

**Towards Professionalism?
Archives and Archivists in England in the 20th Century**

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Abstract

Archives have the potential to change people's lives. They are 'a fundamental bulwark of our democracy, our culture, our community and personal identity'.¹ They are created in the first instance for the 'conduct of business and to support accountability', but they also 'meet the requirements of society for transparency and the protection of rights', they underpin citizen's rights in a democratic state and are the raw material of our history and memory.² Archivists and records managers are the professionals responsible for ensuring that these qualities are protected and exploited for the public good. Do they belong to a mature profession, equipped for this challenge in the 21st century?

This thesis seeks to understand how the archive profession in the United Kingdom (particularly in England) developed during the 19th and 20th centuries by examining the political and legislative context for archives, analysing how archival institutions developed in central and local government, business and in universities to preserve and provide access to records and archives, by considering the growth and influence of professional associations and support bodies and reviewing the education and training of archivists and records managers. None of these themes has previously been addressed in a comprehensive study and together they help answer the question of whether archivists display the characteristics of a fully mature profession or whether it is still an emerging profession.

In conclusion the thesis makes recommendations to guide the development of the UK archive profession in the 21st century to enable it to reach its full potential and ensure that archives and archivists play their proper role in society.

¹ Nicholas Kingsley, Chairman, National Council on Archives, National Council on Archives *Changing the future of our past* Cheltenham: National Council on Archives, 2002: 3.

² Elizabeth Shepherd & Geoffrey Yeo *Managing records: a handbook of principles and practice* London: Facet Publishing, 2003: xii.

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Without the understanding of my family I would have given up long ago. They will be glad that it is all over!

I am indebted to many people but am alone responsible for the conclusions and any mistakes.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is all my own work and that I have acknowledged all my sources.

Elizabeth Jane Shepherd

List of abbreviations

A2A	Access to Archives (strand of NAN)
ACA	Association of County Archivists
ACALG	Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government
ACW	Archive Network Wales
ARMA	American Records Management Association
Aslib	Association of Special Libraries
ATF	Archives Task Force (of Re:source)
BAC	Business Archives Council
BCA	Birmingham City Archives
Bod Lib	University of Oxford, Bodleian Library
BRA	British Records Association
BRS	British Record Society
BSI	British Standards Institute
CHNTO	Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation
CPBA	Council for the Preservation of Business Archives
DRO	Departmental Record Officer (in UK central government departments)
EAD	Encoded Archival Description
FARMER	Forum for Archives and Records Management Education and Research
FoI	Freedom of information
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
HMC	Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts (1869-2003)
ICA	International Council on Archives
IHR	Institute of Historical Research, London
IRMC	International Records Management Council
ISAD(G)	<i>International standard for archival description (general)</i>
ISNTO	Information Services National Training Organisation
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee (of Higher Education Funding Councils)
LA	Library Association
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
MAD	<i>Manual of archival description</i>
NAN	National Archives Network
NCA	National Council on Archives
nd	no date (of publication)
np	no place (of publication)

NRA	National Register of Archives
PRO	Public Record Office (of England, Wales and the UK) (1838-2003)
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
RMG	Records Management Group (of SoA)
RPS	Records Preservation Section (of BRA)
SCAN	Scottish Archive Network
SCONUL	Standing Council on National University Libraries
SLAIS	School of Library, Archive and Information Studies, UCL
S/NVQs	Scottish/National Vocational Qualifications
SoA	Society of Archivists
SRO	Scottish Record Office (after 1999, National Archives of Scotland)
SSRC	Social Sciences Research Council
TNA	The National Archives (of England, Wales and the UK) (2003-)
ts	typescript
UCL	University College London
UCLL	UCL Library
UCLRO	UCL Records Office
UCNW	University College of North Wales, Bangor (later University of Wales, Bangor)
ULL	University of London Library
ULivA	University of Liverpool Archives
ULivH	University of Liverpool, Department of History
UWA	University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Department of History
UWB	University of Wales, Bangor, Main Library, Department of Manuscripts
VCH	The Victoria History of the Counties of England

Introduction

Justification of topic

Archives have the potential to change people's lives. They are 'a fundamental bulwark of our democracy, our culture, our community and personal identity'.³ They are created in the first instance for the 'conduct of business and to support accountability', but they also 'meet the requirements of society for transparency and the protection of rights',⁴ they underpin citizen's rights in a democratic state and are the raw material of our history and memory. Archivists and records managers have a responsibility to ensure that these qualities are protected and exploited for the public good.

What does it mean to be an archivist and records manager in the UK in the 21st century? What is the definition of the profession of archivist? Is it a mature profession equipped for the challenges of the 21st century? Is there diversity or unity in the domain? Unless we can answer these questions we will not be able to shape the future of the profession. If we cannot define where we are and what we are now we cannot have a meaningful discussion about the direction in which the archival profession should go in the new millennium. Nor can we prioritise our activities, co-ordinate and direct professional development.

In the 20th century British archivists were slow to discuss and develop professional issues on a national scale. There were achievements but they were local, often a result of individual initiative. Many of these achievements were remarkable and worthwhile, but they present a picture of piecemeal and disparate activity. Great strides could be made if we first agreed on the direction to be taken: a greater unity of purpose in the first years of the 21st century has already shown how much progress the profession can make.

In deciding where the profession should go, it is important to understand where it came from and to analyse the influences which brought it to where it is today. This thesis seeks to lay the foundations for this understanding by researching and analysing a number of themes, none of which has been addressed previously in a comprehensive study. It takes the UK, particularly England, as its geographical focus. The main temporal focus of the thesis is the 20th century when archives began to emerge as a separate profession, but the antecedents of the 20th century developments are traced from the Public Record Office Act 1838, the commencement of building of the Public Record Office in 1851 and other key 19th century events. The thesis brings the story up to the formation of the National Archives in April 2003.

³ NCA *Changing*: 3.

⁴ Shepherd & Yeo: xii.

In this study, *records* are defined as ‘recorded evidence of activity’,⁵ and *archives* are records which have long term value and are preserved for their use in cultural research and for their continuing value for accountability purposes. An *archives* is the business unit which provides archival services and which may also undertake records management activities. The term *archivist* refers to the individual responsible for archive and records management services.

What is a profession and is archives one (or more)?

Sociologists examined the definition of a profession and professionalism during the 20th century. They sought to define the meaning and concept of a profession, which was based on ‘autonomous expertise and the service ideal’.⁶ Sociologists identified attributes such as increased specialisation and skill, growth of standards, spread of certification, the development of a role commanding prestige, respect and positive evaluation, which was a full time activity not a leisure interest.⁷

Attribute model

The sociological ‘attribute model’, developed between the 1930s and 1960s, assigned traits or attitudes to professionals. The attribute taxonomy identified eight key areas.⁸

1. Theory and intellectual technique
All work requires some knowledge, but a profession requires a complex knowledge base which underpins its special expertise. Professional work is technical and based on systematic knowledge and training.
2. Relevance to social values
Professions are usually closely related to important social values, such as justice or health, and seek to help realise the value, especially at points of crisis.
3. Training period
Professional training is long, specialised and strongly conceptual. Training enables specialised knowledge to be transmitted, and is based on ideas and concepts rather than on physical objects. In addition to learning skills and knowledge, trainees acquire understanding of the ‘occupational sub-culture’, its values and norms.
4. Motivation
Professionals are motivated by a desire to serve the public or a client rather than directly by self-interest or monetary gain: this requires them to behave in an objective and impartial manner. Some professions see themselves as vocations or callings as much as work (eg clergy).

⁵ Shepherd & Yeo: 2, 5.

⁶ Harold Wilensky ‘The professionalization of everyone?’ *American Journal of Sociology* 70 (1964): 137.

⁷ Ronald M Pavalko *Sociology of occupations and professions* 2nd ed. Itasca, IL: Peacock Publishers, 1988: 18.

⁸ Pavalko: 19-29. Wilensky: 137-158.

5. Autonomy

A profession seeks autonomy and self-regulation both at individual and work group level. Work groups form associations to control the profession, including setting high entry barriers. Individual professionals seek to work autonomously, resisting supervision, especially by non-professionals.

6. Commitment

Joining a profession is a lifelong or long term commitment and those who leave are seen as traitors who threaten the integrity of the group.

7. Sense of community

Professional communities often have a common social identity, dress and language.

8. Code of ethics

A profession has a system of norms, written or unwritten, which governs its work. The codes vary in complexity and enforceability, but are used as a basis for self regulation.

Using this model to analyse the archives profession, one can say that theory and intellectual technique have always been present in the work, although originally in the allied disciplines such as archaic languages (medieval Latin, Norman French), diplomatics and palaeography, rather than in archive administration. During the later 20th century theoretical aspects of the management of archives and records, including archival description and digital records, developed strongly. Archives have always had a relevance to social values, initially for the efficient management of legal records and subsequently to support historical studies. A much stronger link developed in the last two decades of the 20th century, with an emphasis on community and individual identity, memory and social inclusion and the role of records in civil rights, justice, transparency and accountability.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries archivists were recruited with general historical and classical skills and education and underwent a period of in-house training. But since 1947 it has gradually become the norm to complete a period of practical experience and a one year, university based Diploma or MA. The training was practical and skills based and, except in the allied disciplines such as diplomatic, lacked much conceptual content; there was no attempt to initiate graduates into the sub-culture. In the 1990s greater emphasis was put on intellectual issues in archives and records management and on the wider professional context.

Archivists have always been highly motivated to join the profession. There has been a strong public service ethic, with emphasis on access and use by researchers, rather than concern about providing a service to the employing institution. Some joined the profession with a sense of vocation. Linked to this has been strong professional autonomy among individuals who felt loyalty to their profession rather than to their employer. Many strongly individual approaches to archive work and a resistance to being confused in public perception with other professional groups such as librarians and museum curators reflected this

professional confidence. High motivation to join was reflected in a reluctance to leave the profession: most archivists developed their careers by staying within the profession, many were reluctant to be promoted into management jobs away from contact with records and some stayed in junior grades while becoming extremely expert in certain types of archives. Archivists felt a sense of professional community and developed specialised terminology for their work and professional associations to represent the community. The popular press, if not archivists themselves, identified common dress; the academic-looking wearer of sandals with a sprinkling of dust. The archive profession developed ethical ways of working, although codes of ethics have been agreed and published at a recent date. For instance, in North America, the National Archives published a code for its employees in 1955, but it was only developed into a code of ethics by the Society of American Archivists in 1980. The Association of Canadian Archivists code of ethics was published in 1991.⁹ The International Council on Archives Code of Ethics appeared in 1996. The UK Society of Archivists (SoA) published its Code of Conduct in 1987 after many years of discussion. In many ways, archivists developed professional attributes which match those in the sociological model.

Process models

Criticisms of the sociological attribute model led to a refinement: the process model.¹⁰ The attribute model emphasised internal factors, whereas the process model gave weight to external issues, seeking to interpret behaviour in a wider context. The process model examined the implications of power, questioning the assumption that a profession will only put its power to use for the client's benefit, rather than for self-benefit. A number of new models appeared which examined the process of professionalisation and how professions increased their status. In Caplow's model occupations aggregate (by developing formal representative associations and regulatory mechanisms), differentiate the work group from others (which may include a change of name), and rationalise, by developing codes of practice and formal training.¹¹ A series of activities happen iteratively until the profession emerges. The activities are:

- establishment of a professional association
- change of name for the work group
- development of a code of ethics
- enactmentment of legal restrictions
- establishment of training.

A linear model based on attributes which tracks the process of professionalization was developed by Wilensky.¹² This identified five steps.

⁹ There is a useful commentary in Trevor I May 'Archival professionalism and ethics: an assessment of archival codes in North America' MA Diss. University of British Columbia, 1991: 89-121.

¹⁰ Pavalko: 30-36.

¹¹ Theodore Caplow *The sociology of work* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954: 19-25.

¹² Wilensky: 142-146.

1. At an early stage the practitioners come from other occupations, but gradually a full time work group develops separately.
2. A training school for new practitioners is established, sometimes beginning independently but always eventually seeking contact with universities in order to develop standards terms of study, academic degrees and research programmes.
3. A professional association is formed, to discuss and define professional tasks, regulate the quality of recruits and their entry into the profession, differentiate the group from other similar groups and, often, change the name of the occupation.
4. Political engagement to seek legislative protection, licensing and certification grows.
5. A code of ethics develops, to embody rules about behaviour, competition and the protection of clients.

Wilensky judged that the degree of professionalization of an occupation was measured both by the exclusivity of the technical competence and by the adherence to the service ideal. He also identified four groups of professions from his research, which he named:¹³

- established professions (eg law, clergy, university teaching, medicine, plus newer ones such as dentistry, architecture, engineering)
- professions in process or borderline/marginal professions (eg social work, city planning, nursing, librarianship)
- new professions (eg information technology professionals)
- doubtful professions (eg public relations, advertising, funeral directing).

Wilensky concluded, however, that ‘very few occupations will achieve the authority of the established professions’ and that it was more likely that occupational groups would combine professional and bureaucratic models, linking professional and civil cultures.¹⁴

A further refinement of the process model was published in 1985 by Forsyth and Danisiewicz.¹⁵ This model identified three phases in the development of a profession:

Phase 1: potential, when the work group develops an essential, exclusive and complex activity and engages in image building.

Phase 2: formation, when the profession receives public acceptance and autonomy from the client and from the employing organisation. True professions are totally autonomous: semi-professions will still depend on either the employer or the client. Professions which fail to achieve public recognition are termed ‘mimic professions’ but may continue with image building activities to seek further recognition and confirmation as a profession.

Phase 3: stabilization, when the profession settles into a pattern of autonomy, as a true profession, semi-profession or mimic profession.

¹³ Wilensky: 137, 141.

¹⁴ Wilensky: 137, 157-158.

¹⁵ Patrick B Forsyth & Thomas J Danisiewicz ‘Toward a theory of professionalization’ *Work and Occupations* 12 (1985): 59-76.

Using these process models to analyse the archive profession, one can say that an identifiable work group developed after the Public Record Office (PRO) was built in 1851, although it was confined to a few institutions, including the British Museum Manuscripts Department and the PRO, until local record offices emerged after the Local Government Act 1888. By the start of the 1900s a work group had clearly developed. Initially practitioners did not see themselves as archivists but rather as historians, editors and researchers and they were trained in historical, not archival, skills. A separate training school for archivists was established in 1947 when university programmes began at the Universities of Liverpool and London and a practicum-based programme started at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Before then, although archivists did acquire training in specific skills, there was no coherent programme of training. A number of archive-related associations were formed during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but the British Records Association formed in 1932 had objectives which included the development of archive policy, the preservation of records and the aspiration to act as a voice for archives. The Society of Local Archivists formed in 1947 was the first body which was for archivists as a profession rather than simply including archivists and archive activities within its remit. Thus by 1947 the profession had both training schools and a professional association. The development of a code of ethics was slower: in spite of long discussion the UK SoA did not publish a code of practice to regulate professional behaviour until 1987, although it did regulate access to membership of the Society (and by implication the accepted professional work group) from 1947. From 1980 the SoA exercised influence over the curriculum of approved university qualifications in archives and tightened up regulations for membership.

The name of the work group took some time to emerge, although the term ‘archivist’ has been used for several centuries to describe someone (usually an historian) who worked with and looked after archives. In the early 20th century, the profession was described as archivist. The emerging discipline of records management in the mid-20th century caused some difficulties: was this a separate profession or part of the same profession? In the UK one new training school emerged specifically for records management (the University of Northumbria at Newcastle in 1991) while existing schools developed programmes with a new emphasis on records management from the 1980s. Some jobs were exclusively that of records management or of archives. A separate professional association, the Records Management Society of Great Britain, was formed in 1983. However, an emerging theoretical approach based on the records continuum confirmed that records management and archives were part of the same profession. In general, training, professional bodies, working professionals and employers see a single profession, although sometimes with an emphasis on one aspect or the other. There is, however, no agreed name for the work group: archivist and/or records manager is used in different situations.

Archivists began political engagement early: public records legislation in 1838 and establishment of the Public Record Office as one of the first national archives in the world put the records of central government

in the UK in a secure position. However, other types of archives and records were neglected by the legislators, even though there were numerous government reports throughout the 19th and 20th centuries which recommended legislation. Limited protection was afforded to local authority archives by the Local Government (Records) Act 1962 and the Local Government Act 1972, although information policy legislation (data protection and freedom of information) began to improve legislative provision for records and archives in the late 20th century. Archivists did not achieve any legislative protection or regulation as a profession in the 20th century. The Society of Archivists (SoA) has not achieved chartered status at the time of writing (unlike its sister the Library Association, now the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)) and, although seeking to control access to the profession through training and registered membership of the professional body, only ever achieved advisory not mandatory controls. In 2004 it is still possible to be employed as an archivist with no professional training, no professional membership or regulation and few relevant skills: it is even easier to find work as a records manager without any professional accreditation. However, political engagement improved in the early 2000s as archivists identified key political issues and sought to show how archives could contribute to their achievement.

Looking at Wilensky's four types of profession, at the beginning of the 21st century archives and records management is an emerging profession or a profession in 'process', still developing, but not yet fully established. Or, to use Forsyth and Danisiewicz's characterisation, archives can be seen as a semi-profession or in formation, since it is dependent on employers (most archivists work within an organisational context, not as self employed professionals).¹⁶ As a professional group, archivists are not autonomous and experience the conflicting demands of the profession and those of the employer.¹⁷ Archivists rely on professional networks, not employer-based networks, for advice, career opportunities and support. The most important aspects of work for many archivists take place within the professional associations, in which they meet, socialise, exchange expertise and information on jobs, make themselves known to other archivists, as well as develop new techniques, standardise their professional practices and carry out political lobbying. The distinction between work and leisure is blurred, as leisure time is consumed with work interests, such as attending meetings and conferences (often privately funded), reading professional literature, taking part in professional committee work and writing for professional journals. The conflict between work and employer can be seen in posts which require a high level of professional expertise but carry little organisational weight, because they have low requirements to manage staff or control financial resources. Such posts may be crucial to the knowledge of an archive and its ability to provide expert services, but may be poorly paid, not be part of a career path and accorded a low value.

¹⁶ Richard Cox takes a more pessimistic view, saying that archives has not developed beyond the potential phase: Richard Cox 'Professionalism and archivists in the United States' *American Archivist* 49 (1986): 229-247. May suggests, although he is not entirely clear, that archivists subsequently improved their position on the professional continuum: May: 18-27.

¹⁷ Pavalko: 186-200. Wilensky: 146-150.

Conflict may arise when the archivist wants to treat a case based on its unique merit whereas the organisation wants to achieve uniformity (eg performance measurement of professional areas such as cataloguing has to be quite sophisticated to satisfy all parties). The autonomy of the professional is greater when the demand for service is high, since it is easier then to move to an alternative post. Salaried professionals often do not have final responsibility for their work, but are managed by non-professionals who set performance targets and means of assessment. Most examples of ethical dilemmas hinge on a conflict between professionalism and obeying organisational rules, such as access or selection policies in private organisations which might reflect organisational interests not professional ones. Recruitment or promotion is an obvious area of conflict, since the archivist may place professional skills over managerial ones, while the organisation seeks more general management skills. The university courses experience this difficulty as a competition for space in the curriculum, since they seek to provide their graduates with both general interpersonal and key management skills and good professional skills.

In the early 21st century, archives face a new challenge, that of deprofessionalisation. The archives profession sees challenges to its hard won authority: increasing specialisation of the work means that the first professional qualification offered by the universities no longer prepares graduates for all aspects of work. Should more specialist initial programmes be developed (such as the MPhil in digital preservation at the University of Glasgow, which is not yet regarded as a professional qualification by the SoA)? The technical developments in the profession causes stresses for some individuals: new skills are needed, there is an implied devaluation of traditional skills and a need for retraining of professionals in post. There are calls for a separate route in to management or leadership for the profession, other than via the traditional professional track. As some previously professional tasks are increasingly standardised, enabling non-professionals to do the work under professional direction, the profession has to change its focus (eg initial enquiry work in public searchrooms and archival description, if not arrangement, is increasingly carried out by unqualified staff). The demand for records managers and archivists by employers could not be met by the output from the existing training schools by the 1990s. This led to employers filling 'professional' posts with candidates with other qualifications and training them as necessary in post, leaving the archives profession vulnerable to outsiders challenging 'qualified' insiders for work. In addition, as employers have sought more flexible use of their workers, archivists increasingly work in cross-disciplinary teams where clear professional distinctions cannot easily be made. New aspects of work, such as outreach, interpretation, social inclusion work within an archives, and management of digital records may be more effectively done by other professions: larger organisations can employ a range of professionals, but in smaller ones, a choice has to be made between different professional skill sets.

An analytical framework for the UK archive profession

Building on these sociological models of professions, this thesis develops an analytical framework for the UK archive profession. The framework focuses on four key themes, which form the basis of the eight main chapters. The framework suggests that four aspects are critical.

1. Political engagement and legislation.

Records and archives are created and maintained by individuals and organisations whose functions and structures are strongly influenced by government policies, legislation and regulation. Records uniquely reveal the inner activities of organisations and stand witness over time to those activities. Although government has recognised the value of records and archives in many enquiries and reports, very little legislation directly affecting records has been enacted, except for central government. Understanding the historical interaction of government policy and legislation and archives and records (and their managers, archivists) is critical to ensuring that archivists play their full and proper role in society in future.

2. A complex and distinct work group.

Although archival skills can be identified generically, the context in which they are exercised determines their validity. There were few employment opportunities for archivists outside the PRO until the 20th century, when local government archives began to develop. Within the PRO most saw themselves as historians rather than archivists. Specialist and business archives did not emerge strongly until the 1960s. An examination of the development of the main employment sectors for archivists will reveal whether there is an identifiable and homogeneous archival work group which might become a single profession or simply a number of specialist posts within disparate organisations.

3. An exclusive professional organisation.

Archives provide a focus for leisure and a resource for cultural and legal research. Groups of interested individuals (whether genealogists, record agents, local historians, academics, editors, students, businessmen and lawyers) met together to discuss archives. The British Record Society, the British Records Association and the Council for the Preservation of Business Archives all included members interested in preserving and exploiting archives. However, if archivists are to form a profession they need an exclusive organisation which establishes standards of practice and ethics, builds gateways to entry, lobbies to protect the profession, defines the training and education required and engages with policy makers. An analysis of the various bodies associated with archives enables us to answer the question, is there an effective professional body for UK archivists in 2003?

4. Appropriate archival education and development.

Archival education sets parameters for professional work, defines the range of the profession, provides a gateway (and barrier) for entry and lays the foundations of career development. Archivists have benefited from quality structured programmes mainly provided within a university context for over fifty years. And yet, as a discipline, little progress has been made in intellectual and theoretical development, leaving archivists vulnerable to external changes for which they are ill-equipped. An analysis of the development of

archival education in the UK will reveal what adjustments the universities and the profession need to make to enable archivists to become a true profession.

Research questions

The research questions amplify these themes.

1. To what extent have archivists developed professional attributes, as defined in sociological studies of professionalism? How and when were these attributes attained? How fully developed is archives as a profession at the start of the 21st century?
2. How have government enquiries, reports, policy and legislation influenced the development of the profession in the UK? What are the key pieces of legislation between 1838 (the first Public Record Office Act) and 2003 (the formation of the National Archives) which provide a framework for archive services? What should the role of government be in the archive services of the 21st century?
3. How have national, local and other archives developed in England over the period 1851 (the construction of the first Public Record Office building) to 2003? Which factors have influenced and which hindered developments? What has been the relationship between the national institutions and local archives? To what extent has development been planned and how far has coincidence played a part? Can the UK be said to have a national archives system? How should the archival structure change to meet the needs of present and future stakeholders?
4. How and why have archival associations developed in the UK, in particular in England? What were the circumstances and reasons for the formation of the main bodies and for their policy development during the 20th century? How and why did professional standards, including a code of ethics, develop? What contribution did the professional bodies make to research and publication? How can the associations best support the profession in the 21st century?
5. How and why did the university education programmes and other routes to professional qualification develop in the UK? How far did the professional associations influence the curriculum and changes in the programmes? What were the other influences? What has the UK contributed to professional literature and to theoretical developments? How should professional education develop in future?

Methodology

The methodology adopted for this thesis is mainly traditional historical research based on primary (archival) sources and on reading of secondary (published) sources. The secondary sources comprised both contemporary witness accounts of developments, such as the foundation of a new record office or the effect of a piece of legislation, and reflective accounts on particular themes. In addition, texts of statutes and of government reports, white and green papers and draft Bills and web sites of archival and government

institutions were consulted. Primary sources included the archives of professional associations, such as the National Council on Archives, British Records Association and Society of Archivists, records held by the universities offering archival education, and archives of some government initiatives such as the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee, the Manorial Documents Committee and the National Register of Archives, held at the Public Record Office (now the National Archives). A few interviews with key individuals were undertaken as the opportunity presented itself, but no systematic programme of interviews was planned, mainly because the available written sources provided sufficient information, but also because of constraints of time. In addition, the personal knowledge of the author and her involvement with the archive profession in the UK over 20 years provided background information.

Literature review

Chapters 1 and 2 draw on published UK laws and statutes, government reports (such as Committee appointed to enquire as to the existing arrangements for the collection and custody of local records... *Report* London: HMSO, 1902. Cd. 1335, Royal Commission on Public Records... *First [to Third] report* London: HMSO, 1912-1919. Cd 6361. Cd 7544. Cmd. 367. and Committee on Departmental Records. *Report* London: HMSO, 1954. Cmd 9163. Chairman, Sir James Grigg. The Grigg Report), *Phillimore miscellanea* and commentaries (including Jeffery R Ede 'The record office, central and local: evolution of a relationship' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 5 (1975): 207-214). They make use of some primary sources, in particular the Manorial Documents Committee minutes of meetings 1925-34 (HMC 5/1, TNA) and Master of the Rolls Archives Committee minutes 1943-49, 1949-56 (HMC 1/214, 1/215, PRO 39/11/1, TNA). Chapter 3 makes extensive use of John Cantwell's *The Public Record Office 1838-1958 and 1959-1969*, of the Keeper's *Annual reports* and of accounts of the HMC, notably those by Roger Ellis (including 'The Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts: a short history and explanation' *Manuscripts and Men* London: HMSO, 1969, 1-39). It also draws on the HMC's own records (such as Proposals for a general survey or census of records, 1920-42, HMC 1/182, Institution of the National Register of Archives and appointment of Directorate 1944-45, HMC 1/232, and National Register of Archives Directorate, minute book 1945, HMC 1/233, TNA). Chapter 4 uses contemporary witness accounts of local and business archivists published in the *Archives* series, 'Local archives of Great Britain' and the *Business Archives* series, 'British business archives', together with the BRA reprint series, *The year's work in archives*, and later surveys of the state of archive services (including W R Serjeant 'The survey of local archives services 1968' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 4 (1971): 300-326 and Heather Forbes *Local authority archive services 1992* London: HMSO, 1993). It also uses Manorial Documents minutes of meetings 1925-34 (HMC 5/1, TNA) and an interview by the author with Dr Felix Hull, retired County Archivist of Kent. Chapters 5 and 6 draw on the annual and other reports of the BRA, BAC and SoA. Amanda Arrowsmith 'Recordari: the 50th anniversary of the Society of (Local) Archivists' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 19 (1998): 229-234 and British Records Association *Jubilee essays: the British Record Association 1932-1992*

London: British Records Association, 1992 comment on influential individuals. Extensive use is made of the archives of the BRA, SoA and NCA. Chapters 7 and 8 use articles by archive academics, such as Mary Ellis & Anna Greening 'Archival training in 2002: between a rock and a hard place' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 23 (2002): 197-207, to supplement the primary sources consulted at the Bodleian Library, University College London and the Universities of London, Liverpool and Wales at Bangor.

The present study has highlighted some gaps in the literature. There is no history of the HMC, except the articles by Ellis: with the amalgamation of the HMC and PRO to form the National Archives in 2003, such a history is overdue. Comprehensive studies of the development of business archives and university archives in the UK are lacking, as is any account of the development of repair/conservation/preservation (which is excluded from this study). The present study only addresses England and there is scope for similar studies for other parts of the UK: Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland. An interesting addition would be a more detailed study of the individuals who peopled the development of archives in the UK, setting their work in archives in the context of their other activities, including Jenkinson (although see J Conway Davies ed 'Memoir of Sir Hilary Jenkinson' *Studies presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson* London: Oxford University Press, 1957), but also Fowler, the Hardy family, Irene Churchill, Ethel Stokes, Kathleen Major (although see D A Bullough & R L Storey eds *The study of medieval records: essays in honour of Kathleen Major* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), Malet, Emmison, Ellis, Walne, Joan Wake and many others. Other topics worthy of study include the role of record agents in the early development of archives; histories of individual archive offices (perhaps as an update on the original series of articles in *Archives*) or groups of record offices by type; and studies of the development of aspects of professional practice such as description. Studies could also be done of the Manorial Documents Committee and the Tithe Committee.

In the bibliography published works are arranged alphabetically by author surname with multiple works by the same author arranged alphabetically by title. Manuscript sources are arranged by repository, archive reference code (if any) and title, and interviews by interviewee's surname. The bibliography includes all the main sources used in the research but does not include all general published works on archives and records management which the author has consulted over the years in which the research has taken shape. In the footnotes each source is given its full reference at its first citation and (in order to save space) in an abbreviated form subsequently. The abbreviations used are, for published works, author surname, short title (if necessary) and page, and for manuscript sources, archive reference code (if any) or title and repository (abbreviated).

Limitations

A general constraint was the lack of an existing broad based study of the topic, so the thesis necessarily has to account for and give details of the various strands of the story. Inevitably this requires in part a

descriptive account to provide the reader with the necessary information, often within a broadly chronological framework. Although the thesis also discusses the implications of the events described, is broadly analytical and draws conclusions, it is difficult, given the necessity to set out the facts of a wide ranging study, to provide a more analytical study within the constraints of 100,000 words. The lack of an existing account of the profession also led to a focus on archival matters while giving relatively little attention to contextual influences: future studies should seek to take greater account of non-archival influences on the profession and set it into a wider context. The thesis considers archives and records management but does not address archive conservation and preservation, which merits its own separate study. It restricts itself to the UK, particularly England and concentrates on 20th century developments.

Chapters 1 and 2 only provide an outline of key legislation and do not attempt a detailed study of all relevant legislation. Since a very detailed study of the PRO's history to 1969 was published by John Cantwell (although it will need to be brought up to date in due course) it was pointless to reproduce that in Chapter 3 but sufficient information has been included to set the PRO in the history of the development of archives in England. Chapter 4 covers such a broad subject area, encompassing thousands of individual archives spread all over the UK, that it was impossible to be comprehensive: in 2002 *British archives* listed 1231 repositories.¹⁸ The study necessarily focused on record offices for which there was published or other reasonably accessible material: less material was available for specialist archives such as universities and businesses. The role of departments of manuscripts and archives in the national libraries and museums and other specialist national institutions could be further explored. In Chapter 6 there was a lack of accessible material for the Association of County Archivists (ACA/ACALG). There is very little in print and although the author contacted successive honorary secretaries, she was unable to trace the council minutes or get access to them. For Chapters 7 and 8 although the author was given reasonable access to files held in the university archives at UCL, University of London, University of Liverpool, Bodleian Library, Oxford and University of Wales at Bangor, as well as some access to departmental files at these institutions, she was not given permission to access files at Aberystwyth.

Outline of thesis

Eight main chapters examine four aspects of professionalism. Within each theme, chronological breaks are made at key points. The first period runs from the 19th century to the immediate post-war period (1945-1950) when a major government enquiry (the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee) led to the National Register of Archives and new archival legislation, the PRO faced the Grigg Committee's investigation, local record offices established themselves nationwide, the first truly professional body, the Society of Local Archivists, was founded and three university programmes in archives began. The second period ends

¹⁸ Janet Foster & Julia Sheppard *British archives: a guide to archive resources in the United Kingdom* Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002: vii.

around 1980 when, after a period of stability and consolidation, the profession experienced significant changes. Government policy for public services demanded new approaches to funding and delivery, new challenges (especially records management and the development of information technology) required the profession to change its work patterns, develop specialist interests, introduce new support bodies and develop new skills through training and education. The profession began to recognise the need to co-ordinate national policy, to lobby for political influence, and to look out towards a wider community. The end point of the thesis is April 2003, when the PRO and HMC came together to form the National Archives, discussions of new national records and archives legislation had begun, Resource's Archives Task Force was collecting evidence (the first significant enquiry into archives since the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee) and the universities and the professional bodies struggled to adapt to the new professional environment.

Chapters 1 and 2 set the context of the legislative framework and the effects of government policy on archival development. They analyse the history of official inquiries and reports into archives and examine how they have shaped the policy framework. Chapter 1 provides a chronological framework for the thesis through the 19th and early 20th centuries and examines key pieces of legislation. Chapter 2 brings the picture from the *Grigg Report* up to the formation of The National Archives in April 2003. The chapters examine the strength of legislation for different sectors (from mandatory legislation for central government records to weaker enabling legislation for local records), note the reluctance of government to commit resources for non-statutory services and examine the significant impact of non-archival legislation. Chapter 2 concludes that legislation tended to confirm existing developments rather than drive future expansion, although new policy developments in the early 21st century offered hope of a stronger future strategy.

Chapters 3 and 4 analyse the development of record offices, nationally and locally, and consider whether the UK has a national archival system or whether its strength is in diversity. Chapter 3 sets the context of developments at the national institutions (the Public Record Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission). Chapter 4 examines the development of local record offices as they grew from libraries, clerk's record rooms, record societies and museums, and more briefly accounts for the development of specialist repositories and business archives. It asks whether the UK has a unified planned system or a patchwork which is the result of accident and individual enthusiasms. The chapters examine the influence of legislation and regulation and the importance of individual initiatives. They consider the relationship between central and local authorities and the effect of organisational structures, objectives and funding on archive services. In the early 21st century, does the UK have a robust and sustainable work group and employment structure?

Chapters 5 and 6 look at the development of professional associations and support bodies from those with historical and scholarly preoccupations towards greater professionalism. They consider the establishment

and activities of the main UK bodies: British Record Society, British Records Association, Business Archives Council, Society of Archivists, Association of County Archivists, Records Management Society and National Council on Archives. The chapters examine the gradual progress towards professionalism and ask why archivists and records managers developed a multiplicity of organisations. New developments usually resulted in the foundation of new bodies, rather than an extension of the remit of existing organisations. What is the influence of strong leading individuals in the organisations: does their wish for autonomy lead to discontinuity? The chapters also examine professional standards which were developed through committees and conferences and disseminated through the literature, and the effect of recent initiatives such as the National Archives Network project. In a small domain, multiplicity rather than uniformity makes stability of the various bodies difficult and there is a lack of clarity about their roles. Many of these bodies lack funding, rely on voluntary officers, and risk duplicating effort: how can the associations best support the profession in future?

Chapters 7 and 8 consider the universities as gatekeepers to the profession. Chapter 7 investigates the background to archival education which emerged from the teaching of palaeography, librarianship, local history and diplomatic. It also examines the immediate post-war period when university courses emerged in London and Liverpool (1947), in Bangor (1954), and in Aberystwyth (1955), together with the scheme at the Bodleian Library from 1947-1980. Chapter 8 looks at new programmes which emerged later, such as the Roehampton Institute course in business archives (1977), the archives course in Dublin (1972) and the Society of Archivists correspondence course (1980). In the 1990s new subjects such as records management at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle and digital preservation at Glasgow University and new delivery mechanisms, such as open and distance learning and more flexible part-time study were offered. Plans for a Scottish programme were developed in 2001. The chapters ask what lay behind the remarkably uniform developments between 1947 and 1980, consider the influence of professional associations on curricula and examine the conflict between professional requirements and academic ones. Government funding for students studying at the universities, initially through the Department of Education and, from 1997, the Arts and Humanities Research Board illustrates the conflicting priorities. The chapters also briefly review professional development through training and the role of writing and research. Huge shifts in the professional skill set and a major investigation into education and training by Resource, due to report in 2003, pose the question of how best to provide for future professional education.

The Conclusion seeks to define what it means to be an archivist at the beginning of the 21st century, to characterise the current state of the profession in the UK and to make recommendations for the future.

Setting the Context: how government shaped the UK archives profession

A 'catalyst for a fundamental and far-reaching programme of change for UK archives'
(*Re:source, Archives Task Force remit, 2002*)¹⁹

Chapter 1: Commissions, Legislation and Reports, 1800-1950

Chapter 2: From Grigg to the National Archives, 1950-2003

¹⁹ Re:source, the Council for Archives, Museums and Libraries, *Archives Task Force: a searchlight on archives* at http://www.resource.gov.uk/action/taskforce/atf_background.asp, accessed 30/04/03.

Chapter 1

Commissions, Legislation and Reports, 1800-1950

Political engagement, the enactment of legal restrictions and recognition of the value of archives and of archivists in law and regulations are all important in the formation of a distinct profession. Government inquiries and legislation have had a significant influence on archival developments in the UK over the past two centuries. A series of government commissions and Reports from 1800 to 2003 investigated and made recommendations on various aspects of archival activity and influenced its development. The legislative framework within which public archive services, in particular, have grown up provides a significant part of the context for the thesis. However, in the UK, there is no archives legislation making general provision for historical records, nor is there a single authority or minister responsible for archives and records. Instead there is a series of measures relating to records originating with various types of institutions (central and local government, the established church, manors), for different jurisdictions within the UK (Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales); responsibility is divided among government departments. Very little legislation has archives and records as its exclusive focus. Most legislation is enabling not mandatory: there are few sanctions for non-compliance. Legislative provision for central government records is fairly strong, but that for other public authorities (including local government and universities) and for business is weak. In general, UK legislation confirmed existing provision rather than driving future expansion. Chapters 1 and 2 examine how government inquiries and legislation shaped the policy framework for archives and records and they provide a chronological framework for the thesis. Constraints of space mean that these chapters account only for key legislation and do not present a comprehensive study.

There is specific Scottish legislation (Public Records (Scotland) Act 1937, Public Registers and Records (Scotland) Act 1948, Local Government (Scotland) Acts 1889, 1973 and 1994) and a Northern Ireland Act (Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) Act 1923). Headings for a new Scottish Archives Act were drafted in 2001 but by 2003 legislative time had not been allocated. Northern Ireland was hoping for new legislation in the early 2000s. In Wales, while there is no specific legislation, statutory provision exists, should the National Assembly commit to a National Archive Service for Wales. This account will not deal in any detail with the specific legislation for Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales.

Many pieces of legislation have had an effect on record and archive services, even though that was not their main object. For instance, there are specific requirements for tithe and manorial records under the Tithe Act

1936 and Law of Property Acts 1922 and 1924.²⁰ By 2000 Freedom of Information and data protection had been introduced and made a significant impact on records management.²¹ Discussions about new national archives and records legislation for England, Wales and the UK took place in 2003 and the complex legislative framework was a matter considered by the Archives Task Force, set up in 2002. Business, university and private archives, by contrast, have little statutory protection. This disparate system, lacking any uniformity, can be traced back to the Record Commissions which were appointed between 1800 and 1831.²² The exclusive focus of the early 19th century legislators on the records of central government skewed the development of archive services away from the localities and their growing involvement with the acquisition of manuscripts and archives and towards the centre of government.

Public Records legislation

At the end of the 18th century public records were scattered between sixty buildings in London and Westminster including the Tower of London, Somerset House, Carlton Ride and the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey.²³ A Committee to inquire into the state of public records was established in 1800.²⁴ The Committee surveyed over 300 repositories in England, Wales and Scotland: the only significant exclusions were war and revenue records and records in private hands. The omission of private records was crucial for future archival developments. The Committee's *Report*, published in July 1800, identified deficiencies in the storage of records, many of which were held in damp unsuitable buildings, and recommended their transfer to buildings in public ownership. Although the *Report* did not recommend bringing together all records of similar types into specialist repositories, it did consider a single national repository, based on the model of the General Register House, Edinburgh. It recommended appointing salaried keepers, purchasing privately owned finding aids and printing calendars of important records. The *Report* also sought authority to destroy documents not worth preserving.

To carry these recommendations forward, the *Report* proposed a Royal Commission. The first of six Commissions was established in July 1800; the final one lapsed after the death of William IV in 1837. The Commissions focused on three key areas: the reform of the fees system, the preparation and printing of calendars and indexes, and the need for an archival building. The lack of each of these made public records

²⁰ Brief details are given in Alfred AH Knightbridge *Archive legislation in the United Kingdom* (Information leaflets 3) Chichester: Society of Archivists, 1985 and in United Kingdom. Re:source, The Council for Archives, Museums and Libraries, *Archives Task Force: information paper archive activities* at http://www.resource.gov.uk/action/taskforce/atf_background.asp, accessed 06/05/03.

²¹ United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. *Data Protection Act 1998; Freedom of Information Act 2000*.

²² Enquiries in the 18th and 19th centuries included the Committee of House of Lords on Public Records 1719 (pub 1723); Committees of the House of Commons 1732, 1772; Select Committee report 1800 which led to the six Record Commissions, 1800, 1806, 1817, 1821, 1825, 1831; Select Committee of House of Commons 1836 led to final report of the Record Commission in 1837.

²³ John D Cantwell *The Public Record Office 1838-1958* London: HMSO, 1991: 33.

²⁴ A separate Irish Record Commission was set up in 1810.

inaccessible. These Commissions, collectively known as the Record Commission, published three general reports (in 1812, 1819 and 1837).

A Fees Commission (1818-1822) considered opening hours and charges and condemned the irregularity of the system, but failed to recommend a solution. The 1831 Commission reported that the system needed to be overhauled. The first two Commissions spent heavily on publishing calendars and indexes. The Sixth Commission favoured full transcription and surveying of records, but published little.

The proceedings of the Commission attracted adverse publicity over its finances and a Select Committee inquiry reported in 1836 that ‘the first and most obvious defect in the present system is that records are deposited in different and widely scattered buildings.’ The report recommended a single central repository for public records, including those from the State Paper Office, and laid the foundations for the Public Record Office Act 1838.²⁵ The Act established the concept of a central repository, although the record office itself was not built until the 1850s.²⁶

Provisions of the Public Record Office Act 1838

The Public Record Office Act 1838 was the first piece of UK legislation to deal specifically with records and ‘represents an event of unequalled importance in the practice and growth of the two professions [of archivist and historian]’.²⁷ The 1838 Act embraced legal and court records but not the administrative records of government departments, although there was provision to extend the Act by Order in Council.

The Master of the Rolls had historically been the official charged with the care of archives in the royal Chancery and he was made responsible for public records in 1838, which at least ensured that court records remained in legal custody.²⁸ Lord Langdale, then Master of the Rolls, had been an ex officio member of the Record Commission and after irregularities in the handling of the Commission funds and a series of personal rivalries, Langdale assumed, ‘somewhat unwillingly’, temporary responsibility for the Commission’s work in 1837.²⁹ In 1838 he proposed that a new office for public records be established in the Home Office or the Treasury, but in the draft Bills the Master of the Rolls was given ‘charge and superintendence’ of the records and a Deputy Keeper was appointed to manage a public record office

²⁵ United Kingdom. Public Record Office *Guide to the contents of the Public Record Office* London: HMSO, 1963: 1. United Kingdom. Committee on Departmental Records *Report* London: HMSO, 1954. Cmd 9163. (The Grigg Report): 10.

²⁶ Roger Ellis ‘The building of the Public Record Office’ *Essays in memory of Sir Hilary Jenkinson* ed AEJ Hollaender. Chichester: Society of Archivists, 1962, 9-30.

²⁷ Peter Walne ‘The Record Commissions 1800-1837’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 2 (1960-64): 8.

²⁸ Hilary Jenkinson ‘Archive developments in England, 1925-1950’ *Selected writings of Sir Hilary Jenkinson* ed Roger Ellis & Peter Walne. Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1980: 273.

²⁹ John D Cantwell ‘The 1838 Public Record Office Act and its aftermath: a new perspective’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 7 (1984): 277-279.

department. The *Grigg Report* commented in 1954 that the appointment perhaps ‘owed more to the qualities of Lord Langdale himself than to anything inherent in the nature of the office he held’,³⁰ although Cantwell argued that the appointment was not accidental.³¹

The Public Record Department in 1840 managed records stored in nine repositories and in Rolls House, Chancery Lane. Both the Treasury and the Admiralty held legal records which now fell under the Act and, according to Grigg, ‘both seem to have seen in the creation of the Public Record Department, a means of disposing of some of their other papers as well’.³² In 1841 the Assistant Keeper at the Tower of London asked if the Master of the Rolls might take administrative records from an Admiralty building at Deptford under the Act, thereby setting a precedent.

In 1842 the Secretary to the Treasury requested that the Master of the Rolls ‘depute a qualified person belonging to the Record Establishment to report upon the state of the old records of the Treasury’, because ‘the confusion had become unbearable’.³³ The resulting report established that the record office could ‘take charge of such records and papers as each office might think proper to transfer’. By 1847 the Master of the Rolls stated that he ‘conceived it to be the duty of the Public Record Office to take charge of all valuable Public Documents which the Offices to which they respectively belong may desire to have perpetually preserved’.³⁴ A Treasury minute of 1848 indicated that the State Paper Office should merge with the PRO on the retirement of its keeper.³⁵ The Deputy Keeper, concerned about the informality of such arrangements, sought an Order in Council which, in 1852, placed all public records, except those already covered by the 1838 Act, under the charge and superintendence of the Master of the Rolls, without even the sanction of the creating department. In practice records continued to be retained in departments and at their direction. The PRO was thenceforth officially a repository for both judicial and executive records.³⁶

From as early as 1833 the Record Commissioners had plans to build the new record office on the Rolls Estate, acquired in 1837.³⁷ Various other sites were considered, including the Tower of London, Victoria Tower in Westminster and a Westminster jail. Excavations began in Chancery Lane in 1850, the first records moved in 1851 and the first block was completed in 1859.

The Establishment of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts (HMC)

³⁰ Grigg Report: 48-50.

³¹ Cantwell ‘aftermath’: 285.

³² Grigg Report: 12.

³³ Grigg Report: 12.

³⁴ Grigg Report: 13.

³⁵ Cantwell ‘aftermath’: 284.

³⁶ Rupert C Jarvis ‘The Grigg Report II: the Public Record Office’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 1 (1955-1959): 10-13.

³⁷ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 1, 4. Cantwell ‘aftermath’: 280.

Attention shifted to private, as opposed to public, records with the establishment of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts (HMC) in 1869. The PRO Act provided for access to and preservation of public records, but private and family papers remained inaccessible. Two obstacles stood in the way. First, there was great reluctance by legislators to interfere with the property rights of private citizens and, second, public expenditure on private records assumed a low priority, when compared with expenditure on central government records. Initiatives such as the Camden Society, founded in 1834 ‘to induce gentlemen possessed of ancient evidences and records to allow them to be printed’, aimed to improve knowledge of private papers.³⁸ The biographer and antiquarian George Harris presented a paper on ‘The Manuscript Treasures of this country’ at the first Congress of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science in Birmingham in 1857, in which he suggested that private owners be offered help with cataloguing their papers.³⁹ He proposed a survey of private records, undertaken by special inspectors, possibly from the British Museum Manuscripts Department. Harris petitioned the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, in 1858, and led a deputation in 1859.⁴⁰ Harris was invited to draw up a detailed proposal which was, Ellis says, ‘so practical and unexceptional - and indeed so close to the plan finally adopted ten years later - that it is hard to understand why it was so cautiously received’.⁴¹

Unfortunately, Harris’s proposal was presented when expenditure on public records was rising steeply - by 1861, the costs of building in Chancery Lane had risen to £88,490⁴² - and the Master of the Rolls, Lord Romilly, was concerned to protect funds for public records. The Home Secretary consulted Romilly and reported to Palmerston that Romilly ‘entirely condemns this scheme as not being likely to produce any valuable results’.⁴³ Palmerston rejected the scheme, suspecting that it was ‘a high church or Tractarian scheme to bring out at the Public Expense Records connected with Ecclesiastical Bodies’.⁴⁴ Although Harris persisted, the Home Office made it clear in 1860 that no action would be taken.

In fact, Romilly had thought that there was some merit in the scheme and in January 1860 he proposed to employ one clerk in the PRO to survey the records of private individuals, ecclesiastical and lay corporations and for the PRO to arrange and list them. Neither proposal progressed.⁴⁵ It suited the Master of the Rolls and the Deputy Keeper, Thomas Duffus Hardy, to revive the scheme in 1869, when spending

³⁸ Roger Ellis ‘The centenary of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts: origins and transformation’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 3 (1965-69): 442.

³⁹ George Harris, 1809-1890, attended Rugby school, called to the bar 1843, wrote biography of 1st Lord Hardwicke (1847) which initiated his interest in records: Roger Ellis ‘The Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts: a short history and explanation’ *Manuscripts and Men* London: HMSO, 1969: 6-7.

⁴⁰ The petition attracted 141 signatures but not those of Lord Romilly, Master of the Rolls or Deputy Keeper, TD Hardy.

⁴¹ Ellis ‘The centenary’: 444.

⁴² Ellis ‘Building of PRO’: 23.

⁴³ Ellis ‘The centenary’: 444.

⁴⁴ Ellis ‘The centenary’: 445.

⁴⁵ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 201. Ellis ‘HMC short history’: 9-10.

on the building in Chancery Lane had been approved.⁴⁶ Romilly may have been reminded of the plan by the inspection of the Cecil papers at Hatfield House in 1868, which revealed a wealth of unexplored material.⁴⁷ This time Hardy and Romilly kept close control. Romilly set out the case to the Prime Minister in January 1869 estimating costs at £500 pa. A Commission was appointed by Royal Warrant on 2 April 1869 initially for five years. A distinguished group of Commissioners was appointed including three peers, the Master of the Rolls, the Deputy Keeper, an MP and three scholars. Later two members were added to represent the Irish interest. Mr Brett was the first secretary. The Commissioners met at Rolls House and although it was an independent commission (funded by the Treasury from 1869 until 1981), for the first 90 years of its life, the HMC was effectively part of the PRO.

By 1870 national bodies had been established to ensure the preservation of and access to public records (the PRO) and privately held manuscripts (the HMC). The principle of separate arrangements for public and private records and the lack of a single national policy body for archives set the pattern for the later development of archive services.

Public Record Office Acts 1877 and 1898

Until 1877 the Deputy Keeper had no power to destroy records or refuse to accept departmental and legal records of no value.⁴⁸ The Public Record Office Act 1877 established a system for the transfer of records from government departments to the PRO. The Master of the Rolls made rules for the disposal of records ‘not of sufficient public value to justify their preservation’. Once approved by the Treasury and the department of origin, the rules had to be laid before both Houses of Parliament for 60 days (amended in 1898 to nine weeks) and were then brought into effect by an Order in Council. Schedules of records (or classes) to be destroyed were drawn up by a Committee of Inspecting Officers and laid before Parliament for four weeks before disposal was authorized. No records before 1715 could be destroyed. The 1877 Act also enabled ‘valueless’ documents to be transferred to local repositories such as libraries, establishing the concept of public records held locally. This facility was not much used until after 1900.⁴⁹ The draft Bill had included provisions for quarter sessions records, which would have brought them more fully under public records legislation, but on the petition of justices of the peace from a number of counties, the clauses were dropped.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Roger Ellis ‘The Historical Manuscripts Commission 1869-1969’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 2 (1960-1964): 233.

⁴⁷ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 242.

⁴⁸ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 277.

⁴⁹ United Kingdom. Royal Commission on Public Records appointed to inquire into and report on the state of the public records and local records of a public nature of England and Wales. *First Report* London: HMSO, 1912, Cd 6361: 19.

⁵⁰ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 279.

As departmental records flooded into the office, the Deputy Keeper, Maxwell Lyte, saw the need to destroy pre-1715 records, especially duplicates and abstracts, and he proposed a relaxation of the date to 1660.⁵¹ When Sir Nathaniel Lindley became Master of the Rolls in 1897 action was taken, a Bill was introduced into the Lords in February 1898 and, having excited little controversy or debate, passed into law in July 1898.

Local Records: legislative provision and proposals

During the 19th century local government legislation had a limited impact on records and archives. The Vestries Act 1818, which regulated vestry administration, required that ‘minutes of the proceedings and resolutions of every vestry shall be fairly and distinctly entered in a book’ (s 2) and that the minute books along with ‘all former vestry books, all rates and assessments, accounts and vouchers of the churchwardens...and other parish officers, and all certificates, orders of courts and of justices, and other parish books, documents, writings and public papers’ should be kept and ‘deposited in such place and manner as the inhabitants in vestry assembled shall direct’ (s 6).⁵² Penalties were established for anyone who might ‘wilfully or negligently destroy, obliterate or injure the same’ or refuse to deposit them, thus providing some protection to vestry records.

The Municipal Corporations Act 1835 regulated the election and administration of municipal authorities, seeking to reform abuses, but made no specific provision for the creation or keeping of records except for the requirement for the Treasurer to ‘enter true Accounts’ into ‘Books to be kept for that purpose’ (s 93).⁵³

The introduction of civil registration in 1837 was followed by proposals for the transcription of parish registers for the Registrar General, and the deposit of original registers at diocesan record offices. However, Gray suggests that opposition from the Church of England to external regulation prevented the proposals from being taken up.⁵⁴ It was not until 1929 that the Parochial Registers and Records Measure made proper provision for parish records.

Although some quarter sessions made provision for their archives there was no legislative requirement that they do so.⁵⁵ The Local Government Bill 1888 sought to reform the structure of local government and

⁵¹ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 346-347.

⁵² United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. 1818. *An Act for the Registration of Parish Vestries, 1818*. 58 Geo 3, c. 69.

⁵³ United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. 1835. *Municipal Corporations Act, 1835*. 5&6 Wm 4, Cap 76.

⁵⁴ Victor Gray ‘The county record office: the unfolding of an idea’ *An Essex tribute: essays presented to Frederick G Emmison as a tribute to his life and work for Essex history and archives* ed Kenneth Neale. London: Leopard’s Head Press, 1987: 12.

⁵⁵ United Kingdom. Royal Commission on Public Records appointed to inquire into and report on the state of the public records and local records of a public nature of England and Wales. *Third Report* London: HMSO, 1919, Cmd. 367: 21 reported that in 1800, 20 counties had record repositories.

establish county councils, but contained little detail about arrangements for records. It simply stated that the clerk of the peace was to 'be responsible for the documents of the county' (Bill clause 82(3)).⁵⁶ The Local Government Act 1888 provided for the transfer of county quarter session property including records to the new county councils (Act s 64(1)(a)). The clerk of the peace was to 'have charge of and be responsible for the records and documents of the county', subject to the direction of the *custos rotulorum*, quarter sessions or county council (Act s 83(3)). An exception was made for records of the court of quarter session which 'shall...remain in the same custody...' (s 64(1)(a)).⁵⁷ The Act encouraged some new county councils to establish record committees and archive services after 1889.⁵⁸

WPW Phillimore, the general editor of the newly formed British Record Society,⁵⁹ was concerned that local records had not received the same protection as public records. Phillimore proposed in 1889 that 'the best means for ensuring the safe custody and preservation of provincial records' was a Central Record Board to replace the HMC and oversee the work of new county record offices, 'established as depositories for local records'.⁶⁰ In a draft Bill, Phillimore suggested that the Board would inspect all depositories, issue 'rules for the construction, arrangement and maintenance of public record offices', approve the appointment of local Deputy Keepers of Records and regulate the establishment of new local record offices.⁶¹ The Board would be chaired by the Master of the Rolls and include the Deputy Keeper, nominees from the established church, universities, the British Museum (since manuscript curators from the British Museum were as likely to be asked for advice about private and local records as the PRO), the Inns of Court and county councils. The draft proposed that county councils be required to make 'all suitable provision for the safe custody of all public and private documents pertaining to the county'. County record offices would be funded from the county rate and managed by a local Records Committee. Cities and boroughs might have their own record office or proportionately fund a county council office. Joint services were envisaged in some areas. Local record offices would hold parish registers, diocesan records, manorial and land registry records, and local public records as well as private papers. Phillimore's model was similar to the local record offices which emerged in the mid-20th century, although central regulation was not then introduced.

Phillimore had considered the centralization of records at the PRO as an alternative to local custody, but believed this to be unpopular and imprudent, even though Scotland and Ireland provided models for a

⁵⁶ Local Government Bill 1888 debates, HLG 29/19: 83, 100, 359, 898, The National Archives, Kew. Bill clause 82(3), renumbered 84(3), Act s.83(3).

⁵⁷ HLG 29/19: 1285, TNA.

⁵⁸ The Act empowered county councils to appoint committees s 82(1), (2) and joint committees s 81(1). Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Worcestershire were the first to do so: see chapter 4.

⁵⁹ William P W Phillimore (1853-1913), solicitor and editor, *Who was who 1897-1916*: 561.

⁶⁰ Press cutting 'The Athenaeum' 13 March 1889; press cutting 'The Reliquary' July 1889 *Phillimore miscellanea - preservation of records*, Institute of Historical Research, London.

⁶¹ 'Draft of a Bill entitled an Act for the Preservation of Public and Private Records' 1889 *Phillimore miscellanea*, IHR.

centralized system.⁶² The establishment of the new county councils under the Local Government Act 1888 made local record offices based on the counties viable for the first time. Phillimore envisaged that ‘a county record office would consist of one or two fair sized fire-proof and damp-proof strongrooms, a room for the acting-keeper and a public search-room where documents would be produced to those entitled to inspect them’ and, perhaps optimistically, that the expense ‘need be but small’.⁶³ The benefit of central inspection and advice was two-fold: to ensure suitable, fireproof repositories and, through the annual report, to keep local record offices in touch with each other.⁶⁴ However, Maxwell Lyte, the Deputy Keeper and Baron Esher, Master of the Rolls, both opposed it and the proposal made no progress: Cantwell attributes this reluctance to the fact that Maxwell Lyte ‘was already hard pushed to fulfil his statutory obligations under the 1838 Act’.⁶⁵

Phillimore continued his campaign for local record offices over the next 15 years, with revised Bills prepared in 1891 and 1899 and given in evidence to the Departmental Committee. The revisions shifted responsibility from a central Board to the President of the Local Government Board, reflecting continuing uncertainty over the locus of government responsibility for local archives.⁶⁶

The Local Government Act 1894, amongst other provisions, abolished vestries and transferred their powers to civil parishes.⁶⁷ Responsibility for maintaining proper custody for the records was confirmed in s 17(8), under which registers of baptisms, marriages and burials and other records ‘relating to the affairs of the church or to ecclesiastical charities’ remained the responsibility of the incumbent and churchwardens, but ‘all other public books, writing and papers of the parish and all documents directed by law to be kept therewith, shall either remain in their existing custody, or be deposited in such custody as the parish council may direct’. The Act also introduced a new requirement for county councils (s 17(9)), which were directed ‘from time to time to inquire into the manner in which the public books, writings, papers and documents under the control of the parish council or parish meeting, are kept with a view to the proper preservation thereof and shall make such orders as they think necessary for such preservation’. Gradually county councils were acquiring records responsibilities.

Government enquiries into local records: the *Report of 1902*

In the 18th and early 19th centuries a number of government enquiries into central public records included consideration of local records but, until the establishment of the HMC in 1869, central government did little

⁶² ‘The Reliquary’ July 1889, *Phillimore miscellanea*, IHR.

⁶³ Phillimore ‘The custody of local Records’: 5, *Phillimore miscellanea*, IHR.

⁶⁴ ‘County record offices’ *Phillimore miscellanea*, IHR.

⁶⁵ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 329.

⁶⁶ ‘County record offices: synopsis of draft bill’ 1899, *Phillimore miscellanea*, IHR. Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 329.

⁶⁷ United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. 1894. *Local Government Act, 1894*. 56&57 Vict, Ch 73.

about local records. In 1899 a Departmental Committee was established 'to enquire and report as to any arrangement now in operation for the collection, custody, indexing and calendaring of local records and as to any further measures which it may be advisable to take'.⁶⁸ Why was such a Committee needed unless, in spite of the establishment of the HMC and the PRO, there was perceived to be a policy vacuum for local records?⁶⁹

Jeffery Ede identified a number of influences on the formation of the Committee.⁷⁰ Phillimore had exerted some pressure in the 1890s in his addresses and articles. Professor York Powell advocated local record offices in a lecture to the Royal Historical Society in 1897. The Bishop of London, the Rt Rev Mandell Creighton, wrote in 1899 to Arthur Balfour, First Lord of the Treasury, to propose an investigation.⁷¹ In 1900 the Bishop referred to his 'plan which I had started for constituting local archives in England. I prevailed on the government to give me a Committee.' The Treasury view was that since 'local archives... are not the property of the State' their collection, custody and indexing could not be the responsibility of central government, but must fall to county authorities. With this in mind a Treasury Departmental Committee (rather than a Royal Commission) was set up.

The *Report on Local Records* gave an account of the treatment of local records to date.⁷² It noted that earlier government enquiries had focused on public records and that the HMC, while generating many individual reports on local records, had not carried out a comprehensive local survey. Local record societies had published county histories. A few municipalities such as Bristol and Norwich had provided for their archives.⁷³ Some municipal libraries had begun to collect manuscripts. For example, Norwich Public Library acquired manuscripts from 1862, the Corporation of London Guildhall Library as soon as it was established in 1824 and Birmingham Reference Library from 1875.⁷⁴ Some justices of the peace had preserved their records.⁷⁵ However, the *Report* of 1902 concluded that the local work had been 'sporadic and unorganized', done 'in ignorance of what had been done ... elsewhere' and that 'the systems adopted

⁶⁸ United Kingdom. Committee appointed to enquire as to the existing arrangements for the collection and custody of local records and as to further measures which it may be advisable to take for the purpose.

Report London: HMSO, 1902, Cd. 1335: 1.

⁶⁹ Phillimore suggested in an article written for lawyers that a series of frauds and forgeries perpetrated in the Shipway pedigree case led to the setting up of the Committee: 'Law Magazine and Review' (April 1906): 282, *Phillimore miscellanea*, IHR.

⁷⁰ Jeffery R Ede 'The record office, central and local: evolution of a relationship' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 5 (1975): 207-214.

⁷¹ Gray 'unfolding': 16.

⁷² *Report on Local Records* 1902: 3-26.

⁷³ Elizabeth Ralph & Betty Masters 'Local archives of Great Britain XIV: the City of Bristol Record Office' *Archives* 3: 18 (1957): 88-96. Philip Hepworth & Mary Grace 'Local archives of Great Britain VIII: the Norwich Central Library' *Archives* 2: 10 (1953): 86-93.

⁷⁴ Hepworth & Grace: 86-93. Alfred EJ Hollaender 'Local Archives of Great Britain XII: Guildhall Library' *Archives* 2: 14 (1955): 312-323. Alfred Andrews 'Local archives of Great Britain V: the Birmingham Reference Library' *Archives* 1: 5 (1951): 11-21.

⁷⁵ Reginald Sharpe France 'Local archives of Great Britain VII: the Lancashire Record Office' *Archives* 1: 7 (1952): 45-51.

have been different and there has consequently been much overlapping and much waste of valuable energy'. This was unfavourably compared with the position for public records, rationalized under the PRO Act of 1838.⁷⁶

The Committee consulted widely, including county and borough councils, senior ecclesiastics, archaeological societies, university professors of history, non-conformist churches and directors of national archives on the continent. Initially, the Committee intended to encompass all of the UK, but in practice it was confined to England and Wales, noting that arrangements were already in place in Scotland (the centralized General Register Office) and Ireland (the Irish Record Commission 1810 to 1830, leading to the establishment of the Public Record Office of Ireland in 1867).

The results of the inquiry were, predictably and familiarly, depressing. 'The collections of local records which are still to be found in their proper resting-places are in many cases very incomplete; ... the records, where not actually lost, have suffered from mutilation, damp and decay; sometimes even from the depredations of rats and mice'.⁷⁷ The *Report* noted key problems: lack of empowering legislation, lack of skilled record staff, records in the hands of administrators with no interest in them, lack of standardized approaches, but instead individual initiatives, and a lack of finding aids, thus preventing access.⁷⁸

The *Report* considered a range of suggested solutions.⁷⁹ Hertfordshire County Council proposed a scheme of local record offices under the management of county councils, set up by legislation and subject to the inspection of the Master of the Rolls. The Library Association proposed using the library network as the basis for local archives but the *Report* noted, 'this view is, however, mainly confined to persons immediately connected with such institutions'. The Society of Antiquaries had developed a 'county and borough scheme' or a scheme which 'would carry centralization further, by grouping counties together'. This latter proposal also had the support of Phillimore and the British Record Society. The Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, no doubt mindful of the likely pre-eminence of the newly founded School of Local History and Palaeography at the University of Liverpool, proposed a scheme focused on universities which combined the role of professors of history and local archivists.

The *Report* set out its prerequisites. The first principle was to distinguish between 'records required for current business and those whose importance is mainly historical'.⁸⁰ 'The records no longer required for current use must, if they are not destroyed, be removed to make room for their successors and it is desirable that they should find some permanent home'. Secondly, repositories should be suitably constructed, dry and

⁷⁶ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 4-5.

⁷⁷ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 28.

⁷⁸ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 33.

⁷⁹ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 37-38.

⁸⁰ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 40.

fireproof and provide a research room. Thirdly, the archivist should be skilled in palaeography and the care of records, which ‘requirement of itself postulates the existence of some school where the necessary training could be supplied’. Finally, there should be uniformity of arrangement and indexing of the records for the convenience of searchers, ‘to secure this it would be necessary to place the various local offices under the supervision of one central department’.

The *Report* considered various practical options for local records. The imposition of a centralized system as in France was thought too expensive and not mindful of existing local initiatives. Regional record offices based on universities would ensure the provision of trained archivists, but were too unwieldy. However, it was ‘desirable that schools of palaeography should be encouraged at the universities to create the supply of archivists which we hope will shortly be required’, on the model of the Ecole des Chartes in Paris.⁸¹ Using local libraries as record offices was convenient but was discouraged on the grounds that library work required different rules for users and that librarians were not qualified as record keepers and were already fully occupied in their own duties.⁸²

The most practical solution was for county and borough councils to be the record authorities for civil records, while the bishop and chapter should be responsible for ecclesiastical records (including both diocesan and parochial records). Civil and ecclesiastical records could be held in the same archive (especially in cathedral towns), and neighbouring boroughs should combine to provide a local record office. Parish records should not be unduly centralized: the centralization at the General Register Office for England of pre-1837 non-conformist registers in 1840 was not to be repeated.⁸³ Institutions holding semi-public records (eg schools and universities) and private owners would be encouraged to deposit their records in public custody, while retaining full rights of access, control and removal.⁸⁴ This recommendation carried with it no financial implications for central government and, it has been suggested, reflected the views of the Committee’s Chairman, Bishop Creighton.⁸⁵ The *Report* also recommended that archivists be salaried public officials. In order to impose uniform standards, officers appointed by the PRO would inspect, approve the destruction of documents, advise on arrangement and indexing and report to the managing authority.

Legislation would be required, so the Committee considered two draft Bills submitted to it. However, the *Report* recommended legislation ‘of a permissive and enabling character’ which built on the Local Government Act 1894 and allowed local authorities to take custody of private and ecclesiastical records. Bills to make better provision for the custody and preservation of local records were introduced in March

⁸¹ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 43, 49.

⁸² *Report on Local Records* 1902: 46.

⁸³ Under the Non-Parochial Registers Act 1840.

⁸⁴ Thus establishing the concept of ‘permanent loan’ rather than gift of private archives to public repositories which subsequently proved a burden for many local record offices.

⁸⁵ Gray ‘unfolding’: 17-18.

1903 and August 1904 but neither passed first reading.⁸⁶ Even these modest legislative provisions were not enacted for a further sixty years.

Phillimore criticized the *Report* and said that ‘unless some definite policy for the future be initiated it may be regarded as absolutely certain that matters will go on much as they have done in the past’.⁸⁷ Phillimore’s prediction was sadly accurate.

Royal Commission Reports 1912, 1914 and 1919

Report of 1912

The treatment of Welsh records held at the PRO, which were absorbed into English series or lay unreviewed for decades, was a continuing cause of discontent. In 1908 the Inspecting Officers’ Committee reviewed Welsh records and some were presented to the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth.⁸⁸ This did not satisfy the campaigners. The MP for Carmarthen, Llewelyn-Williams, who was also a governor of the National Library of Wales, called for a Royal Commission. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lloyd George, was supportive and in 1910, a Royal Warrant was issued for a Commission to investigate the working of the Public Record Office Acts. Part of the Commission’s work focused on Wales and resulted, by the time of the *Second Report* in 1914, in a Bill for a Record Office for Wales.⁸⁹ The Commission also investigated in detail the PRO’s ‘collection, control, custody, preservation from decay or injury, classification, description, cataloguing, indexing, calendaring, publishing, making accessible and disposing of the Public Records’.⁹⁰ It also considered the appointment and training of staff at the PRO and the custody of local public records.

The Commission examined witnesses and inspected archives. Witnesses included staff of the PRO and government departments, history professors, antiquaries, record agents and others who used the public search rooms.⁹¹ C Hilary Jenkinson, then a Clerk at the PRO, gave an account of his education, his entry to the PRO and subsequent training; C Trice Martin, formerly of the PRO and author of *The Record Interpreter*, had views on training of archivists; William Page, editor of the *Victoria County History* and Ethel Stokes, a record agent who subsequently ran the Records Preservation Section of the British Records

⁸⁶ Ede ‘central and local’: 210. Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 348.

⁸⁷ ‘Our local records: a policy’ (April 1906): 281-290 *Phillimore miscellanea*, IHR.

⁸⁸ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 362-364.

⁸⁹ United Kingdom. Royal Commission on Public Records appointed to inquire into and report on the state of the public records and local records of a public nature of England and Wales. *First Report* London: HMSO, 1912, Cd 6361: 40-44.

United Kingdom. Royal Commission on public records appointed to inquire into and report on the state of the public records and local records of a public nature of England and Wales. *Second Report* London: HMSO, 1914, Cd 7544: 3.

⁹⁰ *First Report* 1912: v.

⁹¹ *First Report* 1912: list of witnesses.

Association, also spoke. In addition, the Commission heard from Arthur Doughty, Dominion Archivist of Canada, (who gave evidence about new archive buildings, the classification of records, student facilities and copying programmes) and researched the arrangements in France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

The Commission investigated the legal standing of the PRO and noted the complementary role of the HMC with regard to private and semi-public local records. An area of particular interest was the system for the destruction and disposal of records.⁹² The 1877 Act had established a Destruction Committee of Inspecting Officers to select departmental records, but the Commission concluded that the system for the transfer of 'useless' documents to local public institutions was not very effective.

The Commission compared the PRO with practices observed abroad and noted that the PRO provided the most centralized concentration of public records, since there was no provision for state or regional public record offices in the UK.⁹³ Public records were transferred to the PRO at a comparatively early date, compared with the practice in, for example, Holland, where all post-1830 records were retained in the creating departments. The approach on the continent was not to centralize the records themselves but rather their administration by means of staffing regional offices with civil servants (in France), by regular inspection of branches (in Belgium) or by a semi-official association of archivists (in Holland).

The Commission also surveyed the public use of records by academics and government departments. Longer opening hours and easier access, especially for overseas academics, were recommended. Search-room accommodation, its heating, lighting, supervision, the production of documents, the inventories and reference books available all needed improvement.⁹⁴

The Commission noted that both France and Belgium compiled directories of archives which listed record offices, their holdings and conditions of admission, and published catalogues. It stated that 'the existence of properly organized and catalogued local or provincial records offices is undoubtedly a great assistance to the development of historical education and a great stimulus to the study of local history'.⁹⁵ The Commission recognised the need for a central point of information in the UK but this was not begun until 1945, when the National Register of Archives was established.

The Commission noted the anomaly of the Master of the Rolls having the title of Keeper of the Records while the Deputy Keeper had absolute authority over the PRO.⁹⁶ It recommended that the Master of the Rolls should cease to have responsibility for public records and be replaced by a permanent Commission of

⁹² *First Report* 1912: 14-20.

⁹³ *First Report* 1912: 38-40.

⁹⁴ *First Report* 1912: 21-25.

⁹⁵ *First Report* 1912: 40.

⁹⁶ *First Report* 1912: 44-48.

Public Records. The nine Commissioners would represent the judiciary, public offices and historical study. The Deputy Keeper, renamed Director of the PRO on a continental model, would act as Secretary to the new Commission. Publications would be hived off to a new Board of Commissioners, run separately from the PRO.⁹⁷ The British Academy would be asked to advise on nominations of historical scholars to the Board.

In addition to these administrative and policy recommendations, the Commission investigated the provision of professional infrastructure. The *Report* noted that England lacked the ‘adequate system of inspection and control’ needed to secure the administration of public records held locally.⁹⁸ It noted too that ‘the study of history by local universities and local antiquarian societies’ had been impeded by the absence of provincial repositories. The *Report* also remarked that continental archivists received training and examination in technical subjects and benefited from technical publications which discussed the ‘principles or the practice of record administration’, including the 1898 Dutch manual by Muller, Feith and Fruin, subsequently translated into German, French and Italian.⁹⁹ A congress held in 1910 in Brussels brought together archivists and librarians to discuss principles and issues, although the PRO declined to send a representative.¹⁰⁰ The *Report* recommended systematic training for archivists in the UK and commented ‘that the absence of any system of training Record Officers in this country is a serious defect’.¹⁰¹

Second Report of 1914

A *Second Report* of the Commission followed swiftly. The *Second Report* noted that progress had been made in improving the services at the PRO since the *First Report*. Search-rooms had better lighting and records were produced more quickly and could be ordered in advance. More records were now open to the public and more classes sorted and arranged. A committee of historical scholars had been appointed to advise on publications policy (although the publications activity had not been separated from the PRO) and the Committee of Inspecting Officers had begun to collate rules for the disposal of records. However, there were a number of outstanding recommendations, in particular about the extension of opening hours to 5pm, the revision of rules on disposal ‘to establish a general and uniform practice’ and the adoption of a new method of appointing record officers and giving them systematic training.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ The PRO had issued record publications since 1854, when the State Paper Office became a branch.

⁹⁸ *First Report* 1912: 49.

⁹⁹ An English-language edition finally appeared in 1940.

¹⁰⁰ Forerunner of the International Council on Archives. Michael Roper ‘The international role of the Public Record Office’ *The records of the nation* ed G H Martin & P Spufford. London: British Records Association, 1990: 14-15.

¹⁰¹ *First Report* 1912: 49.

¹⁰² *Second Report* 1914: 67.

One of the main concerns of the *Second Report* was the inadequate arrangements for the transfer of official records from departments to the PRO.¹⁰³ Many public records were still in poor storage and in disorder. In addition, the Commission was concerned about records which did not clearly fall under the Act, such as the statutory registries (General Registry Office, the Patent Office), royal establishments and public offices such as the War Office and the India Office. For these it recommended the appointment of a Registrar to keep the current records in order and provide historical expertise.¹⁰⁴

Two main recommendations were made. The first addressed the lack of storage for departmental records no longer needed for current business but not yet open to the public, those which had to be retained for a number of years before destruction and public records which were infrequently consulted. Three solutions were proposed: a branch repository in the London suburbs to store accruing records temporarily,¹⁰⁵ a suburban repository to store rarely required records which could be transferred to the PRO for public use,¹⁰⁶ and a repository in Whitehall or improvement of existing departmental accommodation for records not yet open to the public. In effect, the Commission was recommending a policy change: public records were no longer to be concentrated in one repository, a policy which ‘has practically broken down’, but instead there was to be a national record office with oversight of departmental and district offices.¹⁰⁷

Second, the PRO’s role in exercising control over the destruction of departmental records was to be strengthened. The power exercised by the Master of the Rolls under the 1877 Act was to be supplemented by giving the PRO authority systematically to inspect departmental records. The new system was designed to encourage earlier transfer of records and improvements in their arrangement and listing by departments. To facilitate such improvements, the Commission recommended that ‘there should be in every department a properly qualified record keeper with an adequate staff’, and that a separate ‘record service’ with specially trained staff be established as a branch of the civil service.¹⁰⁸

Third Report of 1919

The first two *Reports* of the Commission had focused mainly on the records of central government, but in its *Third Report*, the Commission turned its attention to local records. In spite of the intervention of the First World War, the Commissioners visited 30 towns to inspect local records. By 1916 the draft report was ready but its publication was delayed until after the end of the war. The Commission undertook a

¹⁰³ *Second Report* 1914: 58-66.

¹⁰⁴ *Second Report* 1914: 84-88.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Limbo’ storage was established in Goodge Street in 1946 and Hayes in 1951.

¹⁰⁶ Implemented at Cambridge in 1920 (later at Canterbury and Ashridge) but as an alternative to a Chancery Lane extension: see chapter 3.

¹⁰⁷ *Second Report* 1914: 65.

¹⁰⁸ *Second Report* 1914: 92.

supplementary investigation into departmental records relating to the war in 1917 and 1918,¹⁰⁹ and the findings were eventually published in 1919.

The *Third Report* identified six distinct types of local records.¹¹⁰ Records of central courts of justice and public departments kept locally; county records, including quarter sessions records; town records; civil parish records, which had been the responsibility of parish councils since 1894; ecclesiastical records; and the records of statutory bodies, such as poor law guardians, turnpike trusts and canal companies. Investigations were made into the state of each and specific recommendations made. It reported that court records were ‘preserved in nearly 2,000 separate repositories in different parts of England and Wales’, most of which were ‘without adequate accommodation, proper arrangement or adequate supervision’.¹¹¹ They were often in the personal possession of court officials and ought to be transferred to local repositories such as a ‘strong-room in the shire-hall’. Quarter sessions and other county council records were in ‘frequently unsatisfactory’ storage and ‘even when the records are tolerably secure against fire and damp, the accommodation provided is often insufficient to allow them to be properly arranged and made accessible’. Although some had been calendared and printed by local record societies, they ‘have been very little utilized for historical purposes’.¹¹² County council records comprised ‘the recent documents required for the current business’ which should be kept ‘in the buildings where the affairs of the county are transacted’ and ‘the older documents of historic interest’ which ‘should be removed to a special building fitted to contain them’. The neglect of records of defunct bodies was highlighted with the case of town and borough records, where ‘the records seem to have shared the fate of the borough’; if it was disfranchised, the records had frequently been lost or ‘improperly disposed of’. The *Report* noted that ‘few municipal corporations possess proper record rooms or strong rooms’, and while preserving star items such as charters, tended to neglect the rest of the archive.¹¹³ Records of statutory authorities such as turnpike trusts tended to be scattered and should be gathered together in ‘proper official custody’.¹¹⁴

The *Report* commented that although parish records were of great interest to antiquarians, genealogists and incumbents, the arrangements were ‘casual and to some extent undefined’. In view of the likelihood that ‘opposition to a policy of centralization would be vigorous and wide-spread’, the Commission recommended that parish records remain in parochial custody and that diocesan record offices be established for other records. The parishes were already required to take measures to safeguard their records, such as the provision of ‘a dry, well-painted iron chest’ for storage ‘in some dry, safe and secure place’ in the church, rectory or vicarage, but should also be subject to periodic inspection. ‘In cases where the condition of the Registers or the accommodation provided for them is and continues to be

¹⁰⁹ *Third Report* 1919: 38-39.

¹¹⁰ *Third Report* 1919: 8.

¹¹¹ *Third Report* 1919: 18-20.

¹¹² *Third Report* 1919: 11, 21.

¹¹³ *Third Report* 1919: 11, 22.

¹¹⁴ *Third Report* 1919: 18-22.

unsatisfactory, the bishop should have the power to transfer them to an authorized repository'.¹¹⁵ These measures were enacted in the Church Measure of 1929.

The *Third Report* had three objects: first, 'that Local Records shall be safely kept in convenient places, properly housed and under adequate care and supervision'; secondly 'that they shall be properly arranged'; and thirdly 'that they shall be accessible to the public on reasonable terms and under proper safeguards'.¹¹⁶ However, unlike the Committee on Local Records of 1902, the Commission believed that 'merely permissive legislation' 'resting on the discretion of local authorities' was inadequate. The *Third Report* consequently proposed that local records of a public nature be placed under the charge and superintendence of the Master of the Rolls either by Order in Council under the Act of 1838 or by new legislation. A new inspection department should be established in the PRO for local records which would inspect, approve conditions of access, make lists, approve disposal arrangements and, if necessary, remove records from existing custody to 'safer repositories'.¹¹⁷ Local authorities would have to provide a suitable building, but this might be done co-operatively and it was even suggested that some central funds might be found to subsidise the necessary buildings.¹¹⁸ The exception was in Wales where the state of the records was so poor that a central Public Record Office for Wales was needed.

The *Report* made a few recommendations relating to other records, including a new PRO repository for post-1901 records, especially war records. However, by the time that the *Third Report* was published in 1919, the landscape of government had changed, economic conditions were harder, the Deputy Keeper was not in favour of the proposed changes, and the *Report's* recommendations were only partially taken up. Yet again, this *Report* failed to initiate action. In the post-war period, priorities of government lay elsewhere.

Law of Property Acts 1922 and 1924

There are many instances of legislation enacted primarily for non-records purposes having a significant impact on the keeping of records and archives. One example of this is the Law of Property Act 1922 as amended by the Law of Property (Amendment) Act 1924.¹¹⁹ The primary purpose of the 1922 Act was to amend the law of real and personal estate, to abolish copyhold and other special tenures and to amend the law relating to commonable lands, but its provisions gave statutory protection to manorial documents and reduced the requirement to keep other records of title. The 1922 Act provided for the inspection of manorial court rolls, which were 'deemed to be documents of such a public nature as to be admissible in evidence' (s 144). However, the Amendment Act 1924 inserted a new section 144A which extended the

¹¹⁵ *Third Report* 1919: 16-17, 22-23.

¹¹⁶ *Third Report* 1919: 24.

¹¹⁷ *Third Report* 1919: 24.

¹¹⁸ *Third Report* 1919: 37.

¹¹⁹ United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. 1922. *Law of Property Act, 1922*. 12&13 Geo 5, Ch 16. United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. 1924. *Law of Property (Amendment) Act, 1924*. 15&16 Geo 5, Ch 5.

protection significantly. All manorial documents were to be ‘under the charge and superintendence of the Master of the Rolls’ (ss 1), the lord of the manor could not ‘destroy or damage wilfully such documents’ in his possession (ss 2), the Master of the Rolls was entitled to enquire whether manorial documents ‘are in the proper custody and are being properly preserved’ and the custodian was obliged to provide ‘all such information... as he may require’ (ss 3). The Master of the Rolls could direct that ‘any manorial documents which, in his opinion, are not being properly preserved or which he is requested by the lord of the manor to deal with ... be transferred to the Public Record Office, or to any public library, or museum or historical or antiquarian society which may be willing to receive the same’ (ss 5) and he could make rules for giving effect to these powers (ss 7).¹²⁰ Manorial documents were, consequently, one of the few categories of private records to be given a measure of public records protection and regulated by statute.

In 1925, in order to help him to carry out these duties, the Master of the Rolls established a Manorial Documents Committee at the PRO. The Committee’s initial tasks were to acquire ‘knowledge of the extent and distribution of the documents’, which involved drawing up a list of manors and their lords; ‘to ascertain the suitability of libraries and museums in various counties for the receipt of manorial documents’ and their willingness to do so; and to establish Rules for the operation of the Act.¹²¹

The Manorial Documents Rules 1926 gave the PRO responsibility for executing the policy and set out the framework for the protection of manorial court rolls, surveys, maps, terriers, documents and books. Deeds of title to a manor were excluded from the Act.¹²² The Rules required the lord of the manor to keep his manorial documents ‘in receptacles suitable for their safe and proper preservation, approved by ... the Master of the Rolls’. If manorial documents were transferred to a public library, museum or historical body, the governing body was obliged to prepare an inventory in an approved form, to store the records in a proper receptacle, to produce them to the lord of the manor on request and to allow access also to anyone interested in land enfranchised by the Act.

The Committee began to create a complete list of manors (the basis of the Manorial Documents Register) and to approve repositories for the deposit of manorial records. Compiling a list of manors proved difficult. Information was gathered from the Ministry of Agriculture, the Duchy of Lancaster, the Ecclesiastical Commission, Welsh Church Commission and Charity Commission. Appeals were made through the Law Society and local archaeological societies and to Oxford and Cambridge colleges. By December 1925 nearly 5500 manors had been recorded and two temporary clerks employed for the purpose.¹²³

¹²⁰ Printed s 144A of Law of Property Act 1922 as amended in 1924, Manorial Documents minutes of meetings 1925-34, HMC 5/1, TNA.

¹²¹ Minutes 19 May 1925, 19 Jan 1926, 8 Dec 1925 established a sub-committee ‘to consider rules’, HMC 5/1, TNA.

¹²² Printed *Manorial Documents Rules 1926*, HMC 5/1, TNA.

¹²³ Minutes 17 Dec 1925, 14 July 1925, HMC 5/1, TNA.

As news of the Committee's work spread, archaeological societies and record societies applied to the Committee to be allowed to receive manorial records. The first request reported to the Committee was from Somerset Archaeological Society based in Taunton. Bedfordshire Historical Record Society urged that the County Muniment Rooms at Bedford be regarded 'as the proper repository for the county'. To both of these the Master of the Rolls replied that 'any arrangements would be premature' since the Act was not yet in force.¹²⁴ The request from Bedford raised an immediate problem since local authorities had not been included in the Act as suitable repositories. When the request from Bedford was formally considered in 1926, the County Muniment Rooms were approved 'if they could be brought within the provisions of the Act'.¹²⁵ In fact, following a visit the muniment rooms were approved, after which the Act was interpreted loosely and a few county councils followed this lead. This practice was not regularised until the Local Government (Records) Act 1962 enabled local authorities to become approved repositories.

The framing of the Acts was critical in the development of local record offices. At a time when county councils were beginning to set up local record offices, on the model set out in the *Reports* of 1902 and 1919, the only local records having statutory protection (manorial records) were not to be deposited with county councils but rather with the older institutions linked to record keeping in the localities: archaeological societies, public and university libraries and local museums. The statutory provision to inspect and approve 'suitable places for the reception of manorial documents' encouraged libraries and societies to acquire archives, against the recommendations of the recent *Reports*.¹²⁶ In many areas, the established library or record society applied for recognition and when the newly founded county record office subsequently applied, it was turned down since an approved repository for that area already existed.

The Committee established a pattern of inspection 'to ascertain the suitability of libraries and museums in various counties for the receipt of manorial documents'. R C Fowler, secretary to the Committee, and Charles Johnson wrote to local experts for advice and visited repositories.¹²⁷ The first list of places approved was reported in February 1926. Sometimes approval was conditional (eg on a strongroom being provided at Sunderland Public Library). If the accommodation was considered to be inadequate, the application was not approved.

53 repositories were approved between 1925 and 1930. 39 of these had received manorial documents and 24 had students using them by 1930.¹²⁸ The Committee sent an annual questionnaire to librarians and custodians and visited 'from time to time', 'to encourage and if necessary to stimulate the work of the

¹²⁴ Minutes 10 Nov 1925, HMC 5/1, TNA.

¹²⁵ Minutes 23 Feb 1926, HMC 5/1, TNA.

¹²⁶ Minutes 23 Feb 1926, HMC 5/1, TNA.

¹²⁷ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 389, 574. R C Fowler joined the PRO in 1891, Assistant Keeper 1918-1929. C Johnson joined in 1893, Assistant Keeper 1920-1930.

¹²⁸ Minutes 20 July 1931, HMC 5/1, TNA.

depositories'.¹²⁹ Notes on what the inspectors might consider on their visits were drawn up. The repository should have a fireproof, well-ventilated strongroom, facilities for the production and examination of records and aids for students (such as reference books). Staff should be competent to deal with records and draw up inventories. In addition, inspectors noted the number of records received (including non-manorial records) since the previous inspection and the steps being taken to acquire local records.¹³⁰

Local rivalries for acquiring records were evident in some applications. The Committee was at first inconsistent as to limiting the number of repositories in one area. When Norfolk Archaeological Society proposed Norwich Castle muniment room, the fact that the City Library in Norwich was already approved did not seem to be a deterrent. The applicants noted that 'it was hoped that both would be found useful', even though the Town Clerk reported that the Castle muniment room was already full.¹³¹ Birmingham Reference Library was approved in the first round in 1926 and when in 1931 the Library of the Trustees of the Shakespeare Birthplace was also approved, the Master of the Rolls commented 'that the urgent need at present being to save records from loss or destruction it was essential that local enthusiasm should be encouraged and jealousies avoided'.¹³² In 1933 Warwickshire County Council muniment rooms at Warwick were also approved.¹³³ These decisions allowed rival record offices to establish themselves, resulting in a split provision in the area. However, in 1926, John Rylands Library in Manchester was approved and when the Manchester Public Library applied in the following year, the Committee decided that John Rylands was sufficient. The Public Library was turned down as not needed, but 'asked to communicate in case of an offer of transfer': in other words the locality was left to sort out the dispute.¹³⁴ Two years later, East Suffolk County Council's application for its new muniment room in Ipswich was turned down because Ipswich Central Library was already approved.¹³⁵

In other areas, the Committee had difficulty in finding a willing local repository. For example, it was reported in 1927 that the Town Clerks in Newcastle and Durham were unable to find accommodation 'at present'.¹³⁶ In 1930 it was reported that 'depositories have now been provided for every English county'.¹³⁷

The Committee increasingly became involved in monitoring the sales of manorial documents. Fowler went to visit Messrs Maggs in the wake of the sale of Hastings family papers by Maggs to the Henry Huntington

¹²⁹ Minutes 2 June 1930, HMC 5/1, TNA.

¹³⁰ Notice 21 July 1931 'Manorial Records Committee. Inspection of approved depositories', HMC 5/1, TNA.

¹³¹ Minutes 8 June 1926, HMC 5/1, TNA. Norwich City Library was approved on 27 April 1926.

¹³² Minutes 30 March 1931, HMC 5/1, TNA.

¹³³ Minutes 16 Jan 1933, HMC 5/1, TNA.

¹³⁴ Minutes 22 March 1927, HMC 5/1, TNA.

¹³⁵ Minutes 12 Nov 1929, HMC 5/1, TNA.

¹³⁶ Minutes 8 Feb 1927, HMC 5/1, TNA.

¹³⁷ Report 11 March 1930, HMC 5/1, TNA.

Library, California.¹³⁸ Action was also taken to alert surveyors overseeing the sale of manors to the measures to protect manorial documents.¹³⁹

The Committee appears to have stopped meeting in January 1934 - the final set of minutes is unsigned - and the annual report for the Manorial Documents Committee in 1934 is the last on file. The statutory responsibility remained with the Master of the Rolls, administered for him by the PRO, until 1959 when it was transferred to the HMC which maintained a manorial documents register, under revised Rules, 1959.¹⁴⁰

Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1929¹⁴¹

The Church of England enabled its bishops to improve the safekeeping of parish registers and of 'deeds or documents of value as historical records or as evidence of legal rights' under the 1929 Measure. It gave bishops the power (but did not require them) to establish one or more diocesan record office (s 2), make regulations for its administration and appoint staff. Ministers could then deposit registers no longer in use and other records and the bishop had powers to inspect records and, if they were 'exposed to danger of loss or damage', order their deposit at the record office (s 4). The record office could be co-situated with the diocesan registry, a solution adopted in some dioceses, but many dioceses did not make proper arrangements for their records until the stronger successor Measure of 1978.

Local and London Government Acts 1930s

The Local Government Act 1933 was a consolidation Act for local government in England and Wales excluding London (which had its own London Government Act 1939).¹⁴² These Acts confirmed the responsibility of local authorities for parochial records. The Act of 1933, using the same phrases as the Local Government Act 1894, confirmed that parish registers and records continued to be the responsibility of the incumbent and churchwardens (s 281(1)) and that civil parish records should either remain in existing custody or 'be deposited in such custody as may be directed' by the parish meeting, parish council or, in the case of an urban parish, the council of the borough or urban district (s 281(2)). The county council retained its obligation to inquire periodically as to the 'proper preservation' of records held by a parish council or parish meeting (s 281(4)). As in the Local Government Act 1888, the clerk of the county council

¹³⁸ Minutes 4 July 1927, HMC 5/1, TNA. In 1928 Huntington Library consulted Jenkinson about storage of manuscripts, Sir Hilary Jenkinson Miscellaneous Papers, MS Add 47/2, University College London Library.

¹³⁹ Minutes 20 Feb 1929, HMC 5/1, TNA.

¹⁴⁰ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 456. Manorial Documents Rules 1959 (SI 1959/1399), amended by Manorial Documents (Amendment) Rules 1963 (SI 1963/976) and 1967 (SI 1967/963)

¹⁴¹ United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. 1929. *Measure passed by the National Assembly of the Church of England to provide for the better care of parochial registers and other records in ecclesiastical custody and the establishment of diocesan record offices, 1929*. 19&20 Geo 5.

¹⁴² United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. 1933. *Local Government Act, 1933*. 23&24 Geo 5, Ch 51.

was responsible for ‘the records and documents of every county which ... are in the custody of the clerk of the county council and all future records and documents relating to the business of the county council’ (s 279(1)). Similar responsibilities were laid on the town clerk of a borough and the clerk of a district council (s 279(2)). The Act confirmed the power of local authorities to appoint committees for general or specific purposes, including joint committees with other authorities (ss 85, 91).

Tithe Act 1936¹⁴³

The Tithe Act 1936 is a further example of legislation whose primary purpose was property holding but whose provisions regulated records. The Act extinguished tithe rentcharges and cornrents and compensated owners of tithe, setting up the Tithe Redemption Commission (s 4). The PRO was not consulted about section 36, which put copies of tithe apportionments under the charge and superintendence of the Master of the Rolls.¹⁴⁴ He could determine whether the PRO, ‘public library or museum or historical or antiquarian society’ would hold the records and make rules about their ‘proper preservation’, repeating the provisions of the Law of Property Act 1924. The function was exercised for him by the PRO, which held a tithe documents register showing the physical location of regulated records. As Jenkinson noted, this was an example of central government intervention in private and ecclesiastical archives (since copies of apportionment were in the custody of diocesan registrars and incumbents) which implied an official liaison between the PRO and local authorities which did not actually exist.¹⁴⁵ Rules drawn up in 1946 helped to regularise the arrangements.

Post-war developments: the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee

After the flurry of *Reports* issued by the Royal Commission in the 1910s, government was relatively neglectful of records issues until after the Second World War. The Master of the Rolls set up mechanisms to deal with the requirements to secure manorial and tithe records and the work of the national institutions, the PRO and the HMC, continued. However, few of the recommendations of the Royal Commission were taken up. Local record offices, where they developed, did so because of local enthusiasms not because of central government direction. The pattern set in the 19th century of statutory provision for central government records and relative neglect elsewhere continued.

There was, however, an increasing number of private individuals interested in records. Organizations concerned about the preservation of records began to develop outside government: the Institute of Historical Research (IHR), established in the University of London in 1921, reported on the location and custody of local records; the British Record Society set up a ‘centre for the reception and distribution of

¹⁴³ United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. 1936. *Tithe Act, 1936*. 26 Geo 5 & 1 Edw 8, CH 43.

¹⁴⁴ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 420. Knightbridge: 4-5.

¹⁴⁵ Jenkinson ‘Archive developments’: 276.

unwanted documents' in 1929, which became the Records Preservation Section of the new British Records Association (BRA) in 1933.¹⁴⁶ In the business archives arena, academic historians and businessmen banded together to form the Council for the Preservation of Business Archives (CPBA) in 1934 (this later became the Business Archives Council). There was some official government involvement in these initiatives, since the Master of the Rolls, Lord Hanworth, was the first President of both the CPBA and of the BRA. Initially he chaired BRA Council meetings and took an active part in the conduct of its business. These voluntary bodies took on roles of a public nature: Maurice Bond described the BRA as 'a private society founded to remedy official inaction'.¹⁴⁷ The organizations drew on resources of amateur help when government would not fund archival work and unofficial bodies could more easily approach private owners about their records. Even private enthusiasm had limits however. An HMC project to survey private papers proposed in 1920, which was to use local volunteers via local history societies, did not succeed: even using paid surveyors, only the Bedfordshire survey was ever completed.¹⁴⁸

The BRA spurred renewed official interest in records after the Second World War. It issued a major report on archival reconstruction in 1943, written by Hilary Jenkinson, then both Secretary of the BRA and Principal Assistant Keeper of the PRO.¹⁴⁹ The report recommended setting up a national register of records; scheduling documents of national importance (on the model of scheduling significant buildings); establishing a central Inspectorate for archives (to co-ordinate local and national repositories and set standards for repair, storage, access and management of archives); and extending the controls on the export of private archives. The BRA invited HMC to consider its recommendations.

The Commissioners, chaired by Lord Greene, the Master of the Rolls, considered the Report. R L Atkinson noted that the Commission had asked the Master of the Rolls 'to appoint a small joint committee representing the Commission and the Association with power to co-opt other members...to report to both bodies on the best organization to meet the requirements of the situation'.¹⁵⁰ The HMC nominated Deputy Keeper (C T Flower), HMC Secretary (R L Atkinson), Professor E F Jacob (then professor of medieval history at Manchester University) and Lord Sackville. Kathleen Major acted as joint secretary with Irene Churchill. In addition, there were representatives of the BRA, Archbishop of Canterbury, the County Councils Association and the Association of Municipal Corporations.¹⁵¹ The Master of the Rolls Archives

¹⁴⁶ Maurice F Bond, 'The British Records Association and the modern archive movement' *Essays in Memory of Sir Hilary Jenkinson* ed AEJ Hollaender. Chichester: Society of Archivists, 1962: 72.

¹⁴⁷ Bond: 71.

¹⁴⁸ Dick Sargent, *The National Register of Archives: an international perspective: essays in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the NRA* London: Institute of Historical Research, 1995: 3-4. Proposals for a general survey or census of records, 1920-42, HMC 1/182, TNA.

¹⁴⁹ Council and Committee minutes and reports 1942-46, BRA 2/6, British Records Association Archive, Acc/3162, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁵⁰ Letter from R L Atkinson, HMC to Prof E F Jacob, Manchester University, 16 July 1943, Master of the Rolls Archives Committee and National Register of Archives 1943-50, HMC 1/231, TNA.

¹⁵¹ Master of the Rolls Archives Committee interim report [nd], BRA 2/6, LMA.

Committee first met on 9 September 1943.¹⁵² The Committee had before it several papers, including the BRA's Report on post-war dangers to records, a 32-point summary of the Report, a note by Atkinson on how the Regional List of Documents of 1940 could be expanded into a register, memoranda on the proposed inspectorate and a statement from the Board of Trade about the export of documents.¹⁵³

The Committee discussed the principle of setting up a register, what it should contain and which body might keep it and schedule and inspect archives. The Committee agreed that a register was desirable and after some deliberations about its nature, drafted a scheme in 1944 and the first Registrar, Lt Col G E G Malet, was appointed in 1945.¹⁵⁴ The National Register of Archives will be discussed in chapter 3.

The Committee briefly discussed the best arrangements for local record offices.¹⁵⁵ A memorandum from Joan Wake in 1944 proposed that local record offices be set up on a common pattern across the country and that a distinction should be made between archives and current records. L Edgar Stevens noted that it would be difficult to impose a central model in counties where provision had already been made, such as Warwickshire, where there were already three places of deposit. He also suggested that 'there should be separate departments with a Clerk of the Records in charge of the modern records under the supervision of the Archivist whose knowledge and training would ensure that the current records were kept in such a way that when they accrued as archives they would be in better order and preservation than without his directing influence'. However, Jenkinson and Churchill felt that there was no need for uniformity and that it was preferable to 'have the scheme which best suited each locality'. An opportunity to establish a common model for local records was lost.

The Committee also addressed the inspection of local and private archives. An inspectorate had been recommended by earlier reports but was now conceived as a necessary mechanism for the compilation of the Register. It would have powers to advise or compel owners to make arrangements for their records and be a necessary part of a provision for listed and starred archives of national importance. The proposals for inspection and starring, put forward to the Committee by Jenkinson, were controversial.¹⁵⁶ What measure of compulsion could be used? How could controls be enforced? What were the rights of private owners? If archives were scheduled, could owners claim exemptions from death duties? Was it possible to control the sale of private archives? In principle, the Committee agreed that the scheme should be comprehensive, and that local authorities might be required to comply by legislation. However, there were doubts as to whether ecclesiastical authorities and private owners could be made subject to similar compulsion without compensation.

¹⁵² Master of the Rolls Archives Committee minutes 1943-49, HMC 1/214, TNA.

¹⁵³ Post-war dangers to archives and recommendations leading to Master of the Rolls Archives Committee, BRA 5/8, LMA.

¹⁵⁴ Minutes 25 Aug 1944, 23 Jan 1945, HMC 1/214, TNA.

¹⁵⁵ Minutes 13 Nov 1944, HMC 1/214, TNA.

¹⁵⁶ Minutes 2 Dec 1943, HMC 1/214, TNA.

Inspection of local archives required new legislation, so a sub-committee was appointed in 1944 to draft a Bill.¹⁵⁷ The draft Bill obliged county and county borough councils to make provision for archives solely or jointly or in partnership (eg with an archaeological society), enabled authorities to accept private and ecclesiastical archives and enabled the Master of the Rolls to appoint an Inspector General to advise and make rules for the custody and control of archives. Although it was desirable to include private and ecclesiastical archives, they were not compelled to deposit their records, but rather persuaded by good practice in individual councils.

The Bill proposed a central national authority with statutory powers of supervision to approve local arrangements and make regulations.¹⁵⁸ The drafters considered that no existing government department had the range of technical expertise and knowledge of local and national history, so a new body, chaired by the Master of the Rolls, called the National Archives Council, would be established. The Council would include representatives from the PRO, HMC, British Museum, Royal Historical Society, IHR, BRA, Church of England, County Councils Association, Association of Municipal Corporations, Law Society and Ministry of Health, at that time responsible for local government. It would employ an Inspector as its executive officer. Local authorities would be required to provide accommodation for their own records, employ suitable staff and could take in records from universities, ecclesiastical authorities, local societies and defunct bodies.

The legislative proposals also envisaged the registration of archives.¹⁵⁹ Starred archives were ‘an essential illustration of the past life of the English nation’; listed archives were those ‘of undoubted permanent value for historical purposes but are not of ‘National quality’; registered archives were the residue. Starred and listed archives would be subject to additional controls.¹⁶⁰

The Bill received support from the County Councils Association, with the proviso that the Advisory Board be stronger and the role of the Inspector less prominent.¹⁶¹ However, a group of professors of history, led by the Director of the IHR, V H Galbraith,¹⁶² objected to the proposals, in particular for the inspectorate

¹⁵⁷ Minutes 13 Nov 1944, HMC 1/214, TNA.

¹⁵⁸ EW Scorer and Jenkinson, Proposal for the control of English archives April 1946, HMC 1/214, TNA.

¹⁵⁹ Scorer and Jenkinson, Proposal, HMC 1/214, TNA.

¹⁶⁰ Re:source eventually revisited this idea in 2002-2003 when an extension of the Museums Designation scheme to archives was considered.

¹⁶¹ Minutes 7 March 1945, HMC 1/214, TNA.

¹⁶² V H Galbraith (1889-1976), assistant lecturer Manchester University 1920-21, Assistant Keeper PRO 1921-28, Fellow and tutor in modern history, Balliol College, Oxford and university reader in diplomatic 1928-37, professor of history, Edinburgh University 1937-44, Director, IHR, London, 1944-48, Regius Professor of modern history, Oxford 1947-57, *Who was who 1971-1980*: 285.

and custody.¹⁶³ They felt that, as the chief users of archives, they ought to have a predominant voice in any scheme. 'Time was not ripe' for legislation since many were still on war work. In particular, they disliked the proposal for county record offices under central government control, preferring independent organizations which would make archives freely accessible. To reinforce these views, the Royal Historical Society passed a resolution against the principle of county record offices.¹⁶⁴ The Library Association also objected to the proposals because they took little notice of the existing provisions for manuscripts made by libraries.¹⁶⁵ The LA believed that official records could be entrusted to public libraries if there was cooperation between the clerk of the council and the librarian and noted the growing confusion among students caused by the approval of manorial repositories. The LA proposed a system of regional record offices on a common model.

This public and high profile opposition slowed down the progress of the Bill. The Committee discussed details such as the distinction between starred and listed archives and the nature of trained staff (who, in the historians' view, ought 'not to be concerned with current business ... [but] should be historical scholars').¹⁶⁶ A Final Report by the Committee was circulated in October 1946. It proposed only a National Archives Council and central inspectorate. Inevitably the historians felt that they should be well represented on the new Council: a special meeting of historians was convened by the Committee 'to obviate if possible all likelihood of ill informed opposition'.¹⁶⁷ Negotiations with the Royal Historical Society resulted in an impasse: the historians sought a regional scheme and would not agree to the county council scheme favoured by the County Councils Association.¹⁶⁸ The Master of the Rolls issued an ultimatum: he would only support legislation if all parties agreed in advance. The Royal Historical Society 'indicated that they might prefer no legislation to legislation based on the Report'. But eventually, in February 1949, they accepted a revised scheme based on local authorities so long as councils were required to take expert advice on the appointment of archives staff.¹⁶⁹

The establishment of the National Register of Archives was the most significant achievement of the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee and its work will be discussed in chapter 3. The Committee did address a number of other important issues but found it difficult to make significant progress after 1945.

¹⁶³ Minutes 8 Feb 1945, HMC 1/214, TNA. 'Statement regarding local and private records to be forwarded to the Master of the Rolls' 7 Feb 1945, Master of the Rolls Archives Committee minutes 1943-48, PRO 39/10/1, TNA. Galbraith declined to act on the National Register of Archives Directorate in 1945 (see Chapter 3). He was suggested as a member of the Grigg Committee in 1951 but rejected 'because he was not thought to be a good committee man': Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 406, 436, 466, 574.

¹⁶⁴ Minutes 11 Oct 1946 annotated 30 Dec 1946, HMC 1/214, TNA.

¹⁶⁵ Memorandum on archive depositories by the Library Association, 1947, HMC 1/214, TNA.

¹⁶⁶ Minutes 11 Oct 1945, HMC 1/214, TNA.

¹⁶⁷ Minutes 9 Oct 1947, HMC 1/214, TNA.

¹⁶⁸ Minutes informal meeting 13 Feb 1948, HMC 1/214, TNA.

¹⁶⁹ 'Response to comments on proposals for the control of English archives', Minutes 9 March 1949, HMC 1/214, TNA.

Export control

One issue raised by the BRA's report in 1943 and briefly considered by the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee was the control of the export of archives. The Committee felt that the use of the existing Order for the control of the export of goods was not effective and that alternative means should be sought. In 1945 the Board of Trade considered ways to control the export of manuscripts via a system of export licences. The Waverley Committee addressed export licensing regulations in 1952 when the emergency wartime controls (begun in 1939 to prevent the export of works of art as a means of circumventing currency controls) were dismantled. The Waverley Committee recommended the control of the export of works of art, antiques, books, manuscripts and archives, archaeological and photographic materials. The purpose of the controls was to protect archives and works of art of national importance from leaving the country, by giving time to a UK institution to raise funds to purchase a manuscript at the value agreed at the sale. The provisions and conditions of export were to be regulated by a Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art (which has been in existence ever since and on which the archives profession is represented). Specific export licences were required for manuscripts over 100 years old, which the Minister might either grant or withhold for a period.¹⁷⁰ If an export licence was granted, provision might be made for copies of the archives to be given to an appropriate UK repository.

Master of the Rolls Archives Committee (1949)

In 1949 a new committee was set up with a specific brief: 'to draw up ... practical instructions on which a measure shall be prepared for submission to Parliament' to establish a National Archives Council, with powers of inspection. The smaller committee was more suited to drafting a Bill but proposed to consult widely. However, the Committee still had a broad representation and consequently struggled to agree its newly drafted proposals.¹⁷¹ Eventually the Committee proposed that county and county borough councils be put under a statutory duty to provide record offices and staff for their own official records, including repair and student study facilities. A broadly representative National Archives Council would have 'the duty of exercising general supervision over Archive matters'. Funding for the Council would be sought from the Treasury while national funds ought to be available to local authorities for the fulfillment of their statutory duties.

Discussions were opened with the Ministry of Health. Sir William Douglas, Permanent Secretary, indicated that he was sympathetic to the scheme, although he favoured the proposed National Archives Council being an advisory council to the Ministry, for advice and inspection purposes. A costing estimate was to be prepared for the Treasury, including funding of 50% of the costs of the scheme to local authorities.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Reduced to 70 years in 1972 and 50 years in 1979.

¹⁷¹ Summary of meetings 10 Nov 1949, 8 Dec 1949, 'Summary of proposals' 1950, Master of the Rolls Archives Committee 1949-56, HMC 1/215, TNA.

¹⁷² Minutes of discussion meeting 2 Nov 1950, HMC 1/215, TNA.

While the proposals might be introduced for local authorities, nationalized industries and the Church of England, private citizens could not easily be made subject to them.¹⁷³ The County Landowners Association raised many questions about this aspect of the proposals: how would private archives be defined?; what about confidential or personal records?; would compensation be paid? The Committee was warned that if the proposals involved owners in expense or loss of custody, owners might prefer to destroy records.¹⁷⁴

Drafting and consultation continued in 1950 and 1951.¹⁷⁵ The role of the new Council became executive not advisory. Atkinson proposed that the Council and the HMC be amalgamated 'by remodelling the Commission on the lines proposed for the Council'.¹⁷⁶ Local authority representatives preferred a separate body. Private archives continued to be a problem. If the section on private archives was omitted the other provisions might proceed, but the Committee preferred an inclusive Bill.¹⁷⁷ Finally, revised proposals were ready to be sent to the Minister for Housing and Local Government¹⁷⁸ in 1952. A further eighteen months passed in discussions between the Master of the Rolls, the Minister (Harold Macmillan) and Lord Salisbury, Lord President of the Council. In October 1953 Salisbury stated that 'because of pressure of business there was no prospect at present of finding time for legislation on the lines recommended by the Committee, which might be controversial and which would involve the expenditure of public money'.¹⁷⁹ By 1956 'it was clear that the present was a most unpromising time to suggest new fields of government expenditure'.¹⁸⁰ It looked as if years of work to introduce legislation for local archives had come to an end.

The preparatory work did eventually have some positive outcomes, although they were not those envisaged by the original Committee. In 1956 the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee met for the last time. Discussions with the Treasury had resulted in a proposal to introduce provisions into planned local authority legislation 'which would place the legality of present archives activities beyond doubt and make all local authorities more alive to their responsibilities in this field'.¹⁸¹ The Committee could rely on this proposal, or it could seek to 're-commission the HMC with wider terms of reference and a wider ... membership or ...[set up] a new statutory body'. Public records responsibility was soon to move from the Master of the Rolls to the Lord Chancellor under the Public Records Bill which would also establish an

¹⁷³ Minutes, memorandum of meeting with Parliamentary Counsel Office 24 March 1950, Master of the Rolls Archives Committee (1949) official minutes 1949-56, PRO 39/11/1, TNA.

¹⁷⁴ Minutes 28 March 1950, PRO 39/11/1, TNA.

¹⁷⁵ Freddy Stitt 'The post-war decade 1945-55: the memoir of a county archivist' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 19 (1988): 82, commented that local archivists were against the scheme, as an attack on embryonic county record services.

¹⁷⁶ Minutes 18 Jan 1951, PRO 39/11/1, TNA.

¹⁷⁷ Minutes 16 Jan 1952, PRO 39/11/1, TNA.

¹⁷⁸ Established and took over local government responsibilities from Ministry of Health in 1951.

¹⁷⁹ Reported in minutes 8 Dec 1954, PRO 39/11/1, TNA.

¹⁸⁰ Minutes 20 March 1956, PRO 39/11/1, TNA.

¹⁸¹ Minutes 20 March 1956, PRO 39/11/1, TNA.

advisory council on public records. A parallel advisory council for private and local records might also be established.¹⁸²

The Committee's final paper is a note of 1960, which reports the passing of the Public Records Act 1958, the separation of the HMC from the PRO and its reconstitution under a new Warrant in 1959 and the drafting of clauses to be included in local government legislation. The Master of the Rolls still hoped to achieve an integrated archives service under a new HMC and planned to meet key players.¹⁸³ Some of the Committee's proposals were enacted in the Public Records Act 1958, the Local Government (Records) Act 1962, the Local Government Act 1972 s224, and in the new Warrant issued to the HMC. The prospect of an integrated national archives service was much more remote after the separation of the HMC from the PRO and the removal of the PRO to the Lord Chancellor's Office. The opportunity to bring together legislative and executive frameworks for both central and local government archives and for private records was lost: it was not until 2003 that the integrated administration of a National Archives and records system was finally achieved.

Conclusion

Central government took a periodic interest in public and local records between 1800 and 1950. Committees, inquiries and commissions investigated the condition of records and archives and made recommendations: unfortunately few of these were translated into legislation. Central government records (initially court records but later departmental records as well) were provided for in a series of Acts from 1838: the effectiveness of the legislation in practice will be examined in chapter 3. Local government records received minimal legislative attention under local government Acts in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The intervention of the BRA (led by Jenkinson in an unofficial capacity and the Master of the Rolls officially) and the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee had only limited success in overturning the legislators' reluctance to incur expenditure on records and the factional splits in the historical and archival communities. Private records, as might be expected, were not subject to legislation except in support of land holding reforms in the Law of Property Acts 1922, 1924 and the Tithe Act 1936.

Government policy and legislation to 1950 showed that records and archives were not perceived as sufficiently important to the mechanisms of government and the judicial system, to economic growth, to national or international relations or other key government concerns, to require legislative time or government funds. Archives received attention when they were the focus of political embarrassment (irregularities in Commission funds in 1837 or relations with Wales in 1900s) or were an essential part of structural reform (for example of local government or land holding). On other occasions government was

¹⁸² Minutes 20 March 1956, PRO 39/11/1, TNA.

¹⁸³ Master of the Rolls Archives Committee correspondence re present status 1960, HMC 1/222, TNA.

willing to inquire and recommend (often at great length and public expense) but less willing to take action or commit ongoing funding. Government accepted that public records required preservation and should be made accessible for legal, administrative and historical reasons, but even establishing the PRO in 1838 was a major achievement (characterised by Cantwell as visionary men acting in the face of ‘official indifference’).¹⁸⁴

Advice and information on private records were provided by the HMC (after 1869) and the NRA (after 1945) but government did not attempt to prescribe the nature of local archive services. By 1930 government engagement with archives and archivists was weak and archivists had failed to convince government of the value of their work to social values, justice and services to citizens, especially at local level. Existing legislative provision tended to encourage staff at the PRO to focus on their historical tasks and failed to require other public authorities to establish archive and record services. The most explicit local and private records legislation (for manorial and tithe records) encouraged libraries and historical societies, not county record offices, to develop. The emerging archive profession was neither defined nor supported.

In spite of regular discussions about legislation for local and private records, no substantive action was taken to protect them. Records provisions had been included in a minor way in local government legislation, but central government did not see any compelling reason to spend public money on local and private records. In essence, this approach continued throughout the 20th century.

¹⁸⁴ Cantwell ‘aftermath’: 286.

Chapter 2

From Grigg to the National Archives, 1950-2003

By 1950 provision had been made for central government record services (the PRO), while the HMC provided users and owners of other archives with advice and information. Although the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee had not had the impact which the BRA might have hoped for, records legislation was reconsidered in the post-war period. Two significant reports on central government records were published: Grigg in 1954 (which led to new public records legislation in 1958) and Wilson in 1981, which had less impact. In addition, local government records at last received limited statutory protection (in 1962) and ecclesiastical records provision was improved in 1978. The weakness of local government legislation for archives was exposed when the structures of local government were altered in the 1980s and 1990s. Finally, in 2003, the administrative reorganisation of the HMC and the PRO to form the National Archives, proposals for national records and archives legislation and a government-sponsored investigation into the state of archive services in the UK offered hope of radical improvements in the early 21st century. Chapter 2 examines these developments and completes the government and legislative framework for archives.

The Grigg Report 1954

The PRO had struggled with inadequate legislation for over a century, compounded by the record creating activities of two World Wars and the creation of the welfare state. By 1950 it was clear that the selection and destruction system established in 1877 for public records did not operate effectively.¹⁸⁵ Although increasing numbers of schedules were made, the inspecting officers found it difficult to manage departmental records, which grew in quantity and were regularly transferred between departments. In 1951 a Treasury investigation into departmental arrangements revealed that 120 miles of records awaited transfer to the PRO.¹⁸⁶ The growth of the business of government in the 20th century, war and ‘the invention of such devices as the typewriter and the duplicating machine’ had increased the volume of administrative records.¹⁸⁷ In June 1952 a Committee was established under the chairmanship of Sir James Grigg ‘to review the arrangements for the preservation of the records of government Departments... in the light of the rate at which they are accumulating and of the purposes which they are intended to serve; and to make recommendations as to the changes, if any, in law and practice which are required’.¹⁸⁸ The Committee’s remit excluded Scottish records, local records, records of nationalized industries and of law courts and it

¹⁸⁵ John Collingridge, ‘Implementing the Grigg Report’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 1 (1955-59): 179.

¹⁸⁶ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 464.

¹⁸⁷ Grigg Report: 5, 18.

¹⁸⁸ Grigg Report: 5.

focused on modern departmental (ie administrative) records. The Committee's *Report* was published in 1954.

The Committee took evidence from government departments, staff of the PRO, record users and historians at the IHR. Two members of the Committee visited the USA to investigate uses of microphotography. The Committee confined its investigation to central public records which it defined as 'documents drawn up for the purpose of, or used during, the conduct of affairs of any kind, of which they themselves form a part, and subsequently preserved'.¹⁸⁹

The Committee was concerned with 'the problem of how to accommodate so vast an accumulation' and 'the danger ... that the historian of the future may be buried under the mass of his manuscript sources'.¹⁹⁰ It believed 'that useless material has been unnecessarily retained, and papers which ought to have been in the PRO long ago ... are still in the hands of Departments'.¹⁹¹ It stated that 'We believe that the making of adequate arrangements for the preservation of its records is an inescapable duty of the Government of a civilized state'.¹⁹²

The Committee concluded that 'the most important requirement in relation to the preservation of modern Departmental records is a satisfactory method of selecting those which ought to be preserved' and it considered the existing 19th century process 'inadequate to modern conditions'.¹⁹³ The Committee recommended a two-tier review system. First Review based on administrative need should be undertaken 'not later than five years after a paper or file has passed out of active use' and Second Review for both administrative and historical use 'when the paper or file is 25 years old'.¹⁹⁴ Records selected at Second Review for permanent preservation would be transferred to the PRO by the creating department before they were 30 years old ('instead of when they pleased, if at all') where they would be opened to the public at 50 years old.¹⁹⁵ At the time of the *Report* no records later than 1902 were open. Special arrangements were to be made for Particular Instance Papers for which a separate enquiry was recommended.¹⁹⁶ The stated principle that such records should not be retained in the PRO 'solely because they contain information

¹⁸⁹ Grigg Report: 8.

¹⁹⁰ Grigg Report: 19.

¹⁹¹ Grigg Report: 6.

¹⁹² Grigg Report: 6.

¹⁹³ Grigg Report: 19.

¹⁹⁴ Grigg Report: 30. A W Mabbs 'The Public Record Office and the second review' *Archives* 8: 40 (1968): 180-184.

¹⁹⁵ John D Cantwell 'The new style Public Record Office 1992: the transition from the old order' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 14 (1993): 44.

¹⁹⁶ Particular Instance Papers (PIPs) 'are concerned with the application of established policies and procedures in respect of individual cases', Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, John McColl & Alistair Tough 'Sampling particular instance papers' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 14 (1993): 47.

which might be useful for genealogical or biographical purposes' showed that the genealogical revolution had not yet made an impact on the PRO.¹⁹⁷

The Committee recommended changes in staffing to carry out these new responsibilities. It was also recommended that the head of the PRO be renamed Keeper of the Records, to reflect his real responsibilities, with two deputies responsible for government records and for records held at the PRO. The reinvigorated PRO was asked to give greater guidance to government departments through a published Guide.

The Committee considered the question of which government department or office holder should have responsibility for public records, reviewing the suggestions of earlier reports. The *Report* proposed that public records responsibilities be transferred to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary or the Lord President of the Council, so that the PRO would be accountable through a minister to Parliament.¹⁹⁸

Since 1948 a consultative committee had advised the PRO on publications policy. The *Report* recommended the appointment of a new Advisory Council, chaired by the Master of the Rolls, and representing a range of interests including the judiciary, the legal profession, and university academics, to advise the responsible minister on a range of public records issues.¹⁹⁹ The Master of the Rolls thus retained a close interest in the operation of public records legislation which continued into the 21st century.

The Committee also made recommendations concerning the use of microphotography (not seen as a solution to the problem of bulk storage), accommodation for public records and special media archives, including films, photographs and sound recordings.

The Public Records Act 1958²⁰⁰

The government accepted the Committee's *Report* and implemented its recommendations by new legislation to transfer responsibility to a minister of the Crown, to make provisions for an Advisory Council and to authorize the destruction of records. The Public Records Act 1958 transferred public records responsibility to the Lord Chancellor, perhaps because 'it seemed unacceptable to leave legal records under the control of a non-judicial minister'.²⁰¹ The Lord Chancellor was to appoint a Keeper of Public Records who had responsibility for 'the preservation of records under his charge' and the selection of all public records (s 2.3, 3.2). The Keeper had powers to authorize the destruction of records, with the approval of the

¹⁹⁷ Grigg Report: 43.

¹⁹⁸ Grigg Report: 49-50.

¹⁹⁹ Grigg Report: 54.

²⁰⁰ United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. 1958. *Public Records Act, 1958*. 6&7 Eliz 2, c. 51.

²⁰¹ United Kingdom. Committee on Modern Public Records: selection and access *Report* London: HMSO, 1981. Cmnd 8204. (Chairman, Sir Duncan Wilson. The Wilson Report): 4.

Lord Chancellor (s 6). The Act charged everyone responsible for public records to make arrangements for their safe keeping (s 3.2).

The 1958 Act defined public records as 'a) records of, or held in, any department of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom or b) records of any office, commission or other body or establishment whatsoever under Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom' together with records of courts and tribunals and of chancery (First Schedule). In addition, there was provision for 'the administrative and departmental records of bodies and establishments' to be designated as public records by Order in Council.

The Act also clarified the status of public records held locally, such as quarter and petty sessions, magistrates' courts and coroners.²⁰² The Act enabled the Lord Chancellor to appoint places of deposit outside the PRO for the 'preservation of records and their inspection by the public' which regularized the physical management of local public records, although it did not provide for common standards (s 4.1, 4.2). The Act recognized that physical centralization of public records was not possible and that some local authority record offices were in receipt of public records. The PRO inspected and recommended such appointments, proving a useful source of advice for local authority archivists over the following 50 years.

The right of public access to public records was ensured by requiring that records be transferred to the PRO not later than 30 years from their creation (s 3.4) and made available when they had been 'in existence for fifty years', although the period could be varied (longer or shorter) 'as the Lord Chancellor may ... prescribe' (s 5.1).

In addition, an Advisory Council on Public Records, chaired by the Master of the Rolls, was to be set up to advise the Lord Chancellor (s 1.2) and make an annual report (s 1.3). The Council first met in March 1959, thereafter meeting at least three times a year. Its main interest was access and publications associated with public records. In 1964 and 1965 it proposed a reduction of the closure period from 50 to 40 years, and it was largely due to the Council's influence that the period was reduced to 30 years under the Public Records Act 1967 (s 1.1).²⁰³

The Master of the Rolls continued to be responsible for the registers of manorial and title records after 1958, but the new Warrant for the HMC in 1959 transferred the administration from the PRO to the HMC. New Rules were drawn up in 1960 which specified the documents covered and required that they be made available for inspection by the public for historical research and other uses.²⁰⁴

²⁰² Alexandra Nicol 'Liaison: public records held in other record offices' *The Records of the Nation* ed G H Martin & P Spufford. London: British Records Association, 1990, 139-148.

²⁰³ Wilson Report: 85-86. United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. 1967. *Public Records Act, 1967*. c. 44.

²⁰⁴ Tithe (Copies of Instruments of Apportionment) Rules 1960 (SI 1960/2440) as amended by Tithe (Copies of Instruments of Apportionment) (Amendment) Rules 1963 (SI 1963/977).

Report of the Committee on Legal Records 1966²⁰⁵

The 1958 Act dealt mainly with departmental records and many legal records continued to be managed under the old destruction schedule system. The PRO initiated correspondence with the Lord Chancellor's Office and Lord Denning, Master of the Rolls, was invited to chair a committee between 1963 and 1966 to advise on the permanent preservation of court records.²⁰⁶ The Committee's initial brief to consider records of the Supreme Court and county courts was widened to include quarter sessions and magistrates' courts in 1964. The Committee was asked specifically to advise on whether microfilming might save space.

The Committee investigated the needs of users and concluded that historians wanted records which illustrated the workings of the courts and that legal records should not be kept for purely genealogical uses. The Committee recommended that a Grigg-type system could apply, but made some specific observations on the selection criteria for court records (s 23). It drew up a list of 700 classes of records with advice on retention and destruction (appendices 1-10). The Committee recognized that courts would need some additional resources initially but believed that once the backlog was cleared, economies of storage would offset any additional staff costs in maintaining the system (s 50). It also recommended close liaison between the courts and the PRO and other record offices which would ultimately preserve the records (s 51). It recommended that Chancery affidavits already at the PRO should be weeded out (ss 27-35). Controversially, the Committee also recommended the destruction of post-1858 original wills, in favour of the less bulky registered copies (ss 36-39), although this was not carried out.

The Committee considered the advantages of microfilm, which it recommended for the preservation of fragile originals and where there was a big demand from users. In other cases it did not think microfilm a cost effective solution (ss 40-45).

The report had the full support of the Keeper, Stephen Wilson, but the Lord Chancellor referred it to the Advisory Council. It had received some adverse comment from legal historians and the College of Arms and was the focus of discussion at a conference on legal records held at the IHR in 1967.²⁰⁷ Criticisms were of the Grigg system as much as the Denning report, but they were sufficient to make the Advisory Council reject the recommendations about destruction of post-1858 wills and Chancery affidavits. Instead it recommended that original wills be retained up to the 1930s (when registered photocopies came in) and that the selection of Chancery affidavits be reconsidered. The affidavits were moved to Hayes temporarily

²⁰⁵ United Kingdom. Committee on Legal Records *Report* London: HMSO, 1966. Cmnd. 3084. (Chairman, Lord Denning. The Denning Report).

²⁰⁶ John D Cantwell *The Public Record Office 1959-1969* Richmond: Public Record Office, 2000: 65-68.

²⁰⁷ Cantwell *PRO 1959-1969*: 102-104.

and then to the Kew extension in 1996: no weeding was carried out. The revised recommendations were submitted to the PRO for action, although staffing priorities meant that they were never carried out in full.

Local Government (Records) Act 1962²⁰⁸

Limited powers had been granted to local authorities to hold their own records under the Local Government Act 1933 and London Government Act 1939, but councils had no general powers with respect to records. In spite of all the preparatory work undertaken on local government legislation for archives in the 1940s and 1950s, in particular by the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee and by the BRA, years of disagreement about its nature and scope and lack of government support for what might be controversial legislation had resulted in an impasse. The passage of the Local Government (Records) Act in 1962 was, consequently, rather a surprise and resulted from a chance opportunity.

In 1961 Nicholas Ridley, MP won a place in the Private Members Bills Ballot. He needed an uncontroversial Bill and chose a Records Bill, because 'I have always been interested in the preservation of treasures from the past'.²⁰⁹ Ridley assembled sponsors and consulted with interested bodies such as the County Councils Association, BRA and SoA. The scope and proposed powers were so uncontroversial that no amendments or objections were raised until its Third Reading in May.²¹⁰ The Act came into force on 1 October 1962.

The purpose of the Act was to amend the law relating to functions of local authorities with respect to records. For the first time, local authorities were given general enabling powers to acquire records of local interest by purchase or to accept them as gifts or on deposit from other local authorities or from the PRO as local public records. These powers were granted to county and county borough councils and, by order of the Minister of Housing and Local Government, could be extended to county district or metropolitan borough councils. Records were defined as 'materials in written or other form setting out facts or events or otherwise recording information' (s 8(1)). Local authorities also acquired powers to provide access to and promote use of records by inspection and copying, preparing and publishing indexes, guides and calendars and arranging exhibitions and lectures (s 1) and find the associated costs. The Act tidied up the anomalous position over manorial and tithe records by allowing local record offices to accept such records by transfer from the Master of the Rolls, regularizing the practice of the previous 40 years.

²⁰⁸ United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. 1962. *Local Government (Records) Act, 1962*. 10&11 Eliz 2, c. 56.

²⁰⁹ Nicholas Ridley 'The Local Government (Records) Act 1962: its passage to the statute book' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 2 (1960-64): 288-292.

²¹⁰ The Law Society was concerned that local authorities might gain powers which would prevent solicitors from viewing records.

The Minister of Housing and Local Government, now explicitly responsible for local government records, issued guidance to local authorities, encouraging them to make use of their new powers, and ‘to review their existing arrangements for the care and storage of records’.²¹¹ In particular, they were to ensure adequate provision for the storage of ‘permanent records’. The guidance encouraged local authorities to provide properly for records, which ‘need to be adequately catalogued and accommodated in a well-staffed and well-equipped records department where they are readily accessible to students’. To ensure a large enough resource base, joint committees were encouraged. The circular also stated the need for ‘an adequate system ... to ensure that records are reviewed after a suitable period, and a sample made for retention’.

The provisions of the 1962 Act were quite limited. It did not extend to Scotland or Northern Ireland or to the City of London. It gave a clear legislative mandate to those authorities which had already established record offices, whilst not requiring others to make any provision, and it provided no new money. Knightbridge, in his review of archive legislation, noted that ‘the statutory basis of the role of the modern local authority record office derives’ from the Act, although the impact of the legislation on the provision of local authority record offices seems to have been minimal.²¹² A survey of local archive services undertaken in 1968 showed that the main period of growth in the post-war period was in 1946-60 when 24 new record offices were established: only six started in the years 1961-65.²¹³ The legislation tended to confirm the validity of existing developments but did not act as a spur for the future expansion of archive services in the localities.

The London Government Act 1963 established new London boroughs to replace the metropolitan boroughs and designated the Greater London Council and the London boroughs as local authorities for the purposes of the Local Government (Records) Act. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 enabled some local authorities, which would not otherwise have archive powers under the 1962 Act, to hold archives in their library or museum collections.

The Commons Registration Act 1965 provided for the registration of common land and village greens (s 1), designating local authorities as Commons Registration Authorities with a responsibility to maintain registers of common land and village greens (s 3.1). Registers had to be open to the public (s 3.2) and since researchers often needed associated records, such as tithe and enclosure records, title deeds and manorial records, many record offices discharged the statutory function for the council.

Local Government Act 1972

²¹¹ United Kingdom. Ministry of Housing Local Government *Circular* no 44/62. Sept 1962.

²¹² Knightbridge: 3.

²¹³ W R Serjeant ‘The survey of local archives services 1968’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 4 (1970-73): 300-326.

The Royal Commission on Local Government Reform was established under the chairmanship of Lord Redcliffe-Maud in 1966. The Commission's enquiries included submissions on local archive services, such as the one by the editor of the Victoria County History (VCH), R B Pugh, which recommended statutory protection for local archives.²¹⁴ However, the Local Government Act 1972 did not make archives a statutory service but instead confirmed and extended the powers granted in the 1962 Act. The 1972 Act made the Secretary of State for the Environment responsible for local archive services in England (the Secretary of State for Wales acted in Wales) as part of his responsibility for local government services. It conferred archive powers on county councils ('principal councils') and enabled district councils to acquire archive powers by applying for an order under the 1962 Act. The obligations extended to 'any documents which belong to or are in the custody of the council or any of their officers' and required the council to make 'proper arrangements' (s 224) for their own records. The Act provided for access to certain records (eg a local government elector could see the council minutes (s 228 (1)) and a member could see the accounts (s 228(3)), but did not make any general provision for a right of access to local records. Access to some council records was improved by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 which amended the 1972 Act s 100 to give public access to agendas, minutes and reports of council and committee meetings three days in advance and for six years after a meeting.

One key aspect of the 1972 Act was the creation of six new metropolitan counties (s 1(2)). Ideally, each new county would establish a joint archive service for its constituent county and district authorities, to replace the services offered by a few libraries and archives previously. Each of these new counties contained at least one established archive service, either in a record office or in a city library, but also embraced former county boroughs without any existing services. Tyne and Wear successfully developed a countywide service, based on the existing record office. Some found it possible to develop joint services, with service provision in more than one district (eg West Yorkshire), but the struggle to raise sufficient resources to run an adequate service continued throughout the life of the metropolitan counties, until they were abolished as administrative units in 1986.

Church of England

The Church of England provided for the inspection and safe keeping of parish records under the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1929, updated by a new Measure of 1978, passed by its General Synod.²¹⁵ The 1978 Measure required (rather than enabled as in 1929) the appointment of a diocesan record office, probably a local government record office or other place of deposit for public records, at which all non-current registers and records over 100 years old must be deposited (s 10). Parishes could retain the records in their custody if they provided conditions of storage and security which satisfied the bishop. Registers

²¹⁴ Cantwell *PRO 1959-1969*: 105.

²¹⁵ Central Board of Finance of the Church of England *Guide to the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978* Westminster: CIO Publishing, 1978.

were to be made available for inspection either in the parish or in the diocesan record office for searches and certified copies (s 20). Parish records were subject to inspection every six years by an inspector appointed by the bishop (in practice an archivist from the diocesan record office) (s 9).

Although the Measure was relatively effective in some areas, it depended on the willingness of the bishop and the diocesan record office to implement its requirements and it did not provide for any funds to carry out the work. Jenkinson noted that although the 1929 Measure had provided for the better keeping of parish records and empowered the bishop to establish a diocesan record office, its flaw was the failure to provide a source for funds for the activity.²¹⁶ Although the 1978 Measure set out storage requirements for records in parish custody it did not set standards for those held in the record office. It made no provision for records management or the destruction of unimportant records. However, it was ‘evidence that the legislative process can be used to improve the care of records where the will exists’.²¹⁷

The Wilson Committee Report on Modern Public Records, 1981

The Public Records Act 1958 and the provisions of the *Grigg Report* effected significant change in the management of public records over the following twenty years. The Grigg review system largely cleared backlogs in departments and the flow of records to the PRO was much improved. The PRO published guidance in 1958 and subsequently.²¹⁸ However, pressure by the Advisory Council for a review of the system and press criticism of the volume of departmental records surviving review and the criteria used to extend the closure of records beyond 30 years, led to the formation of a committee in 1978, chaired by Sir Duncan Wilson, ‘to review the arrangements for giving effect to those provisions of the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967 which relate to the selection of records for permanent preservation and to subsequent public access to them’.²¹⁹ The Committee interpreted its remit to consider modern departmental records narrowly and it did not look at legal records (which had been dealt with by the Denning Committee of 1963-1966) or medieval and early modern ones.

The Wilson Committee gathered evidence, including fact-finding visits to Scotland, the Netherlands, France, Sweden, the USA and West Germany, but few archivists or academic historians experienced in the use of departmental records were consulted, nor were representatives from the BRA or SoA interviewed.²²⁰

²¹⁶ Jenkinson ‘Archive developments’: 276-277.

²¹⁷ Society of Archivists *Towards a national policy for archives: a preliminary draft statement* Society of Archivists, 1983: 8.

²¹⁸ United Kingdom. Public Record Office *A guide for Departmental Record Officers* London: Public Record Office, 1958.

²¹⁹ M S Moss ‘Public Record Office: good or bad?’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 7 (1983): 157. Wilson Report: xi.

²²⁰ Wilson Report: xii. Moss: 158.

Technological changes by 1981 produced records which were no longer on traditional paper files, such as satellite data, computerized map making and video.²²¹ Multiple copies and cheap impermanent duplication raised preservation questions. Looking to the future, the *Report* commented that ‘the introduction of word processors and their offshoots has been the subject of pilot studies; if widely adopted they would certainly revolutionise office procedures with important implications for record and paper keeping’.²²² Government was experiencing continuous change in structures and work patterns. Functions were hived off, registries were decentralized. Records were being destroyed sooner or being held on new media which required less space (microfilm, machine readable systems).²²³

The Committee considered access, noting that Second World War records were open, but it did not make a full investigation of the use made by historians of applications to see closed records and the grounds on which access was granted or denied.²²⁴ The Committee reviewed changing public use of records, although it did not make a systematic analysis of changes in user volumes and needs.²²⁵

The Committee concluded that the existing legislative framework and policy system was basically sound but that ‘the results of the post-Grigg process of selection have not matched the hopes’.²²⁶ Decentralization of registries, file by file review within ‘theme’ classification schemes, and desk officers notes on retention of individual files made reviewing inconsistent.²²⁷ The Committee recommended changes in working practices in an attempt to improve effectiveness.²²⁸

The seven Inspecting Officers for over 200 departments could give little practical assistance to individual departments and seldom consulted historians and academic users about emerging research areas.²²⁹ The PRO had set up an expert panel in 1968 to advise on review, but it failed because of lack of funds. Wilson recommended sector panels, of the PRO, Departmental Record Officers (DROs) and expert users, to advise on selection: but it failed to identify the necessary resources.²³⁰ Although a committee had been set up in 1957 to carry out a census of Particular Instance Papers (PIP) classes, it had focused on statistical sampling of paper records and had not considered the retention of complete data sets nor addressed issues of

²²¹ Wilson Report: 9-10.

²²² Wilson Report: 10.

²²³ Wilson Report: 8,10.

²²⁴ Moss: 162.

²²⁵ Wilson Report: 11-14.

²²⁶ Wilson Report: 18.

²²⁷ Wilson Report: 21-22.

²²⁸ For instance, Registry practice was to be improved by accurate file titling, more regular closure of files (at 2 years) and uniform retention periods. PRO was to be more actively involved with records management, by issuing guidance, providing training for records staff and seminars for DROs and by more regular inspection of departments. Wilson Report: 38-46.

²²⁹ Wilson Report: 24.

²³⁰ Moss: 159.

automated data.²³¹ In 1965, its work incomplete, the PIP committee lapsed and Wilson failed to offer a solution.²³²

Wilson concluded that in spite of the PRO's wide range of functions 'it would be against the public interest to fragment the present service either by separating the care of ancient from that of modern records or by dividing responsibility for modern records at any point in the continuum'.²³³ However, it failed to recommend a single central government archive and records service (which would raise standards and improve records control) on cost grounds, recommending instead that departments resource their record services appropriately.

The Committee was generally cautious in its recommendations. Its most far sighted recommendation was that computerized records be investigated in a joint project with the Central Computing and Telecommunications Agency (CCTA) and a data archive centre established at the PRO, saying 'The loss of machine-readable records because the passage of time rendered them useless, while no policy was settled, would be the worst of outcomes'.²³⁴ It did not fully investigate important areas (such as services to users, the places of deposit scheme, the availability of finding aids and the location of the PRO) and some findings were inaccurate:²³⁵ there was no PRO representative on the Committee. Its final report was considered 'long and rambling and often difficult to follow'.²³⁶ The government response was unfavourable and, although it recognised the importance of modern public records for posterity and accepted an obligation to safeguard them as a national asset, it only accepted 42 of the 70 recommendations.²³⁷ For instance, government did not support the establishment of expert Sector Panels to advise on selection, partly on the grounds of cost and partly because the existing arrangements were not 'sufficiently defective'.²³⁸

Local government archives in the 1980s and 1990s: heritage or administrative value?

National heritage developed a higher profile after the National Heritage Act 1980 which brought together museums and libraries in a new Arts office, although archives were not specifically referred to. The Act established a National Heritage Fund which made grants or loans to help purchase heritage objects,

²³¹ Wilson Report: 29-33.

²³² Moss: 161.

²³³ Wilson Report: 81.

²³⁴ Wilson Report: 122.

²³⁵ For instance, Wilson's remarks about unwarranted destruction were shown to be imprecise, United Kingdom. Public Record Office *25th annual report of the Keeper of Public Records on the work of the Public Record Office and the 25th report of the Advisory Council on Public Records 1983* London: HMSO, 1984: 14-15.

²³⁶ Moss: 159.

²³⁷ PRO *24th report 1982*: 8-9.

²³⁸ PRO *24th report 1982*: 35.

including archives and manuscripts, and amended financial arrangements for acceptance of manuscripts of pre-eminent national, scientific, historic or artistic interest in lieu of capital transfer tax. The Act marked a shift in government policy towards heritage and cultural assets.

The Local Government Act 1985 abolished the metropolitan counties in 1986 and threatened the future of the metropolitan record offices. In spite of attempts to persuade government of the benefit of retaining mandatory joint services, the legislation only provided for voluntary cooperation. Some areas maintained cooperative countywide agreements, hard won by local negotiation. The HMC was right in 1990 to 'have strong doubts whether the further restructuring of the administration of the shire counties now under consideration would improve the local arrangements to preserve historical manuscripts and archives'.²³⁹

In 1991 the Department of the Environment published a consultation paper on the structure of local government in England, which proposed a review of local government structures, based on the premise that unitary authorities were the ideal model: 'a single tier should reduce bureaucracy, improve the co-ordination of services, increase quality and reduce costs'.²⁴⁰ The review was to be carried out by a roving commission, making recommendations on each locality, rather than by the imposition of a single national pattern. The professional bodies quickly realized that this meant that they needed to lobby nationally but also had to intervene locally to ensure that the needs of archive services were kept in mind. The SoA set up a working party, involving the ACA and NCA, to monitor progress, provide local and national support and issue regular bulletins. Amendments concerning proper arrangements for archives were tabled during the progress of the Local Government Bill in 1991 and the government minister acknowledged the needs of small specialist services such as archives. Government set out the options for archives: where county councils remained, archive services could continue as before; where they were replaced, archive services could be delivered by district councils; where there were successor authorities voluntary arrangements, or if necessary statutory joint arrangements, would ensure that archive collections were not split up. No clause requiring local authorities to provide archive services was included in the Bill. The Local Government Act 1992 set up a Local Government Commission for England which considered structural, electoral and boundary changes in each area, a task which took several years to complete. The profession's intervention at least ensured that the guidelines issued to the Commission required it to pay attention to the importance

²³⁹ United Kingdom. Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts *The twenty seventh report 1982-1990* London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1992: 27-28.

²⁴⁰ Elizabeth Shepherd 'Local government review – England' (papers on local government review read at Society of Archivists AGM, Birmingham Central Library, Birmingham, 28 April 1992) and 'Local government review at the AGM' in *Society of Archivists Newsletter* 61 (1992): 5.

of satisfactory arrangements for existing archive services and raised public awareness of the value of archives to the community.²⁴¹

The official government position was set out in 1995 in *Guidance on the care, preservation and management of records*.²⁴² This addressed current records and archives and stated that ‘services should continue to be provided to at least the same standard following reorganisation’ (s 1.2). The *Guidance* asserted that automatic archive powers would be extended to new unitary authorities (s 3.2) and that successor authorities could not split up archive collections (s 4.2). This still left uncertainty over areas where there was a hybrid solution (ie the continuation of an existing authority and the establishment of a new one for part of the old county area).²⁴³ *Guidance on joint arrangements* (s 6) indicated that ‘building on the infrastructure of the existing repositories’ was preferable, thus giving some protection to existing local archive services. In spite of fears at the time that the reorganization would result in poorer archive services, in practice, partly as a result of the determination and hard work of many county archivists, local archive services emerged reasonably unscathed from the reorganization. In the longer term, however, the loss of the link between county councils and county archive services based on historic county boundaries led to the destabilization of local archives.

Archives in the European Union

The advent of the single European market under the Maastricht Treaty on European Union in 1993 provided a transition from a community of member states to a closer union. It was a matter of concern to the professional bodies, especially the SoA whose members’ employment rights might be affected. Information papers on training and qualifications, standardization, acquisitions and standards of service were prepared by the SoA.²⁴⁴ In 1983 the archives of the community institutions opened to public access. After 1989 the national archives of the member states began informal meetings and sought closer cooperation. An EU Experts Group on archives formed in 1991 to look at areas of coordination, including appraisal, conservation and access to traditional archives and computerised records, legislation, training and qualifications and professional networks.²⁴⁵ The resulting report made recommendations which, however,

²⁴¹ National Council on Archives, Society of Archivists, Association of County Archivists, *Challenge or threat?: England’s archive heritage and the future of local government*, 1992.

²⁴² United Kingdom. Department of National Heritage *Guidance on the care, preservation and management of records following changes arising from the Local Government Act 1992*. July 1995.

²⁴³ David Curry MP, Minister for Local Government, Department of the Environment, to the Rt Hon Sir Thomas Bingham, 25 Oct 1995, ref CU/PSO/23006/95 concerning Local Government Act 1992. Photocopy in possession of the author.

²⁴⁴ Society of Archivists *Annual report and accounts 1989-90* np: Society of Archivists, 1990: 5.

²⁴⁵ European Commission *Archives in the European Union* Luxembourg: Office of Official Publication of the European Communities, 1994.

reflected the position of the national archives (eg the PRO) and not of the whole profession.²⁴⁶ Nevertheless in the longer term UK archives benefited from EU initiatives, especially in digital records and technological innovation, such as the DLM-Forum, which started in 1994.²⁴⁷

The second main effect of union for archives was less direct but nevertheless significant. The development of data protection and freedom of information legislation in the UK was closely influenced by European Directives and initiatives.

Data Protection Acts 1984 & 1998²⁴⁸

The Data Protection Act 1984, which came into force in 1986, was enacted to bring the UK into line with the requirements of a European Directive on data protection. The Act imposed a duty on those holding personal data to comply with eight data protection principles, to register with the Data Protection Registrar and to allow data subjects access to the data and, if necessary, to correct it. The 1984 Act applied only to records in electronic form. A second EU Directive led to the Data Protection Act 1998 (which comes into force between 1998 and 2007). The most significant feature of the new Act was that the data protection regime was extended to manual records.²⁴⁹

The 1984 Act defined data as information which was recorded with the intention of being processed by automatic equipment and as part of 'a relevant filing system' (s 1(1)). 'Personal data' related to a living individual. The data protection principles required processing of data to be fair and lawful and for a specified purpose, that data was adequate and not excessive for the purpose, accurate and up-to-date, not kept for longer than necessary, kept securely and not transported outside the European Economic Area. The data subject's rights were also set out (schedule 1, part 1).

Data protection applied only to living subjects, so more directly affected records managers responsible for records containing personal data. However, archivists were concerned in the late 1990s that the use of personal data in research and statistical analysis would be significantly restricted by the new Act: in the event, the limited exemptions (s 33) enabled most historical work to be undertaken satisfactorily. The Data Protection Acts put in place the first part of the information policy legislation in the UK.

²⁴⁶ Minutes of Council 20 Nov 1991, Top copy minutes 1988-97, NCA 1, National Council on Archives archive, Birmingham City Archives.

²⁴⁷ Dlm-forum on electronic records, at www.dlmforum.eu.org, accessed 01/08/02.

²⁴⁸ United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. *Data Protection Act 1984*. 32&33 Eliz 2, c. 35. *Data Protection Act 1998*. 46&47 Eliz 2, c. 29.

²⁴⁹ United Kingdom. Public Record Office *Data Protection Act 1998: a guide for records managers and archivists* Richmond: Public Record Office, 2000.

Freedom of Information Act 2000²⁵⁰

The second piece of information policy legislation was the Freedom of Information (FoI) Act 2000, which comes into force between 2000 and 2005. In 1993 a *White Paper on open government* appeared after a long campaign by lobbying organisations such as the Campaign for Freedom of Information. The *White Paper* was the beginning of an ‘open government’ initiative which extended access to official information. *Code of practice on access to government information* was published in 1994²⁵¹ and provided a significant improvement to public access to government information, both explanatory information and also information about policies, actions and decisions ‘in response to specific requests’.²⁵² The *Code* did not have statutory force but it provided a benchmark for access to government archives and records. 10,000s of public records, which had been subject to extended closure beyond 30 years, were re-reviewed and subsequently released.

A Labour White Paper, *Your right to know*, was followed by a Bill in 1999.²⁵³ The FoI Act 2000 created new statutory rights of access to government information and extended the range of public authorities for the purposes of the Act. As well as government departments, local government, police authorities, schools, colleges and universities came within the legislation. Public authorities had to produce publication schemes which set out the classes of information to be made available and the manner in which it would be published. The Act also established a new Information Commissioner. The Lord Chancellor provided guidance on the application of the Act and records management in 2002.²⁵⁴ The *Lord Chancellor’s Code* required public authorities to recognise records management as a corporate function (s 5), to have a policy statement (s 6), to employ suitably qualified staff at a senior level (s 7), to manage records effectively (s 8) and dispose of them appropriately (s 9).

The Act will (after 2005) replace the provisions of the Public Records Act 1958 relating to access to information in public records. Although public records will still be transferred to the PRO when they are 30 years old and government departments will still need permission to retain records older than 30 years, once records are at the PRO they will be presumed to be open, irrespective of their age. The grounds on which records may be withheld were clarified in the Act. The Act also changed the role of the Advisory Council

²⁵⁰ United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. 2000. *Freedom of Information Act 2000*. 48&49 Eliz 2, c. 36.

²⁵¹ United Kingdom. *Code of practice on access to government information* London: The Stationery Office, 1st ed 1994, 2nd ed, 1997.

²⁵² *Code of practice*, 1997: s 3(5)

²⁵³ United Kingdom. *Your right to know: the government’s proposals for a Freedom of Information Act* London: The Stationery Office. Cm 3818. Dec 1997. United Kingdom. *Freedom of Information Act: consultation on draft legislation* London: The Stationery Office. Cm 4355. May 1999.

²⁵⁴ United Kingdom. Public Record Office *Lord Chancellor’s Code of practice on the management of records, issued under section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000* Nov 2002 at www.pro.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/foicode.htm, accessed 21/05/03

on Public Records, which will from 2005 advise the Lord Chancellor on the application of the Act to information contained in public records (s 1(2A)) including those retained by government departments.²⁵⁵

Flowing from the *Lord Chancellor's Code*, Model Action Plans were developed for particular sectors, including local government, central government, police authorities, the national health service and higher and further education institutions. These set out best practice for records management within the relevant sector, and with the force of the FoI Act behind them acted as significant spurs to the institutions to employ records managers and review records management policy and practice.

In Scotland UK-wide matters fall under the FoI Act 2000, but for Scottish issues, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (which has broadly similar provisions to the UK Act) applies. A Scottish Code of Practice on records management was drafted in 2003 and the Scotland Act will come into force fully in 2005.²⁵⁶

'Next steps' agencies

The PRO was subject to several reviews and studies between 1981 and 1990 which gradually changed its priorities. In 1981 a feasibility study group was established to investigate moving records and facilities from Chancery Lane to Kew and the possible incorporation of the PRO into the plans for the British Library at St Pancras.²⁵⁷ In 1986 a review of the accommodation needs of the PRO was undertaken and the overall aims of the PRO were revised.²⁵⁸ In 1988 the Conservative administration issued *Next steps – improving management in government* and the PRO was considered as one of the new executive agencies.²⁵⁹ Part of the process was an 'efficiency scrutiny' which took place in 1990. It looked at the functions, management and organisation of the PRO and recommended that the PRO should become an executive agency from April 1992.²⁶⁰ Most of the review's 127 recommendations were accepted and acted upon.²⁶¹

Archives at the Millennium

A number of government initiatives came to fruition at the millennium. Increasingly, archives were working in a wider, cross-domain context, alongside other cultural services such as libraries and museums

²⁵⁵ An extension of the non-statutory advice given for many years on applications for extended closure, etc under the Public Records Acts 1958, 1967.

²⁵⁶ Peter Anderson 'Freedom of information in Scotland' *ARC* 167 (2003): 4-5.

²⁵⁷ *PRO 23rd report 1981*: 9.

²⁵⁸ *PRO 28th report 1986*: 2, 40, 46.

²⁵⁹ *PRO 30th report 1988-89*: 3.

²⁶⁰ *PRO 32nd report 1990-91*: 3.

²⁶¹ A proposed change of title, to The National Archives, was rejected: *PRO 32nd report 1990-91*: 4.

and associated with the achievement of FoI and data protection. A key aspect of the National Heritage Act 1997 was the wider powers given to the Trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund to award grants for projects which helped to secure or improve access to heritage collections which were of public benefit. This led to an increased emphasis on outreach and access by archives and on cross-domain work and provided a new source of funds for projects.

Archives at the Millennium

The HMC published a major review of the state of archive care and use, following large scale consultation in 1998-99, *Archives at the millennium*.²⁶² In surveying the ‘archival health’ of the nation, the report identified strengths including a steady overall growth in provision, greater numbers of records in safe custody, a rise in reader numbers, improvements in storage accommodation, better access to information about archives and a greater ‘sense of community among those who deliver archive services’.²⁶³ Set against these were problems including continuing unevenness of provision of archive services, lack of public awareness of the value of archives both among potential users and among funders and decision makers, shortfalls in funding and changes in governing administrative structures. Issues for the future included information technology, digitisation, the impact of FoI legislation, new sources of funding, the increasing importance of the views of users and the proposals for a Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. The report made a number of recommendations.²⁶⁴ More strongly than in previous HMC reports, *Archives at the millennium* recommended ‘legislation to make the provision of archive services by local authorities ... a mandatory responsibility’, together with a long-term obligation to fund services at an appropriate level. It called for the reimbursement of local places of deposit for their care of public records. The report supported the development of records management services to secure FoI. Significantly, in the light of later developments and the formation of the National Archives in 2003, the report recommended the continuing collaboration both nationally and locally of service providers and professional bodies. It set out funding priorities for national archival networks, preservation activities including improved buildings and digitisation, elimination of cataloguing backlogs in order to make archives available for use and tackling the problems of digital records. Underpinning these was continuing training in both new and traditional skills.

Government policy on archives

The heads of the UK national archive institutions met informally from time to time to discuss matters of common concern.²⁶⁵ The Inter-Departmental Archives Committee (with a wider representation) was more formally established in 1996 to coordinate archives policy matters within government in the UK and to

²⁶² United Kingdom. Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts *Archives at the millennium: the twenty eighth report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts 1991-1999* London: The Stationery Office, 1999.

²⁶³ HMC *Archives at the millennium*: 5-6.

²⁶⁴ HMC *Archives at the millennium*: 58-60.

²⁶⁵ Informal meetings began before 1992: email from David Leitch, TNA, to the author, 15/03/04.

consider archives policy and legislation issues and to speak on UK government archive interests to the European Union.²⁶⁶ The Committee was asked to prepare a national archives policy, to look at regional structures and review the legislative basis for archive services. The *Government policy on archives* formed the government's response to the profession's *National archives policy* (which will be discussed in chapter 6) and provided a comprehensive statement on the way in which archives could contribute to key government policy objectives on modernizing government, social inclusion and improving access to information.²⁶⁷ It wanted to raise awareness of the importance of archives and help them to deliver services more effectively. The policy sought to ensure access to archives, to exploit educational uses of archives, to ensure that public archival institutions complied with best practice for current records and archives, to enable the sector to develop skills in managing electronic data, to encourage cross-sectoral work and to encourage private organizations and individuals to care for their records well. In putting the policy into practice, however, the focus tended to be on official government archives rather than embracing a wider range of solutions: the difficulties of funding local archive services and of addressing the structural and legislative weaknesses emerged again.

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and Re:source

In 1997 the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) commissioned the Library and Information Commission to report on public library provision in the 21st century. The resulting reports, *New library: the people's network* and *Building the new library network*, brought significant government financial support to develop public libraries to support lifelong learning and provide networked resources in libraries.²⁶⁸ In 1998 DCMS undertook a detailed review of its activities and spending in its consultation document, *A new approach to investment in culture*.²⁶⁹ There was universal dismay in archival circles because the review made hardly any reference to archives. DCMS set out its initial conclusions in a further document, *A new cultural framework* in 1998, in which the idea of a Museums and Libraries Council (to replace the Museums and Galleries Commission and the Library and Information Commission) was expanded to encompass archives.²⁷⁰ Regional Archive Councils were proposed. As part of the review, Chris Smith, then Minister for Culture, commissioned a report from a group of senior professionals to advise on the formation of a new Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLAC). The MLAC Design Group

²⁶⁶ NCA Council minutes 23 April 1996, NCA 1, BCA.

²⁶⁷ United Kingdom. Lord Chancellor's Department *Government policy on archives* London: The Stationery Office Ltd, 1999. Cm 4516: 24-27 explains the background to the Inter-Departmental Archives Committee.

²⁶⁸ United Kingdom. Library and Information Commission *New library: the people's network* (1998) at <http://www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk/about/history.asp>, accessed 20/05/03.

²⁶⁹ United Kingdom. Department of Culture, Media and Sport *The comprehensive spending review: a new approach to investment in culture* July 1998.

²⁷⁰ United Kingdom. Department of Culture, Media and Sport *The departmental spending review: a new cultural framework* Dec 1998.

recommended that a Council should be established as a strategic policy body which would provide leadership to the sector and focus on cross-domain issues. The Group believed that the advent of MLAC ‘offers a major opportunity to promote the development of the sector’.²⁷¹ Further consultation on the role and work of MLAC was undertaken in early 2000.²⁷² MLAC was positioned as a strategic body, not a service delivery body, so the executive functions inherited from the Museums and Galleries Commission were mainly transferred elsewhere. A governing Board with representatives from museums, libraries and archives, education and the creative industries was established: Victor Gray, Director of Rothschild Archive, was the sole archival representative, although Lola Young, Professor of Cultural Studies at Middlesex University, had strong archival interests. MLAC became operational in April 2000 with initial funding from the DCMS of £19.5m. Shortly afterwards it was renamed, Re:source: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries.²⁷³

Resource took up the cause of archives with enthusiasm, recognizing that ‘though smaller in scale than either libraries or museums, the archives domain needs to be given specific help in order for it to fulfil its potential’.²⁷⁴ An Archives Policy Adviser was appointed and prepared an *Action plan for UK archives* which set out Resource’s priorities: identifying strategic needs and priorities, exploiting the potential for archives to contribute to learning and access, and promoting training and career development.²⁷⁵ Two specific projects emerged from the action plan in 2002: a study by the National Council on Archives (NCA), commissioned by Resource, of training, retention and leadership and the government commissioned Archives Task Force.

One of the weaknesses of the Resource approach was its cultural focus. Its sponsor department, DCMS, and the predominance of museums in the sector, made it difficult for Resource to do more than acknowledge that libraries and archives often have a dual objective. Resource took the view that work on information policy and records management could be left to other bodies, and that it would focus on cultural services. Resource’s priorities also reflected the government agenda on social inclusion and education and lifelong learning, and it became a policy body for government rather than acting as an advocate for the sector.

The trend towards regionalisation, following Scottish devolution and the establishment of the Welsh Assembly and regional government offices, was reflected in the archives domain. Regional structures for archives were proposed in the *MLAC Design Group Report* to mirror the existing Area Museum Councils

²⁷¹ United Kingdom. Department for Culture, Media and Sport *The establishment of a Museums, Libraries and Archives Council: report of the Design Group* 1999 at www.culture.gov.uk/MLAC%20DESIGN%20GROUP%20REPORT.htm, accessed on 08/06/99: 15.

²⁷² United Kingdom. Museums, Libraries and Archives Council *Consultation on the work of the new Museums, Libraries and Archives Council*, Jan 2000.

²⁷³ In February 2004 it reverted to the title, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA).

²⁷⁴ United Kingdom. Re:source, The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries *Developing the 21st century archive: an action plan for United Kingdom archives* London: VIP Print Ltd, 2001: 5.

²⁷⁵ Re:source *Action plan*: 12.

and regional library services. During 1999 Regional Archive Councils were established by NCA and a new post of Regional Development Officer for Archives set up with funding from the SoA and the PRO.²⁷⁶ Following the commitment of the profession, Resource supported the initiative by providing £250,000 to appoint an Archives Development Officer for each Region in 2001/02, as well as funds for the Regional Archive Councils. Further funding enabled the Regional Archive Councils to produce archive strategies which set regional goals and made recommendations on funding and policy to government.²⁷⁷

Archives Task Force, 2002

Following the success of the major reports on public libraries and regional museums, Resource turned its attention to archives.²⁷⁸ In July 2002 DCMS invited Resource to carry out an in-depth analysis and review of the state of the UK's archives and produce a vision for the 21st century.²⁷⁹ The objectives were to open archives up to 'a wider and more culturally diverse audience', to re-orientate archives 'in the public consciousness as a valuable community resource', to develop creative partnerships to provide better public services and to change 'professional attitudes through innovative and inspiring training opportunities'. The Archives Task Force (ATF) included representatives of national archival bodies, academic historians and other interested parties including Liz Forgan, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund and Dame Stella Rimington, former Director General of the Security Services and a qualified archivist. This high-powered group was well placed to make a real difference to national archive policy, funding and services.

The ATF focused on structures and funding for archives, the national electronic archive network, specialist archives, and training and development. A report on training, recruitment and leadership in the archive domain had already been commissioned by Resource from the NCA (Archives Workforce Project), due to report in late 2003, which would inform ATF outcomes. A new feature of this investigation was the use of the Resource website to publish notes of the meetings, discussion papers and other information and to gather views while the ATF was in progress.

Issues which had not been resolved by earlier investigations came to the fore again: structural arrangements for archives to complete a 'distributed national archive', centres of excellence (an idea which developed from the museum regional hubs concept, but had also been proposed in *A national archives policy for the United Kingdom* in 1995), the need for new archives legislation especially for local authority archives, and

²⁷⁶ Victor Gray 'Strategic development, cross-domain working and regional structures' *Proceedings of Archives in the regions: future priorities* Cheltenham: National Council on Archives, 2002, 5-8.

²⁷⁷ National Council on Archives *Archives in the regions: an overview of the English regional archive strategies* np: National Council on Archives, 2001.

²⁷⁸ United Kingdom. Re:source, the Council for Archives, Museums and Libraries, *Renaissance in the regions: the Regional Museums Task Force report* (2001) at <http://www.resource.gov.uk/action/regional/00renaiss.asp> accessed 20/05/03.

²⁷⁹ Re:source ATF: *searchlight*.

inspection and standards. In addition, new concerns surfaced, including understanding user needs, homes for orphan archives, social inclusion work in archives,²⁸⁰ raising the profile of archives, statistical collection and mapping, and the national electronic archive network which had been developing since 1998.²⁸¹ ATF had not reported at the time of writing.

The National Archives, April 2003

In 2001 the Lord Chancellor gave approval to start work on new national archives and records legislation.²⁸² Information policy legislation (FoI and data protection) had left existing public records legislation in need of updating. Responsibility for public records in digital form needed clarification and local authorities needed greater incentives to undertake effective records and archives management. The PRO had been a leader in government in standards for digital records since the mid-1990s, with the twin programmes for datasets and electronic records in office systems. Following the White Paper *Modernising government*, government was committed to the electronic storage and retrieval of government records by 2004. The Public Records Act 1958 was considered inadequate for the selection and preservation of digital records. In addition the FoI Act's wide definition of public authorities provided an opportunity to strengthen archives and records legislation for local authorities and universities. The proposals sought to ensure the proper treatment of digital records; to standardize records management practices in public authorities by inspection and standard setting; to bring regional and local authorities within the legislation; and to establish the National Archives.²⁸³ If parliamentary time was found, new national records and archives legislation would complete the third part of the information policy legislation for the UK.

In July 2002 Baroness Blackstone, Minister of State for the Arts, announced that the HMC would combine with the PRO to form the National Archives. The administrative reorganization took effect in April 2003 when The National Archives (TNA) was launched. Since the PRO had been within the Lord Chancellor's Department since 1959 and the HMC had been in the Office of Arts and Libraries under the Minister for the Arts since 1983, latterly in DCMS, ministerial responsibility seemed to be divided: but the TNA was positioned firmly with the Lord Chancellor. An unexpected consequence of a ministerial reshuffle in June 2003 was the reorganization of the Lord Chancellor's Department and a proposal to abolish the Lord Chancellor's office. At the time of writing the effect on the future of TNA was uncertain.

²⁸⁰ National Council on Archives *Taking part: an audit of social inclusion in archives* np: National Council on Archives, 2001.

²⁸¹ National Council on Archives *Archives on-line: the establishment of a UK archival network* np: National Council on Archives, 1998.

²⁸² Duncan Simpson 'Archives, legislation and information policy' *Proceedings of Archives in the regions: future priorities* Cheltenham: National Council on Archives, 2002, 9-12.

²⁸³ United Kingdom. The National Archives *Proposed national records and archives legislation: proposals to change the current legislative provision for records management and archives: consultation paper* London: The National Archives, 2003.

Conclusion

Over a period of 150 years from the PRO Act of 1838 those responsible for archives and records struggled to engage with legislators and policy makers. The PRO benefited from legislation (albeit inadequate until 1958) and a close link with government through the Master of the Rolls and, after 1958, the Lord Chancellor. Even the 1958 Act did not include records of all public authorities (eg some nationalised industries and quasi-governmental organisations were omitted). Those working in other archives (whether local authority, diocesan or specialist) lacked statutory authority and had little central guidance, funding or support. At the start of the 20th century the British Museum Manuscripts Department was as likely to be asked for advice about local archives as the PRO or HMC. The HMC, with a responsibility for private archives, was effectively a branch of the PRO until 1959 and with small resources, it played a relatively limited role. The relationship between the central institutions (the PRO and HMC) and local authority archives was unclear. Archivists struggled to establish their work on a statutory basis, often relying on individual local initiative for practical progress. Periodically, government considered archival issues in commissions and reports. Legislation on matters such as property holding or local government included provisions about records: some even incidentally gave statutory protection to records (eg manorial, tithe). Other legislation occurred opportunistically and provided limited powers (eg Local Government (Records) Act 1962). In spite of numerous reports on archives, other priorities took precedence: local government reform had a significant effect on archives and records but the focus of the legislation necessarily concentrated on reforming and creating local administrative structures to support services such as education, with little consideration of smaller, non-statutory services such as archives. Most archive powers for local bodies were of enabling or permissive character, not mandatory. Legislative provision tended to follow existing developments, rather than driving future expansion. Private archives were treated similarly to other private property and were mainly exempt from legislative controls.

How far did archival practice follow government policy or did policy emerge as a result of professional practice leading the way? Until the late 20th century, enthusiastic individuals in the localities developed services and government enquiries reviewed what had been done. Reports often revisited recommendations of earlier reports which had usually not been acted on (in competition with other priorities for funds and ministerial time). Local practitioners continued their work: this will be explored in chapter 4. National institutions supported by mandatory legislation did not provide leadership to the rest of archival community. The PRO perceived itself as an institution with essentially historical (rather than archival) objectives, which will be discussed in chapter 3. With no legislative requirement to link national and local archives, the cultural gap between archives in the centre and regions proved hard to bridge. Archives in the localities were not powerful enough to dictate policy, lacking legislative strength, funding and professional coordination.

In the 1980s the government agenda to ensure customer-orientation, accountability and transparency of public services began to affect legislation and archive services. The emergence of new media and communication technologies, the widening of boundaries (both through EU policy and Directives and the world wide web) and development of significant information policy legislation (FoI, data protection) drew attention to the role of records managers (in particular) and archivists in meeting the requirements of the later 1990s. The emergence of a government policy body with explicit remit for archives in 2000 (Resource) and better coordination and lobbying by professional bodies (which will be discussed in chapter 6), combined with stronger leadership for the sector from the PRO after 1992, led to a new thinking. The long overdue union of the PRO and HMC to create a national archives service and proposed new archive and records legislation in 2003 enabled archivists finally to see the possibility of securing the necessary framework within which they could play their full professional role. Future legislation must more clearly define records and archives and ensure proper provision for services in all public authorities. Legislation should require standards of service and protect adequate funding against future changes in regional and local government organisation, while also defining clearly the responsibilities of the various parts of the national archives service (local, specialist and central) and the relationships between them.

A National Archival System or Strength in Diversity: the development of record offices, 1838-2003

A 'network of well-established local record offices' or 'an integrated national archives service'?

(Jeffery Ede, Keeper of the Public Records, 1975)²⁸⁴

Chapter 3: National Archival Institutions, 1838-2003

Chapter 4: Diversity of Provision: local and specialist archives

²⁸⁴ Ede 'central and local': 214.

Chapter 3

National Archival Institutions, 1838-2003

This chapter and the next examine the development of a distinct work group associated with archives and records in the national institutions and (chapter 4) in local and specialist archives. The Public Record Office Act 1838, which concluded the work of the Record Commission 1800-1837, led to the foundation of a national repository for the legal records of central government. The history of the PRO to 1969 has been comprehensively discussed by John Cantwell, a former Assistant Keeper,²⁸⁵ and will not be recounted here in detail. Key points from the history of the PRO and HMC will be covered in this chapter to set the context for both national and local developments.

For the majority of the period studied, there were few employment opportunities for archivists outside the PRO, other than in the national libraries which employed manuscript curators, and yet staff at the PRO often regarded themselves as historians (and as civil servants) rather than as archivists or records managers. As individuals they nevertheless contributed to the development of the profession through publication, advice and involvement with professional bodies and the universities. The PRO had limited official interest in or interaction with specialist and local archives throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries: the appointment of a Liaison Officer in 1964 improved official links. The HMC also played only a limited role in local developments, preferring to concentrate on private archives. One of its greatest contributions was through the NRA and its Registrar in the immediate post-war period. Even after the emergence of university education and qualifications in 1947 (which helped to define the profession and which will be discussed in chapter 7), and the development of specialist and business archives in the 1960s, qualified archivists worked outside the national institutions. It was not until 1979 that a qualified archivist first joined the PRO.²⁸⁶ Chapters 3 and 4 will analyse employment in national, local and specialist sectors and consider whether there is an identifiable and homogeneous archival work group.

The Public Record Office to 1947

The national framework for central government records was established by the Record Commission 1800-1837 and public records legislation of 1838, 1877 and 1898, discussed in chapter 1. Cantwell traced in detail the development of the PRO in the 19th and early 20th centuries, setting the key characters into their historical perspective. He attributed the foundation of the office to Lord Langdale, Master of the Rolls, Sir

²⁸⁵ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958* and *PRO 1959-1969*.

²⁸⁶ Michael Roper 'The Public Record Office and the profession' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 10 (1989): 162.

Henry Cole, and the first two Deputy Keepers, Sir Francis Palgrave and Sir Thomas Hardy.²⁸⁷ Cantwell noted the friendship between Cole and Charles Buller MP, chairman of the Select Committee of 1836 and proposer of a Bill in 1837 which set the framework of the subsequent Act.²⁸⁸ Palgrave, a lawyer, had joined the Record Commission in 1822 to work on parliamentary writs and in 1834 obtained the keepership at the Chapter House. He was appointed Deputy Keeper in 1838 in spite of problems over the salary and strong competition from Sir Thomas Hardy, who succeeded him in 1861. Palgrave's vision of the PRO in 1838 acknowledged the importance of expertise in history, law and languages, but also called for the work to 'be treated as a distinct profession'.²⁸⁹

Initially, Palgrave opposed the union of ancient and 'modern or living records' in a single office and he proposed to Langdale keeping three main offices, gradually extending the scheme to public departments and parliamentary records. However, Langdale's proposals in 1838 recommended a single new central office and he agreed to receive 'charge and superintendence' of public records.²⁹⁰ Staffing was set at 30 assistant keepers and clerks, split into three classes.²⁹¹ Rules for the operation of the office were established, including regular opening hours (10 to 4 each day except Sunday) for supervised public access.²⁹²

Deputy Keeper Palgrave in the 1840s

In the 1840s Palgrave set about structuring the office.²⁹³ The Deputy Keeper's Department, managed by a Secretary, undertook all financial matters and correspondence. The Search Department dealt with public access. The Binding Department organised records storage. The Archival Department made inventories, catalogues and calendars. Concern grew about records in the branches being exposed to fire and damp. The Treasury, committed to the expense of the parliament building which included the Victoria Tower for records, was reluctant to spend more.²⁹⁴ In 1846 a parliamentary debate called for a new public record office.²⁹⁵ Plans for the repository were drawn up by James Pennethorne as part of a new thoroughfare from Long Acre to Cheapside. Palgrave sought Treasury approval for £45,000 in 1850.²⁹⁶ The building was designed to be fireproof, hence the unusual construction with wrought iron beams, slate shelves and a series of small rooms. Langdale had played a principal role in the new PRO building in Chancery Lane although

²⁸⁷ Cole worked for Palgrave at Record Commission from 1823, Assistant Keeper PRO 1840-50, left to work on Great Exhibition, later secretary of Department of Science and Art. Palgrave, Deputy Keeper 1838-61. Thomas Hardy, Deputy Keeper 1861-78.

²⁸⁸ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 511-521.

²⁸⁹ Cantwell 'aftermath': 286.

²⁹⁰ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 33-34. Cantwell 'aftermath': 279-281.

²⁹¹ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 48.

²⁹² Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 54.

²⁹³ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 76-89.

²⁹⁴ Ellis 'building of PRO': 10.

²⁹⁵ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 120.

²⁹⁶ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 128.

he died before work had commenced.²⁹⁷ In May 1851 the first stone was laid at the new record office: the first block was finally complete in 1859.

Order in Council 1852

The appointment of Sir John Romilly as Master of the Rolls and Keeper in 1851 strengthened Palgrave's position. Under Romilly the scope of the Act of 1838 was extended beyond legal records to the records of government departments.²⁹⁸ Departmental transfers had already taken place. An Order in Council was issued in 1852 which put 'all records belonging to Her Majesty deposited in any office, court, place or custody' under the Master of the Rolls's charge and superintendence and gave the office the legal title, Public Record Office.²⁹⁹ The order made accommodation for departmental records pressing and before the first wing of the repository was finished, plans were made for the east extension.³⁰⁰

In 1854 the State Paper Office became a branch of the PRO and provided Palgrave with an opportunity to begin publication of calendars.³⁰¹ He also started the Rolls Series³⁰² in 1858, which by 1911 had published 250 volumes of texts of medieval chronicles and other manuscripts mainly held outside the PRO and through which 'an academic tradition was to be firmly established within the office'.³⁰³ Palgrave and Romilly enabled the PRO to develop 'an unchallengably prominent role in historical circles which allowed its employees to assert a new sense of professional unity... [as] the first truly professional historians'.³⁰⁴

The transfer of the State Paper Office records to the PRO led to a further accommodation crisis at Chancery Lane. By the late 1850s Palgrave 'no longer had the energy to battle for the further building needed': he died in July 1861.³⁰⁵

Thomas Duffus Hardy

Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy's succession to the Deputy Keepership was 'something of a formality' given his long involvement with public records. He wanted to make records available by publication or by consulting the originals. He developed the Rolls Series and Calendars. He oversaw the building works in Chancery Lane and the opening of the search-rooms in 1866 (the Round Room for 'literary searches' for historical students and the Long Room for legal searches mainly concerning evidence of titles or rights). Hardy was

²⁹⁷ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 499.

²⁹⁸ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 139-140, 142-143.

²⁹⁹ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 142.

³⁰⁰ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 185. Ellis 'building of PRO': 22.

³⁰¹ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 166.

³⁰² David Knowles *Great historical enterprises* London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1963: 101-134.

³⁰³ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 500.

³⁰⁴ Philippa Levine 'History in the archives: the Public Record Office and its staff, 1838-1886' *English Historical Review* 101 (1986): 22.

³⁰⁵ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 201.

involved with the new Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC), established in 1869, which will be discussed below.

As Romilly's tenure as Master of the Rolls neared its end, Hardy sought to separate the office of Keeper from that of the Master of the Rolls, conscious that his relationship with the new appointee might be less productive. He drafted a Bill which would effect the change but hope of legislation fell with Gladstone's administration in 1874.³⁰⁶ Cantwell considered that the Bill might have stood a chance if the disposal of records had been a current concern: it soon became one.

Public Record Office Act 1877

The 1838 Act gave no power to destroy legal records. In 1848 the Master of the Rolls concluded that he had no authority over the destruction of departmental records and proposed that responsibility should be devolved to the Public Records Department. In 1858 the Master of the Rolls sought funds for a new wing in Chancery Lane and the Treasury challenged the PRO to show that the records were worth preserving. A Committee on Government Documents was established in 1859 to make recommendations about the disposal of departmental records already in the PRO and to suggest ways of documenting what was destroyed.³⁰⁷ Initially it reviewed the records of the War Office and the Admiralty and achieved the opening of navy records to 1760 and the destruction of 165 tons of admiralty papers.

In 1874 Hardy requested £100,000 for a new repository block along Fetter Lane and the preservation of records again came under scrutiny. Master of the Rolls, Sir George Jessel, felt that the PRO had no authority to advise on destruction and ordered the committee to be wound up, worsening the accommodation problem.³⁰⁸ The 1877 Act (which has been discussed in chapter 1) finally empowered the PRO to destroy records. The first inspecting officers, J Redington and L O Pike, were appointed in 1880 and a Committee of Inspecting Officers to examine and schedule records was set up in 1881. Rules established the procedures.³⁰⁹ Each department drew up a Destruction Schedule which was inspected, with the records, by the Committee. The agreed Schedule was laid before Parliament. Only records to be destroyed were scheduled: those worthy of permanent preservation were not included.

William Hardy

When Hardy died in 1878, his younger brother, William Hardy, whom Cantwell characterised as 'a kindly man but an ineffectual administrator', succeeded him as Deputy Keeper.³¹⁰ Sir Thomas had made no

³⁰⁶ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 252-253.

³⁰⁷ PRO's first representative was William Lascelles, succeeded in 1866 by J Redington. Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 196-197.

³⁰⁸ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 265-266.

³⁰⁹ Inspecting Officers Committee Minute Books 1881-1958, PRO 15 and Inspecting Officers correspondence and papers 1861-1958, PRO 17, TNA.

³¹⁰ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 501.

provision for a successor and when William took over, he was not an effective Deputy Keeper. In 1885 he was encouraged by the Master of the Rolls, Baron Esher, to approach Henry Maxwell Lyte, an inspector of the HMC, as his successor: in January 1886 Hardy resigned and Maxwell Lyte succeeded.

Henry Maxwell Lyte

Maxwell Lyte was a stranger to most of the PRO staff and they much resented his arrival.³¹¹ However, he quickly established leadership of the PRO. He undertook new projects, such as the exhibition to celebrate 800 years of Domesday, made plans for a permanent museum, reformed the pay structure for the clerks and revised the publication programme. Maxwell Lyte ended the Rolls Series, preferring calendars of records in the PRO to edited texts,³¹² and, encouraged by Phillimore's *Index Library* series, introduced the Lists and Indexes series in 1892.³¹³ He also introduced a new *Guide* to the contents of the PRO edited by Scargill-Bird in 1891: the 3rd (1908) edition was arranged by provenance.³¹⁴ Maxwell Lyte modernised the Chancery Lane building, with a lift in 1889 and electric light. In 1870 Pennethorne had proposed an extension along Chancery Lane, which would have involved the demolition of the Rolls Chapel. In 1892 the foundations for the new block started but Rolls House and the Rolls Chapel stood in the way. The House was demolished but the Chapel interior was to be retained. In the event all that remained (amid great public controversy) was the original chancel arch, the stained glass and monuments, which were reassembled in the new building as part of the museum. In 1899 the judge's chambers were demolished, a garden laid out and a lodge built on Fetter Lane in 1900. Although further extensions were periodically recommended, none was ever built.³¹⁵ Maxwell Lyte was also instrumental in achieving the Public Record Office Act 1898 which revised disposal arrangements.

The 1890s were considered tranquil years for the PRO, but the peace came to an end when Welsh campaigners sought the return of records to the principality and a Royal Commission was established in 1910. The work of the Commission has been discussed in chapter 1. Unfortunately Hubert Hall, appointed from the PRO as secretary to the Commission, was thought by Maxwell Lyte to be disloyal and Maxwell Lyte refused to cooperate with the Commission's work.³¹⁶ When the war intervened, Maxwell Lyte was able to remain at the PRO and indulge his interest in antiquarian pursuits.³¹⁷ Financial constraints after the war prevented any action on the Commission's recommendations. During Maxwell Lyte's final years,

³¹¹ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 306.

³¹² Knowles: 128-129.

³¹³ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 334.

³¹⁴ Michael Roper 'The development of the principles of provenance and respect for original order in the Public Record Office' *The archival imagination: essays in honour of Hugh A Taylor* ed Barbara L Craig. Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992: 141.

³¹⁵ Ellis 'building of PRO': 25-30.

³¹⁶ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 364-365.

³¹⁷ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 382.

much of the running of the PRO devolved to A E Stamp, the PRO's Secretary, and it seemed natural that he should succeed Maxwell Lyte on his retirement in 1926.³¹⁸

A E Stamp

A E Stamp's major achievements as Deputy Keeper were his tough stance in discussions over Cabinet papers in the 1930s, during which he sought to include them fully under the PRO Acts, and his concerns for the problems of dealing with departmental records, which he felt were inadequately treated by the legislation.³¹⁹ In 1932 the Cabinet Office (which fell outside the scope of the 1877 Act) discovered that many of its papers were finding their way onto departmental files and thus into the PRO. A compromise was reached under which some papers remained on file while the Cabinet Office retained a secret and complete set.³²⁰ Stamp oversaw the administrative arrangements to enable the Master of the Rolls to carry out his duties under the Tithe Act 1936, even though he had not been consulted in advance. He continued the development of provincial repositories for administrative records, replacing the Cambridge store with a Canterbury prison in 1929. He also facilitated the 100th anniversary celebrations of the PRO in 1938, which culminated in a splendid reception in Chancery Lane in October.³²¹ Unfortunately his health had been deteriorating since 1934; in March 1938 he died.

A E Stamp had advised Lord Greene, Master of the Rolls, that Cyril Flower should succeed him as Deputy Keeper: no one was surprised except Hilary Jenkinson. According to Cantwell, Jenkinson had convinced himself that his work with the BRA, his pioneering writing on archival matters, his work abroad and his service in the PRO since 1906 fitted him for the role of Deputy Keeper, even though Flower was senior.³²² Jenkinson did, however, achieve the Secretaryship and joined the Inspecting Officers' Committee.

Wartime

Jenkinson worked on the plans for the evacuation of records in the event of war and prepared a summary list, arranged by group and class.³²³ Several locations were identified including a prison in Shepton Mallet, a workhouse in Market Harborough, Oxford Diocesan Training College and Belvoir Castle.³²⁴ In accordance with traditional practice to keep records in official custody, honorary assistant keepers were appointed. In Chancery Lane, records were moved to the lower floors and a single small search-room kept open. Fire watching from the roof became a regular duty.

³¹⁸ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 396.

³¹⁹ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 502.

³²⁰ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 414-415.

³²¹ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 424.

³²² Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 425.

³²³ Jenkinson 'Archive developments': 290.

³²⁴ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 428-429.

Staff time was taken up with war duties. Departmental salvage drives increased the work of the inspecting officers. Air raids destroyed departmental records at the War Office and Ministry of Works.³²⁵ Flower acted as Director of the Institute of Historical Research from 1939 until Galbraith took over as a full-time professor in 1944. Jenkinson was seconded in 1944 to the War Office as an Adviser on Archives to the Monuments and Fine Art and Archives Sub Commission and reported on archives in Italy, Germany and Austria.³²⁶

Jenkinson convened an interdepartmental committee to consider the PRO's storage problems and the policy for records no longer needed by departments. 'Limbo' storage (in Goodge Street deep shelter from 1946 and the former ordnance factory at Hayes, Middlesex from 1951) was established for records which might be considered for permanent retention. Discussions about the records of nationalised industries failed to result in their inclusion within the Public Record Office Acts but a conference of nationalised industries was held which recommended that they adopt PRO practices.

Flower did not resign until his 68th birthday in 1947. He continued to transcribe and edit Curia Regis rolls until his death in 1961. Jenkinson achieved his ambition to become Deputy Keeper a few months before his 65th birthday.³²⁷

Professional advances in the first century

In its first 100 years the PRO had built a modern central repository for the legal and administrative records of government, reformed the search-room facilities and established an historical culture among PRO staff. It set standards in repository design and trained skilled repair staff. It had established an adequate system for the selection and destruction of records of central government department, although the reforms suggested by the 1910 Royal Commission were not taken up until 1954.

One of the most important contributions by the PRO to historical studies was its publication programme. The Rolls Series published 253 volumes of 'Chronicles and Memorials' between 1858 and 1911.³²⁸ Publication established an editorial tradition and professional historical group among PRO staff and equipped the many scholars commissioned as editors with historical skills. The Calendars series (also begun under Palgrave and at the time a unique approach to sources)³²⁹ made public records accessible while developing the analytical and abstracting skills of the editors. A separate Calendaring Department was established in 1862.³³⁰ Preparation of editions of texts and calendars fostered historical skills: under

³²⁵ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 440.

³²⁶ H E Bell 'Archivist itinerant: Jenkinson in wartime Italy' *Essays in Memory of Sir Hilary Jenkinson* ed AEJ Hollaender. Chichester, Society of Archivists, 1962, 167-177.

³²⁷ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 443.

³²⁸ Knowles: 101.

³²⁹ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 246.

³³⁰ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 223.

Maxwell Lyte the Lists and Indexes and the new *Guide* marked a more archival focus on finding aids. Early attempts to produce finding aids (such as Thomas's *Handbook* of 1853 and T D Hardy's proposal for a 'Chronological Inventory') were based on subject arrangements rather than on modern archival principles of provenance.³³¹ Publication moved to improving finding aids to the records at the PRO, both as preparatory to publication of calendars and to provide direct assistance for searchers.³³² Scargill-Bird's *Guide* appeared in 1891: the 3rd edition in 1908 changed from an alphabetical subject arrangement to one respecting groups and classes. Giuseppi's *Guide* (begun in 1914 and published in 1923-1924) was more fully provenance-based.³³³

However, the PRO's expertise was firmly rooted in the past, developing historical rather than archival approaches for much of its first century, and it was not well equipped to face the stringencies of the Second World War or the quickly changing circumstances of post-war Britain.

The Historical Manuscripts Commission 1869 to 1945

Unlike the PRO, the HMC's role after its foundation in 1869 was to look away from central government records and their administration. The HMC had two key activities: to survey private manuscripts and to publish calendars and lists of them. Individuals and institutions holding archives (eg peers, gentry, clergy, universities, endowed foundations, municipal corporations) were approached.³³⁴ In the HMC's first year over 100 owners either sent manuscripts to Rolls House for safe keeping or invited an inspector to visit. The architect of the scheme, Romilly, had 'greatly underestimated the magnitude' of the task and volunteer editors from the PRO or the British Museum were insufficient. Two Inspectors (H T Riley and A J Horwood³³⁵ both barristers and editors for the PRO) were appointed and two more quickly followed.³³⁶

Reports and calendars

The HMC's first report in 1870 contained summaries of 77 archives. A further eight reports on 424 archives were published by 1885. This represented a major contribution to knowledge of archives for scholars.³³⁷ The first reports received a great deal of press attention and excitement. However, it soon became apparent that the original intention of a comprehensive survey of all historical records was 'quite impracticable' and from 1883 the HMC concentrated on major archives, starting with the Cecil papers at

³³¹ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 161, 215.

³³² Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 308.

³³³ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 389-390. M S Giuseppi *A guide to the manuscripts preserved in the Public Record Office* London: HMSO, 1923: v-vi.

³³⁴ Ellis 'HMC short history': 10-11.

³³⁵ T D Hardy's son in law.

³³⁶ Dr John Stuart of General Register House, Edinburgh for Scotland and Mr Gilbert of the PRO, Dublin for Ireland. Ellis 'HMC 1869-1969': 234. Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 243.

³³⁷ Brian S Smith 'The National Register of Archives and other national finding aids' *The records of the nation* ed G H Martin & P Spufford. London: British Records Association, 1990, 111-118.

Hatfield House.³³⁸ Gradually, editorial work replaced inspection and listing. The first volume of calendars was published in 1883 and publication continued at the rate of six to eight volumes a year until 1914. After the war, the publication programme resumed at a more modest level.

HMC or PRO?

The relationship between the HMC and the PRO, both in Rolls House, was close. The Royal Commission *Report* 1912 noted that ‘for all practical purposes the Commission itself may be regarded as a branch of the [Public] Record Office’.³³⁹ PRO staff were seconded as Assistant Secretary and Secretary to the HMC. For instance J J Cartwright was appointed Assistant Secretary to the HMC in 1875, rising to Secretary before 1887, when he was appointed Secretary to the PRO.³⁴⁰ He maintained both Secretaryships until his death in 1903, receiving an extra £100 a year for the HMC work.³⁴¹ His tenure saw the issue of a new Warrant in 1876 to reappoint the Commission. The Commissioners deputed the Deputy Keeper and the Master of the Rolls ‘to carry on the general work of the Commission’ and held no meetings between 1877 and 1882. In 1883 they met to record the issue of a further Warrant and again deputed the Deputy Keeper and the Master of the Rolls. In 1897 the Commissioners discussed a proposal from the Treasury to transfer the HMC’s work to the PRO entirely, but they resisted, and replied that ‘the names of the Commissioners, it is believed, inspire many owners of manuscripts with a confidence which might be wanting if the examination and reporting upon their family papers should come to be regarded merely as one of the duties of a Government Department’.³⁴²

After 1903 the posts of HMC Secretary and PRO Secretary were usually held separately. R A Roberts, at the PRO since 1872, succeeded to the HMC work in 1903.³⁴³ By 1905 Roberts was in charge of a team of 15 regular inspectors, all working part-time, and including academics, lawyers and the record agent, W J Hardy. When Roberts was appointed as Secretary to the PRO in 1912, A E Stamp took his place at the HMC.³⁴⁴ Under Stamp, the HMC’s fortunes waned: the vote dropped during the war from £1750 to £600.³⁴⁵ Difficulties were encountered with recruiting inspectors and editors. However, new concerns emerged, such as the dispersal of family papers at auction and advice on the transfer of papers to local repositories. On appointment as Deputy Keeper in 1926 Stamp gave up the role of HMC Secretary to S C Ratcliff, though he maintained a close interest in the HMC as acting commissioner.³⁴⁶ R L Atkinson became HMC

³³⁸ Ts paper by R L Atkinson on Census of Historical Manuscripts ‘written for the BRA conference in Nov 1939 but not read owing to the restriction of the programme’, HMC 1/182, TNA.

³³⁹ *First Report* 1912: 11.

³⁴⁰ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 251, 316.

³⁴¹ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 353.

³⁴² Ellis ‘HMC short history’: 15-16.

³⁴³ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 249, 353.

³⁴⁴ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 377, 381-2.

³⁴⁵ Ellis ‘HMC short history’: 20-21.

³⁴⁶ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 397, 426.

Secretary in 1938 and by 1946 most of his time was devoted to the HMC. Atkinson retired in 1954 but was immediately re-employed and remained at the HMC until his death in 1957.³⁴⁷

Surveys

The importance of survey work as a means of identifying the location of archives for scholars increased after the introduction of estates duty in 1894 which encouraged the dispersal of private manuscripts through the salerooms as private estates were broken up and sold. The First World War accelerated the dispersal. In 1920 the Commissioners again proposed a general survey 'to ascertain how much manuscript material of historical value remains unpublished', this time with voluntary assistance on a regional basis. Lord Dartmouth, a Commissioner, was Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire and chairman of Staffordshire Archaeological Society: Staffordshire was the first county to be approached.³⁴⁸ The HMC suggested to the William Salt Library, Stafford, 'some sort of general return of Historical Manuscripts in private hands in the country. We thought of proceeding county by county and asking local societies to help'. A Commissioner, R G Roberts, attended the Staffordshire Archaeological Society AGM and distributed printed forms for the returns. Miss Cornford of the Salt Library expressed the 'hope that we shall have some useful returns to send in': sadly these did not materialise and the survey did not succeed.

A second attempt at a county-by-county survey was made in 1926 after the Commission's 19th Report suggested 'a general conspectus of the historical materials in private hands in the country'. A Committee on the Census of Historical Manuscripts was set up and two county surveys were eventually completed: Surrey and Bedfordshire. In each case there was a strong personal connection. In Surrey, Hilary Jenkinson had founded the Record Society in 1913 and was its secretary, and from 1924 also its editor, until 1950.³⁴⁹ In 1926 a survey, funded by Surrey County Council, was undertaken by questionnaire.³⁵⁰ A general introduction written by Jenkinson and a series of guides to classes of records was eventually published. Between 1935 and 1938 Dr G H Fowler carried out a survey in Bedfordshire, at a cost of £154. Although the results proved disappointing, the Commissioners were sufficiently enthused 'having read the summary of Dr Fowler's Report [to] refer to a committee the question whether investigations in other counties on similar lines could usefully be undertaken'.³⁵¹

³⁴⁷ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 378, 442, 488.

³⁴⁸ Draft letter, A E Stamp, Secretary, HMC to Margaret Cornford, William Salt Library, Stafford, July 1920; letter, Cornford to Stamp, 21 July 1920; letter, R G Roberts, The Athenaeum, (a Commissioner) to Stamp, 25 Nov 1920; HMC 1/182, TNA.

³⁴⁹ J Conway Davies ed *Studies presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson* London: Oxford University Press, 1957: xvi. Proposal for a Surrey Record Society to print and index records Nov 1912, press cutting announcing the proposed Society, annual report and accounts for Society 1913 notes foundation of Society on 15 April 1913, MS Add 47/1-2, UCLL.

³⁵⁰ Blank survey forms, HMC 1/182, TNA.

³⁵¹ Atkinson on Census of Historical Manuscripts and File note, committee on Census of Manuscripts terms of reference, 1938, HMC 1/182, TNA.

Three other counties were approached: Northamptonshire (in 1931 and 1938), Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire (in 1939). In each case, although the HMC was willing to fund the survey, local problems meant that the projects failed. Joan Wake of the Northamptonshire Record Society was initially enthusiastic but following an interview with the committee, wrote refusing ‘the job the Historical Manuscripts Commission wanted me to do’, on the grounds that ‘if I went round as the Employee of a Government Commission some of them might not like it at all, the word would be passed round, and it would queer the pitch for this Society’ and ‘risk upsetting the very friendly and cordial relations which at present exist between this Society (and myself as Secretary) and the owners of private collections of manuscripts’.³⁵² Instead the Committee considered collecting ‘general information as to unpublished collections in that county’ while ‘a further effort should be made to continue the general survey of manuscripts in individual counties’.³⁵³

In Cambridgeshire it proved impossible to find a suitable surveyor for £50 a year. The Lincolnshire survey made no progress. Eventually the failure of the various attempts led the HMC to ‘the conclusion that a detailed county survey is impracticable’ and that in future, the HMC would rely ‘on the gradual accumulation of information from voluntary helpers all over the country’, to be recruited with the help of the BRA.³⁵⁴ The more summary Location List of Archives produced in 1940-41 at the request of the Ministry of Home Security for the assistance of the Regional Commissioners for Civil Defence and their local officers and based on 325 replies to a circular letter from the HMC Secretary, Atkinson, was the only immediate product.³⁵⁵ The failure of the HMC attempts to survey records systematically led the Commissioners to concentrate on private papers and those of national importance such as the correspondence of statesmen, leaving local matters to private and municipal efforts. When the Committee on the Census of Manuscripts met for the last time in February 1942, the general census was in abeyance, supplanted by other initiatives.³⁵⁶

Institute of Historical Research

The IHR supported the survey and publication work of the HMC in its quest to improve the availability of information about local and private records for scholars. In 1926 a committee ‘to consider and report on the best methods for registering the sale and tracing the migrations of important early printed books and manuscripts’ was set up after discussions at the Anglo-American Conference of Historians, organised by

³⁵² Letter from Miss Wake to R L Atkinson, 3 Dec 1938, HMC 1/182, TNA.

³⁵³ Ts committee report 1938, HMC 1/182, TNA.

³⁵⁴ Atkinson on Census of Historical Manuscripts, HMC 1/182, TNA.

³⁵⁵ Historical Manuscripts Commission and British Records Association *List of places in which accumulations of documents are normally preserved* ts, 1941, IHR. Irene Churchill, N D Hunt & H Jenkinson *The year's work in archives 1940-42* London: British Records Association, 1942: 5.

³⁵⁶ R L Atkinson, report of sub-committee on census of manuscripts, Feb 1942, HMC 1/182, TNA.

the IHR.³⁵⁷ The committee, whose members included A E Stamp, planned to ask local societies to collect information about archives on a pre-designed questionnaire and send the returns to the IHR which 'would undertake to file and make available the information received'. It also encouraged them to notify the IHR of sales of manuscripts and to promote the 'establishment of local record repositories, properly housed and staffed'.³⁵⁸ In 1928 the Anglo-American Historical Committee (the organising committee of the Conference) set up a permanent sub-committee on the Accessibility of Historical Documents and Migrations of Historical Manuscripts under the chairmanship of Dr G H Fowler.³⁵⁹ The sub-committee carried out two major surveys: the first in 1930-31 on county, borough, diocesan, cathedral and archdeaconry records,³⁶⁰ and the second in 1933-34 on local record societies, colleges, and Inns of Court.³⁶¹ A third survey, of parish records, was postponed until the BRA classification scheme was completed.³⁶² The interest of the Anglo-American Conference of Historians in local archives was one of the factors behind the establishment of the BRA, which will be discussed in chapter 5.

The IHR also proposed a survey of manuscripts in 1934 by Seymour de Ricci, who had recently carried out a similar survey in the USA.³⁶³ It considered the initial plan to include all manuscripts in both public and private collections too ambitious, and suggested a more practical first step was the 'compilation of a list of all printed catalogues of collections of manuscripts in Great Britain, both in public and in private hands, arranged under the place of deposit'. The permanent sub-committee on the Accessibility of Historical Documents was asked to supervise the project.

HMC achievements

From its foundation in 1869 the HMC sought to fulfil its objectives of making private and local records accessible to scholars by surveying them and publishing calendars and lists, complementing the historical publication work of the PRO. Throughout its life the HMC struggled with limited resources to address this dauntingly large task. The initial plan to use voluntary editors to compile a comprehensive list of private archives soon moved towards the publication of calendars of significant archives. By 1905, 15 part-time

³⁵⁷ Letter from Dr Meikle, secretary IHR to S C Ratcliff, HMC Secretary, 12 Feb 1927, HMC correspondence with IHR - Sub-Committee on the Migration of Manuscripts, 1927-1936, HMC 1/185, TNA.

³⁵⁸ Minutes 15 May 1929, HMC 1/185, TNA.

³⁵⁹ Report June 1928, minutes 15 May 1929, minutes 5 Dec 1929, HMC 1/185, TNA.

³⁶⁰ Agenda 13 Nov 1931, minutes 18 Nov 1931, HMC 1/185, TNA. Published as 'Guide to the accessibility of local records of England and Wales: part 1 records of counties, boroughs, dioceses, cathedrals, archdeacons and in probate offices' *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* special supplement no 1 (June 1932): 1-32.

³⁶¹ Agenda 10 Dec 1934, HMC 1/185, TNA. Published as 'Guide to the accessibility of local records of England and Wales: part 2 records of the Inns of Court, collegiate churches, older educational foundations, repositories approved by the Master of the Rolls, and local societies, in England and Wales' *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* special supplement no 2 (June 1934): 1-25.

³⁶² Agenda 10 Dec 1934, HMC 1/185, TNA.

³⁶³ HMC correspondence with IHR - Sub-Committee on Seymour de Ricci's scheme for a survey of manuscripts, 1934, HMC 1/186, TNA.

editors were employed. Although the HMC was a separate entity, it was in effect a branch of the PRO and its only permanent staff was a Secretary seconded from the PRO. In the 1920s and 1930s further attempts were made to carry out a general survey. Although these failed they laid the groundwork for the National Register of Archives, which emerged after the war.

The National Register of Archives, 1945-1965

The foundation of the National Register of Archives (NRA) in 1945 was one of the major outcomes of the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee, which has been discussed in chapter 1, and a key recommendation of the BRA's report on post-war dangers to records.³⁶⁴

National Register of Archives

The Master of the Rolls Archives Committee agreed in 1943 that steps be 'taken as soon as possible for the construction of a National Register of Archives'.³⁶⁵ There were strong differences of view about who might compile such a register. Atkinson, HMC Secretary, proposed that it be the HMC's responsibility. Jenkinson, representing the PRO and BRA, objected to the project being supervised by the HMC, commenting that the register would then inevitably fall under the HMC and divert it from its existing tasks.³⁶⁶ The Deputy Keeper, C T Flower, proposed a compromise: a new wing of the HMC would be set up with separate resources to create the register, 'under the direction of a special committee of Archive experts' appointed by the Master of the Rolls, and run by a Secretary, with assistants. Since the scheme was envisaged as the prelude to a National Archives Council and inspectorate, it was important that the NRA was an independent body.

Atkinson proposed that the new register make use of the list of surviving manorial records maintained by the PRO (the Manorial Documents Register) and the Regional Commissioners List.³⁶⁷ He proposed gathering information from local individuals, Regional Commissioners, societies (such as the Council for the Preservation of Business Archives and the Records Preservation Section of the BRA)³⁶⁸ and existing HMC reports, coordinated by a general editor. A scheme was drawn up in 1944 including the appointment by the Advisory Board of a Registrar (who might be seconded from the PRO or British Museum) on a

³⁶⁴ 'Interim Report to Council: Committee on Post-War Dangers to Records' July 1943, BRA file 2/6, LMA.

³⁶⁵ Minutes 20 Oct 1943, Master of the Rolls Archives Committee, Minutes 1943-49, HMC 1/214, TNA.

³⁶⁶ Minutes 19 Oct 1944, HMC 1/214, TNA. Jenkinson's view in 1945 was in contrast with his original proposal in 1943 that the register might come under the auspices of the HMC. Michael Roper, former Keeper, noted that 'It was PRO legend that Jenkinson was trying to create a job for himself in case Flower did not retire as Deputy Keeper before Jenkinson reached his 65th birthday in November 1947 (in fact Flower did retire just in time)', email to the author, 15 June 2003.

³⁶⁷ Minutes 9 Sept 1943, HMC 1/214, TNA.

³⁶⁸ The experience of the CPBA in establishing a register of business archives from 1934 and the BRA's proposals for a register in 1936 were useful precedents and will be discussed in chapter 5.

salary of £650 per annum, an assistant and clerical support. Jenkinson noted that ‘the number of professional archivists was at present so limited’ that it was improbable that anyone very senior could be found to do the work, but that the salary should be at least £600 pa, comparable with a senior provincial archivist’s pay.³⁶⁹ Later, Jenkinson remarked that a salary of £650 was too high for a ‘clerical job’, but he was overruled.³⁷⁰ The Registrar was expected to travel widely probably making 300 visits annually. Local committees would be formed to gather information. The register itself was to focus on archives which had not been reported by the HMC. It would be arranged on a county basis, with separate sections for municipal, ecclesiastical, parochial and business archives. The classification scheme used was to be based on the BRA’s scheme (which will be discussed in chapter 5). The estimated cost was £6000 for the period April 1945 to Michaelmas 1947, after which time the work would be substantially scaled down.³⁷¹ The register was to be confined to England: Wales was to be considered separately by the National Library of Wales³⁷² and a Scottish survey was to be undertaken by the Scottish Record Office.³⁷³ The Treasury approved the English scheme in January 1945.³⁷⁴

Appointment of a Registrar

The committee of experts, the National Register of Archives Directorate, was appointed in 1945. It comprised C T Flower (chairman), R L Atkinson (as secretary), Dr I Churchill (BRA), H Jenkinson, and Professor E F Jacob.³⁷⁵ V H Galbraith, Director of the IHR, declined the invitation to serve.³⁷⁶ The committee’s first business was to appoint staff, order stationery, and recruit local helpers. Jenkinson suggested approaching Dr H Thomas, recently retired Keeper of the Guildhall Library archives, as Registrar. Atkinson wrote to him suggesting that ‘it might be a congenial occupation for the early years of your retirement’. However, Thomas declined saying that the daily journey from Worthing to London was too tiring at his age (68).³⁷⁷

The committee considered two names: Lt Col George E G Malet as Registrar and Dr Kathleen Edwards as assistant.³⁷⁸ Atkinson approached Malet, then at army HQ on Salisbury Plain, who replied favourably.³⁷⁹

³⁶⁹ Minutes 20 Oct 1943, HMC 1/214, TNA.

³⁷⁰ Minutes 19 Oct 1944, HMC 1/214, TNA.

³⁷¹ Minutes 25 Aug 1944, HMC 1/214, TNA.

³⁷² Minutes 20 Oct 1943, HMC 1/214, TNA.

³⁷³ Letter from William Angus, Scottish Record Office, to R L Atkinson, HMC, 4 July 1944, HMC 1/231; letters from Angus to Atkinson, 30 July 1945, 26 Jan 1946, about funds for three years for Scottish census and appointment of C T McInnes, National Register of Archives, Scotland 1945-46, HMC 1/234; TNA.

³⁷⁴ Minutes 23 Jan 1945, HMC 1/214, TNA.

³⁷⁵ Minutes 22 March 1945, National Register of Archives Directorate, minute book 1945, HMC 1/233, TNA.

³⁷⁶ Perhaps in view of his opposition to many of the recommendations of the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee, discussed in Chapter 1.

³⁷⁷ Letters from R L Atkinson to A H Thomas, 22 March 1945 and Thomas to Atkinson, 23 March 1945, Institution of the National Register of Archives and appointment of Directorate, 1944-45, HMC 1/232, TNA.

³⁷⁸ Minutes 24 April 1945, HMC 1/233, TNA.

The committee interviewed Malet and Edwards in May, no alternative names having been proposed. Somewhat unenthusiastically, Atkinson reported that ‘though we came to no definite decision it was more or less agreed that we should appoint them both if we heard no more of any alternative candidates’.³⁸⁰ Malet wrote that ‘I would much prefer a job such as the Committee’s – one in which I am really interested and which, even if it ends in two years, will be in line with the type of work I hope to do permanently’.³⁸¹ The committee eventually ‘decided that Lt Col Malet and Dr Edwards should be recommended to the Master of the Rolls for appointment ... as Registrar and Assistant Registrar as from 1 July 1945’.³⁸²

Malet set to work with enthusiasm: Atkinson reported that his ‘zeal and work load is in excess of what was expected’.³⁸³ He steered the Directorate through the intricacies of index cards, investigating a type of ‘paramount card’ which could be mechanically sorted, reviewed the BRA classification as a basis for the register, and drafted a leaflet promoting the Register as ‘a vast Guide to Manuscript Sources covering the needs not only of professional historians but of enquirers seeking information in every field’. Malet quickly realised that the undertaking was extensive and warned the Directorate in August 1945 that it ‘might therefore take longer than expected’.³⁸⁴

Local NRA Committees

Malet began to establish local committees to assist the work of the NRA, visiting the West of England and John Rylands Library in Manchester (for the Lancashire and Cheshire committee). By July 1947 local committees had met in 17 counties, mostly new committees but some based on existing record committees of an archaeological society or county council. Local committees had to raise subscriptions to fund work. By 1951 there were 40 county committees and Malet had addressed many of their meetings, estimating that he had travelled over 30,000 miles for the Register.³⁸⁵ The meetings caused great local interest (in Brighton over 600 people attended) and produced ‘correspondence on the custody, repair or disposal of particular collections and on the appointment of County Archivists...in at least two instances this has been the decisive factor in inducing the local authority to appoint an archivist’.³⁸⁶

³⁷⁹ Letter 26 April 1945, G Malet to R L Atkinson, HMC 1/232, TNA. Malet had been educated at Harrow, did not take up an exhibition at King’s College Cambridge in 1915 because of the War, served in the Royal Artillery until 1929. Had worked at the PRO for Somerset Record Society and as editor for Eton College archives. Called up in 1939, received OBE in the Desert Campaign, invalided out from Sicily in 1944, then on light duty in UK. Copy letter R L Atkinson to Kelly, Treasury, 25 April 1945, National Register of Archives, appointment of first Registrar 1947-52, HMC 1/236, TNA.

³⁸⁰ Draft letter from R L Atkinson to Prof Jacob, 18 May 1945, HMC 1/232, TNA.

³⁸¹ Letter from G Malet to Atkinson, 28 May 1945, HMC 1/232, TNA.

³⁸² Minutes 29 May 1945, HMC 1/233, TNA.

³⁸³ Copy letter R L Atkinson to H C A Gill, Treasury, 29 Dec 1947, HMC 1/236, TNA.

³⁸⁴ Minutes 27 July, 1 Aug, 14 Aug, 4 Sept 1945, HMC 1/233, TNA.

³⁸⁵ Copy letter G Malet to R L Atkinson, 4 June 1951, HMC 1/236, TNA.

³⁸⁶ Annual report of NRA to HMC, 1946, 1947, National Register of Archives Annual Reports 1946-55, HMC 1/225, TNA.

In November 1947 the first conference of local NRA representatives was held at Stationers' Hall. Almost every English county was represented. Jenkinson, Malet, Professor Jacob and F W Brooks of Hull University College addressed the conference.³⁸⁷ The annual national conference became a popular event with regular attendances of over 300 delegates. From 1948 the NRA issued a regular bulletin about its work and issued notes for voluntary helpers and reports.

Some counties made good progress, but in spite of the enormous amount of enthusiasm for the project, reliance on unpaid volunteers in local areas once again proved a stumbling block. The complex three-stage reporting system, the complicated sub-divisions of the index, and difficulties in making archives fit into the standard forms issued by the NRA all inhibited progress.³⁸⁸ Work was reported to be at a standstill in Dorset and Derbyshire because of a lack of committee secretaries in 1949, and reports were slow to come from Devon, Durham, Nottinghamshire and Northumberland. Nevertheless, 1241 reports had been received by 1949, 688 in the previous year alone,³⁸⁹ and the numbers kept on growing: 817 in 1950, 630 in 1952, 1268 in 1953, 1203 in 1954. The local committees gradually found their own ways of surviving. In some areas (including Wiltshire, Kent, Lincolnshire) the county record office took on the work. Eventually, as county record offices became firmly established, the county committees ceased to be active.

Staffing in London

Recruiting staff to keep up the central work was difficult. Dr Edwards resigned in August 1946 for an academic post and was replaced by Dr W D Coates, a graduate of St Hilda's College, Oxford. None of the clerks stayed in post for longer than seven months and vacancies generally took several months to fill. The perpetual refrain was that low salaries meant that 'the sine qua non for any candidate... is the continued possession of private means' and that it was impossible to secure 'sufficiently intelligent and energetic clerks at Grade III or Grade II salaries'.³⁹⁰

The greatest blow was the illness of Malet. Whether or not the stress of the work contributed to his illness and subsequent death is difficult to assess, but Malet's reports to Atkinson grew increasingly anguished. In 1947 Malet complained that he was finding it difficult to manage on his salary, given that he had moved his family to London, and asked for an increase to £950. In 1949 he reported that he was coordinating 25 county committees, 200 area committees and had travelled 10,850 miles in the previous year. In 1951 he wrote a nine page letter to Atkinson. His concerns included the 'extremely serious' staffing situation, declining interest among local volunteers, his own overwork with very long hours, weekend work and frequent trips away from home from which 'I often arrive home in the early hours of the morning', and his shortage of money because of the demands of the job to maintain 'a certain standard in clothes', to have a

³⁸⁷ Proceedings of conference 17 Nov 1947, HMC 1/225, TNA.

³⁸⁸ Sargent: 7-9.

³⁸⁹ Annual report of NRA to HMC 1949, HMC 1/225, TNA.

³⁹⁰ Annual report of NRA to HMC 1951, HMC 1/225, TNA.

study and telephone at home, to subscribe to local learned societies and take the *Times*. Atkinson proposed a reorganisation and the establishment of some NRA posts but no salary increases. In April 1952 Malet underwent a serious operation. He died in August.

The original plan for the NRA had been for two or three years but it was clear to the committee from early on that the work could not be completed in this time. The Treasury acknowledged in 1947 that ‘instead of the original plan of completing the Register in a limited number of years after which the cost of maintenance was expected to be very small, the intention has now developed of continuing the compilation indefinitely so that the National Register will, in fact, become a permanent part of the Historical Manuscripts Commission’ but it declined to accept its ‘indefinite continuation’, agreeing only to a ‘temporary continuation’.³⁹¹ After Malet’s death Dr Coates succeeded as Registrar and the NRA was reorganised. Malet had largely spent his time travelling, talking to local experts and advising owners. It was felt that this was unsuitable work for a woman, so Dr Coates ran the register from London and developed the NRA as a research centre. An assistant, R P F White, who had joined the NRA in 1951 after taking the UCL archives programme, was appointed to the new post of Chief Inspector.³⁹² It was not until 1953 that the Treasury finally approved established posts for the NRA within the HMC and the Directorate ceased to meet.³⁹³

Under Dr Coates the work changed. The county committees gradually ceased to exist and their work was assimilated into the county record offices. Since 1923 the IHR had published periodic lists of accessions to repositories and in 1954 the task was transferred to the NRA.³⁹⁴ The new Royal Warrant for the HMC in 1959 enabled the NRA to be more fully integrated into the HMC and removed the ‘degree of administrative ambiguity’ which had been introduced when the Directorate ceased activity.³⁹⁵ In 1964 White succeeded Dr Coates as Registrar. By 1969 only a few committees including Oxfordshire and the West Riding of Yorkshire survived. The work of the NRA did not decline, but continued in a modified form in local record offices.

NRA 1945-1965

The foundation and work of the NRA in the immediate post-war period was central government’s most significant contribution to the new archival era. The NRA reached out to local and private archives, stimulated their development and showed an unprecedented level of central interest in local archives. The

³⁹¹ Letter from Treasury to R L Atkinson, 22 Nov 1947, HMC 1/236, TNA.

³⁹² Note on proposed staff reorganisation at HMC, Aug 1952, HMC 1/236, TNA.

³⁹³ Letter from M G Russell, Treasury to R L Atkinson, 26 Aug 1953, HMC 1/236, TNA. Ellis ‘HMC short history’: 27 states that the Directorate ceased to meet in 1950, but the NRA Annual Report 1953 refers to a Directorate meeting on 28 April 1953, HMC 1/225, TNA.

³⁹⁴ Annual report of NRA to HMC 1955, HMC 1/225, TNA. The first NRA *List of accessions to national and local repositories* was published in 1955.

³⁹⁵ Ellis ‘HMC short history’: 27.

mechanism of local committees, borrowed from the CPBA, was effective in stimulating local enthusiasm and recruiting volunteers, although without the hard work of the first Registrar, Malet, the NRA might not have become widely established. Later Registrars did not achieve the same level of local support but local committees were absorbed by, and acted as a catalyst for, county record offices. Record offices gradually undertook survey and listing for their locality, submitting the results to the NRA for central indexing. In its first 20 years the NRA established the principle of central registration of private archives as a resource for scholars and developed an administrative system for collecting information, on standard report forms. However, after an initial attempt at standardisation, the NRA failed to take a lead in developing and disseminating professional standards in archival description, concentrating instead on providing resources to scholars.

The Historical Manuscripts Commission, 1945-2003

Between 1945 and 1956 the majority of the funds and attention of the HMC went into the NRA:³⁹⁶ only three volumes of calendars were published in the decade. As Deputy Keeper, Jenkinson proposed discontinuing the calendar series and starting a new list series linked to the NRA. The Publications Subcommittee agreed but then the publication plan issued in 1958 both extended the calendar series and started a list series. Many of the new calendar volumes were prepared by local record societies.

A new Warrant 1959

It had become clear by 1956 that a National Archives Council and independent inspectorate, as recommended by the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee, would not be established and therefore the NRA could be absorbed into the HMC. Lord Evershed sought legislation to reconstitute the HMC, however, the Grigg Report and Public Records Act 1958 took precedence. In 1957 Roger Ellis was seconded from the PRO to the HMC to succeed Atkinson as the first full-time Secretary to the HMC.³⁹⁷ Ellis expanded the work of the HMC under the new Warrant issued in December 1959.

The HMC continued to enquire into the location and existence of private manuscripts, inspect them and make reports, but it also gained wider powers to inspect and advise on the preservation, storage and access to archives, and acquired responsibility from the PRO for the statutory duties of the Master of the Rolls for manorial and tithe documents. The NRA was integrated into the HMC. The Treasury vote for the records preservation activities of the BRA was paid through the HMC after 1958.³⁹⁸ Numbers of established posts increased and reliance on part-time editors reduced. The HMC moved out of the PRO into Quality Court,

³⁹⁶ Ellis 'HMC short history': 28-34.

³⁹⁷ Cantwell *PRO 1959-1969*: 9. When Ellis joined the PRO in 1934 he 'found himself in an institution where the traditions of historical scholarship ... still remained very strong' (Alan Bell 'Roger Ellis' obituary *The Independent* March 1998). He developed a strong working relationship with Jenkinson, both at the PRO and in Italy and Germany during the War.

³⁹⁸ Ellis 'HMC 1869-1969': 239.

Chancery Lane in 1959, which it continued to occupy until the formation of the National Archives in 2003. In 1962 the long-standing arrangement that the Deputy Keeper, now the Keeper, act as Executive Commissioner ended and the Commission became an independent body.³⁹⁹

The main functions of the HMC remained constant during the later 20th century. It focused on providing support to private owners and information to users, especially about 'the nature, ownership and location of collections of manuscript material of every type, outside the Public Records, that may be of value for the study of history'.⁴⁰⁰ Reports received from local record offices were filed and indexed in the NRA. A public search-room opened in 1965. A series of thematic surveys began in 1959. Some were carried out in collaboration with specialist bodies, such as the survey of sources for business history with the BAC, for science and technology with the Royal Society, and for British political history with the British Library and Nuffield College, Oxford.

A major review of the role of the NRA was undertaken by the new Secretary, Godfrey Davis, in 1973, which led to a concentration on the collection of briefer information about archives.⁴⁰¹ A new series of *Guides to sources for British history* started. The great series of detailed published reports on private papers of pre-1800 date had been wound up in 1956, although it took several more decades to complete the publication of the final volumes. The NRA indexes were also restructured and a pioneering computerisation project was begun in 1970. Computerisation was extended in the 1980s and online public access to the indexes provided in the search-room in 1989.

As well as information provision and publishing activities, the HMC carried out advisory functions. A survey was undertaken in the mid-1970s by the Advisory Council on Public Records and the HMC to identify semi-public bodies which fell outside public records legislation, with a view to extending public records protection to them. Unfortunately, in spite of proposals for a new 'protected status', this did not result in any significant improvements.⁴⁰² Other activities such as advice to private owners and custodians on the preservation of records, monitoring the sale of manuscripts, encouraging owners to consider private treaty sales and helping record offices to raise funds to purchase manuscripts (eg through the Government Purchase Grant Fund) continued. When a new trade in manorial titles developed in the 1980s the HMC tried to ensure that manorial records did not also change hands.

From 1973 historical manuscripts could be accepted in lieu of capital taxation and the HMC advised government on appropriate places of deposit. In the 1980s and 1990s the HMC took an increasing interest

³⁹⁹ Ellis 'HMC short history': 34.

⁴⁰⁰ United Kingdom. Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts *The twenty sixth report 1968-1981* London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1983: 4.

⁴⁰¹ Godfrey Davis Secretary 1972-1981, when Brian Smith succeeded him.

⁴⁰² PRO *18th report 1976*: 31.

in preservation of archives and management of local record offices. The National Manuscripts Conservation Trust was launched in 1989 as an independent charitable trust with initial funding of £300,000 over three years to fund conservation, reboxing and repair projects in local, university and specialist archives. In 1990 the HMC published *A standard for record repositories* as guidance on administration, services, storage and preservation which underpinned its inspection services and contributed to the Museums and Galleries Commission *Code of Practice* on archives held in museums.

HMC activities

The HMC provided the main central government support for local and private archives. It focused on its responsibilities to private owners through advice, listing and publication. The NRA developed as a unique central information resource for historians, enhanced after 1970 by automated searching. The staff of the HMC later became specialists in description and retrieval and contributed to professional standards developments through the ICA and NCA in the 1980s and 1990s. The HMC also provided guidance to local record offices through its inspection programme (originally begun to enable it to carry out its manorial and tithe responsibilities) which was eventually supported by the publication of *A standard for record repositories*. The HMC played a limited role in the development of the UK profession, for instance through its support for the BRA, but both the HMC and the PRO, its parent body until 1959, considered services to archival users and support for archives in the localities more important than leadership for the profession. In April 2003 the HMC amalgamated with the PRO to form the National Archives under its last Secretary, Christopher Kitching and a new warrant was issued which made the Keeper sole Commissioner.

The Public Record Office 1947-1982

As Deputy Keeper, Jenkinson seemed unwilling to accept post-war changes at the PRO.⁴⁰³ He clung on to the ‘belief that in order to deal with modern records it was necessary to have a mastery of those of the middle ages as well’.⁴⁰⁴ His interest in classification was rewarded with the publication under his editorship of the first volume of a new *Guide to the public records* in 1949.⁴⁰⁵ But, his thinking on archival matters essentially unchanged since 1922, Jenkinson effectively prevented the PRO from moving into a more modern archival phase, preferring instead to focus on traditional historical activities. He was the last of the old-style Deputy Keepers and it was only after his retirement that the PRO could finally develop a professional archival approach to its work.

⁴⁰³ Jenkinson’s presidential address ‘The future of archives in England’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 1 (1955-59): 57-61, stated that the role of archives and archivists would not change in future and that modern and ancient archives should not be separated.

⁴⁰⁴ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 502

⁴⁰⁵ Hilary Jenkinson *Guide to the public records: part 1, introductory* London: HMSO, 1949. No further volumes were published, but some sections originally intended for the *Guide* were subsequently published as PRO handbooks.

Michael Roper, a former Keeper, observed that although Jenkinson's role in the 'creation of a professional consciousness and the establishment of professional practices is undoubted', he undertook these activities in a personal capacity.⁴⁰⁶ Jenkinson's seminal text published in 1922, his work as joint secretary of the BRA from 1932-1947, his academic posts at King's College London and UCL and involvement with the establishment of the archives programme at UCL in 1947 and his support for the SoA, of which he was President, were all undertaken as part of his huge range of private interests (which also included being editor of Surrey Record Society 1913-1924, horticulture, and historical research interests from seals and tally sticks to early wallpaper).⁴⁰⁷ The PRO and local archives developed separate paths in the mid-20th century and Roper characterised the relationship by the late 1950s as 'distant and touchy'. Graduates from the university programmes were not employed at the PRO (even though PRO staff taught them), membership of the SoA was discouraged (even though Jenkinson was its president) and the PRO did not recognise its role in the wider profession (even though it made a significant informal contribution to its development).

By 1950 searchers were visiting the PRO in increasing numbers and for new purposes, including searching for evidence of UK citizenship by those of Indian and Pakistani origin under the British Nationality Act 1948.⁴⁰⁸ Use of the census increased after the inspection fee was abolished in 1952 and microfilm copies were increasingly available locally. Accommodation continued to be a problem although the acquisition of a branch repository at Ashridge Park in 1951 helped. The failure of the PRO in the inter-war years to respond to external demands or address issues concerning access, and longstanding wrangles with the Treasury over resources led to the appointment of the Grigg Committee in 1952.⁴⁰⁹ The *Grigg Report* was critical of PRO practice and finally enabled the office to move forwards with a new system for modern records and a new Act in 1958: these have been discussed in chapter 2. Jenkinson was not invited to be a member of the Committee and he found its conclusions unpalatable: he retired in 1954 before the Committee's recommendations were implemented.

David Evans as Keeper

When David Evans⁴¹⁰ succeeded Jenkinson as Deputy Keeper he was faced with the implementation of the *Grigg Report*. Under his stewardship administrative reforms were implemented, which made some expansion and change at the PRO inevitable. Evans oversaw a restructuring of the office, revisions of pay grades and an increasing number of women employees.⁴¹¹ He also managed the transition brought about by the Public Records Act 1958.

⁴⁰⁶ Roper 'The profession': 162-167.

⁴⁰⁷ MS Add 47/1-2, UCLL.

⁴⁰⁸ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 451.

⁴⁰⁹ Cantwell described Jenkinson as 'a thorn in the Treasury's flesh', 'aftermath': 286.

⁴¹⁰ Deputy Keeper 1954-1959, Keeper 1959-60.

⁴¹¹ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 482-485.

Selection before and after Grigg

Under the 1877 Act, selection was done ‘before the meaning of the transactions in question has faded from memory’ and ‘by persons having a first-hand knowledge and experience of the executive work of the Department’.⁴¹² Identifying records of value for historical purposes was difficult, since historians were not involved in selection, nor was much account taken of changing research interests. Scheduling and reviewing was undertaken within each department essentially on administrative grounds, with little involvement by the PRO Inspecting Officers, which led to a lack of standardization across government.

Commentators at the time of the *Grigg Report*’s publication identified other problems. Scheduling and reviewing were a low priority and records which ought to be open were still unreviewed in departments. The procedure for approving general destruction schedules was cumbersome. The schedules were brief and difficult to apply to heterogeneous record series: detailed appraisal was carried out by departmental officials who might not be trained in history or archives.⁴¹³ The Rules could result in whole series being retained if they contained small numbers of interesting files.⁴¹⁴

The new system of selection proposed by Grigg focused on what to keep rather than what to destroy and introduced two reviews, at five and 25 years, although ephemeral records could be destroyed earlier using ‘classified lists’.⁴¹⁵ Each department was required to appoint a Departmental Record Officer (DRO).⁴¹⁶ A new post of Records Administration Officer (initially J H Collingridge) was established at the PRO, assisted by four Inspecting Officers.⁴¹⁷ A Treasury Circular requested departments to appoint a DRO, of equivalent status to the Establishment Officer, to be responsible for the department’s records ‘from the time when they are created or first received in the Department until they are disposed of either by destruction or by transfer to the Public Record Office’.⁴¹⁸ The initial task of the DRO was to draw up a programme for reviewing existing papers and introducing the new system by 1961. In 1958 a provisional *Guide for Departmental Records Officers* was published: the recommendations of the *Grigg Report* began to establish efficient records management in central government.

Local government responses to Grigg

Local government archivists welcomed the publication of the *Grigg Report*. One commented that the *Report* ‘seeks to fulfill the desire expressed in 1851 by the Deputy Keeper that the transfer of records from

⁴¹² Grigg Report: 20.

⁴¹³ Philip E Jones, ‘The Grigg Report I: departmental records’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 1 (1955-59): 7-9. Collingridge ‘Grigg Report’: 179-184.

⁴¹⁴ Collingridge ‘Grigg Report’: 179.

⁴¹⁵ Mabbs: 181.

⁴¹⁶ Grigg Report: 32.

⁴¹⁷ Grigg Report: 50. Inspecting officers included two from the PRO, one a departmental Deputy Registrar and one an organization and methods officer.

⁴¹⁸ Letter 17 May 1956, Lord Chancellor’s file inc reports of and correspondence re Committees, 1927-1958, LCO 8/47, TNA.

departments should be made in an orderly manner⁴¹⁹ and suggested that the arrangements proposed for public records be adopted for local records. Felix Hull, Kent County Archivist, also reflected on the local impact of the *Grigg Report*.⁴²⁰ He commented on the precedence of administrative over historical requirements, although he accepted that this might be expedient. Hull noted that ‘The County Archivist still holds an anomalous position as regards modern administrative records’, since he seldom had any control over records of council departments except the Clerk’s office. In addition, a dedicated inspecting officer could not be appointed in archives with a small staff although ‘such duties [fall] naturally enough to the assistant archivist responsible for modern records’.

In some councils the publication of the *Grigg Report* was a spur to review records management arrangements. London County Council set up an inter-departmental committee to consider records problems in 1955.⁴²¹ A survey revealed widely varying practices, ranging from detailed schedules in the Comptroller’s Department to no control in others. Indiscriminate destruction to clear space took place alongside retention of duplicate sets of documents. The review recommended appointing a senior administrative officer in each department as records officer, regular review of policy and subject files, disposal schedules for routine papers and consultation with the archivist over historical value. In Kent County Council, a version of the two-tier review system was adopted. A first review was carried out by the head of department at 10 years and a second review (with an archivist advising on historical value) at 15 years.⁴²² It was difficult for the county archivist to exercise supervision over official records outside the county council, such as borough records. Although Grigg’s recommendations were not intended for local government, and no official attempt was made to disseminate good practice outside central government, the *Report* provided a source of guidance which some local archivists were keen to adopt.

Central government records management

DROs were gradually appointed in departments: at the first conference of DROs in 1968, 167 DROs and assistants from 81 departments attended.⁴²³ The PRO still had only four inspecting officers for about 120 departments. By 1968 the debate had moved on to more complex issues around the operation of second review and the difficulties of selecting records for permanent preservation, including the unevenness of practice between departments.⁴²⁴

⁴¹⁹ Jones ‘Grigg Report’: 7-9.

⁴²⁰ Felix Hull ‘The destruction of administrative records: the county’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 1 (1955-59): 41-43.

⁴²¹ Ida Darlington ‘Methods adopted by the London County Council for the preservation or disposal of modern records’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 1 (1955-59): 140-146.

⁴²² Kent system was established in 1955 and amended in 1979 to reviews at 7, 15 and 25 years: Felix Hull *Guide for officers in charge of modern county council records* Canterbury: Kent County Council, 1979: 19.

⁴²³ ‘Conference of Departmental Record Officers’ *Archives* 8: 40 (1968): 179.

⁴²⁴ Mabbs: 180-184.

In parallel with the historical and archival approach exemplified in the 19th century Acts and the *Grigg Report*, government records were also affected by the reform of registry practice as part of more general civil service reform. Following the First World War, the Bradbury Committee investigated the use of civil service manpower, including registry staff.⁴²⁵ After the Second World War a Treasury Organisation and Methods Directorate report on registries in fourteen government departments recommended decentralisation of registry services. In the 1980s the Fulton Committee examined the structure, recruitment and management of the civil service and included consideration of record storage space and costs but ‘an opportunity was lost to apply the records management lessons learnt a generation earlier in the United States to the British Civil Service’. Records management services were among those targeted for contracting out under the government’s market testing programme in the 1990s. These developments reflected the division between archivist-records managers and administrator-records managers in the late 20th century. Kelvin Smith noted that Grigg and Wilson did not affect current records of government, only the manner in which archives were selected. He suggested that the PRO should advise government departments directly on registry management and that ‘records managers ought to be in a position to give advice to registries. In central government... records and registries have been viewed as separate functions, but of course they are both integral and co-ordinated parts of records management’.⁴²⁶

Public Records Act 1958

The Public Records Act 1958, discussed in chapter 2, restyled the Deputy Keeper as Keeper, the Master of the Rolls became chairman of the new Advisory Council on Public Records and public records responsibilities transferred to the Lord Chancellor.

For the first time, central government records legislation established an official relationship with the custodians of local records, through the places of deposit facility established by s4 of the 1958 Act. The Lord Chancellor’s Office wrote to local authorities to explain how it would affect them.⁴²⁷ Evans, now Keeper, gathered information about the records, their depositors, storage conditions, provisions for public access, the existence of guides or lists and whether a qualified officer was employed. He also invited repositories to apply to be appointed as a place of deposit. The survey revealed a very mixed picture of provision. Only a few inspections were made as the PRO felt it was well enough informed about local offices through the BRA and SoA: the Lord Chancellor’s Office recommended that ‘periodic visits of inspection should be made in future’. Over 80 repositories and libraries were appointed by the Lord Chancellor on the recommendation of the Advisory Council. In 1964 a dedicated post of liaison officer was

⁴²⁵ John Simpson ‘These valuable treasures: changing attitudes in the British and United States government services over the past four decades, as reflected in the management of official records’ *Records Management Bulletin* 31 (1989): 9-13.

⁴²⁶ Kelvin Smith ‘Records appraisal’ Society of Archivists Records Management Group *Records management 10: proceedings of a one-day seminar held at the Westgate Hotel, Newport, Gwent, 22 November 1985* np: Society of Archivists, 1987: 59.

⁴²⁷ Nicol: 142. Cantwell *PRO 1959-1969*: 5, 13.

created for Collingridge, who had retired as Records Administration Officer, to oversee the appointments.⁴²⁸ His appointment represented the first official acknowledgement of the PRO's responsibilities towards local archives and he initiated discussion with local archivists about the principles of selection and the basis on which appointments of places of deposit should be made.⁴²⁹

The work of the new Advisory Council got under way. Initially there was some uncertainty over the extent of its powers to advise the Lord Chancellor on extended closures of records.⁴³⁰ The first instrument approving extended closures was drawn up by the PRO and signed by the Lord Chancellor without reference to the Council. After its November 1959 meeting, Lord Evershed, the Master of the Rolls, wrote on behalf of the Council asking 'whether we should not be consulted before these schedules were signed'. After a long discussion the Lord Chancellor agreed to inform the Council of proposals and consider any suggestions that it might make.

Evans initiated the publication of office lists on microfilm.⁴³¹ However, he cancelled plans for a new *Guide* in the form proposed by Jenkinson, preferring the less costly option of an updated edition of Giuseppe's *Guide*, eventually published in 1963.⁴³²

A new PRO?

In the late 1950s pressure was growing both on storage for records and on accommodation for readers. *Grigg* had proposed an extension to the accommodation at Ashridge or Hayes while the Advisory Council recommended a new search-room in central London. Evans developed plans for an extension on Fetter Lane. However, his successor as Keeper, Stephen Wilson,⁴³³ disliked the plan and considered other solutions, preferring an extension on the roof of Chancery Lane, which in the end proved impossible to build.⁴³⁴ Wilson did not settle the question of new accommodation, but he was instrumental in reforming the production of documents system and for the first time inviting readers to comment on PRO services. He also sought to modernise staffing structures, to accelerate promotions among younger staff and undertook a series of management and costing reviews to obtain better control over budgets.⁴³⁵

A peculiar incident occurred in 1962 when Wilson was attacked by the BRA, which criticised the direction in which the office was going, the facilities offered to researchers, retrenchments in the publications programme and, in particular, approval of the Principal Probate Registry as a place of deposit which set a

⁴²⁸ Cantwell *PRO 1959-1969*: 43-44.

⁴²⁹ John Collingridge 'Liaison between local record offices and the Public Record Office in the light of the Public Records Act 1958' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 2 (1964): 451-457.

⁴³⁰ Cantwell *PRO 1959-1969*: 15-16.

⁴³¹ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1959*: 496.

⁴³² Cantwell *PRO 1838-1959*: 477.

⁴³³ Keeper 1960-1966.

⁴³⁴ Cantwell *PRO 1959-1969*: 35-37.

⁴³⁵ Cantwell *PRO 1959-1969*: 42-43.

precedent for other departments.⁴³⁶ Although not an official body, the BRA had great influence and a deputation put its case to Lord Evershed.⁴³⁷ The Lord Chancellor's Office also became involved. Underlying the opposition was hostility by medieval and early modern historians to the focus of the PRO under Wilson on 20th century records and relative neglect of publication of texts and calendars, together with internal concerns about the appointment of places of deposit.⁴³⁸ Luckily for Wilson, the reforming judge Lord Denning succeeded Evershed as Master of the Rolls. He felt that the BRA had no authority to remove a head of department and after some further discussions, the BRA withdrew its report,⁴³⁹ although grumbling in the academic community continued.⁴⁴⁰

Wilson also had to deal with the recommendations of the Denning Report on Legal Records in 1966 (discussed in chapter 2) and the impending changes to the 50 year rule under the 1967 Act. Wilson was in broad agreement with Denning's recommendations, but critical representations on the report (especially on the proposal to destroy post-1858 original wills) resulted in it being referred to the Advisory Council before further action could be taken. In the event, Wilson's resignation in 1966 in order to take up a post at the Cabinet Office left these matters to his successor, Harold Johnson.⁴⁴¹

Johnson had immediately to deal with accommodation. Pressure from reader numbers had become acute during the 1960s: in 1960 records were open to 1909, in 1962 the 1861 census was released, in 1966 First World War records and records up to 1922 were opened, by 1968 the records of the 1930s were available as the 30 year rule was introduced. In 1927 the PRO's 20th century holdings had comprised about 1% of the total, by the 1960s they comprised about 30%.⁴⁴² New types of users with new demands were emerging.⁴⁴³ The PRO undertook a study of its users in 1967 which showed a major move towards interest in 20th century history, partly as a result of the opening of such records, but also because of the growth of contemporary history in British and overseas universities.⁴⁴⁴ By 1967, over 50% of users were academic (university teachers, writers, students, school teachers), while 40% were individuals pursuing a hobby or private interest. Only 1% were lawyers and 6% record agents, who had originally made up the bulk of researchers.

Queues for seats became a regular feature in 1966 and 1967. Accommodation in the Land Registry building in Lincoln's Inn Fields, backing on to Portugal Street, became vacant and a search-room for 210 readers

⁴³⁶ Council minutes, 2 Oct 1962, 6 Nov 1962, BRA Signed minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

⁴³⁷ Evershed was BRA president, Master of the Rolls and chairman of the Advisory Council and the HMC.

⁴³⁸ Cantwell *PRO 1959-1969*: 44-46.

⁴³⁹ Cantwell *PRO 1959-1969*: 50.

⁴⁴⁰ For instance, Herbert G Nicholas 'The public records: the historian, the national interest and official policy' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 3 (1965): 1-6.

⁴⁴¹ Keeper 1966-69.

⁴⁴² J R Ede 'The Public Record Office and its users' *Archives* 8: 40 (1968): 186.

⁴⁴³ E K Timings 'The archivist and the public' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 2 (1960-64): 179-183.

⁴⁴⁴ Ede 'users': 187-189.

using the census and non-parochial registers was opened in 1968,⁴⁴⁵ followed in 1969 and 1970 by search-rooms for readers consulting Foreign Office and Colonial Office records; the Conservation Department also moved there. Johnson accepted that further developments in Chancery Lane were unlikely and that a new site was needed. The Advisory Council considered a possible site at Kew in 1968 but felt that this was too far out of town. A site in Southwark was considered too small. A proposal to build a second PRO at Milton Keynes, which would have satisfied government policy to relocate departments out of greater London, raised strong opposition from the Advisory Council and led in 1969 to government approval of a new PRO building at Kew.⁴⁴⁶ It was to have accommodation for 750 readers, planned to be open by 1975 with 200 staff and further developments on the site were envisaged.⁴⁴⁷

1970 to 1982

Several issues dominated the period 1970 to 1982: increased awareness of user needs, accommodation (the move to Kew took place while Jeffery Ede⁴⁴⁸ was Keeper), and gradual but significant changes in publication priorities, partly driven by computer indexing developments.

In 1970 the first market research survey of readers needs was commissioned.⁴⁴⁹ Although 83% of researchers were academics, students or professional researchers,⁴⁵⁰ and 60% of enquiries were work or business related, 25% of readers were pursuing leisure interests including genealogy.⁴⁵¹ Experimental Saturday morning opening of the census search-room in Portugal Street in 1971⁴⁵² helped to accommodate increased demand, which rose by 14% in 1972 after the release of the 1871 census⁴⁵³ and of Second World War records to 1945.

Building at Kew began in 1973 and, after some delays, was completed in May 1977. Staff and 45 miles of records from Chancery Lane, Portugal Street, Ashridge and the British Transport Historical Records Office moved to Kew. The new building had many modern facilities including computer terminals for ordering documents in the reading rooms and a paternoster document delivery system.⁴⁵⁴ A new reader ticket system was introduced. HM Queen visited the new building in 1978.⁴⁵⁵ At the time it was assumed that Chancery Lane would continue to operate but within two years, cuts in government expenditure led to proposals to

⁴⁴⁵ Cantwell *PRO 1959-1969*: 87.

⁴⁴⁶ Cantwell *PRO 1959-1969*: 92.

⁴⁴⁷ 'The new PRO' *Archives* 9: 41-44 (1969-70): 160.

⁴⁴⁸ Keeper 1970-78.

⁴⁴⁹ *PRO 12th report 1970*: 2, 12-14.

⁴⁵⁰ Remaining 7% civil servants, 10% private individuals.

⁴⁵¹ Remaining 15% combination.

⁴⁵² *PRO 13th report 1971*: 1.

⁴⁵³ *PRO 14th report 1972*: 1.

⁴⁵⁴ 'Opening of PRO, Kew' *Archives* 13: 57-60 (1977-78): 146.

⁴⁵⁵ *PRO 20th report 1978*: 1.

shut Chancery Lane.⁴⁵⁶ The new building was generally well received, although problems with the automated production system led to delays in document production and faults in the air conditioning resulted in extended closures of the reading rooms.⁴⁵⁷

Editorial and publication priorities in the 1970s were partly driven by the advent of computer assisted indexing and by changes in readers' interests. A trial of computer indexing with Newcastle University in 1970, was followed by a pilot with the Institution of Electrical Engineers using the INSPEC journal abstracting software to create class-level descriptions.⁴⁵⁸ The PROSPEC database enabled the new *Guide* to be updated regularly, keeping pace with changes in central government organisation, as well as keeping repository location lists up to date. In 1974 PRECIS indexing software was investigated.⁴⁵⁹ New kinds of publications were introduced, such as the Museum pamphlets series from 1972, handbooks about 20th century records, including those of interest to social scientists,⁴⁶⁰ and co-operative ventures in areas of special expertise, such as PRO records in oriental languages.⁴⁶¹ The Advisory Council's Publications Committee expressed concern about the reduction of resources going into traditional editorial publications, fearing a loss of medieval and early modern research skills.⁴⁶²

A W Mabbs⁴⁶³ became Keeper in 1978 and faced both the appointment of the Wilson Committee to enquire into the workings of the public records legislation and cuts in government spending. Since the *Grigg Report* in 1954, PRO staff had grown from 171 to 418, PRO holdings had doubled, 200 places of deposit had been appointed and reader numbers now averaged 400 daily, up from about 80 a day in 1954.⁴⁶⁴ However, the PRO faced a funding cut of 2½% in 1979 and 10% in 1980: in response, a feasibility study group was established which recommended moving public services to Kew and closing Chancery Lane. When the *Wilson Report* was published in 1981 it was considered to be flawed, was not endorsed by government nor were many of its recommendations implemented and it had little specific impact on the public records system, as has been discussed in chapter 2. However, Wilson did underline the significance of records management in government and stimulated a review of records practices in many departments.⁴⁶⁵

Other issues also assumed importance by the 1980s. One long-running project was the preservation of 'machine-readable' records in a data archive. In 1968 a working party to consider the selection and

⁴⁵⁶ Cantwell *PRO 1959-1969*: 129-130.

⁴⁵⁷ *PRO 26th report 1984*: 1.

⁴⁵⁸ *PRO 13th report 1971*: 7.

⁴⁵⁹ *PRO 16th report 1974*: 6.

⁴⁶⁰ *PRO 13th report 1971*: 5.

⁴⁶¹ With the British Academy, Turkish 1660-1703, Chinese 19th century: *PRO 14th report 1972*: 7.

⁴⁶² *PRO 14th report 1972*: 39.

⁴⁶³ Keeper 1978-82.

⁴⁶⁴ *PRO 20th report 1978*: 2.

⁴⁶⁵ *PRO 25th report 1983*: 14.

preservation of records ‘processed by computers’ was announced,⁴⁶⁶ and a survey of machine-readable records in government departments was commissioned in 1970.⁴⁶⁷ A two-stage review system (of information content and systems) was initiated in 1974⁴⁶⁸ and consultations on a long-term record storage medium led in 1975 to a decision to standardise on the ICL 2900 magnetic tape format.⁴⁶⁹ A survey of 360 academic historians about possible uses of machine-readable records elicited an enthusiastic response, and calls for improvements in sampling techniques, early release of anonymised data, and provision of magnetic copies of data for local processing.⁴⁷⁰ The PRO appointed two specialist staff and converted 11 sample files to the standard preservation format in 1977.⁴⁷¹ In 1980 a report recommended establishing a machine-readable data archive based on magnetic tape technology,⁴⁷² but instead a pilot project based on optical disk technology followed in 1985-87⁴⁷³ and draft principles of selection for ‘computer-readable’ public records were issued.⁴⁷⁴

The PRO 1947-1982

In the period 1947 to 1982 the PRO gradually transformed itself from a scholarly, historical institution and laid the foundations of a modern archival organisation. Jenkinson was the last traditional Deputy Keeper: the *Grigg Report* and Public Records Act 1958 propelled the PRO into the late 20th century. Wilson, in particular, instituted reforms in internal management and staffing structures which enabled the modern PRO to grow.

A systematic approach to records selection in central government was introduced during the 1960s, even beginning to address machine-readable records after 1968 (although no proper solution was implemented until the 1990s). Gradually the PRO became involved in advising government departments on records management through the system of DROs, and the Records Administration Officer and his inspectors.

The PRO also began to establish a formal relationship with local record offices, building on the provision to appoint places of deposit with the post of Liaison Officer in 1964, which provided a valuable source of advice for local archives. Some local authority records management services were also influenced by *Grigg*. Ede was president of the SoA while he was Keeper.

The PRO’s holdings and its researchers increasingly concentrated on 20th century records. The PRO took more interest in the needs of its users and responded to the increase in leisure and genealogical researchers

⁴⁶⁶ Aidan Lawes *Chancery Lane 1377-1977, the strong box of the Empire* Richmond: PRO, 1996: 71.

⁴⁶⁷ PRO 12th report 1970: 9.

⁴⁶⁸ PRO 16th report 1974: 8.

⁴⁶⁹ PRO 17th report 1975: 9.

⁴⁷⁰ PRO 17th report 1975: 36-38.

⁴⁷¹ PRO 19th report 1977: 9.

⁴⁷² PRO 22nd report 1980: 6.

⁴⁷³ PRO 27th report 1985: 10.

⁴⁷⁴ PRO 30th report 1988-89: 4.

with new types of publications and longer opening hours. Pressure on accommodation for readers and for records became acute in the 1960s, eventually resulting in the decision to build a new PRO at Kew (which opened in 1977). The PRO adopted more archival activities, such as improving finding aids for on-site searchers, the use of automation in description and archive management, and the management of machine-readable records and reduced the effort put into historical, scholarly publication (to the periodic dismay of academic historians).

The Public Record Office 1982-2003

In 1982 G H Martin, professor of history at Leicester University, was appointed Keeper. He was instrumental in rebuilding the PRO's relationships with the academic community, and with government after the Wilson Report, while also promoting the PRO to a wider public through the celebrations of 900 years of the Domesday Book in 1986 and the 150th anniversary of public records legislation.⁴⁷⁵ Martin held the PRO steady through a period of external change, such as the Local Government Act 1985 which disrupted archives in metropolitan areas, publication of national archives policy papers by the Association of County Archivists and other groups, the Data Protection Act 1984, decentralisation of government records management branches to the regions⁴⁷⁶ and increasing sophistication of computers in use in government departments (including the PRO). Clearer aims for the PRO were introduced which identified its multiple roles as the guardian of the nation's archives, a government department providing services to other departments and a public service institution.⁴⁷⁷

An increasingly important feature of the PRO's work was the relationship between it and local and specialist archives. Martin was chairman of the BRA, providing a link with archivists and users of local archives. In 1982 Alexandra Nicol became liaison officer and initiated some important projects.⁴⁷⁸ The Hospital Records Project was a collaboration between the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine and the PRO to survey hospital records held locally and create a unified national finding aid. Nicol's role also extended to the arrangements for public records not deemed worthy of retention in the PRO which were presented to other record offices. Inspection ensured that places of deposit were of satisfactory standard and provided local archivists with expert advice. Frequently local councils responded positively to criticism and advice and either upgraded buildings or provided new buildings to the required standard.

Roper and 'Next Steps'

When Michael Roper, who had served the PRO since 1959, was appointed Keeper in 1988 he inherited a PRO utterly different from that left by Jenkinson in 1954. The PRO now accepted its role as a leader for the

⁴⁷⁵ PRO 30th report 1988-89: 3.

⁴⁷⁶ Eg DHSS records centre moved from London to Nelson, Lancs: PRO 29th report 1987: 6.

⁴⁷⁷ PRO 28th report 1986: 40-41.

⁴⁷⁸ Nicol: 139-148.

archival profession; it participated in the affairs of national and international archival associations; it adopted innovative approaches to archival automation through a centralised Records Information System; it sought publicity for its activities; mounted regular exhibitions (including the hugely successful Domesday celebrations); it had a state-of-the-art repository; and served 120,000 readers annually with over 400 staff.⁴⁷⁹ Within government it provided advice and training in records management, including its DROs conference.⁴⁸⁰ Under Roper, the machine-readable data archive plans using optical disk progressed; the Friends of the PRO group was established to co-ordinate volunteers and organise study days and visits; educational services began to develop; a new repository at Kew was planned and commercial and electronic publications were considered.⁴⁸¹

A major preoccupation for Roper was the Next Steps 'efficiency scrutiny' in 1990, which has been discussed in chapter 2. In 1991 the scrutiny report proposed that the PRO should become an executive agency with greater freedom to manage its affairs, headed by a chief executive and Keeper.⁴⁸² It also recommended a single grading structure for curatorial and administrative staff; longer opening hours; more competitive reprographic services; building an extension at Kew for the records from Chancery Lane; retaining a central London reading room; and continuing free access to public records (although this was reviewed in 1993)⁴⁸³. In April 1992 the PRO became an executive agency under its new Keeper, Sarah Tyacke.

The PRO as a leader for the archive community

In the decade following agency status for the PRO, the foundations built by Martin and Roper and the freedoms provided by becoming an agency, enabled Tyacke to establish a new approach to the national archives. Although it is too soon to assess the achievements, some milestones can be identified. Internally, new management and strategic planning systems and a total reorganisation of the office's structure and staffing provided the flexibility and strong leadership needed to adapt to new challenges and to become a more responsive organisation.⁴⁸⁴ Public access became a priority: regular reader satisfaction surveys were introduced,⁴⁸⁵ internet services began in 1995,⁴⁸⁶ and in 1997 the Family Records Centre was opened in Clerkenwell with the Office for National Statistics to provide access to microfilm of census, wills and the indexes of births, marriages and deaths, formerly at Somerset House and St Catherine's House.⁴⁸⁷ These

⁴⁷⁹ PRO 28th report 1986: 1, 40-41, 29th report 1987: 1, 2, 20,

⁴⁸⁰ PRO 29th report 1987: 6.

⁴⁸¹ PRO 30th report 1988-89: 4, 11, 42, 31st report 1989-90: 36-37, 32nd report 1990-91: 3.

⁴⁸² PRO 32nd report 1990-91: 3-4.

⁴⁸³ PRO 36th report 1994-95: 29.

⁴⁸⁴ PRO 34th report 1992-93: 9-10.

⁴⁸⁵ PRO 34th report 1992-93: 17.

⁴⁸⁶ PRO 37th report 1995-95: v.

⁴⁸⁷ PRO 38th report 1996-97: v.

changes were reflected in the make-up of the Advisory Council, which appointed a ‘senior archivist ... to provide an independent professional view’ and non-academic users.⁴⁸⁸

At the same time the major building project at Kew led, by December 1996, to the removal of the PRO to Kew and the closure of the Chancery Lane building.⁴⁸⁹ The new building provided much improved storage and outstanding conservation facilities. Reader services were significantly extended with enlarged reading rooms, a new shop and restaurant and a schools visit room. Innovative use of internet-delivered services, including the 1901 census on-line, digitised documents (PRO Online), archival catalogues (Archives Direct 2001), and the education service, the Learning Curve, gradually revolutionised services to users.⁴⁹⁰

Tyacke was well aware of the need for the PRO to engage with government. She highlighted the role it could play in the implementation of freedom of information (initially in the release of records and later in effective records management services)⁴⁹¹ and as a leader for electronic government and digital records initiatives.⁴⁹² Digital archives projects were finally implemented at the PRO for datasets and office documents in 1997.⁴⁹³ Part of the PRO’s ‘modernising government’ agenda was a shift from supervising selection of records in departments to leadership in the management of current and non-current records across government.⁴⁹⁴ In 1998 the PRO’s first acquisition policy was introduced, following widespread consultation, and operational selection policies across themes and historical periods were introduced to guide selection.⁴⁹⁵ Projects such as Moving Here and Pathways to the Past engaged new audiences and met government objectives for social inclusion and diversity.⁴⁹⁶

The PRO also became a leader for the archival profession. It invested in the development of new techniques for archival description, establishing a methodology for retroconversion of catalogues, helping to develop the encoding standard EAD and to train UK archivists in its use, and playing a role on the NCA’s Network Policy Committee.⁴⁹⁷ It hosted the Access to Archives project (A2A) which sought to build a network of online catalogues for regional and local archives across the UK.⁴⁹⁸ The PRO developed a methodology for mapping the archival resources of the UK and contributed to the development of standards which underpinned its archive inspection services. The culmination of these, and many other, activities,

⁴⁸⁸ PRO 33rd report 1991-92: 40.

⁴⁸⁹ Chancery Lane was officially re-opened in 2002 as the library for King’s College, London.

⁴⁹⁰ PRO 44th report 2002-03: 22, 43rd report 2001-02: 5, 40th report 1998-99: vi, 3.

⁴⁹¹ PRO 34th report 1992-93: 7, 35th report 1993-94: 7, 40th report 1998-99: 20.

⁴⁹² PRO 35th report 1993-94: 5, 36th report 1994-95: 26, 37th report 1995-96: vi, 38th report 1996-97: 9.

⁴⁹³ PRO 38th report 1996-97: 10.

⁴⁹⁴ PRO 39th report 1997-98: 19.

⁴⁹⁵ PRO 39th report 1997-98: 18.

⁴⁹⁶ PRO 44th report 2002-03: 4.

⁴⁹⁷ PRO 39th report 1997-98: 28, 40th report 1998-99: 3-5.

⁴⁹⁸ PRO 40th report 1998-99: 6.

was the formation of the National Archives in 2003 which provided for the possibility of a truly national archival service in the 21st century.

Conclusion

The national institutions in the 19th century developed as historical, not archival, organisations. PRO Clerks and Assistant Keepers (described by Levine as ‘the first truly professional historians’)⁴⁹⁹ pursued interests in scholarly publication. Much of the repository work, including binding and repair, was left to a class of employee known as Workmen. Use of public records was restricted and searchers were mostly antiquarians, lawyers and record agents. Activities which later became seen as archival, such as selection, did not emerge until after 1880 and were in any case historically-orientated since the records concerned were from the 18th century and earlier. The first three Deputy Keepers had a preference for historical work and were constrained by inadequate legislation: however building a central repository for public records to modern standards with search-room facilities was a major achievement.

Maxwell Lyte was a modernising Deputy Keeper who introduced a more archival approach to publication and completed the Chancery Lane building. The Royal Commission of 1910 ought to have been a pivotal point, and its recommendations were generally sound, but personal animosities and, perhaps, declining enthusiasm on the part of the Deputy Keeper, combined with the intervention of the First World War, prevented the PRO from making the major shift needed to embrace the archival challenges of the 20th century. This stance was supported by the HMC, which had a clearer mandate than the PRO to foster regional and local archival developments. HMC and PRO regarded themselves as essentially historical, scholarly bodies and neither took up the challenge of leading and developing the British archival profession in the period before the Second World War. The PRO lacked interest in the rest of the archive community and did not acknowledge its role as a leader for the profession. As a result, local archival development followed a separate path without the benefit of central expertise.

Jenkinson was oddly contradictory. In a personal capacity he was a great force to stimulate the archive profession. As secretary of the BRA his report on post-war dangers to records led directly to the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee and thus the foundation of the NRA. But as Deputy Keeper, his unwillingness to let the PRO evolve its archival practices beyond the thinking of the early 20th century meant that the PRO, HMC and NRA remained historically focused. Even in the field of archival education, to which Jenkinson had devoted so much time and energy, progress was not possible until after his death in 1961.

⁴⁹⁹ Levine: 22.

The post-war changes leading to the PRO Act 1958 and Keepership of David Evans brought the PRO into a distinctly different era. For the first time significant staff resources were devoted to selection and inspection. The explosion of paperwork and influx of records caused immense physical pressure on repository space and, with the growth of users, resulted in the building of the new PRO at Kew in the 1970s. The *Grigg Report* of 1954 provided expert guidance to central government and was adopted by local archivists who faced similar problems in managing modern records. Until then local archivists seemed unaware of PRO activities, for example, the Society of Archivists *Journal* did not carry an article on a central government topic until 1955.⁵⁰⁰ In 1964 the establishment of the Liaison Officer post confirmed the growing importance of the local/national relationship and was a signal that the PRO acknowledged some responsibility for local progress and the need to effect official communication. Roper has noted that this facilitated valuable, though informal, links between PRO and local archives on wider issues than just deposited public records, especially under proactive liaison officers (eg Pat Barnes and Alexandra Nicol).⁵⁰¹ A third new factor which emerged in the 1960s was the broadening of user interest. Wilson and Johnson faced increasingly acute pressure from reader numbers as records were opened earlier and new types of users interested in historical and genealogical subjects emerged. The PRO was finally forced to become more outward facing and to engage with those outside central government who used its services.

The PRO was an archival pioneer in some of its activities. These included the design of repository buildings (both the original Chancery Lane building and Kew), conservation and repair work (where PRO staff helped local record offices to establish their units from the 1940s and to found the SoA training scheme), principles of archive administration such as provenance, creation of finding aids (from calendars to Encoded Archival Description) and records management (from the destruction schedules created after the 1877 Act, to the development of limbo stores in the 1940s and management of digital records in the 1990s).⁵⁰² Some early progress was made with the management of machine-readable records and the development of automated systems to manage archives (including PROSPEC) in the 1970s. The PRO was also proactive in developing its links with national archives abroad, for instance through the International Council on Archives.

In the 1960s and 1970s the national institutions seemed to be clinging on to their old traditions and failing to embrace the new. The separation of the HMC and PRO after 1959 was retrograde. It led to confusion in government and among the archival community about the locus of responsibility for archives and prevented any national view from emerging. The HMC did not exploit its mandate (including responsibility for manorial and tithe records) to set standards for the archival community. The NRA provided useful services to scholars but other HMC activities were undertaken cautiously, lacking the funds and the will to provide a

⁵⁰⁰ Society of Local Archivists *Bulletin* started 1947. Jones 'Grigg Report': 7-9. Jarvis 'Grigg Report': 10-13.

⁵⁰¹ Roper 'The profession': 166.

⁵⁰² Roper 'The profession': 162-167.

lead in professional matters across the country. At the same time the PRO was slow to recognise its role in the archival community. It did not display the will, lacked obvious legislative legitimacy, and did not have sufficient funds to develop wider archival leadership. A proposal to create a national 'directorate' for archives was rejected by the HMC in 1981 as impractical and lacking wide support.⁵⁰³ Little progress was made towards a unified national archive services until the end of the 20th century.

Martin and, in particular, Roper began the changes which led to the transformation of the PRO into an executive agency and the appointment of Sarah Tyacke in 1992. The professional leadership role of the PRO then developed significantly, particularly in technical areas such as the management of digital records and standards for the description of records (notably Encoded Archival Description and the Access to Archives project). In April 2003 the HMC and PRO finally came together to form a new National Archives, under the guidance of a joint Advisory Council for National Archives and Records. The National Archives offered the possibility of a unified system but for it to succeed it needed legal legitimacy. Proposed new national record and archives legislation under discussion in 2003-04 must be extended to all public bodies both to enable FoI to operate effectively but also to rationalise local archive and records provision. The ideal pattern is national legislation, supervised by TNA, with an obligation on all public bodies to provide for and fund their archives and records (including public records deposited locally), but allowing local authorities to determine how best to deliver services locally. Standards should be set by TNA and services subject to its inspection and approval, but this would only be effective while TNA is responsive to professional needs. If TNA retreated to a limited central government view or was unhelpfully prescriptive about standards (for instance insisting on a standard pattern of delivery) the system would fail. The role of the Advisory Council may be an important balancing factor, but its membership would have to be revised in the light of its new role, especially if it became involved in negotiations about standards between the various interested parties. In the longer term ways of ensuring that the new national archive system remains robust and responsive will need to be developed. Gradually the remote (on-line) delivery of services will reduce the logic of record storage in county record offices, especially as the underlying framework of local government shifts repeatedly. In future, regional archives locally managed or even managed directly by TNA might provide a more viable option.

⁵⁰³ HMC *Twenty sixth report*: 18.

Chapter 4

Diversity of Provision: local and specialist archives

Many local authorities, especially cities, valued their archives and records from an early period,⁵⁰⁴ and libraries acquired significant manuscripts from the early 19th century, but the modern local record office as we know it today did not begin to emerge until the end of the 19th century. This chapter examines the development of local record offices in cities and counties and also more briefly considers the development of business archives and specialist repositories. It seeks to determine whether these developments led to a homogeneous professional work group emerging.

Central government took little interest in local archives in the 19th century, for these records lay in the shadow of national public records policy including the foundation of the PRO in 1838 and the HMC in 1869. The Record Commission (1800-1837) focused on central public records and, according to Ede, the legislators saw no role for local record offices.⁵⁰⁵ Although, as Gray noted, the Commission of 1831 investigated municipal, diocesan and county records, and the HMC improved access to private manuscripts and local archives.⁵⁰⁶

And yet, in a number of localities, significant provision was made for the preservation of archives. Local initiatives sometimes benefited from the national framework, but were more often the result of individual enthusiasms. The 1880s saw burgeoning interest in local record publications, the foundation of local antiquarian and record societies and a growth in genealogy.⁵⁰⁷ The study of local history developed and stimulated awareness of archival sources. Archaeological societies (such as Suffolk in 1848 and Yorkshire from 1870) collected manuscripts and set up libraries and museums. A few record societies expanded beyond publishing to acquisition, including Northamptonshire, Lincoln and Norfolk.⁵⁰⁸ The ‘great revolution in academic history’ was driven by printed historical sources (such as the Rolls Series from 1858) and contributed to a more analytical approach to sources and their management.⁵⁰⁹ Local authorities, in a period of change, became aware of their own history and records.

The *Report on Local Records* 1902 and Royal Commission *Third Report* 1919 recognised the importance of records for the administration of local government and for the study of local and national history. The

⁵⁰⁴ For example, Bristol issued an ordinance in 1381 which required the archives to be kept in the Guildhall and they were moved in the 16th century to St George’s Chapel. Ralph & Masters: 88-96.

⁵⁰⁵ Ede ‘central and local’: 207.

⁵⁰⁶ Gray ‘unfolding’: 12.

⁵⁰⁷ Gray ‘unfolding’: 24.

⁵⁰⁸ Lilian J Redstone & Francis W Steer, *Local records: their nature and care* London: G Bell & Sons for the Society of Local Archivists, 1953: 35-38.

⁵⁰⁹ Knowles: 101, 134.

Report of 1902 recommended that local record offices acquired archives from various organisations and made them available for historical study.⁵¹⁰ Proposed legislation of ‘a permissive and enabling character’ which would empower local authorities to hold records from other bodies and legalise the removal of parish registers to local record offices did not emerge.⁵¹¹ The *Third Report* took a more robust line, recommending that local records be brought within the scope of the public records legislation and subject to PRO inspection, while remaining geographically dispersed. County, borough and diocesan records could be held in combined local centres. Again, the *Third Report’s* recommendations failed to initiate action, partly because the then Deputy Keeper, Maxwell Lyte, was not disposed to support them.

A number of different models of local record provision developed: some justices and clerks of the peace protected the records of quarter sessions; city and borough authorities maintained their records; and public libraries acquired manuscripts alongside printed materials. In a few places, privately run antiquarian societies, trusts and museums collected archives in the absence of, or sometimes in conflict with, official bodies. From 1889 county councils began to discharge their responsibility to provide for the county’s records. By the early 20th century the forerunner of the modern local record office could be found in the clerk to the council’s department holding official deeds and records of the council and its predecessors (including quarter sessions). These offices quickly developed into acquisitive archives, collecting the archives of families, estates, churches and other organisations in the locality and providing cultural, historical and research services to the community. Led by record agents or historians, reliant on individual enthusiasts, attached to local authorities structurally and financially, lacking legislative legitimacy, local record offices were subject to local vicissitudes of policy and funding. Only a few saw a role in managing records for the council’s current business.

Why did local authority record offices grow up in such a piecemeal fashion and why were opportunities for a national public archives system not seized? What effect did government policy and legislation have on the development of national, local and specialist archives? How far were archives shaped by the enthusiastic (and often eccentric) individuals who nurtured and developed them? Has the diversity of provision proved to be a fascinating and durable patchwork? Or are the weaknesses of the system so serious that a unified, national pattern must emerge if local and specialist archives are to survive in the 21st century?

The Clerk of the Peace’s record room

⁵¹⁰ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 49.

⁵¹¹ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 46-47.

The earliest model for local records was when justices and the clerk of the peace established a repository for the records of quarter sessions and the county. By 1800, 20 counties had record rooms.⁵¹² The justices saw a strong link between the county's current business and records which provided evidence for judicial and administrative purposes. In many counties, a records room was built in the sessions house, records were sorted and repaired, finding aids created and a records committee appointed. Funding was generally short-term. However, in many cases the justices did establish embryonic county record offices, which were subsequently (although often after a delay of several decades) developed by county councils.

Middlesex justices

One of the first quarter sessions to take records seriously was Middlesex. Mercer has shown that a records survey was ordered in 1676 and in 1824 an inquiry into missing records was appointed.⁵¹³ John Millard was employed in 1840 to index the records. In 1882 the new Records Committee sought advice from the HMC. J C Jeaffreson reported mould and damp and recommended refurbished storage. Jeaffreson, helped by workmen from the PRO, sorted and listed thousands of volumes and rolls. He recommended calendars of the early records but the 'labour and expense' was too great. Instead, a group of justices formed the Middlesex County Record Society to publish summaries of records, edited by Jeaffreson.

Officially the justices took no further interest. Local government reorganisation intervened.⁵¹⁴ London County Council was created in 1889 and the records divided between the clerk of the peace (records of the sessions and justices) and the clerk of the county council for London (the county's other records). Under Middlesex County Council Act 1898, the county council and the justices established a joint Records Subcommittee in 1900. The record agent W J Hardy began to calendar the records, while Douglas Cockerell established a repair shop. Records were transferred to the new guildhall after 1913 and Miss D McEwan, a repairer since 1903, sorted and listed them. In 1915 the war brought the work to an end.

Quarter sessions archival activity

Middlesex was not alone in its concerns. By the early 1880s about half the sessions had prepared indexes and calendars, reboxed records or improved storage.⁵¹⁵ Records were often stored in shire hall.⁵¹⁶ Gloucestershire justices granted £10 in 1734 for a storage room which was still in use in 1800.⁵¹⁷ In Worcestershire papers were 'loose in an unceiled garrett', in private hands or in the clerk's office in 1800

⁵¹² *Third Report* 1919: 21.

⁵¹³ E Doris Mercer 'Local archives of Great Britain XXIV: the Middlesex County Record Office' *Archives* 6: 29 (1963): 30-39.

⁵¹⁴ United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. 1888. *Local Government Act, 1888*. 51&52 Vict, Ch 41. s 83(11).

⁵¹⁵ Gray 'unfolding': 13.

⁵¹⁶ Margaret Holmes 'Local archives of Great Britain XXIX: the Dorset Record Office' *Archives* 7: 36 (1966): 207-214.

⁵¹⁷ Irvine Gray 'Local archives of Great Britain XXV: the Gloucestershire Records Office' *Archives* 6: 31 (1964): 178-185.

but moved to shire hall in 1837.⁵¹⁸ In 1894 the Worcestershire committee took advice from the PRO and a record room was built to a high specification in 1898.⁵¹⁹ Lancashire records were moved to the clerk's room 'for their preservation and utility' in 1808.⁵²⁰ Lancashire was unusual in obtaining an Act (1879) which enabled the justices to build offices including a record room (with a safe door, steel shuttered windows and wooden presses), gave the clerk responsibility for the records, and allowed 'any person' to inspect the records at a fee.⁵²¹

Some justices published editions of records, while others employed antiquarians and record agents to sort, list and index the records. Gloucestershire justices, in recognition of the historical and legal value of their records, printed a catalogue in 1870.⁵²² In Kent, editorial work began in 1870.⁵²³ Lancashire asked the historian G S Veitch to rearrange and index its records in 1907.⁵²⁴

Sessions which took an active interest in their records established committees. In a few places these became council committees after the foundation of county councils in 1889, for example in Worcestershire.

These early initiatives did eventually lead to county record committees and record offices, but there was frequently a delay of several decades. Kent county council employed an archivist in 1933 (Miss N Dermott Harding from Bristol Record Office).⁵²⁵ Lancashire finally appointed R Sharpe France in 1940 as county archivist.⁵²⁶ In Worcestershire a proposal to create a record office failed in 1938 and it was not until 1947 that E H Sargeant was appointed archivist.⁵²⁷

City and Borough Repositories

A second model for local record offices was to be found when the central administration of cities and boroughs made provision for their records and archives. Municipalities were proud of their history and heritage. After the reforms of the Municipal Corporations Act 1835, Deputy Keeper Palgrave believed that the PRO should take corporation archives because 'the Town Clerks who can rarely read these documents have generally much neglected them'.⁵²⁸ The centralisation did not happen. The *Report 1902* found that

⁵¹⁸ E H Sargeant 'Local archives of Great Britain XXII: the Worcestershire Record Office' *Archives 5*: 27 (1962): 151-159.

⁵¹⁹ Sargeant 'Worcestershire': 151-159.

⁵²⁰ France 'Lancashire': 45-51.

⁵²¹ France 'Lancashire': 45-51.

⁵²² I Gray 'Gloucestershire': 178-185.

⁵²³ Felix Hull 'Local archives of Great Britain XI: the Kent Archives Office' *Archives 2*: 13 (1955): 237-246.

⁵²⁴ France 'Lancashire': 45-51.

⁵²⁵ Hull 'Kent': 237-246.

⁵²⁶ France 'Lancashire': 45-51.

⁵²⁷ Sargeant 'Worcestershire': 151-159.

⁵²⁸ Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 33.

municipal records were often quite well cared for, although records were stored in odd places including a bank vault, a wooden chest, an 'ordinary closet', a granary (in Boston) and a disused lavatory (in Winchester).⁵²⁹

Official archives

Bristol maintained its archives as part of its central administration, initially under the mayor and subsequently the town clerk.⁵³⁰ An Ordinance of 1381 placed the archives in the Guildhall. In 1788 storage was provided in the Council House. The Finance Committee took responsibility following the 1835 Act and inventoried the archives. The modern archive department was not established until 1924 when Estates Committee appointed an Archives Sub-Committee. Under Miss N Dermott Harding the historical records were sorted and catalogued. In 1925 responsibility for modern records was added and the record office subsequently widened its remit to acquire diocesan and parish records and deposited archives of local businesses, bodies and families. It was approved for manorial records for Gloucestershire in 1932.⁵³¹ A new council house, including a record office, was begun in 1934. Eventually, in 1956, a searchroom, cleaning and fumigation room and air-conditioned strongrooms opened.

Norwich city corporation employed Goddard Johnson to prepare a repertory of the archives in 1840.⁵³² In 1898 J C Tingey became honorary archivist under the Town Clerk's supervision. Norwich city charters were listed with the advice of I H Jeayes, Assistant Keeper in the Department of Manuscripts at the British Museum.⁵³³ The city archives, housed in the Castle muniment room, were approved for manorial records in 1926⁵³⁴ and also acquired the Norwich archdeaconry records 'temporarily' in the 1920s. Following the death of Frederic Johnson in 1931 (archivist since 1919), the council transferred the city archives to the Public Library.

Antiquarians

Antiquarians were significant in preserving and using archives in cities, although their intervention seldom led to official action. For instance, two antiquarians, Henry Woolcombe and R N Worth worked on Plymouth's archives in the 19th century.⁵³⁵ New accommodation was found for the archives after an HMC report in 1883, but little further official interest was taken in the records until 1949. In Newcastle-upon-Tyne antiquary John Brand and Hugh Hornby, mayor in the 1770s and 1780s, worked on the city's

⁵²⁹ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 29-30.

⁵³⁰ *Ralph & Masters*: 88-96.

⁵³¹ Minutes 26 Jan 1932, HMC 5/1, TNA.

⁵³² *Hepworth & Grace*: 86-93.

⁵³³ P R Harris *A history of the British Museum Library, 1753-1973* London: British Library, 1998: 441.

⁵³⁴ Minutes 8 June 1926, HMC 5/1, TNA.

⁵³⁵ C Edwin Welch 'Local archives of Great Britain XXI: the Plymouth Archives Department' *Archives* 5: 26 (1961): 100-105. Woolcombe, an instigator of municipal reform, wrote a history of Plymouth. Worth, a journalist and printer, worked on the borough records for a history published in 1872.

records.⁵³⁶ Several town clerks took an interest in the archives, including John Clayton (1822-1867), Sir Arthur Maule Oliver (1907-1937) and John Atkinson (1937-1964). Yet the city library undertook local history study, while the university library at King's College, Newcastle acquired private papers, manorial and official records. The first city archivist was only appointed in 1948.

Public Libraries

The Public Libraries Act 1850 established new public libraries in many cities, which often became centres of civic pride. In the absence of alternative institutions to house archives, libraries acquired archives alongside local history collections, providing a third model of development. In some cities, including Norwich and the Corporation of London, official archives developed in parallel with library collections.

City and Public Libraries

Norwich's ancient City Library, founded in 1608, was transferred to the new Norwich Public Library in 1862. Its manuscripts formed the core of the Library's archive collections. In 1926 the Library strongroom was approved for manorial records.⁵³⁷ After the city's official archives came to the Library in 1931, the Committee employed an archivist, Mary Grace, from Northampton. In 1934 the BRA began to deposit records relating to Norfolk. However, the county council still held quarter sessions and other county records, and the bishop employed a diocesan archivist. In 1950 Norfolk Record Society initiated discussions about a single record office for the whole county.⁵³⁸ The new central library provided a joint Norfolk and Norwich record office in 1963. An archivist, Jean Kennedy, was appointed and a Joint Records Committee established. Norfolk Record Office remained in the library until the fire of 1994.⁵³⁹

Birmingham Reference Library (opened in 1866) acquired local books and manuscripts.⁵⁴⁰ In 1912 Walter Powell was appointed City Librarian and H M Cashmore⁵⁴¹ his deputy: both took a particular interest in the archives. By 1926 when the Library was appointed a manorial repository, it held over 10,000 local documents.⁵⁴² Cashmore became Librarian in 1928 and Leonard Chubb was appointed Manuscripts Assistant in 1930. A notable feature was the supply of experienced staff to other emerging archives: Chubb was appointed Chief Librarian in Ipswich in 1931, G F Osborn archivist to Westminster City Libraries in

⁵³⁶ Michael Cook 'Local archives of Great Britain XXIII: Newcastle upon Tyne City Archives Office' *Archives* 5: 28 (1962): 226-233.

⁵³⁷ Minutes 27 April 1926, HMC 5/1, TNA.

⁵³⁸ Jean Kennedy 'Local archives of Great Britain XXX: the Norfolk and Norwich Record Office' *Archives* 8: 38 (1967): 63-69.

⁵³⁹ Jean Kennedy 'Norfolk Record Office fire: an initial report' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 16 (1995): 3-6.

⁵⁴⁰ Andrews: 11-21.

⁵⁴¹ HM Cashmore was a member of the Committee of the Record and Allied Societies in 1932 which led to the establishment of the British Records Association: see chapter 5.

⁵⁴² Minutes 23 Feb 1926, HMC 5/1, TNA.

1934, M G Rathbone Wiltshire county archivist in 1946 and E H Sargeant county archivist in Worcestershire in 1947, followed by Miss M H Henderson in 1950.

Many other city libraries also held archives. London's Guildhall Library, founded in 1824, acquired autograph letters and archives of city parishes, wards and guild companies.⁵⁴³ The manuscript department became a manorial repository in 1931⁵⁴⁴ and diocesan record office in 1954. City Librarians who were interested in manuscripts included Raymond Smith (from 1943), who introduced the classification system. Alongside the Guildhall, the Corporation of London Record Office acquired archives from the City after the appointment in 1876 of a Clerk of the Records. Its role as the official archive for the Corporation, its officers, courts and commissioners (the Guildhall Library holding other records relating to the city) was defined in 1948. A joint guide to the two archives was published in 1951. Gloucester City Library had a local history collection and was a manorial repository from 1926.⁵⁴⁵ Liverpool public library collected manuscripts from 1852, Sheffield, Winchester, Hereford, Bradford and Derby libraries from the 1870s and Shrewsbury from 1885.⁵⁴⁶

The importance of public libraries as archival institutions was emphasised by the Manorial Documents regulations, introduced after the Law of Property Acts 1922 and 1924. Public libraries were eligible for manorial repository status: all but one of the first nine places approved were public libraries.⁵⁴⁷ However the *Report on Local Records* 1902 had discouraged the use of libraries as record offices, although convenient, partly because librarians were not qualified as archivists.⁵⁴⁸

Archaeological and record societies and museums

In a few localities, archives emerged from archaeological and record societies, learned institutions, private trusts, libraries and museums. Particular circumstances were created by enthusiastic individuals. In these cases, a private institution with historical interests filled the vacuum left by official bodies: this is a fourth model for local record office development.

⁵⁴³ Hollaender 'Guildhall Library': 312-323.

⁵⁴⁴ Minutes 20 July 1931, HMC 5/1, TNA.

⁵⁴⁵ V A Woodman 'Local archives of Great Britain XXVI: archives in the Gloucester City Library' *Archives* 6: 32 (1964): 225-228 says it was appointed in 1925 but it appears in the minutes 27 April 1926, HMC 5/1, TNA.

⁵⁴⁶ Redstone & Steer: 30-34.

⁵⁴⁷ Minutes 23 Feb 1926, HMC 5/1, TNA. The exception was the Museum of the Royal Institution of Cornwall at Truro. County muniment rooms at Bedford also applied but could not be approved as they fell outside the Act.

⁵⁴⁸ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 46.

Local record societies

Local record societies laid the foundations for several county archives, often led by individual enthusiasts. Canon C W Foster and Kathleen Major in Lincoln and Joan Wake in Northampton were such individuals. In Lincoln Canon Foster recruited volunteers to sort diocesan records and prepare them for publication from 1901, founding Lincoln Record Society in 1910.⁵⁴⁹ After Foster's death in 1935 the Pilgrim Trust funded Kathleen Major as archivist to the new Lincoln Diocesan Office, housed in cramped quarters in Exchequer Gate. Major had met Canon Foster while she was researching her doctoral thesis and her scholastic skills and archival experience were exceptional.⁵⁵⁰ She was appointed lecturer in diplomatic at Oxford University in 1945 but continued to be active in Lincolnshire Archives Committee. Joan Varley succeeded Major as archivist.

Northamptonshire Record Society was founded in 1920 by the record agent Joan Wake.⁵⁵¹ Joan Wake's family claimed descent from Hereward the Wake. She was active in the cause of local archives outside Northamptonshire through the BRA Council and committees between 1932 and 1955 and was elected as the first honorary member of SoA in 1952 in recognition of her contribution. Northamptonshire Record Society organised lectures and exhibitions and acquired private records.⁵⁵² After the war negotiations began with Northampton borough and Northamptonshire county council about a repository and research library under a joint record committee, on the Lincoln model. The Northamptonshire Archive Committee was established and the five staff of the Society, led by Joan Wake, transferred to the new body.

Private and public trusts

In Staffordshire, the record office grew from a family trust set up by William Salt, a banker who collected local antiquities.⁵⁵³ In 1863 the collection was given to the county and a Trust established in 1872. The William Salt Library became a manorial repository in 1926.⁵⁵⁴ Quarter sessions and other county records were sorted and calendared by the Trust, under the direction of the county clerk. In 1938 the Trust asked the county council for an annual grant. After the war the Trustees and the County Record Committee jointly appointed a County Archivist/ Salt Librarian. In 1950 Lichfield city and diocesan records came under the county archivist. A new record office in Stafford opened in 1960.

⁵⁴⁹ Joan Varley 'Local archives of Great Britain VI: the Lincolnshire Archives Committee' *Archives* 1: 6 (1951): 5-16. Kathleen Major & Joan Varley 'The experiment in co-operation among Lincolnshire authorities' *Bulletin of the Society of Local Archivists* 7A (1951): 10-17.

⁵⁵⁰ D A Bullough & R L Storey eds. *The study of medieval records: essays in honour of Kathleen Major* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971: v-x.

⁵⁵¹ Joan Wake (1884-1974), 5th child of Sir Hereward Wake 12th Bt, studied at LSE 1913-15, Honorary Secretary Northamptonshire Nursing Association 1916-19, Honorary Secretary Northamptonshire Record Society 1920-63, Hon MA Oxon 1953, CBE 1960, *Who was who 1971-1980*: 823.

⁵⁵² Redstone & Steer: 38-39.

⁵⁵³ Freddy Stitt 'Local archives of Great Britain XIX: record office work in Staffordshire' *Archives* 4: 24 (1960): 204-213.

⁵⁵⁴ Minutes 2 Nov 1926, HMC 5/1, TNA.

The situation in Warwickshire was complicated by the development of four repositories in parallel: Coventry City Archives, Birmingham Reference Library (1866), Warwick County Record Office (1931) and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (1866).⁵⁵⁵ Shakespeare's birthplace was purchased by public subscription in 1847. In 1866 Stratford corporation acquired the library and museum and set up a trust. The library collected records relating to Shakespeare, but also provided record services to Stratford corporation and held the borough's archives.⁵⁵⁶ A calendar and catalogues of corporation records were published in the 1860s. In 1931 the library was approved as a manorial repository, in spite of objections from Birmingham Library,⁵⁵⁷ and developed as a record office for south west Warwickshire, acquiring family and estate papers, parish records, title deeds and probate records.

Museums

Museums acquired records in some counties. Dorset County Museum,⁵⁵⁸ founded in 1846, collected archives, eventually building a muniment room which was approved as a manorial repository.⁵⁵⁹ In 1928 the museum amalgamated with Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club to form the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society. In 1955 the Society approached the county council for regular funding. The council appointed a county archivist in 1955 (Margaret Holmes), set up a County Records Sub-Committee and established a muniment room in county hall. In 1957 all the archives were transferred from the museum to county hall, except for the literary manuscripts of Thomas Hardy and William Barnes and the local history library. In 1959 the county record office was appointed as diocesan record office and an assistant archivist was appointed.

These few examples illustrate the importance of local individual enthusiasts and experts in establishing record offices, often through a record society (such as in Lincoln and Northampton), museum (such as the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester) or private library or trust. These private initiatives filled the gaps left by official inaction and acted as catalysts for the formation of a local record office. In most cases the private institution was able to work well with officialdom, although sometimes there were conflicts of interests which took time to resolve (for instance, the complicated picture of provision in Warwickshire).

County Council Record Committees

⁵⁵⁵ Anthony C Wood 'Local archives of Great Britain X: the Warwick County Record Office and the preservation of records in Warwickshire' *Archives* 2: 12 (1954): 192-204.

⁵⁵⁶ Levi Fox 'Local archives of Great Britain XX: Shakespeare's Birthplace Library Stratford upon Avon' *Archives* 5: 26 (1962): 90-99.

⁵⁵⁷ Minutes 30 March 1931, HMC 5/1, TNA.

⁵⁵⁸ Holmes: 207-214.

⁵⁵⁹ According to Holmes, but the author could not find a reference to this in HMC 5/1, TNA.

After 1889 some county councils moved towards independent record offices, a trend which was assisted in a limited way by local government legislation. Vestry and civil parish records received protection under the Vestries Act 1818 and the Local Government Act 1894. The Local Government Act 1888 made the clerk of the peace responsible for the records and documents of the county (s 83(3)). A number of the new county councils established record committees and embryonic record offices in the wake of these Acts. The *Report on Local Records* 1902⁵⁶⁰ and *Report* 1919⁵⁶¹ recommended that county and borough councils should provide local record offices. Although no supporting legislation emerged, a few county councils began to take an interest in local archives.

This provides a fifth model for local record offices, that of the new county council inheriting records from quarter sessions and building on the provisions of the Act of 1888. In a few counties, the establishment of a county council acted as a catalyst. Hertfordshire (in 1895) and Bedfordshire (in 1898) were the earliest counties to appoint a County Records Committee. Worcestershire was also a pioneer, adding records issues to its Charities Committee by 1894, and in 1898 renaming it the Records and Charities Committee. After publishing a calendar of quarter sessions records in 1900, little else was done until a new strongroom for manorial records was built following the Law of Property Acts 1922 and 1924.⁵⁶² Other counties having record committees by 1902 included Buckinghamshire, Lancashire, Northamptonshire, Norfolk, Surrey and Warwickshire.⁵⁶³ Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire benefited from the skills and enthusiasm of important individuals. In Hertfordshire an energetic committee supported the work of two generations of Hardys, while Bedfordshire was fortuitous in the presence of Dr G H Fowler.

The Hardy family in Hertfordshire⁵⁶⁴

Hertfordshire was the earliest county council to appoint a Committee to ‘consider the best means of arranging and keeping’ the county’s records for ‘historical and other purposes’ in 1895. It was not permanently established until 1897 nor was it given significant funds. However the social status and influence of the committee, which included Sir John Evans (President of the Society of Antiquaries and a trustee of the British Museum), the Earl of Clarendon, H J Toulmin (who helped restore St Albans abbey), and T F Halsey, MP, ensured swift progress. Booth, in his study of Hertfordshire Record Office, also noted the influence of Sir Charles Longmore, clerk to the county council and clerk of the peace.⁵⁶⁵ Longmore was clerk to Hertford Corporation when the record agent W J Hardy listed the borough records for the HMC in 1893. Hardy lived in St Albans and his firm of record agents, Hardy and Page, inspected the county’s

⁵⁶⁰ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 46.

⁵⁶¹ *Third Report* 1919: 24, 37.

⁵⁶² Sargeant ‘Worcestershire’: 151-159.

⁵⁶³ *Report on Local Records* 1902: App III, schedule 1.

⁵⁶⁴ William Le Hardy ‘Local archives of Great Britain IV: the County Record Office at Hertford’ *Archives* 1:4 (1950): 16-24. Jan Booth ‘An analysis of the development of Hertfordshire County Record Office, 1895-1990’ MA Diss. University College London, 1996.

⁵⁶⁵ Booth: 9-10.

records in 1895.⁵⁶⁶ The Committee spent over £2000 on storing, binding, calendaring and publishing records, encouraged by Hardy, who reported references to notable figures and national events. Longmore and Hardy seem to have developed a cordial social relationship ‘which may have contributed to the support the initiative received from within the Council’s administration’.⁵⁶⁷

The war led to the dissolution of the committee in 1914. In 1919 a proposal by William H C Le Hardy, son of W J Hardy, led to the committee reconvening.⁵⁶⁸ Although Le Hardy agreed to bill the council so that ‘too much expense should not fall in one quarter’ archival activities were again suspended in 1924. However, a vigorous campaign and the Law of Property (Amendment) Act 1924 ensured the revival of the committee in 1926.⁵⁶⁹ The record office was approved as a manorial repository in 1927 when the council was assured that their obligations ‘would not be at all onerous’,⁵⁷⁰ and for diocesan (1934) and tithe records (1936). Le Hardy was part-time archivist and record agent and it was not until 1939, when the new county hall was completed, that the first full-time archivist (Betty Colquhoun formerly of Le Hardy’s staff in London) was appointed.

After the war the record office was established as a council department.⁵⁷¹ Le Hardy was appointed County Record Agent in 1946 and County Archivist in 1957. In 1949 the office first employed a qualified archivist, I N Graham from UCL,⁵⁷² and by 1960 there were four professionals. Unqualified staff were promoted and stayed but qualified archivists moved on, which Booth attributes to the lack of opportunity while Le Hardy remained. Records management began formally in 1950s, influenced by the *Grigg Report*. Le Hardy attributed significant increases in accessions to the NRA local committee. Hertfordshire Record Office was approved for local public records in 1960, although Le Hardy thought that made little practical difference. In 1960 the Hertfordshire County Council Act⁵⁷³ gave the council powers to accept the deposit of records and to incur expense two years earlier than most county councils.⁵⁷⁴ Le Hardy continued at Hertfordshire until 1961 when he died ‘of a heart attack brought on by a bitterly cold drive home from work’.

⁵⁶⁶ Gray ‘unfolding’: 15-16.

⁵⁶⁷ Booth: 13.

⁵⁶⁸ Booth: 14.

⁵⁶⁹ Correspondence files of Hardy and Page, D/Elh B6, Hertfordshire Record Office, quoted in Booth: 15-17. Booth notes that, as a solicitor, Longmore would have been aware of the value of manorial records.

⁵⁷⁰ Minutes 28 Nov 1927, HMC 5/1, TNA. Booth gives a date of July 1927 (17). Le Hardy asserts that the repository was approved in 1929: St Albans museum was inspected that year, but not approved. Minute book of Hertfordshire County Record Committee, 1904-1948, HCC 18/3: 145, Hertfordshire Records Office, cited in Booth: 17.

⁵⁷¹ Booth: 21-31.

⁵⁷² UCL School of Librarianship list 1947-48, register of students 1944-48, UCLRO.

⁵⁷³ United Kingdom. Laws, Statutes, etc. 1960. *Hertfordshire County Council Act, 1960*. Local Acts 8&9 Eliz 2, c. 44

⁵⁷⁴ Which were granted such powers by *Local Government (Records) Act, 1962*.

Hertfordshire's history illustrates the interaction between official support by the county council and the informal influence of individuals (committee members, clerk, record agent). Without central direction or real legislative mandate, the record office grew by expediency, taking advantage of specific provisions for manorial, tithe and diocesan records, and exploiting the willingness of the committee to pursue historical activities. Gradually the council accepted its role, only suspending funds in times of crisis, and the record office became established.

Hertfordshire also shows the contribution made by record agents in the early years of local record office development. The Hardy family was active in Hertfordshire from 1895 until 1961. William Le Hardy and his father, William John Hardy, were part of an extended family of lawyers, archivists and editors.⁵⁷⁵ W J Hardy was the nephew of the second Deputy Keeper, T D Hardy, and son of William Hardy, the third Deputy Keeper. His brother in law was William Page, editor of the *Victoria County History*, with whom he founded the firm Hardy and Page.⁵⁷⁶ W J Hardy was a scholarly record agent, legal antiquary and HMC inspector. His son, William Henry Clement, was educated at Westminster and Oxford and joined his father's business, which he inherited in 1923. He changed his name to Le Hardy after finding genealogical links in the Channel Islands. He had a military career, serving in France in the First World War and in Italy and the Middle East in the Second World War, returning as Colonel Le Hardy.

Le Hardy was an archivist as well as a record agent: he became consultant archivist for Middlesex in 1920, when he restarted the work begun by his father in 1900,⁵⁷⁷ until 1940. In 1945 he resumed work part-time as Middlesex county archivist, with Doris Mercer as archives clerk in 1947. In 1956 Le Hardy retired and Mercer was appointed the first full-time county archivist. Le Hardy served on the Society of Local Archivists council from 1947, becoming its second chairman in 1949 and vice-president in 1954. His career illustrated the transition from scholarly records work to a professional role as an archivist and on the wider professional stage he helped to 'promote the Society's success and to bind the profession together'.⁵⁷⁸

George Herbert Fowler in Bedfordshire

Bedfordshire can claim the earliest established county record office, although its Records Committee was appointed three years after Hertfordshire, in 1898.⁵⁷⁹ As in the neighbouring county, the record agents Hardy and Page reported, recommended sorting and calendaring the sessions records and sending some to

⁵⁷⁵ Obituary of William Le Hardy *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 2 (1960-1964): 229-230.

⁵⁷⁶ William Page (1861-1934), record agent, HMC inspector, general editor VCH 1902, vice president, Society of Antiquaries 1916-20, chairman, Local History Section, Anglo-American Historians Congress 1926, *Who was who 1929-40*: 1036.

⁵⁷⁷ Mercer: 30-39.

⁵⁷⁸ Obituary Le Hardy: 229-230.

⁵⁷⁹ Joyce Godber 'Local archives of Great Britain I: the County Record Office at Bedford' *Archives* 1:1 (1949): 10-20.

the PRO for cleaning and repair.⁵⁸⁰ More cautious with resources than Hertfordshire, the Bedfordshire Committee agreed small sums for storage, repairs, notes by Hardy on early records and the publication of calendars. In 1910 the committee was wound up.

In 1906 Dr George Herbert Fowler, an assistant professor of zoology at UCL, moved to Aspley Guise, Bedfordshire, after the death of his parents.⁵⁸¹ His failing eyesight made microscopic studies increasingly difficult and by 1909 he had retired from marine zoology and concentrated on gardening and local history.⁵⁸² In 1912 Fowler founded Bedfordshire Historical Records Society and was elected to the county council. Fowler became chairman of the Records Committee, a post he held until his death in 1940.

Fowler worked to establish a record office before he left for the Naval Intelligence Division in 1914. He appointed an assistant (W D Baker), introduced sliding steel presses in the record rooms, prepared destruction schedules for current records and devised a classification scheme. Fowler was also an accomplished repairer. Fowler was familiar with the *Reports* of 1902 and 1919 and had a vision of an acquisitive historical archive, holding county, parish and private records. The office opened to public access in 1919. Bedford muniment rooms were approved for manorial records in 1926, 'if they could be brought within the provisions of the Act', the first to be so approved⁵⁸³ and as the Diocesan Record Office in 1929. The parish survey began in 1927 (energetically pursued by F G Emmison from 1928-1933). In many ways, Bedfordshire (and Fowler) were pioneers.

Bedfordshire became an important training ground for the archivists who were to oversee the development of the new county record offices. Fowler noted in 1922 that 'there exists no school of training ... from which an efficient archivist could be drawn' so he had 'to train on the spot some young person who has a natural bent towards historical study, who is orderly, methodical and neat fingered'.⁵⁸⁴ F G Emmison was appointed in 1923 from Bedford Grammar School and proved to be an excellent choice.⁵⁸⁵ He took to records work enthusiastically and was thoroughly trained in Fowler's approach until he left in 1938 to become the first county archivist of Essex. A second assistant was appointed in Bedford in 1934, I P Collis, who became county archivist of Somerset in 1946. Fowler also trained Francis Rowe, who became Cheshire county archivist in 1949. Joyce Godber succeeded Collis in Bedfordshire and later became county archivist.

⁵⁸⁰ Gray 'unfolding': 15.

⁵⁸¹ G H Fowler (1861-1940), educated Eton, Oxford, Leipzig, CBE 1918, *Who was who 1929-1940*: 471.

⁵⁸² G H Fowler to Hilary Jenkinson, 1939, a letter about the garden; offprint of an article on 'Dr Fowler's work in Bedfordshire', MS Add 47/2, UCLL. Patricia Bell & Freddy Stitt 'George Herbert Fowler and county records' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 23 (2002): 249-264.

⁵⁸³ Minutes 23 Feb 1926, HMC 5/1, TNA.

⁵⁸⁴ Godber: 12.

⁵⁸⁵ According to Godber, although his obituaries all say he started in 1925.

Fowler published his analysis of local archives in *The care of county muniments* in 1923.⁵⁸⁶ The purposes of this book, appearing just a year after Jenkinson's *Manual of archive administration*, were twofold.⁵⁸⁷

to draw the attention of County Authorities to the value and interest of their Records in the hope that those of them which have not yet done so may consider the responsibility for guarding them, for setting them in order and for making them accessible and useful...[and] to spare any one who may undertake the arrangement of a Muniment Room...hopeless bewilderment

The text was both polemical and practical and codified the county record office 'approach', exemplified by Bedfordshire Record Office.

London

London County Council (LCC) presented a very different story after 1889: the most pressing need was the management of several miles of current and inherited records. No key individual emerged until after the Second World War. From the 1890s records assistants were appointed to the central record room.⁵⁸⁸

Standing orders in 1904 and 1914 established the transfer of records to the clerk and created a schedule of classes. In 1931 departmental record rooms were established. In 1955, informed by the *Grigg Report*, a system of departmental records officers, disposal schedules and file reviews was introduced.

LCC also inherited a local government reference library in 1889, which developed to include surveys of buildings, deeds, maps and plans and unofficial records for London, and in 1943 was recognised as a manorial repository. In 1946 Ida Darlington was appointed to reopen the library after the war, and eventually, in 1954, she was given responsibility for the archives in county hall, creating the County of London Record Office.⁵⁸⁹

Local archives by 1920

In a small number of counties enabling legislation and dedicated individuals stimulated the development of local record offices. In Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Middlesex the immediate interests of the founders were historical and the archives acquired records from external bodies as well as from the council and its predecessors. In London the impetus was the management of the council's own records, a role which developed elsewhere in the 1950s. Fowler's scientific training and historical interests enabled him to establish in Bedfordshire the first modern record office, which set standards, especially in classification and

⁵⁸⁶ G Herbert Fowler *The care of county muniments* London: County Councils Association, 1923. 1st ed.

⁵⁸⁷ Fowler, 1939: viii. Preface to 1st ed, reprinted in 3rd ed.

⁵⁸⁸ Darlington 'Methods': 140-146 and 'Local archives of Great Britain XIII: the County of London Record Office' *Archives* 2: 14 (1956): 477-486.

⁵⁸⁹ County of London Record Office became the Greater London Record Office after it acquired Middlesex archives and London Metropolitan Archives after the abolition of GLC in 1986.

training, for the emerging profession. More than any other individual, Fowler can claim to be the first professional archivist.

By 1920 five different models of provision for local records can be identified: justices and clerks of the peace for quarter sessions took a practical and generally short term interest in their own records; cities and boroughs maintained their historic archives as a symbol of stable civic government; public libraries, especially after 1850, acquired local manuscripts alongside printed books; private institutions such as record societies and museums acquired archives for historic and artefactual interest; and a few of the new county councils met their records obligations after 1889. The clerk of the peace was often appointed clerk to the county council and carried forward an interest in quarter sessions records. It was this last model, proposed in numerous government reports throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries and yet barely begun by 1920, which became the norm for county record offices during the 20th century. As Jenkinson noted, there was no legislative requirement on county councils to adopt this role, or central direction, but they did so as a result of propaganda and cultural infiltration.⁵⁹⁰

Development of local record offices, 1920 to 1947

The local record office landscape was transformed in the period 1920 to 1947. In the 1920s there was no assumption that local record offices should be tied to county council administration. More libraries provided archive services than any other type of institution and this was the usual model in cities and boroughs. Legislation and central government had only a limited influence. The PRO and HMC provided minimal advice and expertise to local archives. The Law of Property Acts 1922 and 1924 should have provided a significant boost to the embryonic county record office movement through the network of manorial repositories approved by the Manorial Documents Committee. Ralph and Hull identify this as the ‘first acknowledgement by the central authority that local repositories were required and were desirable’.⁵⁹¹ However, the legislation only allowed for the approval of ‘the Public Record Office, or ... any public library, or museum or historical or antiquarian society’ for the receipt of manorial records.⁵⁹² In practice county record offices were able to get approval, following the test case of Bedfordshire,⁵⁹³ but few were in a position to apply. Almost every English county had one or more repository approved for the deposit of manorial documents by 1933, although most were public and university libraries (39), archaeological and other societies (9), and county clerk’s offices (6).⁵⁹⁴ The Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1929

⁵⁹⁰ Jenkinson ‘Archive developments’: 279.

⁵⁹¹ Elizabeth Ralph & Felix Hull ‘The development of local archive services in England’ *Essays in memory of Sir Hilary Jenkinson* ed AEJ Hollaender. Chichester, Society of Archivists, 1962: 58.

⁵⁹² *Law of Property (Amendment) Act, 1924*. s 144A(4).

⁵⁹³ Manorial Documents Correspondence, Bedfordshire 1925-54, HMC 5/102, TNA.

⁵⁹⁴ ‘Guide: part 2’ *IHR*: 16-22. Only Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Rutland seem to have had no provision.

provided for diocesan record offices but without funds it had little immediate effect on the growth of county record offices.

Professional guidance began to appear in print: Charles Johnson's booklet set down the basic principles of archive work in 1919.⁵⁹⁵ Jenkinson's seminal *Manual of archive administration*⁵⁹⁶ based on PRO practice followed in 1922 and Fowler's *The care of county muniments* in 1923. These provided comprehensive guidance and 'a set of standards of professional conduct as well as sound practical advice'⁵⁹⁷ although all approached records from an historical viewpoint and focused on official records, paying little or no attention to 'unofficial muniments'.⁵⁹⁸ The intellectual challenges were perceived to be with historical archives not with the organisation of current records and deeds. This was emphasised by the employment of record agents (frequently Hardy and Page in south east England) giving archival work a strongly historical slant. Another record agent, Ethel Stokes, and the Records Preservation Section (RPS) of the BRA, distributed archives to local repositories after 1932 and formed a core of deposited records for embryonic record offices.⁵⁹⁹

Jenkinson and the BRA were influential and interview shortlists often contained a 'Jenkinson nominee'.⁶⁰⁰ The BRA monitored developments in local offices and reported regularly through its series *The year's work in archives*. The IHR surveys of private records in the 1930s⁶⁰¹ responded to 'the marked extension of historical study in recent years, notably directed to administration from the standpoint of sociology and economics' and guided students on access.

A few existing archives became formally established during the 1920s, for example, Bristol and Middlesex, and a further dozen were established between 1930 and 1940.⁶⁰² As well as new appointments in Birmingham and Lincoln, Somerset County Council built a record office in 1931 and appointed a full-time

⁵⁹⁵ Charles Johnson *The care of documents and management of archives* London: SPCK, 1919. Johnson was on the staff of the PRO 1893-1930, Assistant Keeper, 1920-1930, and there was a view that he was the father of the profession, usurped by Jenkinson.

⁵⁹⁶ Hilary Jenkinson *A manual of archive administration* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922.

⁵⁹⁷ Ralph & Hull: 58.

⁵⁹⁸ Fowler, 1939: 57-61. Only s.26 of chapter V considers 'whether, in the absence of any other competent body, a County is justified in taking that broad view of its responsibilities...the custody of County Muniments in the widest sense in addition to the bare Records of the County Authorities'.

⁵⁹⁹ Hilary Jenkinson *The work of the British Records Association for the preservation of local and private records: a paper read at the provincial meeting of the Law Society held at Oxford, 26-27 September 1933* (Reprints series no 1) London: British Records Association, 1934.

⁶⁰⁰ Felix Hull recalled being appointed in Berkshire against the 'Jenkinson nominee': Dr Felix Hull, retired County Archivist of Kent. Interview by author, 27 August 1997, Hayling Island, Hampshire. Society of Archivists Oral History programme.

⁶⁰¹ 'Guide: part 1' and 'Guide: part 2' *IHR*.

⁶⁰² Serjeant 'survey 1968': 313.

archivist in 1935, Oxfordshire Records Committee was formed in 1933⁶⁰³ and Westminster City Council appointed G F Osborn in 1934.⁶⁰⁴ Archivists were also appointed for the first time in Essex, Kent, Berkshire, Gloucestershire,⁶⁰⁵ Coventry, Leeds and Warwick.⁶⁰⁶

In the absence of a training school or other recognised route of entry to the profession outside the PRO, the first generation of county archivists were recruited by far-sighted (or lucky) councils and trained in post. A few enthusiastic and skilful individuals established fruitful training grounds for the county archive network: Fowler in Bedfordshire, F G Emmison in Essex (having been trained by Fowler), Felix Hull in Berkshire and Kent (having been trained by Emmison), as well as Cashmore at Birmingham Reference Library. Their ideas and approaches established key patterns for county record offices, eg the classification of local archives, the publication of guides and the development of education services. Kent, Essex and Berkshire took the models established by Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire and developed a new vision of a county record office. Key individuals carried the emerging professional practices with them: the Holworthys in Kent, Emmison in Essex, and Hull successively in Essex, Berkshire and Kent. The story of local archives in the pre-war period is largely the story of these individuals.

The Holworthys in Kent

Kent county council appointed Miss Dermott Harding, formerly Bristol City archivist, with a dual mandate to manage the county's archives and the non-current files of the clerk. Although only in post from 1933 to 1934, Miss Harding listed 'vast quantities' of records and planned a new building which was completed in 1938.⁶⁰⁷ Richard Holworthy, a record agent in partnership with Dorothy Shilton, whom he married in 1934,⁶⁰⁸ approached the clerk when he heard of Miss Harding's resignation. Mr and Mrs Holworthy were appointed jointly. According to Hull, the county clerk, Mr Platts, was a dominant force who was reluctant to let the office develop beyond its role in managing his records⁶⁰⁹ and prevented the council from setting up an Archives Committee until 1947. Holworthy sought an arena where he could act independently outside the county, first on the BRA Council then the Society of Local Archivists. He chaired the meeting of local archivists on a Saturday in February 1946 to 'consider the question of forming some kind of Local Archivists' Committee',⁶¹⁰ and was elected as the first chairman of the new Society in 1947. In 1952 Holworthy retired.

⁶⁰³ Hilary Jenkinson & Irene Churchill *The year's work in archives* reprinted from *The year's work in librarianship 1933* (Reprints series no 2) London: British Records Association, 1934: 6.

⁶⁰⁴ Irene Churchill, C S Drew, N D Harding & H Jenkinson *The year's work in archives* reprinted from *The year's work in librarianship 1935* (Reprints series no 5) London: British Records Association, 1936: 15.

⁶⁰⁵ I Gray 'Gloucestershire': 178-185.

⁶⁰⁶ Wood: 192-204.

⁶⁰⁷ Hull 'Kent': 237-246.

⁶⁰⁸ Obituary of Richard Holworthy *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 2 (1960-64): 175.

⁶⁰⁹ Hull. Interview.

⁶¹⁰ Minutes 23 Feb 1946, SoA Minute Book 1946-1966, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

Emmison in Essex

Essex Record Office was established in 1938.⁶¹¹ Since 1926 a record agent had calendared sessions records. The BRA had deposited private and solicitors records with the council. In 1938 F G (Derick) Emmison (trained in Bedfordshire) was appointed as the first county archivist. The new office in county hall was opened by the Master of the Rolls in 1939. The staffing was relatively large: as well as Emmison, there were two assistant archivists, a typist, junior clerk and trainee repairer. By 1949 this had expanded to 18, including six archivists. The Records Committee had strong links with the Education Committee which seconded a history teacher. The office undertook cataloguing (including the development of classification schemes for all major archive groups), repair, indexing, education, publications (including a complete *Guide* in 1946 and 1948, a *Catalogue of maps* in 1947 and a guide to *Essex parish records* in 1950), exhibitions at Ingatestone Hall, lectures and reader services, including photocopying and photography and (from 1946) late evening opening on Mondays, and encouraged the foundation of Friends of Historic Essex in 1954.

Emmison set the standard to which other county record offices aspired. The office provided excellent professional training, something that Emmison had learnt from his time in Bedford. Eight or nine of his staff became county archivists themselves.⁶¹² Hull, one of his assistants, remembers the staff in 1946, 'Gray, Steer, and myself and Hilda was sort of senior. It was a wonderful team...high powered...we were very enthusiastic'.⁶¹³ Irvine Gray became county archivist in Gloucestershire in 1948 and under his leadership the work of that office developed.⁶¹⁴ It published *Guides*, gave lectures, held evening classes and exhibitions, supported the launch of the NRA local committee in 1949 and the resumption of the VCH in 1959 and organised history days for sixth formers from 1962.

Throughout his career Emmison more than made up for any lack of formal academic standing (he was unable to go to Cambridge University because of financial difficulties) by his prolific scholarship, numerous publications, an honorary doctorate from Essex University and election to fellowship of the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Historical Society.⁶¹⁵ He retired in 1969 but continued his historical studies until his death in 1995.

Felix Hull in Essex, Berkshire and Kent

Hull provides an example of the support that Emmison was prepared to give his staff. Hull had trained as a history teacher but became the junior clerk in Essex Record Office after being taken on a tour of the 'new empty office' in 1938 by Emmison. The war intervened: Hull, as a Quaker, joined the Friends' Ambulance

⁶¹¹ F G Emmison 'Local archives of Great Britain II: the Essex Record Office' *Archives* 1: 2 (1949): 8-16.

⁶¹² Stan Newens 'History's man' *Guardian* (Manchester), 21 Dec 1995 claims nine, while Ken Hall 'F G Emmison' *The Independent* (London) 21 Nov 1995 counts eight.

⁶¹³ ie Irvine Gray, Francis (Frank) Steer, Hilda Grieve and Felix Hull. Hull. Interview.

⁶¹⁴ I Gray 'Gloucestershire': 178-185.

⁶¹⁵ K Hall 'Emmison'.

Unit headquarters in Gordon Square, London. He took an external degree in history in 1946 and then a PhD, supervised by R H Tawney. Hull's major contribution to Essex was the listing of the first large family and estate archive, Petre, during which the family and estates classification scheme was developed: he took the scheme to Berkshire and Kent.

Not wishing to be Emmison's deputy, Hull felt that he should move on. In 1936 Berkshire county council joined the BRA and set up a County Records Committee: Hull was appointed as the first county archivist in 1948.⁶¹⁶ Hull remembered bundles of BRA records still not unwrapped. In 1948 Rev A L B Hay⁶¹⁷ started a parish survey and by 1952 about 90 of the 160 Berkshire parishes had deposited their records. Not all parishes cooperated: Hungerford 'flatly refused' until 'this rather dishevelled vicar appeared with an armful of registers. He said, "Take them, take them. We've had a fire in the Rectory".'⁶¹⁸ Hull also started classes in palaeography and archives for students at Reading Technical College in 1949.⁶¹⁹ In 1950 Hull appointed Peter Walne as his first assistant: Hull soon moved on, recalling 'Walne was certainly a very high powered person' and that 'by 1952 ... really there wasn't room for both of us'.⁶²⁰

Peter Walne, a graduate of Liverpool University, duly became county archivist of Berkshire. Berkshire (together with Kent under Hull) became a pioneer in records management. In 1957 the council set up an inter-departmental committee and each department designated a records administration officer. A system of record reviews and controlled destruction was implemented.

Hull moved to Kent record office where he succeeded Holworthy in 1952. Hull developed the services over the thirty years he was in charge, holding exhibitions from 1953, organising school visits, publishing guides, creating a Grigg-based records management system and establishing regional offices within the county. For Hull, 'modern records were as important as medieval records' and he promoted this message in his leadership of the record office and in his professional involvements. Hull was especially involved with the teaching of records management at UCL and with the SoA training committee, which will be discussed in chapter 8.

Archives during the war

Churchill and Jenkinson reported that in 1939, 'the Archivist's profession was a very young and struggling one, and many of us thought that depletion of staff and economies in expenditure, inevitable in war time, would kill it', and yet by 1942 'we find no lack of interest in the technique of the profession, plenty of local

⁶¹⁶ Peter Walne 'Local archives of Great Britain XVIII: the Berkshire Record Office' *Archives* 4: 22 (1959): 65-74.

⁶¹⁷ Although Hull recalls that the survey was carried out by 'an ex-colonial civil servant who had been in the education service in north Nigeria' who was a 'wonderful success'. Hull. Interview.

⁶¹⁸ Hull. Interview.

⁶¹⁹ Felix Hull 'Three Berkshire developments' *Bulletin of the Society of Local Archivists* 7A (1951): 17-19.

⁶²⁰ Hull. Interview.

institutions somehow managing to carry on... and even occasionally fresh posts created and fresh appointments made'.⁶²¹ Many staff were called up for war duties: Gwynne Jones, archivist in Glamorgan, complained that his office 'was threatened by his being called on for Military Service'. The BRA considered writing to the clerk 'stressing the national importance of Archive Work' but declined to 'interfere'.⁶²²

In spite of the war, two county councils appointed their first county archivist, Cumberland in 1942⁶²³ and Lancashire in 1940.⁶²⁴ The appointment of Reginald Sharpe France marked the beginning of a close relationship between Lancashire Record Office and the University of Liverpool, where Sharpe France taught on the Diploma in Archive Administration from 1947.

Lilian Redstone gradually established a record office for Suffolk during the war.⁶²⁵ She was a record agent, who succeeded Ethel Stokes at the RPS in 1944, and was author of *Local records* published in 1953. In 1943 she was employed part-time by Ipswich Library Committee and in 1945 by East Suffolk county council: by 1947 it was a joint appointment. When Miss Redstone retired in 1950, a full-time Joint Archivist, Derek Charman, was appointed, who developed the records management system.⁶²⁶

Developments 1920-1947

In the period between the wars the development of county record offices was characterised by the individuals who founded them. With little professional guidance and no national system, determined individuals were needed to establish the patterns and frameworks. With a few exceptions, the interests of the first county archivists were historical and their strongrooms filled up with BRA deposits, manorial records (after 1925), private estate and family papers, parish records (after the Church Measure 1929), rural parishes (after the Local Government Act 1933), pre-1857 probate records (in 1940s⁶²⁷) and business archives (after the Council for the Preservation of Business Archives (CPBA) was established in 1934), as well as quarter sessions and county council records. Counties led by record agents, such as the Holworthys, Hardys and Joan Wake, concentrated on calendaring and publishing, in the academic tradition of the PRO and HMC. With the acquiescence of the county councils, local record offices focused on historical archives

⁶²¹ Churchill, Hunt & Jenkinson *Archives 1940-42*: 2.

⁶²² Minutes 24 Sept, 15 Oct 1940, BRA Signed Minutes vol III 1939-42, LMA.

⁶²³ B C Jones 'Local archives of Great Britain XXVIII: Cumberland, Westmoreland and Carlisle Record Office, 1960-65' *Archives 7*: 34 (1965): 80-86.

⁶²⁴ France: 45-51.

⁶²⁵ Derek Charman 'Local archives of Great Britain XVII: the Ipswich and East Suffolk Record Office' *Archives 4*: 21 (1959): 18-28. The Library became a manorial repository in 1926: minutes 23 Feb 1926, HMC 5/1, TNA.

⁶²⁶ Derek Charman 'The archivist and modern local government records' *Bulletin of the Society of Local Archivists* 14 (1954): 2-9. Charman moved to British Steel Corporation in 1970: Derek Charman 'Records management in the British Steel Corporation' *Business Archives* 40 (1974): 17-22.

⁶²⁷ After a change of policy by the Probate Division of the High Court to transfer probate records from district registries to local record offices: Jenkinson 'Archive developments': 280.

and public services. Hull, Walne and, to his credit, Le Hardy, were among those aware of the need for management for the records of the county council and, in the 1950s, they established systems in their authorities: Hull and Walne also both taught records management to archive students after the war.

As these individuals began to train the new generation of archivists, patterns of working and their habits of individual direction spread. The story of the pre-war record office is their story. The archival network 'produced a remarkably individual pattern, by no means undesirable, but with an extraordinary mixture of new entrants'.⁶²⁸ The profession survived the war, rallied by the RPS under Ethel Stokes and her 300 local volunteers. Better public awareness of the value of records through the propaganda of the BRA and the enthusiasm of Col Malet and the NRA local committees were contributory factors.⁶²⁹ For instance, Wiltshire Record Office was established after the inspection of the Marquess of Ailesbury's papers by Col Malet in 1945. After the NRA local committee had been established, Plymouth employed an archivist, G A Chinnery, in 1952 and set up an archives department in Ham library.⁶³⁰ Chinnery also became secretary to the NRA county committee in Exeter. Elsewhere, accessions rose dramatically when an NRA committee was set up: in Bedfordshire accessions increased from 1500 to 4500 a year, and Nottingham city library acquired 3300 manuscripts in the period after an NRA meeting in 1946.⁶³¹ By 1947 there were established employment opportunities for archivists outside the PRO. In the post-war period of expansion of public services, local record offices and their archivists had a unique opportunity to forge ahead.

The post-war period in the localities, 1947 - 1980

Swift progress was made after the war with the county record office scheme, in a period of 'expansion, consolidation and generally of successful growth and advance'.⁶³² The emergence of professional training for archivists at the universities (which will be discussed in chapter 7), the development of a repairer training course at LCC and the steps taken towards a national archival authority by the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee (which has been discussed in chapter 1) all enabled professional development.⁶³³ The Society of Local Archivists, founded in 1947, provided an opportunity for individual archivists to work together as a profession and its *Bulletin* disseminated professional writing.⁶³⁴ A greater professionalism in outlook led to new surveys, such as the Pilgrim Trust-funded survey of ecclesiastical archives in 1946-

⁶²⁸ Ralph & Hull: 64.

⁶²⁹ Ralph & Hull: 62.

⁶³⁰ Welch 'Plymouth': 100-105.

⁶³¹ Roger Ellis ed *Work in archives 1939-47* reprinted from *The year's work in librarianship 1947* London: British Records Association, 1947: 32. Felicity Ranger 'The National Register of Archives 1945-1969' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 3 (1965-69): 456.

⁶³² Roger Ellis, & Ivor Graham eds *Work in archives 1948-55* reprinted from *The year's work in librarianship 1958*, London: British Records Association, 1958: 1.

⁶³³ Jenkinson 'Archive developments': 280-283.

⁶³⁴ Begun under the editorship of Emmison in 1947.

50;⁶³⁵ the BRA review series *The year's work in archives*, which started in 1934; and the publication of the first *List of record repositories in Great Britain* by the BRA in 1956.⁶³⁶

Yet many obstacles still stood in the way of the county record office. Archives lacked national structures, legislation and support. The PRO, now led by Jenkinson, still looked back to its scholarly publishing role and its pre-eminence as the only significant English archive outside the national libraries. It did not acknowledge its position as a leader for the archival profession or any responsibility for local archives. Local archives faced competition from libraries holding archives, had problems recruiting qualified or experienced staff (since the university courses were only just beginning), lacked suitable premises and equipment (such as metal racking), experienced difficulties travelling in an era when few archivists had cars or could drive (Emmison famously carried out the parish survey of Bedfordshire by bicycle) and lacked much professional guidance in print or practice.⁶³⁷ But progress (measured in terms of numbers of offices) was made swiftly.

Growth after 1947

By 1948 Emmison and Gray reported record services in 34 English counties and five Welsh ones.⁶³⁸ Le Hardy noted in his preface to Redstone and Steer's *Local records* in 1953 that only eight English counties did not have a county record office.⁶³⁹ Serjeant estimated that in addition to the 12 local offices which had been founded by 1940, 15 offices were established in 1946-50, a further six in 1951-55, and nine in the decade 1956-1965.⁶⁴⁰ In addition to the opening of new offices, established record offices reopened following suspension during the war.

Among the new offices to be established was Worcestershire Record Office. Worcestershire had been a pioneer among county councils in establishing a records committee in the 1890s, but numerous false starts delayed the appointment of a county archivist, E H Sargeant, until 1947.⁶⁴¹ The office then rapidly acquired records, staff and accommodation. A particular feature was the 'modern archives' section which stored the council's legal records and other records of the clerk's department. Joint committees began to appear, foreshadowing their prevalence in the 1980s. Lincolnshire,⁶⁴² Northamptonshire and Norwich and Norfolk

⁶³⁵ The Pilgrim Trust *Survey of ecclesiastical archives 1946*, ts, 1951, BB0101, IHR.

⁶³⁶ Prepared as UK survey for ICA *International directory of archives* and published separately as *British Records Association Reports from committees no 5: list of record repositories in Great Britain* London: British Records Association, 1956.

⁶³⁷ Stitt 'memoir': 77-91.

⁶³⁸ F G Emmison & Irvine Gray *County records* London: The Historical Association and George Philip & Son, 1948: 28-23, although since the survey was directed at the clerks of the peace, it is difficult to determine which replies really indicated an established office.

⁶³⁹ Redstone & Steer: v.

⁶⁴⁰ Serjeant 'survey 1968': 313.

⁶⁴¹ Sargeant 'Worcestershire': 151-159.

⁶⁴² Varley: 5-16. Major & Varley: 10-17.

established joint Archives Committees. Cumberland, Westmoreland and Carlisle did so in 1960.⁶⁴³ Madeleine Elsas (archivist in Glamorgan, the first county record office in Wales, since 1946) was appointed in 1962 to manage the distributed service.⁶⁴⁴

County archivists were appointed for the first time in Hampshire, Wiltshire, Leicestershire, Staffordshire, East and West Sussex, Cambridgeshire, Northumberland, Dorset and Gloucestershire and additional staff in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex.⁶⁴⁵ The cities of Plymouth, Bradford, Manchester, and York also set up services.⁶⁴⁶ Newcastle upon Tyne appointed its first City Archivist, Joan Fawcett, in 1948,⁶⁴⁷ in the town clerk's section. She concentrated initially on official records, including records management services, leaving local history enquiries to the library. Under Michael Cook after 1958 services included 'archive teaching units' for schools, lectures, palaeography classes for training college students, exhibitions in the Laing art gallery, searchroom enquiry services and records management for the council.

Professional development: records management

By the 1950s a county archivist was responsible for a wide range of records beyond those of his employer, and council records was 'generally only one of his many duties'.⁶⁴⁸ All offices acquired private archives but only a few ran a registry for current records or held non-current records. Exceptionally, LCC established a central record room and dedicated records staff in the 1890s and Bedfordshire had operated destruction schedules for council records since the 1910s. In some counties the record office stored council deeds (eg Oxfordshire and Essex from the 1930s). In the 1950s, following the *Grigg Report*, records management services started in Hertfordshire, Berkshire, Kent and East Suffolk. The Society's *Bulletin* took up the theme in 1954⁶⁴⁹ when Charman identified the division between historical records and modern records and proposed that responsibility for both should be with the archivist. This led him to reinterpret the term archives 'to include all records as soon as they are created'. A few offices later provided storage for non-current files (eg Cambridgeshire in 1964, Chester in 1967). A report for the London metropolitan authorities in 1965 recommended that boroughs establish central registries and that 'archivists have much to offer the administrator in the field of records management and should not be reluctant to offer their services'.⁶⁵⁰ Very gradually, London boroughs established records management services (eg Hammersmith after 1967, Hackney in 1985, Croydon in 1990). Only about 20% of county authorities had established a

⁶⁴³ Jones 'Cumberland': 80-86.

⁶⁴⁴ Madeleine Elsas 'Local archives of Great Britain III: the Glamorgan County Record Office' *Archives* 1: 3 (1950): 7-16.

⁶⁴⁵ Ellis *Archives 1939-47*: 30, 42. Joan C Lancaster ed *Archives 1956-60* reprinted from *Five year's work in librarianship* London: British Records Association, 1963: 473.

⁶⁴⁶ Lancaster: 484.

⁶⁴⁷ Cook 'Newcastle upon Tyne': 226-233.

⁶⁴⁸ Redstone & Steer: 140.

⁶⁴⁹ Charman 'Modern local government records': 2-9.

⁶⁵⁰ Michael Cook, Leonard McDonald & Edwin Welch, 'The management of records: report of the symposium held in Cambridge, 11-13 January 1968' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 3 (1965-1969): 418.

records management programme before 1970 and a further 25% began a service by 1979.⁶⁵¹ For instance, the arrival of Carl Newton in East Sussex in 1971 led to the development of a records management programme and Worcestershire pioneered a classification scheme for current filing. However, these interests were not very widely adopted among county archivists, in spite of a prediction in 1962 that ‘increasingly the quasi-antiquarian flavour of archive work will give way to records management.’⁶⁵² The failure to establish records management services is a surprising feature of post-war development and an area of weakness for local government archives, which was only remedied in the 1990s.

Legislation

In 1962 the Local Government (Records) Act finally confirmed the legitimacy of local record offices, by enabling local authorities to acquire records and provide archival services. The Act did not have a significant effect on the expansion of services since the geographical coverage was already almost complete. The Act’s powers were quite limited and did not compel authorities to provide or expand services (eg into records management or the use of archives in education).

The Local Government Act 1972 conferred an obligation on county councils to make proper provision for their records, but the effect on archives of its other provisions proved more far reaching than expected.⁶⁵³ Many record offices lost their historic unit of county administration, depriving them of historical context and of ongoing utility for records management. Some of the new counties had no records provision, and joint arrangements proved hard to establish in areas where there was no history of cooperation.

In London and metropolitan boroughs, archive services were usually run as part of a local studies library service and small, underfunded offices with wide remits predominated. The London Government Act 1963 made London boroughs archive authorities and a few continued existing arrangements or set up new services, for example the London Borough of Hammersmith, which held private archives in the library and official archives in the town hall.⁶⁵⁴ After reorganisation a new archivist set up a registry system and records management scheme, encouraged the deposit and use of local private records, and organised local history walks, school projects and exhibitions.

Local archives in 1968

In 1968 the SoA commissioned the first survey of the management and administration of record offices (rather than of their contents). It concluded that good progress had been made since 1948, with the almost

⁶⁵¹ A postal survey was carried out by the author in November 1993. 43 returns were received out of 48 questionnaires sent to local authority record offices.

⁶⁵² Ralph & Hull: 69-70.

⁶⁵³ HMC *Twenty sixth report*: 16.

⁶⁵⁴ Pamela Taylor ‘Local archives of Great Britain XXXI: the London Borough of Hammersmith Record Office’ *Archives* 9: 44 (1970): 192-196.

complete network of county repositories, but development had been inhibited by three factors.⁶⁵⁵ First, local provision was uneven, lacked proper resources and was too dependent on ‘hoping for the best’. Secondly, archive work was mainly a low profile rescue operation and had not progressed to broader policy issues. Finally the profession lacked skilled and qualified staff, relying at first on ‘a handful of trained, experienced local archivists’ and lacking a ‘transfusion of archive experience... from the well-established national repositories’. As a result, the profession ‘had to create itself as it went along’ without attention to professional theories and principles.

Local authorities were confused about the real function of archives and placed them in administrative structures ranging from chief executive’s department to library and under various committees. Few archive services were well funded: the survey suggested that small units should join together. Archive premises were typically of low quality, with only 18 of 123 respondents in purpose-built accommodation, although half had access to an exhibition space or lecture hall. Few had repair services. Staffing levels were low: an average of 7.5 in county record offices, which was ‘not generous considering the range of tasks carried out’, although over half were professionals. Greater numbers of support staff would let archivists focus on more specialised tasks. Rates of pay were low and advancement and promotion limited, especially worrying as it was a young workforce. Meanwhile, the use of archives was increasing significantly and by a wider range of readers, including genealogists (25%), teachers, students and official enquirers (50%). The change in the use of local authority archives mirrored that recorded in the PRO’s study of its users in 1967.⁶⁵⁶

Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire provides an example of the changes experienced by local authority record offices over the period to 1980.⁶⁵⁷ When Walne took over in 1962, he capitalised on the progress of his predecessor, Le Hardy, to ensure that the record office was secure within the county council administration, had an adequate budget and sound staffing, and was expanding its collections. From 1968 the council faced a period of ‘rolling reform’ which had significant implications for the organisation, finance and culture of the record office. Walne opposed a proposal in 1969 to bring together records, libraries, and museums, on the grounds that it failed to acknowledge the committee’s legal responsibilities for commons registration and local government records. The Records Committee was instead replaced by a Law and Records Committee.

Although Hertfordshire did not change its boundaries under the 1972 Act, the council underwent administrative reorganisation. Although the record office was by far the smallest department it retained its separate status. However, it was placed under Cultural and Recreational Facilities Committee, together with arts, parks, libraries and museums, with no recognition of its legal and administrative role. As Booth notes,

⁶⁵⁵ Serjeant ‘survey 1968’: 300-326.

⁶⁵⁶ Ede ‘users’: 185-192.

⁶⁵⁷ Booth: 32-42.

‘the accumulation of sources whose utility lay outside the parent authority would ultimately limit the department’s potential to prove internal worth’.

Gradually, the record office suffered budget cuts as spending was curbed by central government restrictions. By 1984 staffing was 25% lower than in 1972. However, services expanded, with a revived records management programme and the acquisition of archives from defunct authorities, such as urban and rural district councils after 1973, the new town corporations in the 1980s and of parish records.

Progress by 1980

Before 1947 local record offices developed individually, strongly influenced by local circumstances and the character and interests of their founders. The pioneering first generation of local archivists established frameworks for the profession, when national legislation and guidance was lacking. After 1945 the NRA began to shape local archives, although other national institutions took little interest in the localities until 1964, when the PRO’s Liaison Officer was appointed to inspect places of deposit under the 1958 Act. In the post-war period university-educated archivists began to work in local archives, bringing with them some similarities of approach and outlook. The Society of Local Archivists provided a forum for professional development and discussion and stimulated a more unified approach. As legislation finally provided legitimacy for local archives in 1962 and record offices became firmly established there was a need to develop professional standards and norms collaboratively. The PRO and HMC did not often provide national cohesion or guidance. Leadership within professional groups, rather than individual innovation, was required. Unfortunately, the individualism of the pioneers lingered on into a period when greater consolidation and professional development would have been possible. Progress was very slow and the profession failed to build on its collective experience. It lacked a central policy body and was reliant on voluntary organisations. Professional standards only began to emerge in the 1980s, by which time the profession in the localities was facing new threats.

Business and university archives

Growing awareness of business archives among local archivists is evident in professional literature in the 1950s.⁶⁵⁸ A few local authority archives began to acquire them: the Guildhall Library undertook the first major initiative.⁶⁵⁹ Subsequently, special collections developed in local record offices including Tyne and Wear archives (shipbuilding), Merseyside (shipping and shipbuilding), Leeds (textiles) and Birmingham (engineering). In-house archive services in companies did not really develop until the 1960s when ‘a

⁶⁵⁸ Eg W H Chaloner ‘Business records and local history’ *Bulletin of the Society of Local Archivists* 12 (1953): 21-25.

⁶⁵⁹ Hollaender ‘Guildhall’: 312-323.

measurable number of businesses appointed full- or part-time archivists'.⁶⁶⁰ Edwin Green, writing for the Business Archives Council (BAC), reported that by 1965 there were 12 business archives and by 1987 over 100 business archives were established.

Green noted that the 'formalized accumulation of business records became a feature of all types of joint stock companies' from the 1830s. In the 19th century some companies commissioned company histories but it was the growth of business and economic history in universities in the early 20th century which increased demand for access to business archives. The formation of the CPBA in 1932, which will be discussed in chapter 5, brought together historians, archivists and businessmen to preserve archives.

Business archives and history

The establishment of company archives followed. In 1933 the Bank of England made J A Giuseppe responsible for its history, formed an Archive Committee in 1938 and a historical records section in 1946. When Wilfred Crick and John Wadsworth's history of Midland Bank was completed in 1936, they turned their attention to organising the archives. W H Smith and Son published a history of the first 100 years in 1920.⁶⁶¹ An archive room was established at headquarters and in 1935 Miss D W Young was engaged part-time to 'collect and arrange old documents of interest to the Company'. In 1963 N J Williams from the PRO was engaged as a consultant and a part-time archivist was employed. As well as managing the family and business archives the archivist undertook records management after a study of 'office efficiency' in 1969.

John Lewis Partnership started an archive in 1964 as part of its centenary celebrations.⁶⁶² In 1960 Baring Bros & Co Ltd appointed an archivist, Major Thomas Ingram who qualified at UCL in 1953.⁶⁶³ The bank had well established office systems, including a registry system for partners' correspondence from 1900 which survived until the 1970s. In 1973 the archivist took on responsibility for records management as well as archives. The archivist also had a significant role in external relations, exhibitions and publications for visiting clients, and managing the art collection.

Public relations value

In the 1970s the public relations value of archives encouraged firms such as J Sainsbury and Colman's to start archive services. Sainsbury appointed an archivist in 1975 in the Public Relations Department to manage the archives, museum objects and photographs accumulated for the centenary publication and

⁶⁶⁰ Edwin Green 'Business archives in the United Kingdom: history, conspectus, prospectus' *Managing business archives* ed Alison Turton. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann, 1991: 1-26.

⁶⁶¹ T W Baker-Jones 'The archives of W H Smith and Son Ltd' *Business Archives* 54 (1987): 41-56.

⁶⁶² Lorna Poole 'British business archives 1: the John Lewis Partnership' *Business Archives* 37 (1972): 11-16.

⁶⁶³ John Orbell 'The introduction of a computer based modern records control system at Barings Merchant Bank' *Business Archives* 55 (1988): 29-37.

undertake outreach and educational activities.⁶⁶⁴ In 1979 the House of Fraser set up its archive in Glasgow, initially to support the writing of a company history but its value for exhibitions, publications and in-store events led to its being permanently established.⁶⁶⁵ The promotion and protection of brands and marques was an important aspect for United Distillers (where in the 1980s and 1990s the archive service was in the heritage and marketing department)⁶⁶⁶ and for Prudential.⁶⁶⁷

Records management in business

Early developments in records management in business were led by the nationalised industries in the 1950s and 1960s influenced by PRO practices. The records officer at the National Coal Board first undertook a 'census of documents' and prepared retention schedules in 1959.⁶⁶⁸ British Steel Corporation was created by the nationalisation of the steel industry in 1967.⁶⁶⁹ After a major restructuring in 1970 an archivist was appointed. In 1972 the first regional records centre was established in Northamptonshire and a records service established on a regional and local basis.

In 1966 the BAC published guidance on business records which suggested that the company archivist 'extend his responsibilities to the control of records as a whole'.⁶⁷⁰ The importance of records management led to new services starting in the 1970s at British Petroleum, Burmah Oil, Guinness Brewing, the Bank of Scotland and elsewhere. Lloyd's Register of Shipping appointed its first archivist in 1970, in preparation for an office move, and he set up a records centre and developed retention schedules.⁶⁷¹ Credit Suisse First Boston Ltd established its records services to reduce records storage, contracting out records storage in the mid-1970s.⁶⁷² In 1985 an archivist was appointed within the library to manage archives and records.

⁶⁶⁴ Honor Godfrey 'British business archives 2: the archives of J Sainsbury Ltd' *Business Archives* 44 (1978): 20-26.

⁶⁶⁵ Alison Turton 'British business archives 3: the archives of House of Fraser Ltd' *Business Archives* 46 (1980): 15-19.

⁶⁶⁶ E J T Collins 'Recent trends in business archives: a university view' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 13 (1992): 122.

⁶⁶⁷ Clare Bunkham 'Lady Prudence on tour in Asia' *ARC* 165 (May 2003): 15-16.

⁶⁶⁸ John Barlow 'Updating the retention schedule: records of the National Coal Board' *Records management 11: proceedings of a Society of Archivists in-service training course held by the Records Management Group at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, 21-23 September 1983* np, Society of Archivists, 1985, 102-112.

⁶⁶⁹ Charman 'British Steel Corporation': 17-22.

⁶⁷⁰ Business Archives Council *The management and control of business records* np, Business Archives Council, 1966.

⁶⁷¹ Raymond Tonkin 'Establishing a records centre' *Business Archives* 40 (1974): 45-50.

⁶⁷² Celia Jackson & Sylvia James 'Commercial off site storage for archives' *Business Archives* 53 (1987): 1-7.

University archives

The development of archives in universities began to make an impression on the archive sector in the 1960s: the BRA included reports from universities, institutions and societies for the first time in 1960.⁶⁷³ Nottingham University appointed its first archivist in the library in 1947 and set up a manuscript department in 1958. The Sudan Archive at Durham University began in 1957. Cambridge University appointed an archivist in the 1950s⁶⁷⁴ and two colleges appointed part-time archivists. Winchester College (the school) received a Pilgrim Trust grant to fund an archivist in 1957-59.

Some universities acquired archives before local record offices existed in the area and fulfilled a broad records function for the locality (eg Manchester, Nottingham). Others identified gaps in subject provision and acquired archives on a theme often to support teaching and research interests, for example Glasgow University, after the establishment of the Colquhoun lectureship in business history in 1959.⁶⁷⁵ Peter Payne surveyed and rescued archives from across the west of Scotland, many of which were deposited in the university, the Mitchell Library and, after the survey work was taken on by the NRA (Scotland) in 1969, at the Scottish Record Office. Michael Moss played a leading role in locating and listing business records in Scotland and was instrumental in the foundation of the Glasgow University Business Records Centre. He was created Professor of Archival Studies in 1997 in recognition of his contribution.⁶⁷⁶ Reading University set up the Institute of Agricultural History in 1968 as a national research centre for rural and agricultural history: as other universities shut down departments in agricultural research it acquired additional materials.⁶⁷⁷ The Centre for Military Archives at King's College London was set up in 1964 to support the work of the department of war studies and founded on the bequest of papers from Captain B H Liddell Hart,⁶⁷⁸ in spite of objections by the Imperial War Museum department of documents.

The expansion of archives in universities and special repositories was not welcomed by local and other specialist archivists and it caused conflict over collection policies, since there was a view that universities did not always take account of existing provision. For example Reading University and local archives competed to acquire agricultural records in the 1960s.⁶⁷⁹ In 1966 the SoA and the BRA discussed a proposal by Leicester University to set up a Victorian studies centre with an archive and declared that 'all

⁶⁷³ Lancaster: 490-497.

⁶⁷⁴ 'Heather Peek' obituary *The Times* 22 Nov 2002.

⁶⁷⁵ Green: 11-12.

⁶⁷⁶ Lesley Richmond, Glasgow University Archivist, 'Michael Moss', email to the author, 15 March 2004.

⁶⁷⁷ Collins: 121.

⁶⁷⁸ 'Notes and news' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 3 (1965-69): 30.

⁶⁷⁹ Peter Walne of SoA made his views known 'forcibly' to the curator who was 'prepared to disregard this Society's very proper objections to certain aspects of the Museum's work in this field'. SoA also expressed concern over the proposed aeronautical collection at the University Library, Southampton. Annual report 1965/66, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

such special collections were potentially inimical to the integrity of archives'.⁶⁸⁰ A BRA statement of principles for special repositories was circulated to universities. Correspondence ensued between the BRA and the universities of Hull and Nottingham about their 'archive intentions'. In 1967 the BRA published a memorandum which acknowledged that universities could keep records of research, science and technology in 'documentation centres' but stated that 'further unplanned establishment of repositories is in the interests neither of the scholars who use the records, nor of the archivists who look after them'.⁶⁸¹ Local archivists defended their territory but missed an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues in universities and to influence national policy.

More university archives were established in the 1970s. In 1973 Leverhulme Trust funded the University of Warwick to employ archivists to collect records of British labour history, industrial relations and politics. Originally the project was to focus on the West Midlands, but it soon took on a UK-wide scope and became the Modern Records Centre for archives of labour and industrial relations.⁶⁸² Also in 1973 Churchill College Archives Centre, Cambridge, was built to house Winston Churchill's papers. Some businesses outsourced their archives to university repositories, including Wedgwood archives which went to Keele University in 1976,⁶⁸³ and BP archives which went to Warwick University in 1992.⁶⁸⁴

Archive services in 1980

By 1980 the archive work group was established in all main sectors: local and central government, businesses, universities and in some museums and galleries and specialist medical and ecclesiastical institutions. New parts of the sector emerged strongly in the 1960s and outside the network of offices and legislative provision so recently secured by local archivists. Instead of embracing these new developments, local archivists and their professional bodies preferred exclusivity. This narrowness of vision, encouraged by the national institutions which were hard pressed with their own concerns, prevented a full national system from emerging. Archivists were still prone to be parochial in outlook. Most archives had developed their own definition of the scope of services to be offered, influenced by local pressures, preferences and funding. There was no general agreement about whether archives should also offer records management or whether this was a separate (and non-archival) function. All archives acquired, arranged and described archives, but few had clear acquisition policies and there were no national or international standards for arrangement and description, beyond the principles of respect for provenance and original order, as evidenced by the bewildered response to the publication of the *Manual of archival description* in 1986.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸⁰ Council meeting 26 April 1966, BRA Signed minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

⁶⁸¹ BRA memorandum on preservation and use of records - the universities' contribution, Council minutes 18 July 1967, BRA Signed minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

⁶⁸² Council minutes 17 July 1973, BRA Signed minutes vol VII 1968-79, LMA.

⁶⁸³ Bruce Tattersall 'The Wedgwood Archives' *Business Archives* 41 (1976): 31-33.

⁶⁸⁴ Anita Hollier 'Computerised finding aids at the British Petroleum Archive' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 13 (1992): 124-131.

⁶⁸⁵ Michael Cook *A manual of archival description* Aldershot: Gower, 1986.

Repository design and management and preservation were still mainly in the hands of archivists, with archive conservators generally viewed as craft-based repairers (although some progress was made after 1970 when the SoA founded its Conservation Group). Reader services began to take account of user needs (the first user survey at the PRO took place in 1967) but there was an assumption in many archives that published Guides (many published in the 1940s and in need of updating), complex provenance-based finding aids, and document production (often at set times) in search-rooms with limited opening hours, met readers' needs. A few offices, such as Essex, pioneered evening opening, outreach and exhibitions, schools services, evening classes and talks. What was lacking by 1980 was any real sense of national archival policy and professional standards to which archivists could aspire. Without professional benchmarks, and offering few clear benefits to their paymasters, non-statutory services such as archives struggled to justify their place in a harsher economic climate.

The archive landscape 1980-2003

Under the Conservative administration of 1979, public services were cut back. Efficiency in delivering services was critical and local archivists, along with other public employees, were asked to justify expenditure on non-statutory services. Demonstrating the quality and effectiveness of services became increasingly important: archives, lacking agreement on professional standards, performance indicators and statistics were in a poor state to respond.⁶⁸⁶ Benchmarking, job evaluations, zero-based budgeting, market testing and contracting out all became features of the more managerial, cost-driven approach. It was assumed that public services were wasteful and inefficient and that citizens would benefit from their reduction. Private provision, driven by market forces, was believed to be better.

Archives faced new challenges. After the introduction of the personal computer in 1981, functions (including archival ones) were increasingly automated. However, archivists failed to prepare for the impact of automation on records themselves, perhaps believing that the problem could be ignored until the records reached the archive in 30 years. As a result, although three quarters of archives held non-traditional media (film, video, audio, electronic) in 1992, only 12% had specialist storage and 19% consultation facilities. Strongly individual practices for core functions such as accessioning, cataloguing and storage, meant that archivists could not easily benefit from mass market IT developments. Sister professions especially libraries, strode far ahead, while archives invested time, energy and money in working with systems developers on specialised systems with no market appeal. Even the national institutions (the PRO and HMC) failed to make significant progress. Underlying this was the failure of most archivists to recognise that national and international, not in-house, standards would enable the great leap forward. Standards for

⁶⁸⁶ Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) began to collect statistics for county record offices from 1987.

core aspects of work emerged very gradually but with no obligation to adopt them: archival storage,⁶⁸⁷ description,⁶⁸⁸ archival management,⁶⁸⁹ access⁶⁹⁰ and records management.⁶⁹¹

Local archives in the 1980s and 1990s

Local government offered employment for over half the archive workforce: in 1992 all but one shire county (Avon) had a record office and some shire districts had archive powers. A series of surveys carried out by HMC and the NCA in 1984,⁶⁹² 1992⁶⁹³ and 1996⁶⁹⁴ enabled trends in local archive services to be mapped over time. These revealed an impending crisis in local archives. Staffing had hardly increased between 1968 and 1984, yet reader visits had increased by a quarter.⁶⁹⁵ Staffing grew by 36% between 1984 and 1992 but reader numbers rose by 59%.⁶⁹⁶ The typical county record office in 1992 had 16.4 staff (including six archivists and two conservators), very different from the one or two staff of the 1940s: however, in boroughs and elsewhere, one-person offices were still common.

Most county record offices held far more private and public archives than official records of the council, which raised the question of why county councils should continue to fund the services. 23% of holdings were records of the parent body and its predecessors, 26% other local authority and public records, and 51% private records.⁶⁹⁷ By 1992, 24% of repositories were full, in spite of over 40 new buildings or extensions since 1984⁶⁹⁸ and many archives fell short of British Standard benchmarks.⁶⁹⁹ Local record offices purported to offer secure storage for unique archives often on deposit from their owners, and yet in many cases they were either full or the storage had obvious deficiencies. Was it luck that so few disasters and losses occurred?

The parent departments for archives had shifted: in 1968, 30 of 35 county archivists reported to the clerk of the council but by 1992 only 15 still did so. Another 15 were in leisure or library departments, four were

⁶⁸⁷ British Standards Institute *BS 5454: 1977 Recommendations for the storage and exhibition of archival documents*. 2nd ed, 1989.

⁶⁸⁸ Cook *MAD*, 1986.

⁶⁸⁹ United Kingdom. Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts *A standard for record repositories on constitution and finance, staff, acquisitions and access* London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1990. 2nd ed, 1997.

⁶⁹⁰ Public Services Quality Group *Standard for access to archives – a working document* London: Public Services Quality Group, 2000.

⁶⁹¹ International Standards Organisation *ISO 15489-1-2: 2001 Information and documentation - records management – part 1: general, part 2: guidelines* International Standards Organisation, 2001.

⁶⁹² Brian S Smith 'Record repositories in 1984' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 8 (1986): 1-16.

⁶⁹³ Heather Forbes *Local authority archive services 1992* London: HMSO, 1993.

⁶⁹⁴ Heather Forbes & Rosemary Dunhill 'Survey of local authority archive services: 1996 update' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 18 (1997): 37-57.

⁶⁹⁵ B S Smith '1984': 1-16.

⁶⁹⁶ Forbes 1992: 2-3.

⁶⁹⁷ Forbes 1992: 6.

⁶⁹⁸ Forbes 1992: 4-5.

⁶⁹⁹ Eg *BS 5454: 1977*.

independent and one in an education department. This represented a major shift away from central legal and administrative functions for the county towards cultural and leisure objectives, a probably inevitable consequence of the focus on acquisition and public services rather than records management. Even by 1992 only half the respondents offered records management services to the authority, making them vulnerable to funding cuts and loss of status in times of organisational change.⁷⁰⁰

The introduction of the national curriculum for schools under the Education Reform Act 1988 promoted the use of original source material but only 20% of offices had a dedicated education officer by 1992, probably because the Act did not provide any new resources.⁷⁰¹ On the contrary, as budgets were increasingly devolved from the local education authority to schools, subventions to central services such as archive education were lost.

Increasingly archives had outreach policies and well planned outreach programmes, such as Nottinghamshire, Kent and Gwynedd in Wales.⁷⁰² As well as the traditional talks, exhibitions and publications, many regularly used newspapers, local radio and television to reach their audiences. 15 counties had 'Friends' organisations, run independently of the archive, but organising visits, talks, meetings and fund raising events and co-ordinating volunteers. New outreach activities included history fairs, road shows, open days, local history days, children's clubs and family history surgeries.

Local authorities had made a big commitment to preserving local archives and archivists increasingly made efforts to attract additional funding. Standards and performance indicators, although in their infancy for archives, assisted development. However, the overall picture was of great unevenness of provision, with some offices as 'centres of excellence' and others struggling with inadequate staffing and premises.

Our Shared Past

The state of local authority archives was comprehensively reviewed in 1998 in *Our Shared Past*, which identified funding priorities for the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and others.⁷⁰³ The findings suggested a sector in need of serious solutions. Although local record offices were providing for 463,000 visitors a year, who consulted over two million documents or copies, pressure on front line services had led to a reduction

⁷⁰⁰ Forbes 1992: 8-9.

⁷⁰¹ Forbes 1992: 21-23.

⁷⁰² Forbes 1992: 24-27.

⁷⁰³ A joint project between the PRO, the HMC, SoA, and ACALG. Archival Mapping Project Board *Our shared past: an archival Domesday for England* Richmond: Public Record Office, 1998. Revised as United Kingdom. Public Record Office *Our shared past: phase two: developing 21st century archive services* Richmond: Public Record Office, 2001.

Surveys for Wales (a pilot project in 1996-97 and full survey in 2000) and Scotland followed: United Kingdom. National Archives of Scotland *An archival account of Scotland – public and private sector archives in Scotland* Edinburgh: National Archives of Scotland, 2000.

United Kingdom. Archives Council Wales *Archival mapping project for Wales* Aberystwyth: Archives Council Wales, 2001.

of effort in traditional areas such as cataloguing. Few offices had recent collection-level descriptions. IT made data exchange possible at a lower cost but record offices had backlogs of cataloguing which might take months or even years to complete. Local archives lagged behind libraries in the use of IT and lacked both technical hardware and staff skills. The report recommended linking local archives into information networks, so that archival resources could be properly shared and exploited.

Regional solutions were suggested for electronic records, where 98% of local archives had no arrangements for the digital records of their employing authority or for deposited records. There was now ‘an urgent need for local authorities to review their strategy with regard to records management’, especially for digital records. Local archive services were most often linked with libraries, museums and other ‘cultural’ departments, but were gradually losing chief officer status.⁷⁰⁴ By 2003 almost half of county record offices had lost the senior county archivist post to budget cuts.

The crisis was magnified by threats to the future of local authorities. Counties had been a stable unit of administration for centuries, and since 1889 had provided a top tier of local government across England and Wales, to which archives could be conveniently tied. However, in the 1970s and again in the early 1990s, Local Government Acts led to restructuring on local patterns and the loss of a national framework.⁷⁰⁵ Government offices were devolved to regions and archives and record offices cast adrift. A ‘fully effective system for co-ordinating our national archives, both central and local’ was needed more than ever.⁷⁰⁶

Policy leadership

The lack of a single government agency responsible for archives was a growing concern. In 1981 the HMC acknowledged the calls for a single government agency, regional record offices and sharing of specialised services under central guidance but declared that central control could not be imposed on local record offices as it ‘would here only invite failure’. HMC stated that ‘the concept of any form of national directorate of archives clearly continues to command no general support’.⁷⁰⁷ Yet the profession needed policy leadership. Central and local government archives faced new challenges but were not responding effectively. Local archives had few common objectives and disagreed about priorities. The profession lacked information about its strengths and weaknesses and its ability to manage its resources: the lack of central policy initiative during the uncertainties of the 1980s left a vacuum into which voluntary professional bodies stepped. Key individuals began to see a valuable national role in leading the profession. Local individual initiative gave way to a broader perspective. The professional bodies, the ACA, SoA and

⁷⁰⁴ HMC *Archives at the millennium*: 36-43.

⁷⁰⁵ For England (1992), Wales (1994) and Scotland (1994) which have been discussed in chapter 2.

⁷⁰⁶ Attributed to the Lord Chancellor in 1988 by Rosemary C Dunhill ‘The National Council on Archives: its role in professional thinking and development’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 11 (1990): 34.

⁷⁰⁷ HMC *Twenty sixth report*: 18, 15.

especially the NCA, took a greater role in proactive policy development, greatly improved their skills in political engagement and brought the profession together: these issues will be addressed in chapter 6.

As the framework of local government disintegrated, local archives looked to regional and national structures and to professional networks to provide stability and leadership. New unitary authorities created as the result of review in the 1990s had mostly settled into joint arrangements to maintain existing archive services. In *Archives at the millennium* HMC pointed the way to regional or 'strategic' repositories serving larger areas and providing specialist services.⁷⁰⁸ As the funding of archival institutions changed, archivists realised the benefits of working in a coordinated fashion towards national priorities.

Specialist repositories⁷⁰⁹

The diversity of archival institutions grew over the last two decades of the 20th century. Specialist repositories made up a significant, and dynamic, minority of archives by 2000. At least ten sub-divisions, based on a mixture of subject specialisations (medical and scientific) and organizational type (businesses, universities, charities) were identified.⁷¹⁰

University archive departments were indirectly funded by Department for Education via the funding councils as part of the university function: there were about 30 in 1990.⁷¹¹ They tended to be small departments within large institutions and often held the institution's own records together with research-related collections of either local or national significance. University archives had access to new funds under a funding council programme for research collections in university libraries for projects including conservation and cataloguing.⁷¹² About £50 million was distributed between 1994 and 1999 and archives 'proved remarkably successful in making their case for funding and ... accounted for very nearly half of all the projects supported'.⁷¹³ In spite of these improvements to cataloguing and preservation, many university archives still had inadequate storage, no professional archive staff, and the care of their own records fell below that accorded to special collections. Yet university archivists led the way in the development of networking technology, regional hubs and use of Encoded Archival Description (EAD).⁷¹⁴

⁷⁰⁸ HMC *Archives at the millennium*: 43.

⁷⁰⁹ Society of Archivists *The missing link: specialist repositories in England: a map of development and funding needs* London: Society of Archivists and British Library, 2002. HMC *Archives at the millennium*: 46-48.

⁷¹⁰ SoA *missing link*: 7-9.

⁷¹¹ HMC *Twenty seventh report*: 26.

⁷¹² For instance, Dorothy Johnston 'From typescript finding aids to EAD (Encoded Archival Description): a university case study' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 22 (2001): 39-52.

⁷¹³ HMC *Archives at the millennium*: 47

⁷¹⁴ Willpower *Information Survey of needs-consultancy report* Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) Archives Sub-Committee of the Non-Formula Funding of Specialised Research Collections Initiative, 1998.

Libraries, museums and galleries, both nationally and locally, held many archives at the end of the 20th century, including public records held locally (of museums as government institutions) and subject-based collections (such as the National Railway Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, Tate Gallery and the Science Museum).⁷¹⁵ The *Code of practice on archives* for museums first issued in 1982 helped to promote good practice and archival standards.⁷¹⁶ The increasingly widespread view of archives as primarily cultural institutions (promulgated by organisations such as Resource) led to libraries, museums and archives moving closer together.

In-house business archives were an important part of the archival scene, although as privately funded organisations they were sometimes ignored by the public institutions. Multi-national corporation archives and those of international organisations posed new issues about where the archive should be held, who should be given access and for what purpose.

Private archives of families and individuals, societies and voluntary bodies kept archives for the community yet many lacked awareness of archival practice and professional advice. Community archives, with no link to established professionally run archives, posed a threat to the profession yet appealed to a wide and inclusive audience. How best could such archives be properly cared for and remain accessible?

Conclusion

In the 19th and early 20th centuries local archives evolved in many different ways, driven more by local enthusiasms and circumstances than by central policy or legislation. The predominant model which emerged was based on county councils, inheriting the records of quarter sessions in 1889, setting up county record committees and, eventually, county record offices. Gradually this model absorbed archives from city administrations, public libraries and private societies and trusts in most parts of England. Before the Second World War local developments were mainly determined by enthusiastic individuals who devised their own systems and frameworks. Patterns emerged as some offices (including Birmingham, Bedfordshire and Essex) acted as training grounds for archivists, in the absence of any formal archival education at the PRO or the universities. The county system which developed was not homogeneous, since it developed independently of government policy. It lacked central direction, legislation and standards, survived by chance and determination, and was often under-resourced and under-valued.

After 1947 the influence of individuals reduced as the professional bodies enabled archivists to work together and the new university programmes offered basic professional skills. The NRA after 1945

⁷¹⁵ HMC *Archives at the millennium*: 49-53.

⁷¹⁶ Standing Conference on Archives and Museums *Code of practice on archives* London: Standing Conference on Archives and Museums, 1990. Revised 1996, 2003.

stimulated local developments and after 1959 the PRO and HMC began to take greater responsibility for archival developments across the country. The period 1947 to 1980 was one of consolidation for local authority archives. The latter part of the period (1960-1980) saw the emergence of a wide range of new archive sectors, notably in business and in universities. The proliferation of archive services led to questions about the appropriate scope of services (records management or not, outreach, archives in education?), funding and standards. What defined the archival work group and what did it mean to be a 'professional' archivist?

By 1980 local government archivists, having experienced a brief period of stability and legitimacy after the 1962 Act, faced encroachments and threats from records managers, business archivists, acquisitive university and specialist repositories, as well as the loss of their historical administrative unit (the county) in 1974. In a period of crisis, a traditional narrowness of vision impeded significant progress. The HMC rejected calls for a 'national directorate of archives'⁷¹⁷ and the PRO focused on its new repository at Kew. Many localities clung to in-house approaches and rejected external innovations.

In the late 1980s archives and archivists changed. Local authority archives were hampered by the loss of the historic links between county councils and local record offices as the pattern of local government administration altered, causing disruption and uncertainty, and by their focus on historical public services over records management services to their employing authority. The professional community, fostered by the SoA and, from 1988, the NCA, spurred by new ways of working in specialist archives and led by the vision and enthusiasm of a new generation of senior archivists, began to work towards national objectives. The development of national archival policy by the professional bodies will be discussed in chapter 6 and was key in this new direction. British archivists began to take an interest in performance measurement and international standards development in professional areas such as archival description (led by Michael Cook and later Christopher Kitching), digital records and records management. In due course uniquely British contributions to professional practice, such as the electronic National Archive Network and social inclusion projects, emerged.

Finally, in 2003, the National Archives was formed, Resource's investigation into archives (the Archives Task Force) was in progress and consultation over proposed archive and records legislation began. The PRO recognised the need for leadership from the centre which was sensitive to local and specialist circumstances. Ideas re-emerged such as centres of excellence and regional facilities under a national standard setting authority. The need for clear and stable funding streams was acknowledged: whether such funding will be forthcoming remains to be seen.

⁷¹⁷ HMC *Twenty sixth report*: 18.

In the 21st century a homogeneous archival work group seems to be emerging to replace the series of disparate specialised groups evident in the 20th century (such as the historical approach of the PRO, individual local archival initiatives and the separation of archives from records management). Many issues still need to be resolved in order to make the complex and changing professional viable. Recruitment, education and training are significant, and will be discussed in chapters 6 and 8. In order to survive in fluid administrative structures archivists require a better understanding of archival functions and of the best way to deliver them, within a parent body which will change over time. Archivists need to respond flexibly and yet robustly to protect the profession's future. At the time of writing, there is no analysis tool available for archivists to enable them to understand and respond to their organisations.

Increasingly, all archives are seen as 'specialist repositories' as parent authorities alter. Some repositories may have several overlapping characteristics (eg educational bodies that are also charities). Some specialist repositories may have more in common with public sector repositories, such as small local government archives, than with other so-called specialist archives. Yet others are not commonly included within the archival community (eg film and sound archives, archaeological archives, community archives).

The sector as a whole lacks a reliable means of analysing its strengths and weaknesses, its functional priorities, and of evaluating alternative service provision models. A sound and independent framework for analysis on which to base decisions about structures, funding and service provision would help the profession to plan its future. An analytical framework for record and archive organizations (or units within larger diverse organizations, with a mandate to manage records and archives) which could be used to develop generic models of record and archive organizations, and a typology of such organizations, is needed. Generic functional maps of record and archive organizations and functional elements could be developed. The analysis could also be extended to other parts of the cultural sector, such as museums and libraries, in order to investigate synergies, overlaps and areas for collaborative development.

Local and specialist archives did not exist in any recognisable form in the early 20th century and were given little official encouragement or support. And yet by 2003 a wide spectrum of archives managing records from all types of creating organisations offered a complex and vibrant complement to the national archives. Local, specialist and national archive services presented a complex and distinct work group and, if managed carefully, offers the possibility of a unified archive profession in the 21st century.

From Scholarly Preoccupations Towards Professionalism: the development of professional associations and support bodies

'(i) to enable practising Archivists to discuss common problems and (ii) to promote the better administration of local repositories for archives' (Rules of the Society of Local Archivists, 1947)

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Chapter 5: Historical and Scholarly Associations, 1880-1945

Chapter 6: The Society of Archivists and beyond, 1945-2003

⁷¹⁸ Rules of the Society of Local Archivists adopted 11 Jan 1947, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

Chapter 5

Historical and Scholarly Associations, 1880-1945

Professional associations are identified by sociologists such as Caplow⁷¹⁹ and Wilensky⁷²⁰ as necessary to the development of professions. They help a profession to develop its theoretical and intellectual techniques, to become autonomous and self-regulating and to evolve a community destiny and language. An exclusive association is an essential element in the process of professionalisation, alongside the establishment of a distinct work group and a training school. Process-based models, such as that of Forsyth and Danisiewicz,⁷²¹ acknowledge that the phases of professional development progress more quickly with an active professional association.

In the early years of the 20th century archivists did not identify with their own work group (which was in any case very small), but rather with historians, editors and publishers of historical documents. Groups of individuals interested in archives as a resource for legal and cultural research and for leisure met and formed societies. Such societies attracted record agents, academic historians, editors, genealogists, businessmen and lawyers, as well as archivists, and focused on archaeology, history, record publication and other allied activities. Archivists joined local and national societies and were instrumental in their foundation, but these societies were not primarily archival. From the 1930s onwards the profession developed national archival associations which began to engage in developing standards, education programmes and policy making. This chapter and the next examine the development of such bodies and consider their influence on the archival profession. Did these associations enable the profession to develop more fully during the 20th century than it would have done without them? What role do they have at the beginning of the 21st century? Is there an effective professional body for UK archivists?

The origins

The earliest Society of Archivists in England was a gathering of ‘collectors and others interested in the study and preservation of Historical Documents, Manuscripts and Autographs’ in 1893 ‘to hold Exhibitions...to form a Library...to publish a Journal...to exchange views at meetings...[about] the preservation of Manuscripts’.⁷²² However, the Society’s *Reference Catalogue*⁷²³ shows that this was not a

⁷¹⁹ Caplow: 139-140.

⁷²⁰ Wilensky: 137-158.

⁷²¹ Forsyth & Danisiewicz : 59-76.

⁷²² H Saxe Wyndham ed *Journal of the Society of Archivists and Autograph Collectors* 1 (June 1895): 12-14 and insert on the Society and its objects.

⁷²³ T J Wise ed *A reference catalogue of British and foreign autographs and manuscripts* 7 parts. London: np, 1893-1897.

professional association, but a group whose main interest was in autograph collecting. Membership never reached more than 50, in spite of an exhibition at the Crystal Palace in 1897, and the Society closed before the turn of the century.⁷²⁴

In the 19th century those working with archives turned to the established national societies, such as the Royal Historical Society and the British Record Society, and to local record and archaeological societies. By the 1880s local record societies were established in a dozen counties including Wiltshire, Lancashire and Cheshire, Yorkshire, Middlesex, and Hampshire.⁷²⁵ Genealogical ventures such as Holworthy's journal *The British Archivist* also occupied the profession.⁷²⁶

Sir Hilary Jenkinson and professional bodies

Hilary Jenkinson, 'scholar and pioneer archivist',⁷²⁷ illustrates within his own career the move from scholarly and publishing associations (including the Royal Historical Society and Surrey Record Society) to professional associations (the British Records Association and the Society of Archivists).⁷²⁸ Jenkinson became joint secretary of Surrey Archaeological Society in 1908,⁷²⁹ edited the proceedings and later became its President. In 1910 Jenkinson proposed a new Record Society which would 'arouse a more widespread interest in Surrey records generally and in their preservation [and] make the material printed immediately available for use by historians and archaeologists'. Surrey Record Society was inaugurated in 1913 at the Society of Antiquaries, with Jenkinson as secretary and M S Giuseppi as editor.⁷³⁰ As a scholar, Jenkinson was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and of the Royal Historical Society (RHS). Jenkinson was also instrumental in the foundation of the British Records Association and was the first President of the Society of Archivists, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Surrey Record Society established a pattern in British archival associations. Although the Record Society was closely linked to the Archaeological Society (the proposal was signed by Ralph Nevill, Chairman of the Archaeological Society and its members and officers overlapped significantly) Jenkinson believed that a new organization ought to be founded, rather than the work of an existing one extended. A proposal to

⁷²⁴ In 1958 Holworthy, former county archivist of Kent, presented SoA with the *Journal of the Society of Archivists and Autograph Collectors* 1895, whose minute book was at Kent record office: minutes annual conference, Maidstone, Kent, 30 May 1958, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁷²⁵ Gray 'unfolding': 24

⁷²⁶ Published 1913-1920: Holworthy obituary: 175. Richard Holworthy ed *The British Archivist* published by Chas H Bernau, by subscription, appeared monthly during 1913.

⁷²⁷ The inscription on the blue plaque commemorating Jenkinson's years at his home Arun House in Horsham, West Sussex gives him this epithet.

⁷²⁸ Anonymous pen portrait, ascribed by Cantwell to Harold Johnson 'Memoir of Sir Hilary Jenkinson' *Studies presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson* ed J Conway Davies. London: Oxford University Press, 1957: xiii-xxx.

⁷²⁹ With his PRO colleague, M S Giuseppi.

⁷³⁰ Printed *Proposal for a Surrey Record Society* to print and index records, Nov 1912 and the first *Annual report and accounts of Surrey Record Society* 31 Dec 1913, MS Add 47/1-2, UCLL.

reunite the two societies was made later⁷³¹ but the preference in 1913 was for something new. This is seen over and over again: the British Records Association (BRA) broke away from the British Record Society (BRS) in 1932, the Council for the Preservation of Business Archives was formed separately from the BRA in 1934, the Society of Local Archivists (having been rejected by the BRA) created a separate group in 1946. The Records Management Society formed in 1983 as a split from the Society of Archivists. The National Council on Archives formed in 1988 to fill a policy gap. The development and impact of these associations on the British archival profession will be examined here.

Beginnings of the British Records Association

The first organization which can be identified as a professional archival association is the BRA. According to Elizabeth Ralph and Felix Hull, writing in 1962, the BRA can be traced back to a scheme by Dr Fowler and others for bringing owners, custodians, scholars and administrators together.⁷³² The idea was fostered by the Congress of Archaeological Societies and the IHR and led to a conference of record societies in London in 1930.

British Record Society

William Phillimore and Walford Selby⁷³³ began to publish indexes to public records in 1888 in the monthly *Index Library*.⁷³⁴ The subscribers formed a society, the BRS, to continue the series in 1889. Phillimore was its first secretary and general editor. Phillimore also founded the Canterbury and York Society and began the publishing business Phillimore & Co Ltd in 1897. In 1890 the BRS amalgamated with the Index Society (founded 1877) and widened its activities to local as well as public records. The BRS published texts, calendars and indexes of records (many prepared in conjunction with local record societies) and was concerned about the preservation and proper custody of records.⁷³⁵ Government reports of 1902 and 1919 identified threats to local records, many of which ‘suffer from dust, disorder and neglect’, and yet their recommendations were largely ignored.⁷³⁶ The *Report* of 1919 recommended a new repository for 20th century war records.⁷³⁷ Historians at the Conference on Local War Records, convened by the British Academy in 1920 at King’s College London, called for the examination of local records ‘with a view to

⁷³¹ Letter 16 March 1931 Lord Onslow to H Jenkinson proposing an amalgamation to form the Surrey Archaeological and Record Society, MS Add 47/1-2, UCLL.

⁷³² Ralph & Hull: 59, attribute the original idea to Fowler and Maxwell Lyte, but the author could find no evidence that Maxwell Lyte was involved.

⁷³³ Joined the PRO in 1860s, Officer in charge of the search-room until 1889.

⁷³⁴ Peter Spufford ‘The Index Library: a centenary history, 1988’ *The records of the nation* ed G H Martin & P Spufford. London: British Records Association, 1990, 119-138.

⁷³⁵ ‘The British Record Society: its Work and Needs’ [Aug 1930], Papers of the Committee of the British Record Society and of the Conference Committee 1892-1932, BRA 1/1/4, LMA.

⁷³⁶ *Third Report* 1919: 25. This remark was particularly applied to bishops’ records.

⁷³⁷ *Third Report* 1919: 43.

selection for preservation' and 'that such documents as are to be preserved should be duly catalogued and classified by Local Societies or Representative Local Committees'.⁷³⁸

Congress of Archaeological Societies

In the 1920s the record agents, Ethel Stokes (who had edited some of the BRS volumes) and Joan Wake, encouraged the BRS to address records preservation.⁷³⁹ In 1928 the BRS set up a committee 'to devise means to attract further support to the Society'.⁷⁴⁰ It recommended publication of records of national importance and an enlarged 'service to records'. This would survey records and arrange deposit with a responsible authority.⁷⁴¹ The BRS began to advise on where records could be deposited and, after amalgamation with the Manorial Society in 1929,⁷⁴² hired premises in which to sort records and distribute them to local repositories.⁷⁴³ In 1929 the BRS set up a Records Preservation Committee, chaired by William Le Hardy. Funded by the Carnegie Trust and run by Ethel Stokes, this became the Records Preservation Branch of the BRS.⁷⁴⁴

In 1924 the Congress of Archaeological Societies, convened by the Society of Antiquaries, discussed how to improve the accessibility of local historical, archaeological and record societies.⁷⁴⁵ The IHR was invited to establish a committee and subsequently published a *Guide* to the publications of local societies.⁷⁴⁶ Another committee was set up in 1926 by the IHR and the Anglo-American Conference of Historians to consider the migration of manuscripts and the accessibility of local archives, which has been discussed in chapter 3. In 1929 the Archaeological Congress approved a proposal from the BRS 'to hold a Conference of Record Societies and other Societies interested in records for the purpose of formulating a systematic scheme to deal with the practical questions that are daily arising in connection with the distribution of rescued documents'.⁷⁴⁷ The proposed conference would bring together the BRS, the IHR and the Archaeological Congress. The BRS organised an annual conference of record societies in 1930, 1931 and 1932.

⁷³⁸ Published report of the conference 1920, MS Add 47/1, UCLL.

⁷³⁹ Spufford: 125. Oliver D Harris 'The drudgery of stamping': a physical history of the Records Preservation Section' *Archives* 81 (1989): 4.

⁷⁴⁰ Final Report of the Organizing Committee 1929, BRA 1/1/2, LMA.

⁷⁴¹ *The Times* 26 June 1929 set out the BRS scheme, BRA 1/1/6, LMA.

⁷⁴² Minutes of proceedings of Manorial Society held at the College of Arms, nd, BRA 1/1/1, LMA.

⁷⁴³ Letter from Jenkinson to Lord Hanworth, 13 Nov 1932 saying the RPS 'would no doubt continue to be at Wm Le Hardy's office', BRA Beginnings 1932, BRA 1/4. Letter from W Le Hardy to I Churchill, 6 Jan 1933 about a 'north west room' at 2 Stone Buildings for the BRA, Finance Committee 1933-40, BRA 4/1A, LMA.

⁷⁴⁴ Bond: 72 says it began in 1929. Carnegie Trust grant started in 1930. Committee decisions about funding for BRS and records preservation, 1928-30, BRA 1/1/2, 3, 5, 8, LMA.

⁷⁴⁵ Draft report of sub-committee [c 1932], Sir Charles Clay's file, BRA 1/3, and BRA *Proposed Constitution* BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

⁷⁴⁶ IHR *Guide to the historical publications of societies of England and Wales* 1930.

⁷⁴⁷ BRA *Proposed Constitution* BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

Records preservation was among the issues discussed at the First Conference of Record and Allied Societies and Depositories in 1930. After acrimonious debates, a committee was appointed to develop the 'Principles' to be adopted by record societies.⁷⁴⁸ The committee set out 'generally acceptable' standards for record repositories.⁷⁴⁹ Its report was adopted by the Second Conference in 1931, which reappointed the committee to 'submit to the next Conference a draft for the constitution of future Conferences and of a permanent Committee'.⁷⁵⁰

Committee of the Conference of Record and Allied Societies

The committee was a powerful one and represented bitterly opposing views. It included Charles Clay, H M Cashmore, William Le Hardy, Canon Foster, G H Fowler, Joan Wake and Hilary Jenkinson and was chaired by Sir Matthew Nathan. At the meeting in December 1931 Hilary Jenkinson was proposed as secretary 'and he, on his arrival at the meeting, agreed to do so temporarily and provisionally'.⁷⁵¹

Fowler and Jenkinson presented the proposal from the Conference of Record Societies of 1931 for a new committee or council to act as an advisory body and organize the annual conference to the BRS Council in 1932.⁷⁵² The BRS feared that the proposed 'Congress' would interfere with its own work and confuse local societies. It deputed Le Hardy, S C Ratcliff and Ethel Stokes to discuss the memorandum with Jenkinson. Le Hardy suggested how the BRS and the new organization might interact, by the BRS controlling the conference and the new committee.⁷⁵³ Wake thought Le Hardy's scheme unworkable and asked whether the national conference should be continued by the BRS which had initiated it or by a new body and who should co-ordinate local societies nationally.⁷⁵⁴ Jenkinson proposed that these became the responsibility of the new body.⁷⁵⁵ Wake suggested either reconstituting the BRS with a wider remit or forming a new organization, the British Historical Records Association, with local record societies as its branches.⁷⁵⁶

The committee continued to draft a constitution for the new body: but it was rejected by the BRS Council because 'the scheme for the Constitution of the Conference as drafted by the Conference Committee is in its present form unacceptable to the BRS as it proposes to set up a rival body to carry out the objects which the BRS is already performing'.⁷⁵⁷ The committee asked Wake to propose amendments to the draft which

⁷⁴⁸ Harris: 7.

⁷⁴⁹ Report of Committee, 26 Oct 1931, BRA 1/1/14, LMA.

⁷⁵⁰ Printed programme for conference of record and allied societies Nov 1932, BRA Signed Minutes vol I, 1932-35, LMA.

⁷⁵¹ Minutes of the Committee appointed by the Conference of Record Societies, Pre-Foundation Papers 1932, BRA 1/2, LMA.

⁷⁵² Memorandum of Conference of Record Societies 17 Dec 1931, BRA 1/1/10, LMA.

⁷⁵³ Report to Council of BRS by delegates appointed to meet delegates of Committee of Conference of Record Societies 21 Jan 1932, BRA 1/1/10, LMA.

⁷⁵⁴ Letter from Joan Wake to C Clay, nd, BRA 1/3, LMA.

⁷⁵⁵ Memorandum by Joan Wake 31 Jan 1932, BRA 1/1/16, LMA.

⁷⁵⁶ Memorandum by Wake, BRA 1/1/16, LMA.

⁷⁵⁷ Amendments proposed by the Council of BRS to the Draft Constitution, BRA 1/1/12, LMA.

would make it acceptable to the BRS. By July, a new draft which differed in minor ways appeared to satisfy the BRS.⁷⁵⁸ In effect the BRS capitulated to the Fowler/Jenkinson plan. The BRS even suggested that the new organization should not be called 'Records Congress' but rather the 'British Records Association' to carry over goodwill from the BRS, and that BRS members and affiliated societies should be able to transfer directly to the new Association.

In public the BRS gave its full approval to the proposals and the constitution was accepted by the Conference of Record and Allied Societies in November 1932.⁷⁵⁹ Before the conference, the question of the officers was settled when Sir Matthew Nathan wrote to Jenkinson, 'as regards the Secretary, I never thought of anyone but yourself if you would take it on and I hope now you see the chance of getting a useful assistant, you will do so'⁷⁶⁰ - the 'useful assistant' being Dr Irene Churchill of Lambeth Palace Library, who acted as Joint Secretary with Jenkinson until 1946.

The early years of the British Records Association

The Council of the BRA met for the first time in December 1932 and included Ethel Stokes, G H Fowler, R Holworthy, C T Clay, W Le Hardy as well as Jenkinson and Churchill.⁷⁶¹ An association with archival objectives now existed: 'to promote the preservation and accessibility under the best possible conditions of Public, Semi-Public and Private Archives', to rescue records at risk, to publicize 'record questions', to promote co-operation between interested parties and to enable the 'interchange [of] views upon matters of technical interest relating to the custody, preservation, accessibility and use of documents'.⁷⁶² The BRA held its first conference in 1933 at the Society of Antiquaries, followed by a reception at the Grocer's Hall.⁷⁶³ The early years of the BRA were devoted to practical records preservation, to generating committee reports on a wide range of archival policy issues and to establishing a sound financial and organizational structure.

The Records Preservation Section of the BRA⁷⁶⁴

The Records Preservation Committee of the BRS had been established in 1929⁷⁶⁵ as a 'centre for the reception and distribution of unwanted documents' and planned to move to the BRA to form a new Records

⁷⁵⁸ Amendments proposed, BRA 1/1/12; printed Constitution, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

⁷⁵⁹ Conference agenda and programme 1932, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

⁷⁶⁰ Letter from Sir Matthew Nathan to Jenkinson 3 Nov 1932, BRA 1/2, LMA.

⁷⁶¹ Minutes 5 Dec 1932, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-1935, LMA. A preliminary meeting held on 14 Nov 1932.

⁷⁶² Draft Constitution, BRA 1/1/12; Constitution, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

⁷⁶³ Minutes 18 July 1933, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35; First Conference 1933, BRA 3/1A, LMA.

⁷⁶⁴ Harris: 3-17.

⁷⁶⁵ Ts 'proposed extension of work', Pilgrim Trust file, BRA 4/3, LMA.

Preservation Section (RPS) in 1932. The Carnegie Trustees agreed to transfer the funding⁷⁶⁶ and the Section was inaugurated in March 1933. However, the RPS Committee, led by Ethel Stokes, sought autonomy within the BRA and threatened to re-constitute itself as a separate organization.⁷⁶⁷ After much debate and Miss Stokes's resignation as chairman in 1934, the BRA agreed to the Section's demands.⁷⁶⁸ The Carnegie Trust grant initially funded the RPS but was extended to cover the administration of the BRA from 1933 to 1935.⁷⁶⁹ After an initially 'unsatisfactory reply' which threatened the continuation of the RPS (and BRA),⁷⁷⁰ the Pilgrim Trust made a grant in 1936.⁷⁷¹

The RPS redistributed 270 archives between 1933 and 1939 to local repositories.⁷⁷² The standard for record repositories published in 1931 was implemented by the RPS.⁷⁷³ Repositories receiving records had to have a muniment room approved for manorial records, a stable organizational structure, access for accredited students, security against damp, fire, theft and vermin and to accept archival principles, such as the sanctity of the group, arrangement and classification, repair and weeding. The early years of the RPS depended heavily on the unceasing activity of Ethel Stokes, secretary from 1934 until her death in 1944.⁷⁷⁴ Records preservation work achieved a national profile by the start of the war.

Classification schemes

The BRA Council was concerned to report on archival policy issues. In its first year, the BRA embarked on the classification of archives. There had been earlier attempts,⁷⁷⁵ not least in the published works of Fowler and Jenkinson, but this was an initiative by a group of archivists to codify practice and introduce standards.⁷⁷⁶ Two members of the committee already had significant experience of classification. G H Fowler, trained originally as a zoologist, had developed a scheme for Bedfordshire and was chairman of the Anglo-American Conference of Historians sub-committee, which carried out surveys of local archives. His

⁷⁶⁶ Letter from Ethel Stokes of Stokes and Cox, Chancery Lane to C Clay, 15 March 1933, 'We (this is the old Committee of the British Record Society who have been carrying on till the Section is formed) are suggesting that the Committee of eight who have carried on now for nearly three years shall be confirmed this first year', BRA 1/3, LMA.

⁷⁶⁷ Draft report of RPS sub-committee 12 Jan 1935, BRA 1/3 (sub-committee comprised W Le Hardy, G E Nathan, R Holworthy, J Wake); Minutes 29 Jan 1935, 19 Feb 1935, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

⁷⁶⁸ Minutes 29 Jan 1935, 19 Feb 1935, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

⁷⁶⁹ Carnegie Trustees, BRA 4/2; minutes, 2 May 1933, 18 July 1933, 8 Feb 1934, 9 Oct 1934, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

⁷⁷⁰ Letter from Sir Matthew Nathan to Jenkinson, 9 Aug 1934, BRA 4/3, LMA.

⁷⁷¹ Minutes 17 March 1936, BRA Signed Minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA.

⁷⁷² Bond: 74.

⁷⁷³ Report of the Committee appointed by the Conference of Record and Allied Societies, 26 Oct 1931, BRA 1/1/14, LMA.

⁷⁷⁴ Second Annual Report, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35. Her death in a motor accident during the blackout reported BRA Signed Minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA.

⁷⁷⁵ Bond: 79 noted Hubert Hall's *Studies in English official documents* 1908.

⁷⁷⁶ Sub-committee comprised the Honorary Secretaries, Sir Matthew Nathan (chairman), SC Ratcliff, G H Fowler, Joan Wake, Dr G Ward. Minutes 2 May 1933, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

scheme adopted the PRO practice of initial letters to identify particular archive groups (eg QS for quarter sessions, CC for county council, L for Lucas family) and was the basis for the classification schemes developed later at Essex Record Office by Emmison, which were taken by Hull from Essex to Berkshire and Kent.⁷⁷⁷ Jenkinson, as well as being familiar with the PRO's ideas on provenance, was the UK editor for the *Guide Internationale des Archives* by the Committee of Archive Experts of the Institut International de Cooperation Intellectuelle and claimed credit for the idea of an international *Guide*.⁷⁷⁸ Two schemes for classifying parish records were submitted to the committee and Joan Wake called for a single unified scheme.⁷⁷⁹ Jenkinson reported to Council that 'under difficulties the committee was forging slowly ahead with its task'⁷⁸⁰ but by 1934 it was able to present a general scheme. The 'Order of Classification for the main Divisions' recommended in the Interim Report was an extension of the classification used by the *Report on local records* in 1902⁷⁸¹ and was 'the same as the International Guide'.⁷⁸² The scheme was a step towards a national standard of classification.

Codification and standardisation of classification continued. As well as the general scheme published in 1934, the committee devised a detailed scheme for parish records, published in 1936.⁷⁸³ In 1934 the committee considered the cataloguing of deeds, surveyed current practice and proposed a common system.⁷⁸⁴ A cataloguing card was devised and tested in 27 institutions.⁷⁸⁵ The scheme was published in 1938⁷⁸⁶ and might have been adopted if its stock of cataloguing cards had not been destroyed during the war. Further progress on classification and description ought to have been made by the NRA after 1945 since it adopted the BRA's scheme as the basis of its work. However the NRA failed to make this a priority, preferring instead to provide archival resources for scholars.

Access to archives

⁷⁷⁷ Hull. Interview.

⁷⁷⁸ Roper 'provenance': 145-146. Signed menu card 2 April 1931, which Jenkinson annotated 'The original Committee of Experts Archivistes [sic] to whom I suggested the Guide International...', file 'Institut International de Cooperation Intellectuelle' MS Add 47/1-2, UCLL. Roper 'International role': 15 says that Jenkinson's international work was undertaken in a personal capacity.

⁷⁷⁹ Schemes from Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire. Minutes 2 May 1933, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

⁷⁸⁰ Minutes 14 Dec 1933, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

⁷⁸¹ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 7.

⁷⁸² Minutes 15 May 1934, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

⁷⁸³ *BRA Reports from committees no 2: classified list of the varieties of documents which may be found in parish archives* London: BRA, 1936. Minutes 23 March 1937 noted that 'the only satisfactory method of collecting information about Parochial Records was to organize and instruct a small band of workers to go round and for them the comprehensiveness of the Report would be an advantage', BRA Signed Minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA.

⁷⁸⁴ Minutes AGM 12 Nov 1934, Minutes 29 Jan 1935, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

⁷⁸⁵ Bond: 80. Minutes 12 Oct 1937, 14 June 1938, BRA Signed Minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA.

⁷⁸⁶ *BRA Reports from committees no 4: report of a committee on the cataloguing of deeds* London: BRA, 1938.

Scholarly access to ecclesiastical archives was of particular concern following the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1929. The BRA was urged to put pressure on the Church Assembly to give effect to its Measure through co-operation with local authorities.⁷⁸⁷ Accordingly, the BRA met some diocesan chancellors in 1934 to discuss access and wrote to the Standing Committee of Diocesan Chancellors suggesting that they might deposit diocesan records in established local authority archives, although there were difficulties over fees for searches.⁷⁸⁸ The IHR surveyed Diocesan Registrars about their holdings.⁷⁸⁹ In 1946-1951 the BRA was a partner in a Pilgrim Trust project to survey ecclesiastical records, undertaken by Margaret Midgley. In spite of objections by Professor Galbraith who 'desired to know ... the real story behind all this', the project was supported.⁷⁹⁰ The survey's purpose was to 'record the nature, extent and state of repair of each collection, the condition of the repository in which it is housed and the facilities provided for access by students, in order that any future action regarding these Archives may be taken on a co-ordinated basis'.⁷⁹¹ The committee was chaired by Professor Hamilton Thompson, Jenkinson was a committee member: Colonel Malet joined later.

Standards for local archives

In addition to the work of the RPS which promoted storage standards for local archives, the BRA established a Technical Section in 1937 to 'serve as a clearing house for information for practising Archivists on technical and scientific matters relating to their work' and disseminate good archival practice.⁷⁹² It covered preservation and conservation, classification, access and repository management. The Section issued a *Bulletin* from 1938.⁷⁹³ The Section revived the idea of regular inspection of local record offices as a means of providing help to local archivists.⁷⁹⁴ Local inspections by a competent authority had been recommended in the *Reports* of 1902, which said that 'all local record offices should be subject to the inspection of officers appointed by the Public Record Office',⁷⁹⁵ and of 1919, which remarked that inspections 'could be systematically organized'.⁷⁹⁶ The appointment of manorial repositories by the Master of the Rolls after 1924 involved approval and periodic inspections.⁷⁹⁷ The BRA recommended 'a practical Advisory and Inspecting Office for Archives' in 1939.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁸⁷ Minutes, 31 Jan 1933, 14 Dec 1933, letters from Professor Powicke urged that capitular and diocesan archives be made available, BRA Signed Minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA.

⁷⁸⁸ Minutes 15 May 1934, 25 June 1935, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

⁷⁸⁹ 'Guide: part 1' *IHR*.

⁷⁹⁰ Minutes 30 July 1946, BRA Signed Minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA.

⁷⁹¹ The Pilgrim Trust *Survey of ecclesiastical archives 1946*, ts, 1951, BB0101, IHR: 1.

⁷⁹² Minutes 23 March 1937, 16 Nov 1937, BRA Signed Minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA.

⁷⁹³ BRA Technical Section *Bulletin* 16 (1946) includes reprints of articles from *Bulletins* 1-15.

⁷⁹⁴ AGM 14 Nov 1938, BRA Signed Minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA.

⁷⁹⁵ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 46.

⁷⁹⁶ *Third Report* 1919: 36.

⁷⁹⁷ HMC 5/1, TNA.

⁷⁹⁸ Minutes 9 May 1939, BRA Signed Minutes vol III, 1938-42; 'Inspection of local records: preliminary report to Council', BRA 2/6; *Inspection of Local Repositories* 1938, BRA 5/6, LMA.

In parallel, the BRA developed the idea of a 'Central Register' of archives and set up a committee to 'enquire further concerning a Central Register to deal with local transfers of collections of Deeds' in 1934.⁷⁹⁹ This was expanded in 1936 to bring together information from various sources covering all types of archives.⁸⁰⁰

Training for archivists

Professional education and training for archivists was regularly discussed in the BRA from 1936 and a summer school in palaeography and archive administration was held as part of the Birmingham Summer School of Librarianship from 1937.⁸⁰¹ An archivist in Southern Rhodesia requested a diploma course and the UCL School of Librarianship offered to host 'a short school' in 1937.⁸⁰² The BRA did not want to institute a Diploma examination but sought academic partners to teach a programme.⁸⁰³

A professional association?

Between 1929 and 1939 the archive profession took significant steps forward. The establishment of the BRA as a separate organization with archival objectives in 1932 marked an important point in the emergence of the profession. The BRA quickly demonstrated the contribution which a professional association could make. The RPS with its local volunteers and contacts with county record societies undertook survey and preservation work before many counties had a record office. Miss Wake and Miss Stokes, under the umbrella of the BRA, acted as archival 'consultants' and catalysts. Membership of the BRA grew (323 institutions and 556 individuals by 1942), mirroring the development of a distinct professional group.⁸⁰⁴ The BRA began to establish standards for professional work (for example surveys, records classification and repair) and to codify procedures and professional terminology. The BRA committee reports on classification and cataloguing and the standard for record repositories provided resources on which the emerging profession could draw. In many ways the BRA provided an unofficial outlet for professional development which the national institutions felt unable to provide officially. The PRO and HMC still regarded themselves as scholarly and historical enterprises and showed little interest in the emerging archival profession. Government policy and reports gave encouragement to archives and archivists, but their recommendations were rarely followed. Legislation gave limited support to central public records and largely neglected local and specialist archives. In order to make progress as a profession, archivists needed to establish a professional profile by means of an archival association. The war diverted the profession to the evacuation of records and non-archival war work, but the BRA had laid foundations for a central Register and professional education which re-emerged in 1945.

⁷⁹⁹ Minutes AGM 12 Nov 1934, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

⁸⁰⁰ Minutes 4 Feb 1936, BRA Signed Minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA.

⁸⁰¹ Minutes 18 Jan 1938, BRA Signed Minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA. Archival education will be discussed in chapters 7 & 8.

⁸⁰² Minutes 16 Nov 1937, BRA Signed Minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA.

⁸⁰³ Minutes 18 Jan 1938, BRA Signed Minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA.

⁸⁰⁴ Minutes AGM 17 Nov 1942, BRA Signed Minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA.

The Council for the Preservation of Business Archives

As the BRA was being founded, a movement to preserve business archives also started. Business history was a developing academic discipline in the 1920s, disseminated by Manchester University Press, among others. In the USA, in 1925 a Business Historical Society was founded at Harvard Business School and two years later the Baker Historical Library began seriously to acquire business archives.⁸⁰⁵ In the UK, G N Clark's inaugural lecture as Chichele Professor of Economic History⁸⁰⁶ in 1932 addressed business archives.

A Committee for the Study and Preservation of London Business Archives

Eileen Power, Professor of Economic History at the London School of Economics (LSE),⁸⁰⁷ proposed 'the formation of a Committee for the Study and Preservation of London Business Archives' which would compile a register and establish a depository at the LSE library for business archives.⁸⁰⁸ Sir William Beveridge, Director of the LSE, proposed to the policy-making Emergency Committee that initial expenses might be met from a Rockefeller research grant. Six months later, in February 1933, Beveridge convened an initial meeting at the LSE, organized by Michael Postan.⁸⁰⁹ Sir Josiah Stamp (chairman of London, Midland and Scottish Railway), A E Stamp (Deputy Keeper),⁸¹⁰ A V Judges (LSE)⁸¹¹ and Richard Pares (All Souls, Oxford) attended.⁸¹² The meeting discussed a proposal by Pares for a new Council for the Preservation of Business Archives, which would offer a register of business records, advice to owners and

⁸⁰⁵ David S Macmillan 'Business archives: a survey of developments in Great Britain, the United States of America and in Australia' ed A E J Hollaender *Essays in memory of Sir Hilary Jenkinson* Chichester, Society of Archivists, 1962: 108.

⁸⁰⁶ George N Clark (1890-1979), army service 1914-20, fellow and lecturer, Oriel College, Oxford 1919-31, fellow librarian 1930, university lecturer in modern history 1927-31, Chichele Professor of economic history, fellow of All Souls, Oxford, 1931-43, Regius Professor of modern history, fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, 1943-47, Provost, Oriel College, Oxford 1947-57 *Who was who 1971-1980*: 150.

⁸⁰⁷ Eileen Power (1889-1940), director of studies in history, Girton College, Cambridge 1913-20, lecturer LSE 1921-24, reader in economic history, University of London 1924-31, professor 1931-40, married M Postan 1937 *Who was who 1929-40*: 1097.

⁸⁰⁸ Memorandum 18 June 1932 from E Power to Sir William Beveridge, Director, LSE quoted in Peter Mathias 'The first half-century: business history, business archives and the Business Archives Council' *Business Archives* 50 (1984): 3.

⁸⁰⁹ Michael Postan (1899-1981), lecturer in history, UCL 1927-31, lecturer in economic history, LSE 1931-35, lecturer in economic history, Cambridge University 1935-38, professor 1938-65, *Who was who 1981-1990*: 607.

⁸¹⁰ The Stamps were not related: A E Stamp (1870-1938) *Who was who 1929-1940*: 1278; J C Stamp (1880-1941) *Who was who 1941-1950*: 1091-1092.

⁸¹¹ A V Judges (1898-1973), lecturer LSE 1927-38, Leverhulme research fellow, USA & Canada 1938-39, reader in economic history London University 1938-48, professor of history of education King's College, London 1949-65, lecturer Goldsmith's College, London 1965-71, honorary secretary CPBA 1934-38, *Who was who 1971-1980*: 424.

⁸¹² Richard Pares (1902-1958) Fellow of All Souls, Oxford 1921-45, 1954-58, professor of history, University of Edinburgh 1945-54, married Janet, daughter of Maurice Powicke, 1937, *Who was who 1951-1960*: 847.

an emergency storehouse for business records of exceptional value. Although London-based initially, it was hoped to expand to the provinces.⁸¹³ Beveridge agreed to meet Lord Hanworth, Master of the Rolls and President of the BRA, to discuss the plans.

At the BRA Council in 1933 Sir Matthew Nathan reported ‘that with the approval of the Master of the Rolls a movement was on foot to organize the preservation of Business archives and that he hoped...to suggest the formation of a Business Archive Section of the Association’.⁸¹⁴ The BRA expressed the view ‘that the multiplication of independent record societies must as far as possible be avoided; and the ideal plan from their point of view would be the formation of a new Section within the framework of the BRA’.⁸¹⁵ The LSE group, however, felt that businessmen were more likely to respond to an appeal from ‘a newly created Council with an apparently independent existence’ and the new Council wanted financial autonomy from the BRA.⁸¹⁶ Possibly the group was also mindful of the power struggle between the RPS and the BRA’s Council over finances and publicity which continued from 1932 to 1935 and the control which Jenkinson exercised over the BRA’s affairs.

The Council for the Preservation of Business Archives

Jenkinson was, in fact, involved in drafting the constitution and was invited to act as joint Secretary to the new Council, an honour which he declined.⁸¹⁷ If he had accepted, the Council might have been less successful in resisting the attempts by the BRA to absorb it. Eventually it was agreed that the Council would be independent initially, but that it might form a Section of the BRA at some future point.⁸¹⁸ The Council for the Preservation of Business Archives (CPBA) was launched on 11 May 1934 at a public meeting. The 39 foundation members represented academics, businessmen, archivists and librarians. The awareness raising campaign began with a letter in *The Times*⁸¹⁹ which set out the Council’s priorities: to promote the preservation of archives of commercial and industrial enterprises useful to the economic historian, to compile a register of all business records over 100 years old through a questionnaire and regional committees, to prevent the destruction of business records by arranging their deposit in public libraries and institutions and to provide expert advice and publication. *The Observer* ran an interview with Beveridge.⁸²⁰ Further publicity was generated by discussions on business records at the Anglo-American

⁸¹³ Draft ts ‘History from business records’ by Richard Pares, Relations with BAC 1933-34, BRA 13/4A, LMA.

⁸¹⁴ Minutes 2 May 1933, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

⁸¹⁵ Report by Pares and Judges 9 Jan 1934, BRA 13/4A, LMA.

⁸¹⁶ Copy letter from Judges to Sir Matthew Nathan, 15 May 1933, BRA 13/4A, LMA.

⁸¹⁷ Letter from Judges to Jenkinson, 28 Nov 1933, BRA 13/4A, LMA.

⁸¹⁸ Letter from Judges to Jenkinson, 12 March 1934, BRA 13/4A, LMA.

⁸¹⁹ ‘History in firms’ documents: preservation of records: new Council formed’ *Times* (London) 21 June 1934: 15.

⁸²⁰ *The Observer* 24 June 1934 quoted in Mathias: 1.

Conference of Historians, the BRA and the Association of Special Libraries (Aslib) conferences, together with articles in the provincial and trade press.⁸²¹

Lord Hanworth, Master of the Rolls, was the Council's first president. Businessmen occupied the positions of vice-president (Sir Josiah Stamp, Robert Holland-Martin) and treasurer (Edward Hoare), whilst academics held posts as joint secretaries (A V Judges, H A Shannon) and chairman (G N Clark). The committee included Jenkinson (representing the BRA) and H M Cashmore.⁸²² Jenkinson did not regard the status of the CPBA as settled: in 1937 he reported that the CPBA had become an institutional member of the BRA as 'a temporary expedient pending developments' and Cashmore noted that the CPBA 'would probably become a Section of the Association and that meanwhile it should be given all facilities and encouragement.'⁸²³

The Register of Business Archives, a card index held at LSE, was compiled from surveys and direct approaches to businesses celebrating their centenaries. By 1937 the Register comprised 600 entries, including details of 'records which have been discovered on inquiry to have been irrevocably lost'.⁸²⁴ The CPBA also planned 'a programme of systematic inquiry' in geographical areas and on an occupational basis.⁸²⁵ A series of regional centres was proposed, each compiling a regional register and recruiting local volunteers. The first was the Aberdeen Committee in March 1935. Regional Committees in Yorkshire, the West Midlands, and Somerset (for the South West) started and the National Library of Wales promised the results of its Welsh survey.⁸²⁶ The occupational survey was undertaken by 'planned intensive inquiries within selected fields'.⁸²⁷ Special questionnaires were devised for insurance companies and joint-stock banks and plans were made to publish surveys of private banks, colonial produce trades, chemical and allied industries and brewing.⁸²⁸ Although it took many years for some of these projects to be completed, the CPBA had, from the start, ambitions for wide-ranging work.

The CPBA also began other activities: publications (eg the leaflet *History from Business Records*), expert advice to owners (later the Business Records Advisory Service) and a reference library of business history. The work of the CPBA halted from 1939 until 1946: the Register was evacuated to the country, Clark resigned as chairman, and the secretary, Judges, left for the USA. The CPBA hoped that the RPS would

⁸²¹ Council for the Preservation of Business Archives *First report of the committee, accounts and list of members* London: Council for the Preservation of Business Archives, 1935: 2. Aslib conference paper published as A V Judges *The preservation of business records* (Reprints series no 4) np: British Records Association, 1936.

⁸²² CPBA *First report*: 2, 5.

⁸²³ Minutes 8 June 1937, BRA Signed Minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA.

⁸²⁴ CPBA *Second report* 1937: 3.

⁸²⁵ CPBA *First report*: 3.

⁸²⁶ CPBA *Third report* 1939: 3, 5.

⁸²⁷ CPBA *First report*: 4.

⁸²⁸ CPBA *Second report* 1937: 4. For example, the survey of British banking was eventually published in 1985 and that of insurance records in 1976.

take over its work in the business arena and Miss Shrigley, the CPBA's Secretary, wrote to banks offering the BRA's services.⁸²⁹ The CPBA relied on the BRA's help in continuing its work through the war.

Business archives: a specialist interest?

The development of the CPBA as a separate organisation from the BRA was the first illustration of a difficulty which the profession faced in its later history: to what extent could existing bodies cater for emerging specialist interests? The BRA's membership criteria did not exclude any of those involved in the setting up of the CPBA, and yet they had a specific focus, their own powerbase (at the LSE and within individual businesses) and felt confident of making independent progress. Autonomy and the unexpected combination of history academics and businessmen brought a new perspective on archives. The CPBA was innovative: it was the first to undertake record registration activities and established the model of regional committees later adopted by the NRA, it evolved the 'programme of systematic enquiry' and thematic surveys which was one of its most enduring legacies to the profession, it developed the rescue and advice services for businesses begun by the RPS, and it recognised the need to provide specialist professional resources through its library and publications. However, the CPBA (and other specialist organisations) remained small, with limited resources. Its existence created a faction among archivists which dissipated effort and mitigated against a unified national profession.

The Second World War and the BRA

The BRA, in contrast to the CPBA, did not let the war terminate its activities. At the Conference in 1939 Jenkinson raised the preservation of records of war activities as well as general records preservation, salvage and evacuation.⁸³⁰ A committee reported in 1941 on the guidance which should be offered to local authorities on war records: this was followed by a discussion on 'War-Time Disasters and Post-War Opportunities'.⁸³¹

Records preservation

Preservation work assumed a high profile during the war when national paper salvage drives threatened the destruction of records. The Master of the Rolls wrote to *The Times* and broadcast an appeal against the 'indiscriminate destruction' of records.⁸³² The President published a talk in the *Listener* and was broadcast.⁸³³ The publicity did encourage some businesses, including the Bank of England, to seek advice

⁸²⁹ Copy letter from Irene Shrigley, CPBA June 1939 and letter from G N Clark to Jenkinson, 24 July 1939, Council for the Preservation of Business Archives 1939-45, BRA 13/4B, LMA. Unfortunately, the BRA had to issue a statement of clarification, saying it offered no storage.

⁸³⁰ Minutes AGM 13 Nov 1939, BRA Signed Minutes vol III, 1938-42, LMA.

⁸³¹ Minutes AGM 17 Nov 1942, BRA Signed Minutes vol III, 1938-42, LMA.

⁸³² Minutes 13 Nov 1939, BRA Signed Minutes vol III 1939-42, LMA. *The Times* 13 Nov 1940 carried a report according to Bond: 76.

⁸³³ Minutes 23 March 1942, BRA Signed Minutes vol III 1939-42, LMA.

before destroying records.⁸³⁴ Ethel Stokes persisted with her work right through the bombings of London, in spite of periods of illness in 1941 (Jenkinson reported that ‘she collapsed one night and we had great difficulty first in finding a doctor and then trying (in vain) to discover a nursing home or hospital still functioning in London. One of the men finally took her back to her room in Took’s Court’)⁸³⁵ until her untimely death ‘as a result of an accident in the blackout’ in 1944.⁸³⁶ She was succeeded as honorary secretary of the RPS by Lilian Redstone.

Committee on Post-War Dangers to Records

The issue of the saleroom value of archives had been a matter of concern since the 1920s but it became urgent when the Curator of Manuscripts at the Huntington Library, California expressed an interest in acquiring private manuscripts which might come onto the market after the war.⁸³⁷ The BRA set up a committee in 1943 to investigate the dispersal of archives, which proposed microphotography of all archives sent for sale.⁸³⁸ It also suggested that an inspectorate should have a monitoring role.⁸³⁹ A committee was asked to report more fully on private and semi-public archives, what the role of HMC ought to be, whether an inspectorate for other than public records was desirable and how its powers might be enforced.⁸⁴⁰ Although the report drew on earlier BRA committee work on a central register (1936) and on inspection (1939), the speed of the drafting suggests that Jenkinson (who was largely responsible) had been developing the ideas over a long period. The committee provided Jenkinson with the right opportunity to present a coherent plan for the archive profession and an outlet for ideas which he could not develop at the PRO. Although the committee was criticised for having exceeded its brief, after a long discussion the report was adopted.⁸⁴¹

The Report of the Committee on Post-War Dangers to Records⁸⁴² drew up a blueprint for the development of the archival profession in the second half of the 20th century, in the way that the *Reports* of 1902 and 1912 to 1919 had sought to do at the beginning of the century. The BRA Report addressed the problems of protecting local, ecclesiastical, private and semi-public records in England and made recommendations for improvement: it did not deal with public records nor, except very briefly, with other parts of the United Kingdom.

⁸³⁴ Minutes 19 May 1942, BRA Signed Minutes vol III 1939-42, LMA.

⁸³⁵ Letter from Ethel Stokes to Hilary Jenkinson, 12 Feb 1940 [recte 1941] annotated by Jenkinson, MS Add 47/1, UCLL.

⁸³⁶ Minutes 14 Nov 1944, BRA Signed Minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA.

⁸³⁷ See chapter 3 discussion of IHR’s sub committee on Accessibility of Historical Documents and Migrations of Manuscripts, 1928.

⁸³⁸ Minutes 19 Jan 1943, BRA Signed Minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA.

⁸³⁹ ts report, 27 Feb 1943 ‘Danger to records in the war and post-war periods’, BRA 2/6, LMA.

⁸⁴⁰ ‘Preliminary consideration for Committee on post-war dangers to private, semi-public, local and ecclesiastical archives’, 20 April 1943, BRA 2/6, LMA.

⁸⁴¹ ‘Interim report to Council: Committee on post-war dangers to records’ July 1943, BRA 2/6; minutes 13 July 1943, BRA Signed Minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA.

⁸⁴² ‘Interim report’, BRA 2/6, LMA.

National Register of Records

One of the major proposals was the national Register of Records for all except public records. Preparatory work on this had already started with the RPS and HMC surveys, the Regional List of places where records were held prepared for Regional Civil Defence Commissioners by the BRA and HMC in 1940,⁸⁴³ and the local surveys by the CPBA and local record societies. Regional committees (on the CPBA model) would collect information, contacting local repositories later. A first edition could be prepared in two years. The work would be co-ordinated by a full-time Director or Secretary supported by an advisory committee comprising representatives of the BRA, Master of the Rolls and HMC, under whose auspices the Register might fall. The final shape of the National Register of Archives set up in 1945, which has been discussed in chapter 3, was very closely modelled on the BRA proposal.

Linked to the Register was an idea of scheduling records of national importance, modelled on the precedent of the inspection and scheduling of ancient monuments. The owners or custodians of scheduled records would receive advice, give access to students and be prevented from selling records. Where necessary, records could be transferred ‘into the permanent keeping of suitable approved institutions’.⁸⁴⁴

Inspectorate

The report noted that many county councils had set up archive departments and considered ‘the desirability of making these activities more general and homogeneous and of relating them officially to those of the Public Record Office’.⁸⁴⁵ It proposed making it obligatory for county councils to provide ‘a regularly organized Archive Department, suitably housed, equipped and staffed, and having, in addition to the provisions for safe custody, some provision for the use of certain classes of records by students’.⁸⁴⁶

The report also proposed to make archives ‘subject to inspection by, and entitled to advice and help from, a Central Authority, under the control of the Master of the Rolls and connected closely with the Public Record Office’. This was integrated into the system of registration and scheduling. The inspectorate should have statutory powers to enforce standards.⁸⁴⁷ Ecclesiastical records ought to be brought within local authority record offices.⁸⁴⁸ In addition, the report recommended the ‘organization of training for archivists: this even if it is not a problem requiring so immediate a solution as some of the foregoing is still a matter urgently demanding attention’.⁸⁴⁹

⁸⁴³ Minutes 14 Nov 1945, BRA Signed Minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA.

⁸⁴⁴ ‘Interim report’, BRA 2/6, LMA. Note that on p7 ‘approved’ was inserted to replace ‘public’.

⁸⁴⁵ Section H ‘Interim report’, BRA 2/6, LMA.

⁸⁴⁶ Section H ‘Interim report’, BRA 2/6, LMA.

⁸⁴⁷ Section N ‘Committee on post-war danger to archives: second report to Council’ Aug 1943, BRA 2/6, LMA.

⁸⁴⁸ Section J ‘second report’ BRA 2/6, LMA.

⁸⁴⁹ Section K (k) ‘Interim report’, BRA 2/6, LMA.

Master of the Rolls Archives Committee

The BRA invited the HMC to comment, suggesting a small committee. This led to the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee in 1943, which included representation from the BRA (Hilary Jenkinson, H I Bell,⁸⁵⁰ L Edgar Stephens and Irene Churchill). The work of the committee has been discussed in chapter 1. The committee agreed that HMC would develop a National Register of Archives (NRA), which has been discussed in chapter 3. The committee approved the inspectorate, but considered that the scheme needed legislation. Private families should be exempt from inspection but in general a comprehensive scheme (including ecclesiastical records) was favoured. The committee considered proposals for scheduled or listed archives and for the control of the sale of manuscripts abroad. The BRA Council received the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee's interim report in 1944.⁸⁵¹ Having made progress on the national register and draft legislation,⁸⁵² the BRA turned its attention in 1945 to archival education (which will be discussed in chapters 7 and 8), reviving the scheme for a repair service and for archival training.

The BRA continued to develop proposals and policies during the war: as a result in 1945 archival plans moved forward very quickly. Jenkinson, acting within the BRA and not yet Deputy Keeper, had a chance to set out a vision for archives in the second half of the 20th century. The BRA engaged with government at the highest levels and influenced policy and set down markers for archival legislation and the control of the sale of manuscripts abroad. The establishment of the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee was a very significant achievement.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the 20th century, archivists were a small group who identified with scholars, historians, antiquarians and record agents. It was barely possible to describe a distinct archival work group, since staff at the PRO regarded themselves as historians, some national museums and libraries (such as the British Museum and Bodleian Library) employed manuscript curators, and few local archives had been established. Those working with archives supported local record societies, the BRS, and historical associations such as the Society of Antiquaries and the RHS. As local archive services grew in number and historians became concerned about records preservation in the localities, proposals by Fowler and Jenkinson led to a new body, which split from the BRS in 1932. The BRA was the first UK body which had primarily archival objectives. It quickly established a role in developing policy and standards for archival

⁸⁵⁰ Harold Idris Bell (1879-1967) educated Oriel College, Oxford, Universities of Berlin and Halle, OBE 1920, knighted 1946, Assistant Keeper, Department of Manuscripts, British Museum 1903, Deputy Keeper of Manuscripts 1927, Keeper of Manuscripts and Egerton Librarian 1929-44, honorary reader in papyrology, Oxford University 1935-50, President, British Academy 1946-50 *Who was who 1961-1970*: 82.

⁸⁵¹ Minutes 11 July 1944, BRA Signed Minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA.

⁸⁵² Minutes 23 Jan 1945, BRA Signed Minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA.

work, providing informally what the PRO and HMC failed to provide formally. Within the BRA, Jenkinson's views were challenged by dominant figures from local authority archives, especially Joan Wake, Ethel Stokes, H M Cashmore and G H Fowler, but his connections and experience enabled the BRA to make an impact on official policy for archives.

The BRA initiated some significant archival developments by beginning to establish standards of practice, engaging in political lobbying (which led, for example, to the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee) and setting parameters for professional education programmes (which will be discussed in chapter 7). The PRO, while intimately involved with the BRA through individual staff, remained aloof from its work and that of successor bodies such as the SoA. Ultimately the BRA was an organisation which *included* archivists rather than one which existed *exclusively for* archivists. Although this enabled the BRA to take a broadly inclusive view, it still excluded elements which would become essential parts of the archive profession, such as business archivists. In the longer term the BRA failed to focus on essential developmental activities, such as representing the views of the profession to employers and government. These would always be diluted by the need to represent a broad constituency.

When the CPBA started in 1934, the BRA was keen to subsume the special interest in business archives within itself: however, the independent strength of the CPBA founders ensured that a separate organisation developed. It was perhaps unexpected, therefore, that when a group of local archivists sought to form a special section within the BRA in 1947, they were turned away. What then emerged was a new body whose membership was restricted to those occupied in or responsible for archives: the first exclusively professional body for archivists.

Chapter 6

The Society of Archivists and beyond, 1945-2003

By 1945 two associations with a professional interest in archives existed: the BRA and CPBA. The BRA embraced owners, custodians and users of archives and provided a forum for informal exchanges of views between local and national archivists. The BRA made progress in two main areas: practical records preservation and the more theoretical work in establishing archival principles and standards. The CPBA grew out of a more specialised interest in business archives and drew in businessmen, historians and archivists. The CPBA provided an important reminder that specialist archives had a place in the sector, although by remaining separate the CPBA fragmented the profession, emphasising differences not similarities. When the Society of Local Archivists began in 1946, it seemed simply to provide a home for another specialist group, namely local authority archivists. By 1980 the SoA appeared to be evolving as a professional body for the whole archive work group. However, further special interest bodies developed in the 1980s: the Association of County Archivists in 1980 and the Records Management Society in 1983. All these bodies developed along parallel lines, each with its own focus but often overlapping in membership (with the same individuals active in more than one body) and in interests. Eventually the profession realised the need for a single policy-making body but in preference to amalgamating existing bodies, a new widely-representative National Council on Archives was established in 1988. This chapter examines progress towards professionalism and considers how the associations can best serve the archive profession in the future.

The Council for the Preservation of Business Archives

When the CPBA started up again in 1946, Jenkinson made a final attempt to subsume it within the BRA structure, asking Hoare, the CPBA's Treasurer, 'whether it is not time that the whole position of the Council should be reviewed?'.⁸⁵³ A joint committee aired the desire for freedom of action on the part of the CPBA and the close link between BRA, NRA and the PRO, whose official status might put off businessmen.⁸⁵⁴ Cashmore expressed his view to the BRA 'that the continuance of two associations whose work was so closely associated would be a mistaken policy'.⁸⁵⁵ However, Jenkinson and Cashmore were overruled and the council approved the committee's rather weak recommendation 'to leave the matter for further discussion at a later time'. No such discussion ever took place. For once, Jenkinson had been thwarted.

⁸⁵³ Letter from Jenkinson to Hoare, 13 April 1946, BRA 13/4B, LMA.

⁸⁵⁴ Memorandum 14 May 1946 of meeting, Ashton, Hoare, Judges, Jenkinson and Shrigley, BRA 13/4B, LMA.

⁸⁵⁵ ts minutes CPBA Committee 9 July 1946, BRA 13/4B, LMA.

The work of the CPBA flourished. Economic history was an expanding subject, business was becoming more international and more companies now employed archivists. The work of record registration was gradually transferred to the NRA after 1948.⁸⁵⁶ Instead the CPBA began thematic surveys into nationalised industries and the building trade.⁸⁵⁷ Publications and advisory work grew, a move of premises increased the space available for rescue work⁸⁵⁸ and business archivists gravitated towards the CPBA. After a campaign to raise funds and increase membership in the universities, numbers soared from 51 in 1956 to 172 in 1960 and 264 in 1965.⁸⁵⁹ Income was improved by grants from the Pilgrim Trust and British Academy.⁸⁶⁰

Society of Local Archivists

In the late 1940s local authority archive services grew in number and strength: one of the objects in establishing the archive Diplomas at Liverpool and London universities in 1947 (which will be discussed in chapter 7) was to meet the need for training of local authority archivists. Public authorities appointing an archivist for the first time often asked for advice from the PRO or the BRA.⁸⁶¹ The enthusiasm of the NRA local committees raised awareness of local archives. Perhaps, therefore, the BRA should not have been surprised that local archivists wanted to discuss matters of common interest.

Local Archivists' Committee

One Saturday afternoon in February 1946 Richard Holworthy and another ten local archivists met informally at the IHR 'to consider the question of forming some kind of Local Archivists' Committee, the chief object of which would be to hold meetings at which archivists' practical problems could be discussed'.⁸⁶² Irvine Gray wrote the next day about 'a meeting of archivists in London – possibly the first meeting (only 11 of us) of what will some day be quite a big affair'.⁸⁶³ They agreed to ask the BRA to form 'a Section of the British Records Association, to be known as the Local Archivists Section'.⁸⁶⁴ In fact, Holworthy had suggested 'a small section or sub-committee for County Archivists' in June 1935, but then it was felt that the BRA 'had enough work in hand at present' and the idea was not pursued.⁸⁶⁵

⁸⁵⁶ CPBA *Fifth report* 1948: 3.

⁸⁵⁷ CPBA *Fourth report* 1946: 4-5.

⁸⁵⁸ To Devereux Buildings, Devereux Court, London WC2, Business Archives Council *Tenth report of the committee, accounts and list of members* London: Business Archives Council, 1955: 4.

⁸⁵⁹ BAC *Ninth report* 1954: 3. Mathias: 11.

⁸⁶⁰ BAC *Annual report 1957-58*: 2. BAC *Annual report 1958-59*: 6.

⁸⁶¹ Minutes 4 Dec 1945, BRA Signed Minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA. Jenkinson was invited to report on local and private archives including Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (1935), York Diocesan Registry (1939) University of Aberdeen (1959), Papers of Sir Hilary Jenkinson 1920-1960, PRO 30/75/13, TNA.

⁸⁶² Minutes 23 Feb 1946, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁶³ Letter from Gray to his wife, 24 Feb 1946, quoted in SoA *Annual report 1986-1987*: 3.

⁸⁶⁴ Minutes 23 Feb 1946, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁶⁵ Minutes 25 June 1935, BRA Signed Minutes vol I 1932-35, LMA.

In 1946 the BRA was 'prepared to welcome the formation of a Group or local Groups of practising Archivists' but felt that a Section 'would not be the best means of achieving the object of the signatories'. Practical objections were raised, such as the constitution of the BRA which did not allow Sections to deal with particular branches of employment and a fear that a proliferation of Sections 'would cumber the machinery'.⁸⁶⁶ Jenkinson and others preferred an informal group or club within the BRA, or affiliation as an institutional member, to a Section. In contrast with the CPBA, these proposals were not of central interest to the BRA and it did not need to accommodate them. The BRA seemed unaware of the potential of the new group to develop into a professional organization to challenge its authority.

When the group met to discuss the BRA's response it agreed 'that a Society of Local Archivists be formed with the object of discussing common problems and exchanging views'.⁸⁶⁷ It drew up rules for the Society, agreed a regional structure with a London headquarters and considered membership. The BRA allowed the new Society to form, viewing 'an Archivists' Guild or Society' as 'a body of professional workers somewhat like the Society of Clerks of the Peace and other similar professional bodies, with whom the Council would be glad to be in touch'.⁸⁶⁸ This statement suggested that archival associations in the UK had reached a new stage in professionalism: the BRA had had an enormous impact on national archival policy and structures but it was an organization which included archivists but which was not solely for archivists. The more exclusive nature of the new Society of Local Archivists was one of its great strengths in the following decades.

Society of Local Archivists

Meetings of the Society in 1946 and 1947 settled its structure and rules. From the second meeting, in June 1946, the regional structure was established in principle.⁸⁶⁹ The Society would have its headquarters in London and England and Wales would be divided into six regions.⁸⁷⁰ Regional centres were proposed at Preston, Leeds, Birmingham, Cambridge, London and Bristol, but this was left to the individual regions and no regional centres were ever established.⁸⁷¹ The regional structure was modelled on the RPS network of representatives and on the CPBA and NRA regional committees, which have been discussed in chapter 3. The NRA Registrar, Malet, helped to draft the rules and the local archivists were involved with RPS and NRA local committees. However, the Society used its regional structure for discussion of professional issues, not for registration and survey activities.

⁸⁶⁶ Minutes 22 Jan 1946, BRA Signed Minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA.

⁸⁶⁷ Minutes 29 June 1946, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁶⁸ Minutes 22 Oct 1946, BRA Signed Minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA.

⁸⁶⁹ Minutes 29 June 1946, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁷⁰ North West (including North Wales), North East, West Midland, East Midland, South and East (including London), and South and West (including South Wales).

⁸⁷¹ Minutes 19 Nov 1946, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

The importance of the regions for the Society was enshrined in the rules of 1947.⁸⁷² The council comprised the officers ‘and one member for each six members in a Region, elected annually for this purpose by each Region’.⁸⁷³ This was amended in 1949 to six councillors, one representing each region, plus six councillors elected directly by the membership, in addition to the officers.⁸⁷⁴ As well as the London AGM, a general meeting or conference was to be held each year ‘in the provinces’. The Society’s sphere of interest only extended to England and Wales. This accorded with the NRA’s scope and reflected the fact that local archive services were better developed in England and Wales.⁸⁷⁵ Eventually the Society added regions for Scotland and Ireland to cater for members in those areas.⁸⁷⁶

The Society’s first officers were elected in January 1947: Richard Holworthy as chairman, Joan Wake as vice-chairman, Francis Rowe as honorary secretary, Francis Steer as honorary treasurer and F G Emmison as honorary editor.⁸⁷⁷ After five preliminary meetings⁸⁷⁸ the Society held its first council meeting in July 1947 at Middlesex Guildhall, Westminster and its first AGM in November 1947, attended by 38 members. It elected 51 members, set up an administrative structure, issued a *Bulletin* and began to consider policy issues such as appraisal and the training of archivists.⁸⁷⁹ It applied for institutional membership of the BRA and in 1948 achieved a permanent seat on the BRA council.⁸⁸⁰ The Society was well and truly established.

Membership

A significant issue which differentiated the new body was its membership. The 1947 rules gave council the power to elect members who ‘are responsible for and are occupied in the practical care of local archives’ or ‘who are giving or have given Honorary services in the cause of local archives’.⁸⁸¹ Initially the new Society seemed unsure whether it wanted to be independent and considered reuniting with the BRA.⁸⁸² Holworthy wanted an autonomous Society while others, including Emmison, thought there would be more power within the BRA.⁸⁸³ Amendments to tighten membership criteria were made in 1952 when only ‘those

⁸⁷² Minutes 11 Jan 1947, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁷³ Minutes 11 Jan 1947, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁷⁴ Minutes 5 Feb 1949, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁷⁵ NRA (Scotland) was established separately in 1946.

⁸⁷⁶ Scottish and Irish Regions were added in 1954 but were not active. Relaunched Scotland in 1971 (annual report 1970/71, SoA Honorary Secretary’s Minutes 1967-71, SA 83/1/1/2), Ireland in 1979 (minutes annual conference 21 April 1979, Honorary Secretary’s Minutes 1971-82, SA 83/1/1/6), LMA.

⁸⁷⁷ Amanda Arrowsmith ‘Recordari: the 50th anniversary of the Society of (Local) Archivists’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 19 (1998): 231-233 commented on their individuality.

⁸⁷⁸ Between February 1946 and April 1947.

⁸⁷⁹ Minutes 26 April 1947, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁸⁰ Minutes 18 March 1947, 14 Sept 1948, BRA Signed Minutes vol V 1946-56, LMA.

⁸⁸¹ Minutes 11 Jan 1947, SA 88/1/1, LMA. A postal ballot of the membership on membership applications was discontinued Nov 1947.

⁸⁸² AGM 16 Nov 1948 discussed relationship with BRA, Emmison and Foster proposed asking the BRA again to form a branch or section ‘open only to practising local archivists’, Gray and Campbell Cooke opposed ‘fusion into the BRA’, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁸³ Hull. Interview. Arrowsmith: 232.

primarily occupied in the practical care of local archives' were admitted.⁸⁸⁴ Also in 1952 Peter Walne was elected secretary, which he continued until his retirement in 1977.⁸⁸⁵ Walne and Le Hardy, chairman 1949-1954, oversaw the early development of the Society and set it on the road to become the professional body for archivists in the UK.

The Society was even-handed in its treatment of men and women: many of the first archivists in local government (and therefore members of the Society) were female. The Society's first vice-chairman was Joan Wake, although she declined to succeed to the chairmanship, and Elizabeth Ralph was the first female chairman in 1957.⁸⁸⁶

Society of Archivists

A major review of the Society took place in 1953-54. The body was well established, had published a handbook on local records, lobbied for better archival education, investigated training for repairers, considered local government grades and salaries for archivists and discussed the local archive response to the *Grigg Report*.⁸⁸⁷

Membership was widened to include 'all archivists in the British isles and the Commonwealth overseas' who were 'primarily occupied in the practical care of archives'.⁸⁸⁸ In addition, retired and honorary members were allowed for. The Society's name was changed to Society of Archivists (SoA) and its objects extended.⁸⁸⁹ The new SoA sought to foster the care and preservation of archives, to promote the better administration of archive repositories, to enable archivists to discuss common problems and to exchange technical knowledge, to encourage research in archive problems and to co-operate with other bodies. The constitution was approved in 1954 and Hilary Jenkinson was invited to become SoA's first president.⁸⁹⁰ A new professional *Journal* was published from 1955. SoA became a registered charity in 1962 under the Charities Act 1960.⁸⁹¹

⁸⁸⁴ Minutes AGM 18 Dec 1952, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁸⁵ Peter Walne elected secretary 18 Dec 1952, minutes AGM, SA 88/1/1; retired 8 Dec 1977, minutes AGM, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

⁸⁸⁶ Minutes 11 Jan 1947, minutes AGM 26 Nov 1957, SA 88/1/1, LMA. Wake was also elected the Society's first honorary member in 1952, minutes general meeting, 26 April 1952, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁸⁷ Minutes AGM 8 Dec 1949, subcommittee improvements to UCL course, SA 88/1/1, LMA. Minutes AGM 8 Dec 1949, subcommittee central repair office with LCC, SA 88/1/1, LMA. Minutes AGM 18 Dec 1952, SA 88/1/1, LMA. Annual Report 1953/54, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁸⁸ Annual Report 1953/54, Amended constitution 1954, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁸⁹ Amended constitution 1954, although deleting 'Local' from the Society's name had been proposed and rejected in 1946, minutes 19 Nov 1946, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁹⁰ Minutes AGM 15 Dec 1954, minutes 1st AGM SoA, 11 Dec 1955, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁹¹ 'Society's chronicle' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 2 (1960-64): 329.

Membership

In 1958 two grades of membership were introduced. Full membership (Fellow) was restricted to graduates with five years' professional work in a recognised repository or those with a research degree or a recognised course in archive administration and four years' professional experience. Associate members were 'primarily occupied in the administration and care of archives'.⁸⁹² After consultation via the regions, the AGM approved the changes.⁸⁹³

Ten years later, Council proposed amendments to membership, reducing the qualifying period for full membership from four to two years. A faction campaigned for a return to a single grade of membership but based on academic qualifications and professional employment, which would have restricted membership to qualified and experienced professionals.⁸⁹⁴ Council's proposal was accepted.

In 1976 the full and associate member grades were abolished and a single grade for 'persons who are primarily occupied in the administration or conservation of archives' introduced instead.⁸⁹⁵ A student membership category was also established for full-time students of archives at UCL, Liverpool, Dublin, Aberystwyth and Bangor and of conservation at Camberwell School of Art.⁸⁹⁶ In 1979 the question of membership and status was raised again, this time in the context of a proposal to set up a register of qualified archivists. There was little support and Council took no further action.⁸⁹⁷

Membership was reviewed in the 1980s when five options were proposed, ranging from no change to opening up membership to any interested individual.⁸⁹⁸ The discussions addressed the purpose and role of the SoA and eventually the membership structure introduced in 1987 included all 'occupied in the administration or conservation of archives or records management' in the UK, Commonwealth or international institutions. Student and retired membership were retained. In compensation for the wider catchment, a new professional register was introduced.⁸⁹⁹ The voluntary register replicated the full membership requirements abolished in 1976,⁹⁰⁰ however, it was promoted as a step towards improved

⁸⁹² Proposed amendments to Constitution 1958, minutes AGM 27 Nov 1958, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁹³ 44 in favour, 34 against, minutes AGM 27 Nov 1958, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁸⁹⁴ Proposed amendment by Freddy Stitt and S C Newton, minutes AGM 29 Nov 1967, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA.

⁸⁹⁵ SoA Membership questionnaire [1983], in possession of the author.

⁸⁹⁶ Minutes annual conference, 10 April 1976, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA. Notice of student associateship, introduced Jan 1976, Society of Archivists Training Committee copy agendas, minutes and correspondence 1974-75, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

⁸⁹⁷ Minutes annual conference, 21 April 1979, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

⁸⁹⁸ Options included no change, revising 'primarily occupied' to include those for whom archives was only part of their responsibilities, opening up membership to anyone who paid the subscription, restricting membership to qualified professionals or introducing a new membership structure to enable all those qualified in or working in archives to join.

⁸⁹⁹ SoA 'Proposed alterations to the constitution: background paper', 1986, in possession of the author.

⁹⁰⁰ A degree, professional diploma and two years' experience, a degree and five years' experience or, for non-graduates, ten years' experience.

professionalisation for the work group and a basis for scrutiny of professional conduct.⁹⁰¹ A scheme for pre-Registration training and development was introduced in 1996 as a requirement for newly qualified archivists seeking admission to the register two years later.⁹⁰² In 1992 the new category of non-voting institutional affiliate was introduced.

The SoA considered the adoption of a code of ethics or code of practice alongside the professional register. Jenkinson had introduced the idea of the primary duties (the physical and moral defence of the records) of an archivist in the 1920s. Hull modified these 'duties' in 1960 when he added requirements for professional behaviour.⁹⁰³ In 1980 the SoA adopted 'in principle' a code of practice: in 1981 two draft codes were considered but neither adopted.⁹⁰⁴ The introduction of the Register provoked further discussion of the definition of professionalism and a code of practice.⁹⁰⁵ A draft code of conduct was prepared in 1988 and, eventually, in 1994 the SoA adopted a code of conduct as a requirement of membership.⁹⁰⁶ The purpose of the code was 'to set out the standards of professional behaviour expected of archivists, archive conservators, records managers and those occupied in related activities, who are members of the Society' and it was enforced by a Disciplinary Panel. The code had its limitations: it only applied to members not to the whole profession, it was a code of conduct not a broader code of ethics and it was quite limited in scope. However, it was the first attempt in the UK to codify professional behaviour and was subsequently used to discipline offending members.

From the first the SoA sought a measure of exclusivity for its members, exercised through restrictions over admission. The focused nature of the membership generally encouraged the SoA to deal with professional issues on behalf of its members, although sometimes the narrower view led to friction with interest groups and the formation of other bodies to address particular issues.

Salaries and status

Although the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) represented local archivists in negotiation with employers, from time to time the SoA gave an opinion on pay and conditions. In 1952 the SoA corresponded with the Local Government Examinations Board over promotion for archivists taking a professional examination. SoA agreed that it would 'not be concerned directly in negotiations over salaries and status' but in 1954 it consulted with NALGO about 'the introduction of nationally uniform gradings of

⁹⁰¹ SoA 'Registration....What's in it for you?' 1987, in possession of the author.

⁹⁰² *SoA Annual report 1996: 2. Qualifying period later changed to 3-10 years.*

⁹⁰³ Felix Hull 'Limits' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 2 (1960-64): 138-140.

⁹⁰⁴ Minutes AGM 2 Dec 1980; versions drafted by the Council working party and 'alternative' version, agenda AGM 2 Dec 1981, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

⁹⁰⁵ *SoA Annual report 1986-1987: 7. SoA Annual report 1987-1988: 2.*

⁹⁰⁶ SoA 'Memorandum and articles of association, bye-laws, code of conduct' 1994, in possession of the author.

assistant archivists'.⁹⁰⁷ The pay of archivists in local government was 'improving but still inadequate' in the late 1950s and a survey of local government archivists in 1961 revealed difficulties in recruitment.⁹⁰⁸ After 1968 SoA refused to advertise posts on 'salary scale of AP1', raised to AP3 in 1975.⁹⁰⁹ AP4 was established as the minimum national grade for assistant archivists in 1976.⁹¹⁰

Other means of promoting the work of the profession included the 'film strip on the work of an archivist' proposed in 1961 and the BBC Third Network series 'Introduction to Archives' by Emmison in 1964.⁹¹¹ The SoA also organized an exhibition to celebrate 75 years of county council government in 1964, attended by Queen Elizabeth II.⁹¹²

Special interest groups and committees

In 1955 the SoA set up its first special interest committee, the Technical Committee, chaired by Roger Ellis.⁹¹³ It established an advisory panel, a research register, a technical bibliography and commissioned experiments.⁹¹⁴ W J Barrow visited from the USA to explain his lamination process in 1957 and the SoA discussed setting up a central lamination service with the BRA.⁹¹⁵ In 1970 a Conservation Group (later the Preservation and Conservation Group) supplemented the Committee's activities.

As new interests emerged, the SoA set up committees to address them, often followed by a group to offer member services, such as specialist training, meetings and publication. In 1970 the Training Committee began: it will be discussed in chapter 8. In 1973 a committee on computers in archive administration began: the Information Technology Group started in 1986.⁹¹⁶ In 1978 the Education Services Committee was established to involve teachers and education officers (not then eligible to join the SoA) in archives: this became the Archives in Education Group in 1992. Other Groups included the Records Management Group (1977), Film and Sound Archives Group (1994), EAD/Data Exchange Group and Business Records Group (both 2000).⁹¹⁷

⁹⁰⁷ Minutes provincial meeting 26 April 1952, AGM 18 Dec 1952; Annual report 1953/54; Annual report 1955/56, SA 88/1/1, LMA. By 1965 negotiations were not concluded: Annual report 1964/65, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹⁰⁸ Annual report 1959/60, Annual report 1961/62, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹⁰⁹ Minutes AGM 14 Dec 1968, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA.

⁹¹⁰ Minutes annual conference, 10 April 1975, annual conference, 10 April 1976, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

⁹¹¹ Annual report 1960/61, Annual report 1963/64, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹¹² Annual report 1964/65, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹¹³ Annual report 1955/56, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹¹⁴ Roger Ellis 'Select bibliography of archive administration' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 2 (1960-64): 67-73.

⁹¹⁵ Annual report 1957/58, SA 88/1/1, LMA. Minutes 15 July 1958, BRA Signed Minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

⁹¹⁶ Minutes annual conference, 13 April 1973, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

⁹¹⁷ SoA *Annual report 1994*: 10. SoA *Annual report 2000*: 4.

A Specialist Repositories Forum was set up in 1979. The SoA Council agreed to support its work and it became a Group in 1982.⁹¹⁸ It had an uneasy relationship with the central machinery of the SoA, as it sought a measure of financial, membership and policy independence. Informally affiliated groups (Religious Archivists Group, Historic Houses Archivists Group, Scientific Archivists Group, Archivists in Independent Television) provided important networks but their status within the SoA was unclear in the 1990s.⁹¹⁹

SoA achievements

By 1980 the SoA had established itself as a primary representative body for archivists. It operated exclusive membership criteria (periodically strengthened and diluted), had adopted 'in principle' a code of practice, taken action to promote and protect the interests of its members in local government and offered services across a range of professional special interests through its committees and groups. However, it had not established exclusive rights over regulating professional work or representing the profession, for example in salary negotiations. Unable to decide on a clear role, the SoA became involved in many activities, often in conflict with (or in collaboration with) other associations.

Business Archives Council

In 1952 the CPBA changed its name to the Business Archives Council (BAC), reflecting a wish for a simpler title.⁹²⁰ The BAC helped businesses to find homes for their archives, including arranging deposits at the LSE and UCL.⁹²¹ In 1958 it came to an agreement with the BRA to collaborate on advisory and rescue work, when funding for the RPS was endangered.⁹²² The BRA feared that the HMC wanted to absorb the RPS activities, but a Treasury vote via the HMC maintained independence.⁹²³ The RPS ceded the preservation of business archives to the BAC and shared its premises at Charterhouse with the BAC for survey purposes.⁹²⁴ Roger Ellis, Secretary of the HMC, was elected BAC vice president.⁹²⁵

In 1959 the BAC introduced a new constitution to reflect its wider activities and set up committees for research and education, regional activities, finance and membership.⁹²⁶ New concerns arose such as education and training in business archives, which will be discussed in chapter 8. The preservation of

⁹¹⁸ Minutes general meeting, 19 Sept 1980, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

⁹¹⁹ *SoA Annual report 1994*: 13.

⁹²⁰ Mathias: 10, 16, said the name change reflected earlier informal use of the BAC name.

⁹²¹ *BAC Twelfth report 1957*: 2-3.

⁹²² Minutes 18 March 1958, BRA Signed Minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

⁹²³ Minutes 15 July 1958, BRA Signed Minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA. Harris: 13, noted Treasury grant actually began in 1959-60.

⁹²⁴ Minutes 13 May 1958, BRA Signed Minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

⁹²⁵ *BAC Annual report 1957-58*: 2.

⁹²⁶ *BAC Annual report 1958-59*: 3.

business and industrial films was addressed with the National Film Archive and the BAC contributed to a conference on film and history at the Slade School of Art in 1969.⁹²⁷

In 1960 the BAC suffered a double loss with the deaths of its chairman, Stephen Twining and its secretary since 1946, Irene Shrigley. Business archivists rather than historians began to dominate. In 1968 the council resigned en bloc: a new council took power, led by Major Tom Ingram, archivist at Baring Bros, and Sam Twining.⁹²⁸ Further changes were made in 1974 when a new constitution was agreed.⁹²⁹ Branches in the north west and north east started in 1975 and another was planned for Bristol.⁹³⁰ The northern branches merged in 1993.⁹³¹

Rescue work

Rescue work continued to be important, for instance following the merger of northern Co-operative Societies in 1970 and the absorption of local estate agents by national chains in the late 1980s.⁹³² In 1975 the BAC set up the Business Records Advisory Service with funding from the HMC to employ a part-time archivist.⁹³³ The service offered consultancy, advice and surveys, and later, supervision of in-company archivists.⁹³⁴ John Orbell was appointed archivist in 1976.⁹³⁵ Over the years the BAC provided an important entry route for business archivists including Anne Piggott, Celia Jackson, Melanie Aspey, Alison Turton and Serena Kelly.

The BAC started a liquidation monitoring service in 1968 with the cooperation of the Board of Trade for companies over 50 years old in liquidation. By 1980 the service was run with the City Business Library and hundreds of notices were sent out weekly to local record offices.⁹³⁶ The workload led to a suspension of the service in 1982 but it was restarted in 1985 with the cooperation of county record offices.⁹³⁷ A simpler system via the Insolvency Practitioners Association was initiated later that year.⁹³⁸ In 1990 a Liquidations and Rescue Support Group was set up to survey records of companies in liquidation held by Cork Gully & Co.⁹³⁹

⁹²⁷ BAC *Annual report 1962-63*: 6. BAC *Twenty-fifth report 1969-1970*: 5.

⁹²⁸ J E Wadsworth 'Businessmen, bankers and the Business Archives Council' *Business Archives* 36 (1972): 14-17. Mathias: 12.

⁹²⁹ BAC *Twenty-ninth report 1973-74*: 3.

⁹³⁰ BAC *Annual report 1975-76*: 1.

⁹³¹ BAC *Yearbook 1993*: 10.

⁹³² BAC *Twenty-fifth report 1969-1970*: 5. BAC *Annual report 1988-89*: 7.

⁹³³ BAC *Annual report 1975-76*: 5.

⁹³⁴ BAC *Annual report 1987-88*: 1.

⁹³⁵ Orbell succeeded Ingram as archivist to Baring Bros in 1980 and maintained his links with the BAC until 1995.

⁹³⁶ BAC *Annual report 1979-1980*: 5.

⁹³⁷ BAC *Annual report 1984-85*: 2.

⁹³⁸ BAC *Annual report 1985-86*: 2.

⁹³⁹ BAC *Annual report 1989-90*: 6.

BAC surveys

Thematic surveys were a significant part of the BAC's work and were often funded by grant aid. A shipping survey was carried out in the mid-1960s with the National Maritime Museum. A joint project with the BRA surveyed the brewing industry and wine trade, and a survey of insurance records was undertaken with the Chartered Insurance Institute to which Edwin Green, subsequently archivist to the Midland Bank, was appointed in 1972.⁹⁴⁰ A banking survey started in 1969 under Professor Pressnell and was eventually published in 1985.⁹⁴¹ In 1976 a British shipbuilding industry survey was begun with BAC (Scotland), sponsored by the Shipbuilding and Repairers' National Association, published in 1980.⁹⁴² A survey of 1000 limited liability companies funded by the Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC) in 1980 listed 674 archives and resulted in 70 deposits by 1984.⁹⁴³ Leverhulme Trust funded a survey of Billingsgate Market trader archives before the market moved to a new site on the Isle of Dogs in 1981.⁹⁴⁴ In 1994 a guide to the records of chartered accountants was funded by the Institute of Chartered Accountants.⁹⁴⁵ A pharmaceutical records survey funded by the Wellcome Trust began in 1995 and was published in 2003.⁹⁴⁶

BAC achievements

As well as providing a forum for businessmen, economic historians and business archivists, the BAC undertook significant work in identifying, rescuing and surveying business archives. Its survey publications represented a major resource for historians and the work of compiling them provided excellent archival experience for generations of business archivists. The BAC sought reasonably successfully to reconcile the views of three communities, academics, archivists and businessmen, but it did not primarily seek to act as a professional body for archivists.

Professional bodies and professional development

The BRA, BAC and SoA all contributed to three important professional development issues: education and training (which will be discussed in chapters 7 and 8), research and publication and fostering relationships between professional bodies in the UK and abroad. These bodies supported the development of a professional group of archivists to varying degrees.

⁹⁴⁰ BAC *Annual report 1968*: 8. BAC *Twenty-sixth report 1970-71*: 5. BAC *Twenty-eighth report 1972-73*: 4. BAC *Annual report 1974-75*: 4.

⁹⁴¹ BAC *Twenty-fourth report 1968-69*: 4. BAC *Twenty-fifth report 1969-1970*: 3. BAC *Annual report 1984-85*: 1.

⁹⁴² BAC *Annual report 1975-76*: 7. Later expanded into a joint project with the PRO, SRO, HMC, PRONI and the National Maritime Museum: BAC *Annual report 1977-78*: 6.

⁹⁴³ BAC *Annual report 1979-1980*: 6. BAC *Annual report 1984-85*: 2-3. Published as Lesley Richmond and Bridget Stockford eds *Company archives* London: Gower, 1986.

⁹⁴⁴ BAC *Annual report 1980-81*: 1. BAC *Annual report 1982*: 4.

⁹⁴⁵ BAC *Yearbook 1994*: 3.

⁹⁴⁶ BAC *Yearbook 1995*: 11.

Training and education

The issue of training concerned the Society from the first meeting of the Council in July 1947.⁹⁴⁷ The archive profession was not restricted to graduates or those with higher degrees, but the SoA sought to ensure that its practitioners were well educated in professional issues. There was discussion of ‘the value of a degree as contrasted with that of considerable experience as a qualification for appointment or promotion’ which may have reflected the personal experience of many of those running archives and the Society in the 1940s and 1950s without the benefit of university education.

In 1963 the SoA set up a Liaison Group, followed by the Training Committee in 1970 and the university accreditation scheme of the 1980s. It was the SoA, more than any other archival body, which made archival education a central concern and which brought professional influence to bear on academic programmes. Without the SoA’s input, archival education (at least at UCL) might have continued to be biased towards central government practice and academic concerns. It is, however, important to record that there was mutual benefit from the SoA/university contact: the universities also supported and influenced SoA activities. The practical orientation of the profession in the UK was in contrast with the USA which ‘begins by establishing a theoretical basis and from this proceeds to derive rules of conduct to govern her Archivists’ practice’.⁹⁴⁸

Training and short courses

In 1949 the Society agreed to hold an annual meeting or conference in the provinces.⁹⁴⁹ In 1951 the London AGM was accompanied by an ‘exhibition ... of repair materials, tools, gear and office equipment’.⁹⁵⁰ Provincial meetings began in 1951 in Warwick, to be followed by Salisbury and Preston.⁹⁵¹ The first annual conference was in York in 1955 followed by Lincoln in 1956, Oxford, Canterbury and Taunton.⁹⁵²

The Society proposed a Central Repair Centre and training for repairers at LCC evening classes and by 1950 the PRO offered training including paper repair, parchment and an advanced course, leading to a Diploma.⁹⁵³ These initial courses ran successfully and a concentrated three week course, run by the Society, was proposed in 1952.⁹⁵⁴ Technical Committee arranged the first ‘instructional meeting for repairers’ in

⁹⁴⁷ Minutes 18 July 1947, SoA Signed Council minutes 1947-67, SA 83/1/1/1, LMA.

⁹⁴⁸ Irene Churchill, C S Drew, N D Harding & H Jenkinson *The year’s work in archives* reprinted from *The year’s work in librarianship 1937* (Reprints series no 7) London: British Records Association, 1938: 30-31.

⁹⁴⁹ Minutes AGM Nov 1948 reconvened 5 Feb 1949, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹⁵⁰ Minutes general meeting 27 April 1951, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹⁵¹ Minutes general meeting 27 April 1951, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹⁵² ‘Annual Conference, York, 13-14 May 1955’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 1 (1955-59): 54-55. Notices *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 1 (1955-59): 116, 177, 231-232, 296.

⁹⁵³ Minutes AGM 11 Dec 1950, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹⁵⁴ Minutes AGM 6 Dec 1951, minutes AGM 18 Dec 1952, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

1959.⁹⁵⁵ Between 1968 and 1973 the SoA developed a Repairers' Training Scheme.⁹⁵⁶ In the first five years, 25 trainees registered, of whom 17 completed the scheme.

In 1969 the first BAC annual conference was held at the PRO at which the subjects discussed included records management and storage standards.⁹⁵⁷ Later conferences addressed training of unqualified staff, photography, shipbuilding records and archives in the recession (in 1982).

Cambridge University hosted an important series of seminars for the SoA. A symposium on records management was held in 1968, followed by one on archive services in local government in 1969 and training in 1970.⁹⁵⁸ This led to the formation of the Training Committee which ultimately facilitated the correspondence Diploma in Archive Administration, and, in the 1980s, recognition of the university degrees, which will be discussed in chapter 8. Training Committee also considered in-service training for 'subordinate staff employed on archive and records management duties'.⁹⁵⁹ In 1981 a practically-based scheme for 'subprofessionals' was proposed.⁹⁶⁰ A set of training materials for archive assistants was published.⁹⁶¹

By 1982 the Training Committee was organizing a course each year, usually of two or three days duration, on a topical subject such as computers, management skills or accounting records. In addition, the SoA regions and groups organised training days. Training Committee provided coordination, information exchange and support to training activities. In 1995 the SoA employed a training officer for the first time to coordinate a training programme and promote continuing professional development for the profession, although the post was discontinued in 2002.⁹⁶²

Professional literature

Given the small number of members of the SoA in the 1950s, the published output was impressive. The Society's *Bulletin*, first published in 1947, was edited by Emmison. Distributed in duplicated typescript format, the content addressed professional issues such as the value of an archive diploma as against practical experience and the conflicting demands for archivists with 'modern' skills for current records and

⁹⁵⁵ Annual report 1958-59, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹⁵⁶ Report of Registrar of Training Scheme, 27 June 1978, SoA Training Committee Copy minutes, agendas, correspondence 1978-81, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

⁹⁵⁷ BAC *Twenty-fifth report 1969-1970*: 5.

⁹⁵⁸ Cook, McDonald & Welch: 417-423.

⁹⁵⁹ Discussion paper in-service training course: a future programme, 1982, SoA Training Committee, copy agendas, minutes and correspondence 1982-83, SA 88/4/4, LMA. Copy minutes 7 Sept 1972, SoA Training Committee Copy minutes, agendas, correspondence 1970-74, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

⁹⁶⁰ Discussion paper on training of non-graduate archive assistants, 1981, SA 88/4/4, LMA.

⁹⁶¹ Minutes Training Committee 6 Oct 1983, SA 88/4/4, LMA.

⁹⁶² *SoA Annual report 1995*: 1.

‘ancient’ skills for archives.⁹⁶³ Under Albert Hollaender, editor from 1951 until 1973,⁹⁶⁴ the *Bulletin* gradually became more scholarly,⁹⁶⁵ whilst retaining its role in addressing professional issues and communicating news to the membership. By 1954 each edition was 80 pages and carried substantive articles, book reviews, notes and news. Following the renaming of the Society in 1954 the *Bulletin* became the *SoA Journal* and, for the first time, was printed rather than duplicated. Young members of the profession were encouraged to submit articles under a scheme for ‘The Archivists’ Prize’ for the best article by a member under 30 years of age.⁹⁶⁶ Unfortunately the prize lapsed for lack of entries. The *Journal*, however, thrived and was the main organ of communication between SoA members and between the SoA and others interested in archives until the establishment of the *Newsletter* in 1977.⁹⁶⁷ At this point, internal communications, membership changes and short topical notices moved into the *Newsletter*, leaving the *Journal* to carry more substantive articles and reviews.

In 1949 the BRA started a new journal, *Archives*, edited by Roger Ellis, as the ‘first periodical in this country to be devoted entirely to archive matters’.⁹⁶⁸ It was published twice a year in a 64-page format and 500 copies were distributed internationally.⁹⁶⁹ In 1958 the BAC collaborated with Liverpool University Press on a new journal *Business History* and started a newsletter. In 1965 the newsletter expanded into a journal, *Business Archives*, issued in an improved format from 1969. A new short newsletter was started.

Although the works of both Jenkinson and Fowler had been reissued in the 1930s, nothing substantive had been published since the war. By 1950 the Society had two publishing projects underway: a booklet on repairs and a manual on local archives by Lilian Redstone.⁹⁷⁰ Redstone, assisted by Francis Steer after 1951 when she began to be seriously ill, edited the work of 35 contributors.⁹⁷¹ *Local records: their nature and care* covered archive policy, types of records and a bibliography. The book was designed to help prospective archivists, history students and county councillors to understand the workings of a local record office and provided an overview of the state of the profession in 1953. Since it was the only modern text on the subject, it is hard to explain why it seemed to have so little impact on the growing profession.

⁹⁶³ Society of Local Archivists *Bulletin* 1-3 (Aug 1947-Feb 1948).

⁹⁶⁴ Hollaender was succeeded by Felicity Ranger after 23 years as editor, minutes AGM 5 Dec 1973, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

⁹⁶⁵ The first article with scholarly apparatus such as footnotes appeared in 1952.

⁹⁶⁶ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 1 (1955): 55. Minutes 1st Annual Conference 13 May 1955, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹⁶⁷ Annual conference 16 April 1977, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

⁹⁶⁸ Council minutes 27 Jan 1948, BRA Signed Minutes vol V 1946-56, LMA.

⁹⁶⁹ Editorial Committee reported 493 subscriptions 14 April 1953, BRA Signed Minutes vol V 1946-56, LMA.

⁹⁷⁰ Minutes AGM 11 Dec 1950, SA 88/1/1, LMA. Purnell’s booklet became a chapter on repairs in the manual.

⁹⁷¹ Minutes AGM 6 Dec 1951, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

The SoA also published a volume of essays, originally prepared in honour of Jenkinson's 80th birthday, but eventually published as a memorial.⁹⁷² In 1957 it started a series of occasional papers on specific topics and a series of 'practical handbooks' on repair, classification, buildings and equipment in 1964.⁹⁷³ A bequest from Ida Darlington's estate in 1970 was used to launch the series with *Document Repair* by D B Wardle.⁹⁷⁴

BAC published a *Directory of corporate archives* in 1986 and a *Guide to tracing the history of a business* in 1987.⁹⁷⁵ The growth of employment of archivists in business and of business archives on deposit locally stimulated a major book, *Managing business archives*, which became the standard text in the 1990s.⁹⁷⁶

Each of the three organisations (BRA, BAC and SoA) published a journal and a newsletter. The journals had some difficulty deciding who their target audience was: archivists, historians or other users of archives? The BAC addressed the problem in 1987 by devoting alternate issues to archive principles and practice and to business history. Over time, BRA's *Archives* moved towards an historical rather than archival audience, while *SoA Journal* gradually focused on professional issues in the later 1990s. The associations all contributed to the compilation of bibliographies and thus facilitated access to relevant literature. Surprisingly few books appeared: the BAC published thematic surveys and *Managing business archives* in 1991, the SoA published *Local records* in 1953 and several series of booklets subsequently, while the BRA concentrated on guides to the use of types of records. The relatively small published output was a weakness of the UK archival profession and reduced its visibility abroad.

Facilitating research

The SoA began a 'technical library' for its members in 1955 to cover all aspects of 'archives and archival problems'.⁹⁷⁷ Donations of 'guides, books, exhibitions catalogues etc' were sought and the library sought 'actively to acquire foreign and commonwealth publications'.⁹⁷⁸ In 1962 the library received 'a valuable gift of books and pamphlets from the executors of the late Sir Hilary Jenkinson'.⁹⁷⁹ G F Osborn of Westminster City Library became honorary librarian. In 1991 the stock moved temporarily to join the British Library of Information Studies (BLISS) in Bloomsbury, then to the Borthwick Institute in York.⁹⁸⁰

⁹⁷² AEJ Hollaender ed *Essays in memory of Sir Hilary Jenkinson* Chichester, Society of Archivists, 1962.

⁹⁷³ Annual report 1957-58, minutes annual conference, 10 April 1964, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹⁷⁴ Annual report 1969-70, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA.

⁹⁷⁵ BAC *Annual report 1985-86*: 4. BAC *Annual report 1986-87*: 3.

⁹⁷⁶ BAC *Annual report 1987-88*: 4.

⁹⁷⁷ Minutes 1st AGM 11 Dec 1955, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹⁷⁸ Annual report 1955/56, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹⁷⁹ Minutes, annual conference, 5 May 1962, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹⁸⁰ SoA *Annual report 1990-91, year book 1991-92*: 7. SoA *Annual report 1994*: 4-5.

The BAC also ran a library of business history which was responding to hundreds of enquiries from around the world by the 1970s.⁹⁸¹

In 1970 a Fellow Commoner was established at Churchill College, Cambridge, awarded annually on the nomination of SoA Council for eight weeks to 'research into some aspect of archive work'.⁹⁸² The first recipient was K Darwin, from PRONI, who studied the application of computer techniques to archive work in 1970.⁹⁸³

Roger Ellis first mooted the idea of a President's Prize in his Presidential Address in 1964 'for work, whether practical or theoretical, performed or submitted by a senior archivist and judged to be of outstanding merit and advantage to the profession as a whole'.⁹⁸⁴ In 1972 he endowed a fund to invite foreign experts to the UK and to award a prize. In 1977 the Ellis Prize was established, to be awarded to an individual in recognition of exceptional service to archives.⁹⁸⁵

In 1979 the Wadsworth Prize was established in honour of John Wadsworth, BAC committee member for 40 years. It was awarded to 'the outstanding contribution to the study of British business history': the first recipient was David Fieldhouse for *Unilever overseas*.⁹⁸⁶ It has since been awarded to a distinguished list of historians.

International affairs

The BRA set a precedent of contact with colleagues overseas and international activities. Jenkinson sought BRA support for the 'International Archives Organisation' in 1947 and ensured that the BRA was the UK representative professional body on the International Council on Archives (ICA) after its formation in 1948.⁹⁸⁷ In 1964 the BRA ceded its position to the SoA: in 1968 the SoA and PRO shared the representation.⁹⁸⁸

SoA applied for associate membership of ICA in 1952 and was regularly represented at ICA meetings.⁹⁸⁹ Peter Walne attended the second ICA Congress in 1953 when he started his involvement with archival terminology. Three UK archivists attended the Round Table in 1954 and 50 UK archivists attended the 5th

⁹⁸¹ BAC *Annual report 1978-79*: 6.

⁹⁸² Annual report 1968-69, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA.

⁹⁸³ Annual report 1969-70, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA.

⁹⁸⁴ Roger Ellis 'The British archivist and his society' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 3 (1965-1969): 43-48.

⁹⁸⁵ Minutes AGM 8 Dec 1977, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

⁹⁸⁶ BAC *Annual report 1979-1980*: 7.

⁹⁸⁷ Minutes 20 May 1947, 22 July 1947, 19 July 1955, BRA Signed Minutes vol V 1946-56, LMA.

⁹⁸⁸ Minutes 6 Oct 1964, BRA Signed Minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

⁹⁸⁹ Minutes AGM 18 Dec 1952, Minutes annual conference 29 April 1960, annual report 1959-60, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

ICA Congress in 1964.⁹⁹⁰ Charles Keskemeti from ICA visited the SoA conference in 1977: the ICA Congress was held in London in 1980.⁹⁹¹ During the 1980s and 1990s the SoA sent a representative to the ICA Section for Professional Associations who enhanced the UK's reputation abroad and ensured that ICA issues were discussed in the UK. SoA supported the triennial European Conference of ICA, hosting the 1994 event at Lancaster.

The BAC maintained links with organisations overseas, including the Australian BAC, and the ICA.⁹⁹² In 1974 it was instrumental in establishing a Business Archives Committee of the ICA, chaired by Charles Thompson, archivist for the National Coal Board.⁹⁹³ The BAC collaborated on an international manual on archival preservation in 1979-80.⁹⁹⁴

The SoA admitted archivists from the 'Commonwealth oversea' from 1954: by 1955 applications had been received from Rhodesia, Canada and Eire.⁹⁹⁵ It frequently hosted foreign visitors at conference, including Ian Maclean from Australia in 1957, W Kaye Lamb from Canada in 1960, Michel Duchein from France in 1968, and S. Don Luis Sanchez Belda of Spain in 1975 (together with Chris Hurley from Australia and Hugh Taylor from Canada).⁹⁹⁶ Contacts with the USA included representation by Emmison at the Society of American Archivists in 1962 and Hull's invitation to the Mormon Assembly in 1969.⁹⁹⁷

Occasionally professionals went to work abroad or came to the UK, mainly from British Commonwealth countries: A D Ridge, archivist at the National Coal Board and a member of SoA Council, was appointed to McGill University, Montreal in 1961, Edwin Welch (who ran the SoA records management symposium in 1968) went to Canada in 1971 and Northumberland county archivist, Hugh Taylor, became Provincial Archivist in Alberta in 1965, later serving at the Public Archives of Canada.⁹⁹⁸ Taylor and Welch wrote the Canadian archive education guidelines in 1976. Peter Emmerson and Leonard McDonald both worked in Africa before coming to the UK, while Michael Cook spent several years in Ghana in the 1970s setting up a regional archive training centre.

⁹⁹⁰ Madeleine Elsas & J H Holmes 'Report on Round Table on Archives, Paris, Spring 1954' *Bulletin of the Society of Local Archivists* 14 (Oct 1954): 46-52. Annual report 1963/64, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹⁹¹ Minutes annual conference, 16 April 1977, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

⁹⁹² BAC *Eleventh report* 1956: 4. Macmillan: 108-127.

⁹⁹³ BAC *Annual report 1974-75*: 1, 6.

⁹⁹⁴ BAC *Annual report 1979-1980*: 6-7.

⁹⁹⁵ Minutes annual conference, 13 May 1955, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

⁹⁹⁶ Annual report 1957-58, Annual report 1959/60, SA 88/1/1, LMA. Minutes annual conference 30 March 1968, minutes annual conference 10 April 1975, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

⁹⁹⁷ Annual report 1961-62, SA 88/1/1, LMA. Hull's visit was in a personal capacity, Hull. Interview.

⁹⁹⁸ Annual report 1961-62, SA 88/1/1, LMA. Annual report 1970-71, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA. Minutes 20 July 1965, BRA Signed Minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA. Craig: 14.

Collaboration between professional bodies

The interests of the professional bodies often overlapped: in 1955 the BRA and SoA agreed 'spheres of interest', SoA, BAC and RPS collaborated over the deposit of business records locally, all provided material for the *Year's work in archives* series and in 1959 proposed to write jointly a 'manual on British modern archives'.⁹⁹⁹ A joint committee of the BRA and SoA was set up in 1958 with the Royal College of Physicians to issue guidance on medical records which fell outside the Public Records Act 1958.¹⁰⁰⁰ By 1964 the roles of the BRA and the SoA were again in question, when the BRA was accused of taking a purely professional view: only two BRA Council members were not professional archivists.¹⁰⁰¹

The SoA did not make external relations a priority, although it regularly sent representatives to committees and outside bodies, ranging from the Advisory Council on the Export of Works of Art, the ICA, NALGO, the BSI (in 1967 the SoA was invited to send representatives to two BSI sub committees, one on document terminology (Peter Walne) and one on the preservation of documents (Roger Ellis)),¹⁰⁰² and Library Association (LA) including its Education Committee. SoA collaborated on a number of specific projects with sister professions, for example, in 1977 a joint working party on archives was set up with the Museums Association (joined by the LA in 1978).¹⁰⁰³ It published a statement of policy on archives in museums and libraries which became a Code of Practice in 1982. The working party became the Standing Conference on Archives in Museums (SCAM) in 1989.¹⁰⁰⁴ SoA participated in a Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) with library and information bodies including Aslib and LA in the 1980s and 1990s. JCC activities included the joint conferences, Info '85 and Info '90.¹⁰⁰⁵ In the 1990s NCA and SoA worked together to fund the new posts of Archive Lottery Adviser (1998) and Archive Development Officer for the Regions (1999).

Political engagement

The BRA had influenced government policy on archives in the 1930s and 1940s, through its reports and links with the Master of the Rolls. After the war a new mode of political engagement developed which was essentially reactive. The SoA responded to specific legislative initiatives rather than developing broad policy objectives. For instance, in 1954 the SoA set up a committee to consider the implications of the *Grigg Report* for local government records and developed guidance on local government records.¹⁰⁰⁶

⁹⁹⁹ Annual report 1955-56, Annual report 1957-58, Annual report 1958-59, SA 88/1/1, LMA. Minutes 13 Jan 1959, BRA Signed Minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Annual report 1958-59, SA 88/1/1, LMA. Minutes 14 July 1959, BRA Signed Minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

¹⁰⁰¹ Minutes 28 Jan 1964, BRA Signed Minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

¹⁰⁰² Annual report 1966/67, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA.

¹⁰⁰³ Minutes annual conference, 16 April 1977, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

¹⁰⁰⁴ SoA *Annual report* 1988-89.

¹⁰⁰⁵ SoA *Annual report* 1985-86.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Annual report 1953-54, Annual report 1956-57, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

Local government

The SoA began in 1957 ‘to keep a watch on any possible repercussions on archives’ resulting from the Local Government Bill and prepared a memorandum for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.¹⁰⁰⁷ The BRA set up a parallel committee on Modern Local Government Records: Hull (who sat on both) liaised.¹⁰⁰⁸ The Ministry consulted with both on proposals for county councils to purchase and accept archives and provide access, although the Public Records Act 1958 did not include the provisions. The BRA and SoA were consulted over the Local Government (Records) Bill in 1961 and members of the BRA council met Nicholas Ridley in 1962 to discuss the draft Bill (largely based on the 1957 proposals).¹⁰⁰⁹

In 1969, mindful of the Redcliffe-Maud report on local government reorganization, the SoA formulated a statement on local government responsibilities for archives and commissioned a survey of local archive services, which has been discussed in chapter 4.¹⁰¹⁰ The SoA lobbied for archive services to be made a statutory service for county councils within the central administrative departments and published its *Recommendations for local archive services* in 1971.¹⁰¹¹ The BRA also urged government to make proper provision for local archives, suggesting that new unitary authorities run existing repositories.¹⁰¹² The SoA, together with the Historical Association (HA), met ministers and MPs in 1984 and 1985 to secure the future of archive services in the metropolitan areas in the Local Government Bill, resulting in obligations on the residuary bodies for archives and staff.¹⁰¹³ Although the campaign did not achieve statutory protection for local archives, it did raise the profile of archives in political circles and highlighted the need for effective joint political action by professional bodies.

The BRA took an interest in the Parochial Registers and Records Measure in 1976, enlisting Lord Teviot (who had promoted a parochial records bill in 1975) to monitor progress.¹⁰¹⁴

Public records

The SoA and BRA made submissions about the Denning committee’s proposals in 1966.¹⁰¹⁵ IHR, SoA and others requested the Advisory Council to delay the destruction of records, including the post-1858 wills and post-1800 crew lists.¹⁰¹⁶

¹⁰⁰⁷ Minutes AGM 26 Nov 1957, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Minutes 8 Jan 1957, BRA Signed Minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Annual report 1960-61, SA 88/1/1, LMA. Minutes 17 Jan 1961, 9 Jan 1962, BRA Signed Minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

¹⁰¹⁰ Annual report 1968-69, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA. Serjeant ‘survey 1968’: 300-326.

¹⁰¹¹ Annual report 1970-71, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA.

¹⁰¹² Minutes 30 Sept 1969, 27 April 1971, BRA Signed Minutes vol VII 1968-79, LMA.

¹⁰¹³ SoA *Annual report 1984-85*: 1-2.

¹⁰¹⁴ Minutes 20 Jan 1976, BRA Signed Minutes vol VII 1968-79, LMA.

The SoA lobbied MPs in 1967 over the Transport Bill and its effect on transport records.¹⁰¹⁷ The sale of railway records by London Midland in 1969 was prevented after lobbying by the BAC and they were offered instead to local record offices.¹⁰¹⁸ Concern over the British Transport Historical Records led to a meeting between the SoA, BRA, BAC and other bodies and Jennie Lee, Minister for the Arts, in 1970 at which representations were made against the proposal to move them from London to York.¹⁰¹⁹ They were transferred to the PRO under the Transport Act 1972 and eventually became public records in 1984.

Relations between individual members of the BRA and SoA and the PRO were cordial, but official relations seem to have been less happy, reflecting the poor relationship between the PRO and local archives, characterised as ‘distant and touchy’ in 1959.¹⁰²⁰ As Roper noted, Jenkinson’s undoubted role in the ‘creation of a professional consciousness and the establishment of professional practices’ was undertaken in a personal not official capacity. The BRA criticised the PRO periodically¹⁰²¹ and led the historians’ attack on the Keeper, Wilson, in 1962. In 1967 the SoA met the Keeper, Johnson, to discuss public records held locally: he denied that the PRO used ‘local repositories as “dumping grounds” for unwanted public records of local origin’ but held out ‘little hope of any grant-in-aid to local repositories’ for these functions.¹⁰²² Even though this meeting did not seem to have been very fruitful, it was agreed to have an annual meeting to discuss issues of common concern.¹⁰²³ Further lobbying took place in 1979 and 1980 when the SoA, BRA and BAC made submissions to the Wilson Committee.¹⁰²⁴

The BRA was skilled in political engagement from its foundation, helped by its officers. Gradually the SoA found its feet politically and in 1977 it set up a Parliamentary and General Purposes Committee (replaced by the Legislation Panel in 1990) to consider legislative provisions, respond to government enquiries and coordinate its political work. Political action in the post-war period was usually responsive to particular proposals and on occasion the SoA, BRA and BAC made separate submissions. The bodies gradually developed a more proactive and coordinated approach. The need for concerted action by the profession grew as changes in the administrative structures on which archives depended became faster and more profound in the 1980s.

¹⁰¹⁵ Annual report 1966-67, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA. Minutes 23 Jan 1968, BRA Signed Minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

¹⁰¹⁶ Annual report 1966-67, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA.

¹⁰¹⁷ Annual report 1967-68, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA.

¹⁰¹⁸ BAC *Twenty-fourth report 1968-69*: 6.

¹⁰¹⁹ Minutes annual conference, 11 April 1970, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA. Minutes 21 April 1970, BRA Signed Minutes vol VII 1968-79, LMA.

¹⁰²⁰ Roper ‘The profession’: 162.

¹⁰²¹ Minutes 20 Jan 1970, BRA Signed Minutes vol VII 1968-79, LMA.

¹⁰²² Minutes annual conference, 8 April 1967, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA.

¹⁰²³ Annual report 1967-68, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA.

¹⁰²⁴ Minutes general meeting, 19 Sept 1980, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA. Minutes 30 Jan 1979, BRA Signed Minutes vol VII 1968-79, LMA.

One professional body?: 1945-1980

Between the late 1940s and 1980, the SoA, BRA and BAC developed distinctly different roles. The Society of Local Archivists was the first attempt by members of the British profession to establish an organization exclusively for those occupied in the care of archives. It excluded users and owners and concentrated on those engaged in professional activity. Although not a trade union, it represented the interests of archivists to local government employers. Its key effect (perhaps unconscious) was to establish the parameters of the professional work group by its membership criteria, instituting recognition for first professional qualifications and its Diploma and, in 1980s, introducing a professional register and a code of conduct.

The SoA sought to influence significant aspects of professionalism such as university qualifications and access to jobs outside the PRO. Its special interest groups and committees catered for particular interests and publication of professional literature, notably the *Journal*, helped the profession to develop. A major weakness was the failure to attract staff from the PRO as members until the 1980s.¹⁰²⁵ It had ambitions to exercise greater control over the profession, for instance by obtaining chartered status, as the LA had.¹⁰²⁶ However, archives has not yet achieved the status of a regulated profession, whether by charter or statute. The SoA took many decades to replace the BRA as the leading organisation in the profession and it has not yet established exclusive control over professionals.

The BAC was an important part of professional development, not only for business archives. As businesses increasingly employed archivists (discussed in chapter 4), the BAC provided a natural home for them in association with academics and businessmen. The BAC, with a seat on the BRA and later on the NCA, was a reminder to archivists in local and national record offices of the particular needs of business archives. The BAC provided professional advice to the many businesses which did not employ an archivist and it initiated a series of thematic surveys, generally with external project funds, which were published and made available to users and to archivists. Its journal, *Business Archives*, was a significant contribution to the UK literature. It acted as an advocate for archives and archivists to academics (for instance through the Wadsworth Prize) and to businesses and took a wide view of the role that archivists could play, always sensitive to broader economic and organisational objectives. The BAC showed that archives and archivists could demonstrate their value even in a corporate climate.

The SoA, BAC and BRA all made important contributions to professional development. Between them they influenced the development of professional education and offered training, short courses, symposia and conferences. Although the SoA eventually employed a Training Officer, training provision lacked

¹⁰²⁵ Roper 'The profession': 162.

¹⁰²⁶ Discussion of royal charter plan: minutes of annual conference, 12 April 1974, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

coordination and central planning. Many topics were addressed over time but there was no national plan to ensure appropriate training was offered to meet professional needs. The three bodies produced the majority of UK archival literature through their journals, newsletters and occasional publications. The Ellis and Wadsworth Prizes highlighted particular individual contributions. However, there were few attempts to stimulate more comprehensive writing: there was no national oversight of archival literature, and only limited attempts to initiate series of publications or research projects which might address professional issues in a serious manner and provoke thoughtful contributions.

In addition the bodies sought collaboration with each other and with sister professions in the UK and internationally. Collaboration operated mainly through the exchange of committee members and joint working parties on specific matters. Some initiatives were successful (such as SCAM) but apart from the JCC meetings which became increasingly formulaic, no national strategy for the archives profession in a wider context emerged. By 1980 each of the three organisations played some part of the role of a professional body and none could claim the exclusive right to represent the whole archive profession. The picture became even more complicated when the issue of records management gained prominence.

Records Management

The profession, and the SoA, in the mid-20th century was ambivalent about the relationship between archives and record management. In 1952 the Society's *Bulletin* asked 'will the archivist be merely a keeper of records and the servant of the scholar or will he become a more important part of the administrative machine and the fellow worker of the administrator?'.¹⁰²⁷ The traditional view of the evolution of records management in the UK is that British development was led by ideas from the USA.¹⁰²⁸ Certainly, the publication of Schellenberg's *Modern Archives* two years after the *Grigg Report* influenced British thinking in the 1950s and 1960s and as did Benedon's *Records Management* and his visit to Britain in the 1970s.¹⁰²⁹ Regular contact with Canadian archivists, including W Kaye Lamb, President of SoA from 1961 to 1964, drew attention to the emerging discipline.¹⁰³⁰

¹⁰²⁷ Peter Walne 'Quo vadis?' *Bulletin of the Society of Local Archivists* 10 (1952): 2-3.

¹⁰²⁸ Confirmed in a recent study which also notes the dominance of the PRO practices, Peter Emmerson 'The growth of records management in the UK: from insignificant cog to vital component?' *Essays in honour of Michael Cook* ed Margaret Procter & Caroline Williams. Liverpool: Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies, 2003, 132-151.

¹⁰²⁹ William Benedon 'The future of records management' *Records management IV: proceedings of a one day conference held at the Shell Centre, London, 1 June 1979* np: Society of Archivists, nd, 55-59.

¹⁰³⁰ Felix Hull 'Modern records now and then' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 4 (1970-73): 395-399.

Two important events in the late 1960s led to records management growing as part of the archive profession. The first was Ellis's presidential address to the SoA in 1966¹⁰³¹ in which he reviewed the development of the Diploma in Archive Administration at UCL since 1947 and proposed a new modern records course alongside the existing medieval/early modern course. The resulting revision of the Diploma to embrace records management will be discussed in chapter 8.

The second was a symposium on records management held in 1968 at Churchill College, Cambridge, by the SoA, the first such meeting to focus on records management. North American influences were acknowledged and British developments surveyed. The symposium set some objectives for the SoA: to run an annual training symposium for working professionals, to develop model retention schedules and establish training for records managers.¹⁰³²

Records Management Group

The SoA had always included archivists interested in records management, notably Hull, Charman, Len McDonald and Michael Cook, but it was not until 1977 that a special interest group was established. The Records Management Group (RMG) was 'open to all who are primarily engaged in the management of records, who are members of the Society' and its objectives included the promotion of professional skills in records management. RMG organised a series of one-day conferences between 1977 and 1990 with published proceedings.¹⁰³³ However, the SoA membership criteria continued to exclude many working in records management and relations between the RMG and SoA Council were sometimes strained.¹⁰³⁴ Records management drew its practitioners from a wide range of backgrounds beyond qualified archivists and this led in 1982 to a move to form a separate society with a more open membership policy.

Records Management Society

The RMG was affiliated to the International Records Management Council (IRMC), which encouraged national associations to promote records management, and it also had links with the American Association of Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA).¹⁰³⁵ The RMG and ARMA discussed a non-professional records management association, perhaps a British chapter of ARMA, in 1982. The RMG executive supported a new association and the Records Management Society (RMS) was inaugurated at the Institution of Electrical Engineers in 1983. The RMS was established to provide a discussion forum, advice

¹⁰³¹ Roger Ellis 'The British archivist and his training' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 3 (1965-69): 265-271

¹⁰³² Cook, McDonald & Welch: 417-423.

¹⁰³³ Society of Archivists Records Management Group *Records management 1[-12]: proceedings of a one-day conference 1977[-1990]* np: Society of Archivists, 1978-1991.

¹⁰³⁴ Minutes annual conference 15 April 1978, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

¹⁰³⁵ Derek Charman 'The Records Management Society: retrospects and prospects' *Records Management Bulletin* 56 (1993): 4-5.

and training and a *Bulletin*. It hoped to attract 500 members initially, 5000 by year five, although this proved over-ambitious.

Just as the CPBA fifty years earlier had brought together those interested in (but not necessarily qualified or occupied in) business archives, the RMS was open to all those with an interest in records management. It quickly established itself as ‘a vibrant, active organization which set the records management agenda’. However, as it sought to develop a role as a professional body for records managers, difficulties emerged and conflict occurred: many individuals were members of both RMS and SoA, there was ‘competition rather than cooperation and a dissipation of professional energy’.¹⁰³⁶ In due course RMS and SoA learned to live with each other amicably: SoA provided services to professionals while RMS was a source of support and advice on records management to a broader constituency.

Towards a national archive policy

The National Heritage Act 1980 established a new Minister of Arts with responsibility for heritage matters, including museums and libraries. Archivists felt that archives were falling behind archaeology, libraries and museums in terms of funding, government profile and professional infrastructure. Other sectors had begun to develop policy bodies: the Library and Information Services Council, the Museums and Galleries Commission and a proposed Museums Council, the Council for British Archaeology, and the development of British Library services since 1973. In 1980 the Association of County Archivists (ACA) was established to represent archivists at county level, replicating museum and library county networks.¹⁰³⁷ The ACA and the SoA noted the increasing interest in heritage and regretted the lack of progress in the archive community to exploit this.¹⁰³⁸

Yesterday's Future

The ACA felt that the national institutions and the responsible government departments were failing to provide policy leadership and that there was ‘a desperate need to establish a climate of opinion and a programme for action towards the preservation of our national archival heritage’. The Department of Education and Science undertook to write a national archives policy: this galvanized the professional bodies into action.¹⁰³⁹ Into the policy vacuum, the ACA published *Yesterday's future: a national policy for our archive heritage* in 1983.¹⁰⁴⁰ It identified two problems: inadequate funding and ‘the absence of a systematic and comprehensive view of the objectives... and the best means of achieving them’. The paper recommended a National Archives Policy, with a responsible Minister to oversee a ‘fully co-ordinated

¹⁰³⁶ Emmerson ‘vital component?’: 142.

¹⁰³⁷ Minutes general meeting, 19 Sept 1980, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

¹⁰³⁸ Minutes general meeting, 19 Sept 1980, SA 83/1/1/6, LMA.

¹⁰³⁹ Dunhill ‘NCA’: 32.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Association of County Archivists *Yesterday's future: a national policy for our archive heritage* Tyne and Wear: Association of County Archivists, 1983.

public archives system', a registration system for semi-public repositories and a scheme for private archives. A national inspectorate would maintain standards.

The paper envisaged a national archives service embracing the PRO and local archives, delivering professional standards on service levels, finding aids¹⁰⁴¹ and staff training and development.¹⁰⁴² Legislation would provide single Ministerial responsibility for archives, a National Archives Council, a national inspectorate, a redefinition of public records to include local government, new statutory obligations on local authorities and financial provisions. The report commented on 'semi-public organisations' holding archives, some of which were of 'doubtful continuity and quality'. To avoid competition, collecting policies should be registered. A registration system for private archives, based on the NRA, would impose obligations on the owner, while entitling him to financial incentives. The role of the existing advisory bodies (the HMC and the Advisory Council) should be reviewed.

Towards a national policy

The SoA continued the campaign with its paper, *Towards a national policy for archives*.¹⁰⁴³ Published in 1983, very shortly after the ACA paper, it provided more background information, defining archives and setting out the existing legislative position and system of archive repositories in the UK. It criticised the lack of coordination, lack of finance, inadequate professional staffing, gaps in provision for some types of archives and problems of career development, management, leadership and research.

The SoA made recommendations. First, it called for a review of public records status to ensure that 'records of publicly-funded bodies' were preserved and made available. It recommended that a single government department be responsible for national archives policy, maintaining standards, coordinating acquisition policies and running an inspectorate. A new Advisory Council to 'advise generally on the most effective means of development of archives services' and regional cooperative bodies (similar to area museum councils) should be set up. Thirdly it called for the PRO to have wider powers for records management in government and for local archive services to be made a mandatory function of county councils. In addition, the report recommended the establishment of 'an archival research institution'. The paper was followed in 1984 by a shorter discussion document.¹⁰⁴⁴ The BRA also published a paper in 1985, *Britain's archival heritage*, which made similar suggestions for action.¹⁰⁴⁵ Although a single statement might have been preferable to three separate ones, they made broadly similar recommendations.

¹⁰⁴¹ Re-emerged in 1990s as NCA initiative, National Archives Network (NAN).

¹⁰⁴² Surprisingly, no reference was made to the two SoA initiatives begun in 1980; the quinquennial reviews of the university archive training schools and its Diploma.

¹⁰⁴³ SoA *Towards a national policy for archives: a preliminary draft statement* np: Society of Archivists, 1983.

¹⁰⁴⁴ SoA *Towards a national policy for archives: a discussion document* np: Society of Archivists, 1984.

¹⁰⁴⁵ SoA *The outline of a national policy on archives: a discussion paper* np: Society of Archivists, 1994: 3.

The ACA paper was the first proactive political intervention since the war and was in the mould of Jenkinson's report on reconstruction issued by the BRA in 1943. Unfortunately the ACA was not as well placed as Jenkinson to influence government. No Master of the Rolls Archives Committee was established in the 1980s and none of the recommendations was taken up officially. The three statements showed a profession willing to engage with political questions but made little impact outside the profession at the time. The foundation and work of a new organisation, the ACA, pushed the archive agenda forward, although in the longer term it provided the profession with yet another body to run. However, the report let a group of young county archivists take the lead in policy development, strengthened joint action by professional bodies and set some key targets for the profession: a national archives policy, a unified national archives service under a single minister, new records legislation, improved inspection and standards, regional support structures for archives and a national policy making council. A national council was the first achievement.

National Council on Archives

Three bodies (ACA, SoA and BRA) together with the Standing Council on National University Libraries (SCONUL) explored aspects of national archives policy together in 1985-86.¹⁰⁴⁶ They considered that the ideal of 'a single department with overall responsibility' leading to 'greater governmental awareness and concern for archival matters' was then unobtainable but that the HMC and the PRO were insufficient: 'there is a place for a third voice representing the views of professional archivists and other interested bodies'. They supported an inspectorate but thought it needed statutory foundation. They drafted best practice guidance and recommended a coordinating council with regional structures to implement it. A report on private archives recommended a new voluntary register, to complement the NRA, under a new Council for British Archives. Improvements in tax arrangements were recommended. The most controversial recommendation was the establishment of a new national forum, to bring together professional bodies, archival organisations and user groups.

A national archives forum

The report was not well received by the established bodies. Sir Robert Somerville, chairman of the BRA and an HMC Commissioner, considered the proposed Council for British Archives unnecessary, suggesting instead 'a revitalization and strengthening of the BRA'. He felt that the report undervalued the role of the HMC.¹⁰⁴⁷ However, the SoA approved the recommendations and invited the ACA and others to a joint steering group for a 'national archives forum'.¹⁰⁴⁸ A meeting was held in 1987, chaired by Victor Gray, and

¹⁰⁴⁶ National Archives Policy Discussion paper, 1986, Setting up papers 1986-87, NCA 3, National Council on Archives archive, BCA.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Letter Sir Robert Somerville to V W Gray, 16 Aug 1986, NCA 3, BCA.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Letter A Arrowsmith, secretary, SoA to R Dunhill, secretary, ACA, 1 Dec 1986, NCA 3, BCA.

representing the SoA, ACA, BRA, SCONUL, and the PRO.¹⁰⁴⁹ The steering group agreed to consider ‘the feasibility of a national body to promote and maintain liaison between all concerned with the preservation and use of archives and make recommendations’. The objects were to bring archive bodies together, to provide a voice of consensus, to engage with government, to advise grant awarding bodies, to inform the public about archive and heritage services and to promote national standards in archives.

Proposals about the nature of the forum ranged from an informal group for the exchange of views, to a membership body for societies and institutions representing custodians and users of archives, to a statutory inspecting body.¹⁰⁵⁰ One member noted that he saw no point in recreating the BRA but preferred ‘a tight professional liaison committee or forum who can exert pressure and influence speedily’.¹⁰⁵¹ The ACA and SoA favoured a widely representative group, whereas SCONUL thought an informal group sufficient.¹⁰⁵² By November 1987 a decision was made to establish a National Archives Council comprising representatives of the founding bodies (SoA, ACA, BRA and SCONUL) plus the BAC, British Association for Local History and Federation of Family History Societies, observers from the PRO, HMC, British Library, Association of County Councils and Association of Metropolitan Authorities. Observers from the Advisory Council on Public Records, HA and RHS were added in 1988. It was a specifically English body and did not include Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland until 1990.¹⁰⁵³ The inaugural meeting of what became known as the National Council on Archives (NCA) was held in March 1988.¹⁰⁵⁴ Although not a government body, the NCA acted as a catalyst and facilitator for policy and funding developments over the following 15 years.

National Council on Archives activities

The NCA had a national (usually English) interest and at the beginning was not interested in regional issues.¹⁰⁵⁵ Its immediate concerns, apart from settling its finances, structure and administration, were to raise public awareness of archives, to review a proposed archive registration scheme, security provisions (including a readers’ ticket scheme), export controls and the Green Papers on public libraries and civil

¹⁰⁴⁹ Minutes 19 May 1987, NCA 3, BCA.

¹⁰⁵⁰ ‘A proposed National Archives Body: some starting points’, [no author but perhaps by Rosemary Dunhill] NCA 3, BCA. Dunhill ‘NCA’: 33-34.

¹⁰⁵¹ Note from David Vaisey to R Dunhill, 21 July 1987, NCA 3, BCA. Vaisey became the NCA’s first chairman.

¹⁰⁵² Minutes 7 Oct 1987, NCA 3, BCA.

¹⁰⁵³ Minutes 10 Nov 1987, NCA 3, BCA. From 1990 minutes were sent to PRONI and SRO, by 1992 Patrick Cadell from SRO was attending Council meetings. In 1995 Archives Council Wales was established separately and was later represented at NCA.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Minutes 9 March 1988, NCA 1, BCA. The change of name arose from an objection by the BAC that NAC would be confusing, so NCA was chosen instead.

¹⁰⁵⁵ For example it rejected the application of the London Archive Users Forum on the grounds that it was not a national body, minutes 5 May 1988, NCA 1, BCA.

registration.¹⁰⁵⁶ Sometimes the NCA co-ordinated joint groups to address specific issues, such as the ACA/SoA group on solicitors' records.

An early initiative, inspired by Museums Year in 1989 and International Archives Week in 1979, was an archives month which developed into *Voices from the Past*, a national exhibition with linked local events, a schools educational package and television programme.¹⁰⁵⁷ Unfortunately the project expired in 1995 after repeated delays over the exhibition, problems with venues and a failure to attract sufficient sponsorship.¹⁰⁵⁸ However, exhibits illustrated a promotional text, *Archives: the very essence of our heritage*, published in time for the ICA Congress in Beijing in 1996.¹⁰⁵⁹

The NCA took an active role in the development of archives in universities and in local government in the 1990s. A major survey of local authority archives was published in 1992: this has been discussed in chapter 4.¹⁰⁶⁰ A joint report by SoA and SCONUL on the role and resources of university archive services led NCA to recommend a survey of polytechnics and further education colleges, to hold a forum on university archives and make submissions to the funding council for Sir Brian Follett's review of university library and special collection provision.¹⁰⁶¹

The advent of the NCA led to a new approach to political engagement. NCA provided local and specialist archivists with access to national archival organizations (HMC, PRO) which were, in any case, more disposed to be open. Individuals with political experience (including successive chairmen David Vaisey and Alice Prochaska and Keepers, Michael Roper and Sarah Tyacke) and those seeking to institute change (chairmen Victor Gray and Nicholas Kingsley) came together at NCA meetings. Through them the profession learnt greater political astuteness and developed new ways of working, including user representation. Although in some ways the establishment of the NCA seemed to be simply the introduction of yet another professional body which would draw on the limited time and resources of archivists, it actually provided an environment in which archivists could develop their skills and learn to engage with those outside the profession with one voice.

In the 1990s, in agreement with the NCA, the SoA took the lead in coordinating the profession's responses to the proposals to reorganize local government across England and Wales which have been discussed in

¹⁰⁵⁶ Council minutes, 9 March 1988, Officers' minutes, 5 May 1988, NCA 1, BCA.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Council minutes, 7 Nov 1990, NCA 1, BCA.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Council minutes, 29 April 1992, 18 Nov 1992, 5 May 1993, 26 April 1995, 22 Nov 1995, NCA 1, BCA.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Christopher Kitching *Archives: the very essence of our heritage* Chichester: Phillimore & National Council on Archives, 1996.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Forbes 1992.

¹⁰⁶¹ Council minutes, 29 April 1992, 18 Nov 1992, 3 Nov 1993, NCA 1, BCA. United Kingdom. Joint Funding Council Libraries Review Group *Report* London: Higher Education Funding Council for England, 1993. (Chairman, Sir Brian Follett. The Follett Report).

chapter 2. A working party chaired by Gray developed a strong political contacts list, met with ministers, peers and MPs, officials in government departments and involved the membership regionally and locally as well as nationally.¹⁰⁶² After the Local Government Act 1992, the SoA followed the roving Local Government Commission for England seeking to influence its work in each area. The working party continued meeting, lobbying and giving support locally until 1998.¹⁰⁶³

By the 1990s, proactive political engagement had become a normal activity for the profession. It had established mechanisms (such as the NCA and the SoA Legislation Panel) for identifying and responding to government reports, draft legislation and regulations which might affect the profession. It recognised the effectiveness of joint action and the need to inform and engage the whole profession through briefing papers, training and postings on electronic discussion lists. During the 1990s data protection, freedom of information, national archival legislation, devolution, copyright and government policy on archives were all dealt with by these means.

A National Archives Policy, 1995

In the early 1990s the professional bodies made further progress towards a national archives policy, as recommended in *Yesterday's future*. The SoA produced a discussion paper in 1994, *The outline of a national policy on archives*. The paper recommended a comprehensive network of public archive repositories, each with a centrally approved acquisition policy, alongside private archives where appropriate; legislation for local authority records; 'centres of technical excellence' to provide support for records with special characteristics; a single government department to regulate standards and archival policy; and a public education programme on archives. The report acknowledged that additional resources would be needed, but failed to say where these would come from.

A national archives policy

The report was criticised at the time as flawed and limited but it was an excellent catalyst for action. A Liaison Group brought together Archives Council Wales, ACA, BRA, BAC, NCA, and the SoA, chaired by Michael Roper, recently retired Keeper, to publish a further statement, *A national archives policy for the United Kingdom*.¹⁰⁶⁴ It was aimed at government policy makers as well as at the profession and set out 12 principles to 'guide a national archives policy' (part 1), an implementation programme (part 2), and detailed discussion of the background (part 3). The 'principles' brought together the key issues from previous discussions, recommending a single 'reference point for government policy in respect of archival

¹⁰⁶² SoA *Annual report 1990-91, year book 1991-92*: 8-9. SoA *Annual report 1992*: 6.

¹⁰⁶³ SoA *Annual report 1998*: 13.

¹⁰⁶⁴ National Archives Policy Liaison Group *A national archives policy for the United Kingdom: a statement prepared by the National Archives Policy Liaison Group* np: National Archives Policy Liaison Group, 1995.

issues' (principle 1), a nation-wide network of public sector and private sector archival services (principle 2), external funding to stimulate improvement and reinforce existing centres of excellence (principle 3), legislation requiring public bodies to manage their records and archives (4, 5), proper resources and access for archives (6, 7), co-ordinated acquisition (8), and professional education, training and methodology development (10-12).

The *National archives policy* endorsed the work of the NCA, especially in coordinating policy and representing users as well as professionals, even though it was not the government body envisaged by earlier reports (part 2, s 1.3). The policy showed that the profession was again becoming more politically astute. For instance, part of the recommendation for a single ministerial reference point for archives was a 'national inter-departmental archives committee' to bring together the national archives and the ministries with archival responsibilities (part 2, s 1.2). The existing informal group of the UK national archive institutions was more formally established in 1996 as the Inter-Departmental Archives Committee.¹⁰⁶⁵ In due course, the Committee published a *Government policy on archives*, as a government response to the *National archives policy* that had inspired the Committee's formal foundation. Other achievements were also made such as the development of standards (part 2, ss 6.1-9.2), and the completion of the network of regional film and sound archives (part 2, s 2.4) but many recommendations, such as those relating to legislation and funding, did not happen immediately.¹⁰⁶⁶

Scotland and Wales

Although originally intended as an archives policy for the UK, dissension from Scotland and later Wales, led to the development and publication of an Archives Policy for Scotland and one for Wales.¹⁰⁶⁷ These statements adopted, with amendments, the principles of the original *Policy*. In Scotland, draft archives legislation for public authorities in Scotland emerged, although no parliamentary time was allocated.¹⁰⁶⁸ The Wales statement recommended 'A National Record Office for Wales' (principle 3.1) and the Government of Wales Act 1998 provided for a Public Record Office of Wales. Until this was established,

¹⁰⁶⁵ Council minutes 23 April 1996, NCA 1, BCA.

¹⁰⁶⁶ The Film Archive Forum became a member of the NCA in 2002.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Scottish National Archives Policy Working Group *A Scottish national archives policy* np: Scottish National Archives Policy Working Group, 1998. Archives Council Wales *A national archives and records policy for Wales* Aberystwyth: Archives Council Wales, 2001.

¹⁰⁶⁸ 'principle 3: Legislation. There should be comprehensive and consistent legislation affecting the management of records and archives' *Scottish national archives policy*: 6. Scottish Records Advisory Council *Proposed Scottish national archive legislation* 1999 at <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/archives/snal/htm>, accessed 21/07/99.

the PRO continued to keep Welsh public records.¹⁰⁶⁹ A separate statement was being developed for Northern Ireland in 2003.¹⁰⁷⁰

The *National archives policy* was widely discussed within the professional bodies but was never fully endorsed by the profession as the way forward.¹⁰⁷¹ However, in spite of some criticism by professionals, it remained an authoritative statement and resulted in some progress in government action on archives. The achievement of the policy statement was largely due to the willingness of the professional bodies to act cooperatively, strongly encouraged by the NCA. The statement gave an impression of clarity of vision and unity of voice. It proved to be the first of a series of significant documents which informed government about the priorities of the profession and enabled action to be taken.

Professional bodies 1990-2003

In the 1990s archivists were subject to many new pressures. Work circumstances changed dramatically for many, as employing organizations in all sectors were restructured and reassessed their funding priorities. Professionals looked to their associations and support bodies to help them manage change, to give them new skills and to provide networks and professional advice. In the mid-1990s ACA was renamed the Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government (ACALG) to reflect the changes in local government archives.

Bidding culture

New sources of funding opened up to archives in the 1990s. University and local authority archives, in common with most public services, were increasingly subject to the 'bidding culture' (ie competitive bidding for the allocation of public resources).¹⁰⁷² Among the new funds available was the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) which made its first grants in 1994. The NCA showed that by 1996 only 18 bids had been made to the HLF by archives, of which two had been successful.¹⁰⁷³ It convened a seminar on archives and the HLF in 1997 which proposed a Heritage Lottery Adviser post to offer support and advice to archivists preparing bids to the HLF.¹⁰⁷⁴ The post, which had no counterpart in the library or museum domains, was jointly established with the SoA and PRO. HLF bids were complex to construct and involved lengthy

¹⁰⁶⁹ United Kingdom. Public Record Office *National Assembly for Wales/PRO memorandum of understanding* at <http://www.pro.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/NAWPROMoU/Contents.htm>, accessed 21/05/03.

¹⁰⁷⁰ As reported in the author's presence by Gerry Slater, Keeper at PRONI, at NCA Council meeting, 29 April 2003.

¹⁰⁷¹ Council minutes, 22 Nov 1995, NCA 1, BCA. Victor Gray 'National archives policy' *Society of Archivists Newsletter* 81 (1995): 1, 4.

¹⁰⁷² Sandra Parker, Ken Harrop, Kathryn Ray & Graham Coulson *The bidding culture and local government: effect on the development of public libraries, archives and museums* Newcastle upon Tyne: Resource, 2001: 5.

¹⁰⁷³ Council minutes, 13 Nov 1996, NCA 1, BCA.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Council minutes, 15 April 1997, NCA 1, BCA.

consultation and preparation: many archivists were unused to the bidding culture.¹⁰⁷⁵ The Adviser ran workshops, advised on draft bids and maintained close links with HLF personnel. By 2000 the majority of archives (68%) had been involved in one or more bids for external funds.¹⁰⁷⁶ Several major capital projects were funded by HLF and all of the bids made under the Access to Archives (A2A) phases 1 and 2 (discussed below) were successful. New digitization projects were funded under the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) in 2001. The Adviser also helped those seeking funds from other grant awarding bodies.¹⁰⁷⁷ NCA intervention significantly improved the flow of HLF funds to archives.

The mapping projects of the 1990s, which have been discussed in chapter 4, resulted from effective collaboration between the professional bodies and the national institutions. They provided evidence of the state of the profession and enabled the NCA and others to give informed advice to funders and policy makers. NCA's millennial statement, *British archives: the way forward*,¹⁰⁷⁸ was prepared as guidance to the HLF, but helped 'the shaping of the agenda for the development of UK archive services'. The report set out a vision of digital access and wider use of archives. Its four main recommendations were widening access through the electronic network, improving availability by eroding cataloguing backlogs, improving preservation through new buildings and refurbishment, and conservation projects. Controversially, the report made indicative funding allocations placing the highest priority (30% of funds) on digital networks for archives and less on traditional conservation and preservation activities. In fact, traditional concerns were strongly represented within the report while the focus on access and use appealed to government priorities.

National Archives Network (NAN)

Standards for archive work were important to the NCA from its inception. University archivists began to develop standards in the late 1980s as they sought to even out variations in practice and to adapt to the bidding culture.¹⁰⁷⁹ Patricia Methven led a performance indicators working party (the SoA Professional Methodology Panel from 1991) to develop agreed approaches.¹⁰⁸⁰ NCA maintained links with the ICA working party on descriptive standards and set up a group on IT standards and archival description in 1991.¹⁰⁸¹ Although it concluded that 'there appeared to be little demand at present for remote access', it later made recommendations on name authority controls and considered the ICA draft standard on archival

¹⁰⁷⁵ SoA *Annual report 2001*: 35-36.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Parker, Harrop, Ray & Coulson: 25-26.

¹⁰⁷⁷ For example the British Library, National Manuscripts Conservation Trust, V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Wellcome Trust.

¹⁰⁷⁸ NCA *British archives: the way forward* np: National Council on Archives, 2000.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Patricia Methven 'Performance measurement and standards' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 11 (1990): 78-84.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Patricia Methven, Janet Foster, George MacKenzie & Rosemary Rogers *Measuring performance* (Best practice guideline 1) London: Society of Archivists, 1993.

¹⁰⁸¹ Council minutes, 8 Nov 1989, 7 Nov 1990, 22 May 1991, NCA 1, BCA.

authority records.¹⁰⁸² A significant report, *Archives on-line*, provided a framework for national action towards an electronic archival information network in 1998. Its vision was a series of projects in different parts of the domain with different funders which together would form a gateway National Archives Network (NAN). Steered by Nicholas Kingsley, the NCA facilitated agreements on standards, coordinated bids and developed a national strategy for the retroconversion of archival and library catalogues.¹⁰⁸³

Several strands developed in parallel. A consortium of universities developed a model for the networking of collection level records, the National Networking Demonstrator Project.¹⁰⁸⁴ The Higher Education Archives Hub included over 50 university archives.¹⁰⁸⁵ A second strand, Access to Archives (A2A), arose from the experience of the PRO in developing its online catalogues.¹⁰⁸⁶ A consortium of employers (PRO, HMC, British Library) and professional bodies (ACALG, SoA, NCA) bid for funds through the Treasury's Invest to Save Budget, complemented by regional and thematic bids funded by HLF. Infrastructure development funds were secured in 2000 and 13 bids in A2A phase 1 were made to the HLF.¹⁰⁸⁷ Further strands were added to the NAN by AIM25 (Archives in the M25 area), SCAN (Scottish Archive Network) and ANW (Archive Network Wales).

The role of the regions

In spite of projects such as the national archives policy, archivists realised that their profile was not still sufficiently high in government, when DCMS plans for the delivery of cultural services largely ignored archives.¹⁰⁸⁸ However, MLAC and its successor, Resource, did embrace archives. The SoA established a Resource Liaison Group as a 'rapid response' group for the profession to ensure that information was communicated to members and that the profession's views were voiced and used its regional structure to contribute local expertise.¹⁰⁸⁹

The NCA was the main focus for the profession in its discussions with Resource. Gray traced the development of regional government and devolution, in particular the establishment of Regional

¹⁰⁸² Council minutes, 20 Nov 1991, 20 April 1994, 26 April 1995, NCA 1, BCA. Peter Gillman *National name authority file: a report to the National Council on Archives* London: British Library (Research and innovation report 91), 1998.

¹⁰⁸³ Kingsley chaired the Technical Sub-committee of the Network Implementation Committee: 'Building the National Archives Network', *NCA Review of the year 2000/2001* Cheltenham: National Council on Archives, 2001: 18-19.

¹⁰⁸⁴ D Kay & I Ibbotson *National networking demonstrator project: technical consultant's report* Fretwell-Downing Informatics, 1998.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Amanda Hill 'Bringing archives online through the Archives Hub' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 23 (2002): 239-248.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Sarah Flynn, Matthew Hillyard & Bill Stocking 'A2A: the development of a strand in the national archives network' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 22 (2001): 177-191.

¹⁰⁸⁷ *NCA Review 2001/2002*: 10-11.

¹⁰⁸⁸ *SoA Annual report 1998*: 5.

¹⁰⁸⁹ *SoA Annual report 2001*: 10.

Development Agencies in 1998 and Regional Cultural Consortia the following year, and suggested that the Regional Archive Councils (RACs) were the response of the archival community to these larger moves.¹⁰⁹⁰ Of the three domains within Resource, only archives had no regional structure: Regional Library Systems (established in the 1930s) and Area Museum Councils (established between 1959 and 1965) already existed.¹⁰⁹¹ The NCA committed itself to establishing RACs through which ‘the contribution of archives to the regional cultural policies’ could develop.¹⁰⁹² NCA recognized that given the increasing weight accorded by government to regional views and strategies, ‘the absence of bodies in the archive field capable of contributing an authoritative archival perspective to cultural debate in each of the regions was likely to prove a significant disadvantage’.¹⁰⁹³ DCMS subsequently asked the NCA to ‘develop regional arrangements which will address strategic issues for the archives sector’.¹⁰⁹⁴

The NCA set about establishing RACs in 1999 to mirror the eight Regional Development Agency areas, adding London later. ACALG and NCA identified ‘Groundbreakers’ in each region and appointed Shadow RACs. In 2000 the RACs were formally established by the NCA. The RACs quickly gained ‘parity of esteem’ with their sister bodies for libraries and museums, although funding varied greatly between the three domains.¹⁰⁹⁵ A dedicated post of Archive Development Officer for the Regions, funded by SoA and the PRO, was established in 1999. Each RAC developed a regional archive strategy to provide a framework for regional development.¹⁰⁹⁶ The strategies helped to consolidate the RACs, raised the profile of the domain and secured funding of £250,000 from Resource in 2001 for Regional Archive Development Officers.¹⁰⁹⁷ RACs provided a natural forum for regional collaborative projects, such as A2A, social inclusion in archives¹⁰⁹⁸ and cross domain projects. They also played an important part in ‘delivering and monitoring government policy’ in the regions and ‘ensuring that such policy is informed by local circumstance’.¹⁰⁹⁹ Resource hoped that single regional agencies for libraries, archives and museums would replace the separate professional networks: the first to emerge was North East Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (NEMLAC) in 2001.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Victor Gray ‘The English regions: the archival dimension’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 21 (2000): 149-157.

¹⁰⁹¹ Rosemary Ewles ‘Archive of the Committee of Area Museum Councils’ *ARC: Archives and Records Management* 171 (2003): 17 reported that AMCs were replaced with cross domain agencies in 2002.

¹⁰⁹² Gray ‘English regions’: 153. SoA *Annual report 1999*: 5.

¹⁰⁹³ NCA *Review 1999/2000*: 3.

¹⁰⁹⁴ DCMS *Departmental spending review*.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Gray ‘English regions’: 156.

¹⁰⁹⁶ SoA *Annual report 2001*: 32-33. NCA *Archives in the regions*.

¹⁰⁹⁷ NCA *Review 2000/2001*: 3.

¹⁰⁹⁸ NCA *Taking part*.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Katie Norgrove ‘A seat at the table: the development of the English Regional Archive Councils’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 22 (2001): 27.

Education and awareness

In 2002 the professional bodies turned again to issues of traditional concern: the education of the work group and the need to raise the profile of archives among the general public. In both cases projects were undertaken in partnership between government agencies, professional bodies and archive services.

The Archives Workforce Project was initiated by the NCA and funded by Resource in 2002. The principal investigator was Margaret Turner, NCA's honorary secretary and leader of the SoA team which accredited the university programmes in 2001.¹¹⁰⁰ The study was the first rigorous academic study of the work group. It looked at employers' needs and the existing first professional qualification curriculum, career choice and recruitment into the profession, the retention of professional staff, training and development, career aspirations and opportunities and leadership and succession planning.¹¹⁰¹ It found that the existing MA programmes at universities were educating students well in the core skills, although there was a need for more specialist skills (such as in digital records and new legislation), and for more educational provision (which in 2003 was limited to three universities). Questions were raised about whether programmes should specialise or continue to seek to be broad-based and whether management skills should be included in the core curriculum. The report identified barriers to entry to the profession such as the low profile of the profession, poor careers information, the complex process required to gain the first professional qualification (including getting pre-course work experience, finding funding and applying for a programme), the limited range of entrants (most with an interest in history) and career limiting factors (such as low long-term remuneration, limited promotion and development opportunities, skills development). 'Negative retention' (ie employees who join and do not progress, blocking posts for new entrants) was identified as an issue, as much as the loss of high-flyers to other sectors. The need to develop leadership in individuals, organizations and the sector was highlighted and the question raised of whether there was a lack of leadership potential in the profession or whether the potential was not being developed. The project reported to the Archives Task Force in early 2004 and its recommendations included systematic promotion of the profession; minimising the barriers to entry; a review of pre-course experience requirements, core competencies and the relationship between first professional qualifications and continuing professional development; data collection about staff turnover and the impact of short-term contracts on the domain; and a strategy for developing leaders.

The professional bodies recognised the need to improve their contacts with peers and MPs, especially in view of proposals for new national archives legislation and Resource's Archives Task Force. Accordingly, NCA, SoA, HMC, PRO and Resource collaborated in a profile-raising event at Westminster in 2002.¹¹⁰² The event was a success, a booklet *Changing the future of our past* was distributed and parliamentary

¹¹⁰⁰ NCA Review 2001/2002: 5.

¹¹⁰¹ NCA Archives workforce project (papers from a seminar at British Library, London, 9 July 2003) in the personal possession of the author.

¹¹⁰² NCA Review 2001/2002: 5.

briefing papers were subsequently issued. The NCA turned again to the idea of a national archival promotional programme. Archive Awareness Month September 2003 was a 'month long promotion of celebratory events across the UK and Republic of Ireland' which sought to raise awareness of how archives are relevant to the present day and to encourage more users from under-represented groups to join in. It was co-ordinated by the NCA's Policy and Development Officer. Over 250 local, national and private archives held 475 'events celebrating and promoting the wealth of archival treasures'.¹¹⁰³ The Month was the first co-ordinated effort by the archive domain to address its low profile and it was considered a great success, with print media coverage reaching a circulation of 53 million over 30 days (equivalent to £823,000 worth of editorial), while 41% of visitors to events had not visited an archive before.

Professional bodies in the 1990s

The 1990s were years of developing maturity and consolidation for the professional bodies. Many projects were undertaken in partnerships for specific purposes. Increasingly the NCA led policy development on important initiatives, under the chairmanship of Alice Prochaska (1991-1995), Gray (1995-2001) and Kingsley (2001-). The roles of the BRA, BAC and RMS became increasingly focused on their specific areas of interest. Archives and records management converged as disciplines and the professional bodies struggled financially, yet active individuals kept both RMS and SoA in being, following parallel tracks. The SoA undertook a series of internal reviews and restructurings in its attempts to find ways of delivering a wide agenda with a small resource base and a shortage of voluntary officers able to take on the national workload. The SoA introduced a corporate logo and style in 1990;¹¹⁰⁴ in 1991 it was restructured, a permanent office opened in London and a full-time executive secretary employed.¹¹⁰⁵ In 1994 the SoA was relaunched as a limited company with charitable objectives.¹¹⁰⁶

As regional activity increased and the number of bodies with which archivists were involved proliferated, the traditional bodies found it difficult to sustain their activities. In 2003, after decades of financial difficulties the BAC finally closed its offices, sold its library to the University of Glasgow, retired its employees and became a purely voluntary organization.¹¹⁰⁷ It maintained its survey and publication work and held regular meetings and conferences and contributed to debates about the future of the profession.¹¹⁰⁸ The BRA had lost its grant in aid for the RPS, sold its premises in Padbury Court, London and narrowly

¹¹⁰³ NCA *Archive Awareness Month September 2003* at <http://www.aamsept2003.com/welcome.html>, accessed on 27/08/03.

¹¹⁰⁴ SoA *Annual report 1989-90*: 5.

¹¹⁰⁵ SoA *Annual report 1990-91, year book 1991-92*: 4. SoA 'A Society of Archivists paid secretariat?: a discussion paper' [1985] in possession of the author.

¹¹⁰⁶ SoA *Annual report 1994*: 1.

¹¹⁰⁷ BAC *Newsletter* 130, 131 (2003).

¹¹⁰⁸ For instance, BAC *Archives Task Force evidence hearings: submission by the Business Archives Council, 1 August 2003* np: BAC, 2003.

survived financially. By 2003 the SoA had widened its membership structure, dispersed its library, moved its offices out of London, lost its Training Officer, withdrawn financial support for national advisers and struggled to fill its honorary officer posts. Meanwhile in the sister professions, the LA, Aslib and Institute of Information Scientists, facing similar resource constraints, amalgamated to form the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) in 2002.

Increasingly the efforts of the active professionals turned towards the government agenda, both nationally and regionally, and were both led by and sought to influence government policy makers (primarily Resource and the National Archives) and external funders. In this environment the NCA flourished and its political influence and ability to deliver new ideas and projects was widely respected. Archivists gradually moved towards partnerships with other professions which offered new ideas and challenges and to an extent neglected their established, archivally-focused bodies, perhaps taking it for granted that they would continue to exist.

Conclusion

Archives provide a focus for leisure and for research. Groups of individuals interested in archives have met and formed local and national societies since the late 19th century. The early associations, such as the BRS, were mainly concerned with publications which would improve scholarly access to archives. Interest in records preservation and a wish to promote technical standards for archives led to the formation in 1932 of the BRA, the first UK organisation with professional archival objectives. The BRA led national archival developments filling the vacuum left by the PRO and HMC. The RPS undertook local preservation and survey work in many areas before local record offices were established. The BRA set standards in classification, storage and repair and laid foundations for a national register of archives and professional education by 1945. The BRA sought broadly to represent the profession and users of archives, but more specialist interests were catered for in separate organisations; the CPBA from 1934 and the Society of Local Archivists from 1946. By the end of the war the archive profession had made significant progress towards a national professional body. Although the parallel development of the CPBA and BRA mitigated against a single exclusive body emerging, standards of practice, engagement with policy makers and government and gateways to entry (such as education) had begun to be built.

Between 1946 and 1980 the SoA established itself as the primary (although not exclusive) professional body. It operated exclusive membership, exercised some influence over education (which will be discussed in chapter 8), lobbied for privileges for the work group (such as national salary scales) and provided specialist services for members. Unfortunately it only represented part of the profession, with business archivists gravitating to the BAC and, after 1983, records managers to the RMS. The SoA also failed to look outwards sufficiently to take a lead in national policy and to establish coherent plans for professional

development such as training, practice and theoretical research. The BRA and BAC continued to make significant professional contributions within their respective spheres of interest.

In the 1980s two new organisations emerged, both with more explicitly political agendas; the ACA in 1980 and the NCA in 1988. The NCA proved to be particularly effective in leading the profession into successful collaborative projects which brought great benefits (financial, practical and theoretical). Innovations included the Archives Lottery Adviser post, NAN strands and the Workforce Project, all of which contributed to the transformation of the profession in the early 2000s. However, NCA did not take on the role of a purely professional body but was rather a national policy body which embraced various partners – professional bodies, services providers, user representatives, government advisers – and which responded closely (its critics said too closely) to the government agenda. NCA also tended to neglect information policy and records management aspects and was driven by cultural priorities.

Although a small profession, historically archivists responded to new pressures by setting up new organisations rather than seeking to absorb new ideas within existing structures. Archive organisations were often established by strong-minded individuals seeking to pursue specific objectives. In a small profession, a few leading individuals often held honorary posts for decades, reducing opportunities for new entrants to exercise control, contribute ideas or direct policy. Enthusiasts seeking a new direction found it easier to establish a new body than to adapt the old ones. Inherently conservative, archival organisations were not generally closed down, even when their natural role and resources appeared to be finite. As a result archivists have often dissipated their time, energy and resources on an ever greater number of organisations which lacked definition and overlapped. The result has been confusion over roles and lack of leadership for the profession.

By 2003 all the essential elements of a UK professional organisation for archives were present but they were delivered by a multiplicity of bodies, most of which lacked the resources to carry out their work thoroughly. Some activities were duplicated. Professional service delivery and development (such as practice standards development, training policy and delivery, educational frameworks, creating and policing gateways to entry, ethics and conduct) were mainly delivered by the SoA, with BAC and RMS making contributions in their specific areas. In addition, the NCA and BRA delivered some services as did other organisations, such as the universities and Resource. Lobbying, policy development and advocacy largely fell to the NCA, although it had no brief to lobby for professional privileges for archivists. ACA, BRA, BAC and SoA all took some part in policy development, although the RMS rarely made interventions. Consultations with other professions, nationally and internationally, had been a clear role of BRA in the past, but now fell to the NCA, with some SoA activity. The RPS, still under the BRA umbrella, and the BAC undertook archival rescue and preservation work which ought to be a statutory function of the National Archives or of local and specialist archives.

How could the work of the professional bodies be improved in future for the benefit of the profession? Ideally, several should either be abolished or focus on much more specific and narrow objects. The BRA's future role is unclear as it has no distinctive contribution without the RPS. The RMS and BAC probably ought not to seek large memberships or to provide specialist professional services, but might be more creatively used as special expert advisory and policy panels. ACALG ought also to focus on expert advisory work. Sister professions deliver most of their services within a single body (CILIP for the library and information profession and the Museums Association for museum curators). However, perhaps archives would benefit from two revitalised bodies. The SoA (or better, a reinvented version) as a single large professional membership body which could deliver professional services to the whole spectrum of the profession, while the NCA focuses on policy making, advocacy and political engagement.

Gatekeepers to the Profession: fifty years of archival education

'the Profession of Archivist may be said to have arrived' (Sir Hilary Jenkinson, in The English archivist, the inaugural lecture to mark the launch of the London archives diploma 1947) ¹¹⁰⁹

Chapter 7: Archival Education, 1880-1980

Chapter 8: Specialisation, Expansion and Development of Professional Education, 1960-2003

¹¹⁰⁹ Hilary Jenkinson *The English archivist: a new profession* London: H K Lewis, ¹⁹⁴⁸: 13.

Chapter 7

Archival Education, 1880-1980

All professions require complex knowledge and theory to underpin their expertise and practical techniques. Professions expect entrants to undergo periods of intensive training and education to develop specialist knowledge and be inducted into the occupational sub-culture. Archival education sets parameters for professional work, defines the range of the profession, provides a gateway to entry and lays the foundations of career development. Archives conformed to the model from 1947 when structured university programmes began, although it struggled to differentiate its training from that offered to historians and librarians. Unqualified staff continued to work in the profession, although controls to entry were gradually tightened, in particular by the SoA, in the 1980s. As sub-disciplines grew (such as records management and digital records), educational programmes evolved to meet new demands: this process raised questions about the boundaries of the profession. Many academic disciplines evolve research and theoretical advances alongside education programmes, but archives made little intellectual progress in the UK in the 1950s to 1970s, leaving the profession vulnerable to changes for which it was ill equipped.

The need for formal training and examination for archivists had been recognised at least since the publication of the *Report on Local Records* of 1902 and the *First Report* in 1912. The *Report* of 1902 recommended that custodians of local archives be trained in palaeography and records, which ‘postulates the existence of some school where the necessary training could be supplied’. The *Report* recommended that ‘schools of palaeography should be encouraged at the universities to create the supply of archivists’, on the model of the *Ecole des Chartes* in Paris, whose Director had given evidence to the Committee.¹¹¹⁰ Oxford and Cambridge Universities should be encouraged to teach palaeography and medieval history and PRO staff lent to local record offices to disseminate skills.¹¹¹¹ The *Report* of 1912 commented on ‘the systematic training of foreign archivists’ and ‘that the absence of any system for training Record Officers in this country is a serious defect’.

Disciplines allied to archives

In the mid-19th century PRO staff were mainly transferred from the Record Commission, but a systematic appointment process was introduced in 1857 when the Civil Service Commission instituted a specific examination for clerkship.¹¹¹² Permanent staff at the PRO in the 1850s and 1860s, before university history departments were established, represented a group of ‘professional scholars within an expanding historical

¹¹¹⁰ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 43, 49.

¹¹¹¹ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 229.

¹¹¹² Levine: 23.

discipline' which was offered a wide training in historical skills and the legitimisation of attachment to a permanent institution, the PRO.¹¹¹³ From 1872 the Civil Service Examination class I open competition required candidates to have expertise in handwriting and orthography, English history, French and Latin as well as arithmetic, English and geography.¹¹¹⁴ By 1912 most entrants had 'a good classical (or occasionally mathematical) training at a University and have obtained high (but not usually the highest) honours in the examinations', although not usually history graduates.¹¹¹⁵ They then received training at the PRO from their senior colleagues: for instance, Hilary Jenkinson joined as a clerk in 1906 and trained under C G Crump. However, by the early 20th century 'universities emerged as the natural home of the professional historical scholar' and succeeded in relegating PRO staff 'to the lesser status of an auxiliary servicing agency'.¹¹¹⁶

Professor C H Firth¹¹¹⁷ reported to the Royal Commission in 1912 that, 'many people have suggested the establishment in London of a school of archivists and librarians connected with the University of London, as the Ecole des Chartes is with the University of Paris' and he estimated that between one and six archivists would be needed each year in England. The Commission concluded however, that, 'in England appointments for archivists are at present few; local authorities deal with their own archives in their own way and appoint their own curators; and a man who spent several years in preparing himself for the position of archivist might, if he failed to obtain a place in the Public Record Office, find himself stranded without hope of employment'. As a result, it did not advocate 'specialized training' recommending instead that men with 'a good general education' be recruited to the PRO, trained by senior colleagues and attend courses at a university, in palaeography, diplomatic, medieval Latin, French and research methods.¹¹¹⁸ The profession was not sufficiently developed to warrant its own distinct education: however, universities began to teach related disciplines.

Palaeography¹¹¹⁹

The teaching of palaeography in the University of London, as an adjunct to historical research, began in 1896, when Dr Hubert Hall of the PRO held classes at the School of Economics. In 1908 he was appointed Reader in Palaeography and Economic History. University College (UCL) also considered establishing a lectureship in palaeography, but instead in 1919 the colleges agreed to transfer palaeography to King's College, London, where the University Chair in Palaeography remained. In the 1920s Hilary Jenkinson lectured in sources of English history at King's and became a Reader in Diplomatic and English Archives in the 1930s. Specialist aspects of palaeography developed within the University to support disciplines such

¹¹¹³ Levine: 36-37.

¹¹¹⁴ *First Report 1912*: Appendix VII, 109-111. Levine: 23-24.

¹¹¹⁵ *First Report 1912*: 32. Levine: 40, notes that Maxwell Lyte was the first Deputy Keeper to hold a history degree.

¹¹¹⁶ Levine: 41.

¹¹¹⁷ Regius Professor of modern history, University of Oxford.

¹¹¹⁸ *First Report 1912*: 33.

¹¹¹⁹ Printed report prepared for the University of London Committee on Palaeography, June 1936, School of Librarianship, Miscellaneous 1933/34, file 18/3, UCLRO

as English, French, Oriental languages, archaeology and egyptology as well as history, librarianship and archives.

Librarianship

Formal arrangements were made in 1902 between the Library Association (LA) and the London School of Economics for the teaching of librarianship. In 1915 the arrangements lapsed, but immediately after the war an initiative by the LA and UCL, supported by the Carnegie Trust, led to the establishment of the first British School of Librarianship in 1919.¹¹²⁰ Jenkinson taught palaeography and the study of archives to library students.¹¹²¹ He also taught palaeography at Aberystwyth library school and palaeography and archive administration at the LA summer schools, in conjunction with David Evans.¹¹²² A succession of distinguished scholars taught palaeography to librarians at UCL including V H Galbraith (1926-1937), Charles Johnson (1933/1934), S C Ratcliff (1937-1947), L C Hector (1947-1960), J E Fagg (1954-1957) and E W Denham (1957-1973).¹¹²³ Palaeography and Latin finally ceased to be a compulsory part of syllabus for Librarianship in 1959, although palaeography continued to be offered as an optional subject.¹¹²⁴

Local History

In 1899 J Ramsay Bryce Muir was appointed to the University of Liverpool History Department. Muir was keen to stimulate research into the new area of local history and, with the agreement of Professor J M Mackay, the School of Local History and Palaeography emerged by 1902.¹¹²⁵ The School's aim was 'the study, editing and publication of the history and records ... of the City of Liverpool' and it was supported by subscription.¹¹²⁶ Publications were prepared¹¹²⁷ and classes given in Latin palaeography, diplomatic, local records, numismatics, philology, bibliography, personal and place-names.

The Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire had recommended the development of Schools of Muniments, Palaeography and Local History in 1902, as a way of establishing local archives.¹¹²⁸ A lecturer

¹¹²⁰ Copy letter from W P Reeves, Director, LSE to W E Seton, Secretary, University College 27 March 1918, minutes 4 Feb 1919, minutes 1 July 1919, UCL Minutes of College Committee, UCLRO. Correspondence between Carnegie Trust, LA and Vice-Chancellor of University of London about funding:

University Central File, general correspondence, School of Librarianship and Library Association 1918-1919, CF/1/19/208 University of London Library.

¹¹²¹ Minutes 9 July 1919, UCL Minutes of College Committee, UCLRO. Jenkinson taught 1919-1926, subsequently external examiner:

Palaeography and archives examination paper for the University Diploma in Librarianship, 1920, PRO 30/75/4, TNA.

¹¹²² Jenkinson *English archivist*, 12. A G Watson 'The training of archivists in Great Britain' *Archives et Bibliothèques de Belgique* 46: 1-2 (1975): 215.

¹¹²³ School of Librarianship Appointments, 1930/31-1944/46 file 18/1, UCLRO.

¹¹²⁴ School of Librarianship and Archives, Director's Report, 1956-62 file 18/3/9, UCLRO.

¹¹²⁵ Thomas Kelly *For advancement of learning: the University of Liverpool 1881-1981* Liverpool, University Press 1981: 107. Draft Prospectus for the reconstituted School 1909 dates the creation of the School to 1900: Copies of publications and press cuttings about the University of Liverpool School of Local History and Records file D 399/1/2, University of Liverpool Archives.

¹¹²⁶ Draft Prospectus for the reconstituted School of Local History and Records, 1909: 4 file D 399/1/2, ULivA.

¹¹²⁷ Such as *History of municipal government in Liverpool* by Ramsay Muir & Miss E M Platt Draft Prospectus, 1909: 4, 11, file D 399/1/2, ULivA.

¹¹²⁸ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 248-249.

in palaeography, local history and archaeology would both run an archival training school and act as the city archivist. The model was not adopted in Liverpool, but appointments made in 1908 cemented a link between the Victoria County History (VCH) and academic study of local history when William Farrer, editor of the Lancashire VCH, was made Reader in Local History.¹¹²⁹

J A Twemlow was appointed Lecturer in Palaeography and Diplomatics, also in 1908. He was a graduate of Oxford and the Ecole des Chartes and he spent several months each year in Rome as the PRO's representative at the Vatican Archives.¹¹³⁰ On his appointment to Liverpool, Twemlow produced testimonials from the Professor of Diplomatics at the Ecole des Chartes, the Director of the Prussian Historical Institute in Rome, the Prefect of the Vatican Library and the Director of the British Museum.¹¹³¹ Twemlow may have introduced the model of the Ecole des Chartes for the scientific training of historians. Soon after his arrival in Liverpool the School was reorganised as a 'training ground for history students'.¹¹³² During discussions about the School's future, Dr E K Muspratt noted that although several English universities had lectureships in palaeography, Liverpool was the first British university, 'to establish a school on the lines of the Ecole des Chartes', 'a model which England had been sadly slow to imitate adequately'.¹¹³³ Professor Kuno Meyer also suggested that Liverpool follow continental models, including 'similar institutions in Germany'.¹¹³⁴ The renamed School of Local History and Records was established.¹¹³⁵ However, Farrer resigned in 1911, complaining of overwork, and it proved difficult to find a successor: Twemlow was reported as saying that 'although Convocation were quite willing to put up with Farrer's doing nothing owing to the weight of his name, they are not in the least likely to agree [again]'.¹¹³⁶

The School established itself within the University although there were few openings for students trained in local history and palaeography.¹¹³⁷ R Gladstone wrote in 1911, 'if every county and large town kept an archivist or two there might be some small demand for such people, but I see no present chance of such posts being established'.¹¹³⁸ Twemlow became Associate Professor of Palaeography and Diplomatics from

¹¹²⁹ Farrer was appointed for five years from January 1908 'to promote the study of local history, by lectures or otherwise, as he may think fit', Letters about appointments and resignations in the post of Reader in Local History, 1911, file D 399/4/2, ULivA.

¹¹³⁰ Ms copy of Twemlow's obituary from *The Times* 1954, Memorabilia of Professor J A Twemlow 1908-1954, file D 171/1-3, ULivA.

Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 344.

¹¹³¹ Testimonials for J A Twemlow 1908, Presscuttings and publications about the School and Twemlow, 1908-1920, file D 399/3/1, ULivA.

¹¹³² Printed report of public meeting January 1909 to discuss extending the School's work: 1, file D 399/1/3, ULivA.

¹¹³³ Printed report 1909: 5, 6, file D 399/1/3, ULivA.

¹¹³⁴ Printed report 1909: 8, file D 399/1/3, ULivA.

¹¹³⁵ Reports of annual meetings, 1909-14, including *The Times*, 1910, Presscuttings about the School, 1909-1914, file D 399/2/1-5, ULivA.

¹¹³⁶ Letter from W Farrer to R Gladstone resigning and seeking to persuade Gladstone to succeed him, 28 March 1911, file D 399/4/1, Letter from W F Irvine to R Gladstone withdrawing his nomination for the post, 29 May 1911, file D 399/4/8, ULivA.

¹¹³⁷ Annual report of School of Local History and Records 1913: 9 'owing to a welcome change in the regulations relating to the medieval section of the School of History, honours graduates are now required to include Palaeography and Diplomatics in their course of studies', file D 399/1/11, ULivA.

¹¹³⁸ Letter from R Gladstone to W Farrer, 29 April 1911, file D 399/4/6, ULivA.

1921 until his retirement in 1934.¹¹³⁹ The School continued until the mid-1950s, when it was reabsorbed into the History Department.¹¹⁴⁰ Twemlow's scholarship and his 'remarkable collection of facsimiles of manuscripts' provided a resource for the Liverpool archive diploma to draw on in 1947.¹¹⁴¹

Diplomatic

Teaching and research in diplomatic at Oxford University emerged with the appointment of Reginald Lane Poole to a lectureship in diplomatic in 1897, 'the first post of its kind in this country'.¹¹⁴² In his evidence to the Committee on Local Records in 1902, Poole noted that 'only one university in the country gives systematic teaching in ... the study of documents' and warned that without 'a regular course of training...I do not see how we are to find competent custodians'.¹¹⁴³ Poole subsequently became Keeper of the University Archives.¹¹⁴⁴ In 1928 Maurice Powicke was appointed Regius Professor of modern history¹¹⁴⁵ and V H Galbraith, returning to Oxford from the PRO, became reader in diplomatic.¹¹⁴⁶ Kathleen Major was taught by Galbraith and supervised by Powicke.¹¹⁴⁷ Sir Frank Stenton, who later had close ties with the Liverpool archives course, was her examiner. In 1945 Major returned to Oxford from Lincoln Diocesan Record Office to the lectureship in diplomatic, vacated by Professor Cheney. She was involved with the scheme for trainee archivists at the Bodleian Library from 1946. Although she became Principal of St Hilda's in 1955, she continued to teach diplomatic. Pierre Chaplais, trained at the Ecole des Chartes, was appointed to lecture in diplomatic. One of his students, Jane Sayers, was appointed at UCL, and another, Elizabeth Danbury at Liverpool, both in 1977. Major noted that, compared with continental Europe, England had little tradition of teaching diplomatic: there was no central institution, nor any school of diplomatic and publication depended on individual scholars.¹¹⁴⁸

Cambridge University also taught diplomatic and palaeography: Jenkinson gave the Maitland Memorial lectures on English palaeography and diplomatic between 1911 and 1935.¹¹⁴⁹ In the 1930s Geoffrey Barraclough taught palaeography and diplomatic at the University. In 1944 he was appointed Head of the

¹¹³⁹ File D 171/1-3, U^{LivA}.

¹¹⁴⁰ Kelly: 357.

¹¹⁴¹ Twemlow obituary, file D 171/1-3, U^{LivA}.

¹¹⁴² Kathleen Major 'The teaching and study of diplomatic in England' *Archives* 8: 39 (1968): 117.

¹¹⁴³ *Report on Local Records* 1902: 222-223.

¹¹⁴⁴ In 1909. D G Vaisey 'Now and then' *Essays in honour of Michael Cook* ed Margaret Procter & Caroline Williams. Liverpool: Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies, 2003, 120-121. Cantwell *PRO 1838-1958*: 372.

¹¹⁴⁵ M Powicke (1879-1973) professor of medieval history, University of Manchester 1919-28, Regius Professor of modern history, Oxford 1928-47, Honorary Fellow, Oriel College 1947-63, *Who was who 1961-70*: 912.

¹¹⁴⁶ Galbraith was on syllabus committee for University of London Diploma in Archive Administration 1946 and first external examiner for University of Wales Diploma, 1955-57.

¹¹⁴⁷ Bullough & Storey: v-ix.

¹¹⁴⁸ Major 'diplomatic': 117.

¹¹⁴⁹ Notice of F W Maitland Memorial Fund lectures, 1923, PRO 30/75/4, TNA.

History Department at Liverpool University, and he influenced the development of the archive administration course there in 1947.

Allied disciplines before 1945

Government reports recognised the need for archival training from 1902 onwards and there was a moderate demand by local authorities for archivists. However, the main employer of archivists, the PRO, preferred civil service examinations and in-house training and its employees generally considered their work to be of a scholarly rather than archival nature. Although some universities considered establishing a training school for archivists on continental models and established lectureships in allied disciplines such as palaeography, diplomatic, librarianship and local history, no separate school developed before the Second World War. After the war universities saw an opportunity to develop new subject areas which built on their historical interests and the new discipline of archival education was established.

Why did archival education develop in 1947?

In the rebuilding after the war, education and social policy had a high priority. Although economic conditions were difficult universities expanded and many offered scientific training for historians. Gradually a demand for qualified professional archivists was created in local record offices and business archives (which has been discussed in chapter 4) and the work of the professional organisations (discussed in chapter 6) and government bodies (especially the NRA) encouraged county councils to establish record offices and to recruit archivists.¹¹⁵⁰ The International Council on Archives (founded 1948) and its predecessor bodies increased awareness of the profession overseas.¹¹⁵¹ The BRA and the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee both recommended the establishment of archival training. A distinct archival profession had arrived and was ripe for development after 1945.

Three separate initiatives in archival education occurred in 1947. At University College London, archive studies was initiated alongside library studies by Jenkinson and the BRA. At Liverpool University, the newly appointed Professor of medieval history, Geoffrey Barraclough, established a Diploma in the Study of Records and Administration of Archives. In Oxford, a meeting between representatives of the Bodleian Library and the History Faculty, including Powicke, considered instruction in the nature and use of archives for postgraduate students, which evolved into the Bodleian Library training scheme for archivists. Each of these initiatives, chronologically coincidental, contributed a unique aspect to British archival education.

¹¹⁵⁰ Sargent *NRA*: 4.

¹¹⁵¹ 1910 International Congress in Brussels; 1929 International Commission for Historical Science which set up an Archives Commission; 1931 Committee for Intellectual Cooperation (ICI) (forerunner of UNESCO) set up an Archivists Committee.

Lord Greene, Master of the Rolls, considered that the educational developments ‘marked an epoch in archive work in this country, for it meant that a new profession had come into existence’.¹¹⁵²

University College, University of London

During the war many academic activities were severely curtailed. London University’s evacuation scheme dispersed UCL Faculties around Wales and to Oxford and Cambridge in 1939: the Faculty of Arts went to Aberystwyth.¹¹⁵³ Some departments, including the School of Librarianship, were suspended.¹¹⁵⁴ Attempts to restart the School were halted on the resignation of the Director, J C Cowley, and his death in enemy action in 1944.¹¹⁵⁵ A new Director, Raymond Irwin, was appointed to re-open the School in 1945. Nine new library schools also opened around the UK. Irwin reported that ‘the demand for places was stimulated by the flow of students from the Services and the provision of grants ... many libraries have been replenishing or expanding their staffs, and successful students have found little difficulty in obtaining suitable posts after training’.¹¹⁵⁶ The School provided a convenient home for the BRA’s proposed Diploma in Archive Administration.

BRA scheme

The BRA discussed professional education and the need to ‘organize Archive work as a profession’ in the 1930s.¹¹⁵⁷ A summer school in palaeography and archive administration was proposed and H M Cashmore, chairman of the LA summer school in Birmingham, was asked to include palaeography and archives in 1937: Jenkinson and David Evans gave classes.¹¹⁵⁸ The School of Librarianship at UCL also suggested ‘a short School’ in local archive work in 1937, which was turned down by the BRA because it thought few students would attend a ‘special course involving several days stay in London and a fairly elaborate programme’.¹¹⁵⁹

The BRA also considered offering a ‘Diploma for Archivists’ but concluded that any qualification would need to ‘be generally accepted as conferring real distinction on the holder’.¹¹⁶⁰ The BRA might award a diploma to candidates taking examinations at a university, as the LA diploma was offered to candidates at

¹¹⁵² Printed proceedings AGM, 18 Nov 1947, BRA Signed minutes vol V 1946-56, LMA.

¹¹⁵³ Negley Harte *The University of London 1836-1986* London: Athlone Press 1986: 235

¹¹⁵⁴ School of Librarianship miscellaneous 1937/38 file 18/3, UCLRO.

¹¹⁵⁵ Minutes 30 Jan 1945 UCL Minutes of College Committee UCLRO

¹¹⁵⁶ School of Librarianship and Archives, Publication of Report 1945/51, file 18/3/15, UCLRO

¹¹⁵⁷ Jenkinson *English archivist*: 13. Ellis *Work in archives 1939-47*: 23

¹¹⁵⁸ Raised by Cemlyn Jones at AGM 16 Nov 1936, Council Minutes 19 Jan 1937, BRA Signed minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA. First summer school ran in Birmingham in 1937.

¹¹⁵⁹ Council minutes 19 Jan 1937, 23 March 1937, 4 May 1937, 16 Nov 1937, 18 Jan 1938, BRA Signed minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA.

¹¹⁶⁰ Request from Southern Rhodesia and letter from Emmison, Essex Record Office, reported, Council minutes 18 Jan 1938, BRA Signed minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA. *BRA Proceedings* 6 (1941): 12

UCL. However, Miss Wake ‘thought that it would be better to wait till the Association itself was in a position to grant such a Diploma’ and Council decided ‘that no further steps be taken’.¹¹⁶¹

In 1941 the BRA appointed a committee ‘to investigate the possibility of developing and organising a Repair Service for English Archives’.¹¹⁶² It reported that repair training should be considered together with the training of archivists, so in 1944 Council agreed to approach the School of Librarianship at UCL about teaching archive science and the PRO about a scheme of ‘Learners’ on attachment to the Repair Department.¹¹⁶³ Two schemes were drafted: one, by Douglas Cockerell, on a ‘Suggested centre for teaching the repair of archives’ and one, originally by Mrs E H Hunt in response to an approach by Bristol University, for training archivists.¹¹⁶⁴

The archive training school would provide expertise in ‘Archives and Collections and Documents’, research into technical issues, ‘summary instruction’ about archives for ‘the Clergy, Law Students, Clerks, Library and Museum Staffs etc.’, and a thorough education for archivists in ‘the principles of Archive Science ... the theory and practice of Archive work and with some actual experience of Archive Repositories and their administration’.¹¹⁶⁵ Cashmore was concerned that he would lose students from the LA summer school but it continued to include archives for another decade.¹¹⁶⁶

The proposed Diploma would take between one and two years for graduates or those ‘of graduate standing’.¹¹⁶⁷ The syllabus comprised twelve areas: palaeography of English archives (medieval and post-medieval); languages (including medieval Latin, Anglo-Norman French); transcription and translation; diplomatic; English constitutional and administrative history; sorting, listing and indexing; research methods; publishing and reproduction of archives (including ‘microphotography’); organisation of an archive office; archival materials and storage; organisation of archives of other countries; and practical work in a repository (including repair and binding).¹¹⁶⁸ It should be run in conjunction with the PRO and the BRA and ‘conform to their standard of requirements’, while being offered in a School ‘attached to and housed in a College or University’. Miss Major considered that the Board of Education was not likely to

¹¹⁶¹ Council minutes 18 Jan 1938, BRA Signed minutes vol II 1935-38, LMA.

¹¹⁶² AGM 10 Nov 1941, BRA Signed minutes vol III 1938-42, LMA.

¹¹⁶³ Council minutes 17 Oct 1944, BRA Signed minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA. Deputy Keeper Flower was not hopeful of the PRO plan: *BRA Proceedings* 10 (1945): 17.

¹¹⁶⁴ Committee on Reconstruction 1939-42, BRA 5/9A, BRA Archive, LMA. Bristol did not include archive training in its plans in 1940s but reconsidered the idea in 1961 when it proposed setting up a School of Management Studies and had discussions with Elizabeth Ralph and Roger Ellis about including the administration of records. Council minutes 9 May 1961, BRA Signed minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.
¹¹⁶⁵ Ts ‘An Outline of Requirements for a Training School for Archivists...’ 1944-46, file 18/3 UCLRO.

¹¹⁶⁶ Council minutes 22 Jan 1946, BRA Signed minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA. Eg W E Tate wrote seeking a speaker, Council minutes 15 March 1955, BRA Signed minutes vol V 1946-56, LMA.

¹¹⁶⁷ BRA Council discussed prior qualifications required and agreed ‘an adequate educational background and should have preliminary qualifications in the appropriate subjects’, Council minutes 17 July 1945, BRA Signed minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA. *BRA Proceedings* 10 (1945): 7-8, 16.

¹¹⁶⁸ ‘Outline of Requirements for a Training School...’ file 18/3 UCLRO.

support a university scheme. Another BRA member suggested that a Central School of Archives be set up under the PRO instead.¹¹⁶⁹ However, Jenkinson believed that the scheme ‘must ultimately be associated with an academic body’, although the BRA insisted that the full-time lecturer ‘should also be a practical Archivist’, supplemented by academic staff, PRO and local archivists.¹¹⁷⁰

Further discussions within the BRA refined the schemes and made suggestions about the ideal location of the proposed School (including an Oxford college or the LSE).¹¹⁷¹ Additions to the syllabus were suggested: Welsh language, economic history, Anglo-Saxon. Although originally several university history departments were to be sent the scheme, in the event discussions were only opened with UCL.¹¹⁷²

London University Diploma in Archive Administration

Jenkinson, as BRA Secretary, wrote to the Provost of UCL, D R Pye, in August 1945, making two proposals for the revived School of Librarianship: one to establish ‘a School of and Diploma of Archive Science’ and a second ‘for an experimental Repairing Centre’.¹¹⁷³ Jenkinson’s approach was well received.¹¹⁷⁴ With limited resources and little accommodation UCL only seriously considered the archive diploma, not the repair workshop. Although Jenkinson’s reports to the BRA continued to refer to both schemes, it was clear early on that the repair shop would not be established.¹¹⁷⁵ Archive conservation as a separate study was not subsequently reconsidered by UCL.

At UCL the School of Librarianship Committee discussed the schemes in 1946 and the Diploma in Archive Administration began its progress through College and University bureaucracy. A syllabus Committee including Irwin (Director of the School), Galbraith, Jenkinson, S C Ratcliff, and J Wilks (College Librarian and Assistant Director of the School) began work. College Committee approved the draft syllabus, which comprised six courses plus three weeks practical experience in an ‘approved repository’. The syllabus combined subjects proposed by the BRA with courses in librarianship (general bibliography, urban, county and school libraries and university and special library administration). The teaching lasted one year for graduates: part-time students might also be admitted.¹¹⁷⁶ The syllabus had a close link with librarianship and was academic and scholarly.¹¹⁷⁷

¹¹⁶⁹ Minutes 6 March 1945, Signed Minutes of Committee on Reconstruction 1944-45, BRA 5/9B, LMA.

¹¹⁷⁰ Council minutes, 4 Dec 1945, BRA Signed minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA.

¹¹⁷¹ *BRA Proceedings* 10 (1945), 7-8 and draft schemes: 17-21. It is not clear whether Conference knew that an approach had already been made to UCL.

¹¹⁷² Galbraith ‘emphasised the impossibility of getting such a scheme going at short notice’ and advised that it would be ‘best at the moment to concentrate on getting the scheme accepted in one place’. Council minutes, 4 Dec 1945, BRA Signed minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA.

¹¹⁷³ File 18/3, UCLRO.

¹¹⁷⁴ Copy letter from Pye to Jenkinson, 23 August 1945, file 18/3, UCLRO. Council minutes, 4 Dec 1945, BRA Signed minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA. Revised schemes were submitted to UCL in November 1945. Copy letter from Pye to Jenkinson, 19 Nov 1945, file 18/3, UCLRO.

¹¹⁷⁵ Council minutes 21 May 1946, BRA Signed minutes vol IV 1942-46, LMA.

¹¹⁷⁶ Minutes 2 July 1946 and appendix XXVII, Minutes of College Committee, UCLRO.

¹¹⁷⁷ Report 1945-1951, file 18/3/15, UCLRO.

The University of London Board of the Faculty of Arts considered the new Diploma in November 1946. It accepted that although librarianship students studied palaeography, the demand by county record offices for trained assistants required a new course in archive administration. However, archivists needed ‘some knowledge of general librarianship’.¹¹⁷⁸ The Board proposed restricting entry to Arts graduates (as opposed to graduates in any field), an increase in Latin and French teaching and the addition of a modern European language.¹¹⁷⁹ The University’s Academic Council approved the institution of the Diploma, to be examined for the first time in 1948, and the change of the School’s name to the School of Librarianship and Archives.¹¹⁸⁰ Fees were £6.6s.0d.¹¹⁸¹ The University Senate gave the final approval in June 1947.¹¹⁸² The University Diploma in Archive Administration was instituted and the first British School of Librarianship and Archives created.¹¹⁸³ Jenkinson gave the inaugural lecture *The English archivist: a new profession* on 14 October 1947.

Initially, the Diploma took two years to complete, mirroring the Diploma in Librarianship. Part I was the taught course of one year but the Diploma was not awarded to the student until ‘he has been employed in full-time paid service in an approved repository for a period of not less than twelve months.’¹¹⁸⁴ The successful completion of the work experience year was outside the control of the University and by 1952-53, Part II of the Diploma was supplemented with a thesis, which was to be a ‘Descriptive List, or Index of, or other work upon, an original Document or class of Documents in a Local or other Archive Repository, Muniment Room or Library’ usually in the employing repository.¹¹⁸⁵ By 1965-66 the thesis requirement was dropped, but students still required a year’s approved work experience until 1967-68.¹¹⁸⁶ After an initial surge of interest (31 archive students graduated between 1947 and 1950), numbers settled at around 5-7 annually. About 100 archive students had graduated by 1960. In the 1960s numbers rose to about 10-12 annually.

In 1953 lectures on local record office work were added, although the main teaching of palaeography, diplomatic, administrative history and archive administration was still provided by PRO staff. A G Watson joined the School’s full time staff in 1954 as a lecturer in bibliography and began to teach archive students a course in printed materials and sources for the study of archives, as an alternative to studies in special

1178 Minutes 7 Nov 1946, Minutes of University of London Board of Faculty of Arts 1944-1947, AC 6/1/1/6, ULL.

1179 Minutes 25 Nov 1946, AC 6/1/1/6, ULL. The last amendment was not adopted in the final syllabus.

1180 Minutes 5 May 1947, Minutes of University of London Academic Council 1946/47, AC 1/1/43, ULL.

1181 Minutes 6 June 1947, Minutes of University of London Finance and General Purposes Committee 1946/47, FG 1/1/26, ULL.

1182 Minutes 25 June 1947, Minutes of University of London Senate 1946/47, S T 2/2/63, ULL.

1183 Minutes 30 June 1947, Minutes of College Committee 1946-49, UCLRO.

1184 University College Calendar, 1948/49: 273, UCLRO.

1185 University College Calendar, 1952/53: 296-297, UCLRO.

1186 University College Calendar, 1965/66: 287, UCLRO. Deleted requirement for practical experience which ‘has prevented the award of the Diploma in two unfortunate cases’ and ‘is not regarded as very important professionally’ Minutes 3 November 1967, Special Advisory Board on

Librarianship and Archives minutes 1950-68, AC 8/34/1/1, ULL.

librarianship.¹¹⁸⁷ By 1965 Watson was also teaching palaeography and in 1969 he was appointed as the first tutor to archive students.¹¹⁸⁸ He later became professor of manuscript studies and director of the School.¹¹⁸⁹ Two long serving members of staff, Ia Thorold (later McIlwaine) and John McIlwaine, both of whom supported the overseas archives students in particular, joined in the 1960s.¹¹⁹⁰ Although UCL offered a professional archive qualification, for over two decades it relied entirely on part-time lecturers from the PRO to provide archive expertise. Archive students did not have a dedicated tutor until 1969 and a full-time academic whose primary interest was archives was not appointed until 1977.

University of Liverpool

Jenkinson's inaugural lecture at UCL made no mention of developments in archival education outside London. However another initiative was taking shape at the University of Liverpool.

Department of Medieval History

The School of Local History and Records had established a strong base for the study of diplomatic, local history and sources in Liverpool. In October 1944 candidates for the chair of medieval history included R R Darlington from Exeter, G O Sayles, R F Treharne from Aberystwyth (later involved with the archive diploma there), Richard W Hunt (lecturer in palaeography and diplomatics) and Squadron Leader Geoffrey Barraclough.¹¹⁹¹ Barraclough, educated at Oriel College, Oxford, narrowly beat Hunt to the chair.¹¹⁹² Hunt resigned to become Keeper of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, where he became involved in the scheme for archive training.¹¹⁹³ Liverpool University was persuaded to fill Hunt's post to teach history and language students textual criticism, syntax and editing, and to support archival plans in the Department of Medieval History. 'In view of ... the provision now made in many counties for the appointment of Archivists, the time is ripe to consider the introduction of a Diploma in Archives and Archive Administration. Such a diploma has been long in existence in France: in England it would be a new departure and initiative in this respect would be to the Faculty's credit.'¹¹⁹⁴

¹¹⁸⁷ University College Calendar, 1954/55: xlvi, 294, UCLRO.

¹¹⁸⁸ University College Calendar, 1965/66: 279, 1969/70: lxi, UCLRO.

¹¹⁸⁹ University College Calendar, 1983/84: 50, UCLRO.

¹¹⁹⁰ University College Calendar, 1963/64: lvii, 1965/66: lx, UCLRO. John McIlwaine took on responsibility for overseas archive students in 1980. Both became professors and retired in 2001.

¹¹⁹¹ University of Liverpool Report Book 23, 1944: 257, S2484, U^{LivA}.

¹¹⁹² Page 309, S2484, U^{LivA}.

¹¹⁹³ University of Liverpool Report Book 24 1945/46: 67, S2485, U^{LivA}. Vaisey reported Hunt's wife died unexpectedly in 1945, which, compounded with failure to gain the Chair, made him move from Liverpool: Dr David Vaisey, retired Bodley's Librarian. Interview by author, 15 July 1997, Bodleian Library, Oxford. Author's notes. However, *Who was who 1971-1980*: 392, states that R W Hunt (1908-79), Sub-Librarian and Keeper of Western Manuscripts, Bodleian Library and Fellow of Balliol, Oxford, 1945-75, married Katharine Rowland in 1942 (died 1977).

¹¹⁹⁴ Faculty of Arts Report Book 1942-47: 197, S140, U^{LivA}.

It proved difficult to find suitable candidates.¹¹⁹⁵ Dorothea Oschinsky, of German Jewish origin, had left Germany in 1938. She studied for a second PhD at the London School of Economics under Eileen Power¹¹⁹⁶ and, later, R H Tawney. The Liverpool selection committee noted her Germanic languages, research expertise and brief teaching experience (at LSE and Cambridge) and ‘decided that while it was probable that Dr Oschinsky would prove well qualified to make a success of the lectureship it was better to recommend an appointment on a strictly temporary basis, for one year only.’¹¹⁹⁷ The temporary appointment became a thirty year tenure until Oschinsky retired at Christmas 1976.¹¹⁹⁸

By July 1946 both the chair in medieval history and the lectureship in palaeography had new incumbents. Barraclough proposed a new Diploma in the Study of Records and the Administration of Archives to the Faculty and enquired about the BRA scheme.¹¹⁹⁹ In 1950 Barraclough reflected that ‘when the Diploma was instituted it was expected that legislation would soon be introduced, making obligatory the appointment of qualified archivists in counties and county boroughs’.¹²⁰⁰ Alec Myers, who worked with Oschinsky and Barraclough to establish the diploma, later stated that they had ‘the famous examples in mind of the Paris Ecole des Chartes and the Austrian Institut für Geshichtsforschung’.¹²⁰¹

Diploma in the Study of Records and the Administration of Archives

The Liverpool Diploma combined academic teaching (four hours a week) and practical instruction (by attendance at a county record office, initially Lancashire Record Office). The course was one year full-time, but classes held in the evenings encouraged working teachers and librarians to attend. The course was open to graduates with French and Latin and ‘considerable practical experience of work on records’.¹²⁰² The Diploma was approved by Council and Senate in November 1946 and instituted from 1947-48.¹²⁰³ The initial aim of the Diploma was to train students in a practical way for work in English local archives, manuscript collections in libraries and other repositories, as well, by 1950, as for ‘graduates who desire a concentrated practical training as a preliminary to research work’.¹²⁰⁴ This broadening of scope was a response to concerns that there would not be enough jobs for qualified archivists.

¹¹⁹⁵ Report Book :197, 260, S140, U^{LivA}.

¹¹⁹⁶ Professor Power proposed the foundation of the CPBA, which has been discussed in chapter 5.

¹¹⁹⁷ Report Book :260, S140, U^{LivA}.

¹¹⁹⁸ University of Liverpool *Report to the Court, 1976-77*: 17, U^{LivA}.

¹¹⁹⁹ Report on proposed Diploma in the Study of Records and Administration of Archives, 291, S140, U^{LivA}. Council minutes 9 Sept 1947,

BRA Signed minutes vol V 1946-56, LMA.

¹²⁰⁰ University of Liverpool *Annual Report of the Council, the University and the Vice-Chancellor 1950/1951*: 63, U^{LivA}.

¹²⁰¹ A R Myers joined the Department of History in 1936 as a lecturer, held the Chair of medieval history, 1967-1980. A R Myers ‘The Diploma in Archive Administration’ *The University of Liverpool Recorder* 63 (October 1973): 17.

¹²⁰² Report Book: 291, S140, U^{LivA}. University of Liverpool *Calendar 1950/51*: 250, U^{LivA}.

¹²⁰³ University of Liverpool Report Book 25 1946/47: 142, S2486, U^{LivA}. Lancaster, 445.

¹²⁰⁴ Insert about Diploma, June 1947, University of Liverpool *Prospectus 1947/48*: 196, U^{LivA}. Diploma in the Study of Records and Administration of

Archives, University of Liverpool *Prospectus 1950/51*, U^{LivA}. University of Liverpool *Annual report 1950/51*: 65, U^{LivA}.

The Liverpool syllabus in 1947 comprised Latin and English palaeography (2 papers), diplomatic and administrative history, real property law and local history (1 paper), principles and techniques of editing and calendaring historical documents including chronology and sphragistics (1 paper), theory and practice of archive administration with practical work at the Lancashire Record Office (1 paper) and an oral examination.¹²⁰⁵ The teaching focus was towards history whereas at UCL the context was librarianship.¹²⁰⁶ Twenty two students graduated from Liverpool in 1947-1951 and throughout the 1950s and 1960s a small but steady stream of archive students gained the Diploma there. Oschinsky was assisted in teaching by county archivists Reginald Sharpe France and Peter Walne, academics J J Bagley (Extra Mural Affairs) and J Crossley Vaines (Laws), and from 1956-1958, Hugh Taylor.¹²⁰⁷

Bodleian Library, Oxford

A third major development in British archival education also took place in 1947: the establishment of a trainee scheme for archivists at the Department of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

The study of archives

A memorandum on 'The study of archives' by the Regius Professor of modern history, Maurice Powicke, and the Principal of St Edmund Hall, A B Emden,¹²⁰⁸ followed discussions at the Board of the Faculty of Modern History about a readership in 'what has loosely been described as modern diplomatic but which is better described as the nature and study of modern records'.¹²⁰⁹ They noted that 'the necessity to make further provision for the study of modern history, suggest[s] that the University of Oxford should give more definite attention to the study of archives' and that 'the demand for trained scholars as archivists is certainly likely to grow'. Powicke and Emden proposed that the Reader be appointed part-time at the Bodleian Library and that 'a diploma in the study and use of archives' be established at the same time. The Bodleian could offer studentships to candidates who 'would be required to undertake suitable duties in the Library'. Their proposals were submitted to Hunt, Keeper of Western Manuscripts, with an invitation to a 'few people whose opinions and judgement are especially important to meet together to discuss the matter' in February 1946. The meeting, to investigate ways of 'providing instruction in the nature and use of archives

¹²⁰⁵ Report Book: 291, S140, and University of Liverpool *Calendar* 1947-48: 186-187, U^{LivA}. Sylvia Tollitt 'Liverpool University course for the Diploma in the Study of Records and Administration of Archives' *Bulletin of the Society of Local Archivists* 7 (1950): 2-6.

¹²⁰⁶ J P M Fowle 'The archives course at London University' *Bulletin of the Society of Local Archivists* 6 (1949): 3-5.

¹²⁰⁷ Sharpe France was awarded an honorary MA in 1950, University of Liverpool *Annual Report* 1949/50: 9, U^{LivA}.

¹²⁰⁸ A B Emden (1888-1979) Principal St Edmund Hall, Oxford 1929-51, publications include joint editor (with Powicke) of Rashdall's *Medieval universities*, 1936, *Who was who 1971-80*: 246-247.

¹²⁰⁹ Copy letter from A B Emden and F M Powicke to R W Hunt, nd [Feb 1946], Archive Training Course General 1946-80, RC86/1295, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

for post-graduate students',¹²¹⁰ included Powicke, Hunt and Emden, Kathleen Major, Professor E F Jacob,¹²¹¹ and Professor Keith Hancock.¹²¹²

They agreed 'that there was need for strengthening archive study in post-graduate research' and 'that there now existed an opportunity for instituting specific training in certain aspects of archive technique and administration' such as 'a University diploma in the study and use of archives'. The group considered that the overlap between the work of the historian and the archivist meant that 'the rigid distinction between conservation and exploitation, often made by professional archivists, should, so far as Oxford is concerned, be avoided'. The time had not yet arrived for 'a diploma in the study and use of archives': instead, two studentships in the Bodleian Library would be offered together with relevant courses from the 'Advanced Teaching and Research section of the Modern History Faculty lecture list'. Hunt was in favour of the proposals, especially once the Local History Room in the New Building had been fitted up.¹²¹³ Bodley's Librarian felt that it might be difficult 'to give any particular graduate student ... archival training in the library' but that there was plenty of cataloguing and calendaring.¹²¹⁴

BLitt

Following the meeting, Professor Jacob drafted proposals for the Board of Studies in Modern History: the first trainee began in 1947. Initially one or two students each year worked on archives in the Library towards their BLitt. However, this prepared them neither for research nor as an archivist. Subsequently trainees spent time arranging and describing archives alongside staff of the Department of Western Manuscripts, archive repair at the county record office and attended lectures in palaeography, diplomatic, local history, sources and historical bibliography.¹²¹⁵

The scheme was quite a different venture from the university diplomas. Graduates (usually in history from Oxford) were selected by recommendation and interview with Major and Hunt.¹²¹⁶ Generally they had

¹²¹⁰ Dr Molly Barrett, 'Bodleian scheme' (unpublished paper given at the Society of Archivists' Conference, 5 December 1962); 1. Letter from E F Jacob to R W Hunt, 21 Nov 1946, enclosing a draft memorandum, RC86/1295, Bod Lib.

¹²¹¹ E F Jacob (1894-1971), Fellow and Librarian, All Souls, Oxford, professor of medieval history, University of Manchester 1929-44, Chichele Professor of modern history, Oxford 1950-61, appointed to Master of the Rolls Archives Committee in 1943 and to National Register of Archives Directorate in 1945, *Who was who 1971-80*: 406.

¹²¹² W Keith Hancock (1898-1988) born Melbourne, Australia, fellow, All Souls, Oxford 1924-30, professor of modern history, University of Adelaide 1924-33, professor of history, Birmingham University 1934-44, Chichele Professor of economic history, Oxford University 1944-49, Director, Institute of Commonwealth Studies & professor, London University 1949-56, director, research school of social sciences, Australian National University 1957-61, *Who was who 1981-90*: 324.

¹²¹³ Draft letter from R W Hunt to E F Jacob, 2 March 1956 [sic, recte 1946], RC86/1295, Bod Lib.

¹²¹⁴ Draft memorandum enclosed with letter from Jacob to Hunt, 21 Nov 1946, RC86/1295, Bod Lib.

¹²¹⁵ Barrett: 12. Ts careers leaflet on Archives nd [1950s], RC86/1295, Bod Lib.

¹²¹⁶ Copy letter from Assistant Librarian [Hassall] to E E Y Hales, Ministry of Education, 14 Nov 1957, RC86/1295, Bod Lib.

already done voluntary work on archives in the Library while undergraduates.¹²¹⁷ At the end of the year, no formal qualification was awarded but a detailed reference was prepared by the Keeper of Western Manuscripts.¹²¹⁸

The scheme depended on co-operation between academic and library staff. Major's archival experience was invaluable.¹²¹⁹ Three Bodleian Library staff were associated with the scheme: Dr R W Hunt, Dr W O Hassall and Dr D M Barratt.¹²²⁰ Hassall also organised the local NRA committee and the Library acquired local private archives, diocesan and probate records.¹²²¹ Later Molly Barratt took over most of the supervision. Dr David Vaisey, himself a Bodleian trainee, became increasingly involved as Keeper of Western Manuscripts after 1975.¹²²²

Grants and funding

Until 1960 the trainees were unpaid but 'the student is expected to do enough useful work for the Library to earn his keep'.¹²²³ Trainees usually obtained county or state scholarships but in 1957 the Ministry of Education refused grants and the traineeship was suspended.¹²²⁴ Local authorities also became reluctant to make grants.¹²²⁵ The course did not lead to a qualification, although the students were examined during the year and were awarded a 'testimonial'. Applicants were well qualified but Hassall commented that 'any applicant with a first class degree [ought] to consider carefully whether it would not be better for him to find some use for his talents other than the career of county archivist'. Following the refusal by the Ministry to continue with 'State Scholarships to enable students to train as Archivists at the Bodleian Library' trainees were paid a salary by the Library (similar to library students gaining experience) and the traineeship was resumed in 1961.¹²²⁶

The traineeship catered for a small number of students each year, never more than three. Bodleian trainees were highly regarded in the profession¹²²⁷ and, as Barratt commented in 1962, 'none of our students has yet

¹²¹⁷ Barrett, 2.

¹²¹⁸ Barrett, 13.

¹²¹⁹ D G Vaisey 'Bodleian Library archive training scheme' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 6 (1980), 311.

¹²²⁰ Vaisey 'Bodleian Library', 311.

¹²²¹ Barrett, 6-7.

¹²²² D G Vaisey 'Archive training past and present' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 22 (2001): 231.

¹²²³ careers leaflet [1950s], RC86/1295, Bod Lib.

¹²²⁴ Copy letter from Assistant Librarian [Hassall] to E E Y Hales, Ministry of Education, 14 Nov 1957; letter from Hales to W O Hassall, 21 Sept 1960; copy letter from Hassall to Award Branch, Ministry of Education, nd [1960]; letter from Miss Cordingley, Ministry of Education to Hassall, 17 Nov 1960, RC86/1295, Bod Lib.

¹²²⁵ Barrett, 3.

¹²²⁶ Vaisey 'Bodleian Library', 311.

¹²²⁷ Vaisey noted that the products included academics Michael Cook and Michael Moss, Secretary of HMC (Brian Smith), and county archivists of Suffolk, Hampshire [twice], Gloucestershire, Dorset, Northamptonshire, Lincoln, Hereford, as well as two Keepers of Western Manuscripts: 'Archive training': 231-232.

found the absence of a paper qualification an obstacle to obtaining employment or promotion'.¹²²⁸ However, in 1980, with Barratt's retirement imminent, the training scheme closed. Vaisey identified three main considerations: 'changed needs in the record office world which is demanding more of the kind of non-traditional skills which the Bodleian training has never aimed to provide; the changing role of the Bodleian which is now far less of a repository for purely local archives than it was; and an attempt to weigh Bodleian's responsibilities to the local record office movement at large against its responsibilities to its own collections at a time when it is facing staff shortages caused by cuts in public expenditure'.¹²²⁹ In all the scheme trained 50 archivists in its 33 years.

Initiating archival education

In an astonishingly short period in 1946-47 the archive profession established three education programmes. Each aimed to produce within one year a skilled graduate archivist for local authority archives. The paths taken by the three institutions were different: one in a medieval history department, one in a library school and one in a working archive in a national library with links to history research and teaching in the university. None was ideally placed to fulfil all the requirements. UCL offered the possibility of integration of archival study with librarianship (which might also have developed local archives within libraries) but the influence of Jenkinson and the PRO discouraged this. Neither did Jenkinson develop the theoretical aspects of archive management at UCL. In 1922 Jenkinson had codified PRO practice, but outside technical areas (eg reprographics, conservation) his ideas on archive administration barely changed and were not revised in his teaching nor in subsequent editions of *A manual of archive administration*. UCL drew on the expertise of its part-time lecturers and did not employ an archive specialist until 1977, relying on the bibliographer and manuscripts scholar Andrew Watson to oversee the archive programme in the previous decade. It therefore lacked the capacity and the interest to develop archives as a discipline. Liverpool's strongly historical slant was tempered by the practical involvement of Lancashire Record Office, but academic staff were expert in allied subjects, such as medieval history and diplomatic. Initially professional topics were taught by practitioners and lacked a theoretical component: the academic aspects of archival science did not develop until after Michael Cook's arrival in 1969. Oxford came closest to the ideal: practical experience, one-to-one advice from experienced professionals and high quality academic instruction in specialist areas. However, it could not take large numbers of students and eventually the programme was forced to close, since it did not fit the Library's longer term objectives. The other university programmes survived and developed by fitting into organisational goals (such as research into established academic subjects rather than archives) even though there were periodic threats to their viability. They were subject to the constraints and aspirations of higher education as much as of the archive profession.

¹²²⁸ Barrett, 13

¹²²⁹ Vaisey 'Bodleian Library', 311

In the early years of the programmes, student numbers were relatively small: between 1947 and 1950, 22 archivists graduated from Liverpool and 31 from UCL.¹²³⁰ The universities both noted ‘strict limitations on numbers’ because the ‘number of vacancies occurring is very limited indeed’.¹²³¹ The majority of graduates went to work in local government archives, with a few transferring to other professions such as teaching or further research. By the mid-1950s UCL reported that ‘there are more vacancies now than there have been in recent years’ and by the early 1960s commented on a ‘marked increase in the number of vacancies for trained archivists’ and ‘signs of a shortage of well qualified candidates’.¹²³² By 1960 almost 100 archivists had graduated from UCL and about 50 from Liverpool. Numbers rose during the 1960s to an average 10-12 a year at UCL and 6-8 at Liverpool: much larger increases were seen after 1970 when UCL took 20 students a year on its revised programme and Liverpool up to 14 annually by 1978. By 1980 over 400 archivists had graduated from UCL, almost 200 from Liverpool and 50 through the Bodleian Library scheme, providing a substantial body of qualified professionals to feed the expansion of local government (and other) archives in the post-war period. In addition, two courses in Wales produced archivists for both the Welsh and English employment market.

The Welsh courses, 1955-1980

Sir Wynne Cemlyn Jones had asked the BRA to include the Welsh language in its archive syllabus in 1945.¹²³³ In 1954 Cemlyn Jones was Deputy Chairman of the College Council of University College of North Wales, Bangor, when it approved a Diploma in Palaeography and Archive Administration.¹²³⁴ In 1955 a University of Wales Diploma was established and offered at Aberystwyth from 1956. By the mid-1950s a pattern of archive education provision in Britain was set which remained unchanged for twenty years.

University College of North Wales, Bangor

North Wales College was founded in Bangor in 1884 after years of debate about higher education provision in Wales.¹²³⁵ A year earlier a college in Cardiff had opened for south Wales. The college at Aberystwyth, opened in 1872, became the third foundation constituent college of the University of Wales in 1893. Swansea joined the university in 1920 and other colleges were subsequently added.¹²³⁶ Bangor initiated the teaching of archivists in Wales. The development was encouraged by the work of the BRA, the expansion of demand in local government for archivists and the publication of the *Grigg Report*. Dr N Denholm-

¹²³⁰ University of Liverpool *Annual Report* 1950/51, ULivA. Minutes 30 Oct 1951, Minutes of College Committee 1951/52, UCLRO.

¹²³¹ Minutes 3 Nov 1953, Minutes of College Committee 1953/54, UCLRO.

¹²³² Minutes 6 Dec 1955, Minutes of College Committee 1955/56. Report on the work of the School 1956-62, file 18/3/9, UCLRO.

¹²³³ *BRA Proceedings No 10* (1945): 7.

¹²³⁴ Sir Wynne Cemlyn Jones, obituary *The Old Bangorian* 2: 7 (1967): 48.

¹²³⁵ J Gwynn Williams *The University College of North Wales: foundations 1884-1927* Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1985.

¹²³⁶ JEL *The University College of North Wales: a short guide* University College of North Wales, nd: 1-2.

Young is generally credited with the establishment of the course in the Department of History at Bangor, supported by Professor A H Dodd, Head of Department.¹²³⁷ Denholm-Young had been an archivist at Caernarvon Record Office and was the first of a series of ‘archivist academics’ at Bangor. By 1954 he was a senior lecturer in medieval history and had published *Handwriting in England and Wales*: he became director of the new Diploma in Palaeography and Archive Administration. Gwilym Usher, recently appointed to a lectureship in medieval history with a special interest in Welsh history and in medieval manuscripts, taught diplomatic.¹²³⁸

Diploma in Palaeography and Archive Administration

The formalities of approval for the new Diploma were taken through the College’s hierarchy. The Finance and General Purposes Committee recommended the ‘establishment of a Diploma Course in Palaeography and Archives Administration at an approximate cost of £225 pa’ in 1954/55.¹²³⁹ College Council approved and Senate confirmed the Diploma in summer 1954.¹²⁴⁰ Professor Dodd reported that the course had seven students in 1954/55, of whom four took the Diploma.¹²⁴¹

The syllabus comprised four papers taken in one year (palaeography, diplomatic, administrative history and archive administration) plus a general viva.¹²⁴² Graduates in arts with Latin were admitted, although others might follow a certificate course. Palaeography included the development of hands, dating, and transcription. Diplomatic covered the history of the science, chanceries, analysis and development of forms and forgery. Archive administration concentrated on the history of archives, archive keeping bodies, preservation and repair, equipping a record repository, classification, lists, calendars and indexes and the duties of the archivist. English administrative history ran from the Norman Conquest to the present. The external examiner was V H Galbraith.

Archivist-academics at Bangor, 1954-64

One of the characteristics of the course at Bangor was the appointment of academic staff who were experienced archivists and the involvement of working archivists in teaching. Caernarvonshire county archivist, W Ogwen Williams, was appointed a part-time lecturer in 1954 and students undertook practicals

¹²³⁷ G A Usher ‘Palaeography and archives administration’ *University College of North Wales Gazette* 13: 1 (1973): 15-16.

¹²³⁸ [J Gwynn Williams] ‘Mr Gwilym A Usher’ obituary by JGW *University College of North Wales Gazette* 17: 3 (1978): 9-10.

¹²³⁹ Minutes 10 March 1954: 2, UCNW, Finance and General Purposes Committee minutes, Department of Manuscripts, Main Library, University of Wales, Bangor.

¹²⁴⁰ Minutes 28 April 1954, f4417 and f4418, UCNW Council minutes 1953-57, UWB. Minutes 3 May 1954, UCNW Minutes of Senate 1953-57, UWB.

¹²⁴¹ Reports of Heads of Departments, minutes 28 Sept 1955, UCNW Court of Governors minutes and reports 1953/57, UWB.

¹²⁴² UCNW, *Prospectus* 1954/55: 82-84, UWB.

in the record office.¹²⁴³ In 1958 he transferred from Caernarvonshire to Bangor full time.¹²⁴⁴ When C L Mowat from Chicago succeeded Dodd as Head of Department, Denholm-Young was forced to retire early on the grounds of ill health. Gwilym Usher, assisted by Ogwen Williams, succeeded him as tutor. Professor Mowat's report for 1959-60 noted that Denholm-Young had been responsible for the 'inauguration and development of the Diploma' and commented that his 'health has improved' since his retirement.

Staff from the College Library also provided an important resource for the Diploma. The College Librarian, E Gwynn Jones, had been county archivist of Glamorgan prior to his appointment to Bangor in 1947. Alun Giles-Jones was appointed Assistant Librarian with responsibility for the archives in 1958. He took the Diploma at Bangor in 1958/59 and subsequently taught on the course for over three decades.¹²⁴⁵ Tomos Roberts, also a Bangor graduate, succeeded him as College Archivist, and as a tutor on the Diploma course.

In 1963-64 Usher went on sabbatical to the USA and Ogwen Williams left for Aberystwyth. The Diploma had to be suspended. However, the appointment of Keith Williams-Jones, county archivist of Caernarvonshire, and A D Carr from Essex Record Office to the Department of Welsh History continued the tradition of 'archivist academics'. The new appointments of 1963 and 1964 and return of Usher 'made possible the giving once again of the course for the postgraduate Diploma in Palaeography and Archives Administration'.¹²⁴⁶

A University of Wales Diploma, 1955

In February 1955, while the first students were on the Diploma course, the Registrar at Bangor wrote to the University Registry in Cardiff requesting that the College Diploma be given University Diploma status.¹²⁴⁷ The Registrar reported that 'if more publicity could have been given to the new Diploma at the outset it would have attracted a greater number of graduates from other Colleges and Universities'. Academic Board recommended the syllabus to the University Council for 'inclusion amongst the diplomas of the University as from October 1955'.¹²⁴⁸

The draft regulations set the fees, the qualifications of candidates ('a degree of the University of Wales or of another university approved') and registration requirements and enabled any of the constituent colleges

¹²⁴³ UCNW, *Prospectus* 1954/55: 10, UWB.

¹²⁴⁴ Report of Council to the Court 1957/58, UCNW, Court of Governors minutes and reports 1958-62, UWB.

¹²⁴⁵ Dr Tomos Roberts, College Archivist. Interview by author, 29 July 1997, Department of Manuscripts, University of Wales, Bangor. Author's notes.

¹²⁴⁶ Reports of Heads of Departments 1964-65: 25, UCNW, Court of Governors minutes and reports 1963-67, UWB.

¹²⁴⁷ Recommendation to the University Council, letter from Kenneth Lawrence, Registrar, setting out Diploma syllabus, minutes 3 and 4 March 1955, Academic Board, University of Wales, University Registry, Cardiff, 1954-55, UWB.

¹²⁴⁸ Minutes 3 and 4 March 1955, Academic Board, UWB.

of the University of Wales to offer candidates for the examination.¹²⁴⁹ Students had to ‘pursue a course of study in palaeography and archives administration ... of not less than one academic year’ and ‘the examination for the diploma shall consist of a written examination and a *viva voce* examination’. Other colleges were not bound by Bangor’s syllabus, but had freedom to develop and approve their own within the university framework.

University of Wales, Aberystwyth

The college at Aberystwyth took up the idea of providing a course in palaeography and archives administration immediately, inspired by the success of the first year of the Diploma at Bangor.¹²⁵⁰ The Aberystwyth course began in 1955 with the appointment of Dr Hywel Emmanuel to a lectureship in palaeography in the Department of Classics. In 1956 Dr Ronald Walker was appointed to a parallel post in diplomatic in the Department of History, a Board of Archive Studies was approved by Senate in 1956 and the Diploma was taught as an inter-departmental course (Welsh History, History and Classics).¹²⁵¹ The programme was due to start in 1956/57 but the first student (a trainee librarian in the College library) was accepted the following year. In 1968 the Diploma was transferred to the Department of History, following Dr Emmanuel’s appointment as college librarian.¹²⁵² Dr Walker became solely responsible for it and continued to run the course until 1991, when he retired.¹²⁵³ Natalie Fryde, a medieval historian, began to teach palaeography in 1968.¹²⁵⁴ In 1979 Dr Susan Davies was employed part-time in the Department of History to teach palaeography and historical scholarship: after Walker’s retirement she also taught diplomatic.¹²⁵⁵ As well as the academic staff in History and Classics, there was substantial input from the Department of Manuscripts at the National Library of Wales. The Head of History, Professor Treharne, sought to appoint a specialist from the National Library as a part-time lecturer in archive administration: E D Jones was appointed in 1957, succeeded by Daniel Huws in 1963, Philip Wyn Davies in the late 1980s and Glyn Parry in the 1990s.¹²⁵⁶ A local record office element was added in 1973, when Gareth Williams at Dolgellau (Merionethshire Record Office) took students for teaching and practical experience. He was succeeded by Maureen Patch at Carmarthen in 1974 and Janet Marx at Ceredigion in 1985. Records management was added to the syllabus in 1975 and taught in conjunction with local record office

¹²⁴⁹ Minutes 5 and 6 May 1955, Academic Board, UWB.

¹²⁵⁰ Dr Susan Davies, lecturer. Interview by author, 6 August 1997, Department of History, University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Author’s notes. Sophie Houlton *The development of the Diploma in Archive Administration at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth* MSc Diss. University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1997: 1.

¹²⁵¹ Houlton: 4.

¹²⁵² Copy letter from Professor R R Davies to the Registrar, UCW Aberystwyth, 27 May 1981, shown to the author by Dr S Davies, UWA.

¹²⁵³ Susan J Davies ‘Ronald Walker (1924-2002)’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 24 (2003): 99-101.

¹²⁵⁴ Houlton: 14.

¹²⁵⁵ Houlton: 24.

¹²⁵⁶ Houlton: 21.

management until 1989.¹²⁵⁷ Computing was also first offered as part of records management and local record office teaching in the late 1970s.¹²⁵⁸

Initially the course aimed to provide ‘an accredited scheme of training for the profession of archivist’ as well as technical skills for history research students.¹²⁵⁹ As at Bangor, students offered four subjects, palaeography, diplomatic, administrative history and archive administration. A College Certificate in Palaeography was introduced for research students in 1959. Up to three students took the Diploma annually at Aberystwyth: by 1968 six students a year graduated.¹²⁶⁰ Of the 77 students who graduated between 1969 and 1981, 48 went into local authority archive posts.¹²⁶¹

Syllabus revision

By 1962 the Bangor course was accepting two students annually, who attended lectures, spent half a day each week at Caernarvon Record Office and undertook repair work in the College Library.¹²⁶² Although Bangor and Aberystwyth submitted students for the same qualification, they did not co-operate in running courses. In 1963, in a move to unite the syllabuses taught at Bangor and Aberystwyth, Professor Treharne, Head of History at Aberystwyth, wrote to Professor Mowat suggesting that the syllabus was insufficiently practical and proposing to increase the number of papers to five or six.¹²⁶³ Treharne understood that the regulations which required the Diploma to be examined in common across the University meant that Aberystwyth had to consult Bangor about revisions. Mowat consulted the lecturers and External Examiner and replied that there had been four papers at Bangor since 1960, that Bangor did not wish to make revisions and wished to retain the viva.¹²⁶⁴ No further proposals to unify the syllabuses were made until the 1980s, when possible co-operation was discussed, and the two Diploma programmes, although leading to a common qualification, developed quite separately.

However, Treharne’s initiative and new staff at Bangor led to some syllabus revisions there in 1964.¹²⁶⁵ In spite of Mowat’s reply, many of Treharne’s suggestions were incorporated. Palaeography was divided into two papers (practical and theoretical). New topics were added to diplomatic, including land law. Archive administration was reorganised to cover principles and organisation of local record offices with separate

¹²⁵⁷ Davies. Interview. Houlton: 23.

¹²⁵⁸ Houlton: 10.

¹²⁵⁹ Briefing paper on the Diploma prepared by Dr Walker for the visitation of the SoA in 1990, shown to the author by Dr S Davies, UWA. Houlton: 6.

¹²⁶⁰ Letter from R F Walker to P Walne, 23 Jan 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹²⁶¹ Copy letter from Professor R R Davies to the Registrar, UCW, Aberystwyth, 27 Nov 1981, UWA.

¹²⁶² ‘Society’s chronicle’ (1960-64): 330-331.

¹²⁶³ Letter from Professor R F Treharne, Department of History, UWA to Professor C L Mowat, UCNW, Bangor, 12 June 1963, Archives: general correspondence 1966-69, UWB. Administrative history and archive administration were examined in one paper at Aberystwyth.

¹²⁶⁴ Copy letter from Mowat, UCNW to Treharne, UWA, 3 July 1963, Archives: general correspondence 1966-69, UWB.

¹²⁶⁵ *Postgraduate prospectus* nd [post-1965]: 45, UWB.

practicals on repair, exhibitions, reprography, genealogy and local history. Although in 1964 the course was still being advertised for 'students pursuing research in history' who might be 'admitted to the course or to such part of it as may be specially useful to them', by the later 1960s it was clearly 'intended for graduates who have in mind a career in Archives'.¹²⁶⁶ Computing (taught at the College Computing laboratory) and the law of real property (taught by a law academic) were added by 1972 and the students were required to complete practical work before the course started.¹²⁶⁷ By 1977 the course objective was 'to make graduates useful members of record office staff upon qualification'.¹²⁶⁸ The Diploma was taught jointly by the History and Welsh History Departments from 1964 until its transfer to History in 1967.¹²⁶⁹ It was reorganised as an inter-departmental Diploma in 1972.¹²⁷⁰

In 1973 the long serving Sir David Evans retired as External Examiner at the University.¹²⁷¹ Usher, believing that he had consulted Aberystwyth, sent in the nomination for the new examiner. Professor Johnston at Aberystwyth complained to the University Registrar that he had not been properly consulted.¹²⁷² He also proposed that Bangor and Aberystwyth should have separate examiners, since Bangor was 'more definitely vocational in character' while Aberystwyth was more academic and catered for research students. A compromise candidate was eventually agreed on.

The Bangor Diploma reached a period of stability and security during the 1970s. It had solid teaching by academics and professional archivists and provided a variety of practical experience for the students. However, the sudden death of Usher, senior lecturer in charge of the Diploma, in January 1978, followed by the death of Williams-Jones in 1979, was destabilising. Williams-Jones had begun restructuring the Diploma and the revision was completed under the new tutor, Dr Carr.¹²⁷³ The Welsh History Department formally took on its organization.¹²⁷⁴

The course revisions resulted in a renamed Diploma in Archive Administration in 1980. This had six courses: a practical palaeography course covering both medieval and modern hands; diplomatic and the law of real property; administrative history (including central, local and ecclesiastical institutions and Welsh

¹²⁶⁶ *Postgraduate prospectus* nd [1964]: 17, UWB. *Postgraduate prospectus* nd [post-1965]: 18, UWB.

¹²⁶⁷ *Postgraduate prospectus* nd [1972]: 55, UWB.

¹²⁶⁸ *Postgraduate prospectus* nd [1974-1977] loose-leaf pages on Diploma, UWB.

¹²⁶⁹ Student Statistics 1965-66, UCNW, Court of Governors minutes and reports 1963-67, Student Statistics 1967-68, Court of Governors minutes and reports 1968-72, UWB.

¹²⁷⁰ Annual Report 1972/73: 89, UWB.

¹²⁷¹ V H Galbraith (1955-57), Sir David Evans (1957-1973). External Examiner nomination proposals to Registrar, University of Wales, 23 March 1973, Archives: general correspondence 1972-74, UWB.

¹²⁷² Letter from Professor S H F Johnston, Department of History, UWA to Registrar, University of Wales, 21 May 1973, Archives: general correspondence 1972-74, UWB.

¹²⁷³ Discussion paper by K Williams-Jones, Feb 1978, Archive Administration: syllabus revision 1978, UWB.

¹²⁷⁴ Move to Welsh History Department was 'a logical step since it is already responsible for all the academic teaching involved' Annual report 1979-80: 41, UWB.

history); practical archive administration; theoretical archive administration (including records management); and special studies, which included computing, history of record keeping and purpose of archives.

University of Wales, 1955-1980

Between 1955 and 1980 the University of Wales developed a graduate qualification in palaeography and archive administration in two of its constituent colleges, Bangor and Aberystwyth. Both colleges located the diploma in history departments (although initially palaeography had been taught in Classics at Aberystwyth) and involved practising archivists (at Bangor from Caernarvon record office and the university library and at Aberystwyth from the National Library of Wales and Carmarthen). Both colleges, and the individual academics within them responsible for the diploma, were committed to providing a professional qualification which catered in particular, but not exclusively, for Welsh archivists. The programmes developed quite differently within the common qualification framework. They seldom collaborated or seriously considered whether one college might take on sole responsibility for the subject area within the university. As elsewhere, the academics had research interests in history and did not seek to develop archive administration as a discipline in its own right.

Influence of professionals on curriculum development

From 1947 onwards, professional bodies had influenced educational developments and many individual archivists contributed to archival education. Relations between the academic institutions teaching archive management and the various professional bodies were not always harmonious. However the universities recognised their role in providing professional qualifications, not simply academically coherent programmes and involved archivists in programme development. Professionals influenced the university courses through formal and informal channels. In addition, academics contributed their expertise to debates within the professional bodies, especially the SoA, and helped them to develop educational policies.

The universities invited practising archivists to teach. In 1947 four part-time teachers were appointed to UCL from the PRO: L C Hector, D L Evans, D B Wardle and R H Ellis. In 1957 J R Ede was appointed to teach archive administration and he was joined by Lionel Bell in 1960/61.¹²⁷⁵ Bangor appointed archivists from Caernarvon Record Office as well as the College Archivist as part-time teachers.¹²⁷⁶ Aberystwyth appointed a part-time lecturer from the National Library of Wales in 1957 and a local archivist in 1973.¹²⁷⁷ This tradition has been maintained to the present day, in spite of periodic budgetary and policy threats.

¹²⁷⁵ Staff lists in *Calendar* published annually, UCLRO.

¹²⁷⁶ UCNW, Court of Governors minutes and reports 1963-67; UCNW, Reports of heads of departments 1962/63: 28 and 1963/64: 29, UWB.

¹²⁷⁷ Davies. Interview. Houlton: 5.

The London syllabus was heavily influenced by Jenkinson and therefore by PRO practices in its early years. Le Hardy accepted an invitation to the Society to provide a speaker for the ‘first county Archivists’ lecture at the University’ in 1949.¹²⁷⁸ The following year Miss Godber was invited to give three lectures on local archives to students in London.¹²⁷⁹ A local archivist was first appointed to teach a course at UCL in 1970 when Felix Hull from Kent taught records management.¹²⁸⁰

Archivists were appointed external examiners to the university archive programmes, beginning with Jenkinson and H C Johnson at UCL in 1950.¹²⁸¹ At least one member of staff at the PRO was on the UCL Board of Examiners until 1995 and archivists from local government, university repositories and business served regularly. David Evans was external examiner for fifteen years (1957-1973) in the University of Wales.¹²⁸² Academic regulations governing the choice of examiners and the length of time they served influenced the shape of Boards of Examiners, but the principle of professional as well as academic representation was maintained.

Archivists also served as advisers on regulating Boards. At UCL, a School of Librarianship Committee acted as a board of management advising on curriculum development, staffing, appointment of examiners, and reporting annually to the College Committee from 1919 until its abolition in 1962, by which time the Committee’s activities ‘had been limited to one meeting a year to consider an annual report from the Director’.¹²⁸³ The LA had direct representation on the Committee but archivists had to rely on College Committee nominations: Evans and Jenkinson appeared regularly during the 1950s.

The balance of power between College and University in London shifted in the 1950s towards the federal University. A Special Advisory Board in Librarianship and Archive Administration was established by the University.¹²⁸⁴ Gradually it took on powers for the appointment of staff, examiners, approval of curriculum changes, examination and award of diplomas and approval of research topics for MPhil and PhD from the School’s own Committee. The Board gave archivists an opportunity to be involved in academic development. Initially representatives came from the PRO but in 1963 it was thought ‘desirable to have on the Board a local archivist’ and Peter Walne from Hertfordshire was invited.¹²⁸⁵ Archivists were

¹²⁷⁸ Council minutes 16 July 1949, SA 83/1/1/1, LMA.

¹²⁷⁹ AGM minutes 11 Dec 1950, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

¹²⁸⁰ *Calendar* 1970/71: lxiii, UCLRO.

¹²⁸¹ Minutes 23 November 1950, AC 8/34/1/1, ULL.

¹²⁸² UCNW, Court of Governors minutes and reports 1958-62. Reports of heads of departments 1958-59: 19. Archives: general correspondence 1972-74, UWB.

¹²⁸³ Minutes 1 July 1919, established the Standing Committee for the School of Librarianship, Minutes of College Committee 1918/19. Minutes 12 December

1961, Minutes of College Committee 1961/62, UCLRO.

¹²⁸⁴ Minutes 23 November 1950 renamed Board of Studies, minutes 4 November 1965, AC 8/34/1/1, ULL.

¹²⁸⁵ Minutes 21 March 1963, AC 8/34/1/1, ULL.

represented on the Board until its dissolution in 1995: for example, in 1974 the nominations included archivists from a local record office, a business archive, a government department and the HMC.¹²⁸⁶

Summary

Senior staff from the PRO influenced the development of the university archive programme at UCL in the 1940s and 1950s; the National Library of Wales was key to the early development of the Aberystwyth programme; university and college archivists taught at Bangor and the Bodleian from 1947; local authority archivists became involved in the programme at Liverpool from the 1950s and elsewhere from the 1960s and 1970s. Professionals taught courses as part-time lecturers, acted as external examiners and represented the profession on advisory boards. In the main, the individuals served for long periods and thus provided university programmes with stability to establish themselves. The universities seemed content to support archival programmes, which attracted sufficient high quality candidates and research-active academics, and were generally responsive to the professional advice offered. The profession seemed reasonably content with graduates from the programmes as the new generation of archivists. Increasingly local government and other employers of archivists (except the PRO) expected candidates to be qualified and valued their scholarship and professionalism.

Higher degrees and research

The mid-1960s saw an attempt to develop the academic standing of archive administration with the introduction of higher degrees (MA, MPhil, PhD) at the University of London and the appointment of research fellows to the UCL School.¹²⁸⁷ In spite of the offer by Jenkinson to UCL of the copyright of his *Manual of archive administration* in 1950 and his appointment as an honorary fellow of the college, there had been little archival research in the School.¹²⁸⁸ Maxine Merrington was appointed a research fellow in 1971: in 1976 she formed the Archive Research Unit within the School, which continued work until the mid-1990s mainly producing finding aids for college collections.¹²⁸⁹ None of the full-time staff was primarily interested in archives until Jane Sayers was appointed in 1977. In 1992 London University conferred the title of Professor of Archive Studies on Dr Sayers in recognition of her scholarship in diplomatic.¹²⁹⁰ At Liverpool University, Michael Cook's appointment in 1969 led to developments in research in archive administration and description.

¹²⁸⁶ Minutes 23 October 1974, Board of Studies in Library, Archive and Information Studies minutes 1974-84, AC 8/34/1/3, ULL.

¹²⁸⁷ *Calendar* 1967/68: 28-29, Minutes of College Committee 1966/67: min 99B UCLRO.

¹²⁸⁸ Minutes 31 Oct 1950, Minutes of College Committee 1950/51, UCLRO.

¹²⁸⁹ *Calendar* 1971/72: ixv, *Calendar* 1976/77: 45, *Calendar* 1977/78: 45, UCLRO.

¹²⁹⁰ Minutes 5 Feb 1992, AC 8/34/1/4, ULL.

Higher degrees in archives

The introduction of higher degrees in librarianship and archives at UCL was triggered by a University review of MAs in 1964.¹²⁹¹ London University offered two types of MA: a one year taught MA and a two year research MA with thesis. UCL's Librarianship and Archives Diplomas Part I were equivalent to taught MAs, while the thesis for Part II could, if extended, become a separate MPhil.¹²⁹² The Advisory Board noted that the expansion of the 'professions of librarianship and archives' and changes in technology meant there was need for advanced study. Other universities had established diplomas but none had developed programmes of advanced study. Indeed 'no similar provision on any significant scale at present exists outside the USA and USSR'. This provided the University with an opportunity to be the first to offer structured research in archive administration. The Diploma was retained in revised form over one year. A new MA by examination was available to diplomates taking a further year's study. An MPhil by thesis embodying original research took two years. MA or MPhil candidates might progress to a PhD programme.¹²⁹³ The new degrees were offered from 1966/67.

The tutor responsible for archive students noted, in 1968, that so far these higher degrees had attracted little interest from archivists, except one MPhil candidate. His explanation was that the 'more restricted nature of the subject' compared with librarianship reduced the pool of candidates and that many archive students were 'primarily interested in history and go on to do a thesis in that subject rather than in Archive Studies'. He thought that these factors might change as archivists found ideas during their work which they wanted to develop through research.¹²⁹⁴ However, the view of archive administration as a narrow subject not worthy of research and the preference of many archivists (and academics) for historical as opposed to professional research greatly hampered the development of the discipline in British universities.

Higher degrees by research in archive studies did gradually find a place. A very few UK candidates sought to take an MPhil.¹²⁹⁵ From 1983 onwards a steady number of research students came from overseas, in particular after the appointment of Dr Anne Thurston to the staff in 1988 (for example, from Ghana,¹²⁹⁶ Canada,¹²⁹⁷ Swaziland,¹²⁹⁸ Turkey,¹²⁹⁹ Sri Lanka,¹³⁰⁰ Kenya¹³⁰¹ and Botswana¹³⁰²). In the 1990s a few UK

¹²⁹¹ Minutes 23 January 1964, AC 8/34/1/1, ULL.

¹²⁹² Minutes 23 January 1964, AC 8/34/1/1, ULL.

¹²⁹³ Minutes 25 February 1965, AC 8/34/1/1, ULL.

¹²⁹⁴ Appendix, 26-28 Board of Studies in Librarianship and Archive Administration minutes 1968-74, AC 8/34/1/2, ULL.

¹²⁹⁵ Brian Hutton (Guide to PRONI) minutes 27 May 1969 (application turned down); Colin McLaren (edition of Foxford, a vicars' general book 1521-1539) minutes 24 May 1972, AC 8/34/1/2, ULL.

¹²⁹⁶ Samuel Kwasi Agyei (guide to archive sources relating to Ghana in the UK) minutes 26 Oct 1983, AC 8/34/1/3, ULL. Daniel Tetteh (records disposition in Ghanaian government) minutes 5 Feb 1992, Board of Studies in Library, Archive and Information Studies minutes 1985-94, AC 8/34/1/4, ULL. Pino Akotia (1997, records management and the National Archives of Ghana).

¹²⁹⁷ Barbara Craig (organisation of hospital archives in London and Ontario, 1850-1950) minutes 26 Oct 1983, AC 8/34/1/3, ULL. Laura Millar (1996, The end of 'Total archives'?: an analysis of changing acquisition practices in Canada). Victoria Lemieux (2002, Competitive viability, accountability and record keeping: a case study of Jamaican commercial bank failures).

candidates also started research degrees at UCL and the Universities of Liverpool, Northumbria and Wales at Aberystwyth each began PhD programmes in archival subjects.¹³⁰³

Archive curriculum developments 1965-1980

In the period between 1965 and 1980 all of the archive programmes underwent revision in order to accommodate new aspects of the profession, such as the treatment of 20th century archives and records management. New staff arrived in Bangor in the early 1960s and in Liverpool (Michael Cook in 1969 and Elizabeth Danbury in 1977) and enabled the programmes to develop. Professional changes influenced course development at Aberystwyth. By 1970 the programme there was out of touch with practical needs and the Board of Archive Studies considered reducing the time given to palaeography and diplomatic in order to make more space for records management, computer applications and business records.¹³⁰⁴ The UCL programme underwent significant changes by 1970 but when Jane Sayers was appointed at UCL in 1977 she brought with her a scholarly historical approach which reflected the post-war period and was not easily adaptable to the needs of the late 20th century.¹³⁰⁵

UCL course revisions

In his presidential address to the SoA in 1966, Roger Ellis reviewed the development of archival education at UCL.¹³⁰⁶ In 1947 the syllabus reflected ‘scholarship, ... craftsmanship, ... medieval and Tudor historical study’. Ellis suggested that in future archivists ‘will require inevitably a knowledge not only of modern techniques and technologies but also of records management - the art or science of so creating records that they not only serve efficiently their primary purpose in the administration but are no less adapted, when their current phase is passed, to ... disposal’. To meet this need Ellis proposed a separate modern records course alongside the existing medieval/early modern course.

Ellis’s address triggered consideration by the University of London of ‘a) the establishment of a new course in modern archives; b) the establishment of a course suitable for overseas archivists; c) the amendment of

¹²⁹⁸ Julius Dlamini (evolution of records management and archive administration in Swaziland) minutes 5 Feb 1992, ^{AC 8/34/1/4}, ULL.

¹²⁹⁹ Hamza Kandur (management of electronic records) minutes 3 Feb 1993, ^{AC 8/34/1/4}, ULL.

Ahmet Icimsoy (development of record services in Turkey), minutes 2 Feb 1994, ^{AC 8/34/1/4}, ULL.

¹³⁰⁰ Sarath Wickramanayaka (management of official records in Sri Lanka 1802-1990) minutes 3 Feb 1993, ^{AC 8/34/1/4}, ULL.

¹³⁰¹ Nathan Mnjama (1994, Railway records: their management and exploitation in Kenya). Justus Wamukoya (1996, Records management and administrative reform programmes in Kenya).

¹³⁰² Peter Sebina (started 2003, freedom of information and records management in Botswana).

¹³⁰³ Including: Liverpool, An Xiaomi (2001, urban construction archives in China). Aberystwyth, Zawayah Yusof (2000, business records in Malaysia), Sarah Horton (2004, UK archive policies).

¹³⁰⁴ Houlton: 8-16.

¹³⁰⁵ Minutes 14 Nov 1978, Minutes of College Council 1978/79, UCLRO.

¹³⁰⁶ Ellis ‘training’: 265-271.

the existing course to include either a) or b) or both'.¹³⁰⁷ The programme was totally restructured so that 'the needs of the 'general' archivist and the 'modern' archivist ... will be met'.¹³⁰⁸ The new syllabus introduced in 1970 had three compulsory courses (record office management, records management and finding aids) plus six of fourteen options, including administrative history, palaeography and diplomatic, description of records, law of real property, historical sources, local government organisation, company law and accounting and the history of science and technology.¹³⁰⁹ The use of computers in record offices was added in 1972. The new Diploma programme, and a Certificate for Commonwealth students with a greater practical element, made UCL the only UK university addressing 'the task of training modern archivists and archivists from Commonwealth countries': between 1970 and 1976 students from 21 countries studied archives at UCL.¹³¹⁰ The new programme also attracted record numbers of UK students (about 20 a year during the 1970s) most of whom found jobs in local government archives.

The relationship between Diploma and MA in Archive Administration was also reviewed in 1970.¹³¹¹ Archive administration was seen as a practical subject in which advanced studies could not be taken without relevant experience. The MPhil and PhD were maintained for archivists with experience, but the MA to which Diplomates might progress immediately was suspended.¹³¹² The MA issue was raised again in 1980 and a new MA, concurrent with the existing Diploma in Archive Studies, was instituted from 1981-82.¹³¹³ This time a steady number of candidates on the Diploma course progressed to the MA each year by completing a dissertation and some additional examinations.

Liverpool University

By 1968 the Liverpool archive Diploma was firmly established as 'one of the two leading courses' and applicants far outnumbered the places available.¹³¹⁴ Alec Myers succeeded C N L Brooke¹³¹⁵ in the Chair of medieval history in 1967 and under his guidance until 1980 significant staff and curriculum changes were made. Michael Cook, university archivist since 1967, became a part-time lecturer in 1969. Sharpe France was succeeded by Brian Redwood from Chester and external lecturers included F G Emmison and Jane Sayers.¹³¹⁶ In addition, new lecturers joined the department (Helen Jewell and Jenny Kermode) who made significant contributions to the Diploma teaching. Michael Cook began to involve the university archives in his teaching, organised summer schools and started his research into archive and records management. He

¹³⁰⁷ *Calendar* 1977/78: 45, UCLRO. Minutes 9 Dec 1968, AC 8/34/1/2, ULL.

¹³⁰⁸ Minutes Annual Conference 11 April 1970 and *Annual report 1968/69*, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA.

¹³⁰⁹ Minutes 30 Oct 1969, AC 8/34/1/2, ULL.

¹³¹⁰ Minutes 3 Nov 1976, AC 8/34/1/3, ULL.

¹³¹¹ Minutes 28 Oct 1970, AC 8/34/1/2, ULL.

¹³¹² Minutes 26 Feb 1970, AC 8/34/1/2, ULL.

¹³¹³ Minutes 3 June 1980, 13 Jan 1982, AC 8/34/1/2, ULL.

¹³¹⁴ University of Liverpool *Report to the Court* 1968/69: 34, ULL ivA.

¹³¹⁵ C N L Brooke (1927-present) lecturer in history, Cambridge University 1953-56, professor of medieval history, Liverpool University 1956-67, professor of history, Westfield College, London University 1967-77 *Who's who 2004*: 274.

¹³¹⁶ University of Liverpool *Report to the Court* 1968/69: 34, ULL ivA.

began work on a manual of archive administration in 1971 and in 1975-76 went to Ghana for UNESCO to set up a regional training centre for archivists.¹³¹⁷ In 1977 Oschinsky was succeeded by Elizabeth Danbury. Michael Cook returned from Ghana and published his book, *Archive administration*. New ideas emerged. Liverpool proposed a new BPhil in Archives Studies by teaching and research, more short courses and offered support for the SoA's Diploma.¹³¹⁸ The SoA was not receptive to the proposals, commenting that London University's experience with higher degrees had not been encouraging.¹³¹⁹ Proposals for a new diploma in the management of modern archives and records were developed at Liverpool.¹³²⁰ As well as courses in archive administration and records management, the programme covered management and administrative sciences, information management and research methods and sought to change the traditional alignment of archive training. Financial constraints, rather than professional disquiet, meant that instead of introducing a separate programme for modern archives, the existing programme was remodelled to cover both medieval and modern concerns.¹³²¹ Liverpool University replaced its Diploma with a new degree of Master of Archive Administration in 1982-83.

University College Dublin

The other key development in the 1970s was a new diploma in archives, at University College Dublin (UCD) in 1972, the first such training available in Ireland. Previously candidates were offered the diploma in library studies which included an archives option or a series of lectures at Queen's University Belfast. The new programme aimed to stimulate the archival profession in Ireland and encourage local, municipal and central government to employ qualified custodians. It covered archival science and administration, history and archival practice and auxiliary sciences (including languages and palaeography).¹³²² Candidates undertook several weeks' practical work in the college archives. Initially UCD only took a small number of mainly part-time students but numbers settled at 10-12 annually. The UCD Diploma maintained a fairly traditional syllabus assessed by practicals, eight written papers and a viva. UCD Archives Department was unusual in that it was both a teaching department and also an archive repository for College archives and those relating to modern Irish politics. The College archivist was also tutor for the Diploma. The UK universities did not much welcome the new programme, fearing that it would lead to 'a glut of candidates' on the job market and would 'export unemployed archivists to Britain'.¹³²³ In fact, the intention was to train archivists for the Irish profession and only a few UK candidates chose to take the UCD Diploma and a small number of Diplomates sought work in England. A distinctive feature of the Dublin programme was its strong links with European and North American archives.

¹³¹⁷ University of Liverpool *Report to the Court* 1970/71: 262, and *Report to the Court* 1975/76: 262, U_L ivA.

¹³¹⁸ Letter from Alec Myers to P Walne, 5 Oct 1976, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹³¹⁹ Copy letter from P Walne to A Myers, 20 Oct 1976, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹³²⁰ Minutes 30 March 1978, 1 Feb 1979, 29 March 1979, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹³²¹ Paper by M Cook, minutes 17 April 1980, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹³²² Syllabus outline 1972, SoA Training Committee, Correspondence, reports etc on university training courses 1970-83, SA 88/4/6, LMA.

¹³²³ Note by A R Myers, Liverpool University, and letter from P Radcliffe, PRONI to A R Myers, 29 Jan 1973, SA 88/4/6, LMA.

Developments 1965 to 1980

The university programmes evolved along the lines established by their founders. In many cases long serving academics and professionals taught on the Diplomas, ensuring continuity. College archivists often made a significant contribution to teaching (Cook at Liverpool, Giles-Jones at Bangor, Kerry Holland at Dublin). Each programme had one academic mainly responsible for its direction and development and many of these staff remained in post for two or three decades, providing stable and slow evolution.¹³²⁴ However, after 1965 new aspects of the profession emerged and there were concerns about the failure of the programmes to treat 'modern archives' sufficiently thoroughly. The impetus for change came both from the SoA (which influenced UCL and Aberystwyth) and from the universities themselves (eg Cook and Danbury at Liverpool and Williams-Jones and Carr at Bangor). The programmes shifted significantly in their content but all retained a single programme which evolved to meet academic and professional needs. Archives and records management became bound together. The only new provision was in Dublin, which increased the geographical spread of archival education, although the programme itself was a traditional mix of practice and academic study.

The discipline had gradually acquired clearer definition, by reducing the focus on allied subjects such as history and librarianship, and concentrating more on new aspects within the field of study such as records management and automation in records and archives services. Gradually the diploma programmes were upgraded to Masters qualifications, except in Dublin and Bangor. Most of the academic staff (even those who had worked as archivists) had research interests in allied disciplines such as history or diplomatic and the archive programmes were orientated towards an historical approach to archives. The conflict generated by a more record-focused approach, initiated at Liverpool by Michael Cook after 1969, emerged in the refusal of Oschinsky to alter the programmes before her retirement in 1976. UCL suffered a similar, more serious, calcification in the 1980s. The research culture for archives and theoretical aspects of the discipline emerged only slowly, led by Cook who began to investigate archive management and archival description.

Conclusion

All professions expect those who join to undergo intensive educational and training programmes, often in universities, in order to develop knowledge and skills and professional norms and behaviours. After 1947 such education was available to archivists and local government employers began to expect their staff to have professional archival qualifications. Teaching in palaeography, diplomatic, local history and librarianship had developed in the first half of the 20th century. These allied disciplines offered skills to archivists and the academic departments acted as a home to the new archive Diplomas. In the post-war

¹³²⁴ Bangor, A D Carr, 1964-2001. Aberystwyth, R Walker, 1956-89, S Davies, 1979-present. UCL, A G Watson, 1954/69-1990, J E Sayers, 1977-99. Liverpool, D Oschinsky, 1947-76, M G Cook, 1969-94, E A Danbury, 1977-97. UCD, A C Holland, 1972-present.

period universities sought to expand their subjects, especially into areas which led to employment and which were supported by grants. Universities were responsive to proposals made by the BRA for an archive Diploma. Although the BRA most obviously initiated the programme at UCL (where Jenkinson had taught since 1919), Liverpool University, the Bodleian Library and the University of Wales were well aware of the proposals. The university Diplomas were similar in core content, much of it derived from the examples of the Continental schools such as the Ecole des Chartes, (Latin and English palaeography, diplomatic, administrative history, editing, listing and indexing, archive administration and practical work) but differed in emphasis. UCL candidates had to take courses in special librarianship, whereas those at Liverpool devoted more time to historical subjects. The Bodleian Library practicum focused on 'learning-by-doing' alongside senior colleagues and was supplemented with university history lectures. The University of Wales offered Welsh history, diplomatic and palaeography.

A small number of enthusiasts championed these programmes. At UCL, Jenkinson, Evans and other PRO staff supplied most of the archival expertise until the appointment of Watson in 1954. At Liverpool, Barraclough, Oschinsky and C N L Brooke drove the developments. In Oxford, Hunt (formerly at Liverpool University) and Hassall led the scheme, after Powicke and Emden's initiative. In Bangor, Cemlyn Jones was a BRA member and deputy chairman of UCNW College Council (1945-66). Denholm-Young initiated the course there: he was joined by Ogwen Williams and Usher (who succeeded him as tutor in 1960). Walker effectively ran the Aberystwyth programme from 1956 until 1987. The second generation of archive academics were just as tenacious: Williams-Jones (formerly a research assistant to Barraclough) and Carr at Bangor, Danbury and Cook at Liverpool, Barratt in Oxford and Sayers at UCL. Stability and continuity enabled the programmes to evolve and often protected them from financial cuts, but also led to ossification and an unwillingness to change.

In the period to 1965 the universities established sound first professional qualifications for archivists. They included a significant proportion of new teaching and were tailored to a specific market (mainly local authority archives). Fairly substantial numbers graduated (about 250 by 1965)¹³²⁵ and were absorbed into the work group. All of the programmes involved senior professionals as part-time lecturers and offered practical experience as well as academic instruction. Most relied on one or two full-time academics to oversee the subject and tutor the students. Professional bodies represented the views of the profession to the universities: initially the BRA and, after Jenkinson's death in 1961, the SoA. In addition many individual professionals were on advisory boards and committees. The first period consolidated the place of university qualifications as a gateway to the profession.

Between 1965 and 1980 the university programmes matured and changed. The discipline began, albeit in a small way, to develop academic standing through research for higher degrees in archives and by individual

¹³²⁵ 1947-65: Liverpool 67; UCL 139; Bodleian c20; Wales c25.

academics. Higher degrees emerged first at UCL but the majority of students were from abroad and their research did not feed directly into the development of the UK profession. Archive academics pursued scholarly research but their interests were mainly in allied subjects (diplomatic, historical bibliography, history) so the profession, as such, was not the subject of study and academic development. Cook's appointment at Liverpool in 1969 signalled a change of direction and his subsequent work in archive administration and description was the first substantive professional research in the UK. At the same time, the teaching programmes underwent significant change in content and structure. They all recognised the need to deal with modern archives and records management and all chose to expand the existing provision rather than to start new parallel programmes. Although this choice was made on pragmatic and financial grounds rather than theoretical ones, it had the effect of binding the subject into a single profession. The geographical spread of archive education was increased in 1972 when the programme at UCD began.

By 1980 university archive education was firmly established as the main gateway to professional work: even the PRO finally employed a university-qualified archivist in 1979. However, the university programmes catered mainly for local government employment, had little to offer specialist or business archivists, and were failing to provide the profession with the theoretical development needed to modernise the work group. The universities were increasingly influenced by and supportive of professional bodies, in particular the SoA: this relationship and the expansion and modernisation of educational provision for archivists are explored in chapter 8.

Chapter 8

Specialisation, Expansion and Development of Professional Education, 1960-2003

Between 1947 and 1980 mainstream archival education programmes were established in three English, two Welsh and one Irish universities. The programmes were remarkably similar in structure, content and approach. Some included greater elements of practical work (Bangor, Oxford and Dublin) but all covered both practical archival administration and academic courses in traditional skills such as palaeography and diplomatic. The established programmes made little concession to specialist interests, since they mainly sought to prepare archivists for local authority record offices. Since the PRO did not employ a qualified archivist until 1979, preferring to maintain a scholarly tradition and to train its staff in-house, and given the relatively late development of business, university and specialist archives (in the 1970s and 1980s) this was reasonable. However, new needs developed and new solutions emerged. Chapter 8 considers the influence of professional bodies over archive education, in particular the SoA, which offered its own Diploma 1980-2000, but also more specialist developments led by Aslib and the BAC (in business archives) and RMS (in records management). The chapter examines the modernisation of the university programmes in the 1980s and 1990s and the many new influences to which they were subject. It considers research and theoretical developments and, in conclusion, seeks to recommend how professional education should develop in future.

Business archives training and education 1960-1980

Alongside mainstream archive education other initiatives provided more specialist opportunities for professional training and development. Most of these originated with working archivists and the professional bodies.

Report on education and training for business archives, 1960

One area of collaboration between professional bodies was specialist training. Between 1957 and 1961 the Association of Special Libraries (Aslib) ran a business records conference in association with the BAC.¹³²⁶ The BAC identified ‘the need for instruction in business archive management’ and proposed a course on the management of business archives for record clerks and junior staff.¹³²⁷ The BRA was concerned about conflict with the existing Diplomas and suggested a committee of the BAC, BRA, HMC and UCL to ‘consider what steps should be taken to promote education and training for the proper care and conservation of business archives’.¹³²⁸ The committee addressed educating senior business executives about

¹³²⁶ BAC *Twelfth report* 1957: 4. Council minutes 17 Jan 1961, BRA Signed minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

¹³²⁷ BAC *Report 1958-59*: 3.

¹³²⁸ Council minutes 13 Jan 1959, BRA Signed minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA. BAC *Report 1959-60*: 6.

the value of archives, training archive staff for businesses, and instructing local and other archivists in business archives.¹³²⁹ The first step was ‘to convince the men who control the firm - the chairman, managing director and managers – that such a programme is desirable’, through business institutes, conferences, journals and management colleges such as Henley and Ashridge. Short courses, rather than a full Diploma course, were recommended to train business archivists. Since the existing Diploma courses did not include business records, the report proposed a two-day course about business archives for archivists in local government.

Short courses

The London North West Polytechnic offered a six week course in records practice which was tolerated although not especially encouraged by the BRA although the BAC was supportive.¹³³⁰ Plans to offer the course in Manchester were disrupted when speakers (Michael Cook and Hugh Taylor) departed to work abroad, although a meeting was held at Manchester College of Commerce.¹³³¹ East Suffolk County Council ran a weekend course for business archivists, librarians and others, organised by Derek Charman, county archivist of East Suffolk, and Rupert Jarvis, archivist of Customs and Excise and secretary of the joint BAC-BRA Committee, which was ‘very successful’.¹³³²

By 1966 the BAC had taken on responsibility for the courses.¹³³³ Archivists within the BAC called for ‘a common training policy...for business archivists’ and developed a syllabus.¹³³⁴ Aslib ran a course based on the BAC syllabus in 1967 which became an annual event.¹³³⁵ In 1968 the week was attended by 14 business archivists and record officers.¹³³⁶ In 1969 a separate course for junior records staff started.¹³³⁷ The course was reworked, with SoA advice, in 1975 for local government officers.¹³³⁸ A course on archivists and the computer attracted 20 archivists in 1971.¹³³⁹ In 1973 a three-day residential school at Aston University, Birmingham, started: Charles Thompson of the National Coal Board, Tom Ingram of Barings Bank and Bill Young of BP taught the first programme.¹³⁴⁰ The course was repeated many times over the next twenty years.¹³⁴¹

¹³²⁹ Committee report on Education and Training in the Care and Conservation of Business Archives, Council minutes 10 May 1960, BRA Signed minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA. *BAC Report 1959-60*: 6.

¹³³⁰ Council minutes 11 July 1961, BRA Signed minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA. *BAC Report 1961-62*: 6. *BAC Report 1962-63*: 6. Council minutes 2 April 1963, BRA Signed minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

¹³³¹ Council minutes 20 July 1965, BRA Signed minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA. *BAC Report 1963-64*: 5-6.

¹³³² *BAC Report 1962-63*: 6.

¹³³³ Council minutes 18 Jan 1966, BRA Signed minutes vol VI 1956-67, LMA.

¹³³⁴ *BAC Report 1967*: 7-8.

¹³³⁵ *BAC Report 1968*: 9.

¹³³⁶ *BAC Report 1968-1969*: 4.

¹³³⁷ *BAC Report 1969-1970*: 4. *BAC Report 1970-1971*: 4.

¹³³⁸ Correspondence between F Hull, SoA, and Jack Bird, Aslib, 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹³³⁹ *BAC Report 1971-1972*: 4.

¹³⁴⁰ *BAC Report 1973-1974*: 3-4.

¹³⁴¹ Five days in 1980, *BAC Report 1980-1981*: 7. Biennial after 1987 (one day courses offered in alternate years) *BAC Report 1986/87*: 5. Moved to Nottingham University 1989, *BAC Report 1989/90*: 4.

Southlands College, Roehampton Institute

The BAC also advised on a university programme in business archives. In 1976 the BAC was approached by Southlands College, part of the Roehampton Institute of Higher Education, for advice on their proposed Diploma in Archives Management. Southlands planned to offer a Diploma in ‘modern archives ... geared particularly to business archives’ and hoped ‘to offer opportunities for archivists already employed in business to obtain professional training on a part-time basis’.¹³⁴² The BAC deputed David Avery (secretary of BAC and archivist at Rio Tinto Zinc) and Bill Young to advise. The programme was aimed at graduates working in business and local government, but also accepted non-graduates with professional qualifications (eg chartered accountants). An archives tutor was employed one day a week. The course comprised five compulsory topics (record office management, records management, preparation of finding aids, corporate structure, communication and decision making and information storage and retrieval), some options (company law, accountancy, administrative history, reading and interpretation of documents, history of science and use of computers) and three weeks practical work in an archive.¹³⁴³ The Diploma was modelled partly on the UCL Diploma and partly on Southlands College’s strengths in management, languages and technology.

Avery and Young supported the proposals when the new Diploma was discussed by the University of London Board of Studies in 1977.¹³⁴⁴ The Board however expressed concerns and eventually strongly recommended that approval not be given. The Board felt that sufficient provision already existed, that Southlands College was unable to staff the programme adequately and that academic standards could not be guaranteed.¹³⁴⁵ The examining body, the Institute of Education, did not follow its advice, however, and approved the course.¹³⁴⁶

In 1979 the SoA was asked to recognise the programme to enable the students to become SoA student members. The course had accepted 14 students and advertised that the SoA had ‘given its support and approval’.¹³⁴⁷ However, the SoA resolved ‘not to accord recognition under the terms of the Society’s constitution to the Southlands College course’ because of concerns about its syllabus. Southlands continued to discuss the diploma and its future development with the SoA, reshaping the syllabus to provide a core of archives and records management courses plus options in business archives and public administration

¹³⁴² BAC Report 1975-1976: 6.

¹³⁴³ Syllabus, appendix to minutes ^{2 March 1977: 172-173, AC 8/34/1/3, ULL.}

¹³⁴⁴ Minutes 2 March 1977, AC 8/34/1/3, ULL.

¹³⁴⁵ Minutes 2 March 1977, 18 May 1977, ^{AC 8/34/1/3, ULL.}

¹³⁴⁶ Noting that Roehampton Institute degrees were validated by the University of London. Minutes 18 May 1977, ^{AC 8/34/1/3, ULL.}

¹³⁴⁷ Minutes 21 June 1979, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

archives.¹³⁴⁸ The SoA monitored progress as Southlands transferred to the University of Surrey but the programme never became accredited by the SoA.¹³⁴⁹

Loughborough University of Technology

During the 1970s Loughborough University of Technology library studies department taught archive administration in conjunction with Leicestershire Record Office. In 1974 Loughborough planned an undergraduate diploma for records clerks in business and local government combining administrative history, records management, local government organisation, business law and accounting with practical work experience.¹³⁵⁰ It also planned a postgraduate diploma in archive administration focusing on modern records and business and consulted the SoA over its proposals.¹³⁵¹ The diploma later became an MA, offering archive administration and records management, general management skills, and courses drawn from library and information science.¹³⁵² Periodically the SoA made contact with Loughborough, for instance in 1983 when the MA was considered 'not a threat to UK archive training' in view of the small archive component in the programme and preponderance of overseas students.¹³⁵³ Loughborough never invited the SoA to accredit its MA. The programme last ran in 1992/93 with two students.¹³⁵⁴

Business archives

The specialist area of business archives was neglected by the established university programmes. Professionals working in business attempted to influence the providers of both university education and short courses to fill the gap. The BAC, in particular, was successful in providing short courses for archivists working in business or with business records and established a long running programme of regular training courses. UCL included company law and accounting and archives of science and technology as options after 1970 but the university programmes never made business archives a core part of the curriculum. The universities which provided qualifications in specialist subject areas (Southlands and Loughborough) never gained acceptance within the profession as mainstream providers. The BAC's provision (in the 1990s) of a course in business archives within the Liverpool Masters in Archive Administration had a more lasting educational impact.

The few universities offering archival education were generally conservative in the scope of their programmes. Between them they supplied the traditional job market in local government reasonably well, expanding gradually in the 1960s to 1980s. However, limited competition between the programmes led to a

¹³⁴⁸ Minutes 25 Oct 1979, SA 88/4/3, LMA. Syllabus with minutes 19 June 1980, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹³⁴⁹ Minutes 2 April 1981, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹³⁵⁰ Letter from M A Reed, Loughborough, to F Hull, SoA, 2 Dec 1974, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹³⁵¹ Letter from M A Reed to F Hull, 19 Dec 1974, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹³⁵² MA (Archives) syllabus, SA 88/4/6, LMA.

¹³⁵³ Minutes 10 Feb 1983, SA 88/4/4, LMA.

¹³⁵⁴ I A Smith, Loughborough University, 'MA in records management and archives', email to the author, 15/03/04.

lack of differentiation and specialisation. Specialist areas were either gradually catered for within the existing programmes (eg records management) or were effectively ignored (eg business archives, science and technology archives, audio visual archives). The influence of the professional bodies, especially the SoA which was itself dominated by local authority archivists, was conservative and encouraged the universities to remain within the established boundaries. Specialist interests were provided for by short courses and continuing professional development rather than in initial professional education.

Society of Archivists and professional education

Although the BRA had led the way among the professional bodies in discussions with the universities about syllabus development in the 1940s, from 1949 the Society also began to get involved. Its AGM called for 'greater emphasis ... on the work of local Record offices' at UCL so 'that the value of the course would be greatly increased for prospective local archivists'.¹³⁵⁵ However, caution was urged since 'it was not the function of the Society to go around expressing opinions'. In 1955 SoA considered 'the problems connected with the training of archivists and the supply of new entrants to the profession' and invited the Directors of the archive schools at Liverpool and London to meet SoA representatives.¹³⁵⁶ By 1956 'doubts about the adequacy of the instruction in the techniques on modern archive preservation' had been discussed with Barraclough at Liverpool and Irwin at UCL and the Bodleian Library had also been approached.¹³⁵⁷ Walne criticised the Bodleian scheme as 'very much on the antiquarian, scholarly side' and 'the person you turn out ... is not likely to have much knowledge of or even interest in the problems posed by modern archives of a very recent date'.¹³⁵⁸ The discussions were 'mutually profitable'.¹³⁵⁹ Any discussions would necessarily have involved Jenkinson, a senior figure in the BRA, SoA, PRO and at UCL, and it was not until after Jenkinson's death in 1961 that the SoA instituted a more formal approach to archival education, setting up a committee in 1963 'to maintain liaison with archive training schools'.¹³⁶⁰

Liaison Committee

A discussion meeting on the training of archivists was held by the SoA in 1962.¹³⁶¹ Three speakers gave accounts of archive courses: D M Barratt of the Bodleian Library, W Ogwen Williams from Bangor and A G Watson of UCL. The meeting called for closer liaison between the universities and practising archivists and for the SoA to seek representation on advisory Boards. In 1963 the SoA set up a liaison committee

¹³⁵⁵ AGM 8 Dec 1949, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

¹³⁵⁶ AGM 11 Dec 1955, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

¹³⁵⁷ Minutes annual conference 25 May 1956, SA 88/1/1, LMA. Letter from P Walne to W O Hassall, 20 Feb 1956, letter R W Hunt to P Walne, 6 March 1956, letter from P Walne to R W Hunt, 13 March 1956, RC86/1295, Bod Lib.

¹³⁵⁸ Letter from P Walne to R W Hunt, 13 March 1956, RC86/1295, Bod Lib.

¹³⁵⁹ Annual report of Council 1955/56, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

¹³⁶⁰ Hull commented that 'it might not have been as easy before' Jenkinson's death. Hull. Interview. Minutes annual conference, 5 April 1963, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

¹³⁶¹ 'Society's chronicle': 330-331.

(comprising Derek Charman, Ivor Collis, Felix Hull, Freddie Stitt and Peter Walne) ‘to discuss in the widest context, the mutual problems of the profession and the archive training schools in the recruitment and training of archivists’.¹³⁶² Hull recalled later that ‘we felt that the PRO were having too much say in the running of the School [at UCL]. There wasn’t enough realization of what was happening outside’.¹³⁶³ One immediate result was that Walne was invited onto the University of London Advisory Board.¹³⁶⁴ In 1964 lobbying for changes in the London syllabus began, resulting in modifications to the syllabus in 1965/66 and re-modelling in 1970.¹³⁶⁵

Training Committee

In 1970 a symposium on training, convened by the SoA and held at Churchill College, Cambridge, marked a new approach.¹³⁶⁶ Remarkably, the symposium ‘was the first time that all the schools had been represented under one roof and we took the opportunity of having a meeting’.¹³⁶⁷ It stimulated many new developments including plans for summer schools, the joint application system for the university archive courses, pre-course practicals and the formation of a Training Committee to act as a forum for communication between the university teachers, employers and the professional bodies.¹³⁶⁸ Although at the symposium the plan had been for a joint committee with the BAC, Walne organised a meeting without consulting other parties.¹³⁶⁹ The Committee included representatives of the Universities of Liverpool and London, Bangor, the Bodleian Library, the BAC, PRO, HMC, PRONI and SRO, seven local authority archivists, and the chairman, Felix Hull.¹³⁷⁰

The Committee discussed pre-entry practical experience, guidelines for in-service training for professional and non-professional staff, joint seminars with the BAC and summer schools. Although it was organised by the SoA, many of the initiatives came from the universities (especially Liverpool): the SoA was often conservative in its outlook. In 1971 Oschinsky proposed a standard three-week pre-course practical programme, supported by DES grants.¹³⁷¹ She saw an opportunity to establish a programme of work and preparatory reading, a report by the student and a reference by the archive.¹³⁷² Hull suggested that it be widened to include other universities, although he foresaw some practical difficulties (eg variations

¹³⁶² Annual report of Council 1962/63, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

¹³⁶³ Hull. Interview.

¹³⁶⁴ Minutes 21 Mar 1963, AC 8/34/1/1, ULL.

¹³⁶⁵ Minutes annual conference 10 April 1964, SA 88/1/1, LMA. Annual report of Council 1964/65, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

¹³⁶⁶ Annual Report of Council 1969/70, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA.

¹³⁶⁷ Letter from Tony Carr to Peter Walne, 7 Oct 1970, SA 88/4/1, LMA. Letter from Carr to G Usher, 17 July 1970, reporting on ‘a very useful conference’, Archives: general correspondence 1969-72, UWB.

¹³⁶⁸ Michael Cook ‘Changing times, changing aims’, *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 18 (1997): 5-17. *Annual report 1969/70*, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA.

¹³⁶⁹ Letter from Charles Thompson, BAC, to Peter Walne, 26 July 1971, which says that an independent committee would have wider influence, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹³⁷⁰ Minutes 29 Sept 1971, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹³⁷¹ Letter from D Oschinsky to Walne, 12 March 1971, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹³⁷² Memorandum from Oschinsky to Walne, 29 March 1971, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

between record offices and the inexperience of the students).¹³⁷³ Liverpool pioneered structured work experience but unfortunately a common model proved impossible for the universities to agree.

Summer schools and new programmes

Two universities proposed summer schools for 1971: Bangor and Liverpool. The Liverpool plans were more fully developed, including refresher courses, advanced courses on 'older' skills such as diplomatic and basic courses on 'newer' subjects such as computing.¹³⁷⁴ But Walne 'issued a dampener to stop us going ahead... He says that Bangor has already offered and the Training Committee must be given a chance to reflect...'.¹³⁷⁵ Eventually Liverpool did run a school with the SoA and in 1975 Leicester University also offered a summer school.¹³⁷⁶

Training Committee became involved in discussions about selection of students for the university programmes. By 1975 the universities received 'a large number of applicants, well qualified apparently on paper but many, despite expressions of keenness and interest, never having been to a record office' while record offices were concerned that trainees to whom they offered posts then failed to get onto a university programme.¹³⁷⁷ The Committee declined to intervene in specific cases.¹³⁷⁸ In 1978 it discussed the lack of archivists interested in business archives and records management.¹³⁷⁹ In 1981 it discussed the problem of newly qualified archivists having 'extreme difficulty' finding jobs: one employer reported 23 applications for one job.¹³⁸⁰ It was an important (and until 1978 the only) forum for the exchange of views between university educators and between them and the profession.

The SoA intervened with external bodies on educational issues, for example in 1969 when it expressed concern over the proposal to replace local education authority grants with bursaries awarded by the DES since 'the number of such bursaries might result in a serious reduction of the number of students to be accepted in the coming year' at a time when there were many jobs.¹³⁸¹ The grants were transferred

¹³⁷³ Copy letter from F Hull to Oschinsky, 19 March 1971, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹³⁷⁴ Letter from Michael Cook to Walne, 16 Nov 1970, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹³⁷⁵ Copy letter from Cook to Alan Dibben, 18 Nov 1970, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹³⁷⁶ Letter from Cook to Walne, 24 Sept 1973, and copy minutes 19 Oct 1973, SA 88/4/1, LMA. Letters from Hull to Professor Everitt, Department of English Local History and to G A Chinnery, Archives Department, Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester, 16 July 1974, proposing a summer school to prevent 'the Liverpool/Cook link' becoming a monopoly, SA 88/4/1, LMA. Report on course by Hull, 10 Oct 1975, ^{SA} 88/4/2, LMA.

¹³⁷⁷ Minutes 14 March 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹³⁷⁸ Such as that raised by Rosemary Collier who accused UCL of 'unnecessarily restricting its intake of overseas students', minutes 17 June ^{1975, SA 88/4/2,} LMA.

¹³⁷⁹ Minutes 22 Sept 1977, ^{SA 88/4/3,} LMA.

¹³⁸⁰ Minutes 24 Sept 1981, ^{SA 88/4/4,} LMA.

¹³⁸¹ Minutes annual conference, 12 April 1969, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA. Council minutes 15 April 1969, BRA Signed minutes vol VII 1968-79, LMA.

nevertheless and the DES made allocations to the universities.¹³⁸² By 1973 Liverpool and London had seven grants each.¹³⁸³

Training Committee monitored new developments. Aberdeen University had offered a Diploma in medieval studies since 1966 which was a useful preparation for research and for those wishing 'to become archivists or librarians of universities or learned societies'.¹³⁸⁴ In 1972 Alec Myers reported a plan to introduce a Diploma in archive administration at Aberdeen for Scottish archivists, while acknowledging that the existing courses did not cover Scottish issues.¹³⁸⁵ This raised a general discussion of how best to plan archival education in the UK. In 1973 Myers reported the new diploma course at UCD.¹³⁸⁶ In 1974 UCL proposed a new Certificate for overseas students: Watson asked whether the Committee thought that this would appeal to UK students in-post.¹³⁸⁷ In 1978 the Committee received reports on the Southlands College diploma and a proposed course based at the University Archives in Glasgow.¹³⁸⁸

Liverpool proposed a shorter Certificate in Archive Administration from 1972 for mature students in archives posts.¹³⁸⁹ The university sought the SoA's view on whether the idea 'is likely to meet with appropriate recognition from the profession'. The Training Committee expressed little support, feeling 'that such a Certificate might tend to create, at least in the eyes of employers, a second class qualification'.¹³⁹⁰ It did, however, discuss the 'feasibility of some sort of examination leading to a qualification equivalent in standing to a diploma'.¹³⁹¹ A survey reported that of 88 unqualified staff holding professional posts, 30 would be interested in qualifying.¹³⁹² The Committee 'came to the view that a qualification issued in the name of the Society might be the only practicable course': in 1973 a working party was set up to investigate.¹³⁹³

Society of Archivists' Diploma in Archive Administration¹³⁹⁴

¹³⁸² Annual report 1968/69, SA 83/1/1/2, LMA.

¹³⁸³ Letter from Oschinsky to Walne, 19 March 1973, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹³⁸⁴ Memorandum on review of policy in archive studies, minutes 28 Oct 1968, AC 8/34/1/2, ULL.

¹³⁸⁵ Letter from A Myers, Liverpool University, to Walne, 27 April 1972, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹³⁸⁶ Letter from Myers, minutes 7 Feb 1973, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹³⁸⁷ Minutes 26 Feb 1975, ^{AC 8/34/1/3}, ULL. Letters from A G Watson to Walne, 15 Jan 1974 and 4 Feb 1974, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹³⁸⁸ Minutes 2 Feb 1978, ^{SA 88/4/3}, LMA.

¹³⁸⁹ Letter from Myers to Walne, 17 April 1971, SA 88/4/1, LMA. Correspondence between A R Myers and SoA, April 1971, SA 88/4/6, LMA.

¹³⁹⁰ Minutes 29 Sept 1971, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹³⁹¹ Minutes 7 Sept 1972, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹³⁹² Minutes 7 Feb 1973, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹³⁹³ Working Party comprised Messrs Bell, Hull, Serjeant, Stitt, Watson and Walne, minutes 7 Feb 1973, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹³⁹⁴ Dunhill & Short, 42-50. The author is grateful to Dr D B Robinson and Dr B Barber, former Directors, and to Mr G Williams, former Convenor of the Diploma Course Committee for providing information for this section.

In 1947 the Society had asked the University of London to grant an external diploma for those in work or outside London who could not attend classes at UCL.¹³⁹⁵ In 1948 it made a similar suggestion to Liverpool University for a course suitable for archivists with a year's archive service.¹³⁹⁶ Pressure for external degrees or an examination 'on lines comparable with those of the Library Association' for working archivists was considerable.¹³⁹⁷ In the intervening years the SoA did not pursue the matter and, as discussed above, discouraged proposals by the universities for alternative routes to qualification.

By the 1970s archivists appointed before a university archive qualification was widely available found that advancement was barred while employers found it difficult to recruit qualified archivists because of a shortage of candidates.¹³⁹⁸ The SoA changed its membership requirements in the 1970s, introducing student membership and considering a professional register limited to qualified graduates. In 1975 Hull set down the possible qualifications for a professional register, the form of an examination by the SoA (a 10,000 word dissertation, viva, submission of a portfolio of professional work and period of experience), and proposed a course of lectures by the SoA to support the examination.¹³⁹⁹ Alan Dibben, incoming chairman of Training Committee, felt that the discussion of an SoA qualification should be 'divorced entirely' from membership questions: however the idea of providing a professional examination had taken root.¹⁴⁰⁰

Training Committee recognised that many issues needed to be resolved: what would be taught, who would teach, how it would be examined, who would set the examinations, how students would be selected, and the costs and time involved.¹⁴⁰¹ Hull wrote that he could not 'really see how we can organize an examination along the lines of the diplomas ... this is a non-starter which will create opposition from the present courses and be too cumbersome to operate properly'.¹⁴⁰² The Committee concluded 'that the Society should assume the role of an examining but not a teaching body, although in complement to the existing diploma courses and not in replacement of them'.¹⁴⁰³ Several ideas were suggested, of which the one investigated was a 'postal scheme' offered with Wolsey Hall, Oxford, a correspondence college.¹⁴⁰⁴ Wolsey Hall already ran courses in bookselling and banking, in association with the relevant professional bodies. It monitored student progress and course finances and prepared and printed course materials. The SoA set admission

¹³⁹⁵ AGM minutes 18 Nov 1947, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

¹³⁹⁶ Minutes 21 Aug 1948, SA 83/1/1/1, LMA.

¹³⁹⁷ Minutes AGM 16 Nov 1948, SA 88/1/1, LMA.

¹³⁹⁸ Letter from D F Lamb to Dr F Hull, 2 May 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹³⁹⁹ Discussion paper by F Hull, 28 Feb 1975, prepared for Constitution Committee, SA 88/4/2, LMA. The Register was eventually established in 1987. SoA 'Registration...What's in it for you?' 1987, in the possession of the author.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Copy letter from A Dibben to F Hull, 27 Jan 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹⁴⁰¹ Copy letter P Walne to F Hull, 5 Feb 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹⁴⁰² Letter from F Hull to P Walne, 17 March 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹⁴⁰³ Minutes 30 Jan 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹⁴⁰⁴ Ideas included a certificate course taught by Liverpool University; co-operation with a polytechnic without a library school; assistance from the PRO; in-house training; starting an Open University course: minutes 14 March 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

Letter from D F Lamb, Hampshire Record Office, to F Hull, 2 May 1975, suggesting Wolsey Hall College, Oxford, and minutes 17 June 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

criteria, recruited students, conducted the examinations and appointed course writers and tutors. When the process began in 1976 it was hoped that the course would be ready in 18-24 months: in the event the course writing took over four years to complete.¹⁴⁰⁵

A draft syllabus

In 1976 a Qualifications Sub-committee drafted a syllabus of core and optional subjects, including 'management of machine readable archives'.¹⁴⁰⁶ The universities were invited to comment. Vaisey at the Bodleian commented that new archivists did not need courses in 'office and staff control' or 'management techniques' and thought that records management should be optional, although Myers from Liverpool disagreed. Vaisey suggested a non-Latin palaeography course, while both Myers and Usher from Bangor thought palaeography and diplomatic essential: in the event, the SoA diploma offered the subjects as options.¹⁴⁰⁷ After some reshaping the syllabus of the Diploma in Archive Administration planned in 1978 to offer five core subjects (record office management and archive administration, record management, preparation of finding aids, administrative history and information sources) and options which included palaeography and diplomatic, law of real property, central administrations, local administrations, organisation of religious bodies, history of company law and accounting and computers in archives. Students were heavily examined, writing between 70 and 80 essays, a 5000 word critique and three examinations.

A voluntary Registrar, Dr David Robinson, was appointed in 1977 and Council established a Monitoring Group to oversee progress.¹⁴⁰⁸ Applicants had to be graduates with one year's experience in a professional post or non-graduates with four years experience.¹⁴⁰⁹ Graduate archive assistants were also eligible.¹⁴¹⁰ 24 candidates were accepted, each paying a fee of £230.¹⁴¹¹ Finding writers proved difficult and almost caused the course to be abandoned before it started: in 1979 Training Committee resolved that 'unless it was possible to state firmly at the Committee's October meeting the date at which the first students would begin their work, the question of abandoning the course would be discussed'.¹⁴¹² After several further delays with the writing and printing of materials the course finally started in August 1980.¹⁴¹³

¹⁴⁰⁵ Minutes 13 Nov 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Precedents included Canadian guidelines for graduate training in archival science by Hugh Taylor and Edwin Welch minutes 13 Nov 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA. Taylor and Welch were both expatriate archivists from the UK working in Canada.

¹⁴⁰⁷ Letter from D G Vaisey to A A Dibben, 10 Nov 1976, letter from G A Usher to A A Dibben, 6 Oct 1976, comments by A R Myers, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹⁴⁰⁸ Minutes 22 Sept 1977, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹⁴⁰⁹ Minutes 22 Sept 1977, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹⁴¹⁰ Minutes 5 Oct 1978, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹⁴¹¹ Minutes 31 Jan 1980, SA 88/4/3, LMA. In October 1980 14 students had signed up and numbers had risen to 26 by January 1981: minutes 15 Oct 1980, 29 Jan 1981, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹⁴¹² Minutes 21 June 1979, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹⁴¹³ Minutes 19 June 1980, 15 Oct 1980, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

Professional education?

After Jenkinson's death in 1961 the BRA's influence began to wane and the SoA increasingly took the lead as the professional body. The SoA established formal structures to manage its responsibilities for education and training (Liaison Committee in 1963, Training Committee in 1970 and Diploma from 1980) and involved a wider group of archivists in a more consultative way to develop policy. As a small professional body with limited resources and no paid staff, the SoA had quite bold ambitions. It was the first to bring together academics from the university programmes to exchange ideas and engage with the profession, it monitored developments in archival education (and expressed often negative views), it provided training courses and it undertook the major project to develop and deliver the in-service diploma. At the time the SoA Diploma was innovative and ambitious: it was an in-service course (but unlike the Bodleian scheme, candidates were working in a wide range of organisations), it was delivered by correspondence, and it took non-graduates with experience as well as graduates. The SoA was not a higher education institution and did not have existing educational experience or infrastructure to draw upon. It relied upon the expert advice of archival educators representing the universities and on Wolsey Hall's experience. Boldly, the SoA decided not to collaborate with a university (Southlands College and Loughborough were both trying to start new programmes if none of the established ones suited the SoA) but rather to offer something totally new: a correspondence diploma. The Diploma provided an important alternative entry point to the profession for 20 years which was accepted as valid by educators, candidates and the profession. The SoA Diploma had greater capacity than the universities and made up some of the shortfall when university numbers were restricted. Importantly, it also gave the SoA credibility when it addressed the accreditation of the university programmes.

Accreditation of university programmes

An issue raised in 1956 by the university courses was the question of recognition by the profession. Hunt commented on the lack of a final diploma at Oxford but hoped nevertheless 'that the Society will recognise us'.¹⁴¹⁴ In reply, Walne commented 'I don't quite know what you mean by the Society recognising your course. I don't know that we as a body accord recognition in the manner of an imprimatur. We know of the various courses that are run and are more or less aware of what they do. The most we can do is comment on them'.¹⁴¹⁵ This informal arrangement persisted for two decades.

Soon after its foundation Training Committee took an interest in the standards of the university diploma programmes. For example, in 1974 Hull expressed concern about the practical skills of newly qualified archivists and suggested that 'we ought to try to establish standards of training and to see that new entrants

¹⁴¹⁴ Letter from R W Hunt to P Walne, 6 March 1956, RC86/1295, Bod Lib.

¹⁴¹⁵ Letter from P Walne to R W Hunt, 13 March 1956, RC86/1295, Bod Lib.

have an approximately equivalent practical background'.¹⁴¹⁶ As investigations into an SoA qualification began in 1973 the university programmes were asked to submit their syllabuses to the Committee.¹⁴¹⁷ Training Committee discussed the role of the SoA in 'criticising the content of individual courses'. It was persuaded to write to Liverpool University confirming that it did not wish to see changes there, and was invited to Aberystwyth if it wished to comment on that course.¹⁴¹⁸ In 1975 Training Committee agreed that 'generally, the contents [of the diploma courses] were satisfactory but that there was a need for a constant watch and an interchange of ideas between the courses and between them and the profession'.¹⁴¹⁹

'Student associates'

In January 1976 the SoA adopted a new constitution which introduced student associate membership for 'persons undertaking a full time course of training recognised by the Council'.¹⁴²⁰ In order to fulfil the implied requirement, Council 'recognised the archive diploma courses of University College, London, the University of Liverpool, the University Colleges of Aberystwyth, Bangor and Dublin and the conservation training course provided at the Camberwell School for the purposes of article 5 of the new constitution'.¹⁴²¹ Although introduced for a specific purpose, 'recognition' began to take on a broader significance. Members made their views of the existing programmes known: for instance, in 1976, while agreeing that the courses were fundamentally useful, one Region criticised them for overemphasis on academic, medieval and central government issues, a lack of practical work, inadequate treatment of archive administration and lack of input from local authority archivists.¹⁴²²

A formal procedure for 'recognition' of training courses?

The significance of 'recognition' became clearer when Southlands College applied, and failed, to achieve recognition for its Diploma in 1979. Training Committee also refused to accept a representative from Southlands, even though 'no recognition or approval of the course would be implied by such representation'.¹⁴²³ Training Committee considered 'the question of introducing a more formal system of 'approving' training courses... but no recommendation [was] made'.¹⁴²⁴ The SoA was concerned 'to protect the profession first against new substandard courses and secondly against a possible proliferation of courses in a period of limited job opportunities'.¹⁴²⁵ The universities became anxious to resolve the

¹⁴¹⁶ Letter from F Hull to P Walne, nd, SA 88/4/1, LMA.

¹⁴¹⁷ Minutes 7 Feb 1973, SA 88/4/1, LMA. Letter from Maureen Patch to F Hull, 1 Jan 1975, and letter F Hull to P Walne, 7 Jan 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹⁴¹⁸ Minutes 19 Nov 1974, and letter from R F Walker, Aberystwyth, to P Walne, 23 Jan 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹⁴¹⁹ Minutes 14 March 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹⁴²⁰ SoA, Proposals by the Council for the revision of the constitution, 1975, in the possession of the author.

¹⁴²¹ Minutes 5 Feb 1975, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹⁴²² Note attached to agenda for Qualifications Sub-Committee minutes 23 Nov 1976, SA 88/4/2, LMA.

¹⁴²³ Minutes 29 March 1979, 21 June 1979, ^{SA 88/4/3}, LMA.

¹⁴²⁴ Minutes 21 June 1979, ^{SA 88/4/3}, LMA.

¹⁴²⁵ Progress report on recognition by RCD and AJEA, 21 April 1982, ^{SA 88/4/4}, LMA.

‘question of a formal procedure for Society ‘approval’ or ‘recognition’ of training courses’. A working group on Approval of Diploma Courses met.¹⁴²⁶

The group included two educators (Danbury and Vaisey) and two archivists (Ken Hall and Brian Smith). Their wide-ranging discussion paper suggested that the SoA should ‘encourage excellence and ... attempt to ensure that any new courses provide students with an adequate professional training’.¹⁴²⁷ It said that the SoA ‘does not formally approve or recognise courses’ and was ‘not... in a strong position to disapprove of any course nor to advise potential entrants to the profession or prospective employers that any particular course is inadequate or unsatisfactory’. However, ‘it would be in the interests both of the Society and potentially of the existing diploma courses, if some machinery existed for recognising courses as giving an adequate profession training for archivists’. A system of recognition (not approval) could be based on the prospectus, course curriculum and reports by examiners. Training Committee added that ‘visits to and discussion with course tutors’ were also desirable.¹⁴²⁸ Once recognition was given, a course would ‘only be reconsidered if any major change in the content or method of teaching is proposed’. Comparisons were made with the schemes operated by the LA and Institute of Information Scientists. In 1980 Training Committee recommended an outline scheme of recognition of university courses, although discussions about conflict resolution, appeals against SoA decisions and the consequences of non-recognition continued.¹⁴²⁹

Recognition of training courses

Monitoring Group was now charged with recognition of the university courses.¹⁴³⁰ As a ‘first step towards implementing the criteria for the recognition’ in 1981 it requested course prospectuses and documentation.¹⁴³¹ Comparisons were made of entry requirements, practical experience, subjects studied and examined, programme structure and contact hours. It also ‘agreed to investigate the possibility of meeting with those directly involved in the courses and visits to the relevant universities’.¹⁴³² By 1982 the architects of the scheme, Rosemary Dunhill and Amanda Arrowsmith, felt that a choice had to be made between completing the informal process and recommending that all the courses be recognised, abandoning the scheme, or introducing a rigorous formal system, with clearly established criteria, leading to accreditation by the SoA.¹⁴³³ The latter course was chosen:¹⁴³⁴ the criteria, based on the SoA’s own Diploma, established the ‘subjects with which qualified archivists must be conversant, but they did not of

¹⁴²⁶ Minutes 25 Oct 1979, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹⁴²⁷ Discussion paper, minutes 31 Jan 1980, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹⁴²⁸ Minutes 31 Jan 1980, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹⁴²⁹ Minutes 17 April 1980, 19 June 1980, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹⁴³⁰ Minutes 15 Oct 1980, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹⁴³¹ Minutes 2 April 1981, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹⁴³² Report of the Monitoring Group, 16 Sept 1981, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹⁴³³ Progress report on recognition by RCD and AJEA, 21 April 1982, SA 88/4/4, LMA.

¹⁴³⁴ Training Committee felt that informal recognition was adequate in the short term, minutes 29 April 1982, SA 88/4/4, LMA.

themselves form a syllabus'.¹⁴³⁵ They covered archives and archive administration (including records management) and archival techniques (palaeography, diplomatic, conservation and automation).¹⁴³⁶ All five traditional university courses (including Dublin which had quickly established its position but not Loughborough or Southlands College) applied for recognition and four were assessed in 1984 (Liverpool in 1985) by visits from members of the Assessment Team.¹⁴³⁷ In February 1985 Hull was able to announce 'that the four courses already assessed should qualify for recognition'.¹⁴³⁸

Maturity of 'recognition'

The SoA's recognition scheme for university programmes in archives was an important mark of the maturity of the professional body and of the profession itself. The universities invited professionals from the SoA and other bodies to advise them and provide expert teachers and examiners, but were understandably reluctant to give any rights of approval to an external body. The first round of recognition in 1976 was a formality for the established programmes and for the SoA. When the new and less familiar qualification at Southlands failed to achieve recognition in 1979 the process had to be scrutinised. The group which first recommended formal 'machinery for recognising courses' represented the universities and the SoA jointly. The details of the scheme were developed by Dunhill and Arrowsmith (both senior local archivists) in 1980-1982. They sought to make it rigorous and meaningful: the first round in 1984/85 gave the assessors a unique opportunity to review the state of archival education, enabled the universities and SoA to discuss problems and concerns and also spurred the SoA into revising its own Diploma. All five universities applying for recognition in 1984 were successful, signifying a large measure of common agreement between the profession and the universities about the adequacy of archival education.

Masters (MA/MSc) in Records Management at the University of Northumbria

In the 1980s and early 1990s significant educational and professional developments in records management occurred. The SoA's Records Management Group, which had been running short courses for several years, attempted unsuccessfully to establish Benedon's records management correspondence course, sponsored by ARMA in the USA, in the UK.¹⁴³⁹ The first UK textbook wholly devoted to records management was

¹⁴³⁵ Dunhill & Short, 45.

¹⁴³⁶ Subsequently detailed standards were published: Clare Rider 'Developing standards for professional education: the Society of Archivists' accreditation criteria' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 17 (1996), 85-95.

¹⁴³⁷ The first Assessment Team comprised F Hull, V W Gray, S C Newton, W A L Seaman, C M Short, D G Vaisey and chairman of Training Committee (R Dunhill) or Monitoring Group (A Arrowsmith), minutes 12 April 1984, SoA Training Committee, copy agendas, minutes and correspondence 1984-85, ^{SA 88/4/5}, LMA.

¹⁴³⁸ Minutes 28 Feb 1985, ^{SA 88/4/5}, LMA.

¹⁴³⁹ Papers for minutes 7 July 1983, ^{SA 88/4/4}, LMA. Correspondence between SoA and Derek Charman, ^{SA 88/4/5}, LMA.

published in 1989.¹⁴⁴⁰ The SoA and the RMS produced a report and model syllabus for records management which was widely discussed in professional and educational circles and influenced new course developments. Archivists, such as Peter Emmerson, made individual contributions to the debate about the scope of professional education.¹⁴⁴¹ He concluded that business archivists and records managers needed 'management skills, informed by professional training and tempered by academic awareness' and asked whether the existing professional training courses were adequate, especially in the area of records management. Emmerson also made his views known as part of the SoA accreditation team which visited the universities in 1990.

At the University of Northumbria at Newcastle a new MSc in Records and Information Management was introduced in the context of a library and information department in the early 1990s, the first new mainstream provision since UCD in 1972. Strongly influenced by the RMS/SoA syllabus and building on the strengths of the School, the programme viewed records management as a part of the management of information structures and sources rather than as a sub-set of archive administration. The academics concerned, Catherine Hare and Julie McLeod, engaged with both the information and the records management communities and established the credibility of the programme and its teachers. Northumbria looked to other information schools within Europe for development. In 1993 a survey of records management practices and training needs in the north east of England assisted Northumbria to market its new course and provided a basis for applied research in the discipline.¹⁴⁴² Hare and McLeod undertook the editorship of the *Records Management Journal* and began to publish articles and books.

In 1995 Northumbria established a project to consider continuing professional development in records management which identified the training needs of records managers, and sought 'to investigate practitioners' learning experiences..., to assess the suitability of existing learning materials and to identify appropriate delivery methods'.¹⁴⁴³ A graduate programme in records management, delivered by distance learning began in 1996.

The MA/MSc in Records Management took three years part-time and was aimed at graduates working in records management or information management. Learning was through paper and electronic materials, individual and group tutor support and a 'student learner network'. There was a residential school lasting four days each year. Assessment was by assignments or by submission of evidence for accreditation of prior experiential learning. Northumbria hoped to collaborate with European universities under the EU

¹⁴⁴⁰ Peter Emmerson ed *How to manage your records: a guide to effective practice* Cambridge: ICSA, 1989.

¹⁴⁴¹ Peter Emmerson 'Business archives and records management in professional training' *Business Archives Council Proceedings of the Annual Conference 1988* (1988), 46-59.

¹⁴⁴² J Tomlin 'Report on a survey of records management practice and training needs in North-East England' *Records Management Journal* 4 (1994): 25-38.

¹⁴⁴³ Julie McLeod 'Piloting a postgraduate distance learning course in records management for practising records managers' *Records Management Journal* 5 (1995): 61-78.

Socrates Fund.¹⁴⁴⁴ The syllabus was quite different from the traditional archive programmes. Students studied interpersonal skills, strategic approaches to management, information and storage retrieval and the lifecycle approach to records management. Year 2 courses included active records, non-current records, archives management, records management in an electronic environment and research methods for records management. Year 3 was a dissertation. The programme was accredited by the SoA.

Modernisation of archival education programmes 1980-2003

In the period after 1980 each of the established programmes changed significantly, reflecting the changes in the profession and in higher education.

Heads of Archive Training Courses meeting

Encouraged by the success of the SoA Training Committee, the university educators saw the value of meeting to exchange information and in 1978 Danbury and Myers convened a meeting of heads of archive training courses in Liverpool.¹⁴⁴⁵ The annual meeting became an important point of contact between the universities which otherwise concentrated on their own individual programmes. The meeting, and the chairmanship, rotated between the four British courses after the Bodleian Library scheme ended in 1980, although Dublin was invited from 1983.¹⁴⁴⁶ Northumbria joined the group from 1993. The first meeting considered the joint admission procedures, the conversion of the Liverpool diploma to an MA, whether there should be a national common core curriculum, student proficiency in Latin and a leaflet on archives as a career (written by Danbury and published by the SoA). The meetings frequently compared the quantity and quality of applicants ('a first impression is that quality is not very good. Numbers...are a drop from previous years'¹⁴⁴⁷ is typical) and showed that in the 1980s UCL generally received 80-90 applicants annually, Liverpool 40-50, while Bangor and Aberystwyth had about 12-15 each. The meeting was invaluable as the universities prepared for the SoA recognition process in 1984/85 and subsequently. In 1999 the meeting was superseded by the Forum for Archives and Records Management Education and Research in UK and Ireland (FARMER). The new body aimed to foster the discipline of archives and records management in an educational context by acting as a voice for educators and researchers, providing a forum for the exchange of best practice, facilitating the development of a national research strategy for the discipline and initiating joint research projects. FARMER subsequently established a student research prize (sponsored by the SoA) and sought funds for other projects.

¹⁴⁴⁴ Information from Catherine Hare, Senior Lecturer responsible for the MA and from publicity leaflets from the University of Northumbria, Department of Information and Library Management, 1996.

¹⁴⁴⁵ Minutes 5 Oct 1978, SA 88/4/3, LMA.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Correspondence: Heads of archives courses, 1980-86, ULivH.

¹⁴⁴⁷ Letter A G Watson, UCL to E Danbury, Liverpool, 4 Feb 1982, Correspondence with London, Aberystwyth and Bangor universities 1977-86, ULivH.

Bangor and the Masters in Archive Administration

From 1979 until he retired in 2001 Dr Carr had sole academic responsibility for the Diploma in the Welsh History Department. During the 1982-83 session, Carr tried to introduce a master's degree in archive administration, to replace the Diploma, in the University of Wales so that Welsh graduates would not be disadvantaged professionally.¹⁴⁴⁸ The proposal progressed well in the Bangor hierarchy during 1982 but by the time it arrived at Academic Board in 1983, Aberystwyth had raised concerns (including the practicality of introducing a thesis) and the proposals were rejected.

Even though the MA proposal failed, the Bangor Diploma continued in a revised form.¹⁴⁴⁹ Carr noted gaps such as business archives and audio-visual archives, and knew that computing and records management needed improvement.¹⁴⁵⁰ Traditional subjects (such as palaeography, diplomatic and archive administration) were retained and records management developed as a separate course. Computer applications were more fully treated. A new course, the study of records, and special studies were added.

Long periods of service by key staff in the Department of Welsh History and in the College Library, such as Usher, Carr and Giles-Jones, and their dedication to the archives Diploma, even though it was not their main responsibility, ensured the stability and long term development of the course and enabled it to survive many threats.¹⁴⁵¹ Bangor narrowly survived budget cuts in the 1980s. In November 1986 Carr wrote 'Panic over. I have today been told that there can be no question of discontinuing the Bangor archive course'.¹⁴⁵² Sadly the retirement of Carr in 2001 led to the suspension in 2002, and eventual closure, of the archives programme, finally resolving the anomaly of two Welsh courses, for two decades half of all national provision for archival education.

Aberystwyth

With the encouragement of the SoA, Aberystwyth developed new courses in basic computing (1986) and computing in archives (1989), introduced field trips in London and Manchester, while still maintaining traditional subjects such as palaeography.¹⁴⁵³ The University Grants Committee Working Party on Palaeography report in 1988 proposed strengthening national (UK) provision for palaeography and

¹⁴⁴⁸ Paper by A D Carr on the proposed Magister Degree in Archive Administration, 22 Sept 1983, Archives: General Correspondence 1982-83, UWB.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Postgraduate Diploma in Archive Administration syllabus leaflet, 1985, UWB.

¹⁴⁵⁰ Paper by A D Carr on the review of the Diploma, 10 Aug 1983, Archives: General Correspondence 1982-83, UWB.

¹⁴⁵¹ Williams-Jones and Carr are thanked 'for their substantial and wholly voluntary contribution to the course for the Diploma in Palaeography and Archives Administration', UCNW, Annual Report 1976-77: 48, UWB.

¹⁴⁵² Letter from A D Carr to E Danbury, 21 Nov 1986, Correspondence: Heads of archive courses, including annual minutes to 1986, 1980-86, ULivH.

¹⁴⁵³ Houlton: 16, 24.

appointing Aberystwyth a 'centre of excellence' for Wales, thus emphasising the value of archive studies.¹⁴⁵⁴

In 1989, a new lecturer, Clare Clubb,¹⁴⁵⁵ was appointed, to take over Dr Walker's responsibilities. In spite of the recommendation of the Working Party on Palaeography that Walker should be replaced by a palaeographical expert, Clubb was a young professional archivist. Clubb was the first of several appointments to university posts of professionally qualified and experienced staff who took an interest in archival education from a professional viewpoint, often playing an active role within the SoA or RMS. None had previously held an academic post nor had a PhD (although Clubb, and others, completed a PhD while in post). What they brought was a fresh view of the role of archival education and an understanding of professional requirements which was at that time lacking in many of the universities.

In 1990 Clubb identified many problems with the programme, including overlap between courses, a lack of time for reading and the failure of the programme to cater for students without Latin.¹⁴⁵⁶ She proposed better integration, a new course in study of records, a non-Latin option, more time given to computing and records management (to be taught for the first time by an academic at Aberystwyth), more variety in assessment and a review of the requirement to viva all candidates. In 1993 the course moved to the Department of Information and Library Studies, with continuing input from the Department of History and Welsh History. The revitalised programme attracted higher numbers of students (18 in 1996/97, compared with 10 in 1990/91)¹⁴⁵⁷ and, in spite of some setbacks caused by staffing changes, laid the foundations for the expansion of the discipline. Her successors, Robert Chell (1993-98) and Mary Ellis (from 1998), together with the long serving Susan Davies (1979-present), built on these changes.

Liverpool

The practical element of the Liverpool programme was boosted by the addition of a visit to London from 1976, later expanded to include the PRO, HMC and BL,¹⁴⁵⁸ and from 1980 a weekly period at a local record office.¹⁴⁵⁹ The syllabus continued along traditional lines, although computer applications were added in the revision of 1982 when the qualification became a Masters (without a thesis). In the early 1980s, 10-12 students graduated annually, mainly going into temporary posts, but by 1991, 15 students graduated and the tutor commented 'there were more posts than young archivists this year'.¹⁴⁶⁰ Danbury and Cook continued to be innovative: European Social Funds supported three students annually from 1991, a bid with

¹⁴⁵⁴ Houlton: 15.

¹⁴⁵⁵ Clare Clubb later became Dr Clare Rider.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Discussion Document: Proposals for Diploma in Archive Administration 1991/92 by CMC [Clare Clubb], May 1990, Archives: General Correspondence: 1989-90, UWB.

¹⁴⁵⁷ Houlton: 29.

¹⁴⁵⁸ Letter from Danbury to DES, 2 Oct 1978, DES Correspondence, 1976-81, ULivH.

¹⁴⁵⁹ Prospectus [1980], Archive prospectuses 1980-88, ULivH.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Copy letter from Danbury to C Kitching, HMC, 10 April 1985, DES Correspondence, 1982-85, ULivH. Minutes 24 Sept 1991, Correspondence: Heads of archive courses 1987-92, ULivH.

the Language Centre for a French language training course for archivists in 1992 succeeded and in 1993 funding for a seminar series on archives and the user was secured. The Scottish Archive Training School (SATS) was founded in 1982 by a consortium led by Liverpool University with the Scottish Record Office and Glasgow University as a two week course funded by the University Grants Committee New Fund.¹⁴⁶¹ It ran biennially to train archivists who wished to work in Scotland, partly acting as a 'conversion course' for Diplomates from English and Welsh universities. By 1994 proposals for a new post of lecturer in archive administration at Liverpool were being discussed, which led to the appointment of Caroline Williams from Cheshire Record Office in 1996, just prior to the departure of Danbury for UCL.¹⁴⁶²

Society of Archivists Diploma

From 1980 the SoA Diploma offered an alternative to full-time study at a university for candidates already in post, especially for those in local government archives. Ten students successfully completed the Diploma in the first examination in 1983. In 1984 Wolsey Hall withdrew from the course, mainly because the small numbers of students made it economically unviable, and the SoA took on its full administration.¹⁴⁶³ The SoA inherited the printed notes, administered the new intake of students and set the fee at £300.¹⁴⁶⁴ The Diploma had not only fulfilled its purpose of providing training and qualification for those working in the profession without either, but it had also given the SoA experience of teaching archive administration and of developing a major project.¹⁴⁶⁵

When the SoA undertook the recognition of the university programmes in 1984-85 it became clear that its own Diploma should be reviewed. Monitoring Group reported that 'we could no longer avoid the need to re-examine the course...The next round of assessment visits to the university courses is getting closer and we felt that we could hardly look to them to have made changes if we fail to do so ourselves'.¹⁴⁶⁶ The employment market had entirely changed in a decade and graduates from the universities now found it difficult to get suitable jobs. Should the Diploma continue to accept archive assistants or return to the original aim to 'provide a qualification for those already in a professional post, not to act as an additional means of entry to the profession'?¹⁴⁶⁷ Employers could generally recruit qualified archivists although some

¹⁴⁶¹ Copy letter from Danbury to Carr, 18 Aug 1981 enclosing letter from Andrew Broom, SRO, in which he agrees to run the course in 1982, following the pilot with Liverpool students in 1980, Correspondence: Heads of archive courses, 1980-86, ULivH.

¹⁴⁶² Minutes 27 June 1991, 2 July 1992, 1 July 1993, 24 June 1994, Committee on archives course: minutes of meetings 1983-95, ULivH.

¹⁴⁶³ Wolsey Hall had been given estimates of 30 archivists initially, with ongoing numbers of 3 to 6, notes 10 Oct 1975, ^{SA 88/4/2}, LMA. Minutes 5 July 1984, ^{SA 88/4/3}, LMA.

¹⁴⁶⁴ Minutes 5 July 1984, ^{SA 88/4/3}, LMA.

¹⁴⁶⁵ Dunhill & Short, 45.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Letter from R Dunhill to M Roper, 18 Oct 1987, Task Force to review correspondence course 1987-88, SA 90/7/7, LMA.

¹⁴⁶⁷ Minutes 24 Sept 1981, ^{SA 88/4/4}, LMA. Minutes 15 March 1988, SA 90/7/7, LMA.

sectors (businesses and specialist bodies) still recruited unqualified staff. The SoA wanted to continue to offer an alternative for those who could not take a full-time programme in one of the few universities.¹⁴⁶⁸

In 1988 the syllabus and examinations were thoroughly reviewed and the high dropout rate addressed.¹⁴⁶⁹ In the short term the number of essays was reduced, bibliographies updated and supplementary text written. The course was restructured and extensively revised with the advice of the universities and working archivists. After frequent delays, the course was finally relaunched in 1994.¹⁴⁷⁰ The course organisation was also reviewed and the roles of the course director, diploma course committee, board of studies, board of examiners and external examiner clarified.

In 1995 the course had 49 registered students, a similar number to the total output from all the university courses together in a year. Originally students were from local government record offices, with a tiny number from universities, businesses or specialist bodies. By 1995 there were substantial numbers from the specialist sectors, including business. Relations between the course director (Brian Barber in succession to Robinson, then Susan Healy) and the university tutors were cordial. In the mid-1990s there were inconclusive discussions about seeking accreditation for the SoA Diploma, either from a group of university academics (in a mirror of the SoA recognition process) or by an external auditor, perhaps the Open University. By 2000 the programme again needed revision and updating but on this occasion both the profession and educational delivery had moved on too far for the SoA to bridge the gap with its limited resources. After much deliberation, and in view of the likely new provision of distance learning courses by Aberystwyth and in Scotland, the SoA did not recruit students for the 2000 intake and announced its decision to close the programme the following year.

Accreditation

The university recognition process was planned to be quinquennial, so in 1989 preparations were made for a second round.¹⁴⁷¹ After a preliminary meeting of assessors and university tutors, the visits took place in March 1990. Three assessors visited each university over a period of two days, using the criteria drawn up in 1984. In 1987 the SoA had introduced its professional Register and if a university course now failed to be recognised, its graduates would not be eligible for registration. The outcome in 1990 was a test of the SoA's position because two of the five programmes did not achieve full recognition. Liverpool, Dublin and Aberystwyth were recognised for a further five years, but Bangor only received provisional recognition dependent on upgrading of computer teaching (which it did in 1992). The UCL programme was only given provisional recognition for one year. UCL felt that the SoA report was 'neither constructive nor helpful': the decision not to recognise the programme led to a major row between the SoA and UCL. However, in

¹⁴⁶⁸ Report of the Task Force, 1988, SA 90/7/7, LMA.

¹⁴⁶⁹ Report of the Task Force, SA 90/7/7, LMA.

¹⁴⁷⁰ The last revised course notes were published in 1996.

¹⁴⁷¹ Dunhill & Short, 48-50.

spite of much personal disquiet and disagreement, UCL as an institution accepted that if the programme was to continue it had to meet the SoA's standards. It recruited new staff and totally restructured its teaching in order to achieve recognition.

UCL

UCL's Diploma had changed little between 1970 and 1990: it still provided a wide range of options, many visiting lecturers and part-time study. The appointment of diplomatic historian and former archivist Jane Sayers in 1977 did not prevent the calcification of the UCL programme at a period when it needed to evolve and ultimately resulted in the failure to achieve recognition in 1990. Sayers, as Tutor, and Watson, as Director, were dismayed that the positive report given by the SoA in 1984 was not repeated six years later. The SoA criticised the programme for being 'too academic', taking insufficient account of the managerial aspects of archival work, for failing to 'recognise the increasing importance of records management' and for failures in the selection process which led to inappropriate students being accepted. The report also criticised the lack of coherence of the programme, poor communication between part-time lecturers and a bias towards the medieval period and old fashioned skills, such as calendaring.¹⁴⁷² Most of these criticisms would also have been true in 1984, but by 1990 the profession (and other universities) had evolved. UCL had not.

In 1990 the newly appointed Director of the School, Robin Alston, addressed the problem aggressively. He convened a committee representing the profession to advise on a major programme revision, chaired by Michael Roper and including the banking archivist, Alan Cameron, chairman of the SoA Training Committee. However, Sayers was reluctant to make significant changes to the programme and implementation of the proposals was contingent on a new staff appointment.¹⁴⁷³ The author was appointed in August 1992. During the appointment process, Anne Thurston became involved in the programme review. Thurston had developed her distinctive approach to records during a Leverhulme-funded project, 1984-88, to design a new programme for overseas students, the MA in Overseas Records Management and Archives Administration, building on the experience within the School since 1970 of educating overseas archivists. During the summer of 1992 Thurston and the author consulted dozens of professionals and designed a totally new programme structure based around the records continuum and taught in modules. The new MA/Diploma in Archives and Records Management was introduced in 1993. It gave much greater weight to records management, reduced the time devoted to palaeography, diplomatic and history, completely revised the teaching of archival description and dramatically cut the optional elements of the programme. In addition, practical placements were increased with the inclusion of an end-of-year group records project, based on Thurston's international projects. The SoA revisited in 1993 and approved the

¹⁴⁷² Minutes 17 Oct 1990, AC 8/34/1/4, ULL.

¹⁴⁷³ Minutes 5 Feb 1992, AC 8/34/1/4, ULL.

changes.¹⁴⁷⁴ The curriculum review was undertaken in the context of new University thinking about concurrent qualifications and the introduction of experimental modular programmes within UCL. In 1995-96 a modular framework embracing a Certificate, Diploma and MA was introduced.¹⁴⁷⁵

Research

Very gradually the universities developed research programmes in archives and records management. Higher research degrees were available in London from 1966 but few archivists took them. Many academics were individual scholars researching allied subjects such as diplomatic and history. In the 1980s at Liverpool Cook undertook funded research projects in archival description (resulting in the publication of *MAD*) and Danbury obtained grants to supervise survey and listing projects for the European Economic Community and the European Coal and Steel Committee. In 1997-98 Northumbria was a partner in a European-funded curriculum project RECPRO, which 'developed proposals for change in archives and records management teaching that took into account ... the digital environment'.¹⁴⁷⁶ This was followed by e-TERM (European Training in Electronic Records Management), also European-funded, which included UCL and Northumbria in a group of six partners from five European countries. E-TERM aimed 'to design a trans-national vocational training course in the management of electronic records to meet the needs of administrators, information professionals, archivists and records managers'.¹⁴⁷⁷ UCL also ran UK-funded projects including a developing country records management study, funded by Leverhulme in the 1980s under Dr Anne Thurston, and in 2001 under Professor Susan Hockey, LEADERS, a web-based demonstrator system which brought together encoded archival finding aids, transcriptions of records, contextual information on the persons and organisations involved and digital images for the specialist user.¹⁴⁷⁸ Such projects brought external funds and staff, academic respectability to teaching-led departments and encouraged publication. Collaborative research projects enabled the discipline to develop new skills and knowledge.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Minutes 15 June 1993, AC 8/34/1/4, ULL.

¹⁴⁷⁵ UCL Report of the working group on modular Master's Degrees and cumulative awards⁽¹⁹⁹⁵⁾ and Report of the working group on concurrent awards⁽¹⁹⁹⁴⁾ and Guidelines on modular programmes at graduate level (1997), SLAIS.

¹⁴⁷⁶ RECPRO at http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/faculties/art/information_studies/imri/rarea/rm/rmproj/rmcomp/recpro/recpro.htm, accessed 23/09/03. Marjo Valtonen, Catherine Hare, Peter Horsman and Volker Schokenhoff, 'RECPRO - developing a European records management programme' *Records Management Journal* 8 (1998): 55-61.

¹⁴⁷⁷ E-TERM at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/e-term/>, accessed on 02/09/03. Elizabeth Shepherd 'Report on the proposal for a European training project for administrators, archivists and information managers: E-term' *Proceedings of the DLM-Forum on electronic records. European citizens and electronic information: the memory of the Information Society Brussels 18-19 October 1999* Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities (2000): 244-249.

¹⁴⁷⁸ LEADERS project (Linking Encoded Archival Description to Electronically Retrievable Sources) at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/leaders-project/>, accessed 23/09/03.

External influences

Central government policy changes began to affect higher education. In 1995 a policy of ‘lifetime learning’ was announced which encouraged adults to continue their education and training throughout their working lives.¹⁴⁷⁹ Finance for continuing education through tax relief, career development loans and government funding for training was released. The Dearing Report on Higher Education (1997) recommended a national framework for educational achievement, embracing both academic and vocational qualifications.¹⁴⁸⁰ Higher education was also subject to increasingly rigorous inspection of teaching (Teaching Quality Assessment/ Subject Review in 1998-2001) and research (Research Assessment Exercise periodically from 1989).¹⁴⁸¹ Archive and records programmes and research did not fit neatly into the assessment categories, sometimes being included with history, sometimes with information studies and sometimes omitted entirely. In addition the European intergovernmental process to establish a European standard in higher education (the ‘Bologna Process’), begun in 1999 and due to be completed by 2010, proposes a European qualification framework in which Masters programmes take two years and are an essential pre-requisite of entry to a PhD programme.¹⁴⁸² If fully adopted in the UK, this will clearly alter the professional qualification route for archivists and records managers.

New vocational qualifications developed. Scottish/National Vocational Qualifications (S/NVQs) were based on occupational standards of competence set by practitioners in an area of work, and overseen by a Lead Body which represented employers, educators and trainers in the sector.¹⁴⁸³ S/NVQs for archive services and for records management were published in 1996.¹⁴⁸⁴ These frameworks provided flexible ways of achieving qualifications (rather than the traditional route through a first degree and a graduate qualification) and aimed to reduce the distinctions between professional and para-professional work. The take up of archive services and records management S/NVQs was very low, partly because the archive and records management domain was divided between two lead bodies (cultural heritage and information services). Initiatives to help young people to train for work, such as Modern Apprenticeships, offered training leading to NVQs.¹⁴⁸⁵ S/NVQs for the domain were suspended in 2003 but the more flexible approach to education and qualification influenced university provision.¹⁴⁸⁶

¹⁴⁷⁹ Tony Tysome ‘Launch of plan to learn for life’ *Times Higher Education Supplement* (October 1995).

¹⁴⁸⁰ United Kingdom. National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education. *Report* London: HMSO, 1997. (Chairman, Ron Dearing. The Dearing Report) at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/ncihe/>, accessed 25/07/97.

¹⁴⁸¹ United Kingdom. Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education *Subject Review Handbook 2000-2001* Gloucester: QAA, 2000.

¹⁴⁸² UCL *Green paper: UCL in the 21st century* (2004): 16-17.

¹⁴⁸³ Definition given at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/nvq/what.shtml>, accessed 22/09/03.

¹⁴⁸⁴ Royal Society of Arts Examinations Board *NVQ in Records Services/Management Scheme Booklets level 2-4* Coventry: RSA, 1996. Royal Society of Arts Examinations Board *NVQ in Archive Services Scheme Booklets level 2-4* Coventry: RSA, 1996.

¹⁴⁸⁵ <https://www.realworkrealpay.info/lsc/default>, accessed 22/09/03.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Catherine Hare ‘Records NVQs – success tinged with sadness’ *RMS Newsletter* 70 (2003): 4.

The advent of Resource in 2000 as the strategic body to deliver government objectives in the archives, libraries and museums domain (which has been discussed in chapter 2) introduced a new factor in education and training. Resource inherited responsibility for the two national training organisations which spanned its interests: information services (ISNTO) and cultural heritage (CHNTO). Sector Skills Councils were gradually established to replace NTOs after 2002 but disagreements continued over the scope of the successor bodies and about which best represented the sector.¹⁴⁸⁷ It was not clear at the time of writing what role (if any) Resource will have in regulating qualifications in the sector.

In the early 2000s, the costs of higher education increasingly make a full-time programme financially difficult. Archive students often have to work while studying, with little prospect of a well-paid job at the end. State bursaries for full-time students have been under threat for years: part-timers get no financial support. The European Social Fund provided some additional funds in the 1990s. In 1997 bursaries were transferred to the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) which initially provided a greater number to well qualified archive applicants, but after 2001 numbers declined as the AHRB focused on funding research. Economies of scale for intensively taught humanities courses such as archives are difficult for the universities to demonstrate. Modular and open and distance learning courses are being introduced to bring increased flexibility to students and to ensure effective use of teaching resources. Archive and records management jobs are diversifying into new employment sectors with specialist needs, such as charities and scientific archives. The role of the archivist in traditional sectors such as local government is more varied than before: the university programmes have responded by diversifying their provision and offering more specialist courses.

Social factors have increased the demand for flexible study. Students need to balance work, study, family and leisure. Graduates are coming into archival careers later, perhaps after a career break or working in another sector, and are not able to move to the few universities offering archive courses. New delivery mechanisms using information and communication technologies have emerged and most people have access to computers at home or work. The technology itself has become more sophisticated, allowing interactive programs and a variety of modes of information searching and delivery.

The professional bodies have supported training and educational development. The SoA has developed a registration scheme with a structured individual development portfolio, an online continuing professional development guide,¹⁴⁸⁸ a continuing professional development policy,¹⁴⁸⁹ a regular programme of training

¹⁴⁸⁷ Resource supported the cultural and creative industries proposal, the LA backed the information services proposal, SoA and NCA supported both. United Kingdom. Re:source, The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries *Response to the Department for Education & Employment consultation paper Building a stronger network: developing the role of the National Training Organisations* (April 2001) at <http://www.resource.gov.uk/information/policy/responses/ntosap01.asp>, accessed 22/09/03.

¹⁴⁸⁸ Society of Archivists *Online continuing professional development guide* (2003) at <http://www.archives.org.uk/cpd/index.>, accessed 02/09/03.

events organised by a Training Officer, and a respected accreditation scheme for first professional qualifications offered by the universities.¹⁴⁹⁰ The resignation of the Training Officer led to a review of training provision by the SoA in 2003.¹⁴⁹¹ Other professional bodies also provide specialist short courses and conferences, notably the BAC, RMS and BRA.

The 1990s

Considerable changes occurred in the university programmes in the 1990s. Professionally qualified staff (rather than academics) were appointed in London in 1992, Aberystwyth in 1989, 1994 and 1998 and Liverpool in 1996 and 1998. The Liverpool, Aberystwyth and UCL programmes underwent revision. The programmes in Bangor and Dublin both offered their students extensive practical experience although their teaching changed more slowly. The pressures of the attempt to provide a complete programme of study in a quickly changing profession in one year were beginning to show. Questions about what could be included were discussed: could beginner's Latin be taught?, should medieval palaeography become an option?, what about management and communication skills?, how to include the wider information world?, what about international perspectives?

New records and archives programmes developed, often using new methods of delivery, while traditional programmes changed more quickly. For example, UCL increased access to the MA/Diploma in Archives and Records Management through a joint project with the PRO in 1995-97, to provide the qualification to staff by teaching in-house at the PRO.¹⁴⁹² In 1997/98 a para-professional Certificate in archives and records management for PRO staff was provided by Liverpool University. Liverpool and Northumbria, together with UCL, developed a programme of education and training for government records staff in 1999, rm3.¹⁴⁹³ It offered short courses, individual module certificates and a Diploma or Certificate in Professional Studies: Records and Information Management.

At Liverpool University a Centre for Archive Studies was set up in 1996 as an umbrella for research and training activities.¹⁴⁹⁴ Its graduate programmes were restructured and additional options were offered in collaboration with John Moores University and the BAC. It began to offer short courses, to recruit students from overseas and started a publications programme.

¹⁴⁸⁹ Society of Archivists *Developing excellence: continuing professional development* London: Society of Archivists, 2002.

¹⁴⁹⁰ Vaisey 'Archive training': 231-236.

¹⁴⁹¹ CILIP Consultancy Services 'Society of Archivists: future strategic development and delivery options for training' report outline, Sept 2003, in the possession of the author.

¹⁴⁹² Elizabeth Shepherd 'Partnerships in professional education: a study in archives and records management' *Records Management Journal* 8 (1998): 19-37.

¹⁴⁹³ University of Liverpool, rm3 programme, at http://www.liv.ac.uk/lucas/rm3_files/rm3partnership.htm, accessed 22/09/03.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Caroline Williams 'Archival training at the University of Liverpool' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 18 (1997): 181-188

Two further rounds of accreditation by the SoA were undertaken in 1995 and in 2001.¹⁴⁹⁵ Bangor and UCL had been revisited and they fitted back into the timetable. The SoA revised and reissued its criteria.¹⁴⁹⁶ The 1995 visits were more genuinely cooperative than earlier rounds and the SoA expressed the view ‘that each of the course directors possessed a sound awareness of the needs of our profession and was committed to providing appropriately-trained professionals’ in spite of ‘limitations of finance, staffing or accommodation’.¹⁴⁹⁷ all the programmes were recognised. The programmes suffered from being small subjects in larger academic departments (whether library studies or history). Perennial problems emerged, such as the lack of archive-specific software for teaching; the need to employ a wide range of teachers to cover the subject area; the dependence on the goodwill of professionals who offered practicals, visits and lectures to students; the heavy workload of the one or two academic staff responsible for the programmes; and lack of funds, both for the courses and to support the study of students.

After the 2001 visits (which included Northumbria) the SoA proposed that in the light of swifter changes in programmes and staffing, research projects and higher education audits and assessments, a rolling programme of recognition would be introduced. Universities could request re-accreditation as appropriate to meet internal timetables, so long as a period of no more than five years had elapsed.

During the 1990s the accreditation process was used as a mutually beneficial and developmental tool and both the SoA and the universities respected the professionalism of the other party. By 2001 it had become clear what a significant undertaking accreditation was for the SoA, relying on voluntary officers: in future, the SoA will have to consider employing a paid executive to manage education and professional development issues. As the NCA quickly gained ground as the policy body for the sector, the SoA also considered closer alignment with the NCA over educational accreditation.¹⁴⁹⁸ For the universities, a more flexible system of accreditation is needed than could be provided by quinquennial visitation. In future, accreditation might be applied to full programmes, pathways or single modules and take place on a schedule which mirrors educational changes at the universities, which are more frequent and fundamental than in the past.

Educational developments in 2000s

Higher education provision for archives changed significantly in the 2000s, with new staff teaching on traditional archive courses and universities such as Glasgow offering new programmes. By 2002 provision

¹⁴⁹⁵ David Robinson ‘Post-graduate courses in archive administration and records management in the UK and Ireland 1995: an overview’ *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 17 (1996): 73-84.

¹⁴⁹⁶ Rider, 85-95.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Robinson: 75.

¹⁴⁹⁸ Already foreshadowed in the person of Margaret Turner, chair of the SoA Accreditation Team in 2001, secretary of NCA and principal investigator of the Archives Workforce Study 2003.

was significantly altered by the closure of two of the six established archival programmes (Bangor in 2002 and the SoA diploma in 2000) and the beginning of a new distance learning programme at Aberystwyth.¹⁴⁹⁹ Resource's Archives Task Force investigations into education and training in 2003 promised further changes, although these had not been published in full at the time of writing.

Expansion of provision

A number of universities investigated open and distance learning as a mechanism by which to offer new and established programmes. UCL researched distance education and accreditation of prior learning models in 1995 and a template for digital delivery of modules in 2003.¹⁵⁰⁰ Northumbria offers customised training for organisations in-house (such as the BBC, Deutsche Bank, and the University of Cork). Students can put the courses towards a Lifelong Learning Award, a form of continuing professional development.¹⁵⁰¹ The programme is supported at a distance by Northumbria's e-learning platform, email and the Learning Resources e-gateway.

The University of Wales at Aberystwyth started a Masters in records management through its Open Learning Unit in 1999 to complement its campus-based Masters in archive administration (in modular form since 1995) and in records management (begun in 1997). From 2002 it offered a Diploma/MScEcon in Archive Administration by distance learning.¹⁵⁰² Distance students learn through printed study packs, learning resources and conferencing on Gwylan (the computer conferencing facility). In addition students have to attend study schools in Aberystwyth and London. The programme has proved extremely popular and attracted record numbers of applicants.

Increasingly the technology itself became part of the subject area and stimulated new aspects of study. All the university archive and records management programmes have incorporated the study of digital records and archives into their curricula. The most direct specialist response in the university sector is the graduate (MPhil) programme in digital management and preservation at the University of Glasgow which aims to enable students 'to manage digital information resources and electronic records in records centres, libraries and archives'.¹⁵⁰³ The University archives and business record centre also offers short courses and summer

¹⁴⁹⁹ Mary Ellis & Anna Greening 'Archival training in 2002: between a rock and a hard place' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 23 (2003): 197. Anna Greening 'A force for sensitive change towards a cross-sectoral national training strategy' MSc Diss. University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2003: 53.

¹⁵⁰⁰ Elizabeth Shepherd 'Continuing vocational education: a project progress report from University College London' *Records Management Journal* 7 (1997): 131-146.

¹⁵⁰¹ University of Northumbria, Lifelong Learning Award, at http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/faculties/art/information_studies/index.htm, accessed 22/09/03.

¹⁵⁰² University of Wales at Aberystwyth, at http://www.dil.aber.ac.uk/dils/Prospective_Students/Index.htm, accessed 22/09/03.

¹⁵⁰³ Offered by the University of Glasgow, Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute, <http://www.hatii.arts.gla.ac.uk/courses/chc.htm>, accessed 23/09/03.

schools. Although the MPhil has established an excellent international reputation, by 2003 it was not seen as a UK professional qualification and has not sought SoA recognition.

In 1999 the Scottish Postgraduate Archives Training Project was developed by the SoA Scotland to investigate the viability of a Scottish-based graduate course for archivists and records managers. The project recommended the establishment of a Scottish-based programme (although UK-wide) delivered by a consortium of universities or by distance learning.¹⁵⁰⁴ The programme was not operational by late 2003, although the University of Glasgow plans to start a two year campus based part-time programme in 2004.

Resource's *Action plan* for archives indicated in 2001 that a key priority was 'promoting training, career development and skills'.¹⁵⁰⁵ It announced a study of archive recruitment and training (the Archives Workforce Project, 2002-2003) and a broader needs assessment review for archives (which became the Archives Task Force (ATF) in 2002). ATF considered the education, training and development of the profession.¹⁵⁰⁶ Its discussion document accepted the success of universities in attracting high calibre students to their programmes (and thus into the profession), acknowledged the increased flexibility offered by open and distance learning and modular programmes, recognised the quality assurance regimes in place in higher education and noted the wide range of skills and competencies delivered. However, it called on the universities to involve working professionals more in education, suggesting that universities 'delegate a proportion of the training to archival institutions and organisations' and develop 'accreditation of placements, secondments and internships'. It called for new provision of undergraduate study, para-professional training and higher level qualifications. It proposed a framework for progression through five levels of education and training, ranging from training for unqualified clerical assistants to strategic/leadership qualifications for high flyers. This sought to address the skills shortage in the profession rather than to create a coherent educational structure and was more of a workforce framework than an educational one. The extent to which the discussion will be reflected in the recommendations of the ATF was unknown at the time of writing.

Educational provision for archives and records management in 2003

Educational provision is offered by a small number of universities, mainly as a broad-based graduate level first professional qualification, with some specialisation (for example in records management at Northumbria or digital preservation at Glasgow). In addition some universities provide higher qualifications by research (especially UCL), while others offer undergraduate level programmes (Liverpool and Northumbria). All programmes struggle to include in a single year sufficient practical work, theory and

¹⁵⁰⁴ Frank Rankin *Scottish postgraduate archives training project report* (2002) at <http://www.archives.gla.ac.uk/hostsite/publish.html#spat>, accessed 02/09/02.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Re:source *Action plan*: 14.

¹⁵⁰⁶ United Kingdom. Re:source, The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries *Archives Task Force: education, training and development discussion document* (May 2003) at http://www.resource.gov.uk/documents/atf_dis06a.doc, accessed 31/07/03.

classroom study and, in the Masters programmes, a thesis. Programmes are offered in a range of modes, including on-campus teaching, workplace learning, open and distance learning (notably at Northumbria and Aberystwyth) and full-time and part-time. The closure of two programmes (Bangor and the SoA) in 2000-2002 and constraints on numbers in most other programmes have resulted in a shortfall of numbers of new entrants to the profession. The universities increasingly offer short courses and summer schools which provide continuing professional development, although not as part of a co-ordinated national picture. University provision is responsive to employer and professional needs, although working within the constraints of higher education policy and practice and individual institutional priorities. The universities do meet and exchange ideas and there are some collaborative projects (E-TERM and rm3) but in the main each pursues its own programme development independently. In spite of links with universities in Europe and in Africa through research, alumni and teaching, archival education is essentially UK-focused, as is the profession.

Conclusion

Between 1947 and 1972 six universities established archive programmes with similar objectives and curricula. These programmes catered for the traditional archival market in local government and did not supply professionals to the PRO or make many concessions for specialist markets such as business archives. The education and training of business archivists was led by the BAC in collaboration with other professional bodies and occasionally with a higher education institution. Southlands College made a serious attempt to start a new programme in 1976 aimed at business archives and at those already working in the sector. However the proposal was not welcomed by UCL or by the SoA, who viewed the programme as below standard. Southlands did not have staff experienced in the subject (relying on employing a specialist tutor for one day a week) but it also suffered because the SoA and universities had a limited view of what was acceptable in an archive education programme and were not supportive of new entrants or initiatives. Loughborough University also developed a new programme in the 1970s but it did not foster a close relationship with the SoA and it too did not join the mainstream providers, eventually concentrating on the overseas market and closing in 1993.

Limited competition between the universities led to a lack of differentiation and a focus on traditional core skills. Specialist areas were largely ignored: this stance was encouraged by the SoA, itself dominated by local authority archivists. A longer term consequence was that the profession maintained an exclusive view of its boundaries, largely excluding specialist archives. Professionals were often reluctant to work in new areas, thus hampering their wider development. Specialist archives were only slowly embraced within the archive community: for example, film and sound archives were not represented in the SoA until 1994 nor on NCA until 2002 and community archives were still considered by many to be outside the profession at the time of writing.

The influence of the BRA, so crucial to the beginning of university archival education in the UK, waned in the 1960s and the SoA began to take the lead. The SoA established formal structures to consult and develop education policy. It also took the initiative to fill a gap in provision by enabling working archivists to qualify through its correspondence Diploma. The SoA's Diploma enabled many to qualify who had joined the profession at a time when qualification was not essential or who were unable or unwilling to attend a university full-time. The Diploma also gave the SoA the confidence to address the accreditation of the university programmes.

Recognition by the profession of the adequacy of the gateway through which most of its entrants came was an important part of the maturity of the profession. In the past universities were relied on to select and educate those seeking to enter the profession. It was not an exclusive gateway (the PRO recruited mainly historians through the civil service and specialist repositories often chose staff with other skills) but increasingly it became the usual route to the largest part of the domain, local government archives. Initially universities invited individual professionals to advise and to teach. By the 1970s something more formal was needed: the SoA believed that it should establish a corporate view of the university programmes and some working archivists felt that the universities were unresponsive to professional needs. Matters came to a head when the SoA introduced student associate membership in 1976 which was limited to students on courses 'recognised by the Council'. Over the next decade a recognition process was developed jointly by the universities and the SoA (which relied greatly on the expertise and advice of the university academics): in the first round in 1984/85 all five universities were approved.

The advent of records management as a distinct part of the discipline had two important consequences for education. First, Northumbria began new programmes which took an entirely fresh approach to archives and records management. The programmes, influenced by the RMS, focused on records and information rather than historical archives and showed that this approach could be made to work in complement to the traditional archive qualifications. Secondly the traditional programmes all modernised to take account of the new significance of records management. Some, such as Liverpool, evolved gradually, expanding the teaching of records management while retaining an essentially archival perspective. Others, such as UCL after 1990, were altered more radically, embracing records and archives as equal partners. Aberystwyth took the route of separate but parallel qualifications focusing either on archives or on records. Some programmes did not have the resources to undertake the necessary modernisation. The Bodleian Library scheme ended in 1980 and two more (Bangor and the SoA) closed in the early 2000s.

The archive programmes were shaped (and often constrained) by their place within the university. None was a free-standing national school (on the continental models such as Marburg or the Ecole des Chartes). Some were in departments of history (Liverpool, Bangor and, for most of its life, Aberystwyth), some in

library and information studies departments (UCL, Loughborough, Northumbria) and some attached to the university archive (Dublin, Glasgow). These administrative arrangements encouraged the academics concerned to focus on different aspects of the discipline: for example, Carr (in Bangor) and Oschinsky (in Liverpool) pursued research interests in history, Hare and McLeod (in Northumbria) concentrated on information aspects, while Sayers (UCL) was a diplomatist. This split the discipline from an academic viewpoint, resulting in a lack of national profile: different universities returned archive studies to different Research Assessment Exercise subject panels and research grant awarding bodies failed to recognise the place of the discipline in their areas of interest. Although the AHRB did accept archives within its information world panel after 1997, and funded archival research projects, records management was in practice excluded. The national pool of archive academics remained small: initially each university had a single dedicated member of staff (except UCL which only appointed a dedicated tutor in 1969) and, even by 2003, the remaining universities employed only two academic staff each plus additional part-timers, providing a UK work group of archival educators of about eight people.

By 2000 the educational picture had radically altered. Some traditional programmes remained (eg Dublin) but most were transformed or had closed. New programmes had begun in new subjects (digital preservation at Glasgow) or offered in new modes (distance learning). External pressures led to further development such as training and continuing professional development programmes (at Northumbria, Liverpool and Glasgow) and the beginning of a research culture for the discipline (at Liverpool and UCL).

Archival education requires a high level of commitment from the individuals seeking to enter the profession. It takes one year to complete a graduate programme but with pre-course work experience and a first degree the normal minimum is five years post-school study. Learning is a combination of practical application and conceptual study: originally allied disciplines such as palaeography, diplomatic and history offered intellectual challenges, later the issues around digital records and description added theoretical complexity. Programmes include an aspect of acquiring occupational values and norms. After qualification, continuing professional development imparts new skills to individuals and implicitly works to keep them committed to the profession. Surprisingly few take higher study (MPhil, PhD, MBA) and the majority who do studied history or related disciplines.

How should the discipline develop in future? The universities should make a greater contribution through academic research both by academic staff and through study release for working professionals. The universities should continue to lobby funding bodies to support research into professional issues (as well as theoretical or historical research and projects promoting government policy objectives). The universities should also inculcate a sense of the value of research for the future expansion of discipline and encourage employers, individual professionals, academics and policy bodies (including TNA and Resource) to support research. International, as well as national, co-operation is essential to ensure the broad development of

research and education. Universities should continue to expand first professional qualifications to produce greater numbers of archivists without reducing quality but supplemented by national agreements about core competencies and about appropriate specialisation. More diversification of provision is needed but without splitting the domain nor by integration with distinct sister professions (library and information studies or museums) for the first qualification. Instead employers should accept that not all newly qualified staff will have same range of skills and they need to be more sophisticated about selecting skills in individuals: this would be easier if there were more qualified candidates to choose between. The quality and appropriateness of university qualifications for the profession needs to be monitored by the professional bodies (even though they are not ever likely to have real power to dictate to the universities). Greater involvement of NCA in the accreditation process would seem to be sensible. In addition, the professional bodies should lobby for additional funding for programmes, new projects and collaborate in research projects with other employers and with the universities.

Universities should make new provision for higher study through ‘MBA for archives and records management’ or similar cross domain programmes which would be vocational and would foster leadership skills. The universities and professional bodies should collaborate to make greater and better provision of short courses and summer schools. The professional bodies should also seek to develop a national continuing professional development strategy and structure, identifying and filling gaps. Resource (or another body) should take on responsibility for facilitating broad professional development as part of workforce development. Regional organisations (such as regional archive councils or cross-domain bodies) should seek to develop regional delivery strategies which complement national priorities. International partnerships should also be sought. Increasingly working in partnership but respecting individual goals will be the way forward.

No doubt other studies in future will be able to take a longer term view of archival education. The author’s close personal and professional involvement in teaching and research provided useful information and insights but also coloured her view of the developments.

Conclusion

This thesis sought to understand how the archive profession in the UK (particularly in England) developed during the 19th and 20th centuries and to make recommendations for its future. It adopted an analytical framework for the profession which focused on four key themes, derived from sociological models of professionalism:

5. Political engagement and legislation
6. A complex and distinct work group
7. An exclusive professional organisation
8. Appropriate archival education and development.

The research questions amplified these themes. They helped to establish whether archivists were part of a fully mature profession and will lead to recommendations to guide the profession in the 21st century. They were:

1. How, when and to what extent have archivists developed professional attributes? How fully developed is archives as a profession at the start of the 21st century?
2. How have government enquiries, policy and legislation influenced the development of the profession in the UK? What should the role of government be in the archive services of the 21st century?
3. How and why have national, local and other archives developed in England over the period 1851 (the construction of the first Public Record Office building) to 2003? How should archival structures change to meet the needs of present and future stakeholders?
4. How and why have archival associations developed in England? What was their influence on professional standards, codes of ethics, training, research and publication? How can the associations best support the profession in the 21st century?
5. How and why did university education programmes develop? How should professional education develop in future? What has the UK contributed to professional literature and to theoretical developments?

Political engagement and legislation

During the 19th and 20th centuries, archives and archivists struggled to engage the attention of legislators and policy makers. Historically there was a tension between the social value of records to ensure the proper functioning of justice and the courts and their scholarly or historical value. The Public Record Office Act 1838 addressed only central legal and court records and established the concept of a single physical repository for public records. However, the PRO quickly recognised the need to manage departmental records as well (formalised in 1852) and became an historically focused organisation, concentrating on the historical value of government records. Its staff were the ‘first truly professional historians’¹⁵⁰⁷ and the

¹⁵⁰⁷ Levine: 22.

historical training at the PRO predated its teaching in universities. The PRO's publications programme was a major contribution to historical scholarship.

The attention of government was drawn to the physical management of public records, especially the building in Chancery Lane, begun in 1851 and extended periodically until 1900, and to expenditure on publications. Attempts to improve the legislative strength of the Public Record Office Act 1838 were not successful (in spite of the 1877 and 1898 Acts) until 1958.

The lower value placed by government on cultural as opposed to legal values was exemplified by the relative neglect of local and private records. Instead of the statutory function in place for central public records, private records were supported by the HMC; a Royal Commission, time-limited and financially constrained. Throughout its life (1869-2003) the HMC undertook prestigious projects (such as the listing of the Cecil papers at Hatfield House), attracted a distinguished list of Commissioners and it established the National Register of Archives. However, until its separate establishment from the PRO in 1959 (which, it is argued in chapter 3, was in itself a retrograde step), its existence was precarious and it had only one permanent staff post.

In the 20th century, local authority archives and specialist repositories were also uncertain about the primary role of archive services. Some local archives originated with the clerk of the peace (concerned about the preservation of quarter sessions records for their legal value) or city administrations which needed access to records for administrative convenience: both, however, also recognised the historical value of archives to enhance their current standing and status and as a source for scholarly pursuits. Public libraries held archives for their historical and artefactual interest, as a source of civic pride and, along with museums, archaeological and record societies, rarely saw the link with legal and administrative processes. The early county council record offices (Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire) also took an historical view, which broadly continued until the Second World War.

As a result, while archives (local and central) made a great contribution to historical scholarship and the preservation of primary source material at a time when it was greatly at risk from the break up of landed estates, depredations of war and changes in administration, they did not engage with the current business of government and were, mainly, neglected by the policy makers. Local archives benefited little from legislative support and what little legislation there was (such as the 1962 Act) merely confirmed the minimum engagement which was already present in practice.

At the start of the 21st century the historical aspects of archives are beginning to be accepted by policy makers as a significant contribution to community identity and social inclusion, while the legal and accountability aspects are seen as essential to the proper functioning of data protection and freedom of

information legislation. An opportunity is currently presented to secure sound archival and records legislation for all public bodies, which would require them to provide record services. Archivists (both centrally at the PRO and locally) and the professional bodies (especially the NCA and SoA) lobbied for over 20 years to raise the profile of archives (eg through the national archives policy and within government through IDAC) and showed a highly professional approach to their work: this coincided with a shift in government thinking to the potential advantage of the profession.

Development of a complex and distinct work group

In the 19th century archivists were not recognised as a work group. Professional staff at the PRO were essentially historians pursuing scholarly publication: their users were scholars, lawyers and record agents. In the localities, archive work was carried out by antiquarians, editors and record agents. The PRO had an opportunity in the 1900s to evolve a modern archival work group. Maxwell Lyte was a modernising Deputy Keeper, who introduced a more archival approach to publication and oversaw the completion of the Chancery Lane buildings. The Royal Commission of 1910 made sound recommendations and could have provided the necessary catalyst. However, the chance was missed (partly because of a dispute between Maxwell Lyte and Hubert Hall and because the First World War intervened) and the PRO and HMC continued to regard themselves as scholarly bodies with no mandate to lead the British archival community. Significant change did not occur until after the 1958 Act.

In the vacuum local enthusiasts and forceful individuals devised their own systems and frameworks before the Second World War. The predominant model for the local record office in the 20th century emerged from the county council record committees after 1889. Fowler in Bedfordshire (from 1912) and the Hardys in Hertfordshire (from 1895) established a local model which spread across other counties, often transported by staff trained in one county and appointed to start a record office in another. Local archivists, especially Fowler, rather than Jenkinson and the PRO, created the British archival profession. Fowler established the first county record office, devised a scheme of classification for records based on provenance, established standards of storage and public access, undertook repair work, devised destruction schedules for current records and had a vision of an acquisitive archives, gathering in manorial, parish, private and diocesan records, not just those of the county council and its predecessors. He also, in the absence of an archive school, established a scheme of training which produced at least four county archivists and he published a significant professional text, *The care of county muniments*, in 1923. It was these activities which established the parameters of the archival work group in the early 20th century. However, since no legislation required local authorities to provide archive services, the work group outside the PRO (which continued to recruit and train historians)¹⁵⁰⁸ and the national libraries, remained small until after the Second

¹⁵⁰⁸ It is worth noting that even the professional staff at the PRO was fairly small until the late 20th century. Between 1925-30 there were 22 Assistant Keepers, numbers rose and fell slightly in 1940s-60s and by 1967

World War (only a few local archives were established before 1930 and a dozen started between 1930 and 1940). This group did develop distinct characteristics and successfully differentiated itself from the historical work carried out by the universities and the PRO (by professional historians) and the research and publishing activities of record agents and scholars (which continued alongside many local archives in, for instance, local record societies).

That the professional work group developed complexity was in part due to the identification of specialist activities and evolving standards for their execution, for example archival classification and description. Consistency in classification was addressed by the BRA in its report on classification in 1936. Local authority archivists understood early on the importance of providing access to records through published guides.¹⁵⁰⁹ After 1945 the NRA was in a position to enable archivists to develop common practice in description. Although it failed to produce any, the HMC gradually became interested in descriptive standards in the 1980s. Michael Cook's work in the 1970s, published as *Manual of archival description* (MAD) in 1986, established standards for archival description for the first time in the UK. MAD was not widely adopted among British archivists who were entrenched in local practices, but it was an important step towards a common standard. The *International standard for archival description* (ISAD(G)) provided a simpler template for archivists in 1994.¹⁵¹⁰ Grant-aided posts for cataloguing began to appear in the 1990s and these, together with the development of archival ICT networks such as A2A and NAN, eventually led to widespread standards adoption.

A new sub-group for records management developed in the 1960s and 1970s. In some localities and in some specialist repositories, records management was administered as part of the archive service, often viewed from a historical perspective and concentrating on non-current records. In other organisations records management developed separately. The strong links between the two were emphasised through theoretical studies (undertaken in Australia and North America) more than in practice in the UK.

After the transformation of the PRO to an Agency in 1992 and the appointment of Sarah Tyacke as the first woman Keeper of the Public Records, the leadership of the PRO within the UK profession became more marked. Since the PRO was then by far the largest employer of archivists in the UK, this was a significant development. The PRO took responsibility for technical developments (such as digital records management and Encoded Archival Description) and disseminated good practice and skills across the wider profession. In the late 1990s freedom of information legislation forced all public authorities to consolidate their records

there were 23 Assistant Keepers: Aidan Lawes *Chancery Lane 1377-1977, the strong box of the Empire* Richmond: PRO, 1996: 63.

¹⁵⁰⁹ Including Essex (1948), Lancashire (1948), Berkshire (1952), Shropshire (1952), East and West Sussex (1954) and the Guildhall Library and Corporation of London (1950): Ellis & Graham *Work in archives 1948-55*: 24-25.

¹⁵¹⁰ International Council on Archives *International standard for archival description (general)* Ottawa: International Council on Archives, 1994.

management services (albeit sometimes separately from archives) and the PRO adopted a holistic view, even though it was constrained by the 1958 Act. The creation of TNA in 2003 finally offered the possibility of a unified system, based on an agreed framework of standards for professional work.

In the 21st century a homogeneous archival work group seems to be emerging, to replace the series of disparate specialised groups evident in the 20th century. Many issues still need to be resolved in order to make the complex and changing profession viable. In order to survive in fluid administrative structures archivists require a better understanding of archival functions and of the best way to deliver them, to a parent body which will change over time. Archivists need to respond flexibly and yet robustly to protect the profession's future. The sector as a whole lacks a reliable means of analysing its strengths and weaknesses, its functional priorities, and of evaluating alternative service provision models. An analytical framework for record and archive organizations and a typology of organizations is needed. The analysis could also be extended to other parts of the cultural sector, such as museums and libraries, in order to investigate synergies, overlaps and areas for collaborative development.

An exclusive professional organisation?

In 1946-47 two significant markers of emerging professionalism were established: university qualifications in archives and a separate professional body (the Society of Local Archivists). Both were essential in the development of a distinct profession in the second half of the 20th century, but neither clearly identified their role in building the profession.

A number of bodies interested in archives as scholarly and historical resources were established before the Second World War. In particular, the BRA (under Jenkinson) was a vehicle for professional policy and standards development, as well as for rescue and advisory work. The CPBA/BAC gradually developed as the specialist body for business archivists as well as for economic and business historians. But the SoA supported the profession as it developed in local authorities and became, by 1980, the primary professional body. The work group lacked coherence, with splits by activity (records management, archives, sound and film archives) and by sector (central or local government, business) reflected in the variety of bodies which catered for different interests. Although a small professional group, archivists responded to new interests by setting up new organisations and there were few attempts to consolidate or merge entities. By 2003 all the essential elements of an exclusive professional organisation were present but they were delivered by a multiplicity of organisations, ranging from those focusing on policy development (eg NCA) to those offering professional support services (eg SoA).

Key functions of a professional body can be divided into two areas, which ought to be brought together into two new organisations. They are:

1. Policy development and advocacy. This is focused, high level and carried out by a small group. It comprises:
 - advocating for the profession with policy makers
 - lobbying for professional advantage and status
 - identifying and influencing funding sources
 - awareness raising (within the profession of external issues and externally of professional issues)
 - actively developing and disseminating policy
 - identifying key future issues and orientating the profession to respond
 - providing focus and leadership to the profession
 - enabling cross domain consultation (with sister professions and more widely, nationally and internationally).
2. Professional service delivery. This is inclusive, membership-based, diverse and diffused geographically and by sector. It may be directly delivered or facilitated through partnerships. It comprises:
 - representing individual members, developing and administering codes of ethics, regulating professional behaviour
 - developing standards to address all key activities in an integrated plan
 - providing training and development opportunities within national frameworks for staff at all levels
 - regulating gateways to entry including careers advice, education programmes, admission to professional practice, employment practices, salary scales
 - planning and delivering leadership and management development.

The archival functions themselves (including survey, advisory and rescue work carried out by the BRA and BAC in the past) ought to transfer to archival organisations such as TNA.

Sister professions deliver both of these areas within a single body (CILIP for the library and information profession and the Museums Association for museum curators). However, the experience of the archive profession has been that the inclusive nature of membership service delivery bodies (such as SoA) leads to a concentration on tangible services for members to the neglect of policy and advocacy tasks. Smaller bodies (notably the NCA) have been able to respond quickly on policy issues, suggesting that two separate organisations might best replace the multiplicity which exists.

Appropriate archival education and development

In the 1930s and 1940s, the BRA, and (from the 1960s) the SoA, BAC, and (in the 1980s) the RMS all sought to influence the provision of university education for archivists. The UK was fortunate that, in the

absence of a national training school at the PRO or elsewhere, university programmes offering specialist graduate education in archives emerged after the Second World War. Although on a fairly small scale, the universities provided a remarkably consistent qualification for archivists which, while influenced by the teaching of librarianship or history, was distinctively different from them. The syllabuses offered a majority of specialised courses tailored to the needs of archivists and were not unduly weighted towards more general topics such as special librarianship. Archivists were of necessity involved in teaching (the programmes were too wide ranging for a single academic to cover) but this ensured professional input to the content.

In the later 1960s and 1970s academic and professional pressures encouraged the programmes to develop. By 1980 a university qualification was the main gateway to professional work in local record offices. The diversification and growth of archive and records work in the 1980s challenged the universities. Some positive initiatives emerged (including records management teaching at Northumbria, modernisation of many traditional programmes, new distance learning programmes) but cracks began to appear (such as the failure of the UCL programme in the 1980s, pressure on programmes and students to cover more within a year, the closure of the Bodleian course in 1980 (and, later, the SoA and Bangor programmes) and the failure of new programmes, such as that at Southlands, to thrive). Better channels of communication between the SoA and the universities (in particular, the recognition scheme) evolved.

By 2002 archival education had undergone transformation. Traditional programmes had significantly altered or else had closed. New, highly regarded, programmes had emerged along with more flexibility in delivery mechanisms. Universities made some contribution to continuing professional development and offered limited undergraduate (non-professional) study. The accreditation cycle by the SoA in 2001 confirmed the quality and appropriateness of the developments.

However, there were weaknesses. Specialist and business archives were often not able to recruit suitably qualified staff. University intake was across a fairly narrow spectrum (eg very few candidates offered science first degrees) and their programmes focused on broadly applicable skills with little opportunity for specialisation. There were no opportunities to study archives and records within a broad cross-domain context. Few students studied for higher degrees in archives and there were few professionally-focused (as opposed to research-focused) higher degree programmes available. The national pool of archive academics remains small: initially most programmes had a single dedicated member of staff but even in 2004 the universities employ only two academic staff each, providing about eight archival educators for the UK. As a result, universities fail to fulfil their potential role in research and theoretical development for the profession and have not created a pool of qualified archival educators. Opportunities to develop new qualifications, such as in the management of audio-visual archives and for archive education officers, and

new modes, such as a scheme to encourage a more diverse work group through supporting candidates from minority ethnic groups, are not being pursued.

The SoA recognition scheme struggled to cope with the demands of the 2001 cycle, relying entirely on volunteers who were asked to appraise a wider range of programmes offered in multiple modes. The scheme needs to be rethought before its next cycle (due in 2006): it requires paid support, a more responsive set of benchmarks or accreditation criteria and a wider context of policy on professional education, such as that which was likely to emerge from the NCA Archives Workforce Project in 2004.¹⁵¹¹

Recommendations

These conclusions lead to some recommendations to guide the archive profession in its next phase of growth.

1. TNA, the professional bodies and individual archivists should pursue the opportunity for new national records and archives legislation to provide legitimacy for archive and records services in all public bodies. They should also encourage businesses and private owners to match or exceed the benchmarks set for public services for their own archives and records. In addition, they should continue to promote the role of archivists and records managers in shaping legislation on access to records and information and in the management of digital records.
2. Research projects should be established to facilitate a homogeneous archive profession in future, which could include the development of an analysis toolkit for archivists to enable them to understand their own services and plan for future priorities, structures and services in a coherent way within a common framework. The toolkit would also enable policy makers, locally, nationally and internationally, to take a view of the proper role of archive and records services in a wider context.
3. The professional bodies should engage in discussion about how best to maximise resources, avoid duplication of effort and improve professional services by, ultimately, dissolving themselves and redistributing useful functions to two new professional bodies: one focusing on policy development and advocacy and the other on providing professional support services.
4. The professional bodies and universities should develop a national educational strategy for archivists, embracing first professional qualifications, continuing professional development and management and leadership qualifications. It should take account of international models and opportunities. Appropriate partnerships should be established to ensure that the universities are properly responsive to professional needs and to increase the resource available within the universities to enable them to take a more active role.
5. The universities should establish strategies (including increasing the spread and size of the funding streams) to ensure that they play a full part in teaching and in research and development in order to

¹⁵¹¹ The full report had not been published at the time of writing.

ensure the proper theoretical development of the profession. They should also seek to create a pool of archival educators who are qualified both academically (a PhD) and professionally (MA) to undertake teaching, research and publication.

6. The professional bodies, led by the SoA, should evolve a new, more robust, recognition scheme to replace the existing SoA scheme well in advance of the 2006 cycle.
7. Professional bodies, employers and individual professionals (together with those in allied disciplines, especially history) should continue to advocate for the profession, nationally and internationally, and to raise awareness of the full role which archives, archivists and records managers can play in 21st century society.

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