

**LHSA ARCHIVIST: REPORT FOR LHSA ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING 11 DECEMBER 2006**

FOI

At the cut-off date of 31 March 2006, more than half of the audit forms specifying the exemption status of record groups had not been returned from LNHS staff. All non-returners were assumed to have agreed with LHSA's proposed exemptions and future access conditions. The FOI audit database is now being used to check the exemption status of archival material when access is requested.

The listing of un-catalogued collections and work towards developing appraisal criteria for early 20th century RIE correspondence has continued. But from April onwards, this work has been put on hold as the temporary Assistant Archivist has been heavily involved in the preparation for the Main Library Refurbishment Project (MLRP).

The full updating of catalogues (introductory page) and online top-level finding aids with reference to FOI and closure periods is also on hold until the new Records Management Code of Practice is published by the Scottish Executive Health Department.

New LHSA guidelines have been produced for transfers and gifts and deposits in the light of FOI requirements.

CONSERVATION

The current Research Resources in Medical History (RRMH) project, *Preserving twentieth-century case notes of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital*, is on budget and slightly ahead of schedule. A fourth LHSA RRMH project application, *Preserving Edinburgh's twentieth-century reproductive and sexual health case notes* (£121,000) has been successful. Environmental monitoring has been extended to include the areas holding LHSA material during the MLRP. The Conservator participated in Design and Decant Groups for MLRP, and the EUL Disaster Planning Group. She also carried out extensive work in preparation for the MLRP, including preservation boxing and un-framing. Re-binding work of Royal Edinburgh Hospital case books and the final volume of its Press Cuttings has continued and architectural plans were also treated. The latter included the supervision of a volunteer placement. Work funded by a small National Manuscript Conservation Trust grant (£650) was also completed satisfactorily. The Conservator gave a presentation at Edinburgh Libraries Fair (May 2006) and has been invited to speak at a Royal Society of Medicine/ Wellcome Trust conference in October 2006. Conservation staff development included a visit to the National Library of Scotland and attendance at the National Museum of Scotland conservation lecture series, the Gerry Hedley Student Symposium and the ICON Book and Paper Group conference.

BUDGET

The delivery of exchequer component of the budget has been delayed until this month. In view of this and uncertainties about the staffing component of the 2006-07 budget due to Pay and Reward Modernisation, and the possibility of unforeseen post-decant expenditure, very little conservation or running costs expenditure has been committed during the first three-quarters of the year. This is also a prudent approach given uncertainties about the level of the 2007-08 budget. Formerly it was agreed that a three-year budget cycle was the minimum requirement to ensure the efficient spending of LHSA resource. The previous cycle ended in March 2006 and the fact that we have now reverted to a one-year cycle has also inhibited spending during this financial year. The level of funding for 2007-08 is not yet confirmed.

STAFFING

Both current RRMH posts end in January 2007. Two further two-year conservation posts will commence in February 2007. The two-year Assistant Archivist post to assist with FOI-related activity will come to an end in April 2007. In view of the temporary dispersal and greater inaccessibility of the Archive's holdings post-decant, it is recommended that this post is re-focused to user support and continued for at least a further year. Work carried out by LHSA staff is based on annual individual work plans co-ordinated within a LHSA departmental work plan. These, in turn, relate to wider activity within "Division 2" of Information Services (Agenda item 6). The Deputy Archivist has accepted a post with the National Archives of Scotland.

As a result of Pay and Reward Modernisation 3 of 7 LHSA posts were "red-circled" to lower grades. These were the Project Conservation Assistant, the 0.5FTE Assistant Archivist, and the Archivist.

ENQUIRIES

See circulated *LHSA Enquiry Figures Jan-June 2006* produced by the 0.5FTE Assistant Archivist, who spends the majority of her time on enquiry-related work, more so during the protracted decant period. Over the six months from January to June 2006, there were 35,078 website hits, an average of 5,846 per month. Remote enquiries have continued their upward trend. However, due to the restrictions in Reading Room hours during the decant process, visitor numbers are likely to be lower than usual for the second half of the year. The time taken to answer enquiries has lengthened due to the division of collections between two stores in the Main Library and the Research Annexe at the Gyle.

As noted previously, all staff contribute to user support and rely upon shared knowledge of the contents of the holdings. The quality of user services was highly commended in the consultancy report by Julia Sheppard (Agenda item 5).

SHELVING COLLAPSE

With respect to item 4 (iv), the Archivist would like to thank UE Health and Safety for their "Accident/Incident Investigation Report Summary" on the collapse of LHSA shelving and fully endorses its conclusion that "There was a lack of risk assessment

by Management from both Crown and UoE regarding unloading a full side of shelves and the possible overbalance this could cause.”

OTHER ACTIVITIES

With respect to Agenda item 4 (iv) investigation into insurance provision has been prompted by the temporary storage of LHSA material in the South Gyle Research Annex commencing October 2006. An options report was prepared for the Archivist by the Conservator. Two possibilities have been offered by Aon Limited (insurers for UE) based on an estimated total value of the collection of £40 million. One is a £1 million first loss with a premium of £6510 (inclusive of insurance premium tax). The other is a £500,000 first loss with a premium of £5670 (inclusive of insurance premium tax). A decision is required whether to take out such insurance and if so, how to fund the annual premium. The issue of insurance during the LHSA move was handled as part of the overall decant of 5th and 6th floor materials.

Support was provided for the Sheppard consultancy, leading to the final report presented to LNHSB, and for the concluding LHSA-held Objects independent valuation carried out by Thomson Roddick and Medcalf. Liaison with the RIE Arts Committee regarding LHSA-held RIE-related objects is continuing. However, it should be noted that the assessment exercise relates to all LHSA-held objects, not just RIE ones. LHSA also assisted with other Arts Committee-related projects, such as the labelling of RIE Residents' tables and Leena Nammari's exhibition of photographs taken in the Old Royal Infirmary. The latter were displayed alongside captioned archival images selected by the Archivist (The Pelican Gallery NRIE, from April). A project to display a selection of LHSA held plaques at Little France is also being supported.

A one-day conference entitled “The Royal Edinburgh Hospital and the History of Scottish Psychiatry” has been organised for 10 October 2009 and will take place in the Conference Centre of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (RCPE). The speakers have accepted their invitations and their topics have been agreed in outline. It will be billed as the Wellcome Trust Regional Forum History of Medicine in Scotland of that year and additional financial support has been promised from the RCPE and the Scottish Society for the History of Medicine. There will also be an exhibition which will draw upon the LHSA and College collections. Historical research in preparation for this is underway, so that the option of a related publication can be evaluated.

Contact has been made with Dr Anthony Woods, Head of Medical Humanities at the Wellcome Trust (WT) to explore new ways in which the academic research use of LHSA case notes - particularly those collections that have attracted conservation funding from the RRMH programme - can be promoted in the future. A meeting took place in London 12 October, which also resulted in an invitation to attend a WT Medical Humanities all-day workshop on 11 December. This is likely to influence the future pattern of WT funding in medical humanities, much in the same way that the former “A Healthy Heritage” conference 25-26 February 1999 led to the RRMH programme, which LHSA has benefited from.

Agenda Item 7

After many years of input from Scottish NHS Archivists, new guidelines for the retention and disposal of NHS administrative records were issued in April. Work is continuing on the clinical records equivalent and also new FOI-based records management guidelines, which is now being taken forward by the Deputy Archivist.

The LHSA staff reference library (books and pamphlets) has been appraised by the Archivist, and then weeded and re-listed by the 0.5FTE Assistant Archivist, as part of the on-going appraisal of LHSA resources in view of the decant and planned return post-refurbishment.

Prior to the move getting underway, six group tours of the “old” repository were organised for 52 individuals, facilitated by the LHSA Deputy and Assistant Archivists.

Mike Barfoot
LHSA Archivist
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