

## **NOTES FOR ARCHIVIST'S REPORT TO LHSA AD. COMMITTEE, ON 2 MARCH 2005**

### **FOI**

Assistant Archivist FOI temporary post (7 months) has now finished. The post holder completed a report before she left to take up a new position in the NAS, which I'm happy to circulate to Committee members on request.

An information audit of the catalogued LHBs and GDs collections was carried out, leading to the creation of a database of possible exemptions. An audit form containing details of these has been sent for signing off to the LNHS FOI practitioners in each division. (Quite a number of these are still outstanding.) Some work was also done on box listed and unlisted material. Also, a very valuable exercise was carried out on the Gifts and Deposits to clarify their exact status in FOI terms.

Overall this is a very good start. However, much still needs to be done with respect to uncatalogued material, particularly new accessions, and improving existing box lists. Some re-cataloguing will also be required. This will be picked up by the new Assistant Archivist post, the interviews for which will take place next week.

An exit interview with the post holder indicated that she enjoyed her period at LHSA and that she was particularly appreciative of the way the Deputy Archivist, had structured and supervised her work on a day-to-day basis and how her role, tasks and responsibilities had been clearly defined and communicated to her from the outset.

### **CONSERVATION**

The RRMH grant on Learmonth and Dunlop is scheduled to complete on time and on budget in early April.

A new RRMH grant has been awarded of c£80K. This will enable two conservators to work for 18 months preserving and re-boxing Royal Edinburgh Hospital case note folders. Approximately £173,000 has now been awarded to LHSA from this Wellcome Trust-funded programme.

The rebinding programme carried out by commercial companies is continuing, including work on the bound indexes to the RIE General Register of Patients, part of which is funded by a NAS Conservation grant (£1,100 or c10%).

6500 glass plate negatives have now been re-housed.

The object collection (991) items has now been completely re-housed and its photographic documentation is now complete. The Assistant Archivist played an important role in preparing for the latter and will now work on extending the Access database to complete the RIE related items and to add the rest.

Around 14,300 X-rays have been identified, extracted from the Archive and sent for digital reformatting, after which the majority will be destroyed.

As part of the on-going environmental monitoring of the LHSA stack area a trial shelf cleaning programme is now complete covering 100 bays, or about 3% of the total collection, at a cost of £1645.

## **BUDGET**

The 2004-05 direct spend allocation is on target. It is possible that there will be a very slight overspend, depending on invoice presentation and processing during March. Planning is already underway on the basis of the 2006-07 direct cost allocation contained in the Forward Budget approved at the last Committee meeting, with the first quarterly payment expected in April.

## **STAFFING**

The former 1.0FTE Assistant Archivist post has been re-titled LHSA Deputy Archivist. As noted, the Assistant Archivist FOI post holder has left. One of the RRMH conservators has a new post with the RCAHMS. The other will leave in early April. Also two new RRMH conservators will now be recruited, with a proposed start date of May.

## **ENQUIRIES**

The figures before you indicate that 2004 was very similar to 2003 overall, especially in terms of the numbers of enquiries (Fig 1) and their origins (Fig 2).

In 2004, there was a slight drop in Special Collections Reading Room figures compared with 2003 (Fig 3). However more material was consulted directly in the stack. The significant increase in numbers of staff productions in 2004 reflects the recent FOI audit related work, and is probably an underestimate.

Figs 4 and 5 give some 5-year statistics with respect to number and format of enquires and Fig. 6 shows the overall average with respect to the origin of our enquiries. It reflects the diversity of our users as well as our cross-sectoral status as a NHS archive operating within a Higher Education university setting.

What is missing from these figures, however, is the number of “hits” on the LHSA web site, an increasingly important medium through which users engage with LHSA resources. The monthly figures for December 2004 to February 2005 are 2977, 2835 and 2951, or c105 hits a day in February.

Enquiry statistics have hitherto been based on the number of contacts with an enquirer and on the principle that each contact usually requires an additional search or further information gathering and response of some kind. The Assistant Archivist responsible for enquiries has created a new FOI sensitive database to record them from 1 January 2005. As this will be used to generate future statistics based on numbers of enquirers, rather than the total number of contacts with enquirers, post-2005 figures are likely to be significantly lower in the future.

## **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

As well as day-to-day supervising of the FOI post, the Deputy Archivist has also worked closely with the LNHS FOI group and attended wider NHS FOI Group meetings in order to maintain good communication links with the Archive. She has continued the cataloguing of collections and has produced a new machine readable version of the GD section of the LHSa catalogue.

As well as involvement with archival components of the FOI NHS Model Publication Scheme at the national level, the Archivist has worked with SEHD, NAS and SRAC on a retention schedule for NHS Administrative records. He has also worked with the SE on the Scottish Public Records Strategy. He also gave talks to the NAS and for the UE Centre for the History of Book seminar series.

**Mike Barfoot 2 March 2005**