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ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY

Aberdeen Business School

The Content, Scope and Purpose of Local Studies Collections in the  
Libraries of Further and Higher Education Institutions in the United  
Kingdom

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## **Abstract**

This research examines the presence of and reasons for local studies resources in the libraries and learning centres of further and higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. The study's aims were to investigate the content and scope of local collections in academic libraries, to examine the impact these collections have on teaching, learning and research within the institutions, and to compile an inventory of local resources in college and university libraries.

Using an approach combining basic- and applied research, the study represents the most comprehensive investigation of local resources in academic libraries so far. Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected by way of two survey questionnaires, plus observational visits to a small number of libraries, learning centres and Special Collections departments. In addition, interviews were conducted with local studies' experts, collection managers, educators, and students. Secondary literature focusing principally on both local studies and academic libraries was also consulted.

The study found that, while the literature, as well as 'tradition' tends to equate local studies and its resources with the public library, local material could be found in a majority of respondents' collections. It is suggested that the relative neglect afforded local collections outside of the public sector is unwarranted, particularly when considering the potential for wider access to material that a more inclusive approach to local resources might allow for.

The research also noted that the term 'local', as defined by the geographical scope of the material held in different collections, is open to significantly diverse interpretations, ranging from the college or university campus itself to one or more constituent countries (for instance, England and Wales). While some authors have addressed the complexity of defining 'local', the issue remains largely under-examined in the literature, where the term can frequently be based on little more than a tacit understanding of what 'local' means in any given context.

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Introduction

We have moved away from a world of small, intensely self-conscious local units into the world of megalopolis or what the town-planner calls conurbations. Hence we are in danger of forgetting something which has played an immense part in the social experience of mankind [sic].<sup>1p.35</sup>

While Finberg and Skipp's observation in 1967 expresses a concern arguably central to the premise of local studies as a subject – the potential loss of local heritage – a different logic has emerged that has been noted by experts in the field. Peter H. Reid, for instance, observes:

Indeed local studies – and particularly local studies on the Internet – have been described as attempting to overcome the diaspora away from local communities. It seems somehow paradoxical that as our society becomes more mobile then our need to find out and understand our roots and origins becomes more pronounced.<sup>2p.37</sup>

The importance of local studies as an undertaking may indeed have been influenced by this 'move away' from small units to communities that have grown larger and less specific in the way suggested by Finberg and Skipp, but information on these historical communities has also arguably become easier to access now more than ever. While small communities may no longer be as easily identifiable as they once were, advances in technology and communication – essential to an expanding world where people can no longer rely on knowing the community simply by living there and interacting with a familiar or familial population – has, in fact, allowed access not only to additional means of encouraging this type of investigation, but also to a wide range of localities across the globe. In 1967, it is not unkind to assume the

authors could not have imagined the impact of a research tool whose widespread use amongst amateurs and professionals alike thirty years later would permit instant access to digitised indexes, memoirs, photographs, press clippings and records that otherwise might not have been uncovered by or accessible to the researcher (at least quite often not without many additional hours and expense spent on the endeavour).<sup>3</sup> So, while the 'world' around us has indeed shifted in scale and scope, it may be suggested that so too has local studies itself, not only in terms of access, but in terms of how it is used as well as the ways in which it is represented too: from the archetypal real-life amateur consulting decades-old land deeds, seeking to trace the history of his or her house, to representations in popular culture, where the likes of the teenagers in television's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* can be found poring over (albeit often less-than-legally acquired) municipal maps and plans in order to aid their investigations, local studies can be found in various manifestations and characterisations. Such is its scope, it might be fair, if somewhat self-consciously ironic, to state that local studies can be found *everywhere*. This is true also of the physical – as well as digital – collections that form the backbone of local studies investigations. While a strong relationship exists between local collections and public sector libraries, of which there is more further on in this chapter, libraries within universities and colleges are responsible for housing books, newspapers, maps, manuscripts and other materials employed in the study of local areas and communities.

Such is the nature of local studies, it is an endeavour frequently practiced by 'amateur' researchers who wish to discover more about his or her community. In addition to the impetus this 'personal' connection provides, the information resources necessary for the research can typically be accessed locally too, thus adding to the attractiveness of undertaking such a task. However, this is not to suggest that local studies as an amateur pursuit is to be taken lightly. Instead, it might be strongly suggested that local studies is a 'hobby' that can be closely related to the notion of the 'self-improver', in this case, someone who wishes to challenge him- or herself, not only acquiring knowledge of the geographical area under investigation, but taking on new skills in order to do so. As Peter H. Reid notes:

In most cases, local studies departments are used by a wide cross-section of the population from schoolchildren to retired people; they have practised lifelong learning long before the phrase became fashionable.<sup>4p.36</sup>

Reid has also anecdotally used the term ‘the gifted amateur’ to refer to the type of researcher frequently engaged with local studies. When producing an original piece of research based on a local investigation, it quickly becomes apparent that often at the core of local research lies the task of having to piece together very disparate sources of information in order to produce a cohesive picture of, for example, a series of events that took place in a specific geographical location during a particular period. Newspaper stories may have to be analysed in conjunction with municipal documents; pictorial evidence cross-checked with first-hand accounts; material may come in a number of different formats, whether hard copy, microform or digital. While assistance is often readily available from library staff or experienced members of historical or geographical societies, there is little doubt that the challenges presented by local studies investigation frequently require and/or encourage the use of higher cognitive skills in the researcher.

That such skills are a necessity was noted by local historian, W.G. Hoskins in 1967 when, with a touch of deprecation aimed not only at the amateur, but his own attitude towards more professional, academic study – covered further in Chapter Four – he bemoaned the position he found himself in, that ‘in trying to guide local historians into the paths of righteousness and away from the amateurish imbecilities that often marked much of their work in the past, I am in danger of taking all the pleasure out of local history.’<sup>5p13</sup> While some degree of (humorous) exaggeration is undoubtedly in play, Hoskin’s point is nonetheless worth considering when contemplating the shift from amateur to professional and academic investigation. Hoskin’s argument is that local studies *is* pleasurable and the more skilful execution of this type of research *should not* take away from the enjoyment of local investigations. In other words, it might be suggested that the most effective type of local study is that which combines the rigour and skill of the professional with the

enthusiasm of the amateur – see Reid’s ‘gifted amateur’ above – a combination that also, nevertheless, draws attention to the difference between the (not always gifted) amateur and those whose approach is more academic in nature.

## 1.2 The Research

In 2003, an investigative study was begun that focused on local studies collections within the realm of academic libraries. At this stage, it is worth defining the term ‘local studies collections’ as employed within the context of the study’s aims and the resulting thesis. As explained in the notes to the respondents at the start of each questionnaire (see: *Appendix 1: Questionnaires*), the term ‘refers to individual items, materials that may be organised as a single collection, or more than one collection dispersed throughout the library stock’ that relates to local studies. While this definition is arguably quite broad, it was reckoned by the researcher that the term ‘collection’ – even to describe individual items – provided a sense of formality, familiarity, and inclusiveness, while also suggesting a ‘bigger picture’ aspect to both the study itself and the local material that may or may not be held within the respondents’ libraries, learning centres or special collections.

The purpose of the study was threefold: to ascertain the content and scope of local collections in higher and further education libraries; to identify and evaluate the contribution local studies collections make to teaching, learning and research within academia; and to compile an inventory of the collections.

The objectives that served the aims ranged from what might well be described as the semantic scrutiny of the term ‘local studies’ itself in order to establish what this term actually *means* to those who engage with this subject; to an examination of local studies collection management within the academic library environment; and an analysis of the relationship between local studies and the curriculum.

To summarise, the aims and objectives were:

Aims:

1. To examine the content and scope of local studies collections within further and higher education libraries in the United Kingdom.
2. To examine the purpose of local studies collections within these colleges and universities.
3. To compile an inventory of local studies collections in academic libraries.

Objectives:

1. To identify and examine definitions of 'local studies' in order to ascertain the different interpretations placed on this term, whether geographical, historical or otherwise.
2. To investigate the acquisition, organisation and management of local studies collections; this will include an examination of how information technology has contributed to the collection and use of local studies material.
3. To examine external influences on local studies collections, including non-institutional users with a view to ascertaining the impact such access might have on this service.
4. To identify other influences that might mould priorities: financial constraints, for instance, or a perceived obligation to improve access to material on neighbouring regions or communities.
5. To analyse the relationship between academic institutions' local studies collections, their curricula and research activity.
6. To examine the roles of the collections within the institutions.

In order to fulfil these objectives, a combination of primary and secondary research was employed. In terms of secondary research, this mainly comprised an ongoing review of literature that allowed for relevant background into local studies, academic libraries and pedagogy, putting the study into context. Primary sources, however, formed the chief means by which the investigation was carried out: surveys were employed with the intention of providing both an overview of the current situation regarding local studies in academic libraries and more specific information pertaining to individual collections and their relationship with the curriculum; while observational visits were made to five institutions, and interviews conducted with survey respondents and others who engage with these collections in order to gain further insight into the subject under discussion. Further interviews took place with Michael Dewe, a significant and well-respected figure in the field of local studies, many of whose numerous writings on the subject are focused on collections in the library.

### **1.3 Rationale**

As Bryant pointed out as early as 1971, local research can ‘actualize and substantiate’ history’s ‘generalizations’. ‘If we want to know what did happen rather than what was supposed to be done,’ she wrote, ‘we have to go into the field and find out.’<sup>6p.62</sup> Also, while local studies collections are most often associated with history, they are no longer shackled rigidly to this particular discipline; local research is finding its way into different areas of academic interest. Yet, despite this change in status and popularity, its real worth within the academic world remains under-investigated.

With this in mind, one of the principal reasons for investigating the subject of local studies collections in academic establishments is the relative shortage of writing on this subject. This may be due to the perception that local studies, by and large, belongs in the realm of the public library sector. As Paul and Dewe noted in the report based on their preliminary 1984 survey into local studies collections in academic libraries: ‘Local studies collections in Great Britain have traditionally been

the responsibility of public libraries [...] and it is on these collections that the professional literature of the subject has been based.<sup>7p.52</sup> In some respects, this bias is understandable, since, as Paul put it in 1989, 'until very recently it [local history] has been predominantly a field for amateurs,<sup>8p.34</sup> and public libraries, with access for all, would appear the ideal ground for this type of research, which frequently focuses on family history or local places of interest rather than the renowned - but distant - figures, battles and intrigues covered by national history studies. Indeed, this difference in focus also reflects the way in which local history itself has developed. Much earlier, local history study was primarily undertaken by members of the gentry and clergy, educated antiquarians who were principally concerned with chronicling, as Dewe observes, 'the descent of the manor, pedigrees, ancient monuments and the church and its fabric.'<sup>9p.3</sup> The writings therefore, while nevertheless valuable, tended to provide a rather skewed picture of local heritage. One of the most significant developments in local history studies, then, has been the realisation that 'local history' does not simply have to mean accounts of the 'higher' classes, 'stately' buildings or 'worthy' institutions, however 'local' they might be. When the Department of English Local History at Leicester University was opened in 1948, one of its primary concerns was to have local history direct attention to the lives of 'ordinary' people, those whose existence and activities were not usually accounted for in historical writings. As Dewe puts it, local history developed into 'a people's history, rather than one limited to the powerful and privileged and their particular concerns.'<sup>10p.4</sup> Despite the academic roots of this development, the association between local studies and public libraries, with their general remit to serve *the people*, has remained strong.

However, Paul also noted in 1989 that, over the preceding '30 years or so, local history has become more fully and more formally integrated into the curriculum in higher and further education', identifying 'three separate strands' comprising teacher-training, adult and postgraduate study, and undergraduate courses.<sup>11p.36</sup> Despite this rise in integration, by 1989 only two major studies had been conducted on the subject of local studies and academia. Of these, only one focused on the role of the academic library, the aforementioned 1984 study conducted by Paul and

Dewe; the other, earlier, investigation, titled *Local History in Undergraduate History Courses*,<sup>12</sup> focused on the 1974-1975 academic year and was not concerned with the academic library's role in providing curriculum support. It is perhaps unfortunate that by the time the report was published in 1978, a full thirty years after the establishment of the Department of English Local History at Leicester University, focus remained on the curriculum, largely ignoring the resources.

Based on questionnaire results attained from sixty-six universities, colleges and polytechnics, Paul and Dewe's survey sought to establish, amongst other things, the development, scope, and, perhaps most significantly, *use* of local studies collections in British academic institutions. Findings showed, for instance, that collections were, perhaps unsurprisingly, used most frequently for historical study; that a number of universities held local studies collections 'primarily for the benefit of specialist departments and regional centres'; and that universities were more likely to deploy local collections in the field of adult education than were polytechnics and colleges.<sup>13p.56</sup> However, Paul and Dewe recognised the limitations of their study, remarking that, in terms of research, 'there is much more that could usefully be done.'<sup>14p.65</sup> No follow-up visits were made to any of the participating libraries, for instance, with the researchers noting that 'it would be particularly helpful to know more about the practice of individual libraries and to have some discussion of the total range of local and regional collections held in specific institutions both in libraries and in academic departments.'<sup>15pp.65-66</sup> In addition, colleges selected for inclusion in the survey outside of the university sector were, for the most part, those providing courses that led to degrees and professional qualifications in arts, social sciences, education and librarianship; Paul and Dewe recognised that 'it is quite possible that there may be small, highly specialised collections in institutions which concentrate on more technical subjects or on individual fields such as agriculture and horticulture.'<sup>16p.52</sup>

Indeed, a 1990 report on Newcastle College Library's local studies collection, while by no means contradicting Paul and Dewe's findings, suggests that there *is* much more that might be done in establishing the range and purpose of such collections.



Armsby and Morgan cite the ways in which students of engineering and science, as well as business and the arts, are able to utilise both the area itself and the library's local collection, and not just in terms of historical study. Art students, for example, 'may research local artists, craftsmen, and architects, or use the city and surrounding areas as inspiration in their own right,' while science students can examine geological and ecological aspects of the region, as well as its natural history.<sup>17p.10</sup>

The Newcastle report also made clear its intentions with regard to the purpose of starting up a local studies collection, stating that, 'whilst we appreciated Newcastle's past, we were just as interested in the present,'<sup>18p.9</sup> thus highlighting probably the most significant development to have occurred in the subject. Only in the 1970s did the term 'local studies' become widely used. Until then, as Dewe points out, collections were known as 'local collections' or 'local history collections'.<sup>19p.1</sup> While 'local history' focuses on a specific aspect of local investigation and can be included in the practice of 'local studies', the two terms are often, erroneously, considered synonymous. As Reid notes, there is frequently a 'basic confusion' regarding the two terms, and the equation of one with the other 'misrepresents the purpose of a local studies collection which should cover all aspects of the locality, both the physical and built environments, and all aspects of human activity within that locality in the past, present and future.'<sup>20p.2</sup> While 'local history' remains a valid subject in its own right, the emergence of 'local studies' makes it clear that local investigation need not be confined to investigations of the past. That said, two points are worth noting in terms of the proposed research: while the research focus is on *local studies* collections, because local studies is inclusive of local historical study, research conducted on the former will, naturally, incorporate the latter, bearing in mind, for example, the results of Paul and Dewe's study which showed that local studies collections - in 1984 at least - were most commonly used for historical study; in addition, local *history* was the predominant discipline within the field of local investigation prior to the newer term's introduction, and so any discussion of local studies must acknowledge the debt to local history writing and research. References to 'local history', therefore, will be made when discussing the subject of local studies from the perspective of the

period prior to the newer term coming into use, and in terms of its present predominance in local studies, while not always explicitly acknowledging its narrower focus.

Dixon proposes that 'Local studies librarianship stands at the cutting edge of modern library and information work.'<sup>21p.xii</sup> Paradoxically, as the 'global village' becomes increasingly accessible thanks to innovations and developments in technology, business and the economy, people have been encouraged to examine their own surroundings, their own roots, to apply local experiences to what they see happening in the world around them. In universities and colleges, it is also recognised that prompting students to investigate, observe and report on the local area is a helpful way of providing practical research experience as well as a worthy pursuit in its own right. Local studies collections provide the resources with which much of this investigation is conducted, yet little is known about the scope or content of these academic collections, their organisation, or how they affect the ways in which studies are approached. The reason for the proposed research is to investigate these issues and provide a comprehensive account of this subject. Not only will the study go a significant way to correct the relative neglect afforded this subject, but, most importantly, it will contribute to an understanding of how higher and further education - arguably more important now than ever - makes use of library resources to provide students with knowledge and skills they can carry throughout and beyond their academic careers.

#### **1.4 The Thesis Structure**

The structure of any piece of writing is as vital as the content itself, with one informed by the other in order to develop a clear, logical argument. During the writing of this thesis, attention has been paid to constructing a piece of work that takes the reader from an understanding of why this research counts, through an examination of the subject under discussion, to an evaluation of how the research has contributed to a greater understanding of the local studies collection's place in the academic library.

Chapter two comprises the literature review, in which two main thematic strands of secondary reading material are identified – local studies, academic libraries, and teaching, learning and research – with a critical examination undertaken of each publication that assesses its usefulness to the study.

Chapter three focuses on the methods and approaches adopted for the study, with reference to pertinent established theories and methodologies. The chapter not only describes in critical, reflective terms the approach taken towards primary research collection, recording and analysis, but also looks at the secondary sources used and explains the relevance of secondary sources to the study.

The fourth chapter seeks to provide an introduction to the subject of local studies and academic libraries proper. It examines the development of local studies from its roots as study undertaken by the local gentry, through its perceived status as an ‘amateur’ offshoot of wider historical research and its association with the public library, to its integration into academia and, therefore, academic libraries. This chapter, as suggested, will also focus on the development of the academic library. It will explore the library’s remit to support the institution, its ‘duty of care’ to students and educators, and its role as the ‘heart’ of the academic institution. These two areas will also be brought together to look specifically at the ‘history’ of local studies collections in college and university libraries, with particular reference to a 1984 survey conducted by Michael Dewe and Derryan Paul.

In chapter five, findings from the study are introduced. Here, the focus is chiefly aimed at examining and evaluating the present situation concerning the *existence* of local studies collections in university and college libraries, with results drawn largely, but not exclusively, from the first questionnaire, and from interviews conducted and observations made during the fieldwork stage of the study.

Chapter six continues to assess the current state of local studies and academic libraries. In this chapter, the *purpose* behind the collections is the focus, where the

relationship between local studies collections and teaching, learning and research is analysed with reference to the study's findings as well as various relevant pedagogical theories. As with the previous chapter, data from all stages of the study is engaged, with particular attention paid to the second questionnaire and data gathered from interviews and observational visits.

In chapter seven, a reflective account of the subject of local studies and academic libraries is given. Incorporating not only what has been learned from the primary research data, but also philosophies and theories drawn from secondary sources, this chapter looks at the 'big picture' and considers, for instance, not only the situation of local studies collections in university and college libraries in the present, but also the *future*. In addition, conclusions are drawn and recommendations made.

Furthermore, the research itself is reflected upon, with a critical evaluation made of the methodology employed, and the study's contribution to knowledge.

A comprehensive reference list is included, followed by appendices comprising the questionnaires distributed to respondents; interview schedules; a set of reflective questions; a list of the types of materials included in responding libraries' collections; and an inventory of local collections at participating libraries and learning centres;

In the next chapter, relevant literature is reviewed that provides theoretical and contextual support for the findings and related issues that are explored in further chapters.

## 1.5 References

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Finberg, H.P.R. and Skipp, V.H.T. *Local history: objective and pursuit*. Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1967.
- <sup>2</sup> Reid, Peter H. *The digital age and local studies*. Oxford: Chandos, 2003.
- <sup>3</sup> It is, of course, worth noting at this point, as Reid puts it, that digitisation 'does not in any way alter the need to preserve the original artefacts. It is not [...] a replacement for the original hard-copy collections; it is more a supplement to it and one which enhances and benefits it by increasing access to the sources.' (*Ibid*, p.49)
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>5</sup> Hoskins, W.G. *Fieldwork in local history*. London: Faber and Faber, 1967.
- <sup>6</sup> Bryant, M.E. Review article. *Journal of educational administration and history*, December 1971, p. 62.
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- <sup>11</sup> Paul, Derryan. *Op cit*.
- <sup>12</sup> Garside, Patricia L. Local history in undergraduate history courses: a survey of universities and polytechnics in the United Kingdom. *Local Historian*, 13 (2), May 1978, pp.67-74.
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- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>17</sup> Armsby, A.F. and Morgan, L. Newcastle College local studies collection. *Local Studies Librarian*, 9 (1), Spring 1990, pp.9-13.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Dewe, Michael. *Op cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Reid, Peter H. *Op cit.*

<sup>21</sup> Dixon, Diana. *Local studies librarianship: a world bibliography*. London: Library Association, 2001.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, literature from a range of fields relevant to the subject of local studies collections in college and university libraries is reviewed. Principally, two main strands of literature are discussed: that which relates to local studies as a subject; and that which focuses on academic libraries, including their role in serving the larger institution. Literature relating to teaching, learning and research as a separate entity also formed part of the secondary research undertaken; however, given the study's focus on libraries and Learning Resource Centres as the means through which teaching, learning and research is undertaken, much of the information on this subject has been gleaned from books and articles on academic libraries.

The nature of the present study is one in which the current state of local studies resources in academia is explored principally by means of primary survey- and interview-based research, with findings reported in the thesis over two chapters, analysed further within the context of a concluding chapter, and preceded by an introduction and historical overview that follows the development of local studies from its status as an amateur pastime to its place as a subject 'worthy' of academic study. Because many of the issues and theories found in the secondary material cited below are referenced throughout the thesis within the contexts of the above-mentioned chapters, this review principally serves to draw attention to how and why particular articles, books, anthologies and authors were reckoned useful to the study.

## 2.2 Local Studies

In order to explore the context of local studies resources in academic libraries, it is important to acknowledge both local studies' roots in the narrower field of 'local history' and its strong connection to the public library sector. While the study focused on collections within further and higher education libraries, the relationship local studies continues to have with the public library could not be ignored and, indeed, was not only crucial in providing context for the investigation into local studies resources, but arguably provided impetus for the study in the first place.

Because of the contemporary nature of the research, the majority of relevant literature employed in the review was relatively fresh in terms of currency, with most books and articles drawn from works published in the last ten or fifteen years. One notable exception was the second edition of J.L. Hobbs' *Local History and the Library*.<sup>1</sup> First published in 1962, the revised edition, partly rewritten by George A. Carter, appeared in 1973. However, its inclusion in the study as a source of background and context was essential. Hobbs is arguably the father of local studies and this work was for many years the standard text on the subject of librarianship and local studies. With chapters covering topics from the 'value and use' of local history, to collections, archives and its place in the county library, the book comprised the most comprehensive account of the precursor to local studies, and remains a very useful starting point in any examination of local studies issues. This is not to say that the work was consulted merely to provide historical context; rather, Hobbs' approach to, for instance, the matter of 'duplication' between different collections was particularly useful in providing both clarification of and a counter point-of-view to what remains an often contentious issue. Another exception was Hoskin's *Fieldwork in Local History*,<sup>2</sup> from 1967. While not used as a contemporary source of information, Hoskin's work, in a manner similar to that of Hobbs, offered some historical perspective in terms of the growth and expansion of local studies.

Bott's 'The World of Local History'<sup>3</sup> provided an insightful overview of the 'coming of age' of this subject, charting its rise in both status and popularity in the United



Kingdom since the Second World War. Of particular note is the focus placed on the crossover status between local history studies as an amateur pastime and a professional interest, where a difference is observed between the amateur's 'love of the place' and the 'parochialism' that this can allow for, and the professional's often more 'detached' approach.<sup>4pp.8-9</sup> In terms of the study, this was an important point when considering how much the collection manager's own interest in the subject might influence local studies holdings in the library or if the collection existed solely to serve the teaching, learning or research needs of the institution. In addition, Bott addresses how the growth in local history studies has affected the way in which history is taught 'from university to primary school'.<sup>5p.13</sup> Referring to higher education, she notes that, whereas 'real research' was once confined to postgraduate studies, it is no longer uncommon to find undergraduates employing primary source material for use in their dissertations, although she concedes that this is not restricted to local history studies.

Ansell's 'The Historical Development and Present Structure of Public Library Local Studies Provision in the United Kingdom'<sup>6</sup> also proved helpful, tracing local studies' relationship with this sector from William IV's edict to have an investigation carried out of the condition of the national archives in 1830 to the more recent growth of local studies centres. Although the article does not make explicit reference to the way in which an almost 'naturalised' relationship between the public library and local studies is assumed, the work perhaps implies that there was almost something inevitable about the emergence of this 'traditional' connection. Ansell, for instance, writes of the way in which, from the start, the provision of local history materials was deemed to be 'an indispensable feature' of the public library, with politician William Ewart making specific mention of such provision when introducing his Public Libraries Bill to the House of Commons in 1850.<sup>7p.29</sup>

More emphatically, Dixon, also citing Ewart, comments on the 'early history of local collections in public libraries [as] inextricably linked to that of the public library service' in *Local Studies Librarianship: a World Bibliography*.<sup>8p.xiii</sup> This volume proved an invaluable source for secondary data. The most comprehensive publication of its

kind, its coverage includes local studies publications and theses from around the world, as well as including museums and archives in addition to library material; and while this coverage arguably extended far beyond the scope of the PhD, it also helped draw attention, once again, to the diversity and depth of local studies investigation and the literature that serves it. With sections on, amongst others, collection management, materials and ICT (Information and Communications Technology), Dixon's work provided a thorough bibliographic resource from which to draw on. Her introductory essay on the history and development of local studies literature also touches on the emergence of local studies as an academic discipline, from the appearance of professional literature on local studies librarianship issues during the First World War and the recognition of local studies as a discipline 'in its own right in the 1960s,<sup>9p.xvi</sup> to the more recent 'substantial monographs'<sup>10pp.xvi-xvii</sup> penned and edited by Michael Dewe. Along similar lines, Derryan Paul's 'The Bibliography of Local History'<sup>11</sup> also proved useful. However, as opposed to Dixon's comprehensive volume, this article, as the author herself observes, is 'very limited in scope'<sup>12p.102</sup> and serves mainly as a guide for librarians on how to find local history information with some bibliographic details referenced throughout.

One of the foremost authorities in the local studies field, Michael Dewe's experience and expertise is reflected in his works and his edited volumes on local studies collections proved to be of immense value throughout the research. In 'Local studies and libraries'<sup>13</sup> Dewe traces the evolution from 'local history' to 'local studies'. The article attempts to make clear that, while he notes 'the continuing historical emphasis in the public library local studies collection'<sup>14p.2</sup> it should also be observed that 'For librarians, and possibly teachers too, 'local studies' is seen as inclusive of local history and so the collection should support studies that look at the historical past, both distant and recent, or at current concerns in the community ... matters of interest to a wide audience.'<sup>15pp.1-2</sup> Interestingly, however, Dewe admits that this continued focus on historical study may not be simply be down to 'subject emphasis' but also in the 'attitude of librarians,'<sup>16p.2</sup> even those who have adopted the newer, more broadly inclusive term. While the focus is primarily on public libraries, the article provides a concise overview of a range of issues associated with local studies,

from the 'development of local history writing' and the increased popularity of family history to the collection itself, local studies librarianship, and more practical considerations such as users' needs, access, and accommodation.

The development of local history and its marginalisation within broader historical studies is explored by Beckett in *Writing Local History*.<sup>17</sup> Tracing the subject from its roots in sixteenth-century antiquarian county studies to its popularity as a pastime in the present day, the 'book sets out how local history has come to be where it is today, and how through studying it we can better understand the nation, the region, and the locality.'<sup>18p.6</sup> Further reading was required in order to shine more light on the historical context and, in this capacity, Tosh's *The Pursuit of History*<sup>19</sup> proved beneficial in terms of providing an overview of historical writing, methods and theory. Cited by Tosh as the beginning of the genre of 'writing about the discipline of history', it was also reckoned by the researcher that Carr's *What Is History?*,<sup>20</sup> originally published in 1961, was worth consulting, as was one of many responses to Carr's study of historiography, Jenkins' *On 'What Is History?': From Carr and Elton to Rorty and White*.<sup>21</sup> Within the context of local Heritage sites, DeSilvey looks at historical narratives, questioning the 're-invention' of places by way of 'selected story-lines.'<sup>22p.34</sup>

Two further articles by Michael Dewe 'Resource Providers for Local Studies'<sup>23</sup> and the later 'Resource Providers'<sup>24</sup> broaden the scope when looking at the ways in which local collections are housed, while also maintaining the traditional link in the literature between local studies and the public sector. In 'Resource Providers' Dewe notes the 'diversity and complexity' of institutions where local studies material can be found, while at the same time identifying three broad types: libraries, museums and archives. He provides an overview of different providers within these institution types, including public and national libraries, local and family history societies, national record offices and art galleries. Although the section on academic libraries is brief and refers, in the main, to Dewe and Paul's own 1984 study as well as specific collections, both this article and its predecessor served as a useful way of putting university and college libraries as local studies resource providers into a wider

context, highlighting the sheer range of places where such material can be found in a field where much of the literature is concerned with the public library alone.

In keeping with the element of diversity evident within the field of local studies, Jill Barber's 'Materials'<sup>25</sup> offered an outline of the many different types of items that might be found in local studies collections, an overview that proved essential when designing the study's questionnaires. Both the traditional and somewhat outmoded perceptions of libraries as merely 'book' repositories and local studies as a subject confined to investigations of the past are thoroughly interrogated. Barber points out that the local collection 'is a contemporary resource, not purely a retrospective one' and observes that 'The scope of its materials reflects an evolving interdisciplinary focus encompassing geography, economics, social science, planning, commerce, politics and culture.'<sup>26p.69</sup> While noting that 'books and pamphlets are still at the heart of the collection' she examines other materials from maps, photographs and indexes to CD-ROM and other technology-based media. Also, while observing the difficulty in separating 'local studies collection' materials from items held by archivists, Barber also provides the useful 'unwritten rule' that published works might be classified as local studies material, while manuscript sources may be considered 'the province of archivists', a distinction that, again, proved useful in practical terms when considering both the focus of the study and appropriate questions for the surveys. Another article by Barber, 'Marketing,'<sup>27</sup> takes the reader through the process of developing and implementing a marketing plan for the local studies collection. While this focus did have some bearing on the PhD's interest in if and how collections and materials were promoted within college and university libraries, Barber's identification of local studies provision being perceived as a 'backroom "Cinderella" service'<sup>28p.140</sup> proved a very worthwhile and thought-provoking suggestion. The term summarises one of the underlying issues that was investigated in the study: the extent to which local studies resources were valued by the institution and how much this might have relied on the collection manager's own good will and enthusiasm for the subject.

As may be evident by this point, one of the most compelling features of local studies is its complexity, and this is reflected in Diana Dixon's 'Collection Management.'<sup>29</sup> The article outlines various issues that can affect the scale and scope of a collection including selection policies, its remit to 'represent' a community, and the often idiosyncratic decisions that sometimes have to be made when deciding what is or is not relevant local material. One particular aspect of collection management and selection that concerned the study related to the sometimes rather widely differing interpretations of 'local' supplied by respondents to the survey. Dixon notes that while 'defining the area served may seem straightforward in terms of current administrative boundaries, it may be less clear-cut for local historical societies, or academic collections.'<sup>30p.88</sup> This was a point that was followed up during the research in terms of the distinctiveness of local collections in college and university libraries and how collection policies may differ from those of public libraries.

Other texts provided more narrowly focused perspectives on local studies collection management. These include articles by Barber,<sup>31</sup> who examines issues affecting training for local studies librarians, including budget constraints, and Hume and Locke, whose 'Information Access and Retrieval'<sup>32</sup> looks at issues relating to cataloguing and classification. While the article's restricted scope meant that the text was useful in only a limited way, with reference to recommendations set out in the Library Association's *Guidelines for Local Studies Provision in Public Libraries*, it provided a helpful underpinning to the questionnaire findings relating to this area of management. Similarly, albeit from a broader perspective, Bluck's 'Organizing Libraries for Customers'<sup>33</sup> highlights potential issues and problems in cataloguing and classification, not only as they might relate to public libraries, but with reference to academic libraries too. Workman's 'The Influence of the Library User on Collection Management'<sup>34</sup> also proved valuable in this area, examining issues pertaining to cataloguing and organisation with, as the article's title suggest, a strong focus on the user.

Users – in particular, communities – and their relationships with archives and heritage form the crux of articles by Flinn,<sup>35</sup> Roberts,<sup>36</sup> Gray,<sup>37</sup> and Gorman.<sup>38</sup> In

Flinn's 'Community Histories, Community Archives: Some Opportunities and Challenges.' While not entirely relevant to the study – as the title suggests, the article largely examines the influence of and interest in local studies within non-academic populations, in particular from the perspective of often under-represented groups – Flinn's article nonetheless provided some context for present concerns such as inclusion and access. Similarly, articles by Roberts and Gray examine the impact of heritage on communities

As its name suggests, Peter H. Reid's *The Digital Age and Local Studies*<sup>39</sup> focuses largely on more recent innovations – particularly issues concerning the internet – and their impact on local investigation. While the book is mostly concerned with the public library sector, acknowledging this bias as 'inevitable', other institutions are not ignored, and this includes the academic library. The book provided some very useful background relating to issues concerning local studies itself, including, for instance, the erroneous, but commonly held, equation of 'local studies' with 'local history'; and the 'myth of parochialism'. Like Dixon, Reid also addresses the complexity of defining the 'local' in 'local studies'. He acknowledges that while the answer to the question 'how local is local?' is seldom as 'self-evident' as it may appear, this is particularly true in the academic sector, where a 'broader approach' is often more commonly found that might be inclined to represent 'the traditionally perceived catchment area or the aspects of teaching, learning and research undertaken at the institution.'<sup>40</sup>p.3-4 Reid's co-authored article with MacAfee, 'The Philosophy of Local Studies in the Interactive Age' also proved useful, generating thought in terms how the internet has impacted issues such as access, user requirements, and social inclusion, noting a 'need to disseminate and celebrate local studies online, in order to show the users of electronic resources how much value could be added to their research by local studies collections.'<sup>41</sup>p.137

Issues relating to electronic access and resources also feature strongly in Breivik and Gee's *Higher Education in the Internet Age*.<sup>42</sup> While not specific to local studies or libraries, despite the publication's origins in and focus on universities in the United States, the text was able to provide the study with facts and figures relating to the

use of digital resources that proved particularly helpful when posing issues relating to access and materials within a broader context. Articles by Anderson<sup>43</sup> and Smith and Rowley<sup>44</sup> focus on digitisation within a local studies context, albeit outside of the academic sector. While Smith and Rowley look at digitisation from a broad public library perspective, Anderson provides a narrower viewpoint, focusing on an evaluation of the Glasgow Story digitisation project. Access to local studies web-based services are also examined by Barry and Tedd<sup>45</sup> and Litzer and Barnett,<sup>46</sup> who look at the practical benefits of being able to access local material remotely, including the ability to 'display' sometimes rare or unique items that users might otherwise have little or no access to at all.

Further thought is given to technologies and more recent developments and challenges in local studies provision by Dewe,<sup>47</sup> Dixon,<sup>48</sup> Sharp,<sup>49</sup> and Archdeacon, *et al.*<sup>50</sup> Dixon, for instance, looks at the influence and impact of digitisation and the rise of social media against a backdrop of heightened demand and scarce financial resources, while Sharp focuses on the delivery of local studies services in austere times. Nashwalder<sup>51</sup> also examines local studies services' delivery in the public library, using a case study approach with a focus on Wiltshire. While these articles and dissertations are based on public library provision, they do offer context for recent developments and concerns with regard to the ability to provide local studies services.

The ways in which access to online resources is being expanded through web-based sites and services based on Web 2.0 and Library 2.0 technology are explored by Curren,<sup>52, 53</sup> Chowdhury, *et al.*,<sup>54</sup> Maness<sup>55</sup> and Theimer.<sup>56</sup> While only Theimer provides a local studies perspective in *Web 2.0 tools and strategies for archives and local history collections*, which serves largely as a practical guide to navigating the changes to the World Wide Web that the likes of social networking sites and blogs have wrought, the others offered valuable information on Library 2.0, the library-focused user-centred service based on Web 2.0, that was useful when considering next-generation public access catalogues. Indeed, next generation catalogues are the focus of Jai and Weng's<sup>57</sup> examination, and Yang and Hofmann's<sup>58</sup> comparative

study of, OPAC services, both of which proved helpful when considering more recent developments in access to collections.

One issue that emerged from the study was the almost innate *different-ness* of local studies librarianship and provision, its uniqueness at least in part informed by its crossover potential (or, in more negative terms, its lack of a solid identity as an isolated subject in and of itself) and its perhaps frequent reliance on the enthusiasm of the collection manager for the topic. This difference is explored by Joe Fisher, Librarian for the Glasgow Room, in 'Local Studies, What Art Thou?',<sup>59</sup> where the author compares trying to define local studies, an area with which he is more than familiar, with 'the centipede who fell over when he thought about how he moved his legs.'<sup>60p.3</sup> Fisher observes, for instance, that all of the material held in the Glasgow Room 'rightly belongs somewhere else' whether the library's arts and recreation, social sciences, or philosophy and religion sections. He also proposes that the local studies librarian occupies a unique role within the broader librarianship profession, suggesting that he [or she] is 'regarded as something more than a librarian'<sup>61p.4</sup> and is expected to be something of an expert on the subject itself rather than merely its resources. Differences such as these, Fisher concludes, 'suggest that in some radical way local studies does not conform to the idea of an ordinary subject department.'<sup>62p.4</sup> These are salient points that were considered vital to the study when considering the practicalities of the local studies collection's integration with or separation from the main stock, its status as a resource within the curriculum, and its value to the manager, user and the institution as a whole.

One of the most important secondary sources, and the only literature to focus solely on local collections in colleges and universities, is 'Local Studies Collections in Academic Libraries',<sup>63</sup> in which Derryan Paul and Michael Dewe, both renowned experts in the field of local studies, report on the results of a 1984 survey on the subject of local studies collections in university and college libraries. This particular text was especially relevant to the project, given that it concerns the only major empirical study of this subject. Observing both the 'traditional' perception of local studies being 'the responsibility of public libraries', and the bias toward the public



library sector in the literature of local studies, the authors suggest that the report 'constitutes a preliminary attempt to remedy this omission'. The article proved crucial in two distinct, yet related, ways: As a preliminary report, the 1984 study enabled the researcher to identify what was thus far known about the underrepresented subject of local collections in the further and higher education sector; furthermore, its very status as the sole example of such a study in itself underlined the paucity of information on this issue. Paul and Dewe's assertion that the purpose of academic libraries' local studies collections is not 'to duplicate the collections and services provided in public libraries and record offices or to supplant them, but to *supplement* [researcher's emphasis] them'<sup>64p.52</sup> also provided the study with an issue to be explored in the research in terms of not only the question of responsibility for local studies services and resources, but, once again, local studies' *difference* from other college- or university-based subjects.

Although he concedes that local studies provision is not 'uniquely unfortunate' in the potential problems faced by the library service, in 'Local Studies Collections'<sup>65</sup> Crosby highlights two main concerns with regard to this particular issue in county and borough libraries: namely staff and materials. The problems he focuses on involved issues that bore relevance to the PhD study, despite the difference in context. Crosby writes, for instance, about 'specialist staff, who have proper expertise in local history and related subjects ... [being] replaced by staff who ... have no special knowledge or experience,'<sup>66p.2</sup> an issue pursued in the PhD study when identifying levels of local studies training and/or induction in academic library staff. In addition, Crosby writes of service chiefs who may be 'seduced by technology' at the expense of more traditional resources such as books or pamphlets, a topic for further exploration during the study when examining the different types of materials that make up local collections in university and college libraries.

Usherwood examines the provision of materials and guidance in 'The Social Impact of Local Studies Services.'<sup>67</sup> Based on research carried out at the University of Sheffield to assess the social effect of public library services in Newcastle and

Somerset, once again, the emphasis on the public library underlines the strength of the 'traditional' relationship between this sector and local studies investigation, as Usherwood points out the 'significant' role played by local studies in the impact such services have on the population. However, while the article does not move outside of its remit to focus on the public library in order to address the further implications of the surveys' findings, of particular interest to the PhD study was the suggestion that local studies services are a means through which 'individuals develop new skills through supporting an interest in local history.'<sup>68p.2</sup> While the report refers to these individuals in terms of 'the public', that local studies investigation, in particular, lends itself to hands-on research experience can arguably be applied to further and higher education students and was one of the concerns of the study.

In 'The Expansion of Local History: Its Impact on Libraries'<sup>69</sup> Derryan Paul takes a more direct look at the relationship between local studies and education. Published in 1989, the article follows the development over the previous thirty years of local history as a subject of academic interest in further and higher education institutions, observing that previously, although a topic of formal study since the sixteenth century, prior to the 1960s it could be largely characterised as 'a field for amateurs.'<sup>70p.34</sup> Examining its integration into academic study, Paul looks at the emergence of a range of disciplines that take local history as their primary focus and also how local history has been offered as an option within other subjects. While Paul limits herself to the narrower subject of 'local history', as suggested earlier this subject cannot and should not be ignored in terms of its importance to the more recent, broader field of local *studies*. The article, therefore, proved beneficial in supplying background information and in putting into context the issue of local studies' integration into the curriculum.

One of the study's main concerns was to assess the degree to which local studies collections had moved beyond the perception of being almost exclusively associated with historical study and were being employed within different disciplines. An article by A.F. Armsby and L. Morgan, 'Newcastle College Local Studies Collection' not only

provided an overview of a specific collection, but its emphasis on the *purpose* of its collection arguably increased its value to the study as an indication of how local studies collections might be deployed elsewhere. Armsby and Morgan touch on the importance of what might be often considered an issue of mere semantics, as Reid does, when they assert that ‘whilst we appreciated Newcastle’s past, we were just as interested in the present’, thus once again highlighting the potential relevance of holding a local *studies* – as opposed to local *history* – collection. This relevance is made clear as the authors provide an indication of how broadly local studies resources can be used in terms of curriculum support by citing the ways in which art, business, science, and tourism and leisure students may utilise the collection. In terms of materials, the authors also highlight the diversity within the local studies collection, comprising items from books and pamphlets to vinyl records and video.

Less concerned with how collections are used is Wood’s ‘The Local Collection at Durham University Library’. Unlike Newcastle College’s more reflective article, this account is primarily descriptive and mainly served the study by providing an overview of the local history collection at Durham. However, as an example of how local collections can be served by recent technology, promoted to ‘potential customers’, and organised for maximum impact, it provided some useful ideas for areas to look into and follow up during research.<sup>71</sup>

### **2.3 Academic Libraries**

Because the study was as concerned with *the purpose* of local collections as it was with the existence of such materials, examining the *function* of the college or university library was reckoned essential.

Peter Brophy’s *The Academic Library*<sup>72</sup> represents probably the most comprehensive overview of the library within the higher education sector. Covering a wide range of subjects, from the library building itself to performance measurement, the book served as both a useful introduction *and* a more in-depth source of information relating to various issues and concerns focused on during the research. Most useful

to the study were the chapters relating to the library as part of the parent institution, collection management, and users. In 'The Higher Education Context' Brophy provides a summary of the development of universities and higher education colleges, and also looks at recent directions taken in teaching and learning methods. He reminds the reader that, as a general rule, 'the character of each library, and the types of service it emphasizes, are based upon the needs of a particular, well-defined group of users', so that 'the university library reflects its university,'<sup>73p.2</sup> a seemingly obvious, yet important, point when considering why certain collections are held and how they are used. 'The History of Higher Education Libraries' traces libraries in this sector from the pre-modern era to the present, and includes coverage of several significant committee reports, such as the 1992 Follett Report on university library provision. 'Collection and Access Management and the Organization of Resources' provided information and observations on stock selection processes, materials, preservation and conservation and other aspects of the management and organisation of resources that helped put some of the issues relating to the more specific collection of local material into context. 'Users of the Academic Library' offered a valuable overview of types of potential users, including under- and postgraduate students, research students and staff, academic staff and external readers. One of the main areas of interest for the research, especially when considering the types of material that might be found within an academic local studies collection, is that of the tension between the preservation of sometimes very old or unique items and access to materials. Brophy's focus in this chapter is at least partly informed by his belief that a library has little purpose without users, claiming that, even when preservation might be a particular library's primary mission, 'unless 'posterity' includes users it has no real meaning.'<sup>74p.60</sup>

'Posterity' and the relationship between users and library collections forms the central theme of Duckett's article, 'The need for Local Heroes – Using the Knowledge.'<sup>75</sup> As the article's title suggests, Duckett takes local studies materials and librarianship as his example and examines the argument of whether library collections are 'for future use and not just for the present.'<sup>76p.173</sup> While the focus on academic libraries is quite fleeting – attention is quite broadly placed on 'local

studies libraries' – Duckett's article was helpful in providing a context for examining not only the immediate purpose behind local collections in college and university libraries, but also for exploring the different expectations placed on public and academic libraries when it comes to building collections.

The attention given to academic libraries is more limited in Brophy's *The Library in the Twenty-first Century*,<sup>77</sup> which focuses on recent developments across a broader landscape. However, some of the issues raised were useful to the study in terms of providing additional context. For example, Brophy looks at how 'The sense of the academic library's role as a centre for scholarly research' is one that 'has persisted to the present',<sup>78p.27</sup> and examines the reality behind this perception. For instance, he notes that 'The massification (sic) of higher education has led in recent years to much greater prominence being given to the academic library's role in supporting learning and teaching.'<sup>79p.31</sup> Also looking at the future of academic libraries are Law<sup>80</sup> and Holley,<sup>81</sup> with Holley particularly concerned with how technology has impacted upon issue of space within university libraries. Feret and Marcineck<sup>82</sup> and Reyes<sup>83</sup> also consider the future of the academic library, but with primary focus placed on the role of the academic librarian.

Although produced more than twelve years ago, the *Joint Funding Councils' Libraries Review Group: Report*<sup>84</sup> (commonly known as the Follett Report) represents one of the most significant major reviews of library provision in higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. The report, prepared for the four major university funding bodies, is largely focused on, not surprisingly, library issues within the context of financial support, but some useful information was gained in terms of how university libraries are *expected* to function, when considering the pressures placed on libraries that have to cope with increased student numbers and decreased funding, ultimately leading to stretched resources. Similarly, the 1994 Anderson Report,<sup>85</sup> which emerged from concerns raised by the Follett report, served to provide information regarding how libraries are expected to support research activity.

The subject of users' importance to the higher education library is focused on almost exclusively in Jordan's *The Academic Library and Its Users*.<sup>86</sup> The philosophy extolled in this book is perhaps best summed up by the author's edict: 'Never take your eyes off the user!'<sup>87p.viii</sup> As this directive might suggest, the book possibly serves best as a 'how to' guide for professionals in the academic library who wish to improve the service offered to its readers. However, in terms of its usefulness to the study, Jordan's book provided an overview of various subjects that impacted on the project. This included discussions of recent developments in further and higher education libraries, 'quality' issues, and, of course, the users themselves. Jordan himself, however, notes the 'heterogeneous' nature of the student population<sup>88p.49</sup> and, with this in mind, his account of student needs within the library is perhaps rather broad and tends to cover more practical concerns, such as access to the library itself, theft of stock and 'library anxiety' rather than the ways in which the resources themselves might be being used within the context of learning. However, this focus is in-keeping with the nature of the book. Most useful, perhaps, was the chapter on 'Researchers', where provision of materials *is* discussed, with Jordan noting, for instance that in one study, where academic researchers mentioned libraries outside of their own institution in terms of 'more suitable collections' it was more often researchers from new universities.<sup>89p.106</sup>

Baker's 'Academic Libraries',<sup>90</sup> while ostensibly a general introduction to the subject of resource management in this area, actually served as a useful overview of some of the more difficult issues related to academic librarianship. For instance, any idea that libraries in the university have an easily identifiable role within the institution that can be simply summed up in an 'all-embracing' mission statement is belied as Baker puts forward a number of pertinent, albeit rhetorical, questions that proved useful to the study in terms of establishing the purpose of the collections. Suggesting that the 'traditional university library' might be described as 'an amalgam of single-subject special libraries catering for a series of special client groups', he proposes some conflicts that the library might face when endeavouring to serve these different groups. He asks whether the library is, for instance, focused on supporting 'study and teaching or research' and if it might be, primarily 'an archive

or an information centre', questions that bear a great deal of relevance to the PhD study's aim of identifying both the existence *and* purpose of the local collections. Further sections, such as 'Research versus Teaching', in which Baker identifies and outlines some general trends in emphasis between 'traditional' and 'new' universities, provided a beneficial indication of the workings of higher education institutions and their libraries over recent years.

In 'Collections, Collectors and Collection Building'<sup>91</sup> Ratcliffe focuses closely on this aspect of academic librarianship, providing a view of the tension between accumulating holdings that strictly serve the institution's teaching and learning needs, and building collections that may have value outside of the curriculum. While noting, for example, the important collection of printed ephemera in the Bodleian library that would be of 'little scholarly purpose' if duplicated,<sup>92p.60</sup> he argues against James Thompson's view in *Redirection in Academic Library Management* that major academic libraries have frequently been guilty of attempting to 'collect for collecting's sake.'<sup>93p.2</sup> While agreeing that this, indeed, is not what collection-building is about, Ratcliffe also claims that 'No British University in my experience has pursued this policy'.<sup>94p.5</sup> Ratcliffe's work – published as part of a collection of essays 'in honour of Ian Rogerson', the first Librarian of Manchester Polytechnic – places a great deal of focus on the individual histories of specific collections, such as the ancestry of particular benefactors and, while interesting nonetheless and in-keeping with the essay collection's more 'personal' flavour, this meant the article was of limited use to the study. However, Ratcliffe's introductory argument against the perception of academic libraries unrealistically hoping to 'acquire all the books in the inhabited world' provided an intriguing insight into this feature of academic librarianship.

From the same collection of essays is Feather's 'Special Collections in the University Library'<sup>95</sup>. Feather's article takes perhaps a more general tone than Ratcliffe's, and he provides both an interesting and useful overview of some of the issues associated with this division of higher education librarianship. Feather examines the difficulty in defining what a 'Special Collections' department actually is and highlights 'four areas

of concern': preservation, access, the wider implications of 'collections owned and held by a single institution', and the correlation of these holdings with the institution's 'mission', in particular with regard to research, all of which were focused on to a smaller or larger degree in the research.

The issue of how resources are deployed to provide curriculum assistance is studied in Josephine Webb's 'Collection Management to Support Learning'.<sup>96</sup> As Webb points out, this is an issue that has been relatively neglected in both the literature and in e-mail discussion lists on 'how libraries can support learning across the range of their services and facilities',<sup>97p.135</sup> and the article was therefore valuable in terms of providing context for the study's aim in identifying and assessing how local studies resources are used for curriculum support. With reference to the Dearing and Follet reports on library services in universities, Webb looks at various areas of concern within the academic library sector and how these affect teaching and learning within the parent institutions. How curriculum support might be found within the library is examined in a section focused upon the needs of undergraduate and postgraduate students, where Webb suggests that 'the collection should reflect back to students the range of learning outcomes which have been specified in the courses they study',<sup>98p.136</sup> an issue taken up in the research when identifying and analysing whether local collections are influenced by or, conversely, impact on what students are being taught. An interesting point is also made when considering the way in which it is perhaps commonplace to perceive teaching and research as separate functions within higher education institutions. With reference to the Follett Review Group findings, Webb observes that 'a substantial degree of common use of bookstock for teaching and research' was found.<sup>99p.138</sup> Thebridge and Dalton are also concerned with resources to support learning, but with a narrower focus on progressing towards Outcomes Assessment within academic libraries.<sup>100</sup>

Carr's *The Academic Research Library in a Decade of Change*<sup>101</sup> focuses principally, as the title suggests, on a particular sub-set of the academic library, while also making use of case studies that centre on specific institutions, such as the chapter on Oxford's Bodleian Library. However, many of the issues Carr covers in this volume



can be applied outwith the narrower confines of the research library and the book provides a sound overview of the rapid changes that have occurred not only within libraries themselves, but in the wider academic landscape over the ten years prior to the book's publication in 2007. Focal points include the possible future of the hardcopy book, the (changing) needs of users, and digitisation for the purposes of preservation.

In *Colleges, Libraries and Access to Learning*,<sup>102</sup> various authors examine issues salient to librarianship and further and higher education in both colleges and former polytechnics. Articles focus on subjects such as the institutional contexts of further and higher education, the role of the librarian in both learning and the immediate context of the library itself, resources, and students. Published in 1994, the book nonetheless offers an informative overview of the library within a context other than that which tends to prioritise those, older, institutions more traditionally associated with 'academic libraries'.

Outside of the context of the academic library, in *Rethinking University Teaching: A Framework for the Effective Use of Educational Technology*,<sup>103</sup> Laurillard examines how approaches to teaching have changed from a model based on merely 'imparting knowledge' to one that focuses instead on facilitating student learning. Along with other library-focused texts that include discussions of teaching/learning methods and approaches, such as those mentioned above by Brophy and Webb, Laurillard's emphasis on learning as an increasingly independent activity undertaken by students outside of the classroom, provides a connection between teaching and learning and the resources employed to enable these activities.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

In discussing the secondary sources employed in order to provide context to the present study, as well as to position the thesis within a body of existing literature, when it comes to the existence and purpose of local studies collections in further and higher education libraries, the limitations of the existing literature are clear. The

vast majority of material posits local studies within the realm of the public sector, with only Dewe and Paul's preliminary study addressing the specific topic of these collections' place in the academic library to any substantial degree. Likewise, the question of *how* local studies material is used in higher and further education is one that has largely been, if not outright neglected, then perhaps under-analysed.

As has been suggested when discussing the rationale for the present study, however, these omissions in the literature are not entirely surprising, and, in fact, have served to drive the study itself. It is with this in mind that literature cited seeks to inform the aims and objectives of the thesis.

In the following chapter, the methods and approaches employed in the study are described and reflected upon, with attention paid to techniques used for the collection, recording and analysis of primary data, as well as reference to relevant theories and methodologies. The importance of secondary sources to the thesis is also discussed.

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## Chapter Three

### Methods and Approaches

#### 3.1 Introduction

Research is done to settle disputes about the nature and operation of some aspect of the universe. The research process is a disciplined way of coming to know something about our world and ourselves.<sup>1p.5</sup>

So states Bouma when summarising the reasons for research and the reasons for research methodology. While this particular study cannot claim to be concerned with settling a 'dispute' as such – although Bouma would appear to use this term less literally than might be assumed – its aim *is* to discover something about the world of local studies and academic libraries in a 'disciplined way'.

In *Librarianship: Its philosophy and History*, Mukherjee cites a number of different beliefs ascribed to the study of librarianship. Amongst others, Mukherjee references Houle's belief that 'a philosophy of librarianship should be a practical philosophy' as opposed to 'the philosophy of nature, which seeks to re-discover what nature *is*.' Houle further proposed that such a philosophy achieves its 'fullest meaning' when it is applied in order to 'guide the actions of individual librarian [sic] or a group of librarians, who are working together in a single institution.'<sup>2p.9</sup>

It is clear, then, that Houle sees any potential philosophy as one that should be *workable* in the libraries themselves. In addition, Raymond Irwin's view that 'there is no philosophy of librarianship ... on which technical studies can be based' is, as Mukherjee puts it,

countermanded by the existence of its *ruling principles*, which we may describe, as of any other branch of knowledge, as a statement of the aims, object or end of this particular study.

Indeed, according to Irwin, as Mukherjee describes it, the 'philosophy of librarianship has no meaning other than the study of theory or principles of this branch of knowledge.'<sup>3p.9</sup> In terms of conducting research within the field of librarianship, support for such beliefs may, at first glance, appear to be founded on a rather obvious notion. After all, what is the point of carrying out research if it is not to be *employed* in a practical way?

However, Busha and Harter note the way in which research can, roughly speaking, be divided into two broad types: basic research (sometimes referred to as pure, theoretical or scientific research<sup>4p.2</sup>); and applied research. With reference to the former, the authors observe how studies can be 'undertaken primarily to acquire knowledge for its own sake', also pointing to the 'original and theoretical' nature of basic research, drawn from 'fundamental, intellectual problems'.<sup>5p.7-8</sup> Basic research is not concerned with making practical *use* of findings; or, as Powell and Connaway put it, '[basic research] is primarily interested in deriving new knowledge and is, at most, only indirectly involved with how that knowledge will be applied to specific, practical, or real problems.'<sup>6p.2</sup> On the other hand, applied research is chiefly 'pragmatic'. Busha and Harter explain that:

its purposes are more specific and are generally aimed at solving practical problems or at the discovery of new knowledge that can be utilized immediately in actual "real world" situations.<sup>7p.8</sup>

They also point out, however, that, in some cases, 'distinctions cannot easily be made between basic and applied research, especially in cases pertaining to subject areas that are in the process of theory building'.<sup>8p.8</sup> Regarding this sometimes blurry distinction, Mouly further suggests that 'All research findings will be useful and practical – sooner or later – no matter how disinterested in immediate utilitarian goals the pure researcher might be.'<sup>9p.43</sup>

With this in mind, the research conducted into the presence and purpose of local studies collections in academic libraries is perhaps best described as a combination of basic and applied research, with the emphasis on the former since, while the

primary purpose of the research is not necessarily aimed towards cutting costs or enhancing the performance of a specific given library, the knowledge acquired for this study may end up being employed in a practical manner. Ultimately, university and college libraries themselves serve a practical purpose: to provide students with the tools necessary to achieve career advancement in 'the real world', as well as carry with them the capacity for independent thought, undertaking research, and further learning (whether academic or not). The more that is known about resources within the institutions – the *what*, *why* and *how* of them – the better equipped academic libraries and the departments they serve can be when it comes to executing their duty as learning facilitators. Furthermore, the information obtained has also enabled the researcher to provide recommendations that can perhaps be more directly applied in a pragmatic fashion. However, because there is no tradition of literature on this subject, and little is known about it, this study of local studies collections in academic libraries is instead more concerned with acquiring knowledge that may be used for 'theory building', as well as, in part, to fill an intellectual gap for those whose interests lie in the direction of local studies and/or academic library resources. Therefore, it is suggested that basic research – the main purpose being to 'acquire knowledge for its own sake' – is the primary research approach taken in the study.

### **3.2 Methods and Approaches: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Research**

Teddlie and Tashakkori state that 'Mixed methodologists present an alternative to the QUAN [Quantitative Methods] and QUAL [Qualitative Methods] traditions by advocating the use of whatever methodological tools are required to answer the research questions under study.'<sup>10p.7</sup> When designing the research for this study, it was decided early on that a mixed methodology, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, would prove most useful. As noted further on in this chapter, the intention of the research was not simply to present findings comprised of quantifiable data relating to how many libraries hold local studies collections, or

the percentage of collections that date back to the 1900s. While quantitative research certainly was deemed important in order to gather data of this ilk with a view to gaining an immediate overview of the content, scope, and purpose of local collections within academic libraries, it was also reckoned equally important to gather data that is *not* quantifiable.

Glazier and Powell note that 'qualitative research' is known in the literature under a number of different terms. These terms include: naturalistic inquiry, ethnographic research, field work, observation, and grounded theory research. As the authors suggest, 'The concept [of qualitative research] seems to be confusing not only because of the number of terms applied, but also because it carries different connotations for different people.'<sup>11p.6</sup> The complexity of defining qualitative research is reflected by Glazier and Powell's suggestion that, 'Perhaps the best way to understand what is meant by qualitative research is to determine what it is not':

It is not procedures that predominantly rely on statistical analysis for inferences. It is not a set of procedures that rely predominantly on quantitative measures as a means of data gathering. It is not a set of preliminary data-gathering procedures intended to be used as a device for determining what nonqualitative methods should be employed for a project.<sup>12p.6</sup>

In determining what qualitative research *is*, the authors cite Strauss and Corbin's assertion that 'Qualitative research ... can be understood in terms of the means of collection and the type of data collected.' These means include a fairly broad range of data collection techniques, sometimes incorporating a similarly broad range of types of data, such as, 'observations, interviews, content analysis of documents, articles, books, audio- and videotapes, even descriptive statistics such as census data.'<sup>13p.6</sup> Yet, given the range of techniques described, how useful such an approach is to determining the *nature* or *purpose* of qualitative research, is somewhat debatable. More informative, perhaps, is the authors' claim that 'The strength of qualitative data is its rich description. Researchers strive to capture the

essence of a subject by using description that yields generalizations documented by specific examples of data from the field. Qualitative data can be said to yield more contextually detailed data – *richer data*.’ The authors go on to explain that ‘along with the data collected, one also gets a description of what activities were going on around the phenomenon in terms of time and social circumstances surrounding it.’<sup>14p.6-7</sup>

Pickard expands further on this suggestion of qualitative research’s ability to provide a deeper, fuller set of data, looking at quantitative and qualitative research in terms of ‘two separate belief systems, two conflicting paradigms’<sup>15p.14</sup> that can contribute very different kinds of data to the study. Citing Gorman and Clayton,<sup>16pp.24-28</sup> she notes the ‘basic assumptions’ of qualitative versus quantitative research:

quantitative methodology assumes the objective reality of social facts;  
qualitative methodology assumes social constructions of reality.<sup>17p.13</sup>

As suggested throughout the thesis – and in particular, in the introduction to Chapter Five – one of the issues that emerged most strongly during both the preliminary investigation and the research itself, is how large a part *perception* plays when considering attitudes towards local studies and its resources. While the researcher is reluctant to make a claim that the research undertaken was an unambiguous study in ‘social constructions of reality’, a good part of this reluctance would be due to the association of social constructionism with sociology and communication theories, an association that would risk misrepresenting the study’s primary focus or, indeed, take the study into an entirely different realm. Within the context of the study, however, the distinction between ‘facts’ and (not necessarily factual) perception is an important one.

Cresswell, citing Bogdan and Biklen, Eisner, and Merriam, provides a concise summary of characteristics of qualitative research: *Natural setting (field focused) as source of data; Researcher as key instrument of data collection; Data collected as words or pictures; Outcome as process rather than product; Analysis of data*

*inductively, attention to particulars; Focus on participants' perspectives, their meaning; Use of expressive language; Persuasion by reason.*<sup>18p.16</sup>

Addressing the question of why a person engages 'in such a rigorous design', Cresswell posits that 'To undertake qualitative research requires a strong commitment to study a problem and demands time and resources. Qualitative research shares good company with the most rigorous quantitative research, and it should not be viewed as an easy substitute for a "statistical" or quantitative study.'<sup>19p.16</sup> The author elaborates on the commitment and rigour necessary to undertake this type of research, highlighting that the researcher must be 'willing' to do the following:

- *Commit to extensive time in the field.* This includes collecting 'extensive data' and laboring 'over field issues of trying to gain access, rapport, and an "insider" perspective.'
- *Engage in the complex, time-consuming process of data analysis – the ambitious task of sorting through large amounts of data and reducing them to a few themes or categories.'* Cresswell suggests that 'the task is challenging' in particular because of the 'complex texts and images' that comprise the database.
- *Write long passages, because the evidence must substantiate claims and the writer needs to show multiple perspectives.* The author adds that 'the incorporation of quotes to provide participants' perspectives' will also have a bearing on the length of the study.
- *Participate in a form of social and human science research that does not have firm guidelines or specific procedures and is evolving and changing constantly.* This particular task, according to Cresswell, 'complicates' the difference between 'telling others how one plans to conduct a study and how others might judge it' once the study is completed.<sup>20p.16-17</sup>

While not every area of engagement with qualitative research made here by Cresswell can be neatly checked off when it comes to the present study, the points are reflected to varying degrees in the research undertaken by the researcher. By undertaking 'field' visits to academic libraries and relevant departments, studying the collections within their 'natural' environment, and conducting interviews and discussing relevant issues with collection managers, the researcher attempted to gain an 'insider' perspective with the intention of providing both further context and depth to the study. Similarly, the analysis carried out comprised a great deal more than simply adding figures obtained during the survey stages of the study; rather, the study required engagement with 'complex' texts (and images), with the aim of exploring local studies and academia in ways that had not been done prior. When it came to presenting the study's findings, the researcher was particularly concerned with building a narrative that incorporated multiple perspectives in order to interrogate the subject matter to its fullest extent. As suggested earlier, the point of the study was never simply to present 'facts and figures' about local studies resources within colleges and universities, but to alter the framework itself of local studies and its place in academic libraries – to shine a light on local studies resources that would ultimately uncover aspects of the subject that have, heretofore, been neglected. In order to do this, it was essential to look at not only the 'what', but the 'why' and 'how', all of which necessitated examining – often contradictory – opinions and perspectives from a variety of sources, including different authors and 'experts', collection managers, educators, and users; through a number of different methods and resources, including books, articles, interviews and observation, in addition to the opinions and perspectives offered by librarians and collection managers during the survey stage.

The methods employed in order to acquire knowledge in the case of the present survey were informed by the aims and objectives, as set out in the introduction. As Burton notes:

The researcher must have a clear definition of the objectives of the research before being able to ask the appropriate questions. Stating the objective as,



for example, 'to study library users' is too vague: it begs the question 'who is a library user?', what constitutes library use, and so on."<sup>21p.63</sup>

The methodologies used to achieve these objectives, however, cannot necessarily be broken down to match each objective in turn. Rather, the methods and techniques reflected either the depth of coverage or the angle from which a particular issue was approached. In this way, a more integrated and comprehensive approach to the subject was permitted.

Given the study's aims and objectives, the research methodology was also considered with a view to collecting data both qualitative and quantitative in nature. For instance, in order to ascertain the content, scope and purpose of collections the question of 'how many?' was necessary; for example, how many libraries or LRCs hold local studies collections, or how many collections are employed for use in specific courses? Moreover, enquiries were frequently worded in order to elicit an, albeit limited qualitative response to which a quantitative response could also be applied, for instance, which courses does the library's local collection support? This not only indicated how local studies collections are being used, but also the overall *scope* of the collections' use in academic libraries. However, the primary purpose of the research is not simply to be a statistical survey on the current situation. Rather, the study seeks to posit its data within the context of relevant issues concerning the areas of local studies, academic libraries and pedagogy, as well as theories and philosophies related to each.

The methods used comprised the following: secondary source research; and primary research incorporating questionnaire surveys, observational visits, and interviews. A detailed overview of the research methods employed follows, but can be summarised here:

#### 1. Secondary Sources

- A review and examination of the literature was carried out in order to give context to the study.

## 2. Questionnaire One

- 802 libraries and LRCs (Learning Resource Centres) were sent links to an online questionnaire via email; 223 responded.

## 3. Questionnaire Two

- 140 libraries and LRCs were targeted with a second online questionnaire; 70 responded.

## 4. Observational Visits

- Five institutions were visited and interviews were carried out with the collection managers.

## 5. Interviews

- As well as the aforementioned interviews with collection managers, an in-depth telephone interview was conducted with Michael Dewe.

## 6. Questions

- A set of 'reflective' questions was forwarded to Michael Dewe, with written responses to each received.

### **3.2.1 Secondary Sources**

#### **3.2.1.1 Literature Search**

Busha and Harter describe a literature search as follows:

A literature search (or literature review) is an attempt to identify, locate, and synthesize completed research reports, articles, books, and other materials about the specific problems of a research topic.<sup>22p.19</sup>

When conducting any piece of contemporary research, secondary sources are frequently important for establishing background information and context. When researching an area of study hitherto neglected in the literature, it is perhaps judicious to clarify Busha and Harter's statement by suggesting that the secondary

literature can be drawn upon and applied to 'the specific problems of a research topic'. The majority of material drawn upon for this particular research, for instance, was commonly written from a broader and/or different perspective; only one piece of writing was *about* what might be described as the 'specific problem of local studies collections in academic libraries'.

The literature search was, therefore, begun by identifying the parameters for this secondary study. Having identified, through a preliminary study of the literature, the problem to be researched as well as the aims and objectives that would best serve the investigation, it was decided that the majority of material employed would focus on the following areas: local studies; academic libraries; and further and higher education teaching and learning. The absence of literature pertaining to all three was, by the time of the study's original proposal, a given; as was the near-absence of material on local studies and academic libraries. Texts based on the academic library and its relationship to teaching and learning was more commonplace; but, given the study's focus, the researcher was prepared to have to select the material carefully in order to keep it relevant to the research.

Three primary methods for identifying appropriate texts were employed:

1. Use of prior knowledge, such as authors' names or relevant journals.
2. Knowledge of Michael Dewe as probably the foremost authority in the field of local studies in the United Kingdom, for instance, provided the literature search with a useful starting-point. His two volumes, *Local Studies Collections: A Manual* are invaluable resources, compiling articles from well-regarded figures in the field such as Dewe himself, Derryan Paul, Ian Jamieson, Valerie Bott, Bernard Nurse and others. Similarly, journals already known to the researcher were consulted, such as *Local Studies Librarian* and *Local History*. In addition, citations and references were followed up when appropriate.

3. Identifying appropriate terms.

Common terms such as 'local studies', 'local history' and 'academic libraries' were employed in order to identify texts that may be relevant to the study. Library catalogues and journals were consulted and, with reference to these terms, potentially useful items found.

4. Formulating appropriate terms for use in electronic searching, involving Boolean logic, truncation and proximity indicators.

Two primary library, information and education science abstracting services were used: ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) and LISA (Library and Information Science Abstracts). Phrases employed at the initial stage were deliberately quite broad in order to provide a relatively wide overview of the situation regarding available material. This would enable items to be identified that not only related directly to the subject of the PhD, but would guide the researcher to more general articles that may aid in supplying background information on the issue of local studies and its relationship with academia.

Phrases included terms (and appropriate grammatical variations or 'wildcards' when permitted) such as 'library', 'local studies' or 'local history', 'academia', and so on. A typical search thread, for instance, would be: Local studies OR local history (AND Educat\*).

The results obtained from this particular method were, not surprisingly, quite varied. While subject indexing has arguably come a long way when it comes to electronic searching, limitations that are difficult to surmount or bypass remain evident, thus leaving room for much material that ultimately proved irrelevant. Narrowing terms, therefore, often became necessary in order to produce a manageable number of returns, such as adding the terms 'higher' or 'further' to the term 'educat\*' .

When assessing the results gained from the searches, perhaps the most difficult task – and one that cropped up with regard to all three primary methods – was judging the value of material in terms of the study's focus; that is, the 'where to stop?' question. It became apparent early on in the study that, while background and context is, as mentioned, crucial to any piece of research where a 'problem' has been identified, there is also the potential to 'cast the net too wide' thereby both wasting valuable time in following roads of enquiry that ultimately lead to irrelevancy, and risking putting the research itself off course. Frequent referral to the aims and objectives of the study was, therefore, crucial in order that the study remain focused when it came to identifying and employing secondary sources of information.

A critical overview of the literature gathered and employed in the study is contained within the thesis' literature review.

### **3.2.2 Primary Sources**

As Busha and Harter point out:

Seasoned investigators are generally wary of placing too much faith in any one instrument or other technique; they tend to rely upon multiple data-gathering methods.<sup>23p.54</sup>

While this may appear self-evident common sense, taking into account factors such as time limitations, budget concerns, the availability of materials or persons who might contribute to the research and so on, means the question of which methodological techniques to employ has to be considered very carefully. Busha and Harter have also noted that, in many cases, 'the choice of a problem or topic may depend upon the interests and capabilities of research workers, as well as the time available to conduct the research.'<sup>24p.24</sup> In this particular case, with the 'problem' already identified as the existence and purpose of local studies collections within higher and further education libraries, it was decided that the best techniques

to employ in order to gain the most information in the proposed time would be those that could contribute to an overview of the scale and scope of collections across the country and could also aid in a deeper understanding of the issues involved.

Two primary methods of investigation were therefore employed: a two-tiered questionnaire survey, followed by the selection of a small number of institutions to which observational visits could be made and interviews conducted.

### 3.2.2.1 The Questionnaire Survey

As noted above, both quantitative and qualitative data was required in order to more fully inform the content, scope and purpose of local studies collections in academic libraries. Indeed, employing both in the services of the study overall was deemed not only crucial, but, in some instances, largely inescapable. When discussing methodologies, for instance, Slater points to what might be termed as a false dichotomy frequently characterised as ‘qualitative versus quantitative’ research. Although she acknowledges that, ‘within social research [...] there are two schools of thought, methodology and practice, called quantitative research and qualitative research,’ she also notes that, ‘all social research, and indeed other kinds of research, involuntarily and unavoidably embrace some qualitative elements.’<sup>25p.108</sup> As has hopefully been made clear so far, in the case of this particular study, qualitative research and results were not simply regarded as secondary to, or a by-product of, quantitative data; it was, however, recognised that there would undoubtedly be occasions when, in addition to the qualitative information that was deliberately sought, *some* qualitative data would emerge from other data that, on the surface at least, seemed largely quantitative in nature. It should be noted, however, that the term ‘qualitative data’ used here is referred to as such only in the most limited way. Responses to open-ended questions in a survey may produce data that offers insight or knowledge beyond that provided by, say, a ticked box or a circle on a Likert Scale, but, as Pickard notes, ‘In my opinion [rich, detailed, qualitative

data] does not include answers to open-ended questions in a questionnaire; this is rarely, if ever, qualitative data.'<sup>26p.267</sup>

The first stage of data collection was the initial questionnaire survey. One of the characteristics of survey research is that it enables the researcher to target a sample population in order to allow, as Busha and Harter put it, 'generalizations to be made about characteristics, opinions, beliefs, attitudes and so on, of the entire population being studied.'<sup>27p.54</sup> and it was primarily for this reason – the ability to target a population that may allow for generalisations – that questionnaire research was adopted as one technique. Potential downsides to such an approach were considered, but reckoned unavoidable. For instance, as noted by Paul Burton, 'Response rates tend to be low [...] the questionnaire is put aside for answering in the near future, and is then forgotten or completed too late. There is, after all, little apparent incentive to complete a questionnaire.'<sup>28p.62</sup> In this case, while indeed no immediate 'incentive' was offered, it was perceived that targeting libraries with a questionnaire, the purpose of which was, ultimately, to aid in research that may benefit libraries in the future, might be presumed to be an incentive in itself. However, the response rate was not high. Burton proposes that '60% or more is very acceptable [...] anything less than 50% represents a minority, and in some cases this will effectively render the results of little or no practical value.'<sup>29pp.62-63</sup>

Of 802 libraries or Learning Resource Centres targeted initially with the first questionnaire, 223 useable responses were received, providing a response rate of 27.81%; well under 50%, but over a quarter. However, Burton further suggests that 'it can be argued that even a response rate of less than 50% tells the researcher *something* about the problem under study: a slight trend may be detectable, a grouping of attitudes may be evident, etc.'<sup>30p.63</sup> In this case, since the population was targeted quite specifically (university and college libraries and learning resource centres), with the area of enquiry focused narrowly on a particular subject-matter (local studies collections), a 28% response rate was reckoned a *reasonable* if not outstanding result; indeed, as will be discussed later, the response rate and the

concept of 'self-selection' arguably provides a further 'finding' as to attitudes towards the subject under question itself.

### **3.2.2.1.1 Institutions: Selection**

In order to maximise the present survey's potential as a tool for better understanding the situation across the nation, it was decided to target - as far as possible - *every* further and higher institution in Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland, thereby expanding both the scale and scope of the 1984 survey. Institutions and departments were also targeted regardless of the subjects taught, meaning that libraries chiefly concerned with scientific resources were just as likely to be targeted as those whose holdings primarily comprise materials supporting arts, social sciences, education and librarianship itself. It was, however, deemed appropriate to exclude those further education establishments identified as 'sixth form colleges'. This system is exclusive to England and Wales and is largely undertaken as part of the student's secondary education (the Scottish equivalent is 'sixth year studies'). Therefore, they did not properly cover the researcher's intended focus of study.

Of the targeted colleges and universities, the following categories can be identified: further and higher education colleges (both separate and combined); universities; and Oxford and Cambridge University colleges and departments. With reference to the last-mentioned institutions, the sheer size and range of different college and departmental libraries meant that a single questionnaire sent to the main library would most likely not suffice in terms of representing either the institution as a whole or individual sectors where local studies might be an issue. Each college and department was, therefore, treated as a separate entity for the purposes of the study.



### 3.2.2.1.2 Distribution Lists: Compilation

The questionnaire was distributed to 802 libraries and Learning Resource Centres (LRCs), including a few to whom paper questionnaires were posted, with the researcher unable to contact a small number of institutions that had been identified. Given that the questionnaire was being sent to libraries and LRCs, it was decided that adopting a Web-based format for the questionnaire, with a link sent via e-mail to potential respondents, was a reasonable and appropriate means of distribution; and the response rate of just over a quarter (223) was, as mentioned earlier, as expected. A significant majority of institutions contacted were identified as further education colleges. Worth noting, however, is that almost the same number of these colleges as those who identified themselves as universities responded. It may be speculated that further education colleges, with both less traditional 'standing' in communities and less history to draw on, are therefore less likely to hold local studies collections than are university libraries. Furthermore, with regard to the survey responses overall, it might be suggested that an element of 'self-selection' was involved when it came to those who did, in fact, respond; that is, those institutions that lack such a collection were less likely to respond than those who do. Although the questionnaire e-mail pointed out that the researcher was just as interested in finding out about institutions where local collections were absent, it is arguable that those libraries that *do* hold these materials are, to some extent, pre-disposed to having an interest in a survey on local studies collections, whereas such an interest - and thus inclination to be involved in such a survey - is less likely in libraries or LRCs that do not hold local studies material.

It was not, however, unexpected that some colleges or universities would be excluded. Time constraints meant that not every single possible source of information relating to such institutions could be checked, but the sources used *were* considered suitable for compiling a comprehensive list. These sources primarily comprised the online Bubl directory; and the 2003/2004 *World of Learning* directory. The *World of Learning* listings that were consulted consisted of 'Libraries and Archives'; 'Universities'; and 'Colleges'. Bubl, however, was considered a more

comprehensive source, covering a much wider range and number of institutions. This online directory was used initially, with *World of Learning* later employed for, primarily, cross-checking purposes. As an additional check, the online listings 'UK Universities and Colleges' and 'UK Higher Education and Research Libraries' were employed, but neither site was able to provide additional information. Bubl contains a number of sub-directories under different headings, with many institutions featured on more than one of these separate listings. By carefully checking each different list, the likelihood of a particular institution escaping the process of identifying potential respondents was reduced. The Bubl sub-directories checked consisted of the following: *Further Education Colleges; University and College Libraries; Academic Libraries; UK Higher Education College Home Pages; Universities and Colleges in ...* [organised by country, with London as a further, separate sub-directory]; and *UK University Home Pages*.

Where possible, the institution's Chief Librarian or Head of Learning Resource Centres was targeted. This was in order to avoid the questionnaire e-mail becoming 'lost' and therefore overlooked within a more general library e-mail system. College and university websites were consulted in order to obtain names and e-mail addresses. In the majority of cases, however, particularly with regard to college websites, individuals' names were not included on library or learning resource centre web pages and so telephone calls were made to the institutions in order to obtain the required information, although in a minority of instances, general library e-mail addresses were eventually used.

Furthermore, an e-mail was distributed through Jiscmail, a discussion list service focusing primarily on education and information science.

Hard-copy versions of both questionnaires can be found in *Appendix 1: Questionnaires*.

### 3.2.2.1.3 The First Questionnaire

Since the number of institutions to be targeted was so large, it was decided that more than one questionnaire would be required in order to a) prevent the receipt of an unmanageable amount of data to be analysed at a later date; and b) avoid the possibility of deterring potential respondents by presenting a large questionnaire in the first instance. Questions were put together with the study's aims and objectives the main focus. The 'first stage' questionnaire was relatively short and straightforward, with questions largely concerned with the *existence* of local studies items in college and university libraries. One of the primary questions, for instance, was whether or not the targeted library or learning resource centre actually housed a local studies collection. Respondents who replied 'no' were requested to supply reasons as to why this was the case, if such a collection might be considered for the future, and where users with local studies enquiries were directed. These questions were considered essential to the study, since it was reckoned the absence of a collection might well be related to wider issues of library resources, or suggest ways in which the academic library perceives its role in the information sector, for instance, as a limited service, where the public library is relied upon to take responsibility for certain fields of knowledge.

Respondents who answered 'yes' were asked a series of questions relating to the location, the size and the age of the collection, and were asked whether or not he or she would be willing to take further part in the study. These questions were not only reckoned fundamental in providing a foundation for the second stage of the study, but individual questions regarding, for instance, the size and organisation of the collection would provide useful information on the value placed on local studies resources in university and college libraries and LRCs. In addition, in terms of the study's third aim, a more practical goal was achieved in establishing which institutions do or do not have a local studies collection, thus providing information that can be used when compiling the local studies material inventory.

By adopting the technique of distributing a more general questionnaire to begin with, an overview of the national situation could be gauged; libraries with no local studies collection could be immediately discounted from further involvement; and those libraries with a collection, whose interest in the study was evident, could be marked for more detailed involvement at later stages.

#### **3.2.2.1.4 The Second Questionnaire**

For this stage of the survey, respondents who had expressed an interest in contributing further to the study were targeted. The questions posed focused on a more thorough investigation of collection management practices, such as indexing, classification and access; the types of materials held, including formats; future plans – if any – for the collection; and also how the resources relate to subjects covered in the curriculum and are used for staff and student research. This last-mentioned, in keeping with the study's aims, was intended to draw out responses that related to the *purpose* of the collections – that is, *how* the collections are used – and was considered one of the foremost lines of enquiry for the study.

In terms of administrative details, this time the respondent's name was required so that a more 'personalised' introduction could be made for when the third stage of the study was being organised.

#### **3.2.2.1.5 Questionnaire Pilot**

In order to maintain the integrity of the survey sample, it was decided that the pilot would be limited to the Georgina Scott Library at the Robert Gordon University. This ensured that a) all other libraries and LRCs identified could be targeted in order to provide as broad a sample as possible for the survey proper; and b) there would be no 'conflict of interest' in terms of the study including the researcher's host institution. Since, however, it was also recognised that limiting the pilot in this way may risk 'errors' or 'flaws' passing undetected, the questionnaires were also sent to

Michael Dewe for critical comment. Not only was Dewe one of the co-authors of the earlier preliminary research and article that had helped inspire the present project and influenced the types of questions asked in the questionnaires, but Dewe, as noted in the literature review that follows, was the pre-eminent voice in local studies in the United Kingdom at this time, and had both expressed enthusiasm and offered support for the project at the earliest stage.

### **3.2.2.1.6 Questionnaire Analysis**

Data from both questionnaires was recorded using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) research program. Retrospectively, it could be that a more appropriate program designed specifically for qualitative research might have been used. SPSS is a very powerful tool for statistical research, but requires the researcher to assign codes to each potential entry. Whilst this was not a problem when dealing with closed questions that required a limited response, i.e. those that allowed the respondent to select one option from a list of possible responses; it became more difficult when either more than one response was permitted or when the question allowed for an open answer. With the open-question responses, it was therefore decided initially to code by *type* of response – that is, to group responses in terms of their similarity to each other – and to assign a code to each type. The ‘more than one possible option’ responses were dealt with in a more pragmatic way that assigned a code to each permutation based on a breakdown of each individual element. SPSS did allow for a useful overview of the current situation, with the statistical information gathered providing a good indication of some of the basic ‘facts’ from which findings and conclusions could be drawn. Given the nature of many of the questions and responses, however, what SPSS could not do was effectively capture replies where the ‘real’ story lay in the intimated complexity of potentially ambiguous statements, typified by phrases such as: ‘Yes, but...’ These types of responses were, therefore, dealt with in a more qualitative fashion, providing not only data that exemplified the often unique flavour of local studies within an academic setting, but valuable context for the research problem.

Excel was used as a second quantitative analysis tool that allowed for a little more 'flexibility' in terms of having an arguably more user-friendly interface that enabled information to be accessed and referenced more readily, and that also permitted a degree of qualitative input that, again, could be accessed quite easily.

### **3.2.2.2 Observational Visits**

Visits to the libraries, for the most part, comprised two main elements: an interview with the questionnaire respondent; and a guided 'tour' of the collections. Of observation as a research method, Pickard notes that 'the extent to which you [the researcher] enter the lives of others depends on your own situation, the purpose of the research, and the duration of the research and accessibility of the research site'.<sup>31p.203</sup> However, while the observational research described here commonly involves approaches such as participant observation, semi-participant observation and non-participant observation, in the context of the present study, 'observation' refers to the researcher gaining a first-hand impression of the actual collections, rather than surveying, or taking part in, the processes involved in the running of the libraries or special collections departments.

The primary intention of the interviews was to follow-up on the responses provided in the questionnaires; the exception to the questionnaire 'follow-up' aspect from the off-set, however, was the University of Leicester. Professor Harold Fox had not responded to the questionnaire, but was contacted separately since the Department of English Local History's involvement was considered crucial to the study.

In addition, while an early suggestion had been made by the researcher as to the possibility of focus group interviews, which would necessitate the questionnaire respondent's involvement in aiding with arrangements for this, responses to this enquiry suggested that the respondents would find it difficult to help in the organisation of such a group. A further request was therefore made that, if possible, the researcher's details might be passed on to teaching staff or students with an interest in local studies so that he or she could be interviewed at some point either

during the visit or at a later stage. While this suggestion produced varying results, it was, however, also borne in mind that, during the visits themselves, it might be possible to approach staff or students for on-the-spot 'interviews' and this turned out to be the case in Leicester, Keele, and North Lindsay College, where undergraduate students, a researcher, and an adult-education tutor were interviewed. North Lindsey College was, in addition, the only institution where a formal meeting had been arranged between the respondent and members of staff.

The interviews with the questionnaire respondents took the form of semi-structured interviews, with pre-prepared questions serving as both definite enquiries and starting points for more open discussion. The pre-planned questions were drawn from a number of sources: some questions specifically followed up on responses originally given at the questionnaire stage of the research; others were prompted by more general issues raised through secondary reading or preliminary findings; while further questions were encouraged after additional research was undertaken of the institution itself before and after visits were arranged. Additional questions, as per the semi-structured format, grew from the resulting discussion.

Pickard succinctly sums up the purpose of interviews as a research method when she states that 'We interview when that is the most appropriate way to access the data we need.'<sup>32p.172</sup> Interviews, as Busha and Harter suggest, can be a useful survey tool, providing a means of gathering information that often relies on 'the experience and opinions of people'.<sup>33p.78</sup> While the interviews conducted for this study were not intended to cover the same geographic scope and scale as the questionnaire, their use in a few cases (as detailed below) allowed information to be drawn that arguably could not have been captured by a questionnaire. Pickard, for example, notes that 'Interviews are usually used when we are seeking qualitative, descriptive, in-depth data that is specific to the individual and when the nature of the data is too complicated to be asked and answered easily.'<sup>34p.172</sup> Furthermore, as Busha and Harter point out, 'Verbal responses of the interviewee are often valuable, original evidence or research data' and can often provide 'useful insights [...] both from what is said and from what is not said.'<sup>35p.78</sup> In addition, it may be suggested that

interviewees are more likely to offer honest opinions in a face-to-face setting than they are when faced with a formal-looking document that may only be able to provide limited space with which to express their own views. It should, of course, be borne in mind that, as suggested by the descriptions of the types of data that can be usefully gathered through an interview, responses are likely to contain a significant degree of subjectivity and possible bias. As Pickard notes:

You are discovering individual opinions; the information you get from interviews is different from pure factual data. If you want precise dates, times or measurements [...] interviews are not really the most appropriate tool to use [...] you talk to people to discover what they think, feel and remember about events.<sup>36p.172</sup>

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, how collections and issues relating to local studies and academia are *perceived* formed a common thread throughout the research. In other words, the information sought by the researcher was not limited to hard facts and figures. That said, certain types of data raised during the interview process, such as dates or the involvement of specific named actors in the development of local studies within academia, were double-checked through other means to ensure that the information offered by the interviewee was accurate.

In terms of the 'impromptu' interviews with students, researchers and tutors, since prior knowledge was not a factor, enquiries tended to be drawn instead from a broader, less specific, set of basic 'what', 'why' and 'how' questions. In addition, the researcher was not forewarned that the formal meeting with two members of staff at North Lindsey College had been organised. Questions, again, were drawn from a broader, less specific base, but also from issues raised during the semi-structured interview with the college Librarian. Additionally, the researcher was made aware of a short series of presentations taking place that evening concerning local history research undertaken by former college students now at University. The presentation was attended and notes taken afterwards during a short discussion with two of the presenters (because of the short notice given, no time was allowed for recording



equipment to be re-charged and the nature of the venue did not allow for mains-supplied back-up).

In terms of the difference between planning and carrying out research, a further example was provided during the visit to the University of Leicester. While the meeting with Professor Fox had been arranged and was conducted as expected, an additional visit to the main library was organised by Professor Fox during the interview. A questionnaire had been sent to the main library, but a non-response and a follow-up enquiry had led the researcher to conclude that her efforts were better-spent on the Library of the Department of English Local History. However, during the interview, it transpired that – following a request for help by the researcher – Professor Fox had intended to arrange a visit to the main library and pass this information on to the researcher, but had not done so. A visit was thus quickly arranged for the following morning during which a tour of the local studies main stock was given, although the short-notice meant that a formal interview could not be conducted with the librarian at this time. In addition, however, it was discovered that a questionnaire had, to the librarian's knowledge, been completed but had been lost in the delegation process. Another questionnaire was left with the library and received the following week, thereby rounding out the University of Leicester's valuable involvement in the PhD project.

Local public libraries were also visited in Reading, Scunthorpe, and St Andrews for comparative purposes when the public library's local studies collection was an obvious issue. This was not a pre-planned element of the fieldwork, but in the cases mentioned above, there was both the impetus and opportunity to conduct these observational visits.

The timetable for visits and interviews was as follows:

- 28 September 2005: Bridget Andrews, MERL Library Project Manager, The Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading.
- 10 October 2005: Norman Reid, Head of Special Collections (Keeper of Manuscripts), University of St Andrews.

- 18 October 2005: Professor Harold Fox, Department of English Local History, University of Leicester.
  - 19 October 2005 comprised a visit to the main University Library, arranged by Professor Fox as described above.
- 20 October 2005: Helen Burton, Special Collections and Archives Assistant, Keele University.
- 24-25 October 2005: Belinda Allen, Learning Resources Manager, North Lindsay College.
  - An interview was arranged by Ms Allen, for 25 October 2005, with Degree Course Leader, Pat Henderson and English and History tutor, Stephanie Codd.
- 3 March 2006: Michael Dewe, telephone interview.
- 19 December 2006: Michael Dewe, reflective questions sent.

Schedules for pre-organised interviews are found in *Appendix 2: Interview Schedules for Semi-Structured Interviews*. Given that the interviews were deliberately semi-structured, so as to allow for freer conversation, and the researcher was prepared for the possibility that some responses may render subsequent questions irrelevant, the schedules themselves cover only a sample of questions actually asked.

#### **3.2.2.2.1 Observational Visits: Selection**

The libraries selected for inclusion in the third stage of data collection were not intended to be a representative sample insofar as choosing the widest possible sample in terms of attitudes towards the collecting of local studies material. There would have been little point, for instance, in visiting a library with no local studies collection to speak of. Also, much as it would have been desirable to undertake visits that *would* represent a broad geographical sweep as well as libraries of every academic strata, practical concerns, such as time and resources did have to be taken into consideration. Instead, purposive sampling was employed that resulted in a small number of libraries being selected.

As its name suggests, the aim of purposive sampling is, according to Maxwell, sampling where 'particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices',<sup>37p.87</sup> sampling that is, as Tashakkori and Teddlie put it, 'based on a specific purpose rather than randomly.'<sup>38p.713</sup> The authors provide an overview of this type of sampling method, noting that purposive sampling:

addresses specific purposes related to research questions; therefore, the researcher selects cases that are information rich in regard to those questions ... [that] samples are often selected using the expert judgment of researchers and informants ... [that] sampling procedures focus on the 'depth' of information that can be generated by individual cases ... [and] are typically small ... but the specific sample size depends on the type of QUAL research being conducted and the research questions.<sup>39pp.173-174</sup>

Comprising a number of different techniques, three types of purposive sampling can be identified as having informed the present study: homogenous sampling; extreme (or deviant) sampling; and expert sampling.

With regard to the first-mentioned technique, the homogeneity primarily lies in the common characteristic of the institutions holding – and by implication, sharing an interest in – local studies. In this way, the researcher was able to include the seemingly disparate institutions of, for example, the ancient university of St Andrews and Scunthorpe's North Lindsey College, which also offers some higher education courses. Further 'shared characteristics' could also be found when considering the relatively limited geographic scope of three of the institutions, whereby North Lincolnshire's Keele University and the aforementioned North Lindsey College in Staffordshire, combined with the location of the University of Leicester, was thought to provide a potentially useful survey of this middle segment of England.

One of the most relevant types of purposive sampling with regard to the research is extreme or deviant sampling. As Teddlie and Tashakkori note, this type of sampling – also known as outlier sampling – ‘involves selecting cases near the ends of the distribution of cases of interest,’ and ‘involves selecting those cases that are the most outstanding successes or failures related to some topic of interest’.<sup>40p.176</sup> The authors further suggest that these ‘successes or failures are expected to yield especially valuable information about the topic of interest.’<sup>41p.176</sup> As suggested earlier, the University of Leicester’s English Local History department was reckoned a potentially very valuable source of information. This is where formal academic interest in local studies began and the university has maintained its reputation as the foremost institution for local studies within an academic setting. A similar criteria was employed for the Library of the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL), an institution affiliated with the University of Reading. While it would be fair to characterise this library as something of an anomaly if one were following a criteria strictly based on ‘typical’ academic libraries with an interest in local studies, it was considered a worthwhile pursuit to take a closer look at this well-respected institution. It is important to bear in mind that one of the reasons that local studies in academic libraries has been so neglected as a subject is because, in itself, it is considered something of an anomaly; local studies is not a ‘typical’ academic subject and the very nature of it (the ‘local’ factor often being related to a particular geographical space) means that collections are unlikely to be standardised to any real degree. Furthermore, the *atypical* nature of an institution should not necessarily automatically discount it from inclusion within a survey – and certainly not when it has a considerable reputation within the field of study. St Andrews University Special Collections within the main library was chiefly selected *because* of its status as a special collections department. Another characteristic of the broad scope of local collections holdings is the range of material and the ways in which it can be organised and managed. This means that it is not uncommon for a ‘local studies collection’ to be categorised under the broader term of a ‘special collection’ and St Andrews was reckoned to provide a good example of this. These selections also point to the third type of purposive sampling employed during the study: expert sampling. What these particular institutions’ collection managers were able to

provide was a sound degree of knowledge regarding local studies, especially within an academic setting; a degree of knowledge and insight that was unavailable elsewhere, given the dearth of information on this specific subject. Whilst not strictly a further example of 'expert sampling', a deliberate decision was also made to interview Michael Dewe, as detailed below, who at that time, was the foremost authority on local studies in the United Kingdom.

#### **3.2.2.2.2 Data Recording**

In order to capture as much information as possible within a relatively short period of time, it was decided to record interviews with respondents; take written notes when appropriate; and to take photographs of the collections, libraries, and institutions when possible. While a picture may not, in the strictest sense, be worth a thousand words, pictorial data can be employed as a useful supplement to descriptions of the environment in which a collection exists and is used.

#### **3.2.2.2.3 Further Interview**

As the foremost expert in the field of local studies in the United Kingdom, it was reckoned important to the study to have some significant input from Michael Dewe. Dewe had expressed an interest in the project from the beginning and had provided support and encouragement throughout and was willing to be involved in a more formal capacity. A telephone interview was conducted with Dewe in which a series of questions, again allowing for a semi-structured format, had been sent to the interviewee in advance. Once again, the emphasis was on prompting a discussion with the questions being drawn from questionnaire responses and issues raised during visits to libraries. In addition to this, a set of 'reflective questions' (see: *Appendix 3: Reflective Questions*) that had emerged during the data analysis stage of the project was advanced to Michael Dewe later in the year. In this case, Dewe was invited to take his time and reply in writing in order to allow a more considered

response from him this time, while also adding a further dimension to the study in terms of methodological approaches.

#### **3.2.2.2.4 Qualitative Data and Interview Analysis**

The analysis of qualitative data falls under four main strategies: phenomenological strategies, 'concerned with discovering the underlying structure of experiences'; ethnographic methods, focusing on 'the human experience as a whole – beliefs, ways of living and relationships'; narrative or discourse analysis, which 'relies on the assumption that human experience is shaped, transformed and understood through linguistic representation'; and constant comparative analysis, developed for use in grounded theory, which 'involves taking one piece of data and comparing it with all others that may be similar or different in order to develop conceptualizations of the possible relations between various pieces of data.'<sup>42pp.268-269.</sup>

It is the last-mentioned of these that has most relevance to the present study. Elements of grounded theory are found in the research – no hypothesis was made and the data was not approached with theories in mind; instead, any theories that have emerged have been 'grounded' in the data. In addition, analysis has been ongoing, taking place from the first stage of data collection on. By using constant comparative analysis, the researcher was able to ask questions of the data throughout (in terms of where similarities or differences might be found in relation to other data) and form concepts that might encourage emerging theories. For example, identifying categories relating to the term 'local' itself in interview data, and comparing the content to similar categories located in other interviews, allowed patterns and relationships to be identified (for example, acknowledgements of the instability of the term), and contributed to the emergence of the term 'local' itself as a theoretical concept (see, in particular, Chapters Five and Seven for analysis of this term and its importance to local studies).

#### **3.2.2.2.4.1 Transcriptions**

One of the problems with interview transcriptions is often that verbal responses – frequently looser and less formulated than written responses – can contain as much irrelevant ‘information’ as that which can be usefully integrated into the research. Transcribing verbatim can also lead to the time-consuming and even more irrelevant inclusion of every ‘um’, ‘ah’ and pause in the discussion – whether from the interviewer or interviewee. Therefore, transcribing the interviews was approached in an active way, where those parts of the interview that related to the research were noted and any ‘extra’ information left out, with brief notes taken should the need arise to revisit these segments of the interview.

#### **3.2.2.2.4.2 Interview Analysis: Content**

Because most of the interviews were conducted within the context of observational visits to selected libraries, rather than attempt to quantify the responses given to sometimes quite specific questions, the information gleaned from these sources tended to be employed in an illustrative capacity. That is, the interviews often provided a deeper understanding of issues raised in the questionnaires that provided possible ‘explanations’ or ‘reasons’ behind certain responses that *might* be applied, at least speculatively, to other institutions, albeit not explicitly. In other cases, such as the Department of English Local History, the interview conducted with Professor Harold Fox not only afforded the researcher valuable insight into issues concerned with the nature of local history and its place in academia, but also offered a close examination of the institution itself and its *specific* role in the development and continuation of local studies as an academic pursuit.

### 3.3 Conclusion

Busha and Harter have taken note of a particular tendency in library research, observing that contributions have often ‘been concerned more with the collection of information that allows library phenomena to be identified and described, rather than for the purpose of explaining why and how library circumstances occur’. The authors attribute this to an ‘apparent distrust of theory’, also suggesting that the ‘neglect of basic research in the field’ may be down to the ‘inadequate attention that library schools have given to the need for instruction about research methods and theory.’<sup>43p.8</sup> Earlier, it was noted that the primary methodological approach taken in this study is that of basic research – the acquisition of knowledge – with the application of this knowledge a secondary, but not unwanted, goal. The methods employed, a combination of survey research, observational visits, and interviews aimed to fulfil these criteria.

In retrospect, one of the most important issues that arose in terms of reflecting on the methodology employed for this study is that *planning* research and *carrying out* research can frequently emerge as two very different experiences. While the intention to keep the methods and approaches tied closely to the PhD’s aims and objectives was largely adhered to, the planned execution of these methods was chiefly where differences occurred. The cliché that ‘life is what happens when you’re busy making other plans’ is one that could arguably be applied to the experience of conducting a piece of research. In this case, fortunate timing, the good will of others and unexpected contributions formed as much a part of the data collection as did those elements that had been carefully mapped out; and often helped provide a richer illustration of the issues involved than might have been the case otherwise. The visit to Keele University, for example, enabled the researcher to conduct interviews and observe the detail of the local collection within a location that, due to elements such as the physical landscape in which the campus is located, including historical buildings like Keele Hall, provided an excellent illustration of why local studies is a draw for so many people, both amateur and professional.





*Figure 1: Old Library, Keele Hall*

Ultimately, however, throughout the undertaking of the research, an effort has been made to utilise both planned and unplanned elements in such a way as to effectively serve the study's chief aims: to provide not only an overview of the situation regarding the presence of local studies collections in academic libraries, but to explore the reasons behind the existence of these collections. This means that some aspects of the research that might have appeared essential at the planning stage – or potentially 'interesting' when unexpected – may have, latterly, turned out to be less relevant than originally thought as data was collected, collated, analysed and organised; with the research then adjusted accordingly.

In the chapter that follows, an overview is given of the development of local studies from an amateur pastime to academic pursuit, with particular attention paid to the historical relationship between local collections and the public library.

### 3.4 References

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## **Chapter Four**

### **The Evolution of Local History**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

As suggested in the rationale for this thesis, part of the reason for the dearth of material on local studies collections and their place in the academic library is the 'natural' tie local studies is perceived to have with the public sector. In a study seeking to investigate the relationship between local studies collections and academic libraries, it is therefore perhaps useful to take a look at attitudes toward local studies as a pursuit and how perceptions and approaches may or may not have altered in order to get to a place where the fact of local studies collections in university and college libraries can be examined and the 'how and why' explored in a more pragmatic sense. In this chapter, the history of local studies itself will be examined in terms of its status within broader historical studies, and as both an amateur and professional pursuit; its position within academia; and its place within academic libraries, while also looking at how the role of the academic library itself has been understood. It is also worth noting at this point that here, and in subsequent chapters, it may appear at times that undue attention is being paid to linguistic or semantic concerns. However, one of the most interesting aspects to have evolved from this study has been the importance of semantics to the understanding of how the subject of local studies and local history is perceived and approached both by the public at large and by those who undertake these studies themselves; and it is therefore deemed not only relevant, but vital to the project itself to give this facet careful consideration.

#### **4.2 Amateur, Professional, and Historical Studies**

Professor Harold Fox of the Department of English Local History at the University of Leicester offers an anecdote that, amusingly, implies the basic dichotomy that arguably lies at the core of how local studies are perceived when studies of, as Bott

memorably puts it, ‘the lives of those whose anonymity is broken only by marriage, apprenticeship or taxation’<sup>1p.9</sup> are viewed in relation to research that focuses on grander studies of (in)famous historical figures. Fox observes the tendency for undergraduates studying history to choose figures such as Adolf Hitler as subjects of investigation, figures who are overwhelmingly ingrained in the public consciousness in terms of, not only their historical significance politically and in terms of broader social and cultural impact, but also whose lives and deeds are perhaps able to draw the researcher’s interest in a more visceral, almost prurient, way. The job of the Department of English Local History is, Fox states, ‘to turn it around’ and encourage, for instance, the study of ‘ordinary’ people or the places that students come from: ‘You’ll find death, sex and violence ... [but, of course] it’ll be *ordinary* sex, death and violence ...’<sup>2</sup>

The tension between the ordinary and extra-ordinary within historical studies is one not limited to observations about mainstream ‘versus’ local history. However, even when looked at within a broader historical context, it does speak to the different ways in which approaches to history have been perceived. Writing about Carr’s seminal 1961 historiography study, *What Is History?*,<sup>3</sup> Tosh observes that:

In Carr’s view history is the property of literate and powerful elites. There is no sense that history might be claimed by the dispossessed or marginal, and hence no intimation of what later came to be known as ‘history from below’ ... For all his scepticism, Carr did not dispute the historicity of textual evidence, and his conception of history was founded on the ‘grand narratives’ of progress and power.<sup>4p.xi</sup>

Carr’s inability to, at that time, ‘intimate’ history as ‘belonging’ to those outside of the elite or to recognise his own biases – even while taking more traditional approaches to historiography to task – is perhaps understandable, given the ‘lofty’ reputation of much historical writing, a great deal of which may or may not be influenced by the bias of historians that Carr had identified in his work. The myth of

'objectivity' and how it relates to the 'status' of historical knowledge is discussed by Tosh:

Historical knowledge is not, and cannot be, 'objective' (that is, empirically derived in its entirety from the object of the enquiry). This does not mean, as sceptics might suppose, that it is therefore arbitrary or illusory. But, it does follow that the assumptions and attitudes of historians themselves have to be carefully assessed before we can come to any conclusion about the real status of historical knowledge.<sup>5p.187</sup>

Indeed, even within recent activity undertaken in the field of local history itself (as opposed to the early gentry-based studies of the sixteenth century discussed below), the 'history' presented can be subject to a particular slant, often based, as DeSilvey puts it, 'on whose interests are served by the telling of particular kinds of stories in particular contexts'. Of the narratives employed in the service of heritage sites, DeSilvey writes:

Research ... has considered how the re-inscription and re-invention of place is accomplished through the promotion of selected 'story-lines', and the attempted erasure of conflicting memories. At many protected heritage properties a more benign narrative approach prevails, the history of place presented as a linear chronological progression – punctuated with formative events and changes of ownership – which lands us up gently in the present moment of enlightened stewardship. Though perhaps lacking the overt politics of the narrative strategies applied to contested sites, such narratives still have a normative orientation, and work 'in more-or-less formulaic ways to make certain outcomes more logical and palatable than others'.<sup>6p.34</sup>

While DeSilvey's 'normative orientation' does not necessarily refer to the types of stories 'owned' by the grand elitists cited by Carr, there is little doubt that, until relatively recently, a gulf has been perceived between 'worthy' historical studies and 'less worthy' local history. While the ways in which local history has 'suffered' under

the weight of an intellectually 'amateur' reputation, as mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, and explored further on in this chapter, it is worth raising at this point that this reputation is a long-standing one. As Beckett notes, even after the publication of Gibbon's *The History of the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, completed in 1788, where the 'convergence of historical narrative and antiquarian discourse [had] reached a notable milestone'

The true historian continued to preserve a lofty distance from the antiquary, because history was perceived to be superior to the mere study of antiquities. While the antiquary was busy discovering the past, the historian was using that past as a vehicle to improve the present. The historian sought to understand the grand panorama, while the antiquary seemed obsessed with minutiae, which could have no bearing on the historical narrative.<sup>7p.90-91</sup>

As will be seen later on in this chapter, the 'inferiority' of local history would eventually be challenged and recognition given to its complexity. Yet, within Fox's anecdotal observation cited earlier in this chapter perhaps lies a paradox – one of many to be explored throughout this study – wherein it draws attention to what might well be argued is both local studies' greatest strength and weakness in terms of how the subject is perceived: that is, the inherently parochial nature of a study that focuses on a particular locale. The term 'parochial' does, of course, have two fairly distinct, but related meanings, both of which might be applied to local studies research and both in a relatively literal way: first, the term can be used to refer to a parish – that is, a particular district with its own church or a small unit of government found in rural areas – not infrequently the subject of 'local history'; and 'parochial' can also be used to describe an approach to something that is rather narrow in outlook or range. While the latter in particular is not synonymous with an approach that is derogatively 'amateurish' in the commonly-used sense of the word, it is perhaps the case that there has nevertheless existed a connotative aspect towards the 'parochial' that sees studies that focus on the 'smaller picture' – that is, Fox's 'ordinary' – as more inclined to attract, and perhaps more suited to, amateur



researchers. In turn, again speaking semantically, there has also perhaps been a tendency for 'amateur' to be equated with 'not to be taken too seriously'.

However, when studying the history of local studies or history research and writing, what quickly becomes clear is that local studies has rarely existed in a convenient box that can be labelled as either strictly amateur or professional. While the common view has been that local studies exists largely as an amateur pursuit, both the nature of the work undertaken and the issue of who wrote or continues to write these histories, defies easy definition. As Derryan Paul observed in 1989, although 'until very recently' local history has been 'predominantly a field for amateurs', she also points out that it 'has been a subject of formal study since the sixteenth century.'<sup>8p.34</sup>

Indeed, as noted in chapter one, in its infancy, local studies – or, local history – research was a pursuit chiefly undertaken by those in the 'upper' classes. Such studies included, as Dewe notes, a 'generalist approach' by topographers and cartographers such as John Leland and Christopher Saxon; but also the 'individual county history' as well as 'urban, parish and village histories'.<sup>9p.2</sup> As Dewe comments, this early local history research was oftentimes chiefly 'concerned with the description of places and the collection of facts' and, while the writings that were produced from this research remain valuable for this reason, 'they do not constitute local history as viewed today.' He goes on to point out that because the topics covered tended to concern matters related to the gentry – that is, 'the descent of the manor, pedigrees, ancient monuments and the church and its fabric'<sup>10p.3</sup> – the writings may well have presented a somewhat imbalanced view of local affairs, although he does note that the kinds of resources 'local historians take for granted' these days, were harder to come by, if at all, for those practicing the antecedent of what we now know as local studies research. This does not mean, however, that these early studies lacked rigour. In the case of John Leland, for example, Beckett observes that he 'set the pace,' for more detailed studies, showing 'why the topographer could not rely on previous chronicles, but needed to use personal observation and first-hand research.'<sup>11p.22</sup> Commissioned by Henry VIII,

Leland spent ten years travelling extensively to different parts of England, 'making maps, measuring distances, talking to local people and examining books and charters.'<sup>12p.21</sup> The meticulousness of Leland's work, 'trusted as an accurate record of the destruction of monastic civilisation, the demolition of monastic buildings, and the dispersal and destruction of monastic libraries' led to others undertaking more detailed investigations in order to reveal the origins of England 'and to strip away centuries of accumulated myth and legend that passed for history.' It is interesting to note that, even at the earliest stages of the roots of local history, these antiquarian studies were rooted in a dissatisfaction with broader historical 'knowledge'. As Beckett describes, the myths that 'passed for history' included 'the belief in a long line of English kings including Lear and Cymbeline, and the idea that Joseph of Arimathea brought Christianity to Britain shortly after Christ's life on earth.' In order to counter these claims, these antiquarians 'worked with source materials, many of them documents saved when monastic foundations were dissolved.'<sup>13p.22</sup>

Yet, the reputation of local studies as an amateur pursuit is one that prevailed up until, as Paul suggests, 'very recently'. Part of the 'problem' might well be, as pointed out earlier when discussing the study's rationale, the 'natural' relationship taken to exist between local history and the public library, the root of which can be found at the very beginning of the public library sector itself. As Dixon notes, for example, when citing the Public Libraries Bill of 1850, 'from the start, it was recognized that libraries should be repositories for material of a local nature', having already noted that 'the early history of local collections in public libraries is *inextricably linked* [researcher's emphasis] to that of the public library service.'<sup>14pxiii</sup>

Indeed, the explicit nature of the 'recognition' by parliament suggests the importance with which local history was regarded in terms of the *duty* of the public library – that is, its remit to provide a service to the public – to make such materials available. Ansell writes of this influence on local history collections within the public library of the 1849 Select Committee on Public Libraries and the Public Libraries Act 1850. He notes that the former report 'did briefly touch upon the importance of

including local history – or as they were then known ‘topographical’ – collections<sup>15p.28</sup> and also cites the report’s recommendation that ‘Topographical Libraries’ should be present in ‘all our chief provincial towns [...] where history may find a faithful portraiture of local events, local literature, and local manners; and art and science a collection of all objects illustrative of the climate, soil, and resources of the surrounding country.’<sup>16p.29</sup> When, in the following year, the Committee Chairman, William Ewart, introduced the Public Libraries Bill to the House of Commons, he once again, as Ansell puts it, referred ‘to the claims of local history as an indispensable feature of the public library.’<sup>17p29</sup>

It becomes clear, then, that local history as a subject for study was posited within the public sector from the get-go, thus possibly, at the very least, planting the seeds of its amateur reputation. Yet, as can be seen, it is also evident that this reputation has not entirely been deserved and, instead, as proposed earlier, two threads composed of amateur and professional local studies research have existed throughout – and continue to inform the *types* of research carried out in the name of local history. Bott makes this suggestion explicit when she identifies a difference between the amateur and professional local historian. While she observes that the work produced by amateurs is often of a ‘very high’ standard, she suggests that these amateurs, who, by and large, tend to focus on a locality that they are already familiar with, are oftentimes ‘working for love of the place and their subject [and] may allow themselves a little parochialism’. On the other hand, professional local historians are frequently ‘more detached’ in their approach, ‘seeking to identify both the typical and exceptional through a comparison of different communities.’<sup>18pp.8-9</sup> It is perhaps in this difference, therefore, that the common reputation attributed to the local historian can be found, where, as mentioned earlier, the connotative implications of ‘parochialism’ has led to an equation being made with ‘amateurism’, while the more ‘detached, comparative’ approach is not one more easily associated with the popular idea of ‘local studies’ implying the study of a small community.

What appears to be the case, however, is that these different approaches have proved beneficial to the study of local history on the whole, and perhaps not in the

way the casual observer might expect. While there is little doubt that the amateur benefits from the work done by skilled archivists whose job it may be, for example, to compile maps and keep records of the locality, when it comes to local history research and writing itself, Bott puts forward an interesting and valuable point when she observes that the research performed by the amateur 'often provides the groundwork which the professional has neither the time to trace nor the local knowledge to relate to the place in the same way.'<sup>19p.9</sup> Thus, the 'parochial' can be used to supply detail garnered from an oftentimes very individual perspective into the more impassive 'professional' approach.

Local studies, then, begins to take on a more complex shape, with the division between the amateur and the professional becoming somewhat more blurred, but remaining divided nonetheless. However, in terms of the value of 'opening up' local history, Bott describes how the 'intrinsically parochial nature of local history made it all too easy for amateur historians to work in isolation' and suggests that the Standing Conference for Local History, established in 1948, enabled a 'shared experience' that allowed for both 'intellectual as well as social benefits' when it came to the historical study of the locale.<sup>20pp.7-8</sup>

This *intellectual* aspect, in particular, is arguably where local history's reputation as 'amateur' has suffered most, since, as hinted at earlier, an assumption may be suggested that an amateur pursuit is one that may not be considered suitable for 'serious' study. However, the mid-twentieth century saw this reputation carried by local history start to change, and while the 1948 Standing Conference was an important part of that change, more significant perhaps was another event that took place the same year – the founding of the then-named Department of English Local History at the University College of Leicester. In 1952, when he took over from W.G. Hoskins in leading the department, Finberg outlined the unit's belief that local history did not only allow for intellectual study, but frequently demanded it:

Local history is not an elementary study. It is one to which the amateur or the young student can, and often does, make a valuable contribution; but in its higher reaches it demands mature scholarship and a wide background of general culture."<sup>21p.11</sup>

This is not to say that local studies had been completely absent from academia. Indeed, as Finberg noted in 1952, institutions such as Reading; University College, London; and the University College of Hull had already promoted local history as a subject worth pursuing academically in the early half of the twentieth century, instituting the likes of fellowships, certificates and research.<sup>22p.3</sup> While observing the subject's reputation in terms of personifying it – as his choice of term suggests – as something of a downtrodden, largely invisible relation, he also took note of the growing interest within academia of rescuing the 'poor creature' and helping it achieve its potential:

Local history is the Cinderella among historical studies. Nevertheless, in recent years the universities have shown themselves disposed to take Cinderella under their protection. This may be just a counsel of despair; but I would rather construe it as an act of faith in the poor creature's possibilities."<sup>23p.3</sup>

However, Leicester's seminal importance to the study of local history was not overlooked, as Finberg also noted that Leicester was the only university to accord the subject 'a department of its own.'<sup>24p.4</sup> and, as local studies' practitioners such as Dewe point out, 'local history as an accepted field of academic study' is generally considered to have dated from the department's founding.<sup>25p.3</sup>

Yet, Leicester was not only interested in promoting local history in terms of the scholarship required. When his seminal work, *Local History and the Library* was originally published in 1962, Hobbs noted that there remained a tendency within local research to 'place excessive emphasis upon the manor and its history and pedigrees of landed families' instead of on the village itself as exemplified in its

surviving fields, houses and landmarks, and the manner in which its development has been governed by local conditions of soil, climate and water supply.’<sup>26p.16</sup>

Hobbs suggested that this tendency was one that ‘modern local historians are seeking to counter by emphasising that the really important things in history are those which had a direct impact on the village or which affected and changed the lives of ordinary people.’<sup>27p.16</sup> While the fourteen years between the founding of the Department of English Local History and Hobb’s work may not have allowed for a complete revolution in the emphasis of local history studies, Leicester was almost certainly responsible for championing this more modern attitude since, while the department sought to promote local history as an academic endeavour, a further aim was to change the way in which the *content* of local history itself was approached. As Dewe puts it:

The pioneering work of Hoskins and Finberg encouraged the use of the landscape as historical evidence, and evangelized the need for local history to explain as well as describe, to have a developing narrative rather than be a collection of interesting information, and to treat subjects that involved the common people and their day-to-day lives and communal endeavours: a people’s history, rather than one limited to the powerful and privileged and their particular concerns.’<sup>28pp.3-4</sup>

The move towards ‘explanation’ in addition to ‘description’ is a crucial one that emphasised the difference between local studies as an amateur pastime and as a professional and/or academic pursuit. While it would be unwise to characterise every individual amateur investigator’s undertaking as one in which findings are presented primarily as they stand, it is clear that nudging the study of localities towards an approach that encouraged analysis and interrogation pushed the subject nearer to being embraced as a more academically ‘worthy’ endeavour. Yet, even with this new approach, differences of attitude towards the *purpose* of local history as a subject could be found within the ranks of both amateur and academic research – that is, the *usefulness* of local history. For instance, as Bott writes: ‘Where

previously the subject might have been dismissed as parochial antiquarianism, the value of studying local history, not only for its purely local interest but also for the light it sheds on other aspects of historical research, has now been recognised.<sup>29p.8</sup>

However, with regard to those who might place too much emphasis on this aspect of the subject, Hobbs saw such a 'view which regards local history merely as the lantern slide which illuminates national affairs' as 'a short-sighted one'. He wrote:

It [local history] can, indeed, claim to be the most advanced form of historical study. It antedates national history, for national states were comparatively latecomers on the stage of history, while local communities can be traced back to the earliest communal settlement, and its study can give a sense of 'belonging' and continuity which can serve as an antidote to the rootlessness of our twentieth-century society."<sup>30p.18</sup>

Finberg too disputes the notion of local studies as a mere 'lantern slide', albeit by suggesting that not only might local history be a way into national history, but, more so, the opposite: that studying national history may be a means of getting to local history; and, of course, both authors also highlight the value to be found in local history *studies*, where Hobbs calls it 'the most advanced form of historical study', with Finberg too drawing attention to the expertise demanded, thus positing it in a broader context that focuses on the academic skills required. In addition, while Hobbs' statement regarding the 'lantern slide' is unarguably valid, his point about local history's antidotal value might suggest that local studies cannot help but be linked with or to, not necessarily wider, but *other* issues nonetheless. In other words, while there may be an argument that local history or studies research has an intrinsic value in itself, it would perhaps be a mistake to assume that its value is *primarily* to be found as 'history for history's sake', isolated from other concerns. For instance, while Dewe notes the 'realization of the contribution that it can make towards an understanding and interpretation of regional and national history' he also observes the more immediate impact local history can have on a community:

Local history has also come to be seen as having social values for individuals and groups in that it gives people a pride in their locality, a sense of belonging, an understanding of their personal origins and a stake in the future. A shared sense of local history, and an involvement with it, can also be seen as a way of strengthening communities and helping towards the goal of social inclusion.”<sup>31p.4</sup>

Again, the notion of local history’s intrinsic value is not complete, but rather tied to the idea of social concerns within a locality. This is not to say, however, that there is no value whatsoever to be found in simply studying local history for its own sake, but it would appear to be the case that local history or local studies cannot help but have value in a broader context; and the move into academia – into taking local history research ‘seriously’ – arguably reinforced this idea. Bott comments, for example, on the impact that the ‘flourishing interest in and re-evaluation of local history’ has had on ‘Every aspect of the teaching of history, from university to primary school’. In terms of the materials used to inform this flourishing interest, she goes on to note that:

Undergraduate courses in history had long included the use of some original source material, usually in the form of photographs or photocopies, as a means of introducing primary evidence into their syllabuses. Real research, using a quantity of original material, used to be something only postgraduates did. Today it is common to find undergraduates preparing a dissertation from primary sources as part of their course of study.”<sup>32p.13</sup>

In terms of how libraries themselves have been impacted, so far, focus has been primarily on local history and studies research itself, the purpose of which has been to illustrate the subject’s growth and transformation; but, while the approach taken to the local history research and writing itself changed, so too did the role of the librarian. Hobbs, for example, notes the difference between the collections ‘of the past’ and of the types of material produced by earlier historians; and the work carried out by the collection managers of the 1960s:



The local collection of the past, catering for a select band of clerics and schoolmasters and based on the county antiquarian society, consisted chiefly of the rag-bag publications of the antiquaries, plus the county and local histories. The local librarian today needs to be something of a palaeographer, map expert, medievalist, archaeologist and economic historian, but above all he must develop a keen interest in the current events of his own locality and be equipped to ensure that a record of these events is properly maintained as they occur.<sup>33p.16</sup>

Paul also points to the role of the local studies librarian in more recent times, whilst also calling to mind, again, the not always easy distinction between amateur and professional research: '[I]n the no-man's-land between complete amateurs and professional academics, a considerable number of librarians, archivists and museum curators have found themselves helping professionals and amateurs alike.'<sup>34p.34</sup> It is perhaps also worth noting at this point Hobbs' emphasis on 'current events', thus opening up the definition of 'local history' into something that begins to closely resemble the more inclusive 'local studies'. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, semantic interrogation will be employed in this study, and the difference between 'local history' and 'local studies' is one such case in point. Further chapters will explore this difference – and the attitudes that inform the terminologies – more thoroughly, but it is perhaps worth repeating a point made within the rationale that 'local studies' is a term that only really began to make an impression in the 1970s.

### **4.3 Local Studies and Academic Libraries**

In *Local History and the Library*, Hobbs points to the significant contributions made to local studies under the aegis of academic endeavour: 'Public awareness of the importance of thesis literature has increased during recent years: many important local studies submitted for degrees or teaching diplomas are never published and have a very limited availability in university and college libraries. Yet in these can be found some of the most valuable original research work done upon the area ...'<sup>35p.66</sup>

As has been noted earlier, the 'natural' link between local studies and the public library sector means that a strong bond remains between this field of study and the public sector. However, the introduction of local studies into academia has also seen a change in the collections held by the libraries within these higher and further education institutions. The role of the academic library is one that is much debated and discussed in terms of duty and responsibility. Although it is commonly held that the college or university library is there to support teaching, learning and research, Dunlap, for instance, posits a number of interrogative questions that suggest a role that goes beyond this definition:

Where, exactly, does the library fit in the university community? Should the library simply stay the course and muddle its way through or should it be a proactive force on campus? Should the library simply support the curriculum or should it provide a new vision for the university? Can the library reclaim its symbolic central position in the university and provide true educational leadership? Can the library make a difference in the life of college students? Finally, can the academic library resuscitate itself and become an indispensable organ which exudes energy and vitality while providing a unifying force for the university community?"<sup>36</sup>

The use of the term 'indispensable organ' has, of course, been alluded to more than once when considering the role of the library within the institution. As Brophy points out: 'The academic library has not infrequently been described as 'the heart of a university,'"<sup>37p.1</sup> a metaphor that will be explored further in chapter seven. It may not be too far-fetched to suggest that the library could also be described as the 'heart of local studies' or, indeed, the converse – that local studies lies at the heart of the library. Certainly, in the former instance, the public library is oftentimes the first port of call for people wishing to investigate their locality; it can be home to a multitude of printed materials relating to the surrounding area, without which any reasonable investigation would come to a quick standstill. In the latter case, the

central role afforded local material from the beginning cannot be overlooked when considering the development of the public library sector.

In terms of the academic library and the place local studies has found there in relatively recent years, however, there is a case to be made that the development of local collections in this sector is not simply down to the influence of local studies as an academic subject itself. As Paul and Dewe suggested in their preliminary 1984 investigation into local studies collections in college and university libraries:

The chronological development of the local collections [in academic libraries] appears to be at least as closely linked with the expansion of higher and further education as it is with the growth of local studies as an element in academic and professional training courses. It is perhaps worth recalling that before 1798 there were precisely six universities in England, Wales and Scotland – four in Scotland and two in England. Between 1798 and 1960 there was a steady, if modest, growth in higher and further education, followed by more intensive development in the 1960s and early 1970s. This is reflected in the development of local collections to the extent that half of those covered here have been formed since 1960.”<sup>38p.53</sup>

In addition to the increased interest in the subject itself, this suggests a broader, more pragmatic, reason for the growth in collections; but rather than an entirely separate issue, it is one that appears to be very difficult to separate from changes in attitudes towards local history; that is, had local studies not been integrated into academia when it did, there is no guarantee ‘expansion and growth’ would have included local studies.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has traced the journey of local studies from pastime to a subject worthy of academic study. In doing so, it has highlighted the often complex nature of local investigation as a field of enquiry, frequently informed by language used to

communicate (mis)understandings of a subject where the term 'local studies' is often automatically equated with historical investigation; a subject that is 'ordinary' yet focuses on the unique; that is at once amateur and professional; parochial and scholarly; a 'Cinderella' no longer confined to the darkest corners of the halls of academia, where she has finally been proven worthy of recognition.

The complexity of local studies and the paradoxes that frequently inform its intricacies, however, are not limited to the subject itself, but to the collections that lie at the core of local investigation. Addressed in the chapters that follow, for example, are issues such as the strong link between local studies resources and the public library and how this affects perceptions of the academic library's role as a provider of local studies material; the conflation of local studies with local history and its impact on how collections are used; the evocation of 'Cinderella' not only as a characterisation of local studies as a subject, but as a service too; and other issues and paradoxes that, while not necessarily exclusive to local *resources*, have particular bearing on the materials used to undertake local investigation.

Local studies resources and the public library is an established fact as well as a perception; local studies resources and the academic library less so, at least partly due to, as mentioned, the lack of writing on this particular subject. The present study aims to go some way to correcting this oversight by examining these facts and perceptions, and exploring the present attitudes towards local studies collections within the realm of academic libraries, including their role within the curriculum.

## 4.5 References

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>18</sup> Bott, Valerie. *Op cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Bott, Valerie. *Op cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Bott, Valerie. *Op cit.*

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Dewe, Michael. *Op cit.*

<sup>26</sup> Hobbs, J.L. *Local history and the library*. Completely revised and partly rewritten by George A. Carter. London: Andre Deutsch, 1973.

<sup>27</sup> Hobbs, J.L. *Op cit.*

<sup>28</sup> Dewe, Michael. *Op cit.*

<sup>29</sup> Bott, Valerie. *Op cit.*

<sup>30</sup> Hobbs, J.L. *Op cit.*

<sup>31</sup> Dewe, Michael. *Op cit.*

<sup>32</sup> Bott, Valerie. *Op cit.*

<sup>33</sup> Hobbs, J.L. *Op cit.*

<sup>34</sup> Paul, Derryan. *Op cit.*

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<sup>36</sup> Dunlap, Isaac Hunter. *CPR and the Library: Resuscitating the heart of the university*. [Internet]. Western Illinois University; c.1995 [Cited 2007 January 7]. Available from <http://www.wiu.edu/users/mfihd/research/heart/heart.html>.

<sup>37</sup> Brophy, Peter. *The academic library*. second ed. London: Facet, 2005.

<sup>38</sup> Paul, Derryan and Michael Dewe. Local studies collections in academic libraries in Dewe, M., ed. *A manual of local studies librarianship*. Aldershot: Gower, 1987, pp.52-69.

## Chapter Five

### The Current Situation: The Content and Scope of Local Studies Collections in College and University Libraries

#### 5.1 Introduction

It is proposed in the introduction to the thesis that this chapter's primary focus is examining and assessing the present situation concerning the *existence* of local studies collections in university and college libraries. That is, *what* exists within academic libraries in terms of local studies collections. This means that the results discussed are based largely on those gathered during the first questionnaire stage of the investigation, with observations and opinions also drawn from interviews and visits conducted during the fieldwork stage of the study. This also means that, frequently, issues raised in terms of *how* and *why* the collections are used, to be covered in chapter six, will be introduced in this section.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, survey-based research is not infallible. Limited questions will provide limited answers, while open questions will frequently result in answers that do not immediately appear to relate to the specific topic under interrogation. With this in mind, the respondents' perceptions become an important aspect of the investigation, rather than the search for absolute truths that may not exist; how one institution interprets a question may not be same as another's understanding of an enquiry when, for instance, even the interpretation of what constitutes a 'collection' in the first place can vary between respondents.

Indeed, in the case of this particular study, respondents' perceptions are paramount to the search for meaning within the remit of the investigation's aims and objectives. As suggested earlier, local studies and its place within collections held in academic libraries is a subject significantly underrepresented in the literature of both university and college libraries and local studies itself; and one of the possible



reasons for this, covered throughout the thesis, is that the combined subject itself is open to 'interpretation' on so many levels, for example, whether or not local studies material is 'appropriate' academic material or indeed what comprises 'local' material in the first place.

With this in mind, in presenting the findings, an emphasis is often placed on issues such as semantics. This is not an idle endeavour; language, both denotatively and – particularly – connotatively, serves our understanding of objects and concepts, shaping and informing attitudes and perceptions; and its role in local studies is an important one and worth considering at some length. Not only is the semantic element of the subject an issue originally anticipated in the objectives laid out at the start of the research in terms of the 'meaning' of the term 'local' itself, but, as the investigation progressed, it became more apparent that this was arguably a more complex consideration than was first thought, not only in terms of how respondents interpreted the term, but in existing literature, where, as discussed further in this chapter, the 'problem' has been identified and wrestled with.

In keeping with this issue of perception, it is also worth noting that other questions – even those intended to address basic information on, for example, the types of institutions responding – were prone to answers that relied more on interpretation than hard and fast objective 'facts'. Given the sheer number of responses and the desire not to override or second-guess any answers, certain inconsistencies were noted, but left as was, for instance, institutions that identified as 'other', where similar institutions identified as a more specific type of further or higher education college; or, as discussed in some depth further in this chapter, respondents who identify as having no local collection when, in fact, some local material *is* held in the library or LRC. In the case of this latter response, while it may have been useful to include these respondents in the 'yes' category, it was felt that since a) little further information was forthcoming regarding the material, i.e., the type of information provided in the answers to follow-up questions for those who answered 'yes'; and b) the number of these respondents was small enough so as not to have too much

impact on the overall picture, these responses would be dealt with separately from the respondents who identified as holding a local collection.

It is perhaps also worth raising at this point that the survey was not immediately concerned with the existence of formal collection policies as such – that is, gathering information as to the presence of a written policy on collection selection, management and development that reflects the aims and objectives of the library; since local collections in most cases form only part of the larger collection, such a policy would normally not be specific enough. For example, a policy that would underline, say, meeting the users' needs, would not necessarily address the more explicit issues relating to what users may or may not require from materials that focus on 'local' interests. However, it *is* considered important to look at the issue of collection management in a broader sense at least in order to establish some degree of understanding in this area. In the chapter that follows, for example, the – often contentious – matter of how and why academic library collections are acquired *in the first place* is discussed, with the proposal that 'collecting for collecting's sake' versus 'collecting for use' is an issue of particular relevance to local collections in further and higher education libraries.

In this chapter, however, the findings to be discussed largely involve the number and types of responding institutions, the presence and absence of local collections, the geographic scope of the material, and the age of the collections.

## 5.2 Institutions

Two hundred and twenty-three university and college resource providers responded to the first questionnaire stage of the study. The types of institutions are broken down as follows:

**Table 1: Responding Institutions**

		As a % of 223
Further Education Colleges	72	32.29%
Further and Higher Education Colleges	48	21.52%
Higher Education Colleges	13	5.83%
Universities	76	34.08%
Other	14	6.28%

In all three initial categories represented by the above table and the two that follow – overall responding institutions, respondents who do not hold local collections, and those who do – perhaps fortunately, a similar number of respondents were found in the two most common types of institution, universities and further education colleges, which should make comparisons and contrasts more representative when looking at the ways in which different types of institutions present and make use of their local material. In the remaining cases, the types of responding institutions (FHEC, HEC and Other) produced a lower rate of response – reflecting what appears to be a lower rate of existence in the wider academic population in the first place;<sup>i</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Definitive figures indicating the actual number of higher education and further and higher education colleges are difficult to come by. For example, the Association of Colleges' lists 222 'General Further Education Colleges' for England. Of these, five include 'Further and Higher Education College' in their name. No further indication is given as to how many other colleges may offer HE courses. (Association of Colleges. *About colleges*. [homepage on the internet; cited 2011 Dec 8] Available from: [http://www.aoc.co.uk/en/about\\_colleges/index.cfm](http://www.aoc.co.uk/en/about_colleges/index.cfm)). In a similar vein, Universities UK cite, for example, 14 universities in Scotland and 19 Higher Education Institutions, explaining that 'The term higher education institutions includes universities, university colleges, specialist higher education institutions and other higher education colleges', with no further breakdown available. (Universities UK. An overview of

however, these lower figures should not preclude necessarily artificial or skewed information in terms of comparisons/contrasts, but rather should contribute to the overall picture of how colleges and universities engage with local studies collections, even if any possible differences between every type of institution cannot always be easily discerned.

In terms of how the resource providers within the institutions are named, a sharp division was noted between further education colleges and universities. Thirty-seven out of 72 Further Education respondents used the name Learning Resource Centre, Learner Resource Centre or Learning Centre independent of other generic terms; while a further 13 incorporated LRC or LC into its name (e.g., the Ware Library and Learning Centre at Hertford Regional College, or Bolton Community College's Library and Learning Resource Centre, Manchester). Conversely, a mere six out of 76 respondents from universities used LRC or LC free from other designations, while a further two used these terms as part of a larger title. Meanwhile, 51 universities used the name 'Library' or 'Library Services' alone; while a further 12 used one of these terms as part of a broader title (e.g. Glasgow Caledonian University's Central Library and Information Centre; Durham University's Library, Archives and Special Collections Department). In contrast, only 12 Further Education Colleges employed the name 'Library' alone; with an additional 17 using the term as part of the resource provider's name (e.g. the Information and Library Service at St. Helen's College). Further, a small number of university or 'other' responses came from special collections and/or archives. Eight respondents identified their resource provider as Special Collections either in whole or in part (e.g. University of St Andrews Special Collections Department); while six used the term 'Archives' (e.g. University of Huddersfield - University Archives and Special Collections). Possible implications regarding whether a resource provider uses the title 'library' or 'learning resource centre' – namely, how the name may affect perceptions of the services provided – will be addressed in chapter six.

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the higher education sector. [Internet] 2011 [cited 2011 Dec 8] Available from: <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/UKHESector/Pages/OverviewSector.aspx>) It may, however, be assumed that, given the dearth of explicit information regarding these institutions, the response rates are approximately representative.

### 5.3 The Presence of Local Studies Collections

Of 223 responses to the first stage of the survey, 62.78% (140) reported holding local material, while 37.22% (83) reported having no local studies collection in their library or LRC. In the sections that follow, both the absence and presence of these collections are described and issues relating to the immediate findings examined, with the intention of capturing a broad overview of the current situation regarding local collections in university and college libraries and learning resource centres.

#### 5.3.1 No Local Studies Collection

The question of the existence of local studies holdings in college and university libraries is one that cannot be explored to its fullest and most useful extent without also looking at the other extreme: that is, the *non*-existence of these collections, and the reason for (or perhaps the 'purpose' behind) this lack.

**Table 2: No Local Studies Collections**

		As a % of 83
Further Education Colleges	25	30.12%
Further and Higher Education Colleges	19	22.89%
Higher Education Colleges	3	3.61%
Universities	26	31.33%
Other	10	12.05%

As mentioned earlier, of the 223 questionnaires returned in the first part of the survey, 83 respondents, including 25 further education colleges and 26 universities, claim to have no local studies collections in their libraries. However, despite the

reasonably broad definition granted the term 'collection',<sup>ii</sup> 23 of these libraries or learning resource centres are, in fact, in possession of some local studies material, but chose not to identify as holders of a local collection. With a reference to the 'historical' nature of the material that will be discussed later in this chapter, South Devon College, for instance, offered this explanation for choosing not to reply in the affirmative as to whether its library holds a local collection:

We are not a historical collection. Our stock is more closely related to the courses taught here. We do have some material relating to Torbay, particularly tourism and planning.

The range of these (non-)collections vary. A number of institutions pointed out that the only material of local interest held was material or archives that related to the college or university itself.<sup>iii</sup> While the issue regarding the often precarious definitions that can occur when it comes to identifying suitable areas of local study and/or material is addressed in more detail below, for now it is worth considering the somewhat curious nature of this response: Not only might it be reasonable to suggest that the college or university itself is probably the most immediate 'local' area that an academic institution can lay claim to, but, of course, as will be seen further in this chapter, other libraries and LRCs whose collections are limited to this particular geographical scope and who answered 'yes' to the original question have little difficulty viewing this material as 'local' in nature.

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<sup>ii</sup> The term 'collection' was defined in both questionnaires as: *individual items, materials that may be organised as a single collection, or more than one collection dispersed throughout the library stock.*

<sup>iii</sup> These included Stanmore College; Lauder College; Oxford University's Museum of Natural History; the University of the Arts, London; the Department Materials Science and Metallurgy, University of Cambridge; and Jesus College at Oxford.

**Table 3: No Local Studies Collections Because ...**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 83
Not relevant	10	9	1	9	2	31	37.35%
Collection held in public library	5	6	1	6	0	18	21.69%
Collection/archives held at City Council	2	4	0	1	0	7	8.43%
No demand	2	1	0	1	0	4	4.82%
No space	2	2	0	0	1	5	6.02%
Budget restrictions	0	3	0	1	1	5	6.02%
No longer held	0	2	0	0	0	2	2.41%
Other	1	5	1	12	7	26	31.33%
Does hold some local material	10	5	1	5	2	23	27.71%

Reasons for why an institution's resource centre does not hold local studies material varies, with some respondents citing practical concerns such as financial constraints or a lack of room in the library or learning centre for such items. This latter concern, albeit one cited by only six percent of respondents, is perhaps especially interesting, since it alludes quite explicitly to (the absence of) a physical collection. Different types of local material and formats are discussed in chapters six and seven, with the latter chapter addressing, in particular, the advent of digital material and the potential opportunities it affords in terms of access; in the immediate context of the above results, however, it is worth noting that a lack of physical space in order to house items that might otherwise be considered worth holding is a concern.

However, the most common response received in terms of reasons why an institution does not hold local studies material – 31 responses (37.35%) – is that, as alluded to in the example of South Devon above, it is irrelevant to the institution's

curriculum requirements.<sup>iv</sup> This aspect of local collections – their relationship with set programmes of study – will be discussed further in the next two chapters; however, in the immediate context of the current focus on what is and is not stocked, it is still worth noting at this point that the most popular reason for not holding local material is its relationship – or lack of, in this instance – to what is being taught and learned within the institution. Two separate-but-related issues that form primary threads throughout this study immediately jump forth from this finding: The relationship between local studies and the public library is not the same as that between local studies and the academic library; and the ideal notion of the academic library existing to serve the institution’s curricular needs is strongly suggested. There is no ‘obligation’ to carry local studies material in the same way that public libraries have a duty to hold such material; as far as these respondents are concerned, the principal obligation that the academic library has is to its parent institution.

Following this, the second most common response is one that relates to local studies collections in a broader sense – that is, one that is tied to the history and overall perception of local studies in terms of resources – where 18 (21.69%) respondents cited the public library’s provision of local studies material as a reason for the absence of a collection in their institution’s library or learning centre. It is not altogether surprising to note that, while over two thirds reported the ‘occasional’ local studies enquiry, almost seventy percent reported referring these users to the public library. Also, while almost a third cited ‘irrelevance’ to the curriculum as their first reason for the absence of a local studies collection, approximately fifteen percent gave as their first answer the presence of a collection at the public library. Indeed, one respondent from the Learning Centre in South Kent College offered the emphatic opinion that ‘local studies collections are best left to the public library,’ adding that this sector is able to provide the ‘expertise and the resources’, while students could benefit from being referred to ‘other resource collections.’ Similar assertions were noted in other responses. Edinburgh University’s Special Collections

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<sup>iv</sup> While the separate response above of ‘No demand’ may be considered similar to that which cites irrelevance to the curriculum, the respondents did not specify a lack of relationship to set programmes of study, suggesting a broader lack of demand (say, no interest shown from external as well as internal users).



Division, while citing financial constraints as ‘probably the most significant reason’ for the absence of a local collection in that particular library, also echoed the sentiment regarding the public sector, albeit this time suggesting that ‘in the academic library sector there is probably (arguably) an understanding that local history is a public library domain,’ thereby introducing a ‘common knowledge’ element to how local studies is perceived in terms of its ‘rightful’ place.

While the respondents’ assertions are largely unarguable in theory, given the long-standing relationship between local studies and the public library sector and the dedication that many public library professionals show for the subject, there is a degree of presumption in the claims that perhaps bears closer scrutiny. Students may well benefit from visiting sources outside of their institution’s immediate environment, but while local studies is no longer principally viewed as the poor relation of broader historical or geographical investigation, it can be noted that, in Barber’s words – echoing those of H.P.R. Finberg in his introductory lecture at the University of Leicester in 1952 cited in the previous chapter – there may still be a degree to which local studies, even in the public library sector, ‘is seen as a back-room “Cinderella” service.’<sup>1p.140</sup> This suggests a service whose full potential is yet to be realised, whereby it is often only because of the dedication of a particular public librarian that expertise is provided and resources are accessible at all. Duckett, for example, refers to ‘local heroes’ in his article about the ‘acquisitive and custodial role of libraries’ when it comes to building and using collections. Local studies librarians, according to Duckett, ‘being experts in their subject and having the responsibility of coping with enquiries, will normally receive the brunt of the more teasing enquiries anyway, but their knowledge of sources and the contents of the stacks is of value, too.’ However, he also notes that:

[They] rarely escape to other posts. So hard won is their knowledge, and so untransferable, that once a local studies librarian, always a local studies librarian. As their knowledge lives on after retirement, so they are continually badgered. Truly, there is no escape.<sup>2p.173</sup>

This characterisation of the specialist local studies librarian – a description at once both admiring (their expertise and knowledge) and somewhat tragic (note the uses of the word ‘escape’ which seldom, if ever, indicates that the circumstances being described are desirable) – compounds the ‘Cinderella’ analogy, albeit in a slightly different way, ‘personifying’ the librarian him- or herself, rather than the abstract service; and also not permitting the fairy tale heroine the opportunity to escape her present condition. Returning to the ‘Cinderella as service’ metaphor, however, it may, in fact, be the case that the academic student is referred to a public library where the ‘Cinderella’ factor works to prevent him or her from accessing anything useful, be it material directly or guidance on how to access material elsewhere; after all, if the quality of local studies services depends principally on a particular librarian’s enthusiasm or expertise, it stands to reason that at least a number of services will exist that are not fortunate enough to benefit from the presence of such an individual.

However, even assuming that the public library is more than able to provide the student with useful material, while the potential impact of accessing external collections on students’ *learning* is explored in chapters six and seven, here it might also be proposed that the question of the institution’s more direct responsibility to cater to its students’ needs is raised. It could be argued, after all, that having to refer students to the public sector indicates a failing on the university’s part regarding its ‘duty of care’ to its library’s principal users. This question of responsibility is addressed by Paul and Dewe, when they assert that the purpose of academic libraries’ local studies collections is not ‘to duplicate the collections and services provided in public libraries and record offices or to supplant them, but to *supplement* them [researcher’s emphasis].’<sup>3p.52</sup> At first glance, this may appear a very reasonable assertion; after all, ‘duplication’ cannot help but suggest redundancy, that an effort has been made that provides little in return. However, Paul and Dewe’s contention again suggests that local studies collections – and by association, local studies itself – are in some way *different* to resources that relate to other subjects. In many areas, after all, public and academic libraries do overlap in terms of collection holdings with little or no controversy or questioning over

whether or not it is appropriate for them to do so; and indeed, in cases where the opposite – that, is no duplication at all – seems unthinkable. It would, for example, be a poor academic library that did not stock the works of, say, Austen or Twain simply because the nearby public library holds these texts. Nor is it likely that concerns about ‘duplication’ are raised over, for example, more general history materials or science textbooks. Dewe, however, clarified the point, referring to the issue of duplication as ‘a question of cooperation and understanding between the institutions and their respective libraries and making policy decisions through consultation with the public library’:<sup>4</sup>

I think what we were saying at that time [in the report was] that the academic library shouldn’t be *in competition* with the public library. Because the public library was doing this anyway. What the academic library should do, should be to build up a collection which reflected their *particular* needs. [...] They shouldn’t compete – in the same way that the archives and the museums shouldn’t compete with the public library – theoretically; they do, of course. In theory, they shouldn’t compete, and similarly, the academic library shouldn’t compete with the public library. That’s not to say that it won’t have some local studies material.

While Dewe is clear that the academic collection should ‘[reflect] their [the library’s and thus the institution’s] *particular needs*,’ such an approach arguably cannot help but bring to mind something of a perpetual juggling act, where the academic collection – one that was once both reflective of the institution’s requirements and compatible with the public sector’s holdings – is constantly and exhaustively having to be revised, with items added and removed and reshuffled so that the manager can avoid holding a narrowly focused local collection that is not relevant enough and/or committing the grievous harm of ‘redundant’ duplication. Needs, after all, can change, as can public library holdings; and while collaboration is an admirable endeavour, it might also be suggested that building a collection that relies too heavily on what *the other library* is doing may create as many – if not more – problems as duplication itself.

Hobbs also addresses the issue of duplication – albeit in the public library sector – not just from an ideological position, but also by reflecting on the impact that library history itself may have had on this issue, along with the notion that, in some cases, the simple situation of supply-and-demand may play a part:

It is abundantly clear that, because all the existing library authorities of the country did not come into being at the same time, and because their respective local history collections were not initiated simultaneously, that there exists in many areas a duplication of coverage and use of resources that may appear to some to be unnecessary. When two or three adjacent or neighbouring library authorities compete for the same scarce material the problem is highlighted, and the objectives of each competing authority are likely to be called into question. Often, however, a matter that is overlooked on such occasions is that although a duplication of effort and resources may exist, there may also be sufficient demand to justify both the duplication of effort and the competition.<sup>5p.211</sup>

Hobbs' view might be considered somewhat less emphatic and perhaps more pragmatic than Dewe's, whose approach might be argued is perhaps too rigid in this respect. Yet, taken together, Hobbs' and Dewe's attitudes towards duplication, while differing in emphasis, might actually be suggested to complement one another. One of Dewe's main considerations is that academic and public libraries are not in *competition* with one another and, while Hobbs acknowledges that duplication may be problematic, he also notes that, in some – but far from all – cases, it may be justified, provided that resources, and the demand for them, allow for this. While, as mentioned, Hobbs' concern is with the public sector, the justifications for duplication that he presents are not so narrowly defined that such an approach might well reasonably be applied to the academic sector too.

In addition, when considering even just the existence – or lack – of a local collection within an academic library, what might also be considered is the interest of the

institution's librarian or head of information services or learning resources in the subject. Local studies is not a *staple* of higher learning and relatively few institutions, such as Leicester and Reading – who have integrated local studies 'more formally' into the curriculum – are known for their work in this field. In addition, given the long-held association of local studies with the public library, it may well be the case, then, that local studies relies on an *active* interest by academics or education-based librarians. For instance, where the public library is expected to collect material relating to the locality, there is no such expectation on the academic library. Dewe, however, offers a slightly different perspective on whether a more 'active' role is required of academic or of public librarians in the field of local studies:

I guess to some extent, it depends upon the extent of the subject collection in that particular academic library. I mean, if you've got somewhere like Leicestershire – the University library there, where you've got the Department of English Local History, then you're going to have a departmental collection of some significance. And, I would expect that whoever's involved with that, that yes, they would promote it. But, to a certain extent, their promotion perhaps needs to be a bit different than in the public library sector because, to some extent, they've got a captive audience. Although, that's not to say that that captive audience doesn't need encouraging and so on. But, the public library has got a much sort of bigger job, as it were to reach out to a greater range of potential users.<sup>6</sup>

That is, there is no 'pressure' on a potential user to visit the public library in order to access the local studies collection, unless he or she has a specific enquiry. While, as mentioned, the immediate purpose behind the *collecting* of material in college and university libraries is discussed in more detail in chapter seven, Dewe also suggests that another difference between the public and academic sectors is that the public library 'is in the local studies business for the long haul.'

They're creating a collection in perpetuity that will be used in a hundred years time. The academic library may not be doing that. It's essentially responding to the teaching and research demands of that particular time.

Dewe is, of course, quick to point out that this does not mean that some university libraries do not have a long-term investment in local studies material (and, as the findings in the following chapter indicate, not all collections are necessarily responding to particular pedagogical demands), only that they do not tend to be as necessarily invested in building a local studies collection intended to exist for the duration the way the public library is.

Some reasons given for the absence of local collections in a significant minority of responding academic resource centres – 37.22% – already hint at reasons for the existence of such material in other university and college libraries, albeit up to a point only. While it may be a logical fallacy to assert that a cited lack of 'need' dictated by the curriculum or other in-house academic interests suggests that those who do hold local studies items *are* serving the interests of their institutions' set programmes of study or academic research, it is arguably not unreasonable to assume at this point that, given the frequency of this response, this may be true for at least some holders of local collections, an issue examined more closely in the following two chapters. However, even citing a lack of relevance to current curriculum requirements arguably does not provide an entirely satisfactory response as to why an institution's resource provider does not hold local material. As mentioned, local studies is not a standard subject in further or higher education; yet, as reported in chapters six and seven, it *is* a subject that can – to varying degrees – be integrated or combined with other subjects, thus possibly placing a question mark over the very issue of what can and cannot be considered 'relevant' when it comes to potentially useful resources. However, what is clear, is that the issue of why a library or LRC does not hold local material cannot solely be attributed to what students or researchers require in order to fulfil their resource needs; as indicated by the respondents' answers, as well as the literature, the tension that exists between the perceived roles of the academic library and the public library when it comes to

local collections appears to have significant bearing on the academic library’s decision to house local studies material even when such material may benefit its principal users.

### 5.3.2 Local Studies Collections

Of 223 responding institutions, just under two-thirds – 140 or 62.78% – do hold, and identify as holding, local studies material. Those who do hold these collections are broken down by institution type in the table below:

**Table 4: Local Studies Collections**

		As a % of 140
Further Education Colleges	46	32.86%
Further and Higher Education Colleges	30	21.43%
Higher Education Colleges	11	7.86%
Universities	49	35.00%
Other	4	2.86%

#### 5.3.2.1 ‘Local Studies’ and ‘Local History’

A deceptively simple question asked at this stage of the investigation relates to the name given to the library or LRC’s collection. While this may, technically, be thought of as an issue of mere semantics, like most – if not all – issues concerned with perception and identity, it is inseparable from more pragmatic considerations: How local collections are approached and utilised may well be impacted by the descriptive label attached to the collection; and the emphasis placed within such a label may be key to any potential users’ relationship with the material, whether student, educator, external user or, indeed, the collection manager him- or herself.

Dewe points out that, until relatively recently, ‘local studies’ was commonly known as ‘local history’, the broader term coming into wider use only in the 1970s,<sup>7p.1</sup> while

Reid, as noted in the Introduction to the thesis, observes the erroneous way in which the two terms are often reckoned synonymous, where confusing one with the other 'misrepresents' the point of a *local studies* collection which should concern itself with aspects of the locality in question in broader ways than simply that which focuses on its historical past.<sup>8p.2</sup> In an interview conducted with Michael Dewe in 2006, the common synonymy of the terms 'studies' and 'history' within the context of local resources, and the meaning of what might arguably be considered a minor semantic issue in terms of perceptions of local investigation and collections, was discussed.<sup>9</sup> Dewe believes that the intention within the public library field is that, in theory, the terms should not be considered one and the same 'but, I think in reality they are.' Dewe's experience is that public librarians, certainly in the 1970s, tried to 're-orientate local history to give it a broader subject base. But, in fact, when you come to look at what most local studies collections are concerned with, and who their users are, and the subject coverage and so on, it still is largely historical,' further suggesting that, certainly in the public library field, 'local studies' 'doesn't really live up to its description.'<sup>10</sup> This is a development that Dewe argues needs to be taken up, that the challenge of dealing with 'modern issues' – the environment, geology, flora and fauna and so on – tend to be ignored while the 'historical dimension' predominates, 'particularly given the amount of family and geological history that people are concerned with these days.' Dewe points out that, despite this bias towards resources that focus on the historical, most public libraries tend to use the term 'local studies' collections: 'It's an attempt to broaden the approach, but I don't think, in reality, it's happened.'

In terms of the survey and its focus on academic resources, it is interesting to note that despite the emergence, and growing popularity, of the broader term in the field itself – one that suggests within the context of the study that local investigation might be incorporated into a number of different academic subjects – an emphasis on historical study in terms of the names given to such collections appears to prevail. Indeed, even though the practitioner does not identify as holding a local collection, the response of South Devon College above provides a sound example of the conflation of local studies with studies of the past. Not only does the college hold



material that does, in fact, relate to the 'local' area – South Devon College is located in Paignton, one of three towns that comprise Torbay's 'English Riviera'<sup>v</sup> – it is also interesting to note that the college's initial disclaimer makes a specific point of referring to the fact that their collection is not 'historical' in nature, the assumption being put forward that, as far as the respondent is concerned, local studies *is* local history.

Of 139 respondents,<sup>vi</sup> including those whose local collections are either integrated with the main stock, separated, or both, the most common names given to these collections are as follows:

**Table 5: Under what name is the collection known?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 139
No Name (Integrated Collection)	15	4	3	11	1	34	24.46%
Local History	13	7	3	4	1	28	20.14%
Named After Area*	3	4	2	11	1	21	15.11%
Local Collection	7	4	1	7	0	19	13.67%
Local Studies	7	4	1	2	0	14	10.07%
More Than One Name**	0	2	1	7	0	10	7.19%

\*Examples include the Northampton Collection at Northampton College; the Cambridge Collection in the Faculty of Architecture and History of Art Library at the University of Cambridge; and the Saltaire Studies Collection<sup>vii</sup> at Shipley College.

\*\* Examples where more than one collection is named include the 'Canon Rawnsley Collection' and 'Rare Books' at St Martin's College; and the 'Welsh and Celtic Studies' and 'Llewellyn Bequest' collections at Swansea University.

<sup>v</sup> Torquay, Paignton and Brixham.

<sup>vi</sup> One respondent with a separate collection left the field 'Undefined'.

<sup>vii</sup> Saltaire is a small village near Shipley in West Yorkshire.

Other names given include the following:

- Collections named after the institution itself (5 or 3.60%), for instance, the Queen's College Collection Institutional Archive at Glasgow Caledonian University and CUCAP (the Cambridge University Collection of Air Photographs) at the Aerial Photograph Library at the University of Cambridge;
- Named after a person (3 or 2.16%), as in the George Shiels Collection<sup>viii</sup> in the Coleraine Library at the University of Ulster and the Henry Collection<sup>ix</sup> at the Queen's University Library in Belfast;
- Collections known as 'special collections' or 'archives' (2 or 1.44%);

The most common answer as to how a local collection is named, however, is that the collection is not named at all, with 34 respondents noting that the collection is unnamed due to its integration with the main stock. This response would perhaps appear to be somewhat self-evident, were it not for the fact that of 45 respondents whose local collections are wholly integrated, 13 responded otherwise to the question of naming. Why these integrated collections are given names is not clear; it may simply be a case of a colloquial designation given to material of a particular 'type' as opposed to a formal title for a group of resources. However, even if all those respondents who house wholly integrated collections are subtracted from the results above – in other words, leaving only those 94 libraries or LRCs whose local resources are either separate from the main collection, or partly separated/integrated, and who responded to the question of naming collections – the pattern that emerges regarding the most common names given local collections is similar:

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<sup>viii</sup> George Sheils (1881-1949)

<sup>ix</sup> Robert Mitchell Henry (1873-1950)

**Table 6: Separate or Partly Separate/Integrated Collections only: Under what name is the collection known?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 94
Local History	11	6	2	4	0	23	24.47%
Named After Area*	3	4	2	10	1	20	21.28%
Local Collection	7	4	0	6	0	17	18.09%
Local Studies	6	3	1	0	0	10	10.64%
More Than One Name**	0	1	1	7	0	9	9.57%

The results of this part of the investigation strongly suggest that a significant connection still exists between local studies and historical research. What is perhaps curious is that the title 'Local History' appears to be adopted more commonly by Further Education libraries or LRCs than other institutions, when universities – due to the often historic nature of the institutions themselves – might have been expected to employ this 'more traditional' description to their local collections more readily. Further Education libraries were, however, also more likely than other institutions to name their collections 'Local Studies'.

The most frequent name given to local collections in universities is not, in fact, one generic title, but rather a *type* of name, in this case, one based on the surrounding geographical area, for instance the East Midlands Collection at the University of Nottingham, and the Cope Collection on Hampshire and the Isle of Wight at the University of Southampton<sup>x</sup> (universities also provided the highest response for this type of name). Eleven university libraries/LRCs report having a local collection named after a particular area (including one with an integrated collection), although more than one of these libraries situated within the University of Cambridge refer to

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<sup>x</sup> Although named after Sir William Cope (1811-1892), it was decided to categorise this particular collection as 'named after area', since the part of the larger Cope Collection specified by the respondent is the above-mentioned 'Hampshire and the Isle of Wight', found under 'Local History Resources' on the university's library website. See: Cope Collection (special collections). [Internet; cited 2011 Dec 9] Available from: <http://www.soton.ac.uk/library/resources/collections/cope/index.html>

the material as the Cambridge Collection, thereby possibly suggesting something of a generic approach to naming within the parent institution. Nonetheless, what is perhaps curious about this type of name being given to academic collections is that a title of this ilk arguably evokes the kind of community-focused remit normally associated with the public library sector, where one would not be surprised to find the local collection named after the actual town or county the library is bound (and indeed exists) to serve. However, it could equally be argued that, because these academic collections exist within the ‘confines’ of (mostly) university libraries, any suggestion of ‘community’ that might be brought to mind becomes almost innately limited – the books, clippings, and other material for the most part both available to and intended for a more ‘exclusive’ readership than the ‘local community’ at large. It might also be proposed, of course, that naming a local collection after the locality itself is simply a useful way of describing material related to a specific locality. If, as is discussed later, ‘local studies’ or ‘local history’ can refer to more than one locality – or perhaps even *a* locality apart from the one which is home to the collection – then naming collections after a particular place is probably the least ambiguous way of indicating that a single collection is devoted exclusively to – in most cases – the immediate surrounding area. Indeed, in terms of geographic scope, of these eleven institutions, the largest figure represented was just over a quarter (three in total) which covered the town/city only (of the remaining eight, two were described in terms of ‘other’, while the rest were represented by six different geographies, including ‘counties (more than one’) and ‘country’.

### 5.3.2.2 Housing Local Studies Material and the Size of the Collections

**Table 7: Is the collection housed separately or is it integrated throughout the library stock?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 140
Separate	21	19	5	26	0	71	50.71%
Integrated	17	7	5	14	2	45	32.14%
Both	8	4	1	9	2	24	17.14%

One of the main considerations concerning the naming of the collections is that, of the 140 first-questionnaire respondents who hold local material, just over half of these collections are housed separately from the main collection, leaving the other half either wholly integrated or integrated in part. As mentioned, the most popular response given as to the name of the collection overall was that of ‘no name’ due to the integration of the material with the main library or LRC’s collection. Perhaps curiously, two libraries that claimed to have a collection both integrated and separate also chose not to name the part of the collection that was separated from other stock. However, when it comes to material organised and wholly separated from the rest of the library stock, collections were named, with ‘Local History’ and ‘Named After Area’ once again proving the most popular choices.<sup>xi</sup>

**Table 8: What size is the collection?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 140
<50	10	7	0	1	1	19	13.57%
50 - 100	10	6	1	2	1	20	14.29%
101 - 500	19	9	3	11	0	42	30.00%
501 - 1000	6	5	4	7	0	22	15.71%
>1000	1	3	3	28	2	37	26.43%

Again, it is perhaps not too surprising that the size of the collection also seemed to have some correspondence with whether or not a local collection was separated from the rest of the library’s material. Twenty-two collections of between 101-500 items were separated, while 28 were either separated or partly integrated; fourteen collections of between 501-1000 items were separated, while 19 were either separated or partly integrated; and 23 collections of over 1000 items were separated, while 32 were either separated or partly integrated.

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<sup>xi</sup> One respondent whose collection was separate left the ‘Name of Collection’ field undefined.

**Table 9: Correspondence between the size of collections and how they are housed**

	<50	50 - 100	101 - 500	501 - 1000	>1000	Total	% of 140
Separate	4	8	22	14	23	71	50.71%
Integrated	12	11	14	3	5	45	32.14%
Both	3	1	6	5	9	24	17.14%

This can be contrasted with the number of libraries or LRCs whose material is wholly integrated: 14 of between 101-500; three of between 501-1000; and five of over 1000 items. The correlation suggests that those libraries that hold sizeable collections may also be more likely to take local material ‘seriously’ enough to segregate them from the main collection and give the grouped-together material a specific name; of course, it may also suggest that those collections that are separated from the main collection (either entirely or in part) are given more of an opportunity to grow, with their separate status affording the material a ‘special’ identity that may encourage more attention in terms of acquisitions and *building* a collection, more so than if the items are rendered somewhat less visible by virtue of being appended to other material. Regardless of which came first, however – the size of the collection or its separate status – it could be stated that, in other words, these libraries are those with an interest in not just collecting but, within the library itself at least, promoting or marketing – however passively – this material as a distinct collection.

Again, not surprisingly, the majority of collections of over 1000 items, were found in universities (only one further education college, for instance, identified its collection as holding this many items). Without specific data, it is impossible to provide a verifiable reason as to this, but it can most likely be assumed that since many universities tend to hold collections acquired over a longer period of time, and often have more space with which to stock these items, collections are, in general, likely to be larger than those of newer colleges, where material has been collected over a shorter period.

### 5.3.2.3 The Geographical Scope of the Collections and the Term ‘Local’

Dewe provides a description of ‘local studies’ in education in terms of what ‘pupils’ do. However, what he writes might well be applied to students and researchers also, and his choice of words are perhaps telling when he describes it as ‘pupils acquiring and processing information about aspects of their area.’<sup>11p.1</sup> Definitions of ‘local’ itself, whilst not necessarily problematic, remain arguably idiosyncratic, and there is no clear-cut definition of what may or may not constitute a *local* study; ‘their area’ does not quite provide a precise explanation.

**Table 10: What is the geographic scope of the collection?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 139
Institution	1	0	0	3	0	4	2.88%
Town/City inc. Institution	1	0	0	1	0	2	1.44%
Area(s) of Town/City	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.72%
Town/City Only	7	2	0	4	0	13	9.35%
Town/City & Surrounding	3	2	0	2	0	7	5.04%
Area of County	1	4	1	1	0	7	5.04%
County	15	4	5	7	1	32	23.02%
County Inc. Institution	0	0	0	1	1	2	1.44%
County & Parts of Neighbouring County	1	0	0	2	0	3	2.16%
Counties (More Than One)	2	2	2	6	0	12	8.63%
Region	8	11	0	7	1	27	19.42%
Country	1	2	2	4	1	10	7.19%
Countries (More Than One)	0	0	0	4	0	4	2.88%
Other	5	2	1	7	0	15	10.79%

Having asked respondents to describe the geographical scope of their collections, the most common single response indicated an interest in issues relating to the college or university's home county (or Scottish former-'region'), with region-wide studies following closely behind. Over a quarter of respondents cited material whose scope reached county-wide, including those whose collections also covered material relating to the institution and parts of other counties, with a further 8.63% covering more than one county; while almost a fifth of collections were based around material concerned with the immediate region. Other responses included those libraries whose material relates to the parent institution only, those whose collections covered the institution's home town and some surrounding towns and villages, and some libraries whose 'local' collections include material on places located in vastly different areas around the country. These quite widely differing definitions suggest that there is perhaps something quite arbitrary in the way that local studies can be approached, in which, indeed, a paradox exists whereby 'local' might not actually mean 'local' - as it would be commonly recognised - at all. Dewe agrees, suggesting that, when provided with the definitions given by respondents, it is clear that 'local' has a 'variety of interpretations and I think all of those are valid.'<sup>12</sup>

Dewe himself draws attention to what might be described as a *shifting* interpretation of 'local'. He cites the example of studying 'the importance of a river,' that travels through a number of different places; or a road - 'the importance of the M4, for example.' As he points out, the study of a river or major road 'could be seen as local or regional history. At its various points, it will be local, but overall, it will be [a] regional kind of history.'<sup>13</sup>

It is also interesting to note the distinction made here between 'local' and 'regional' studies, where the former is used to indicate a more immediate locale even while respondents were happy to view 'regional studies' as part of the broader term, 'local studies,' providing, this time, a more semantic shift in meaning. Examples such as Dewe's also draw attention to the issue of boundaries by highlighting the - literal - crossing of administrative areas that might otherwise be used as a guide for the term



'local'. Dewe sums up the question 'what does 'local' actually mean?' by offering the suggestion that

what makes it 'local' is the individual community, but it doesn't necessarily have to fit into an administrative area, although it often does for convenience – because that's how the records usually are maintained. But, of course it can cross boundaries.<sup>14</sup>

This may be especially true of local studies in academic libraries. In the public library sector, it is arguable that local studies resources are more prone to 'rules' about what can and cannot be held, since these resources rely on taxpayers' contributions from within government-drawn boundaries that prescribe what is or is not 'local'. When it comes to educational institutions, these boundaries are far less likely to be taken notice of and other factors may contribute to the geographical scope of a local collection. The institution's history, for example, may be taken into account, or a long-standing interest in a no-longer-present historical area, as might be the university or college's relationships with other institutions or its student catchment area.

As Dixon notes, while 'defining the area served may seem straightforward in terms of current administrative boundaries, it may be less clear-cut for local historical societies, or academic collections, and there are a number of points to consider as, for example, administrative boundaries may change.' Indeed, Dixon points out that 'in the past 25 years' local government in the UK has gone through two reorganisations, leading to the reality that a number of library authorities 'now cover very different areas'.<sup>15p.88</sup> As she suggests, for collections that do not depend on such regulated boundaries to define them, this can be problematic.

Belinda Allen, Learning Resources Manager at North Lindsay College in Scunthorpe, offers a prime example of where an area covered by the local studies collection crosses many boundaries thanks to a historically 'shifting' definition suggested by government-drawn areas that have been consistently subjected to administrative

changes that have affected the broader geography of the area. Allen describes the college's collection as 'regional', which she reckons as geographically 'up to Lincoln, really' with York and Yorkshire also featuring in the collection. The imprecision of this geographic description is understandable. As Allen puts it:

[O]ur area has moved into certain counties so many different times over the years. We've been Lincolnshire, East Riding, South Yorkshire, South Humberside and now we're back to the old North Lincolnshire. So, we've moved in and out of these county regional areas over the years – I don't think they quite know where to put us sometimes; but I would say the local collection probably represents that as well, because it moves around Lincoln and York and Humberside and Lincolnshire. And so that's basically what I mean by regional.<sup>16</sup>

In other words, the constantly shifting definition of 'local' by the government has enabled North Lindsay College's 'local collection' to expand beyond what might traditionally be considered 'local' in terms of Scunthorpe and its immediate surrounding area. As Allen notes, the area has been 'here, there and everywhere' with 'little pocket areas [that have] been in and out of the boundaries and the collection represents that. Subtly, but it's there.'

While regulated boundaries, therefore, may be said to restrict or 'force' a locality into being, it is also true that academic collections of the kind described above offer a way to not only blur the lines themselves, but, simultaneously bear witness to the changes that have taken place: if the local government authority no longer recognises the area as 'local', by embracing both the past and the present locality in the material held, as Allen points out, the collection *represents* this historical shift in perception and subsequent regulation.

The term 'local' gains an even broader definition, if a more stable one, when observing the ten respondents whose 'local' collection covers an entire country. Bluntly stated as 'local = country', a local collection that covers this broad a

geographical scope would appear to be something of a contradiction in terms; however, when considering that the United Kingdom is itself split into four separate constituent countries, a 'local collection' with the name 'Welsh Life and History' that comprises material 'Wales-wide with [an] emphasis on Glamorgan' (Bridgend College Library and Learning Resource Centre), or the 'general Scottisshery [sic]' transforming a Renfrewshire-focused collection into a broader geographical selection of material (Reid Kerr College, Abercon Library), does not actually appear to come across as the incongruity that, at first, the idea of a 'national/local' collection may suggest. This, however, may arguably suggest a situation that the relatively unusual position of the United Kingdom and its four countries in particular allows for, a situation where both the size of the smaller component countries and the perceptions of a distinct national identity – often based on common or shared traditions and customs – comes into play. 'Welsh life', for example, could not be mistaken for 'Scottish life' or 'Northern Irish life' and so a sense of 'local' is achieved, even though, technically, it might appear something of an oddity for a person to describe an entire country in terms of an area that is 'local' to him or her.

This idea of 'local' as related to identity is also found in a less obvious geographically defined way. Dr Norman Reid of St Andrews University Special Collections offers yet another possible perspective on the geographical definition of 'local', where he observes that the department tends to view its 'remit of interest' as St Andrews and North-East Fife (this does not mean that material from further away is not acquired and indeed the department does hold material drawn from a wider geographical scope). However, North-East Fife is, according to Reid, the 'core area' covered by the collection's local holdings. The perspectives offered here suggest not only historical geographical issues, but 'local' in terms of what might be described as 'commonsense' knowledge of what constitutes the 'local' area with the perception of a 'local identity' forming a large part of that knowledge. As Dr Reid observes:

Fife is a place that tends to divide itself up into localities [...] and East Fife tends to have a fairly distinctive local identity. And there are even more

local identities within that, of course [...] But, generally speaking, I think most people would agree that there is a sort of East Fife identity.<sup>17</sup>

It is this 'identity' – drawn from common *perceptions* of what characterises 'East Fife' – that forms the core of the 'geographical' collection at St Andrews Special Collections, one that Norman Reid concedes, is 'not clearly defined.'

Indeed, the question of a 'local identity' was raised in mid-2010 from what, on the surface, may have appeared merely to be an administrative shift that has no real bearing on *actual* localities, but, nonetheless, as the BBC put it, is a shift that, for some, 'strikes at the heart of who they are.'<sup>18</sup> In July of that year, the Royal Mail announced that the names of counties were to be deleted from its postal database, following, according to an earlier article, 'complaints by customers to postal watchdog Postcomm about the use of out-of-date county names, such as North Humberside and Dyfed.'<sup>19</sup> In the later article, somewhat provocatively titled 'What's the Point of Counties?', it was noted that, according to the Royal Mail, while people were welcome to continue including county names on envelopes and package labels, to do so was no longer necessary, since a 'house number, street and postcode are all that is needed.' However, the move towards the paring down of postal addresses was not welcomed by those who viewed the proposed deletions of counties as something akin to tampering with history. Negative responses to the adjustment quoted in the article ranged from considerably irate ('It is not up to Royal Mail to decide whether or not to delete our heritage ... As far as I recall, we didn't elect them.') to somewhat more measured, with astrologer, television personality, and author,<sup>xii</sup> Russell Grant suggesting that 'It's not just about [the particular county name] but wherever you grew up and realised from a young age the things that are part of your history and heritage,' proposing later in the article that 'People need their counties for their history and their sense of identity.' In this case, it appears that, for some people, one's own identity is very much tied to the idea of geographical boundaries, where the indicators used to form a postal address

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<sup>xii</sup> Grant, Russell. *The real counties of Britain*. London: Virgin, 1996.

contribute significantly to a 'local identity'. Indeed, the very fact that complaints were received in the first place over 'out-of-date' county names suggests that there is an importance attached to localities that can frequently go beyond any 'practical' consideration.

The issue of defining localities was raised once again in the news later the same year, this time focusing on regions, and highlighting once more the seemingly arbitrary ways in which the identification of localities can be approached, often in such a way as to defy government boundaries. As the article's title indicates, in this instance, the definition relies less on the forging and maintenance of a sense of identity, than on the equally 'human' activity of social communication. In 'Phone Calls Used to Redefine UK Regions', the BBC reported on a 'social map of Great Britain' created through the use of '12 billion landline calls to create a map of Britons' connections.<sup>20</sup> According to Carlo Ratti from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who led the international team responsible for creating the map, 'Regional boundaries are useful for governments ... "But they don't say anything about how people in those regions interact."' Noting that, according to Ratti, telephone users 'tended to communicate most with people that were geographically close to them' the article revealed that, while the map identified commonly recognised regions, it 'also produced surprise results, including the creation of a region that encompassed parts of Wales and the West Midlands.' Although the article's title and an introduction that explicitly uses the phrase 'redrawing the regional map of Britain', arguably contains more than a hint of hyperbole – the researchers suggest that the analysis of social networks could be useful to governments, but there is no indication that any regions are to be officially redefined based on findings – the project does point, as suggested earlier, to a more flexible way of determining 'localities', where, in this instance regions are characterised as 'areas with strong social cohesion.'

Yet, as Dewe's earlier comment suggests, all of these definitions may well be considered valid. If government boundaries are no hard and fast indicator – witness North Lindsay College's ever-changing administrative landscape – then what is left may frequently be down to historically recognisable 'local' areas which may involve

original or older 'official' definitions of a locality; or – when even the Royal Mail cannot be counted on to define where people's sense of local heritage might begin and end – less tangible perceptions of identity or, in the case of identifying regions by patterns of communication, new ways of creating 'localities.'

The Centre for English Local History at Leicester University, the oldest department of its kind in the United Kingdom, is dedicated to the study of localities – as the centre's name implies, the focus is not limited to Leicestershire, although the immediate locale is included. In Professor Harold Fox's own case, as he suggested in an interview conducted in 2005,<sup>21</sup> the advantage of studying 'Leicester here and Devon down there [Devon is one of Professor Fox's particular study focuses] is a comparative advantage. You can compare the two and that gives you insights into each one.' For Fox, 'To study the two illuminates the differences,' in, for example, the study of the very different landscapes found in the areas. Yet, when asked to clarify how far the geographic scope of the centre's concerns reach, it becomes clear that even somewhere with an ostensibly unambiguous focus of study as a centre for '*English Local History*' [researcher's emphasis] is not immune to the grey areas that local studies seem to attract. Professor Fox offered up examples of Cornwall, Kent, Cumberland and Yorkshire – 'The four corners' – in order to illustrate his initial response of 'everywhere,' obviously taken to mean 'anywhere in England'. However, Fox also observed that even the boundaries set up by the department itself had proven to be somewhat problematic, admitting that, 'We're regretting the study of the word 'English' at the moment – 'English' local history.' He uses the example of a PhD student who had chosen to study South Wales, a choice that, perhaps understandably, drew some comment, with the department possibly reaching somewhat to justify the research by noting that South Wales had been colonized by England in the 10th Century.<sup>xiii</sup> While such self-imposed limitations can provide amusing anecdotes – 'We haven't been brave enough to study Scotland yet,' was another observation – the story also provides another illustration of the difficulties in defining the 'local' in 'local studies'. In this case, however, it is not

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<sup>xiii</sup> More accurately, the 11th Century, by the Normans.

necessarily the term itself that is prone to the geographical ambiguity of what constitutes a local area – the centre, as mentioned, is in the business of studying *localities* – but, rather, *which* localities may be studied. As far as the research student is concerned – and with the department’s backing – the Centre for *English* Local History is a perfectly valid place from which to conduct a study of South Wales; to the outside observer, it seemed incongruous – hence the ‘justification’.

Overall, this elusive definition of ‘local’ – where it can be marked by boundaries both within and without government authorisation; historical perspective; a sense of identity; or even, as in the case of the Centre for English Local History, where the term ‘English’, if not quite redefined, is expanded and made more inclusive – is arguably one of the most fascinating, yet potentially frustrating, aspects of local studies. After all, if one cannot even define the ‘local’ *in* local studies with any degree of real consistency, there is a danger that the discipline itself (both academic and amateur) becomes meaningless when the phrase ‘to conduct a local study’ can, apparently, mean almost anything the researcher wishes it to mean.

However, there is one fairly consistent point of definition – the idea that local studies concerns itself with the study of *localities* (as opposed to the notion that it is chiefly interested in the *immediate* locality, however much that may be the concern in many instances) – although even this can be problematic when one takes into account some of the potential problems mentioned above when trying to pin down a particular locality, wherever its broader geographic setting. However, as suggested earlier with regard to the notion of *perception* as an almost constant feature of local studies, there does appear to be an almost implicit *understanding* attached to the subject which overrides the arguably quite shaky definition which, on paper, threatens to render the term, if not quite meaningless, then certainly prone to an interpretation that may reasonably be considered *too* open. What this understanding is, however, remains somewhat elusive. It may, for instance, be based on a notion of what local studies is not. A critical examination of, for example, theories of quantum mechanics is clearly not a local study; nor is, to take a less scientific example, the study of the work of female novelists in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

However, were the researcher to investigate, say, the development of wave mechanics, he or she might find him- or herself peering into Erwin Schrödinger's background – domestic circumstances, education – which may result in a study that takes on elements of local studies. Similarly, the literary researcher might find it useful to compare authors' experiences in different countries and how this might have affected the works produced, in which case, localities become quite important to the study. Perhaps, then, the difference lies in emphasis: a local study is *not* a local study when it is not a local study. While this may not be the most emphatic or clear-cut definition – and still leaves the term 'local' itself open to quite a broad range of interpretations, however valid each may be – it is nonetheless a definition that is consistent.

#### 5.3.2.4 Age of the Collections

One of the most important eras in the development of post-secondary education is the decades of the 1960s and 1970s. Ansell also draws attention to these decades as significant in the 'present structure of local studies provision' noting that it 'dates essentially from the last reorganisation of local government'<sup>22p.42</sup> in which the following library authorities were put in place:

- London's boroughs in 1965
- Northern Ireland's education and library boards in 1973
- England and Wales' metropolitan districts and non-metropolitan counties in 1974; plus a few non-metropolitan districts in Wales.
- Scotland's districts, regions and islands in 1975

Ansell notes that the 'structures now in existence bear a marked resemblance to those recommended in the 1973 Department of Education and Science report, *Public Library service: reorganisation and after* in which, as well as recommending 'a strong central collection relating to the area as a whole' the report also specified that



Outside this central collection, each identifiable community within the new authorities will have a need for material relating to its own history to stimulate and to satisfy the interest of local residents, who may subsequently turn to the central collection to pursue their further studies.<sup>23p.11</sup>

Circumstances, as suggested above, were also changing in academia at this time. As Brophy notes, by the early 1960s, university education ‘remained the preserve of an elite, drawing almost exclusively from public and grammar schools’, a situation that the Robbins Committee addressed by recommending ‘massive expansion: the beginning of the end of higher education for the elite and the start of “mass higher education,” including in the late 1960s and early 1970s, for example, the founding of the Open University and the creation of polytechnics.’<sup>24pp.6-7</sup> The development in local studies and its resources during this era was also reflected where, as Dixon puts it, ‘local studies gradually became recognized as an academic discipline in its own right in the 1960s.’<sup>25p.xvi</sup> The significance of this period to local collections in academic libraries is also noted in Paul and Dewe’s earlier preliminary study, where they draw attention to the ‘intensive development’ of higher and further education in the 1960s and 1970s that ‘is reflected in the development of local collections to the extent that half of those [collections covered in their survey] have been formed since 1960.’<sup>26p.53</sup>

This era’s importance is similarly highlighted in the present study, where collections begun in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s together represent just under half of the total, with the 1970s providing the largest proportion in a single decade.

**Table 11: When was the collection started?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 133
Pre-19 <sup>th</sup> Century	0	0	0	0	2	2	1.50%
19 <sup>th</sup> Century	0	0	1	9	1	11	8.27%
1900 - 1910	0	1	0	3	0	4	3.01%

1920s	0	1	0	4	0	5	3.76%
1930s	0	0	0	3	0	3	2.26%
1940s	1	0	1	2	0	4	3.01%
1950s	2	4	1	2	0	9	6.77%
1960s	6	7	0	8	0	21	15.79%
1970s	13	5	4	4	1	27	20.30%
1980s	9	4	2	2	0	17	12.78%
1990s	3	5	1	2	0	11	8.27%
2000s	6	0	0	1	0	7	5.26%
Other	3	2	0	7	0	12	9.02%

Of those libraries with local studies material, approximately a fifth of the responding institution's local collections were started in the 1970s, followed by almost 16% in the 1960s then just under 13% in the 1980s. Perhaps not surprisingly, most further education colleges began their collections during these decades – six in the 1960s, 13 in the 1970s, and nine in the 1980s – a possible indication of the growing importance of these institutions at this time. On the other hand, responses from 47 universities reveal that a significant number of these institutions – 23 or 48.94% – began their collections prior to 1960, with a further eight university libraries (17.02%) starting a local collection in the 1960s itself.<sup>xiv</sup>

**Table 12: Correspondence between the size and age of the collections**

	<50	50 - 100	101 - 500	501 - 1000	>1000	Total	% of 133
Pre-19 <sup>th</sup> Century	0	0	0	0	2	2	1.50%
19 <sup>th</sup> Century	0	1	3	2	5	11	8.27%
1900 - 1910	0	0	0	2	2	4	3.01%
1920s	1	0	0	1	3	5	3.76%
1930s	0	0	0	0	3	3	2.26%

<sup>xiv</sup> This number does not include the institution whose respondent was not sure if the collection had been started in the 1960s or 70s.

1940s	0	0	1	0	3	4	3.01%
1950s	3	0	0	4	2	9	6.77%
1960s	4	3	5	3	6	21	15.79%
1970s	4	4	11	6	2	27	20.30%
1980s	2	4	7	2	2	17	12.78%
1990s	3	3	4	0	1	11	8.27%
2000s	1	1	4	0	1	7	5.26%
Other	0	1	5	2	4	12	9.02%

When considering the age of collections and how this aspect may affect other attributes, it is perhaps not surprising to note that that, when it comes to larger collections, of those that comprise over a thousand items, the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the 1960s are the most common starting-points. In the former case, of course, the age of the collections is likely to have some bearing on the number of items collected over a considerably lengthy period of time; in the case of the latter era, the aforementioned expansion of both education and local studies itself in the 1960s may well have contributed to the building of more substantial collections.

#### 5.4 Conclusion

The geographical paradox of the local studies collection that can include, for instance, in the case of Swansea University, ‘Wales and (to a lesser extent) other Celtic countries’ or, as the respondent from New College, Oxford described materials that cover, ‘any area of the country which has a connection with [the institution]’ is an issue that has arisen in the findings reported in this chapter; and although this paradox is arguably not the insurmountable ‘problem’ it might at first appear to be when looking at local studies from a purely semantic perspective (the ‘local’ in ‘local studies’), it is difficult to imagine the public library engaging – or wishing to engage – in the same broad definition. Similarly, the almost innate difference with which local studies materials are regarded in the literature, and implications from the survey that a strong association remains between local studies and the public library’s ‘responsibility’ towards this subject, suggest that there may be a very specific

purpose behind individual collections held within academic libraries or LRCs, unlike material in the public library sector, where libraries are bound not only by geography, but by a government-sanctioned 'duty' to collect material relevant to the 'local area'. In the case of the academic library, suggestions have been made in the literature and by other sources cited in this chapter that collections may well be primarily influenced by either a librarian's own interests, or as a reflection of the institution's objectives or goals (in terms of what the institution wishes to teach its students), its background (the history of the institution, its legacies) or otherwise.

With just under two-thirds of first-questionnaire respondents' libraries or LRCs holding local studies material, it *would* appear that local studies resources do have some degree of significance within the further and higher education fields. Whether or not this is supportive of Paul's observation in 1989 that an effort has been made to integrate this subject 'more formally' into the curriculum will be explored further in the chapters that follow.<sup>27p.34-36</sup> However, at this stage, what is broadly suggested is that while local investigation has long been recognised as a pursuit largely undertaken by amateurs with, as pointed out, its resources commonly perceived as the domain of the public library, a significant proportion of the academic sector has, at the very least, made room for these resources despite this perception; further, a number of collections, based on statuses such as age, size, and whether or not items are held and recognised as a separate collection, provide an indication that, for some resource centres, local studies items have some degree of importance within the academic library's holdings.

In order to build on the results presented in this chapter, in the chapter that follows findings are presented that relate to the *purpose* behind local studies collections held in university and college libraries, while, in chapter seven, this purpose will be more fully explored.

## 5.5 References

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## Chapter Six

### The Current Situation: The Purpose of Local Studies Collections in College and University Libraries

#### 6.1 Introduction

Examining the purpose of local collections in an academic environment – the *how* and *why* of the study's aims – requires touching on a number of matters concerned with the way in which libraries support the parent institution and, thus, its students. According to Webb, the issue of academic library support is one that has largely been neglected:

Students judge the quality of a library by the extent to which it supports their learning resource requirements during the course of their studies [...] And yet the way in which the collection should be managed to support the learning experience is rarely considered as a separate issue. It seems curious that there has been little emphasis in the literature and in discussions [...] on how libraries can support learning across the range of their services and facilities.<sup>1p.135</sup>

While Webb is concerned with support on a broader scale, it is arguable that this accusation holds a particular relevance for local studies collections when one considers the somewhat precarious position of local materials within the academic sphere in the first place. As has been proposed earlier in the thesis, the history of local studies resources and their strong association with the public library sector almost automatically positions local studies materials in academic libraries as something of an anomaly – that is, the collections are in a place where one would not typically expect to find such materials. This arguably gives the purpose behind local collections in academic libraries a certain urgency that is missing from their presence in public libraries. Public libraries are, after all, *meant* to hold local material; making available local material is, indeed, frequently part of the public

library's remit. As Dewe puts it, the public library has 'a mission, and aims and objectives – not just for the service as a whole, but for individual components, such as the local studies collection.'<sup>2</sup> There is, however, no such similar government-steered expectation or community-directed duty for college or university libraries to hold local collections. Therefore, the reasons for stocking local material are required to be more compelling than simply a mandatory requirement to do so. In the previous chapter, the presence of local collections within libraries in further and higher education institutions was examined, with primary focus placed on the scope, scale and organisation of the collections; in this chapter, the *reasons* for the existence of these collections within an academic setting begin to be explored.

Because this chapter's focus is on the purpose of local collections in academic libraries, findings are drawn principally from responses generated during the second questionnaire stage of the project, as well as from interviews and visits to institutions that followed this particular part of the survey. Questions are addressed largely concerning issues such as support for courses and types of research conducted, with related concerns such as how material is made available to users also taken into account.

Additionally, while a degree of analysis will be applied to findings in this chapter, further examination of the questions answered – and indeed, raised – by these results, and those from chapter five, is conducted in the chapter that follows, where a more reflective approach is taken to results, and consideration is given to issues regarding teaching, learning and research, as well as matters concerning the building of collections, and how these issues may or may not affect the library or learning centre's approach to providing support. Conclusions are also drawn and recommendations made.

A total of 70 respondents replied to the second-stage questionnaire, comprising almost 50% of those institutions holding local collections who had responded to the first-stage survey, plus one respondent who had not participated in the first



questionnaire: the Directorate of Information Systems and Services, Historic Collections, Special Libraries and Archives at the University of Aberdeen.

**Table 13: Second Questionnaire: Responding Institutions**

		As a % of 70 Total
Further Education Colleges	18	25.71%
Further and Higher Education Colleges	17	24.29%
Higher Education Colleges	6	8.57%
Universities	28	40.00%
Other	1	1.43%

## 6.2 Collection Management for Learning

The boundary between the existence and purpose of a collection within the library or LRC can be a somewhat blurry one, particularly when it comes to the issue of collection management. As will be discussed further in the following chapter, the academic library itself exists within a specific context where its materials and management arguably have a duty to reflect the purpose – that is, the aims and/or mission – of the larger institution. Thus, the existence and purpose of the collections held within the library become often difficult to separate. However, some degree of distinction is possible. The previous chapter, for instance, was largely focused upon the ‘basic facts’ concerning local collections in academic environments that emerged from the first-stage questionnaire: whether or not a local collection exists in the first place; the age of the collection; the geographical scope of the collection; and its physical relationship to the library’s main stock. Here, the management issues covered go slightly further, where the collection’s impact on students, teachers and researchers – and how collection managers and assistants facilitate that impact – is more immediate, covering access to local collections, ‘resource management’, and the types of materials held.

## 6.2.1 Collection Access: Subject Areas, Classification Schemes, Access, OPAC, and Materials

### 6.2.1.1 Subject Areas

In addressing subject areas regarding collections wholly or partly integrated into the main collection, analysing results became somewhat more complicated. In the first questionnaire, respondents were asked if the local collection held was either 'separate', 'integrated' or 'both' when it came to its relationship with the main stock. As mentioned in the previous chapter, of 140 first-questionnaire respondents 71 (50.71%) claimed that the collection was held separately, with 45 (32.14%) claiming that the collection was wholly integrated, and 24 (17.14%) stating that the local material was held both separately from *and* also throughout the main collection. Although the second-questionnaire respondents were not asked to repeat the original question of whether or not the collection was held separately, responses were gathered and categorised based on the following: a) responses regarding specific subject sections, b) responses regarding whether or not, *if* some or all of the collection was housed separately, where it was housed, and c) where neither of the previous sections were completed, the question of how collections were housed was drawn from the first questionnaire.<sup>xv</sup> Inconsistencies between the first and second questionnaires were noted. For instance, a number of those whose local collections had, in the first questionnaire, been cited as 'separate' from the main collection, now – based on answers given to the current relevant questions – appeared to have collections that were, in fact, at least partly integrated. In some instances, no explanation was suggested for the inconsistency other than the respondent having previously identified the collection as 'separate', but now including subject sections as areas where local material could be found. In other instances, the 'confusion' was less ambiguous, but not to the point that the earlier response could be retroactively revised under the assumption that a simple error had occurred. One respondent, for example, noted that the earlier identified-as-separate collection was housed 'within

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<sup>xv</sup> Only six responses were drawn using this method, all universities whose first questionnaire responses had indicated a separate collection.

the main library, shelved separately as Local Collection.<sup>xvi</sup> However, the respondent also included 'Education' as an 'Other' subject section in which local material could be found; thus the original first-questionnaire designation was changed in the second questionnaire to 'both separate and integrated', leaving an inconsistency between the two sets of answers.

Using similar cross-checking techniques with reference to the above-mentioned responses in order to provide a summary of second-questionnaire responses, the following results were possible:

**Table 14: Second Questionnaire: Collections Housed**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 70
Separate	8	7	4	10	0	29	41.43%
Partly separate/integrated	3	6	1	6	1	17	24.29%
Integrated	7	4	1	12	0	24	34.29%

As opposed to the first questionnaire, where a clear majority of just over half of respondents identify their libraries or LRCs as holding local material fully separate from the main collection, here the margin between wholly separate and integrated collections is somewhat narrower, although it appears that separate collections are still more common than fully integrated material.

While the results of this part of the questionnaire are unsatisfactory in respect of consistency with the first stage of the survey, information regarding subject sections can still be drawn out. Of 41 respondents whose collections are identified as fully or partly integrated, local material could be found in the following subject sections, listed in order of inclusion on the original form:

<sup>xvi</sup> Library and Learning Centre, Chester Campus, West Cheshire College

**Table 15: If some or all of your local studies material is integrated, with which subject sections is it integrated?**

	FE	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 41
History	7	8	1	8	1	25	60.98%
Geography	4	5	0	4	1	14	34.15%
Natural Science	0	2	0	3	0	5	12.20%
Natural History	1	1	0	2	0	4	9.76%
Archaeology	1	3	0	4	1	9	21.95%
Geology	1	2	0	2	1	6	14.63%
Art	2	3	0	1	0	6	14.63%
Business	0	3	0	0	0	3	7.32%
Economics	0	1	0	1	0	2	4.88%
Local Government	1	4	0	1	0	6	14.63%
Transport	0	3	0	1	0	4	9.76%
Other	2	4	1	5	0	12	29.27%

As is clear, when it comes to associating integrated local studies material with specific subject areas, once again history dominates, with almost two-thirds of the total respondents holding local studies items within historical sections in the library or LRC. Geography's second place ranking might also be considered unsurprising, although its relatively substantial lower rate of inclusion could provide pause for thought. Indeed, the fact that sections within the library covering studies relating to *when* are almost twice as likely to include material relating to identifiable localities as those areas of the library devoted to studies relating to *where* may appear, at first glance, to be somewhat confounding, when one considers that the most immediate concern of the term 'local' itself tends to be geographical in nature, even when, as discussed in the last chapter, 'local' need not necessarily refer to one's immediate surroundings or 'own' locality (however either definition may be determined). However, if one considers the actual content of material that might typically be found in the 'History' and 'Geography' sections of a library, the division between studies of 'when' and 'where' becomes more open to nuance. A section headed 'Geography', for example, may well include material relating to, for

example, physical geography, which itself may comprise subjects such as environmental resource management, climatology, landscape ecology and so on. Even related fields such as urban planning may be found under the broader 'geography' category. However, while these subjects might include discussion of specific localities, unless this aspect is explicitly highlighted as a feature of the given material – say, a book concerned with the coastal geography of Cornwall – it is unlikely to be thought of as material that can be labelled 'local studies'. Similarly, some geographical material may contain elements of historical study – in the hypothetical example of Cornwall's coastal geography, this may include content that examines a change in the landscape over several years – but the main focus of the material remains principally geographical in nature. Therefore, the book becomes a 'local studies' item held in the geography section of the library. Conversely, a book concerned with the same geographical area that, on the face of it, might appear to have a less specific focus, is more likely to contain content that can easily be accommodated under the banner of 'history' than otherwise. It is likely, for example, that the relevance of any book entitled *Cornwall in the Present Day* would be, by definition, very short-lived. However, a book simply focused on Cornwall in a more general way might almost be *expected* to contain a history of the area and its people and so is more easily found in sections of the library designated as 'historical' in nature.

While not cited as frequently as 'History', or even 'Geography', other subject areas are represented, with the Archaeology section providing a home for local material by just over a fifth of respondents, while Geology, Art and Local Government follow at almost 15%. Amongst the 'Other'<sup>xvii</sup> category are subjects such as Architecture, Churches and Planning (all to be found in North Devon College); Conservation; Environmental Science; Hospitality and Tourism; Statistics and Reports; Non-Subject General Manuscript Holdings; and other non-specified subject areas.

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<sup>xvii</sup> Fifteen respondents checked the 'Other' category. However, when specified, three of these 'Other' categories, supplied by universities, were, in fact, 'local' by nature. Since the question was concerned with subject sections that *incorporated* local studies items, these were discounted.

## 6.2.1.2 Classification Schemes

**Table 16: Under what scheme is the local studies collection classified?**

	FE	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 68 <sup>xviii</sup>
Dewey Decimal System	18	14	2	9	0	43	63.24%
Library of Congress	0	0	0	4	1	5	7.35%
Universal Decimal Classification	0	0	0	1	0	1	1.47%
Own Scheme	0	3	1	6	0	10	14.71%
Other or variation on established scheme	0	1	2	11	1	15	22.06%

In terms of which classification scheme is employed by libraries and LRCs for local studies collections, the Dewey Decimal System is favoured by a majority of second questionnaire respondents. Of these, five also use a second scheme, three of which comprise the library/LRC's own scheme and one where the UDC is employed (the only instance of the UDC cited). The Library of Congress is utilised by five organisations, two of which also use a second 'other' scheme; while 19 libraries/LRCs rely on a different scheme alone. Of these 19, seven are composed of the library/LRC's own scheme, five are based on a variation of an established scheme, two employ more than one unspecified scheme, and four make use of other, different schemes. Coleg Sir Gar's Ammanford Campus' Learning Centre employs no scheme at all, explaining that 'items haven't even been accessioned or indexed.' The University of Aberdeen, meanwhile, makes use of what is described as a 'local scheme', one that is 'also used for Local Collections at Aberdeen, Rosemount Viaduct,<sup>xix</sup> and ALIS [Aberdeen Library and Information Service], Old Meldrum.' Interestingly, this provides an example where the classification system itself takes on a 'local' flavour, covering both the academic and public library in a specific geographic location.

<sup>xviii</sup> After the exclusion of two 'undefined' responses.

<sup>xix</sup> 'Aberdeen, Rosemount Viaduct' refers to the Central Library, the city's main public library.

A preference for using the Dewey Decimal System is perhaps unsurprising, given its ubiquity as a method of classification in general. As Hume and Lock state, its recommended status in the *Guidelines* for local studies as the preferred scheme that 'should be seriously considered for any open access collection of classified subject catalogue [is] simply because it is the most familiar to users and standardized electronic catalogues can use it.'<sup>3p.111</sup> While it is not entirely clear which edition of the *Library Association's Local Studies Libraries: Library Association guidelines for local studies provision in public libraries* – presumably the text referred to – is being cited,<sup>xx</sup> the 2002 edition does not quite advocate Dewey in as wholehearted a manner as that suggested. According to the 2002 guidelines:

A number of local studies classification schemes and many adaptations of other more general schemes have been devised, but few have found widespread use. Any scheme employed for open access collections or in a classified subject catalogue should be devised with ease of use by readers in mind. On this basis, a modification of a widely used classification scheme, especially Dewey, should be seriously considered.<sup>4p.40</sup>

The key term omitted by Hume and Lock is, of course, *modification*, which the guidelines strongly suggest is a requirement for the classification of local studies material. Additionally, although the guidelines are aimed at public libraries, Bluck also draws attention to potential imperfections when it comes to providing access in academic libraries:

[L]ibrarians have excellent powers of organization, but they tend to organize things from their own viewpoint, so that ordinary human beings find it difficult to work out how the information is organized. A classic example is the 'straight through' Dewey sequence, which may look neat and logical to a librarian, but will infuriate students and academic staff. They will expect

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<sup>xx</sup> First published in 1990, with a second edition following in 2002.

obviously cognate subjects – computing and electronic engineering, literature and language, politics and history – to be close to one another, and not on different floors.<sup>5p101</sup>

While the examples of ‘illogically’ separated subjects on library shelves (as far as the non-librarian is concerned) that Bluck provides are more extreme than is likely to be the case when dealing with a relatively specific subject like ‘local studies’, cases that do suggest Dewey’s limitations in this area can be found. For instance, at the Department for Continuing Education at the University of Oxford the ‘general section of local history is divided up as follows’:

**941** English History; **941.006** History of the Landscape; **941.0061** Rural History; **941.0062** Villages; **941.0063** Towns; **941.0072** English Local History; **941.00721-9** Various types of records; **941.0073** Handwriting, manuscripts; **941.0074** Latin for Local Historians; **941.01 - 941.085** General British History; **941.1** Scottish History; **941.5** Irish History; **942.1** English Counties.<sup>6</sup>

While there is nothing described that seems out of place as far as the collection of materials goes – and one can easily imagine this group of items collected together in one particular area of the library – the sequence is arguably problematic in places. This is particularly noticeable at the end of the sequence, where, following Scottish and Irish History, the reader now finds him- or herself looking at material that might reasonably have been expected to be found amongst the items that follow from the earlier sequenced *English* History.

However, since questionnaire respondents were not asked to elaborate on the choice of classification schemes employed in the library or LRC, further information, including discussion of any problems faced by participants, is not available for analysis.



### 6.2.1.3 OPAC and Indexing

Two studies in 1995 and 1997 focused on ‘the task of converting [into machine-readable form] the catalogue records still outstanding’. In terms of higher education libraries, it was discovered that 28 million records awaited conversion, representing ‘some six million individual titles’. Four million of the 28 million records were ‘titles to be found in special collections’, the majority of which were in humanities and social sciences.<sup>7p556</sup>

When it comes to issues of access, the ability to search for items within a library without having to physically browse through shelves is arguably paramount. As Workman notes, ‘The catalogue is the main tool enabling the user to ascertain whether a required item is held in the library and if so where, and, increasingly, whether it is available for use or not. Its other function is to enable the user to determine what material the library holds on a particular subject.’<sup>8p.152</sup> In the case of local studies, the ability to determine which items are held where is perhaps especially important when no separate local studies section exists and the user may be uncertain as to where local material may be found. Here, respondents were asked about the number of local studies items that could be found listed on the library or LRC’s Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), a database of materials employed to enable users to search for specific items or groups of similar items. In 1991, Workman discussed the impact of this type of electronic catalogue and its influence on access:

The introduction of OPACs in [then-] recent years has offered users a more effective and sophisticated means of searching the catalogue than was possible with earlier catalogues on cards or microfiche. Subject access is much easier, with many systems providing options to search by subject keywords or using Boolean logic.<sup>9p.152</sup>

At the time Workman made this statement, OPAC was a new, and arguably much-improved, way of searching the library catalogue; an alternative to leafing through

worn, easily-misplaced card catalogues. As time has gone on, however, other information-searching tools have emerged, that may not be able to tell the user where a particular book is shelved in a library, but can provide vast amounts of information in just a few short strokes. Yet, despite internet search engines' rising popularity as the search-tools of choice,<sup>10p.5</sup> OPAC continues to be used within both public and academic libraries, albeit in a much different form, with the development of next-generation catalogues that allow for a higher level of functionality – including relevance ranking and more user-friendly interfaces – and, if built into an Integrated Library System (ILS), can allow more direct access to online content.<sup>11pp.8-10</sup> OPAC, then, remains an important tool when accessing local studies resources.

**Table 17: How many items in your local studies collection are listed on OPAC?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 70
All	13	11	1	9	0	34	48.57%
Most	3	2	4	10	1	20	28.57%
Some	2	2	0	7	0	11	15.71%
None – card catalogue in use	0	0	1	0	0	1	1.43%
None - other	0	2	0	2	0	4	5.71%

**Table 18: Is your library/LRC's OPAC available remotely?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 64 <sup>xxi</sup>
To all	4	4	4	22	1	35	54.69%
To registered staff and students only	4	3	0	4	0	11	17.19%
Is only available internally	10	5	1	0	0	16	25.00%
Other	0	2	0	0	0	2	3.13%

<sup>xxi</sup> Minus those whose collections are not listed on an OPAC, as per the responses of 'Other' to the previous question; and one other respondent who left the field undefined.

Overall, almost 50% of all seventy second questionnaire respondents claimed to have all local material listed on the OPAC; while over a quarter responded that 'most' local studies items were held in the database. Although the number of those whose local items are not available to any degree on an OPAC system is small, details emerged that shed a little more light on both the often idiosyncratic nature of how local studies collections are approached by collection managers and the 'backroom' issue which can render these collections invisible. As mentioned above, for instance, according to the respondent at the Cole Sir Gar Ammanford Campus Learning Centre, where the campus is 'housed in what was once a college of mining [...] We have never had/made the time to catalogue the material and publicise its presence with potential users'. While the collection, as suggested in chapter seven, may not quite be a 'lost cause', it is not unlikely that the lack of a catalogued presence contributes to the current non-use of this potentially valuable material.

OPAC was also cited by several respondents when participants were asked an open question regarding if and how local materials were indexed. Of 48 institutions who provided information on this subject, 41 described indexing local collections to one degree or another. Indexing techniques took different forms. For instance, in addition to OPAC, card-based catalogues, subject-headings employed in in-house library systems, Heritage, printed book-based catalogues, web sites, and even paper-based lists were cited. Some libraries used a number of different methods, depending on the types of local material being indexed. At the University of Paisley, for example, the book collection only is indexed using OPAC, while 'One archival collection (Norman Buchan Parliamentary Papers) [is] separately catalogued on the web site.' Similarly, Keble College Library in Oxford University relies on both OLIS – a catalogue of the University of Oxford's Bodleian Libraries – and 'Handlists for material in the Archives', additionally explaining that the library has 'recently appointed an archivist who will catalogue the archives to professional standards.'

As noted above, being able to search for items is crucial to the user's ability to access material. Not only as an alternative to the searching limitations that merely browsing can effect, but, as information becomes increasingly available

electronically, the effective indexing of items can frequently provide a type of *organised* guidance to material that might otherwise be overlooked or difficult to find. As Brophy suggest, 'It is arguable that one of the major reasons that we still need libraries is that they can bring order to what is otherwise the chaos of the world wide web, where inadequate description of information objects makes effective discovery of relevant items difficult.'<sup>12p.120</sup>

#### 6.2.1.4 Access and Storage and Preservation

Given the potentially broad range of materials available for local studies investigation, access to the physical collections themselves, however, is an active concern. Respondents were asked about different users' access to the local collection itself:

**Table 19: Is access to the local studies collection itself available in the library/LRC ...?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 70
To all	12	10	3	22	1	48	68.57%
To registered staff and Students only	5	5	1	3	0	14	20.00%
Other	1	2	2	3	0	8	11.43%

Over two-thirds of respondents reported that their local collection was available to all users, indicating that, overall, access is largely uninhibited for those who wish to make use of the collections; while a fifth of libraries/LRCs limited access to staff and students. Of the 'Other' responses, more than one cited that access was by registration and appointment only, while Weymouth College reported that their local collection is, by default, reference only, but that loans could be arranged. In the case of the University of Cambridge's Gonville and Caius College Library, a specific readership is indicated in terms of access to the integrated collection, described as limited to 'Students, Fellows [and] External Scholarly Researchers.'

One of the chief matters affecting access relates to storage and preservation. Respondents were invited to comment on any issues in this area that may have an impact on how readers interact with the collection. A number of practitioners noted explicitly that there are no issues; indeed, for one respondent, from Truro College, the matter of access forms what appears to be a central principle regarding the collection itself, with the practitioner explaining that 'This is a live collection [i.e. current and accessible] – we do not and would not aim to have a collection with special requirements.' While most other respondents for whom storage or preservation issues have no effect did not offer any further information, on three occasions it was noted that, because the items were of no significant monetary value, access was not restricted; and, in two of these cases, the respondents also noted that the materials were neither 'rare' nor 'ancient'. 'Value', 'rarity', and 'age' was also specifically cited by a number of respondents whose collections had, to some degree, limited access. At Keele University's Special Collections and Archives, for instance, 'Particularly rare, fragile, valuable or oversize items are available upon request during staffed hours', with the respondent further explaining that 'Storage away from the main stock means that Material is unavailable when the office is closed,' while Cardiff University's Information Services/Library reported that 'As items become more fragile (acidic paper, etc.), they are moved to the closed shelf collections, to ensure long term preservation.' Some other respondents indicated a future requirement for special storage or limited access – or a current need that simply has not been met at present. The Learning Centre at the University of Derby, for example, expressed a need for 'separate storage/display for some of the more valuable books, but don't have [this] yet. Some books are on open access which shouldn't be.' In a similar vein, at North Nottinghamshire College's Library/Learning Resource Centre the respondent notes that 'some of the items are deteriorating, e.g., in the older items staples [...] and pages are coming loose. We will have to consider having these on a reference only basis.'

Concerns about preservation and/or storage also has an effect on collaboration with other services outside of the library or learning centre. In the case of West Cheshire College, while the respondent stated that the library does 'not have significant

storage or preservation issues' it was also reported that 'Items that might require [special storage or preservation] would be passed on to Cheshire Archives or to the local reference library'. Similarly, at the Cyncoed Campus Learning Centre in the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, 'In the rare instance that an item is identified as having specialist preservation needs, and especially if little-used within UWIC, I would liaise with the Glamorgan Archives Service to see if the material could be lodged with them.' The possibility of distributing stock elsewhere is also taken up by the Somerset College of Arts Integrated Learning Centre, who states that 'Donated items of any real age/significance would probably be transferred to the Somerset Archives or Local Studies Collections.' These cases are particularly interesting when one considers both the 'anomaly' of local collections in academic libraries and the more 'traditional' relationship that is perceived to exist between local studies and the public sector, where it is acknowledged that certain materials might well be better-placed elsewhere, even if the decision to place stock in more 'capable' hands might principally be guided by concerns over preservation.

Enquiries regarding access and storage were also made with reference to archives, where respondents were asked for information on whether archival material – that is, the likes of records, letters, diaries, manuscripts and so on – was housed outside of the library, for example, in a Special Collections department. Of 59 respondents who supplied answers, 18 responded affirmatively, although a small number noted that, like a few respondents who had replied negatively, archives were housed in a separate section in the library. Keble College Library in Oxford University, for instance, explained that archives are 'Housed in the locked stack, a separate location within the library,' while at Gonville and Caius College in Cambridge University, items are held in a 'Separate archive with [a] part-time professional archivist, though housed in same accommodation as the Library.' A number of respondents explicitly cited Special Collections departments<sup>xxii</sup> – both within and without the library – as

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<sup>xxii</sup> It should be noted that, of those who responded to the second questionnaire, six identified as Special Collections and/or Archives. These were: Keele University Special Collections and Archives; the Welsh Library and Special Collections at the University of Wales, Bangor; the University of St Andrews Special Collections Department; the University of Huddersfield's University Archives and Special Collections; the Library and Archives at The

the designated location for archival material, including the University of Kent, Cardiff University, and Keele University, the last-mentioned of whom explained that, 'The Local Collection is one of our Special Collections and part of the Special Collections and Archives Department [...] It is the only open access Special Collection, as the archival material is housed in adjacent archive stores, but still within the University's main library.' While the questionnaire did not explicitly enquire as to how archives were handled when the institution is, for whatever reason, unable or unwilling to accommodate these items, it is perhaps still somewhat surprising that only one respondent made mention of external resource organisations: The Cyncoed Campus Learning Centre at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, noted that archival material that makes its way to the centre 'would be offered to the Glamorgan Archive Service, or possibly the Public Library Local Studies Department,' suggesting that the learning centre views these establishments as better equipped to house such items, and echoing the respondents above whose concerns regarding preservation and storage lead them to place local material elsewhere.

### **6.2.1.5 Materials, Study Packs and Publicity**

Issues raised during the discussion of storage and preservation, as well as results presented in the previous chapter regarding the age of the collections, go some way to underlining the point that, as Barber puts it, 'The value of materials in the local studies collection is that many are rare or unique [...] Every local studies library is a specialist resource.'<sup>13p.69</sup> Once again, this characterisation of its resources arguably posits local studies as inherently different from other fields, where textbooks and other more contemporary resources may form the bulk of material that supports study. In the next chapter, the acquisition of collections is discussed within the context of looking at the purpose behind building local collections in the first place and whether there may be value in acquiring material that might not be used at the present time. Here, results are reported regarding how local material is acquired that may have some bearing, not only on the issue of collecting as an ideological concern, but also on the matter of the types of material that are being collected.

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Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow; and the University of Aberdeen's Directorate of Information, Historic Collections, Special Libraries and Archives.

**Table 20: From where does your library/LRC obtain local studies material?**

	FE	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 68
Library Supplier	14	8	4	20	1	47	69.12%
Donations/Bequests	13	13	4	23	1	54	79.41%
Antiquarian/Second- Hand Dealers	4	2	0	17	1	24	35.29%
Specialist Suppliers	2	0	0	3	0	5	7.35%
Word-of-Mouth	7	6	2	16	0	31	45.59%
Other	5	4	3	9	0	21	30.88%

While over two-thirds of respondents reported that local material is acquired from a library supplier, the most common source from which local items are obtained are donations and/or bequests. In the following chapter, this type of acquisition will be shown to have had a considerable influence on local studies' presence in academia in at least one particular case; as a more general trend, it perhaps speaks once again to the *difference* of local studies in comparison to other academic subjects, suggesting two significant and related aspects of local studies resources: not only the kinds of material that might be found in local studies collections – that is, the not uncommon unique quality of many items – but also *where* they can be found and the importance of these sources to the subject itself. By their very nature, local studies resources, if archival, may be limited to one or two original documents (say, a deed or a letter); if published, the scale of the publication, depending on the locality covered, may well be quite small – that is, not mass-produced or seldom out-of-print. It also, however, suggests a third aspect: a somewhat passive approach, at least initially, to collecting. While the development and maintenance of a sound local collection, particularly within academia, may frequently rely on an active *interest* taken by a librarian or manager, the fact that donations and bequests form such a large proportion of material perhaps suggests that – unless the librarian is actively engaged in seeking out potential benefactors – the collection is frequently dependent on the goodwill and generosity of others in order to grow, develop or even exist in the first place. This, however, is not necessarily a criticism or a



shortcoming that can be corrected. Short of harassing benefactors who may not be willing or able to part with material at a given time, the nature of much local studies material, as mentioned, may well almost dictate such a dependency.

When considering the purpose of any collection in the academic library, central to the issue of access – in terms of both admission to the items themselves as well as user-friendliness – is the format of its items. The increasing role of the internet as a part of everyday life in developed countries has led to a revolution of sorts in a number of ways when it comes to the availability of material; but, while accessing information from home or other more ‘convenient’ settings is becoming an increasingly popular way to gather data, both public and academic libraries continue to serve as environments from which all kinds of resources can be – and are expected to be – accessed. Suggesting that ‘making provision for access to electronic resources [...] is at the heart of information management today’ Breivik and Gee also note that:

This does not imply that print materials are a thing of the past. The reality is that one million new titles were published worldwide from 2003 to 2004 [...] Electronic resources will never meet all the scholarly needs of the campus, nor will the internet.<sup>14p208</sup>

This is perhaps especially true when it comes to local studies collections, where, given the various forms local research can take, and the variety of subjects that may incorporate elements of local studies, a broad range of material is available. As Barber puts it:

The local studies collection is constantly being renewed. It is a contemporary resource, not purely a retrospective one, in which current and historical materials are of equal value [...] The scope of its materials reflects an evolving interdisciplinary focus encompassing geography, economics, social science, planning, commerce, politics and culture [...] Printed books and pamphlets are still at the heart of the collection, but maps and plans, prints and

photographs, visual and sound recordings, and increasingly electronic forms, are all part of the rich resource which exists to meet the needs of users, and enable staff to answer every kind of enquiry about the local area.<sup>15p.69</sup>

Based in part on Barber’s comprehensive outline of various materials in which local resources are either the primary focus or can be found, respondents were asked to indicate which of the following types of local material were held in the library or LRC: Regional Histories; Victoria County Histories; Reference Works; Government Publications; Literature; Sale Catalogues; Dissertations and Theses; Directories; Electoral Registers; Old Parish Registers; International Genealogical Index; Census Enumerators’ Book; Other Genealogical Sources; Newspapers; Periodicals; County, Town, Parish Maps; Ordnance Survey Maps; Goad Maps and Plans; Photographs; Prints and Engravings; Drawings and Watercolours; Other Illustrated Material; Ephemera; Oral Histories; Music Recordings; In-house (film) Productions; Documentaries; Feature Films; and Television.

Respondents were also asked in which formats the above material was to be found. Choices comprised the following:

Text-based material	Hard Copy; Micro-form; CD-ROM; Internet-based; Other
Audio material	Reel-to-Reel; Gramophone; Record; Cassette; Compact Disc; Digital; Other
Visual material	Projector; Video Cassette; DVD; Digital; Other

A detailed account of different local studies materials and formats held in respondents’ libraries and LRCs can be found in *Appendix 4: Materials*. To summarise, however, of the 69 participants who responded to the question of which materials are held in what formats, the vast majority of text-based material is held in hard-copy form, with regional histories, reference works, literature, Ordnance Survey Maps, and government publications proving the most commonly held items across most institution types. Of formats other than hard-copy, CD-ROMs and

Micro-form are considerably less popular, while Internet-based formats are, overall, considerably more commonly used than either. Indeed, in most instances, online information takes precedence over both CD-ROMs and Micro-form in terms of popularity, most notably in the cases of government publications, directories, newspapers and Ordnance Survey Maps. Given the rate at which internet communication and access to information is increasing, it is more than likely that, as Breivik and Gee indicate, access to electronic resources is fast becoming central to the provision of information in libraries.

Audio material overall is not commonly held in college or university libraries, with a small presence noted for all formats. The most popular item, for example, comprises oral histories on cassette tape, held by less than ten respondents. When it comes to visual formats, perhaps surprisingly, videocassette is, at the time of this survey, still more prevalent than DVD,<sup>xxiii</sup> with documentaries and television programmes the most frequently cited material, albeit not to the extent of the most popular hard-copy items. However, this may indicate, once again, the unique nature of many local items; for instance, over 14% of items on videocassette are cited as in-house productions – that is, these ‘exclusive’ items were created by the institution at a time when video was the preferred format and have possibly not been upgraded or digitalised for finance-related reasons or even simply a lack of interest. In other instances, upgrading to a more recent format may not be possible – for example, the documentaries that make up the largest single proportion of items held on videocassette – due to lack of availability.

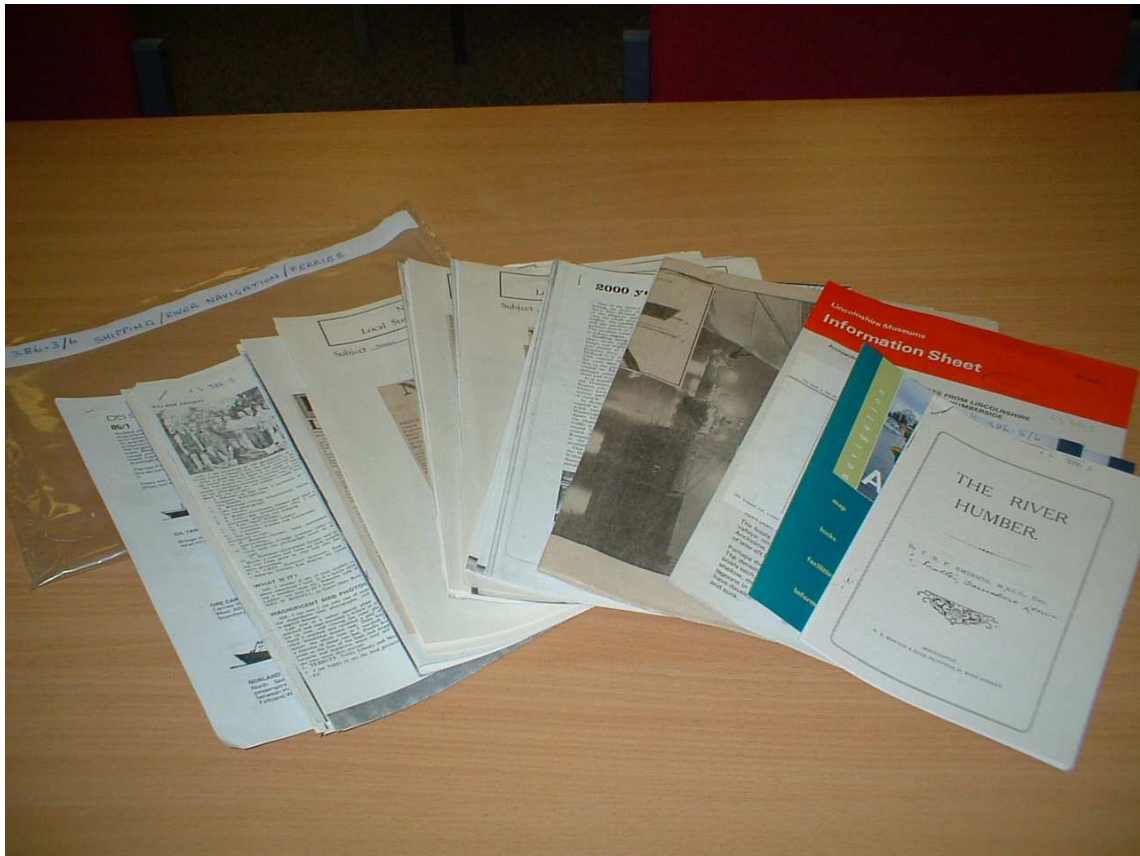
It may be suggested that, should a similar survey regarding materials be carried out in the near future, the findings presented herein may well look quite different, given the rapid growth of digital materials as a source of information, an issue discussed further in the chapter that follows. As these results stand, however, it does appear that local studies collections provide a wealth of different materials with which the student, teacher or researcher can engage.

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<sup>xxiii</sup> Blu-ray, not officially released for commercial use until 2006, was not included in the questionnaire as a potential format.

The question of study packs was also raised in the second questionnaire. Of the 60 institutions who responded as to whether or not study packs were available for students' use, only seven libraries or LRCs responded affirmatively, leaving 88.33% of respondents not making use of this resource.

Belinda Allen at North Lindsey College – one of the seven responding institutions that do provide local studies packs for students – describes how the packs are compiled, where, once a week, one or two experienced members of the library staff check various sources for new items, organise newspaper and other cuttings and materials for inclusion, check through already-existing items to make sure they are still relevant, and, generally, ensure that the packs are 'in order'. Allen, however, notes that the packs are 'probably not as heavily-used as they should be.'<sup>16</sup> Indeed, one second-year student, considering a project on 'women in domestic service' as part of the English and History course at the college, claims that, while students were informed in lectures about various resources, such as *History Today*, and locally-held periodicals, they were not made aware of the study packs.<sup>17</sup> Allen disagrees with this account, explaining that, not only does the library offer an induction, but an index is supplied in photocopied form for the student's use. Notices and guides referring to the resources available are also visible throughout the learning centre.



**Figure 2: 'Shipping/River Navigation/Ferries' Study Pack, Learning Resource Centre, North Lindsey College**

Allen does point out that, once the students are made aware of the packs, they become a valuable resource:

I would probably say that student you've spoken to today, she will probably use those quite often now ... If they can use it once, they'll probably find that they'll always be able to use it ... somewhere, weave it in with what they're doing – their research or whatever [...] it's just getting them to use it in the first instance [that's the problem].

Yet, given the small number of respondents whose libraries or LRCs make local studies packs available in the first place, it appears that, as a resource, these items are not particularly popular with collection managers. Also, while study packs provide a convenient way for students (or other researchers) to engage with resources, once again, the possibility is raised that access to local resources might be

made *too* convenient for students who may benefit from external field research, and from experiencing other research-based skills, such as the ability to collect and collate material and information from a variety of sources.

The issue regarding awareness of resources was also raised in terms of whether libraries or LRCs made use of publicity materials in order to promote their local studies collections. Of 68 respondents who answered the question, only 17 replied in the affirmative. Asked to provide brief details, a small number mentioned online presence as a form of publicity, although the amount of information available varies from 'only in [a] note' on the University of Paisley's library website, to 'detailed information aimed at distance/external users' on Keele University's Special Collections website. Institutions such as Clydebank College, Dudley College of Technology, and Queen's University Belfast, appear to restrict promotion to within the library itself. Clydebank describes its publicity material as 'just basic awareness poster/shelf guides'; Dudley provides 'Library-based displays aimed at all users with interest in the subject'; and Queen's University promotes unspecified material to 'Our own users and visitors.' At St Andrews University publicity material is less precise: 'Leaflets cover most areas of Special Collections holdings, but not specifically local studies on their own.'

A number of respondents use more than one format to promote local studies material. For example, in addition to web-based information, Keele also employs the use of a factsheet 'primarily aimed at visitors entering the Main Library'; leaflets and posters are used at the University of Huddersfield; and the Southampton Institute provides the following combination of publicity material:

Posters aimed at all students/staff; leaflet explaining collection and promoting its uses along with other local studies resources in the area; a subject page on our website providing links to useful local information that is available online or held in the collection.

Others, such as North Nottinghamshire College and the Institute of Continuing Education at the University of Cambridge, include information in prospectuses and brochures.

While the information provided by respondents reveals a variety of publicity materials and methods used to promote local studies collections, the low number of libraries and LRCs who make use of promotional material at all – whether in print or web-based form – indicates that generating interest in local studies resources is not a priority for most.

### 6.2.2 Resources: Budgets, Staffing, Induction and Training, and Enquiries

As Brophy suggests, while the term ‘resource management’ can be principally applied to financial considerations, a ‘broader definition is possible’. He points to, not only budgets, staff and stock, but also knowledge as ‘the “resources” of the academic library.’<sup>18p.107</sup> With this in mind, this section looks at questions regarding funds allocated to local collections, as well as staffing and the ways in which the knowledge or expertise of staff is utilised as a ‘resource’ when it comes to handling local studies enquiries.

#### 6.2.2.1 Budgets

**Table 21: Is the collection separately budgeted?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 66
Yes	1	1	1	6	0	9	13.64%
No	17	16	4	19	1	57	86.36%

A marginal proportion of responding institutions has a budget for local collections that is separate from the library’s main funds. A range of reasons, provided by a small number of respondents, were offered for this. Most explanations simply noted

that monies required for purchase or upkeep fell under the larger library budget. In two further cases where local funds formed part of the larger budget, the acquisition of local resources was explicitly tied to whether or not there was a curriculum-based requirement for such items. The respondent from the University of Lincoln noted that 'If local items are on history reading lists I can purchase items but, if not, there is rarely money to buy local items and the collection depends on donations; in the case of Trinity and All Saints College, Leeds, it was explained that 'Stock has been purchased from general funds or obtained in the past from the old BL Booknet service. Little has been added in recent years because courses do not currently focus on local studies.' Where local collections *were* separately funded, more than one respondent cited a 'small' allocation of funds. The collection manager at North Lindsey College indicated that the separation of funds was performed 'in-house' – that is, the decision to divide the budget was made somewhat unofficially, with the respondent noting that 'I do not receive a separate budget.' Bridgend College provided a notable account of its separate local studies collection budget, one that stands in interesting contrast with the two respondents cited earlier whose acquisition of stock was dependent on curriculum need. In the case of Bridgend, the respondent explained that 'Expenditure on books and other material on Welsh life and history are denoted separately in my budget records; this is because the resources do not directly support any part of the syllabus, but reinforce the identity of the library.' Bridgend's approach to its local studies collection in this matter, however, appears to be quite unusual, since the overall picture suggests that local resources do not appear to be a priority when it comes to the distribution of funds.

### **6.2.2.2 Staffing, Induction and Training, and Enquiries**

In the second questionnaire, questions were put forward as to the staffing of the libraries' local studies collection and whether separate induction and training approaches were employed. A further question was asked regarding enquiry policies and whether a specific policy was in place for responding to local studies-related questions. When analysing the responses to these separate areas of enquiry, it became apparent that relaying these findings could not be done without a significant



degree of overlap occurring, especially when, not entirely surprisingly, amongst the responses to the subjects of induction and training, explicit mention was made of the ability to handle readers' enquiries.

**Table 22: Is the collection separately staffed?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 70
Yes	0	0	0	8	0	8	11.43%
No	18	17	6	20	1	62	88.57%

Only eight of the seventy libraries or LRCs that took part in the second questionnaire has a local collection that is separately staffed, all of these in universities. The types of staff arrangements cited reveal a fairly broad range of different approaches to the staffing of local collections. The Haddon Library of Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge explain that 'the Cambridge Antiquarian Society's collection is the responsibility of the Society's Hon. Librarian,' while Keble College Library at Oxford describe a Main Reading Room staffed by a Librarian and Library Assistant, while its Archives and Locked Stack employ an Archivist and Librarian. Special Collections staff were cited by three respondents, with St Andrews referring to 'a staff of eleven [including nine full-time equivalent] who deal with the local material as well as other collections', noting that the collection is 'Separately staffed, then, in the respect that it is staffed separately from the general library lending and reference collections.' Queens University in Belfast cites two full-time equivalent library assistants, plus one special collections assistant and a 'pool of people, including PhD students [who cover] term-time evening duty'; while Keele University describes an arrangement comprising 'One Special Collections and Archives Assistant, with occasional help from Library Assistants from the Main Library.' In the remaining three instances, a part time archivist is employed; another makes use of two full-time equivalent staff, including a Senior Assistant; and, in the case of the Aerial Photograph Library, Unit for Landscape Modelling at Cambridge, one librarian is employed, while 'others [are used] to collect data.' While these examples show, as mentioned, quite a broad

selection of ways in which local resources are staffed – including, in some cases, the adoption of what appears to be a necessarily flexible approach – the small proportion of libraries and LRCs who designate staff for, specifically, local studies collections, is small. Furthermore, of the eight who do employ staff for this purpose, only one – Queen’s University, Belfast – incorporates both induction *and* training in local studies librarianship.<sup>xxiv</sup>

**Table 23: Is induction in local studies librarianship provided for staff in your library/LRC?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 57
Yes - Induction	2	3	0	1	1	7	12.28%
No - Induction	15	10	4	21	0	50	87.72%

Of those who do *not* employ staff specifically to oversee their local studies collections, six provide staff induction in local studies librarianship, with two of these also providing training; while four respondents claimed to provide training alone.<sup>xxv</sup> Despite the somewhat uneven responses received in terms of which fields were and were not completed, it is nonetheless clear that induction and training in local studies librarianship within academic libraries is not common.

**Table 24: Is training in local studies librarianship provided for staff in your library/LRC?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 60
Yes - Training	2	1	0	1	1	5	8.33%
No - Training	14	13	5	23	0	55	91.67%

<sup>xxiv</sup> The remaining responses to both categories were either ‘no’ or appeared as ‘undefined’.

<sup>xxv</sup> In addition to the two respondents whose libraries or LRCs provided both induction and training, there were two who filled in only the training field, leaving the induction field as ‘undefined’.

Reasons for not providing induction or training specifically in local studies were, again, varied. The size of the collection was cited more than once, with, for instance, the Learning Centre Manager at Duchy College, Rosewarne noting that ‘the collection is very small and all staff are aware of its existence and subject content which is very specialised. Any request for use is normally referred to myself before access is given,’ while, similarly, at Weymouth College, the collection is both ‘very small and rarely used. Staff know about it and can direct people to it.’ While both these responses focus initially on the small size of the collections, it is interesting to observe that the respondents also take care to note that the collections are both known to staff and are accessible, suggesting that visibility is perhaps not a given. The former response also touches on – but does not make explicit – the suggestion that a staff member’s own, sometimes broader, experience may also be posited as a factor in whether or not induction or training is provided or deemed necessary. The library at the University of Lincoln, for instance, does not provide induction or training since, according to the respondent, not only is the collection ‘tiny’, but ‘as Subject Librarian for History, I can manage it myself.’ Similarly, at the University of Kent, no special induction or training is provided since ‘The History Subject Librarian deals with any enquiries.’ Other libraries operate in a similar way in terms of relying on other staff, but this may depend on the specific type of library or department within the institution. For instance, at the University of St Andrews Special Collections department, ‘No specifically local studies training is given, but the general training and induction given to staff will include familiarisation with all of the collections; and we have collection area specialists within the staff, who will supply further information/training as necessary.’ During a follow-up interview in 2005, however, Dr Norman Reid touched on a further element of the issue of staff expertise when it comes to local studies. He talked about a then-new staff member who was employed in part due to her strong interest in local history as a subject, having conducted a significant amount of local studies work on Auchtermuchty in Fife. Dr Reid opined that, to have someone with a strong interest in her own local history was helpful to readers, because ‘she knows the roots to research ... she knows the techniques, even if she doesn’t know the specifics of *the* local history [of St Andrews itself] ... She knows the techniques for accessing it.’ Here, then, the

question of what kind of induction or training might be appropriate to enable successful management of a local collection is raised. Duckett's somewhat facetious tone in the previous chapter regarding the tragedy of the heroic, but ultimately doomed, local studies librarian makes it difficult to ascertain just how seriously one should take his assessment, but certainly his contention that the librarian's skills are 'untransferable' seems to fall somewhat flat when one considers Dr Reid's point about the techniques that enable the history (or otherwise) of a locality in which the librarian is not an expert to be uncovered. It suggests that, far from being a section of the library in which the custodian's expertise relies solely on his or her fascination with the locality under question – in which 'expertise' is presumed to equal the ability to act as a human encyclopaedia – there is room for induction and training that focuses on techniques and methods rather than familiarity with the location itself. This is not to say that there is no room at all for Duckett's more 'traditional' local studies librarian – the 'encyclopaedic' kind, as his comment on 'untransferable' skills seems to suggest; after all, it is more likely than not that the majority of local studies enquiries that the staff member is required to deal with are about the locality itself – that is, enquiries based on 'who' or 'what' or 'when' questions. What Dr Reid's take on potentially useful skills does imply is that a staff member might be trained in local studies management without having to be an expert in the locality; that there are techniques and approaches that are, if not necessarily unique, then particularly useful when it comes to information that falls under the 'local studies' heading. In other words, it might be said that the difference between the librarian who knows all about the town/city/county and the librarian who might not know about the locality, but knows how to access this information is similar to the difference highlighted in the colloquial analogy between *giving* a man a fish and *teaching* him to fish. Brophy, for example, cites several different 'forms' of enquiry that might be made by users: directional, factual, relating to policy or procedure, skills-related, known-item searching, and subject. He notes that 'This last category is, of course, the most complex, and may require the librarian to refer the user on to a specialist in that subject.' Here, Brophy appears to form a link between the subject enquiry, which he describes as an enquiry 'such as *how* to find information on any particular subject' [researcher's emphasis]; and the factual enquiry, characterised as

‘asking for a discrete piece of information, such as the boiling point of a chemical.’<sup>19p.165</sup> Unfortunately, the references to ‘enquiries’ by respondents do not specify whether answers given to users relied on actual information itself (who, what, when) or ways in which the information might be retrieved (how).

Regarding formal procedures, respondents were also asked to reply to an open question regarding whether or not their libraries or LRCs had a policy for dealing with information enquiries relating specifically to local studies. Fifty-one respondents offered replies that varied in terms of the amount of information supplied. While quite a few respondents answered with a simple ‘No’, offering no further information, a number of more detailed responses revealed a range of different approaches towards local studies enquiries. More than one respondent explained that local studies enquiries were treated, for instance, as the respondent from Dunstable College put it, ‘as per the entire collection’ or that, like Southport College and the Head of Rare Books at Cambridge University Library, no ‘separate’ or ‘individual’ policy was in place. In one case, the Library of the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) noted that, while any local studies enquiry ‘comes under the general enquiry policy’ the policy was ‘currently under review with a view to FOI compliance’. This was not the only time that the Freedom of Information Act<sup>xxvi</sup> was cited with respect to enquiries. In addition to MERL, the University of Paisley noted that, ‘We try to deal with any requests received. If we are unable to satisfy we will refer on to another source (members of the Old Paisley Society or public library local history collection, or national/regional archives, etc.). FOI might (or might not) affect this.’ Referring to the Freedom of Information Act (Scotland) 2002, and noting that

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<sup>xxvi</sup> A table of differences between the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Freedom of Information Act (Scotland) 2002 is provided in *Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002: A guide for the information professional*. A PDF version, published in 2004, is available from SLAINTE’s Freedom of Information (FOI) Section at <http://www.slainte.org.uk/foiscotland/foiindex.htm>.

the ‘public sector organisations and institutions’ affected include both ‘government agencies and educational institutions’, as SLAINTE<sup>xxvii</sup> puts it:

At the heart of FOI is the right of everyone to access information. Many governments are now requiring public authorities and other publicly funded organisations to provide the public with access to as much information as possible. This is resulting in a major change in culture, with more emphasis on greater openness and accountability.<sup>20</sup>

Since local collections often can and do include primary resources such as government documentation, it is clear that consideration will have to be given to policies that – even if not specifically limited to local material – may affect how such information is handled. As well as policies regarding enquiries or requests, access policies – whether formal or informal – may have to be reconsidered.

The response from the University of Paisley also brings up the issue of collaboration with other holders of local studies materials. For instance, North Devon College cites ‘access to the Devon Libraries Catalogue’ and an ability to ‘borrow some of the county’s printed materials’ if the library is unable to help directly with enquiries; this comes in addition to being able to ‘phone the Public Local Studies Library Staff and make an appointment for our College staff or students to visit them at a mutually convenient time.’ Bridgend College too relies on outside assistance, where ‘any enquiries which we can’t satisfy are usually referred to the Bridgend Libraries HQ where there is a local studies collection with [a] designated member of staff.’

It has been noted earlier in the thesis that local studies and local studies collections are not uncommonly viewed as ‘different from’ or ‘special’ when it comes to how they are approached in comparison – or contrast – with other subjects or areas of study. Overall, when it comes to resource management and local collections, it

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<sup>xxvii</sup> An online service for library and information professionals in Scotland, with material provided by the *Scottish Library and Information Council* and the *Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland*. See: <http://www.slainte.org.uk>

appears that this 'special' status can be just as complex as any other aspect of local studies. For instance, it is interesting to compare the response from the library at St Edmund Hall in the University of Oxford with that of Dunstable College. The former notes that 'the [local collection] is treated and so administered in the same way as the main collection, so no special training is necessary', while the latter responds that 'All sections [are] treated similarly.' While at first glance, these responses seem very similar in nature, in the case of Dunstable College, the respondent gave a 'Yes' response to the question of local studies librarianship induction and training, thus indicating a significant difference in the way local collections management can be approached even when not singled out as particularly different from the rest of the collection. In the former case, not treating the local collection any differently means that no special attention is given to the ways in which, say, enquiries might be handled or to how the material itself might be approached in terms of familiarising oneself with (at least some) of the content. In the latter case, it would appear that every section of the library – including local studies – is treated as 'special', with each having its own particular needs. In another instance, the University of Durham made a specific point of noting that, in its case, local studies is *not* different, stating that, 'There have been no special needs identified for the local studies collection in terms of induction and training.' Here, it is not simply a case of treating all collections the same way regardless, or of treating all collections as individually 'special'. Given the wording of Durham's response, it is not clear whether all collections are treated similarly unless proven otherwise or all collections are carefully evaluated as to whether or not they require special attention; either way, the response does not negate the fact that the library has, indeed, identified the needs of the local studies collection as '*not* special'.

### **6.2.3 Supporting Subjects**

Of the 68 second questionnaire respondents who replied to the question of whether courses in the institution were supported by the local collection, 55 (80.88%) indicated that courses were supported to some degree. Of these, nine did not specify which courses or area of study, but instead provided a broad description of

how the collection might typically be used. For example, while the collection in the library at Gonville and Caius College in Cambridge is apparently used in a supportive capacity, the respondent noted that ‘the library is geared towards undergraduate research. Local studies material is not bought to support any specific course.’ Of the 46 respondents who did provide more precise course-related information, specific responses were grouped into subject categories. The most popular were as follows:

**Table 25: Which courses in your institution does the collection support?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 46
History	3	4	3	12	N/A	22	47.83%
Local Studies	1	2	1	6	N/A	10	21.74%
English	0	4	0	3	N/A	7	15.22%
Business/Management	3	1	2	0	N/A	6	13.04%
Travel and Tourism/Leisure	3	1	1	0	N/A	5	10.87%
Archaeology	0	2	0	3	N/A	5	10.87%
Art/Design	2	2	0	1	N/A	5	10.87%
Geography	1	2	0	1	N/A	4	8.70%
Education	0	0	2	2	N/A	4	8.70%
Sociology	1	1	0	1	N/A	3	6.52%

These results are discussed further in chapter seven, within the contexts of the impact of local studies on the curriculum and attitudes towards building collections. In the immediate context, as can be noted, the subject-area most commonly making use of the local collection is, perhaps unsurprisingly, history. Courses include History at BA level, Post-graduate History courses, and one course described as ‘Social History’. The second most frequently cited subjects, albeit at less than half the rate of the above-mentioned more broad history-based disciplines, are specifically local studies-related. Courses included those such as ‘Welsh Language and Literature’, MA Local History, a local studies module as part of an access-level History course,



and a Local History Diploma. English, including one ‘Creative Writing’ course, is the next most popular subject-area to make use of local collections, while Business-based subjects include Business Studies and Management. Subjects cited by five respondents each comprise Archaeology; Travel and Tourism or Leisure-related courses; and Art-focused subjects including Art Design and Art History (note the historical nature of the latter). Other less frequent responses highlight the sheer variety of subjects that can, and apparently do, make use of local collections held in the library or LRC. These include Education, Modern Studies, Popular Culture, Social Work, Environmental Studies, Philosophy, Theology, Psychology, Economics, Engineering, a course based around the collection of Meteorological Data, and Sports Therapy. While these results may not provide the depth of detail supplied in the case of North Lindsey’s English and History course, discussed in the chapter that follows, it does appear that local studies is having some impact on a variety of, for the most part, more ‘mainstream’ subjects, allowing for a perspective outside of standardised texts and other typical teaching materials.

The *extent* to which local studies resources impact courses overall within universities and colleges was also raised in the second questionnaire, summarised in the following table:

**Table 26: Approximately what percentage of courses overall employs local studies material?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 41
1% or Less	1	2	0	2	0	5	12.20%
2-5%	1	4	1	5	0	11	26.83%
6-10%	4	3	0	3	0	10	24.39%
11-20%	1	0	0	0	0	1	2.44%
21-30%	0	2	1	0	0	3	7.32%
31% or More	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Other	2	0	0	2	0	4	9.76%
Unknown	1	0	0	6	0	7	17.07%

While it is encouraging that 80% of responding libraries and LRCs report that courses within the institution are supported, when asked for an estimate as to the proportion of courses that rely, to some degree, on local studies resources, the results are perhaps less inspiring. For example, of 41 respondents who offered an approximate percentage or other quantitative indications,<sup>xxviii</sup> the most common response is that five percent or fewer courses make use of local studies material, such as the University College Northampton's Rockingham Library. In approximately 12% of cases, such as the Library and Learning Centre at East Devon College, the estimated proportion given was either one percent or less than this. Almost a quarter of respondents, such as North Highland College and the St Edmund Hall Library at the University of Oxford, offered an estimate that fell between six and ten percent. North Nottinghamshire College put forward an estimate of 15%, while three respondents suggested that 30% of courses employ local studies resources, this proportion being the highest estimate provided. Some other respondents were not as precise, but instead offered descriptions that indicated a low rate of support for courses, such as Keele University's 'a very small percentage', and Coleg Powys' Newton Campus Learning Resource Centre's response of 'very little'.<sup>xxix</sup>

When considering the value of local studies materials in terms of how they are put to use, a distinction between subject support and research may be difficult to ascertain. Webb draws attention to a survey conducted by the Library and Information Statistics Unit (LISU), referred to in the Follet report, 'where many respondents had difficulty in differentiating between library activity in support of teaching and research.' Regarding another study undertaken for the Follet Review Group, in which monographic loans between 1981 and 1991 were analysed by the University of Sussex, Webb states:

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<sup>xxviii</sup> Estimates were noted, then categorised by a percentage range.

<sup>xxix</sup> Because those who were placed in the 'unknown' category had responded to the question – that is, the field had not simply been left undefined – it was felt appropriate to include these responses, despite the absence of either a figure or descriptive comment that might indicate how much course-based use is being made of these collections. See, for example, the University of Aberdeen's comment that a percentage is 'not possible to determine.'

Results showed a very substantial degree of common use of book stock for teaching and research. It is also possible that developments in teaching methods have intensified the use of journals and monographs for teaching purposes, further blurring such distinctions. This is particularly so in cases where such material is used in projects and dissertations in final year undergraduate or taught Masters courses.<sup>21p.138</sup>

In chapter seven, the growing popularity of independent 'resource-based learning' as a teaching and learning method is addressed, a method that may well contribute to the blurred distinction between teaching and research activity within the library. In addition, while the present survey did not make a point of enquiring as to whether or not the same local materials were used for course-based subject support and research, it is possible, if not probable that, given the idiosyncratic nature of much local studies material, some crossover may occur. In terms of gauging the types of research activity undertaken by both students and staff, respondents were asked which of four categories of research output in their universities or colleges – undergraduate dissertations, postgraduate dissertations, higher theses, and academic staff research – incorporated the use of local studies resources. Despite its often limited reach, the contribution of such output to the reputation of local studies in academia, as well as to the field itself, was recognised early; in J.L. Hobbs' seminal work, *Local History and the Library*, first published in 1962, the author points to the significant contributions made to local studies under the aegis of academic endeavour:

Public awareness of the importance of thesis literature has increased during recent years: many important local studies submitted for degrees or teaching diplomas are never published and have a very limited availability in university and college libraries. Yet in these can be found some of the most valuable original research work done upon the area ...<sup>22p.66</sup>

While a significant proportion of potential respondents did not reply to the question of which research activity was supported, the majority of non-responses were from

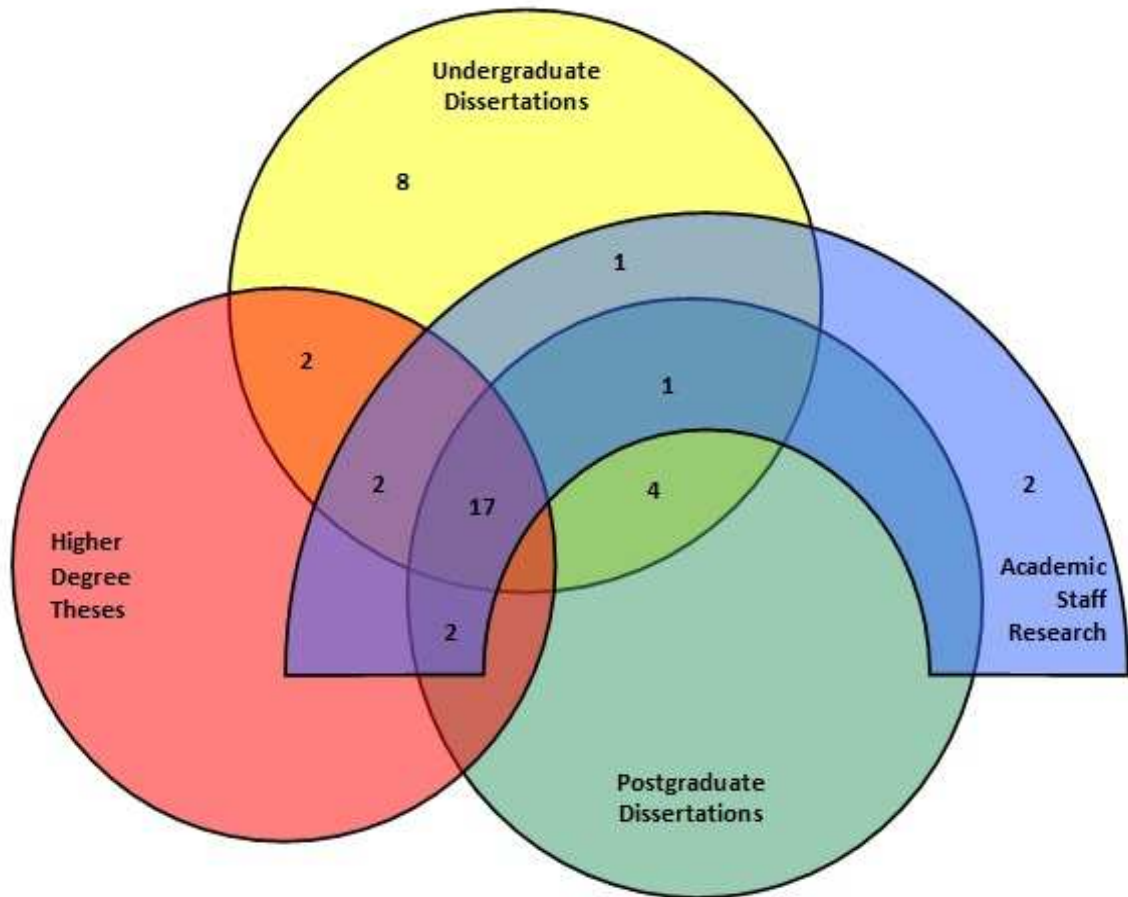
Further Education Colleges, a category which had largely not been expected to respond to the query, given the categories offered and the nature of these institutions. However, four institutions identifying as Further Education Colleges did provide responses and these are included in the following summary drawn from 41 participants:

**Table 27: Does your local studies collection support ...?**

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 41
Undergraduate Dissertations	3	9	3	21	1	37	90.24%
Postgraduate Dissertations	0	3	2	20	1	26	63.41%
Higher Theses	1	5	0	18	1	25	60.98%
Academic Staff Research	1	5	1	17	1	25	60.98%

Taking into account that 24 universities responded to this question, the proportion of these institutions in which local studies resources are employed in research is perhaps significantly high. Undergraduate dissertations are represented by 87.50% of universities, postgraduate dissertations by 83.33%; higher theses by 75.00%; and academic staff research by 70.83%.

A Four-Set Construction Venn Diagram providing an at-a-glance representation of the range of research types supported by separate institutions, underscores the predominance of university activity when it comes to research:



**Figure 3: Types of Research**

Of the 17 institutions whose local collections support all four research types, 14 of these are universities; undergraduate dissertations alone are represented by two FE colleges, three FHE colleges, one HE college, and two universities; the third most common range cited – undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations – is found in one HE college and three universities.

The findings indicate that universities offer more opportunity than other types of institution to undertake research where at least some focus will rely on the use of local studies material. This is perhaps inevitable, even at student-level, given the emphasis placed on independent research at higher education level, where learners' research projects not only can allow the individual to focus on topics that bring together different disciplines, thus broadening the scope of potentially relevant

materials, but can also provide a degree of intellectual and creative ‘freedom’ that may be absent – or necessarily restricted – when it comes to shorter, taught-course assessments.

In terms of outputs produced through Academic Staff Research, a small number of respondents supplied details – to varying degrees of specificity – regarding publications in which local resources were employed. The respondent from Queen’s University, Belfast, for instance, stated that ‘Almost any book written by one of our academics on an Irish topic will have involved use of our material.’ A more specific example was provided by the respondent from the Andrew Kean Learning Centre at Trinity and All Saints (now Leeds Trinity University College),<sup>xxx</sup> who reported on ‘books and articles on the history of the Yorkshire Dales published by Christine Hallas,’<sup>xxxi</sup> also noting that, since the former member of staff left the institution, ‘there is less specific interest in local history.’ Also included, by the respondent from the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL), was University of Reading lecturer, Dr Jeremy Burchardt for his work *The Allotment Movement in England, 1793-1873*, published by Woodbridge in 2002. In addition to other academic works cited by respondents, a more commercial publication was highlighted, where the participant from the Institute of Astronomy at the University of Cambridge brought attention to photographs from the library having been used in Simon Singh’s *Big Bang*, published in 2004 through Fourth Estate.

### 6.3 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to report on the ways in which local studies collections are used in college and university libraries and learning resources centres within the context of a teaching and learning environment increasingly focused on

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<sup>xxx</sup> The institution’s affiliation with the University of Leeds ended in 2009, when the right to award its own degrees was granted.

<sup>xxxi</sup> See, for example, *The Wensleydale Railway* (Leading Edge, 1991), *Rural Responses to Industrialization – The North Yorkshire Pennines 1790-1914* (New York: Wien, 1999), and other publications.

independent study. This means it is also a context in which libraries and their resources, including materials and staff, have become arguably more important than ever in terms of serving the institution and its students, teachers and researchers.

While some discussion of findings has taken place, it is in the chapter that follows that these results, and those found in chapter five, will be drawn together and reflected on with the aim of providing an overall view that takes into account not only the current status of local studies resources in academic libraries, but also the future implications of the present situation. Conclusions will also be drawn and recommendations made.

## 6.4 References

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<sup>17</sup> Matthews, A. [interview]. 2005 Oct 25.

<sup>18</sup> Brophy, Peter. *Op cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Brophy, Peter. *Op cit.*

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## **Chapter Seven**

### **Key Findings and Further Considerations**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

In the previous two chapters, findings were presented principally based on responses drawn from two questionnaire surveys, with additional information and commentary taken from interviews conducted during observational visits to a small number of college and university libraries. In this chapter, key findings are summarised within the context of the study's aims and objectives, in order to provide an at-a-glance overview. In addition, while some analysis of findings has taken place in the previous chapters, further and related issues, themes, and considerations that have emerged throughout the course of the research undertaken are reflected upon and posited within a framework that seeks to explore both the present and potential future, in terms of the relationships between local studies collections, academic libraries, and teaching, learning and research.

Finally, at the end of this chapter, the study's methodological, empirical and theoretical contributions to knowledge are discussed; followed by the study's limitations, and recommendations for future investigation.

#### **7.2 Aims and Objectives and Key Findings**

As noted in *Chapter Three: Methods and Approaches*, the methodologies employed to achieve the study's objectives may not necessarily match each objective in turn; instead, the methods and techniques used tend to reflect either the depth of coverage or the angle from which a particular issue was approached.

Here, the aims and objectives of the study are re-stated, with key findings drawn principally, but not exclusively from the questionnaires, providing an indication of the extent to which each objective, serving the first two aims, has been met, whether wholly or in part.

**Aim 1: To examine the content and scope of local studies collections within further and higher education libraries in the United Kingdom.**

**Aim 2: To examine the purpose of local studies collections within these colleges and universities.**

**Aim 3: To compile an inventory of local studies collections in academic libraries.**

An inventory of local studies resources holdings was compiled using data from the first questionnaire. *See Appendix 5: Inventory of Local Collections at Responding Institutions.*

**Objective 1: To identify and examine definitions of ‘local studies’ in order to ascertain the different interpretations placed on this term, whether geographical, historical or otherwise.**

The largest single proportion of collections cover a county-wide geographical scope, followed by region. Coverage of a particular town or city accounts for almost 10% of collections. Ten local collections, distributed across all institution types, have a country-wide focus; while four university collections’ geographic scope includes more than one country. The most popular title for named collections is ‘Local History’, followed by ‘Local Collection’ and ‘Local Studies’.

Further analysis in Chapter Five, drawn from interviews and other secondary sources, build on the findings above that indicate quite a broad geographical ‘definition’ of the term ‘local’, examining issues such as shifting boundaries and the idea of a ‘local identity’. In addition, the prevalence of local *history* collections, as reflected in the findings above, is explored, indicating that this objective has been met.

**Objective 2: To investigate the acquisition, organisation and management of local studies collections; this will include an examination of how information technology has contributed to the collection and use of local studies material.**

Over 60% of responding institutions hold local studies material in their libraries or learning resource centres. The most commonly held types of local materials are regional histories, followed by reference works, then government publications, periodicals, then newspapers. The most popular format is hard-copy by a broad margin, then internet-based media. Almost 80% of local studies acquisitions are through donations or bequests, followed nearly 70% through library suppliers.

Just over a fifth of local collections were started in the 1970s, followed by the 1960s, then 1980s. The most commonly cited single era in which collections were started in Further Education Colleges is the 1970s; in the case of universities, it is the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The largest single proportions of collections of over 1000 items were started in the 1960s, followed by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Universities tend to have the largest collections, with over half of these institutions holding collections of over 1000 items. It was found that a slight majority of local collections are housed separately from the library's main collection (most local collections of over 1000 items are held separately from the main collection). This is followed by almost a third whose local collections are integrated throughout the library stock, then those whose local material is partly separate and integrated.

Over 60% of respondents use the Dewey Decimal Classification system to organise local collections; the vast majority of these respondents do not use a second scheme.

Almost half of the respondents have all their library's local studies items listed on OPAC, with just less than a third having most items listed. Just over 50% of libraries allow all potential users remote access to OPAC; a quarter permit internal access only.

Only 11% of local collections are separately staffed. Approximately 12% of libraries or LRCs provide induction for local studies librarianship, while approximately eight percent provide training; only three libraries or LRCs provide *both* induction and training.

Questionnaire findings have, for the most part, answered this objective. How information technology has impacted the collection and use of local resources has relied more on further secondary research conducted after the fieldwork stages, due, in part, to rapid changes in technology taking place in a relatively short period of time. Digitisation is discussed in 7.5 Materials.

**Objective 3: To examine external influences on local studies collections, including non-institutional users with a view to ascertaining the impact such access might have on this service.**

Physical access to two-thirds of local collections is available to all; a fifth may be accessed by registered staff and students only. Although further on in this chapter, external users are mentioned briefly in terms of requests for local material, overall, this population does not appear to have too great an impact on the academic library's local studies service.

Other external influences appear mostly to concern other libraries or local studies providers. For instance, a common reason given for *not* holding a local collection is the perception that the public library's local studies provision is adequate. This issue of the public library's role as the 'natural' home of local studies is examined and discussed throughout the thesis, with the issue of duplication and its potential impact also discussed further on in this chapter.

Since no further external influences were identified, this objective has been met.

**Objective 4: To identify other influences that might mould priorities: financial constraints, for instance, or a perceived obligation to improve access to material on neighbouring regions or communities.**

In terms of other influences that may shape priorities, it was found that the vast majority of local collections – over 85% – do not have a separate budget. Financial constraints and other concerns, including issues regarding space, and time with which to organise material, are examined later in this chapter. No obligation to improve access to local material elsewhere was identified, thus indicating that this objective has been met.

**Objective 5: To analyse the relationship between academic institutions' local studies collections, their curricula and research activity.**

The most common subject sections where integrated local collections are found is just over 60% in History, over a third in Geography, and over a fifth in Archaeology. The next most common subject sections are Geology, Art, and Local Government, each integrated with almost 15% of collections. The most popular courses supported by the local collection are History-based, with almost half of all respondents citing this subject-area. This is followed by Local Studies, cited by just over a fifth of respondents; English-based subjects cited by approximately 15% of respondents; followed by Business/Management courses by approximately 13%.

The most frequently cited percentage of courses to be supported by local studies resources, estimated by over a quarter of 41 respondents, is between two and five percent. The second most common percentage range, estimated by just under a quarter of these respondents, is between six and ten percent.

Approximately 90% of 41 respondents claim that undergraduate dissertation research is supported by the library or LRC's local studies collection. Sixty-three percent state that postgraduate dissertation research is supported, while Higher theses and academic staff research are each supported by approximately 61% of

respondents. Of the 17 respondents whose collections support all four types of research, 14 of these are universities.

Of those libraries and LRCs who do not hold local collections, one of the most commonly cited reasons is that the material is irrelevant to what is being taught or researched in the institution.

The findings above provide a concise overview of the extent to which local collections are being used in the service of taught subjects and research activity. In addition to the discussion in Chapter Six throughout the presentation of these findings, teaching, learning and research within the context of academic libraries and local studies resources is explored at some length later in this chapter, thereby meeting this objective.

**Objective 6: To examine the roles of the collections within the institutions.**

Here, the objective is met not through findings as such. While there is some overlap with the preceding objective, the main concern here is, given the figures above indicating the low extent to which local studies collections are used to support courses, whether local collections belong in academic libraries if they are not being used, or if there is any other value in holding a local collection within an academic environment. In the section that follows, consideration is given to the roles – potential or otherwise – of local collections outwith engagement with the curriculum and academic research. With frequent reference to open-ended question responses gathered from the questionnaires, consideration is given to possible reasons for collections not being utilised, future plans for collections, currency of the material, and other issues.

### 7.3 Collections and Collecting for Use

Earlier, in chapter four, the common metaphor of the academic library as the ‘heart of the university’<sup>xxxii</sup> was alluded to. This much-used phrase – which, as Brophy notes, ‘was picked up in the UK and appeared in various reports, including the influential Parry Report in 1967’ – suggests a number of (often overlapping) issues in terms of the library’s relationship with the institution. With regard to the *purpose* behind the academic library, the following might be suggested: that the library is essential to the university; that it is, in fact, *central* to the university’s ability to operate; and that its sole – or at the very least primary – function is to serve the larger institution.

This last-mentioned factor is particularly relevant to the question of purpose – that is, in the context of this thesis, the ways in which local collections are used, or, implicitly, whether they are used at all. For those who advocate that collections serve an immediate function, for instance, having access to a collection that ‘matches’ the curriculum is of principal importance. As Webb notes, ‘In order to support student learning, the collection should reflect back to students the range of learning outcomes which have been specified in the courses they study. Thus material on reading lists should be available, as should a suitable range of resources to support research for assignments.’<sup>1p.136</sup> In this instance, the ‘heart’ metaphor might, then, be utilised further. The organ in question, after all, is an *active* contributor to the body’s ability to function; it is not simply ‘just there’, waiting to be used if or when required. If, therefore, a collection is not being used, can the library be said to be carrying out its role effectively? Payne takes a strong view when it comes to the library’s role in the university, declaring that the ‘only rationale’ for its existence is in serving the user. Employing the *collection-for-potential-use* library as a counter to the *actual* user-focused one, he writes: ‘Yes, there are a few prestige University libraries who have a role in preserving the nation’s heritage. However, for

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<sup>xxxii</sup> Noting that ‘the exact origins of this phrase are unclear’, Brophy cites Grimes’ suggestion that it was initially used by Charles William Eliot during his time as President of Harvard University, a post he held from 1869 to 1909. (Brophy, Peter. *The library in the twenty-first century*. second ed. London: Facet., 2007, p.28.)



the vast majority of libraries, the primary concern is with the need of our existing clientele rather than meeting the needs of future generations of scholars.<sup>2p.59</sup> However, the fact that libraries seemingly more intent on collecting for future use exist in the first place may be where the cracks in the library-as-bodily-organ metaphor appear, where a given collection's contribution to the institution may not always be as immediate as the 'heart' analogy suggests. In fact, it may well be argued that this is especially true of local collections, given the often unique manner in which items are collected and managed, and where a significant degree of forethought, luck – or even, as in the example detailed below of the University of Leicester, building on an unexpected opportunity – might be required in order that the collection ultimately not be considered improvident. For instance, Duckett observed in 1997:

It is currently fashionable to say that collections are for use [...] and so they are – up to a point. There is a case to be made, however, and local studies librarians will be to the fore in making it, that collections are for future use and not just for the present. As today's patrons use material collected a decade or a century ago, so will tomorrow's users bless or curse us for what we have, or have not, collected today. Besides, a collection has to be collected before it can be used, and there is many a collection now used which survived by chance – not collected with future intent. But in the end, a collection has to be used to justify its existence.<sup>3p173</sup>

Here, Duckett presents something of a paradox, where the purpose of a collection may not always be immediately obvious and it could be suggested that, depending on the point one wishes to pursue, the passage can be viewed as both a defence of the philosophy of 'collecting for the sake of collecting', while at the same time underlining the ideology of 'collecting as a means to an end'. The ambiguity that such a paradox can give rise to is evident in responses to the survey. For instance, when asked about future plans for their local collection, the questionnaire respondent from the Rockingham Library at University College, Northampton explained that 'We intend to house the Fowler Collection (a collection of secondary

texts collected by the Bedfordshire Records Society) with our existing collection. At that point we will publicise the collections and aim to build on them.’ Yet, according to the respondent when asked about which courses are served by the collection, the local collection as it stands supports only two, a History BA and undergraduate QTS (Qualified Teacher Status) Education, amounting to less than five percent of the institution’s total courses, suggesting that the acquisition of the Fowler Collection – and the plans to build on this attainment – may not be in response to immediate needs, but rather, the expansion described may result in a collection intended *for future use*.

Bridget Andrews, Library Project Manager of the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL), a museum of the University of Reading, also highlighted this often blurred line between collections that are used and the not-always-evident purpose behind the collection itself. She talks about how the museum’s collection is principally concerned with ‘the nature of the material that we collect and also about retention,’ while also looking at the different ways the material itself might be approached by researchers. ‘Currency’, for instance, is a term used frequently in research and for good reason. However, when examining a subject like ‘local studies’ the question of what does and does not constitute a robust approach towards resources can produce necessarily blurred responses. The pursuit of local studies frequently relies on the investigation of material that may, in many cases, be considered ‘out-of-date’; to use the relatively simple example of investigating an individual’s house, the researcher may be compelled to view architectural plans from decades previous; ownership documents that have been passed on through generations; local government documents from an earlier period regarding land purchases and so on. While, of course, the material mentioned here refers to primary documentation, there is also a need to recognise that published material may also be collected that serves a dual secondary and primary role. As Andrews explained:

The university library *is* a research-level collection in certain subject areas which are specialities of this university. MERL is a research-level collection full-stop. We don’t throw material away because it’s out-of-date, because



fact that ‘not all items on the list are in stock, nor all in print’).<sup>5p.153</sup> Yet the compilation of reading lists ‘based on what is already available in the library’ – say, an older edition of a standard text, or one textbook that is relatively interchangeable with another, unavailable, work – is a far cry from the building or acquisition of a collection that then has to find a home within the curriculum. Of course, while the potential for collected material to actively dictate teaching or learning is not restricted to local studies collections, Duckett’s point above suggests that local collections may be particularly vulnerable to such an approach. Asked in 2006 whether or not this attitude is a valid way to approach academic local collections, Michael Dewe was wary:

I think it’s one that can be questioned, because one could argue – in the same way that you provide any collection – that it should reflect the needs of the users, and you shouldn’t be spending money and time and effort on building up things which are not related to the aims and objectives of the institution for which the collection is being built up.<sup>6</sup>

However, Dewe also acknowledged that collections in academic institutions that do not have a pre-planned purpose are not necessarily wasted or wasteful, noting that, ‘universities do attract these other collections for one reason or another ... and they can become the focus for research and teaching; [but] it’s accidental rather than planned.’

Perhaps surprisingly, this ‘accidental’ approach lies at the root of arguably the most prominent – and certainly oldest – example of an academic institution that clearly does make use of its local studies collections. As Professor Harold Fox of the Department of English Local History at the University of Leicester explained, when outlining the background of the department:

A man called Hatton<sup>xxxiii</sup> gave a vast amount of local history books to the library when the university was very young. And when [W.G.] Hoskins came

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<sup>xxxiii</sup> Thomas Hatton (1876–1943), ‘the owner of a boot-manufacturing business and a boxing and crossword promoter, donated his collection of 2000 topographical works to the University College (the predecessor to the University of Leicester) in 1920, establishing the

here, it was the existence of that [...] that got him interested. And when he founded the Department of English Local History in 1948, it was to match the collection. It wasn't the other way around; the collection was already there. He thought, "Well, we've got a collection, let's have a department to match it."<sup>7</sup>

While the origin of the Department of Local English History provides an excellent example of how local collections already acquired have been put to use, it may be fair to assume that, while not necessarily the 'exception that proves the rule', the Department has, indeed, proved exceptional and it is unlikely that every 'accidental' collection is going to result in an endeavour as successful and groundbreaking as that of the University of Leicester, something very unlikely to be replicated in the universities of today. Even success at a smaller level may prove problematic. For instance, Dewe's acknowledgement that sometimes accidents do produce favourable outcomes comes with a qualifier that encompasses both pragmatic and ideological concerns, when he suggests that:

What one has to argue is that, in the future, can universities – some can, of course – can most universities continue to operate in that way; that is, acquiring things, as it were, accidentally and then suddenly finding they can fit a course or some research activity to them? You know, is that the best way of organising both a university library collection and, indeed, creating appropriate teaching and research?

When asked what the most positive way of looking at this approach to using collections might be, Dewe elaborated on the 'practical' versus 'ideal' dichotomy, one in which 'management' encompasses not only concerns about costs and maintenance, but concerns about use: 'Of course, yes – if it's [the collection's] there, why not make use of it? But, whether you can justify it, in terms of what it costs to

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Library's Special Collections.' Fyfe, Christine. Royal visit delight at University. *News*, [Internet] University of Leicester; 2008 Dec 5 [cited 2010 Nov 18] Available from: <http://www2.le.ac.uk/ebulletin/news/2000-2009/2008/12/nparticle.2008-12-05.4224420979>

maintain and of the use that it gets, is another question ... I'm speaking managerially, of course – I'm not speaking as a librarian or a researcher.' In fact, while Duckett's suggestion above is made in reference to public library collections, it is strongly arguable that, within the context of academic libraries, where, as mentioned, the library's principal purpose is to serve the larger institution, the case for 'justifying a collection's existence' in terms of the collection being *used* becomes even more important.

In chapter five, the issue of whether or not university and college libraries should seek to build local studies collections that do not serve an immediate, identifiable purpose was touched on. While the earlier discussion was raised within the context of libraries and LRCs that do not hold local collections (or, at least, do not identify as holders of such material), 13 respondents whose libraries do hold local collections stated that the material held is not used to support any courses, with five also reporting no supported research activity. A few respondents suggested that local material is occasionally put to use. At Westminster Kingsway College, for example, the respondent noted that, at present, no courses are supported, 'although some requests for information are course-generated.' At the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, meanwhile, the collection 'supports study by outside individuals, no organised courses [are supported],' with all four types of research indicated. Other responses pointed to very casual use. Middlesbrough College, for instance, explained that the collection is 'just for general use and [for] anyone who may have to 'dip' in for any research projects,' although no formal research activity was noted in the questionnaire; while Weymouth College stated that 'Most requests [are] from external users.' Given the varying proportions of course-use indicated by those whose collections *do* support set programmes of study – as noted above, over a quarter of collections support less than five percent of the institution's courses – as well as the large number of respondents who did not reply to the question regarding support for research, the matter of how much use is being made of local collections in academic libraries, and to what level this may be a concern, is raised.

Yet, the somewhat difficult position – or at least grey area – in which local studies resides when it comes to the justification for holding material is highlighted in, for instance, the responses received from Coleg Sir Gar’s Learning Centre Ammanford Campus. According to the respondent, the local collection, comprising approximately 500 hard-copy items, including regional histories, reference works and government publications, none of which, as noted in chapter six, have been ‘accessioned or indexed’ has ‘a relevance to the local community, but not directly to any courses the college offers.’ Nor is any formal research activity noted. This, of course, begs the question of why the college has such a collection in the first place. The possible ‘reasons’ – if not a fully-fledged justification – become clearer when it is noted that the campus ‘is housed in what was once a college of mining ... [which was] a very important industry in the locality’ and that the ‘material was rescued from the threat of disposal.’ While the way in which the collection emerged may suggest that the current attitude towards the items is somewhat akin to ‘retaining material for sentimental reasons’, such a description does not seem adequate. It is difficult to imagine, for instance, that someone at some point in time will not find a 500-item collection on mining, indexed or otherwise, useful. As it is, the learning centre has ‘never had/made the time to catalogue the material and publicise its presence with potential users’ and so ‘perhaps once a year someone asks to look at the material – usually someone local who remembers the past function of the building and comes [to the learning centre] in hope that we have material related to mining.’ While one external visitor a year is hardly the most compelling justification for keeping a collection in the library, it is possible to see the collection manager’s dilemma, where time and/or budget constraints or, indeed, where publicising local collections falls low on the priority list of the library or learning centre, prevents the material from being used in any significant way and thus the ‘value’ of the material can be difficult to ascertain. However, it is worth bearing in mind that when it comes to local collections that are essentially ‘useless’ in terms of serving the best interests of the institutions – ideologically, financially or otherwise – the scenario that arises is not necessarily a dire, dichotomous one where the *only* choices are to dispose of material that may at some point be of potential use to the local community or continue to house a stagnant collection. When asked about future plans, if any, for

the collection, the response from Coleg Sir Gar was fairly pragmatic, and reflected those responses noted in the previous chapter that referred to storage and preservation issues: 'In an ideal world [the plan would be] to catalogue and produce publicity material; realistically perhaps it will be handed to a specialist collection.'

The situation described at Coleg Sir Gar, as well as the wider issue regarding whether or not academic collections are for (immediate) use, once again highlights the grey area where local studies and its resources can often be found when one considers the question of who the current or future users of these collections may be. The external enquirers referred to by the respondents from the Ammanford Campus and Weymouth College are, after all, a reminder that, while the academic library and its resources may exist primarily to serve the institution – regardless of whether the materials are being used at that precise time or not – the *actual* readership of any given college or university library usually includes external users who, even if they are not the principal intended client, are a presence. Brophy, for instance, notes that, while 'few academic libraries have a large body of external readers [...] this group can be important. Those academic libraries with major collections can find themselves under considerable pressure from this direction...'<sup>8pp.67-68</sup> External use is, of course, not limited to local studies material; nor is internal use necessarily limited to that which directly seeks to meet the institution's teaching or research aims. According to Keele University's Special Collections and Archives Assistant, Helen Burton, a couple of lecturers who work on the Victoria County History editorial team are 'often in [Special Collections and Archives], researching that. They'll use the town court rolls and Sneyd<sup>xxxiv</sup> manuscripts as primary source information for the VCHs; and they do Staffordshire studies as well.'<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>xxxiv</sup> The Sneyed family, Staffordshire, owners of the Keele Estate from 1544.





***Figure 5: Correspondence forming part of the vast Sneyd family papers, including letters, business records and sketches, held in the Department of Special Collections and Archives, Keele University***

With regard to a potentially broader user base than students, teaching staff and academic researchers, however, issues can arguably be said to be compounded by the nature of local resources, given not only the often unique flavour of the items held in any given collection, but also the public library’s remit regarding local material and the arguments against the academic library operating in competition with the public sector. The ‘traditional’ link to the public library is an aspect of local studies that has been raised more than once in the thesis. However, it might be suggested that taking such a relationship almost for granted means that what might prove ‘best’ for a given collection risks being overlooked simply because the ‘local studies = public library’ model is so prevalent. In the case of St Andrews University Special Collections, for instance, the department finds itself in something of a unique position in that, according to the Head of Special Collections, Dr Norman Reid, the department is more involved in the field of local studies – ‘in the immediate St Andrews area certainly’ – than is the public library, with the university holding

‘curatorial responsibilities’ for archival material relating to the town.<sup>10</sup> As Dr Reid explains, until relatively recently there was no Fife Council archival provision at all, which is why the National Archives deposited the likes of church and borough records with the Special Collections Department, with the stipulation that, because the documents are public records, they should be made available to any member of the public who wishes to see them. In contrast to the respondents cited in the previous chapter who had, or who planned to, deposit material elsewhere due to preservation and/or storage issues, the Special Collections Department found itself the recipient of material that would normally be held in the public sector. As Reid explains it, while the public library in St Andrews has always held local material – the core collection being the David Hay Fleming Collection that gave the section the name ‘The Hay Fleming Reference Library’ – it was decided some years ago to deposit the collection, which included manuscripts and photographs as well as printed books, with the university’s Special Collections Department, due to the university being in a better position to ‘provide the sort of curatorial care and control needed’. As far as the public library is concerned, it was a ‘difficult’ collection ‘to look after properly’ and the Special Collections Department had more appropriate facilities to store and maintain the material. In addition, given the shortage of space at the public library, moving the collection to the university enabled the public service to expand the more general library provision, thus benefiting both the public and university libraries, since the latter was able to add to ‘the other manuscripts and local studies collections we already had.’ In other words, St Andrews provides an example of a university collection that serves a much broader community than that of the members of the institution and a handful of external users. It is, arguably, a collection that might well be described in the same terms as Dewe used to characterise the public library collection in chapter five: a collection built in perpetuity that may well be used in a hundred years time. Yet, as mentioned, the Special Collections department is in a fairly unique position, and this distinctiveness arguably extends to the geographical and cultural context in which the institution itself exists. That is, it may not be unreasonable to make the claim that St Andrews University *is* St Andrews, a town known chiefly for two things: golf and the oldest university in Scotland, established 600 years ago. Indeed, Reid himself notes that St

Andrews, and the central role that the university has in the town in terms of its history and identity means that ‘the [university] library has always been a public resource to some extent.’ It is within this context that the university library and Special Collections department has ‘taken over’ the role normally inhabited by the public sector in serving the community, and clearly, not every university or college is in such a position.

The issue of whether or not college and university libraries can – or should – seek to build collections rather than simply operate on an ‘as needed’ basis, then, is as complex as any aspect of local studies resources. While St Andrews may be a somewhat exceptional case, evidently as invested in serving the wider community as it is the university itself, the arrangement is one that clearly works for the Special Collections Department, the public library and the communities that both organisations serve. Similarly, most responding libraries and LRCs appear to take a somewhat pragmatic approach to collections and collection-building, albeit with a sense that perhaps not all collections are being allowed to achieve their potential. Indeed, earlier, in chapter five, the notion was raised that local studies resources in academia may rely on the active enthusiasm of a librarian or collection manager in order to be fully effective. Although respondents were not asked directly about how personally invested they are in local studies provision, one way of gauging levels of engagement may be by looking at responses regarding future plans for local material. While some libraries’ plans arguably fall under quite a basic remit – Thurrock and Basildon College’s plans are simply ‘to maintain the print-based collection’ – a small number of libraries and LRCs point to a fairly active interest, where responses indicate a number of specific ways in which the collection is being developed. At the Southampton Institute, for instance, a concern for both the currency and the scope of the collection is suggested in order to provide a more robust collection of local studies material; according to the respondent, the collection ‘is currently being reclassified which should be finished soon. The collection also needs to be weeded. I am looking to update the collection and strengthen material for the local areas that are not covered so extensively.’ Elsewhere, concern that the needs of the institution are being met is expressed. At

Truro College, for instance, the library 'will continue to provide [local] material relevant to courses and [the collection] will adapt, evolve and grow according to the needs of the staff and students,' while at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, the respondent notes that, since 'Our collections are targeted towards our programme of courses, and thus whilst local studies materials remain pertinent to courses, we will continue to maintain and acquire [materials to add to] it.' Not all course-related plans reported are about the collection's potential growth, however. According to the respondent from Bell College's Dumfries Campus, the end of a community studies project undertaken by Pre-registration Nursing students means that 'the collection is not maintained with the rigour that is once was and the contents of the boxes created to support the Community Studies project will probably be discarded or transferred to the Statistics and Reports section as appropriate.' Meanwhile, at Coleg Powys' Newton Campus Learning Resources Centre, where the percentage of courses supported by the local collection is described as 'very little' (Travel and Tourism is the only course named), the respondent indicates a low degree of usage by stating that future plans amount to 'None until I get a request.' This response may be fairly straightforward, and the small amount of use is understandable given the fractional quantity of course-related support required; nonetheless, there is perhaps something almost circular in the reasoning presented, where a request from a (potential) user is required before plans can be made that may help to increase the profile of a collection comprising between 50 and 100 items. Furthermore, this is not the only example where the reasoning is arguably somewhat skewed. At Wirral Metropolitan College, for example, 'Constraints on space mean that the entire library collection must be 'live': we have little space to develop and increase stock which accounts for less than 0.01% of library usage.' While, on the surface, what might seem like two perfectly reasonable justifications for a lack of development can be extracted from this response – a shortage of space and that the miniscule usage does not validate expansion – the juxtaposition of these two issues implies something more than simply an adherence to set programmes of study (in this case, a diploma in Local History is the only supported course cited) or a lack of room. Contrasted, for instance, with Trinity and All Saints College's clear cause-and-effect explanation that

‘The collection has been low priority for a number of years because it is less relevant to our current range of courses,’ the response from Wirral College comes across as somewhat ambiguous, where the circular reasoning employed – expansion is not possible, but the collection does not get used very often, so expansion would probably be unwanted anyway – cannot help but suggest that local studies resources may not be a priority at least partly *because* they are not being prioritised.

Some respondents’ future plans also include the intent to publicise materials. In chapter six, a low rate of affirmative responses was reported with regard to the question of whether the library uses promotional material to draw attention to its local collection; information supplied from respondents, however, suggested that even when some form of promotion is employed, it is often restricted to in-house ‘advertising’, such as leaflets or posters in the library itself, although a few respondents do make mention of some coverage on the library’s website. Promotion, however, forms a significant part of Cambridge University Library’s future plans for its local collection, where the respondent plans to ‘Enhance web pages with digital images of items in the collection; look at cataloguing material with no online catalogue records; include items from the collection in exhibitions.’ While the very act of promoting material carries with it the assumption that more potential users may be drawn to the collection, perhaps oddly, the University of Durham, as well as outlining other projects, is one of the only responding libraries to *explicitly* mention an intention to improve the amount of use the collection receives:

Promote it for more general local use as well as increased academic use.

There has been a retrocon project in the past 2 years to provide full records for all the early printed books, to upgrade the modern book records and to simplify the classification of periodicals. Aim to complete this. Early printed books and maps on ‘Pictures in Print’ web database. Complete cataloguing of printed maps.

Yet, an enthusiasm for the material and a willingness to develop and/or promote the collection can go only so far when other considerations, sometimes outside of the

collection manager's control, come into play. As reported in chapter six, responses to the question of how budgets for local collections are organised suggest that funding for local materials is not a priority for many libraries. When it comes to making plans for the collection, funding is a concern for a number of respondents. According to the respondent from the University of Wales, Bangor, ambitious plans for an expansion of facilities rely mostly on an uncertain financial ability to do so: 'If and when funding is provided, [we plan to build] an extension or new [building] that can better house all the Special Collections and Archives, as well as provide a better conservation workshop, reading room and exhibition area.' Dudley College of Technology, too, has plans that rely on having the financial means to do so, reporting that 'Having collated all materials in one area over past couple of months the hope is to develop the collection but [this] depends on budget allowing.' Similarly, money is at the root of future plans by Southport College, who intend to 'Submit a bid to Lottery or similar for funding to expand collection and marketing.' In the case of the response received from the University of Lincoln, budget constraints are viewed as an issue that can be weighed alongside the user's ability to access materials elsewhere and a collaborative attitude towards other collections, where future plans are composed of 'Expansion if funds ever permit. But there are other good resources close by – would want to complement these.'

While the examples provided above may not definitively measure attitudes held by respondents to their local collections, they do offer at least an indication of varying degrees of active enthusiasm for organising, developing and promoting the library's local studies resources. Together with the findings based on supported subjects and research presented in the previous chapter, it does appear that, overall, these collections exist primarily to serve the institution's needs at present. There are, of course, exceptions: some collections may no longer be used in the capacity as they once were, as in the case of Bell College; others, such as Coleg Sir Gar, find themselves in possession of material that does not have a purpose within the institution while conversely, St Andrews finds itself in possession of material that has a purpose both within and, to a relatively unusually high degree, without the institution. There is, however, little evidence that managers are wilfully amassing

huge collections in the hope that, perhaps in the future, the material might be employed. For example, of those whose collections number over a thousand items, only one – Newcastle College, discussed further below in this chapter – indicated that neither courses nor research activity are supported. It is within a context where local collections are, for the most part, intended for use, that these resources and their contribution to the aims of the institution can be examined more closely.

#### **7.4 Teaching, Learning and Research**

Baker proposes that ‘Universities and other institutions of higher education have two basic functions: to teach and to research.’<sup>11p.4</sup> While Baker’s statement, at first glance, is difficult to argue with – indeed, it very neatly captures a common understanding of what ‘goes on’ within the walls of higher education institutions – it is also perhaps somewhat narrow in scope, omitting what might be considered a third function: that which relates to *learning*. It is perhaps not surprising that this role is not rendered explicitly under Baker’s ‘basic’ remit, since learning is commonly regarded as a necessary counterpart to, or result of, teaching. When addressing the subject of library resources especially, however, the teaching/learning model arguably becomes more complex. Library resources, for instance, do not simply exist for the benefit of teachers or researchers. Although it may be suggested that any study of a book or other material within an academic setting is done in the pursuit of ‘research’, since Baker refers specifically to ‘institutions of higher education’, it might be assumed that he is referring to what is commonly perceived as ‘academic research’, i.e., research undertaken for the likes of dissertations, theses or for publication. However, the different ways in which students are encouraged to learn, means that the ‘basic functions’ of higher, or even further, education cannot necessarily be limited to teaching and research and, with particular regard to the former, directly related activities. Learning, for instance, cannot be rigidly defined as what goes on in the classroom while students are actively being ‘taught’ – the reason why student access to academic libraries exists in the first place is to enable learning to continue outside of the immediate teaching environment.

An emphasis on ‘learning’ is underlined by Laurillard, who looks at what ‘the aim of teaching is,’ pointing to different beliefs in methods of teaching and what these approaches require of the student. She comments on ‘what used to be the prevailing view of university teaching’, suggesting that ‘If you believe that teaching is about imparting knowledge, then the main requirement of the lecturer is that they should possess that knowledge in the first place.’<sup>12p.13</sup> She goes on to add that:

Of course, ‘imparting knowledge’ does not succeed as a teaching aim, as many essays and examination papers testify. Academics have always been well aware of this, but while higher education was an elitist enterprise it was possible to make this failure the responsibility of the student, reified in the ‘fail’ grade.

That ‘imparting knowledge’ is not the aim of teaching should surprise no one who has any interest in academic libraries; if it *were* the primary purpose, then, as suggested above, the academic library’s user-base would be very limited. Laurillard, instead, quotes Ramsden’s view that ‘The aim of teaching is simple: it is to make student learning possible.’ However, Laurillard also notes that there may be something of a gulf between the theory of this approach and the practice since, ‘Making student learning possible places much more responsibility with the teacher. It implies that the teacher must know something about learning, and about what makes it possible.’ Yet, it does appear that teachers in academia are more than aware that learning is not merely an outcome based on passing down hard knowledge:

Academics have ambitious definitions for student learning. When asked to define the nature of learning in their subject area they produce descriptions of high-level thinking, such as “critically assessing the arguments”, “compiling patterns to integrate their knowledge” [...] Course descriptions and syllabuses inevitably tend to focus on the subject content that students will be learning, but clearly, in reflecting on what it is really about, academics are fascinated by the process itself [...] They see learning not simply as a product, but as a



series of activities. How students approach their subject is as important to them as what they end up knowing<sup>13pp.14-15</sup>

It is perhaps in 'how students approach their subject' that it can be found that the responsibility to bridge the gulf between the theory and practice of making learning possible does not rest solely on the shoulders of teachers. As suggested, once the model of 'teaching = imparting knowledge' is dismantled, the academic library's role becomes of primary importance to the students' ability to learn.

Of course, the relationship between what goes on in the classroom and what happens in an institution's library can take different forms. Webb, for example, looks at reading lists which, she states, 'form the critical connection between teaching and learning strategies and the library. Students will invariably use mainly or exclusively material named on the reading list which the lecturer has supplied *unless there is an assignment which requires additional independent study and research* [researcher's emphasis].'<sup>14p.153</sup> The point about 'independent study and research' is stressed further when Webb notes that, while the fact that in 'many academic libraries, especially in newer universities, most stock is purchased to support taught course requirements' theoretically means that 'all stock acquired will be used', this approach in practice is 'mechanistic and reactive', since students tend to utilise a broader range of resources than those included on reading lists, particularly if the named item is on loan to another borrower or the assessment requires the student to undertake independent study<sup>15p.</sup> An emphasis on this mode of study is underlined further as Brophy too draws attention to the way in which learning has increasingly become an activity that occurs outside of the classroom, pointing out that the 'expansion of universities has been one of the driving forces behind changes in teaching and learning methods in higher education.' Although he cites the 'notable' way in which the emphasis continues to be strong on lectures delivered by staff – albeit with students encouraged more to contribute during these sessions – he also notes that there has been a growth in, for instance, group work as a teaching method and 'importantly for libraries, much greater emphasis on independent study.'<sup>16p.15</sup> Indeed, Brophy also notes that the role of the library itself

has altered, where the expectations of what its staff are required to do is, again, rendered more complex:

Because staff-student ratios have worsened, staff tend to be much less accessible to students than in the past and so students can be thrown more on their own devices. As a result, library staff can find that independent learning places greater strains on them as advisers and tutors – a role they are not always well prepared for or even well qualified to carry out.<sup>17p.15</sup>

Within the present context of local studies, certainly, as the results in the previous chapter show, training for library staff in this area is not common, no doubt contributing to the lack of preparation and qualification cited above. While taking up a role usually occupied by teaching staff may be an ‘unfair’ expectation placed on library staff, there are nonetheless undoubted similarities between the roles held by those who work chiefly in the classroom or lecture hall and those whose contribution to teaching, learning and research is carried out in the library. For instance, as was pointed out in the previous chapter, the ability for library staff to provide information to prospective learners tends to fall into two broad categories – categories that echo the different teaching methods cited above of ‘imparting knowledge’ versus ‘making learning possible.’ This overlap between teaching and librarianship is, as suggested by Brophy above, exacerbated by the nature of ‘independent learning,’ where the increased expectation on library staff reveals the term itself to be something of a misnomer; the student may be acquiring skills and knowledge outside of the classroom, but the reliance on library resources and guidance from library staff means that the act of accumulating knowledge is more collaborative than the term ‘independent learning’ suggests.

Although questionnaire respondents were not asked about ‘teaching’ students or the library’s relationship with teaching departments or lecturers, when asked about interactions with students visiting the library in order to use local material, Keele University’s Special Collections and Archives Assistant, Helen Burton, provided an example of a large number of geography students arriving, unannounced, looking for

European documentation. Burton explained to the students' lecturer that it might have been advisable to bring the students to the Department in smaller groups, where she would have been able to introduce them to the material, point out key items, and familiarise them with the archives. However, apparently in most cases, students usually have a 'fair idea' of what kind of material they are looking for and Burton is able to provide appropriate assistance. In fact, during the candidate's conversation with Burton, one second-year student studying French and History was observed undertaking research for a portion of the course focusing on the Domesday Book within the geographical context of Staffordshire. An assigned topic, the student had made the Special Collections department her first port-of-call, using 'the catalogue downstairs to see where everything was [then being] able to come straight in here, straight to what I wanted to see.'<sup>18</sup> Yet, in general, according to Burton, there is 'not a great deal of contact' between the Special Collections and Archives and the teaching departments that might make use of the items held, although there are a 'few regular faces' who are known to the department. One particular lecturer, for example, takes groups of students into Special Collections and Archives occasionally in order to introduce them to key items that might be of use for carrying out coursework; while, later, the students may come to the department independent of the lecturer in order to undertake more in-depth research.

Thus, even putting aside the pressures cited by Brophy that are faced by library staff due to diminishing staff-student ratios, it is clear that libraries within academic institutions serve a purpose far beyond simply supplying books or other materials to teachers and researchers. Brophy looks at 'resource-based learning' a method that he admits 'means different things to different people' but 'at its heart lies the idea that much learning can take place through direct contact between learners and resources, such as documentary material.' Interestingly, however, its popularity does appear somewhat skewed:

There has been considerable use of this approach in further education, especially through the development of open learning materials, but take-up of the idea in higher education has been much more limited. The eLib-

funded IMPEL project<sup>xxxv</sup> ... found that in only just over 10% of institutions was resource-based learning used in all faculties or departments, while over 40% reported that it was not used at all.<sup>19p.16</sup>

In keeping with Brophy's observation that resource-based learning is an approach more readily adopted in further education the majority of respondents who identified their places of study as Learning Resource Centres, or variations thereof, were indeed Further Education Colleges. For example, as mentioned in chapter five, 37 out of 72 Further Education respondents used the name Learning Resource Centre, Learner Resource Centre or Learning Centre alone; while a further 13 incorporated LRC or LC into its name. In contrast, only six out of 76 respondents from universities used LRC or LC solely as a name, while a further two used these terms as part of a larger title. While the use of 'Library', 'Learning Resource Centre' or 'Learning Centre' may not necessarily impact the main focus of this study to a significant degree, the choice of name is perhaps worth considering as an indication of the difference in focus – at the very least on a surface level – that institutions themselves wish to get across. The differences between the terms 'library' and 'learning resource centre' may well be negligible when it comes to practice. Both terms, for instance, are commonly understood, at least in the academic world, to refer to locations where books, journals and other material, including (more recently) digital media may be found for the purposes of study. However, 'libraries' – even when open to new technologies – arguably have a history very much tied to the acts of collecting and/or reading books: When a person refers to one's own library, for instance, he or she tends to be referring to a book collection; similarly, mention of a library in a museum or stately home may bring to mind an image of large rooms filled imposingly from floor to ceiling with rows and rows of scholarly –

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<sup>xxxv</sup> Actually named IMPEL2, the project included a survey of resource-based learning conducted in 1996, funded by the JISC eLib Programme at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle. See: IMPEL2 - Survey on Resource Based Learning. *Deliberations* [Internet] 1997 Apr 25 [cited 2010 Nov 18] Available from: <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/deliberations/resource-based-learning/impel.cfm>

often inaccessible – hard-copy volumes; and a similar picture may be envisioned when referring to university libraries, particularly with regard to ‘old universities’. Learning Resource Centres or Learning Centres, on the other hand, may well imply a broader scope when it comes to the provision of material, particularly given the rise in online and other digital media that has become a regular part of both amateur and professional research and study. More importantly, the term ‘Learning Resources Centre’ arguably puts the emphasis on not, say, reading for leisure purposes, but on – as its name suggests – *learning*; that is, LRCs provide the tools with which to gain useful knowledge and skills.

When it comes to local studies, the term ‘resource requirements’ arguably becomes even more complex. It might, for instance, be considered self-defeating or – to be even more blunt – rather pointless, for a student to conduct a local investigation without having to leave the college or university’s grounds – that is, to *not* venture ‘into the field’, an activity which, as Bryant’s observation implicitly suggests in chapter two,<sup>20p.62</sup> is one of local studies’ greatest strengths in terms of the research experience a local investigation grants. In fact, the questionnaire respondent from South Kent College cited in chapter five who was happy to leave local collections to the public sector may well have inadvertently highlighted one of the possible inherent contradictions of academic libraries hosting local collections material: if local studies provides a first-rate opportunity for the student to get his or her researcher’s toes wet, does placing the material within easy reach perhaps defeat a large purpose of the local studies assignment? After all, it is not difficult for one to assume that local studies is an ideal area for independent, resource-based learning; should the focus be on the immediate geographical area, materials can often be found relatively close to hand, with newspapers, official documents, photographs, people, and so on available for ‘direct contact’. As Dewe points out, ‘It is difficult to imagine another area of study, research or enquiry where the source materials are so varied and so dispersed over a variety of resource providers at local level.’<sup>21p.25</sup> Hobbs too takes note of the academic library’s responsibility with regard to the provision of local studies resources and how this responsibility may not necessarily be limited to the collection(s) located within the immediate vicinity. While he notes

that it is the library's 'primary function' to provide 'advice and help' when both the student and amateur researcher embark on 'The discovery of source material', he also offers a further consideration in terms of how 'no library can hope to secure more than a fraction of the available material on local studies' and ties this to the broadening of the search for potential materials and the value of this endeavour:

This does not mean that the student is to be denied, or is to be carefully shielded from, the delights of searching for his sources on his own account. On the contrary, it is salutary that he should undergo this essential preliminary training and the amount now available is so great that no library can have even know about all that is needed for any specific line of research, however limited it may be.<sup>22p.183</sup>

In 1990, an article published in the Library Association's *Local Studies Librarian* journal focused on the local studies collection held in Newcastle College. The intention of the collection was made clear, where the Librarian and Head of Library Services 'hoped that the collection would help the lecturing staff to introduce the topic into their own teaching programmes and would stimulate research and exploration by the students into their own heritage.'<sup>23p.9</sup> The article provides a number of examples of how local collections can be used to enhance the curriculum across different subject areas:

Art students may research local artists, craftsmen, and architects, or use the city and surrounding areas as inspiration in their own right; business students consider past or present industrial growth, retail trade, service industries, transport networks, regional finance or the workings of local authorities; science students study the geology, ecology and natural history of the region ...<sup>24p.10</sup>

It is clear that Newcastle did not see the collection as one limited to a narrow range of disciplines – namely, those of a historical nature; indeed, the article's authors are careful to point out, when discussing the beginnings of the collection, that 'whilst we

appreciated Newcastle's past, we were just as interested in the present.<sup>25p.9</sup> In addition, the library's managers seemed to be aware of the potential arguments against local studies collections in an academic setting, addressing possible limitations by reframing the purpose of such collections – instead of positing the collection as a complete resource for students who have only to visit the college library in order to carry out local studies research, the article instead forwards the collection as an *introduction* to local studies as an area of research:

We try, if we can, to give students a start to their enquiries in the hope that some measure of quick success will encourage them to move on to better and more comprehensive collections in the public libraries and archives.<sup>26p.10</sup>

Indeed, it might be argued that the case of Newcastle College as described in the article cited provides a first-rate example not only of the breadth of local studies potential to enhance curriculum subjects, but also of a solid, justifiable purpose behind the idea of stocking local studies resources in academic libraries: as a *starting point* to local studies investigation. In other words, a situation is presented where local studies collections in further or higher education libraries are seen as *complementary to* local collections in the public sector rather than as complete resources to be used *instead of* those available elsewhere.

Yet, as ideal as Newcastle's example of local studies resources in academic libraries once appears to have been, the college library's response to the present study's questionnaires over a decade later, suggest that the integration of local studies into the curriculum was not, or at least is no longer, quite as effectively rendered as the article cited would imply. When asked the question, *Which courses in your institution does the collection support?* the following answer was given: 'None specifically. The local studies collection was developed as an item of interest, and hence now v. little [sic] funds are directed towards it.' In addition, not only is the college's collection no longer the integral element of the curriculum that the 1990 article seemed keen to promote, but neither are any links to be found with other local studies collections in the area, nor are there any 'future plans' for the

collection. However disappointing this more recent response might be, given the enthusiasm expressed above, there is evidence in the findings that a majority of institutions that hold local collections are seeing these resources employed, to one degree or another, in support of curriculum subjects. History, English, Business/Management, Travel and Tourism, Archaeology, Art and Design, and Local Studies itself are just some of the subjects that respondents cite as making use of local studies resources.

The English and History BA Honours Degree at North Lindsay College in Scunthorpe provides one such example of how local studies is utilised in other subject areas or, more accurately in this case, provides a focus for both historical and literary study. According to the Degree Course Leader, Pat Henderson,<sup>27</sup> English and History BA Honours is a joint honours degree that came about when the college was franchised by what is now the University of Lincoln to facilitate the first year of the university's BA Combined Studies, which contained elements of English, History, Geography, Law, Psychology, and Social Sciences. This carried on through a change to BA Humanities to the late 1990s, when, with the thought that 'more specific degree titles' would benefit the students, the BA Honours English and History emerged, combining the 'main strands' from both the English and History single honours degree courses. Henderson uses an example from the first year of what is now a two-year start to the degree at North Lindsay College, where a unit is completed on Victorian History, including urban culture, social and economic history and also literature, all of which can contain elements of local investigation: 'So, in fact, the two [subjects] come across very, very well. [For instance] They can use *North and South*<sup>xxxvi</sup> both as a literary source and as a historical source as well.' Henderson points to the benefits of such an approach, arguing that the student does not receive an education on history and English in which one is necessarily diluted by the inclusion of the other. On the contrary:

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<sup>xxxvi</sup> Elizabeth Gaskell novel, 1855.



To some extent, they actually gain, because they get a historical context for the literature. Or, if you want to say it the other way around, they get literature as another strand in the narrative of history. Whichever way you're coming from, the two do actually come together very well.

Asked specifically about the contribution of local studies to the course, tutor Stephanie Codd points to the first year 'research methods essay' where students are encouraged to undertake oral history research involving family members, which they can then relate to other primary sources such as newspapers or other materials that can be found in the library at North Lindsay College. Codd continues:

In the second year, there is actually a unit called Themes in Local and Regional History. So, it's to put it in a broader context. So, again, they're encouraged to use local studies and – not just in this library, obviously – but, the reference library at Scunthorpe Library as well. But, they do use the stuff we've got quite a lot. So, there is a local theme throughout [the course].

Codd also contributes to the supply of local studies resources used on the course, where students are encouraged to use both primary and secondary material. In Themes in Local and Regional History, for instance, 'we look at primary sources. So, I use Trade Directories as an example of that. But this [the library] is very useful for, certainly, secondary sources, so they can go to the books and then ... get references from there to do further work.'

While the results reported in the previous chapter do not provide the depth of detail supplied in the case of North Lindsey's English and History course, it does appear that local studies is having some impact on a variety of, for the most part, more 'mainstream' subjects, allowing for a perspective outside of standardised texts and other typical teaching materials.

As suggested by the example above, as well as shown in the results noted in the previous chapter, however, History is, by a broad margin, the subject area most likely

to provide opportunities for making use of local material suggesting once again that, for many practitioners and users, there remains a strong connection between local studies and studies of the past. The conflation of local studies with local history is a theme that has emerged throughout the thesis. As noted in chapter five, for instance, twice as many named collections refer to 'local history' than 'local studies', while Dewe notes that 'modern' investigations are largely usurped by those of an historical nature. More potentially troubling, however, is that this conflation may not merely be a case of one subject persistently, but harmlessly, being mistaken for the other. Instead, the situation appears to be that historical investigations actively *dominate* local studies. While the findings support the notion that local studies has found itself utilised within a fairly broad range of disciplines, it might also be reasonably argued that the prevalence of history perhaps cannot help but act as something of a background hum that may prevent local studies from achieving a more prominent role within the curriculum, in research, and in the library itself. Witness, for instance, the respondent in chapter five who does not identify as holding a local collection – despite describing the presence of some local items – because 'we are not a historical collection.'

For those who would like to see local investigations more explicitly integrated with contemporary fields of study, the dominance of history is undoubtedly frustrating. Yet, the dominance of 'History' as the go-to subject area for local studies – as well as the term 'local history' having the reputation it does as the synonym that will not go away – need not necessarily be considered a failure to bring local resources up-to-date, nor an indication that actual local *history* is doomed to merely provide 'background' to more contemporary studies. Instead, it might be suggested that the term 'history' (or 'historical') is not static – there is no immutable 'end' point, a suggestion raised during the interview with Professor Harold Fox of the Department of English Local History in Leicester University in 2005 where, given the emphasis on studies of the past that its name explicitly suggests, the question of the department's relevance to studies of the present was broached. Discussing the era covered by the department (studies do not cover 'pre-history' – that is, history prior to the Roman era) and how contemporary the department is permitted to be in its focus, Fox

posits the suggestion that 'In some senses, it [history] doesn't stop'. For example, Fox points to a number of lectures having been delivered in the university on how to conduct interviews with people 'who are still living'. Not only does what Fox describe allude to a dependent relationship between the past and the present, where the two are inextricably intertwined (without the present perspective, the history being relayed cannot exist) but the given example also illustrates something of an on-going history: If the subject him- or herself can be considered a historical presence, it stands to reason that, if the subject is still living, the 'history' continues. Similarly, as a landscape historian, Fox notes that the landscapes with which he is concerned are often visible in the present day; they have not simply disappeared into a historical fog embedded in the past. In addition, he can use his knowledge and awareness of the landscape's history 'to help in the planning process', for example, providing advice for *future* preservation purposes or indicating what can or cannot be demolished or retained in the present. While this may not solve the 'problem' of the strong association of local studies with studies of the past, by taking a different approach towards the very definition of 'history' itself – one that encompasses both the 'old' and contemporary – a means of incorporating local studies into more modern fields of investigation arguably is enabled.

When it comes to examining types of research activity, it is perhaps worth returning to the question raised earlier regarding the potential for local studies to provide sound research experience. Dewe, for instance, is 'thoroughly in support' of the view that local studies might serve as a 'very useful approach to acquiring research skills':

If you look at the local studies guidelines, one of the things they say is that ... not talking particularly about students, but they're talking about people getting involved in local studies as a way of, shall we say, "acquiring a study habit" [...] In terms of undergraduates and others [it does give them] an opportunity to develop research skills, that they get to use a range of sources which perhaps they wouldn't use in other fields. You know, everything from maps, websites to ephemera – and also including fieldwork [...] And then

they have the job of analysing the information from all these varied resources.<sup>28</sup>

If, as Dewe suggests, local studies investigation can provide a means of gaining research experience and honing appropriate skills, it might be said that local studies research provides something of a groundwork for future academic investigation. It might also be suggested, however, that, while this is a valuable aspect of local studies, its importance should not be overestimated at the expense of recognising the value of local research as a pursuit in and of itself. The question of whether or not academic libraries *ought* to be providing the resources with which to carry out such research – thus potentially undermining the more adventurous aspects of local investigation that takes the student out of the campus grounds – is perhaps, from this perspective, something of a moot point. As Dewe points out, ‘fieldwork’ is not the only benefit or pleasure that can be drawn from local studies investigation: exposure to a variety of resources, as well as the ability to analyse information, provides value too. In addition, the ‘introductory’ approach taken by Newcastle College in the article cited earlier (regardless of the collection’s long-term success or lack thereof), as well as collaborations between academic libraries and public libraries and archives, also suggest that the student may well find him- or herself ‘out in the field’ at any rate.

Yet, when considering the value of local studies materials in terms of how they are put to use, a distinction between subject support and research may be difficult to ascertain. Webb draws attention to a survey conducted by the Library and Information Statistics Unit (LISU), referred to in the Follet report, ‘where many respondents had difficulty in differentiating between library activity in support of teaching and research.’ Regarding another study undertaken for the Follet Review Group, in which monograph loans between 1981 and 1991 were analysed by the University of Sussex, Webb states:

Results showed a very substantial degree of common use of book stock for teaching and research. It is also possible that developments in teaching

methods have intensified the use of journals and monographs for teaching purposes, further blurring such distinctions. This is particularly so in cases where such material is used in projects and dissertations in final year undergraduate or taught Masters courses.<sup>29p.138</sup>

While the present survey did not make a point of enquiring as to whether or not the same local materials were used for course-based subject support and research, it is possible that, given the idiosyncratic nature of much local studies material, some crossover may occur.

## 7.5 Materials

In the previous chapter and the related *Appendix 4* that lists the types of local materials held in college and university libraries, it is shown that institutions still tend to carry a majority of items in hard-copy format. Given the nature of much local material and the ways in which it is often acquired – for instance, material of a ‘historical’ nature; books and photographs donated to the library – and the fact that the majority of local collections held by respondents were started prior to the 1980s, this is perhaps not too surprising. It also speaks to the often unique flavour of the materials gathered and the value that can be placed outside of the ‘usefulness’ of the content of the items themselves – for example, letters and manuscripts that are viewed not only as providing insight into the locality due to the knowledge that can be drawn from what is *contained in* these documents, but also as historical artefacts that are worth preserving in and of themselves; that is, a document’s age and/or origin alone can give it ‘value’ beyond its content. Even when material is employed in learning, its usefulness might not be limited to the substance of its text. Dr Norman Reid at St Andrews, for example, points to the study of calligraphy as a subject that not uncommonly makes use of the local manuscripts kept in the university’s Special Collections.<sup>30</sup>

Also noted, however, is that the second most popular format cited is local studies content that is internet-based. As suggested in chapter six, a similar survey on local

studies resources in academic libraries carried out *since* the primary research referred to in the present study was conducted would likely see the gap between hard-copy and digital holdings narrowed. As Reid notes, '[It] can be argued that the Internet revolution of the last ten years [i.e. prior to 2003] has been the most important change in libraries since the introduction of the free public library. No part of the library is immune from the changes being wrought by the Internet.'<sup>31p.14</sup>

Arguably, one of the ways that the impact of the 'internet revolution' on libraries is most likely to be felt is in regards to the issue of, as Baker puts it, 'access versus holdings', a matter focused on the 'concept of access to materials rather than holding them on-site.'<sup>32p.85</sup> He draws attention to one of the most pressing problems faced by libraries when it comes to holding material, noting that:

... it is not just the direct cost of buying the material which causes concern [for libraries]. The growing problem is not the standard indirect costs of acquisition ... but the cost of space in which to house it. UEA [University of East Anglia] Library was built to house 500,000 volumes; it now contains 700,000. The building is full by any standard or definition.'<sup>33p86</sup>

Here, the problem identified concerns lack of space to physically accommodate items and the potential (monetary) costs of rectifying this. Indeed, as reported in chapter five, a number of libraries or LRCs that do not carry local material cite a lack of space and budget restrictions as a reason for the absence. Furthermore, a lack of physical space is not a concern limited to those respondents who have prioritised local studies out of their library collections entirely; as in the case of institutions such as Wirral Metropolitan College and the University of Wales, Bangor, monetary concerns can also impact negatively upon the potential expansion of existing collections.

However, as Reid suggests, digitisation may well provide a potential solution, where 'the mounting of local studies materials on the Internet can result in overcoming [...] the location of the physical collection.'<sup>34p.81</sup> Not only might the digitisation of local

material save room and reduce ongoing concerns about balancing the need to house items with the associated costs required to do so, but there are other benefits that perhaps depend less on the ability to make items *potentially* accessible in the first place (the 'space' problem) and more on making potentially accessible items more *usefully* accessible. Reid points to a situation whereby the creation of digital content can provide a 'universal point of access to the collection,' and not only in terms of bringing together material held in separate locations. As he puts it:

Perhaps the greatest single benefit of the Internet is, however, the ability to reach a much wider audience anywhere in the world. The creation of digital content is not simply about enfranchising members of the local community but is also about enabling a much wider audience to share in unique local resources.<sup>35p.80</sup>

Once again, one of the arguably strongest arguments for digitisation points to the distinctiveness of local studies materials as a learning resource. Whether intentionally or not, however, Reid underlines the perhaps paradoxical – and thus, possibly problematic – nature of a resource whose singular flavour makes it a potentially very desirable focus for digitisation and broader access while, at the same time, lacking the 'mainstream' or broad appeal of more general educational resources:

Certainly the goal is to enable users to find an answer or a response to their particular question or problem but the same universality of sources simply does not exist across the board within the local studies context. It is the individuality of local studies collections that makes them so important. Each individual collection has the capacity, if not always the ability, to provide access to a unique range of holdings; there exists the potential to create digital resources made up of materials that cannot be accessed in any other way beyond the narrow geographical confines of the 'local area'.<sup>36p.80</sup>

Reid, however, is clear that it is the very distinctiveness of local materials that makes it an ideal candidate for wider access. Indeed, to approach the opportunity for broader 'distribution' otherwise could arguably be said to reduce access to educational resources (whether their ultimate use is academic, amateur or professional) to a mere popularity contest, particularly when the means of distribution is a tool whose principal, if not sole, purpose is to share information without borders (barring censorship or copyright issues that may affect certain territories).

Discussing the University of Dundee's Archive Services digitisation project, Brown highlights further potential benefits of digitisation, involving not only the possibility of easier admission to traditionally difficult-to-access formats, but also the prospective practical use that access to digital material may have when it comes to the overall organisation and management of collections:

Creating a digital copy of an item provides a surrogate which can be accessed and used instead of the original thereby assisting in the preservation of the original. Archives that are difficult to access because of their physical nature, such as large plans, glass plate negatives and 35mm slides become immediately accessible. Selecting items for digitisation and having a bank of images available on a computer gives archivists a better overview of their collections and can assist with the cataloguing process.<sup>37p.170</sup>

Yet, despite the potential advantages highlighted above, very few respondents explicitly cited digitisation as part of their library or LRC's future plans, with only North Highland College, the University of Cambridge, and Cardiff University unambiguously bringing attention to this issue as a means of possible development. Whether potential costs of digitisation, present low usage of local material, or even the possibility that the issue simply did not occur to the respondent when answering the open question (that is, the questionnaire did not prompt respondents with potential options) affected respondents' attitudes, again, it is probable that views on this subject have changed since the survey was conducted.



There are, of course, other potential issues to be considered when evaluating the prospect of digitisation as a means of permitting broader access to local materials. For example, for collection managers, meeting appropriate image quality standards, such as those laid out in the National Archives' *Digital Records: Digitised Image Specification*, may be a consideration,<sup>38p.6</sup> as might other practical issues, such as a possible accompanying increase in the cost of server space, or the potential environmental impact of converting items into a digital format.<sup>39</sup> When it comes to prospective users, the issue of admission to digital materials requiring access to the *access point* in the first place is arguably a further cause for consideration. With regards to online access, the Office for National Statistics reports in the first quarter of 2012<sup>40</sup> that 83.7% of the UK population above 16 years of age have, at some point, used the internet, with only a slight gender gap of 86.15% male to 81.3% female; neither does a difference in weekly earnings amongst those in paid employment appear to affect access to any significantly negative degree, with all pay bands found between 90% and (in two cases among the top three earnings bands) 100%. When considering the issue within a local studies context, perhaps interestingly, the most discernable gaps occur when it comes to age, where only 27.4% of those 75 years old and over, 61.3% of those aged between 65 and 74, and 81.8% of the population in the 55 to 64 years old bracket have used the internet, in contrast to, for example, 98.6% of those aged between 16 and 24. While the correlation between an older demographic and relatively recent technology may be (stereo)typically unsurprising, within the context of local studies, such figures may require a more nuanced approach. Professor Harold Fox, for example, points to the popularity of local studies with older people, noting of approximately three quarters of those undertaking the Local History MA at the University of Leicester: "They don't need a degree, they're simply doing it for pleasure ... Their holiday cruise [comparing in terms of cost] is the MA course."<sup>41</sup> This suggests that, in terms of local studies resources, there is yet another paradox – or perhaps conundrum – whereby a demographic amongst those most likely to benefit from digital access is also one of those least likely to make use of the means with which to access the material.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

The research presented in this thesis aimed to provide an exploration of the presence of and reasons for local studies collections in the libraries and learning resource centres of further and higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. While contributions have been divided into methodological and empirical contributions, and theoretical contributions, some overlap does occur between these categories.

### **7.6.1 Methodological and Empirical Contribution: Scale and Scope of the Study**

As noted in chapter one's rationale, the subsequent literature review in chapter two, and elsewhere in the thesis, one of the chief reasons for having undertaken the present study is the dearth of research and writing on the subject of local collections in college and university libraries and LRCs. Prior to the current investigation, the only substantial literature to focus on this particular area of interest is that based on Paul and Dewe's 1984 survey, which the authors themselves describe as a 'preliminary' study of local resources in academic libraries.

While an acknowledgement of Paul and Dewe's work as an influence on the study presented herein is certainly warranted, the research and findings reported in the thesis suggests that, for such a significant gap in the literature – where the public library has, for a long time, been assumed the natural domain of local studies resources – a 'preliminary' study, by definition, does not grant the subject of local collections in further and higher education institutions the importance it deserves; rather, at best, it serves as a starting-point for investigations that are both more expansive and delve deeper into the whys and wherefores of the area under discussion.

One of the most important aspects of the present study is the scale and scope of the investigation. Given this focus, it is not surprising that the methodological and empirical contributions to knowledge appear so dependent on one another – in other words, the methodological approaches employed to carry out the study were very much dictated by the deliberate decision to cast a wide net in order to collect and analyse empirical data on local studies material in academic libraries on a scale and scope that had not been seen before. While this may seem self-evident – methodology *should* depend on the information being sought – it is perhaps worth reiterating that, in this case, the methodological approach was not only informed by the *type* of data required in order to provide information that would benefit the study, but the sheer *reach* of the study itself.

Consideration has, therefore, been given to the methodological and empirical contributions to knowledge as separate entities, but with the acknowledgement that they are profoundly linked.

### **7.6.1.1 Methodological Contribution**

Methodologically, the study comprises both quantitative and qualitative approaches and methods, including questionnaires, observational visits, interviews, and secondary literature.

Quantitative data was collected largely through the distribution of two questionnaires: the first distributed to all identified targets, with a view to providing broad coverage of the content and scope of local collections in university and college libraries in the UK; the second aimed at providing further detail that spoke to the purpose of the collections held. A two-tiered approach was adopted for two reasons: to avoid receiving an overwhelming amount of data in the first instance; and to avoid discouraging potential respondents by distributing a large questionnaire at the initial data-collection stage.

As noted both below and in *Chapter Three: Methods and Approaches*, the decision was made to target as many further and higher institutions as possible in Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Sources including several online Bubl sub-directories pertaining to universities, colleges and academic libraries, and the 2003/2004 *World of Learning* directory were consulted in order to provide the researcher with a comprehensive list of potential respondents. Once email addresses and the names of appropriate individuals were located by either checking library home pages or contacting the library by telephone, the first questionnaire was distributed to 802 libraries and LRCs. Following the receipt and analysis of the questionnaire's responses, a second survey was distributed to 223 respondents who had expressed an interest in contributing further to the study.

The decision to employ questionnaires for these stages reflects the size and scope of the study, allowing the researcher to reach a large number of respondents within a relatively short time. What adds to the uniqueness of the study in terms of the methodological contribution, however, is the decision to combine this method with other, qualitative, methods that served to provide a richer, fuller picture of local studies resources in academic libraries. A small number of observational visits were organised, with purposive sampling employed in order to ensure a robust justification for the selection of each institution; interviews were arranged with the institution's library, special collections department, or learning centre's collection manager in order to build on responses received at the questionnaire stage; with further interviews conducted with educators and students. An interview was also carried out with Michael Dewe, a renowned figure in local studies, in which findings from the study were discussed in-depth; with a follow-up set of reflective questions forwarded to Dewe later in the year.

The combination of a large-scale questionnaire survey; a further, more detailed questionnaire; observational visits to a number of carefully selected institutions; and interviews with collection managers, experts and others, has resulted in the contribution of a mixed methodology that encompasses both a broad scope and deep focus.

### 7.6.1.2 Empirical Contribution

As noted above, one of the first ways in which the thesis' research makes a significant contribution to the field of local studies literature, as well as that focused on academic libraries and the relationship between resources and teaching, learning and research in colleges and universities, is in the scale and scope of the study. Because of the scale and scope, investigations are not limited by either geography (within the United Kingdom) or the types of subjects taught within institutions. Indeed, to have limited the study in this way can be immediately reckoned to run counter to the point of carrying out an investigation seeking to focus on both the *content and scope* and the *purpose* of local studies resources in the first place. For example, to have narrowed the examination of local studies resources' engagement with courses mainly drawn from the arts and social sciences, as was the case in the 1984 study, would arguably have led to a bias in the literature not dissimilar from that which assumes, and arguably propagates, the 'local studies = public libraries' model. In other words, there is already a well-established affiliation between local studies and the humanities, especially historical studies, and limiting the investigation to institutions whose educational focus is based around these subjects risks a significant degree of confirmation bias before the findings are even analysed with regards to what kinds of teaching, learning and research are 'most likely' to make use of local resources. In order to avoid this potential constraint, a broad scope when considering potential participants in the study, therefore, became essential. In terms of limiting the study by geography, while not presenting a problem similar in any way to that just mentioned, there may perhaps be something of an inherent irony in launching an investigation, in which the extent to which local resources are used is a main component, that narrows its geographical scope to specific parts of the country in question. As discussed later in this conclusion, the term 'local' itself comes with a wealth of interpretations that frequently rely not just on geographical lines mapped out by official government bodies (where, even then, the term 'local' might mean anything from the institution itself to entire countries) , but on historical areas, 'shifting' borders, community identities and other *unofficial* indicators.

By targeting the entire (as far as possible) population under consideration, including departmental libraries within Oxford and Cambridge universities, the study allowed for a broad picture to be taken of the current situation with regard to local resources in colleges and universities. One that permitted, for example, libraries supporting natural science subjects to be represented as much as those whose institutions are focused on history or education; while, similarly, further and higher education institutions from all areas of the United Kingdom could, ideally, take part in the survey. The study, therefore, stands as the first large-scale survey of the content, scope and purpose of local studies collections in colleges and universities throughout the United Kingdom, where participation does not depend on certain types of subjects being taught in the curriculum, or by geographic location in the UK. That is, the research represents the first in-depth investigation into local studies resources to focus on libraries within the Further and Higher Education sector.

As the findings suggest, employing an expansive scale and scope to the investigation has allowed for a much richer examination of local collections in academia than has previously been carried out. Not only does this in itself suggest a unique contribution to the discourse of library resources and local studies, but, as proposed earlier, it also serves to interrupt the dominant narrative found in local studies literature that, until now, has firmly positioned local studies within the context of the public library, often with only the briefest of allusions made to local resources that might be found outside of the public sector.

While the issue of the definition of 'local' is discussed further below, it is important to note at this point how critical the relationship is between local resources and the field of local studies, and how the study's focus on resources draws attention to an inextricable link that may not always be evident when thinking about resources and disciplines in a 'traditionally' hierarchical manner, where library materials can frequently be thought to take a 'supporting' role to the area of enquiry itself. Local resources themselves, however, arguably have a much more immediate impact on the study of localities. Local materials, for example, largely define what is meant by

local within the context of a given collection; this is especially true of local material in the academic sector, which, as mentioned previously in the thesis, is subject to fewer restrictions than public libraries regarding geographic scope. As such, if a collection is expanded upon in terms of geographic coverage, the definition of 'local' is, by extension, expanded and must, therefore, be revisited. This emphasises the criticality of the role of resources within local studies and further underlines the importance and significance of this research.

What the study does then, as far as contributing to the broader discourse is concerned, is to *reconceptualise* local studies through the prism of academic libraries and resources rather than keep the subject contained within the 'traditional' realm of the public library. In this way, as will be discussed further when recommendations are made, the door is opened for further explorations of local studies resources outside of the public sector.

Of course, this does not necessarily mean that a sharp division should be drawn between the public and academic sectors. Rather, the attention given to resources within universities and colleges can also be viewed as cause to examine more closely the likes of collaborations and partnerships between public libraries and archives and neighbouring higher and further education institutions. While bearing in mind Dewe and others' caution regarding duplication of materials, findings suggest that collaboration with the public sector has been a consideration for a number of respondents including, in the case of St Andrews University, primary responsibility for city archives being handed from one sector to the other. The issue of collaboration and creative partnerships between resource providers is perhaps especially relevant in the current financial and political climate, where cuts in both the public sector and in education are not uncommon. Economic austerity can frequently be a driving force behind collaborations between those hit hardest by budget cuts and restraints; given the nature of local studies material – that is, in the case of, say, a town or city home to a public library, city archives and a university or college, a range of material that shares a common, and in some cases, strong, geographical theme – local resources would appear to lend itself most readily to

partnerships and affiliations that can benefit both/all parties. In other words, because of the quite specific thematic *sameness* of the material, a relationship between the resources held by different providers *already* exists and can be built upon without having to create (perhaps more artificial or arbitrary) connections between materials.

### **7.6.2 Theoretical Contribution: Questioning ‘Local’**

In addition to reframing local studies resources – and thus local studies itself – by focusing on materials outside of a public sector context, carrying out a survey of this size and scope also allowed for a more thorough than previously undertaken examination of one of the most fundamental aspects of local studies investigation: the definition of the term ‘local’ itself. While an assessment of this facet of local studies had been identified as one of the study’s objectives early on, the extent to which the question of defining the term featured in the research was somewhat unexpected. As indicated above, the scale and scope of the study may well have had some bearing on the reason why this particular issue emerged as a key point, allowing the objective to be met and surpassed. Asking respondents from the largest possible population in terms of further and higher education institutions to describe the geographic scope of their collection(s) encouraged a broad range of answers that frequently belied ‘commonsense’ notions of what ‘local’ is, or how – even within the literature – the term is generally understood. As described in Chapter Five, not only did respondents’ answers range from ‘local as institution’ to ‘local as several countries’, but secondary investigation that suggested ‘local’ as a term commonly used, yet arguably with a limited degree of clarity, consensus or understanding, revealed that this aspect of local studies had also been largely neglected in the literature. This is not to suggest that defining the term – or rather examining how the term is or can be defined – has been of no interest to previous practitioners and scholars; only that, again, given how central the concept of ‘local’ is, and should be, to local studies, there has been relatively little research and writing done on this specific, but arguably overarching, aspect of local studies and its resources.



The present research does not provide a definitive answer to the question of what the term 'local' means within the context of local studies – probably the least problematic and most easily applied definition that carries some degree of consistency is that 'local studies' may refer to the study of one or more localities, with the proviso that defining specific localities in the first place can frequently come with its own set of ambiguities (as mentioned earlier, for instance, 'localities' are not always strictly dependent on government-drawn boundaries). What the research and subsequent findings do, however, is open up an under-investigated issue for further consideration. For example, responses could be grouped into broad descriptive areas, from material whose scope is limited to the institution itself (as in the case of, for instance, the Institute of Astronomy Library at the University of Cambridge), through collections that focus on the immediate town or city (such as the Library and Learning Centre at Hugh Baird College), the county (for instance, Perth College), up to the likes of the University of Leicester, where the collection of 'local' material reaches across more than one constituent country.

While it may be unrealistic to expect that a consensus can or even *should* be reached as to a single definition of the term 'local', the wide range of responses received from the libraries and LRCs that took part in the study suggest that it is an area worth investigating further in order to gain a more *comprehensive* understanding of how geographical areas can be perceived, whether in terms of physical spaces, communities, history or otherwise, rather than relying on tacit knowledge that mostly assumes that the reader or researcher will 'just know' what 'local' in any given context means.

That the focus placed on definition(s) of the term 'local' constitutes the theoretical contribution is precisely because it *is* so central to the subject of local studies and, equally, to its resources. As noted in the previous section, local resources are not easily separated from local studies. Yet, what constitutes 'local' – the primary concept that separates this type of study from almost all others – has rarely been interrogated to the extent that it arguably should be. The findings clearly challenge

common notions of what 'local' is, whether held by lay-persons, academics, librarians, or local studies experts. By opening it up to interrogation, allowing theories and concepts to emerge that challenge perceptions of places, boundaries and even identities, a theoretical contribution is made that focuses on the very heart of local studies.

## **7.7 Limitations of the Research**

As noted above, the use of survey questionnaires permitted the large scale and broad scope of the study. However, the response rate for the first questionnaire was low, at 28%. This limits the significance of the findings to a degree. Yet, as pointed out earlier by Paul in Chapter Three, the response rate for questionnaires in general does not tend to be very high<sup>42p.62</sup> and so, while not an ideal result, it may be counted as a realistic response, especially given that the targeted population was so specific.

Another notable limitation concerns the progress of technology. During the research, a number of innovations occurred and advancements made that may have benefit the study had they been incorporated. It is suggested in the thesis itself, for example, that, given the rapidly increasing popularity of digital resources, responses to the question regarding types of materials held might look very different should the same question be asked in the not-too-distant future, or even today. Similarly, at the time of the research design and implementation, social networking sites and more interactive, visitor-friendly blogs were neither as ubiquitous nor heavily used as they latterly became. Not only could these sites have been utilised as tool for communicating with prospective respondents, but it is possible they would have found their way into the research itself, for instance, cited as a potential publicity tool used by respondents.

## 7.8 Recommendations

By focusing on local studies resources within the academic sector, the research not only aimed to shed light on this underrepresented area of local studies, but also sought to provide ideas and suggestions for how the investigation and findings can be carried forward.

The tendency for local studies collections to be equated with the public library service is one that perhaps puts unnecessary limits on the potential of local studies resources. Further investigation into local resources outside of the public sector may ultimately provide a means of enhancing access – that is, broadening the scope for admission to local materials – as well as shedding a light on collections that may, at present, be neglected; this applies not only to collections that may be lying dormant in colleges and universities or are simply underused in academia, but also private collections that, due to the local studies-public library paradigm, have not been *allowed* to be discovered by those with a serious interest in local studies – whether amateur, professional or academic. After all, local studies collections are not infrequently home to ‘hidden treasures’ that further investigation into different collections may help to uncover. With this in mind, collaboration between public and academic libraries might also be explored further. In addition to the potential for broadening access, collaboration may also provide, for example, practical benefits in terms of shared resources, such as those based on financial concerns, or it may lead to a reduction in the redundant duplication of materials.

Improved access may also be attained if further consideration is given to digitisation. Although academic libraries are taking the lead in digitisation in general, relatively few academic libraries are engaged in such projects with respect to local materials. Yet, while it would be a mistake to assume that digitisation can provide a cure-all remedy for neglected or underutilised items, there are benefits to undertaking such projects, not only in terms of providing potential wider admission to ‘difficult to access’ material, but also in digitisation’s capacity to serve a role in preserving the types of rare, aged, and sometimes valuable items – not to mention those that,

through age of prior lack of care, might be vulnerable to damage – that are not uncommonly found in local collections.

However, the belief that there is room in academic libraries for local collections should not necessarily usurp more practical considerations. It may well be, for instance, that a collection is simply redundant within a given college or university, whether due to lack of use thanks to an incompatibility with courses or research activity or an inability to provide suitable accommodation for the material through a lack of space, or absence of other resources that would enable material to be held for other purposes. In such cases, as may occur in the instance described earlier of the collection held at Coleg Sir Gar's Learning Centre Ammanford Campus, handing material over to a specialist collection may well be the most pragmatic solution, affording the material its best chance both to be looked after properly and to find enthusiastic users.

In addition, as implied earlier when discussing the contribution to theory, further research could be undertaken as to how the present understanding of 'local' as a concept affects not only the literature, but the practice of local investigation and the management of collections. As proposed, this concept is central to local studies, yet largely neglected as an area of examination, and arguably deserves far more attention than has been given thus far.

## 7.9 References

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## **Appendix 1: Questionnaires**

The documents that follow comprise hard-copy versions of both the first and second questionnaires that formed the initial two stages of empirical data collection. In both cases, online versions were made available via links sent to potential respondents, with hard copies available on request.

# Local Studies Collections in College and University Libraries

## Notes for the respondent

Although the questionnaire title, and the questions themselves, refer to local studies collections, I am chiefly interested in local studies materials held in your library or learning centre. Such materials may, in fact, be organised as an easily identifiable single collection, or they may comprise individual items or more than one collection dispersed throughout the library stock. Therefore, the term collection refers to the existence of any local studies items, with certain questions designed to determine the actual nature of their organisation.

The term, "local studies" basically refers to any material concerned with your local area, whether its subject is history, geography, art, science or otherwise. As for "local" itself, definitions of this term can be determined in many different ways. It may, for instance, refer to a town or city, a region, or even a certain distance measured by radius from your college or university. In Question 3 of SECTION B, therefore, the respondent is asked to indicate his or her library's own definition of this concept.

May I also take the opportunity to thank you in advance for your contribution to this study.

Marie E. Nolan

## SECTION A

**What is the name of your library / learning resource centre / learning centre?**

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**What is the name of the educational institution served by your library / LRC / LC?**

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**What type of institution is it?** (Please select one option)

Further Education College



Further and Higher Education College



Higher Education College



University



Other (please specify)



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**What is your title / position?**

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**What is your email address?**

---

**Does your library have a local studies collection?**

Yes



No



If you answered 'Yes' to the last question please complete **SECTION B**, then return the form; if 'No', please complete **SECTION C**, then return the form.

## **SECTION B: Please complete if your library has a local studies collection**

N.B. If more than one local studies collection exists in your library, please supply information about each one. In order to do so, you may wish to fill in and submit more than one questionnaire form.

**1. When was the collection started? (An indication of the decade, if possible, would be sufficient)**

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**2. Under what name is the collection known? (This may include generic names such as 'local history' or more specific titles such as a collection named after a benefactor)**

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**3. What is the geographic scope of the collection? (e.g., town, county, region, etc.)**

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**4. Is the collection housed separately, or is it integrated throughout the library stock?**

Separate

Integrated

Both

**Please give details:**

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**5. What size is the collection? (Please select one option)**

Less than 50 items

50 – 100 items

101 – 500 items

501 – 1000 items

More than 1000 items

**6. Are you willing to take part in a follow-up questionnaire?**

Yes

Perhaps

No

**Thank you for completing the questionnaire.**

## SECTION C: Please complete if your library does not have a local studies collection

1. Your library does not have a local studies collection because:  
(Please be as detailed as possible)

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2. To where do you refer users with local studies enquiries?

Public Library	<input type="checkbox"/>
Archives / County Records Office	<input type="checkbox"/>
Museum	<input type="checkbox"/>
No local studies enquiries are made	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

3. If users are referred elsewhere, how often does this occur?

Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frequently	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Is a local studies collection being considered for your library?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please give further details, such as when the collection might be implemented, the scale and scope of the planned collection, etc.**

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**Thank you for completing the questionnaire.**

# Local Studies Collections in College and University Libraries – Questionnaire Part 2

## Notes for the Respondent

As the PhD study moves forward, more attention is given to both the management and the purpose of local studies collections in the library or learning resource centre. The information received from this questionnaire will help to identify how collections are organised, the types of materials found in the collections, and how local studies resources support teaching, learning and research within the college or university.

Please note that, as before, the term "collection" refers to individual items, materials that may be organised as a single collection, or more than one collection dispersed throughout the library stock.

Should you have any questions regarding the survey, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Once again, thank you for continuing to support this PhD study.

Marie E. Nolan

## SECTION A

**What is the Name of Your Library/Learning Resource Centre/ Learning Centre?**

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**What is the name of the educational institution served by your library/ LRC/ LC?**

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**What type of institution is it? (please select one option)**

- Further Education College
- Further and Higher Education College
- Higher Education College
- University
- Other (please specify)

**What is your job title/position?**

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**What is your email address?**

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**What is your name?**

---

**What is your title?**

- Mr
- Ms
- Mrs
- Ms
- Dr
- Other (please specify)

## SECTION B - The Organisation and Management of the Collection

1. If some or all of your local studies material is integrated, which subject sections is it integrated with? (Please check all that apply)

History	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geography	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural Science	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural History	<input type="checkbox"/>
Archaeology	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geology	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business and Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Government	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

If 'other' please specify

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**2. If some or all of your collection is housed separately, where is it housed?**

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**3. Under what scheme is the local studies collection classified? (Please check all that apply)**

- Dewey
- Library of Congress
- UDC
- Other scheme or variation on established scheme

**If 'other scheme or variation' please specify**

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**4. Is some or all of the information available in your local studies collection indexed? If so, please provide brief details (e.g., whether you have developed your own indexing terms; whether the indexes are electronic- or card-based)**

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**5. How many items in your local studies collection are listed on the library/LRC OPAC?**

- |                              |                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| All                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Most                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Some                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| None – card catalogue in use | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| None – other                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**If 'None - other' please provide brief details**

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**6. Is your library/LRC's OPAC available remotely?**

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| To all  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To registered staff and students only         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| OPAC facilities are only available internally | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**If 'other' please provide brief details**

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**7. Is access to the local studies collection itself available in the library/LRC:-**

- |                                       |                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| To all                                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To registered staff and students only | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If 'other' please provide brief details

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8. How do storage and/or preservation issues affect access to the collection? Please provide brief details

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9. Is the collection separately staffed?

Yes

No

If Yes, please specify the number of staff and their positions/job titles:

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10. Is induction/training in local studies librarianship provided for staff in your library/LRC?

Yes – induction

No - induction

Yes - training

No - training

**If possible, please provide additional information**

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**11. Is the collection separately budgeted?**

Yes

No

**Please provide brief details**

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**12. Does your library/LRC have a policy for dealing with information enquiries relating to local studies? If so, please provide brief details**

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## SECTION C- Materials in the library

### 1. From where does your library/ LRC obtain local studies material? (Please check all that apply)

Library supplier

Donations / bequests

Antiquarian / second-hand book dealers

Specialist suppliers (e.g. cartographic suppliers)

Word-of-mouth (e.g. information passed on from readers, collectors etc)

Other

**If 'other' please specify**

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### 2. If material is obtained from Antiquarian/second-hand book dealers, are 'wants lists' supplied to dealers?

Yes

No

Sometimes

### 3. Is archival material (e.g. records, letters, diaries, manuscripts) housed in a department outside of the library (e.g. a Special Collections department)?

Yes

No

If 'yes' please specify

---

---

---

**4. What types of material are included in your library/ LRC's local studies collection? (Please check all that apply)**

**Texts, maps and illustrations**

**Regional Histories**

- |                |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Hard Copy      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Micro-Form     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| CD-ROM         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Internet Based | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other Format   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If 'other format' please specify

---

**Victoria County History**

- |                |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Hard Copy      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Micro-Form     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| CD-ROM         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Internet Based | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other Format   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If 'other format' please specify

---



### Reference Works

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

### Government Publications

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

### Literature (e.g. fiction, poetry, etc)

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

### **Sale Catalogues**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

### **Dissertations and Theses**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

### **Directories**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

### **Electoral Registers**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

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### **Old Parish Registers (OPRs)**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

### **International Genealogical Index (IGI)**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

**Census Enumerators' Book (CEB)**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

**Other genealogical sources (e.g., family histories)**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

**Newspapers**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

**Periodicals**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

**County, town and parish maps**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

**Ordnance Survey maps**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

**Goald maps and plans**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

**Photographs**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

**Prints and engravings**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

**Drawings and watercolours**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

**Other Illustrated material**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

**Ephemera (e.g., tickets, posters, brochures, etc)**

- Hard Copy
- Micro-Form
- CD-ROM
- Internet Based
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

## Sound Recordings

### Oral Histories

Reel-to-Reel	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gramophone (78 rpm)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Record (45 rpm or LP)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cassette	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compact Disc	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital for Internet Use	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Format	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

### Music Recordings

Reel-to-Reel	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gramophone (78 rpm)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Record (45 rpm or LP)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cassette	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compact Disc	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital for Internet Use	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Format	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If 'other format' please specify**

---



## Film

### In-house productions

Projector film	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video cassette	<input type="checkbox"/>
DVD	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital for Internet Use	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Format	<input type="checkbox"/>

If 'other format' please specify

---

### Documentaries

Projector film	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video cassette	<input type="checkbox"/>
DVD	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital for Internet Use	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Format	<input type="checkbox"/>

If 'other format' please specify

---

### Feature Films

Projector film	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video cassette	<input type="checkbox"/>
DVD	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital for Internet Use	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Format	<input type="checkbox"/>

If 'other format' please specify

---

**Television drama, comedy, etc**

- Projector film
- Video cassette
- DVD
- Digital for Internet Use
- Other Format

**If 'other format' please specify**

---

**Other types of material (e.g. news clippings file, museum artefacts, etc)**

**Please specify type and format:**

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## SECTION D - The Curriculum & Research

1. Which courses in your institution does the collection support? (Please specify whether under or post-graduate)

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2. Approximately what percentage of courses overall employs local studies material?

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3. Does your local studies collection support:- (Please check all that apply)

- |                              |                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Undergraduate dissertations? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Postgraduate dissertations?  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Higher degree theses?        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Academic staff research?     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. If academic staff research is supported, can you please supply any examples of research outputs where local studies resources were employed?

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5. Are 'study packs' based on local studies material available to students?

Yes

No



**If so, who produces these packs? (Please check all that apply)**

The library



The department running the relevant course



Other



**If 'other' please specify**

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## SECTION E - Publicity and Future Plans

**1. Are publicity materials produced for your local studies collections?**

Yes



No



**If 'yes', please provide brief details (e.g. who the publicity is aimed at)**

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**2. What links, if any, does your library LRC have with other local studies collections in the area?**

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**3. What future plans do you have for your local studies collection?**

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**4. Does your library/ LRC have a web-site or web-page that focuses on local studies resources?**

Yes

No

**If yes, please supply a URL below**

---

**5. Does your library website have a page containing links to other sites that focus on local studies issues, resources etc?**

Yes

No

**If yes, please give brief details**

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**6. If your library/LRC has carried out any user surveys specifically relating to local studies in the past five years, I would be grateful if you could supply the results, either by post or by e-mail.**

Please send to:

Marie E. Nolan  
Department of Information Management  
Aberdeen Business School  
The Robert Gordon University  
Garthdee Road  
Aberdeen, AB10 7QE  
or  
[prs.nolan@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:prs.nolan@rgu.ac.uk)

**Thank you for completing the questionnaire.**

## **Appendix 2: Interview Schedules for Semi-Structured Interviews**

Note: Some questions pre-planned by the researcher were based on responses given during the questionnaire stage of the investigation.

### **Bridget Andrews, MERL Library Project Manager**

- Can you provide a brief history of MERL?
- How does MERL benefit through the association with Reading University? Can you provide examples?
- In what ways does MERL hope to strengthen its relationship to teaching departments in the university?
- Can you elaborate further on liaising with the local studies department at Reading Central Library?
- Is a deliberate effort made to avoid duplicating materials held by other libraries or departments?
- Can you explain your acquisitions policy?
- To what extent might MERL's new training programme incorporate aspects of local studies librarianship?

### **Norman Reid, Head of Special Collections, University of St Andrews**

- Can you talk a little about the 'grey area' between local studies material and archives?
- Can you explain further your department's local studies training for members of staff?
- Can you elaborate on the 'historical boundaries' that form the 'local' area?
- Can you provide further information on the department's role in keeping records and manuscripts that would normally be held by the public library or records office?

**Professor Harold Fox, Department of English Local History, University of Leicester**

- How far does the geographical scope of the department reach in terms of places studied and researched?
- Can you provide a definition of 'history'?
- How much of what is taught by the department history itself? How much is taught in terms of local history research skills?
- Why is the department described on the Web Site as the centre for *urban* and local English history?
- How much of what is taught determined by who is available to teach? By the teaching staffs' own interests?
- What is the 'value' of local history in comparison to more general historical studies?
- Why is it important for this university to teach local history?
- What kinds of relationships exist between this department and other departments in the university?
- Can you elaborate on the duplication of materials between this department's library and the main university library?

**Helen Burton, Special Collections and Archives Assistant, Keele University**

- Can you explain more about access to the collections?
- Why is it important that you have the local material and archives held separately from the main collections?
- Can you elaborate on the training carried out in the department? The types of procedures involved?
- Can you describe what kind of help you receive from other library assistants?
- How knowledgeable are staff and students about what is held in the archives?
- What kind of relationship does the archives have with academic departments?
- Do you think it would benefit the archives and (potential) users to have a more formal relationship with these departments?



**Belinda Allen, Learning Resources Manager, North Lindsay College**

- When did the 'Library' become the 'Learning Resources Centre'?
- Can you elaborate on your description of the geographical scope of the collection as 'regional'?
- You do not have a formal acquisitions policy for local studies material. How do you decide which local material to collect?
- How does the centre's local collection compare to the public library's collection in terms of size, scope, etc.?
- Can you explain further why the centre does not have 'any links' with the public library?
- Can you explain in more detail why the local collection is not indexed?
- Why is it important for the local collection to be held in a different room from the main library stock?
- How did the creation of local history 'study packs' come about?

**Michael Dewe, telephone interview**

- Are the terms 'local studies' and 'local history' synonymous?
- Why do you think primary and secondary schools appear to be more invested in local studies than are Higher Education institutions?
- Do you think that local studies research can serve as a useful introduction to research skills?
- Can you comment on the drop in popularity of local studies as a focus of research activity at levels above undergraduate dissertation research?
- Is there a 'local' paradox? [No consensus on what the term 'local' means]
- Do you think there is an inherent *difference* in local studies as a subject compared to other subjects?
- Are there circumstances in which it would be appropriate for the university library to duplicate the public library in terms of local studies, or is this something that should not happen under any circumstance?

- Do you agree with suggestions in the literature that that local studies requires a more *active* interest on the part of the librarian?
- Is it possible that collections not only reflect what is being taught, but that what is being taught deliberately reflects the collection?

## Appendix 3: Reflective Questions

Reflective questions sent to Michael Dewe on 19 December 2006, following the analysis of questionnaire responses and interview transcripts.

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A few common themes seemed to crop up during the visits and interviews conducted and it's these, mostly, I'd like to pursue in terms of gaining your considered opinion.

### 1 – Local history as a historical enquiry.

Professor Harold Fox at the Centre for Local English History noted that, as far as he was aware, local history no longer carried the stigma of 'second-class history' and that PhDs tended not to be written about, for example, 'the industrial revolution', but rather about 'the industrial revolution in West Yorkshire'. On a related note, a second year 'English and History' student at North Lindsay College observed that, when it comes to local history, "You're getting a bit more focused, aren't you? A bit more in-depth," than tends to be the case with broader historical study.

- a) We talked a little in the original interview about this 'deeper' dimension to historical study when placed in a local context, but that was more to do with the 'original contribution to knowledge' aspect of producing a piece of research. I wondered, therefore, if you had any additional thoughts about this idea that, academically, local studies/history is being employed as a means of looking at wider issues (e.g., the industrial revolution), as well as providing a more 'in-depth' examination of 'what happened when'.

## 2 – Local history as an (academic) hobby

Professor Fox also reckons that about 75% of those undertaking the university's Local History MA course are doing it 'for pleasure'. The majority of students involved in this course are 'mature' and include people with PhDs, surgeons, and even nuclear physicists: "Their holiday cruise [comparing by way of cost] is the MA course." Similarly, Andrew Dobraszczyc, who runs classes for the Department for Continuing and Profession Education in the Community at Keele, observes that many who attend his local history classes – run in the daytime – are retired and want "something else to expand their interests ... that they enjoy, that stretches them," and local history frequently fulfills that remit. In other words, these local history students are there because they *want* to be, unlike, for instance, an undergraduate who might be more focused on simply gaining a degree than actually *appreciating* the value of local history itself (a horrible generalisation, yes, but one that I can perhaps suggest comes under the heading of 'Playing Devil's Advocate' for a moment).

- a) Would it be fair to suggest that, even when placed in an academic setting, where students are formally taught both history itself and the methods employed to carry out historic investigation, local studies – or in the cases above, more specifically, local history – can often retain an element of what might be considered amateur 'pastime' status?
- b) If so, I'd be interested on your take as to how this view might affect the status of local studies within academia. While, as in the example of the first question, there is little doubt it is taken 'seriously' as a subject by many institutions, might this aspect set it apart from other academically sound subjects in terms of the value placed on it by students?

### 3 – An added ‘bonus’.

Both Professor Fox and Dr Norman Reid, the head of the Special Collections Department at St Andrews University noted the benefits of local history materials in terms of palaeography. Dr Reid mentioned that local manuscripts are employed explicitly by tutors in that field to provide first-hand examples of written works, while Professor Fox noted that, when his department teaches local history, they also “have to teach the handwriting”, since, certainly prior to 1800, the handwriting “is not easy.”

In the first instance, we have a case where academic local studies collection material is used outside of its actual content; in the second, an aspect of local history teaching that may not be immediately apparent is identified.

- a) Once again, not really a question as such, but an aspect of local studies/history that, I must admit, had never really occurred to me before. I’d like your view on the suggestion that there is an aesthetic quality to local studies that may well have been hitherto neglected when discussing the value – or, indeed, even ‘simply’ the pleasure – in undertaking local studies as a subject (whether amateur or academic).
- b) If so – and taking a broader view – is it possible more could or should be done to highlight these ‘secondary’ aspects of local studies or local history in order to encourage potential students to the field?

#### 4 – The academic library as a public resource.

St Andrews University Special Collections Department was of particular interest to the study, since, as Norman Reid suggested, it has what can almost be characterised as a public library remit when it comes to the local collection. That is, while the public library does maintain a small local studies collection of published material, the Special Collections Department at the university is where a 'deliberate' local studies collection has been developed and maintained which holds not only manuscripts and records deposited by the National Archives concerning the Fife area, but also published material; also, these records have to be made available to any member of the public who wishes to see them. As Reid puts it, the department has "a much more public responsibility, if you like, than many university libraries would consider themselves to have." Indeed, he observes that within St Andrews itself, the university library has "taken over" the local studies responsibility for the town (the David Hay Fleming Collection, for example, once held by the public library, has been passed onto the university).

Part of the reason for this 'takeover', he suggests, is that, not only does the university have the means to "provide the sort of curatorial care and control needed" for certain materials, but the geographical location of the university – "right in the centre of town" – means the library and department has a certain status and reputation as a "major resource."

- a) This, naturally, brought up the question of the 'traditional' link between the public library and local studies. I'd be interested in your thoughts as to whether or not it's possible that there is, potentially, a rather arbitrary aspect to this relationship. That is, it may be a case that the 'tradition' of the public library as the 'people's resource' has merely dictated that the public library takes primary responsibility for material on the locality, whereas the academic library is more than capable of building and maintaining a collection that can be used by all.

## 5 – Another 'local' definition.

During our first interview, we discussed the various interpretations that can be attached to the term 'local' and how 'local studies' can frequently mean the study of a locale, rather than, necessarily, the immediate locality (the latter arguably providing the most common notion of what 'local studies' is).

Further to this, Dr Norman Reid brought up an interesting point, I think, when we discussed the geographical scope of the Special Collections local material.

He says: "Fife is a place that tends to divide itself up into localities ... and East Fife tends to have a fairly distinctive local identity. And there are even more local identities within that, of course ... But, generally speaking, I think most people would agree that there is a sort of East Fife identity."

It is therefore, a 'local *identity*' that the Special Collections tends to draw on when assembling its 'boundaries' – "But, it's not clearly defined." – thus arguably adding yet another dimension to the question of what we actually mean when we talk about 'local studies'.

- a) I would appreciate your take on this, since a 'local identity' doesn't necessarily fit into any definition I'd come across at that time. While there is a geographical element here, of course, there is also the suggestion that an 'identity' is something that can be carried by an individual – or group of people – across traditional or contemporary government-set boundaries, thereby not only taking 'local' to a different place again (as when, for example, we discussed the 'locality' of a river that might travel all across the country), but almost *internalizing* it, so that 'local' becomes a state of mind as opposed to something that can be defined only in physical terms.

## 6 – Any further thoughts

Basically, you have free reign to jot down any additional thoughts, opinions, or comments on local studies, academic libraries, teaching, learning, and research that you might have.

As with the first interview, Mike, I hope these questions are not too interrogative. If they come across as such, you have my sincerest apologies. Also, as mentioned earlier, should you have any questions yourself, please let me know.

Thank you once again – I look forward to hearing from you.



## Appendix 4: Materials

### What types of materials are included in your library/LRC's local studies collection?

Based on responses from 69 libraries and LRCs, including 18 Further Education Colleges; 17 Further & Higher Education Colleges; five Higher Education Colleges; 28 Universities; and one Other.

	FEC	FHEC	HEC	Uni	Other	Total	% of 69
<b>Hard Copy</b>							
Regional Histories	16	14	4	26	1	61	88.41%
Victoria County Histories	7	6	3	22	0	37	53.62%
Reference Works	17	15	3	26	1	62	89.86%
Government Publications	12	13	3	23	1	52	75.36%
Literature	15	13	3	22	1	54	78.26%
Sale Catalogues	0	3	0	5	0	8	11.59%
Dissertations & Theses	5	7	2	21	1	36	52.17%
Directories	11	11	3	21	1	47	68.12%
Electoral Registers	0	1	0	2	0	3	4.35%
Old Parish Registers	3	1	1	9	0	14	20.29%
International Genealogical Index	1	1	0	0	0	2	2.90%
Census Enumerators' Book	0	1	0	2	0	3	4.35%
Other Genealogical Sources	5	7	0	17	1	30	43.48%
Newspapers	11	9	1	10	0	31	44.93%
Periodicals	11	10	4	23	0	48	69.57%
County, Town, Parish Maps	11	11	4	16	1	43	62.32%
Ordnance Survey Maps	14	12	4	22	1	53	76.81%
Goad Maps and Plans	2	2	1	6	0	11	15.94%
Photographs	10	5	3	17	1	36	52.17%
Prints and Engravings	4	1	2	14	1	22	31.88%
Drawings and Watercolours	5	0	1	11	1	18	26.09%
Other Illustrated Material	5	4	2	16	1	28	40.58%
Ephemera	6	6	2	16	1	31	44.93%



CD-ROM							
Regional Histories	1	0	0	6	0	7	10.14%
Victoria County Histories	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Reference Works	1	0	1	7	0	9	13.04%
Government Publications	0	0	0	4	0	4	5.80%
Literature	2	1	0	2	0	5	7.25%
Sale Catalogues	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Dissertations & Theses	0	0	0	1	0	1	1.45%
Directories	0	1	0	3	0	4	5.80%
Electoral Registers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Old Parish Registers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
International Genealogical Index	0	1	0	1	0	2	2.90%
Census Enumerators' Book	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Other Genealogical Sources	0	0	0	4	0	4	5.80%
Newspapers	0	1	0	3	0	4	5.80%
Periodicals	0	1	0	1	0	2	2.90%
County, Town, Parish Maps	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Ordnance Survey Maps	0	1	0	0	0	1	1.45%
Goad Maps and Plans	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Photographs	1	0	0	4	0	5	7.25%
Prints and Engravings	0	0	0	2	0	2	2.90%
Drawings and Watercolours	1	0	0	1	0	2	2.90%
Other Illustrated Material	1	0	0	0	0	1	1.45%
Ephemera	1	0	0	0	0	1	1.45%

Internet-Based							
Regional Histories	3	0	1	4	0	8	11.59%
Victoria County Histories	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Reference Works	3	0	0	4	0	7	10.14%
Government Publications	5	3	1	5	0	14	20.29%
Literature	2	1	0	1	0	4	5.80%
Sale Catalogues	0	1	0	0	0	1	1.45%
Dissertations & Theses	1	0	0	1	0	2	2.90%
Directories	3	3	1	4	0	11	15.94%
Electoral Registers	0	2	0	0	0	2	2.90%
Old Parish Registers	0	0	0	0	1	1	1.45%
International Genealogical Index	1	0	0	3	1	5	7.25%
Census Enumerators'	1	0	0	1	0	2	2.90%
Book							
Other Genealogical Sources	0	0	0	1	0	1	1.45%
Newspapers	4	4	1	8	1	18	26.09%
Periodicals	3	5	2	7	0	17	24.64%
County, Town, Parish Maps	0	0	0	2	0	2	2.90%
Ordnance Survey Maps	1	4	0	5	0	10	14.49%
Goad Maps and Plans	0	0	0	2	0	2	2.90%
Photographs	3	0	0	5	0	8	11.59%
Prints and Engravings	0	0	0	4	0	4	5.80%
Drawings and Watercolours	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Other Illustrated Material	0	0	0	1	0	1	1.45%
Ephemera	2	0	0	1	0	3	4.35%





<b>Videocassette</b>							
In-house Productions	1	2	0	7	0	10	14.49%
Documentaries	2	7	1	5	0	15	21.74%
Feature Films	2	3	0	4	0	9	13.045
Television	5	5	0	4	0	14	20.29%
<b>DVD</b>							
In-house Productions	0	0	0	3	0	3	4.35%
Documentaries	0	1	0	3	0	4	5.80%
Feature Films	1	2	0	1	0	4	5.80%
Television	0	2	0	1	0	3	4.35%
<b>Digital (Visual)</b>							
In-house Productions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Documentaries	0	1	0	1	0	2	2.90%
Feature Films	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Television	0	1	0	0	0	1	1.45%
<b>Other (Visual) Format</b>							
In-house Productions	1	0	0	0	0	1	1.45%
Documentaries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Feature Films	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Television	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Other Materials</b>							
Other*	4	2	1	6	1	14	20.29%

\*Other types of materials held by respondents include press clippings (as opposed to complete newspapers); a collection of hard-copy council minutes; and meteorological data and cropping information.

## **Appendix 5: Inventory of Local Collections at Responding Institutions**

The order each entry's information takes is as follows: the name of the institution; the name of the library or learning resource centre; the name of the collection; the time period in which the collection was started; the geographic scope of the collection; the size of the collection.

Please note that in some cases, not all information following the name of the institution is included. This may be due to data not being provided, relevant (e.g., not all collections are named), or known by the respondent (e.g., when the collection was begun).

University of Cambridge and Oxford libraries are listed in separate sections.



<b>Aberdeen College, Gallowgate Library</b>	1970s	Local Studies	Town/City & Surrounding Area/Towns	Separate	101-500
<b>Barony College, Library and Rural Learning Centre</b>	1990s	Local Studies	Region	Separate	50-100
<b>Bedford College, Library and Resources Centre</b>	1960s	Local Studies	County	Integrated	50-100
<b>Bell College, Dumfries Campus Library</b>	1980s	No Name (Integrated)	County	Integrated	50-100
<b>Bolton Community College, Library and Learning Resource Centre, Manchester Road</b>	1960s	Local Collection	Other	Separate	101-500
<b>Bridgend College, Library and Learning Resource Centre</b>	1970s	Named After Area	Country	Separate	50-100
<b>Bridgwater College, Learning Resource Centre</b>	1970s	Local Collection	County	Separate	101-500
<b>Broxtowe College, Chilwell Centre Library</b>	1970s	No Name (Integrated)	County	Integrated	101-500
<b>Burton College, Library</b>	1980s	Local History	County	Both	101-500
<b>Cannington Centre for Land-based Studies, Bridgwater College, Brookfield Library</b>	1990s	Local Collection	Region	Separate	101-500
<b>Cardiff University, Information Services/Library</b>	19th Century	Named After Person	Other	Separate	>1000
<b>City of Bristol College, Learning Resource Centres</b>	1980s	Local History	Region	Both	101-500
<b>City of Bristol College, Soundwell Centre/Brunel Centre</b>	1960s	Local History	Area of County	Separate	101-500

<b>City College Coventry, Library</b>	1980s	No Name (Integrated)	Region	Integrated	50-100
<b>City College Norwich, The Library</b>	1950s	No Name (Integrated)	Region	Integrated	<50
<b>Clydebank College, Learner Resource Centre</b>	2000s	Local History	Region	Separate	101-500
<b>Cole Sir Gar, Ammanford Campus Learning Centre</b>	Unanswered	Undefined	Other	Separate	101-500
<b>Coleg Powys, Library</b>	1990s	Local History	Town/City only	Integrated	<50
<b>Coleg Powys, Newton Campus Learning Resources Centre</b>	1990s	No Name (Integrated)	Country	Integrated	50-100
<b>Crawley College, Learning Resource Centre</b>	Undefined	No Name (Integrated)	County	Integrated	<50
<b>Dearne Valley College, Learning Centre</b>	1970s	Local History	Area of County	Separate	501-1000
<b>Duchy College, Learning Centre, Rosewarne</b>	1950s	Other	Area of County	Both	<50
<b>Dudley College of Technology, Library</b>	1960s	Local History	Region	Both	501-1000
<b>Dunstable College, Library</b>	1960s	No Name (Integrated)	Town/City & Surrounding Area/Towns	Integrated	<50
<b>East Devon College, Library and Learning Centre</b>	1960s	Local Collection	Counties (More Than One)	Both	101-500
<b>East Riding College, Learning Resource Centre</b>	2000s	No Name (Integrated)	Region	Integrated	<50

<b>Elmwood College, Learning Resource Centre</b>	1970s	No Name (Integrated)	Undefined	Integrated	<50
<b>Glasgow Caledonian University, Central Library and Information Centre</b>	1900-1910s	Named After Institution	Institution	Separate	501-1000
<b>Goldsmiths, University of London, Information Services: Library</b>	Unanswered	No Name (Integrated)	Town/City only	Integrated	101-500
<b>Hastings College of Arts and Technology, Main Library</b>	2000s	Local History	Region	Separate	50-100
<b>Henley College, The Library</b>	1980s	Local Collection	Other	Separate	101-500
<b>Herefordshire College of Technology, Learning Resource Centre</b>	1970s	Local History	County	Both	50-100
<b>Hertford Regional College, Ware Library and Learning Centre</b>	1950s	Local Studies	County	Both	501-1000
<b>Hugh Baird College of Further Education, Library and Learning Centre</b>	1980s	Local Studies	Town/City Only	Separate	501-1000
<b>Keele University, Special Collections and Archives</b>	1960s	Local Collection	Region	Separate	>1000
<b>Kingston College, Learning Resources Centre</b>	1960s	No Name (Integrated)	Town/City Only	Integrated	<50
<b>Kingston University, Library Services</b>	Not Known	No Name (Integrated)	County & Parts of Neighbouring County	Integrated	101-500
<b>Lakes College, West Cumbria, Learning Resource Centre</b>	1950s/60s	Local History	County	Integrated	101-500
<b>Lambeth College, Vauxhall Centre Library</b>	2000s	Named After Institution	Institution	Separate	101-500

<b>Merton College, Library</b>	Pre-19th Century	Named After Institution	Country	Both	>1000
<b>Mid Kent College, Library and Information Centre</b>	2000s	Local Studies	County	Integrated	101-500
<b>Middlesbrough College, Kirkby Learning Resource Centre</b>	2000s	Local History	Counties (More Than One)	Separate	101-500
<b>Newbury College, Learning Resource Centre</b>	1950s/60s	Local Studies	Town/City & Surrounding Area/Towns	Separate	50-100
<b>Newcastle College, Library Services</b>	Not Known	Local Studies	Region	Separate	>1000
<b>Newman College of Higher Education, Newman College Library</b>	1990s	Local History	County	Separate	>1000
<b>Newry and Kilkeel Institute of Further and Higher Education, Library</b>	1990s	Local History	Town/City & Surrounding Area/Towns	Separate	<50
<b>North Devon College, Library</b>	1970s	Named After Area	Region	Both	>1000
<b>North East Wales Institute of Higher Education, Information and Student Services</b>	1970s	No Name (Integrated)	Other	Integrated	101-500
<b>North Highland College, Library</b>	1950s	Named After Area	Region	Separate	>1000
<b>North Lindsey College, Learning Resource Centre</b>	1960s	Local Collection	Region	Separate	501-1000
<b>North Nottinghamshire College, Library/Learning Resource Centre</b>	1970s	Local Studies	Other	Both	101-500
<b>North Trafford College of Further Education, Library Services</b>	1950s	No Name (Integrated)	Region	Integrated	<50

<b>Northampton College, Library/Learning Resource Centre</b>	1970s	Named After Area	County	Separate	101-500
<b>Park Lane College, Library/Learning Centre</b>	1970s	No Name (Integrated)	County	Integrated	50-100
<b>Penwith College, Library and CyberLoft</b>	1980s	Local Studies	County	Separate	101-500
<b>Pershore Group of Colleges</b>	1960s	Undefined (Put down as no name)	County	Integrated	50-100
<b>Perth College, Learning Resources Centre</b>	1970s	No Name (Integrated)	County	Integrated	<50
<b>Plumpton College, Library</b>	1980s	Other	Region	Both	<50
<b>Queen's University Belfast, Library</b>	1920s	Named After Person	Country	Separate	>1000
<b>Redcar and Cleveland College, Learning Resource Centre</b>	1960s	Local History	Region	Separate	<50
<b>Reid Kerr College , Abercorn Library</b>	1990s	Local Collection	Country	Separate	50-100
<b>Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, Library and Archive</b>	Pre-19th Century	Named After Area	Region	Both	>1000
<b>Royal Forest of Dean College, The Study Centre/Learning Resource Centre</b>	1970s	Local History	Area of County	Separate	501-1000
<b>St Helen's College, Information and Library Service</b>	1970s	Local History	Town/City only	Integrated	<50
<b>St Martin's College, Charlotte Mason Library</b>	19th Century	More Than One Name	Counties (More Than One)	Both	501-1000

<b>Salisbury College, The Centre</b>	1960s	Local History	Region	Separate	<50
<b>Shipley College, Resource Centre</b>	1980s	Named After Area	Town/City & Surrounding Area/Towns	Separate	50-100
<b>Solihull College, Library</b>	1980s	No Name (Integrated)	Counties (More Than One)	Integrated	50-100
<b>Somerset College of Arts and Technology, Integrated Learning Centres</b>	1980s	More Than One Name	Region	Integrated	101-500
<b>South Birmingham College, Library, Digbeth Centre</b>	1980s	Named After Area	Town/City only	Separate	>1000
<b>South Downs College, Learning Resource Centre</b>	Not Known	Local Collection	County	Separate	501-1000
<b>Southampton City College, Learning Resource Centre</b>	1940s	Local History	Town/City only	Separate	101-500
<b>Southampton Institute, Mountbatten Library</b>	1980s	Local Studies	County	Separate	501-1000
<b>Southport College, Learning Resource Centre/Library</b>	1970s	No Name (Integrated)	Town/City only	Integrated	<50
<b>Southwark College, Bermondsey Learning Centre</b>	1990s	No Name (Integrated)	Town/City only	Integrated	101-500
<b>Sussex Downs College, The Learning Centre, Cross Levels Campus</b>	Unanswered	No Name (Integrated)	County	Integrated	50-100
<b>Swansea University, Library and Information Centre</b>	1920s	More Than One Name	Countries (More Than One)	Separate	>1000
<b>Telford College of Arts and Technology, Learning Resources Centre</b>	Not Known	Local Studies	County	Separate	101-500

<b>Thurrock &amp; Basildon College, Learning Resource Centres</b>	1970s	Local Collection	County & Parts of Neighbouring County	Separate	501-1000
<b>Trinity &amp; All Saints College (Leeds), The Library, Andrew Kean Learning Centre</b>	1970s	Local Collection	Area of County	Integrated	501-1000
<b>Trinity College (Now Trinity St David), Carmathen Learning Resources Centre</b>	1940s	Local History	Country	Integrated	>1000
<b>Truro College, 5 Libraries/Learning Centres</b>	1990s	Local Collection	County	Separate	101-500
<b>UCE Birmingham, Kenrick Library</b>	1960s/70s	No Name (Integrated)	Region	Integrated	>1000
<b>United College of the Ascension, Kingsmead Library</b>	1920s	No Name (Integrated)	Town/City only	Integrated	<50
<b>University College Northampton, Rockingham Library</b>	1970s	Named After Area	County	Separate	101-500
<b>University of Aberdeen, Directorate of Information Systems and Services, Historic Collections, Special Libraries and Archives</b>					
<b>University of Abertay, Dundee, Library</b>	1970s	Local Collection	Country	Integrated	50-100
<b>University of Bradford, J.B. Priestley Library</b>	1960s	More Than One Name	Region	Both	>1000
<b>University of Derby, Learning Centre</b>	1960s	Local Collection	Counties (More Than One)	Separate	>1000
<b>University of Durham, Durham University Library</b>	1940s	Local Collection	Counties (More Than One)	Separate	>1000
<b>University of Durham, Library, Archives and Special Collections Department</b>	19th Century	Local Collection	Region	Separate	>1000

<b>University of Gloucestershire, Learning Centres</b>	1930s	More Than One Name	Counties (More Than One)	Both	>1000
<b>University of Huddersfield, Archives and Special Collections</b>	Undefined	Local History	County	Separate	>1000
<b>University of Hull, Brynmor Jones Library</b>	1930s	More Than One Name	County	Separate	>1000
<b>University of Kent, Templeman Library</b>	1960s	No Name (Integrated)	County	Integrated	>1000
<b>University of Leicester, Library</b>	1920s	Local History	Countries (More Than One)	Separate	>1000
<b>University of Lincoln, University Library</b>	Not Sure	Local History	Counties (More Than One)	Separate	501-1000
<b>University of Manchester, John Rylands Library</b>	1900-1910s	More Than One Name	County & Parts of Neighbouring County	Both	>1000
<b>University of Nottingham, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Hallward Library</b>	1930s	Named After Area	Region	Separate	>1000
<b>University of Paisley, Library Services</b>	1960s	Local Collection	Other	Separate	>1000
<b>University of Reading, Library of the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL)</b>	1950s	No Name (Integrated)	Country	Both	>1000
<b>University of St Andrews, Special Collections Department</b>	Not Sure	More Than One Name	Area of County	Both	>1000
<b>University of Salford, Information Services Division</b>	1960s	Special Collections/Archives	Town/City & Surrounding Area/Towns	Both	>1000
<b>University of Southampton, Hartley Library</b>	19th Century	Named After Area	Other	Separate	>1000



<b>University of Teesside, Learning Resource Centre</b>	1970s	Local Studies	Other	Integrated	101-500
<b>University of Ulster, Coleraine Library</b>	1980s	Named After Person	Region	Separate	>1000
<b>University of Wales, Bangor, Welsh Library and Special Collections</b>	1900-1910s	Named After Area	Country	Separate	>1000
<b>University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, Cyncoed Campus Learning Centre</b>	1970s	No Name (Integrated)	Country	Integrated	101-500
<b>University of Wolverhampton, Harrison Learning Centre</b>	Not Known	Local Studies	Countries (More Than One)	Integrated	>1000
<b>Waltham Forest College, 2Learn Centre</b>	Undefined	Local History	Other	Separate	50-100
<b>Warrington Collegiate, Learning Resource Centre</b>	1980s	No Name (Integrated)	Town/City incl. Institution	Both	<50
<b>Warwickshire College, Learning Resource Centre</b>	1970s	No Name (Integrated)	County	Integrated	101-500
<b>West Cheshire College, Library and Learning Centre</b>	1970s	Local Collection	Other	Separate	101-500
<b>Westminster Kingsway College, Learning Centre</b>	1900-1910s	Special Collections/Archives	Area(s) of Town/City	Both	501-1000
<b>Weymouth College, Learning Centre</b>	1980s	Named After Area	Area of County	Separate	101-500
<b>Wirral Metropolitan College, Twelve Quays Campus</b>	1950s	Local History	Counties (More Than One)	Separate	501-1000
<b>Yeovil College, The Study Centre</b>	1970s	Local History	Region	Separate	501-1000

**University of Cambridge:**

<b>Cambridge University Library, Rare books</b>	19th Century	Named After Area	Town/City & Surrounding Area/Towns	Separate	>1000
<b>Christ's College, Library</b>	1990s	Named After Area	Town/City only	Separate	<50
<b>Corpus Christi College, Parker Library</b>	1950s	Named After Area	County Incl. Institution	Separate	501-1000
<b>Earth Sciences Library</b>	Unanswered	No Name (Integrated)	County	Integrated	50-100
<b>Faculty of Architecture and History of Art, Library</b>	1970s	Named After Area	County	Integrated	501-1000
<b>Gonville and Caius College, Library</b>	19th Century	No Name (Integrated)	Counties (More Than One)	Integrated	101-500
<b>Haddon Library of Archaeology and Anthropology</b>	19th Century	Named After Institution	County	Both	>1000
<b>Institute of Astronomy Library</b>	Not Sure	No Name (Integrated)	Institution	Integrated	101-500
<b>Institute of Continuing Education</b>	Not Known	Named After Area	Counties (More Than One)	Both	101-500
<b>Newnham College, Library</b>	19th Century	Local History	County incl. Institution	Integrated	50-100
<b>St John's College, Library</b>	1950s	Named After Area	Counties (More Than One)	Separate	501-1000
<b>Sidney Sussex College, Library</b>	1980s	Named After Area	Town/City only	Separate	101-500
<b>Unit for Landscape Modelling, Aerial Photograph Library,</b>	1940s	Named After Institution	Countries (More Than One)	Separate	>1000

**University of Oxford:**

<b>Department for Continuing Education, Library</b>	1960s	Local Collection	Other	Separate	501-1000
<b>Keble College Library</b>	19th Century	No Name (Integrated)	Institution	Both	101-500
<b>New College, The Library</b>	2000s	Named After Area	Other	Separate	>1000
<b>Oriel College, Library</b>	1920s	Local History	Other	Both	501-1000
<b>School of Geography and the Environment Library</b>	19th Century	No Name (Integrated)	County	Integrated	101-500
<b>St Catherine's College, Library</b>	1960s	Named After Area	Town/City only	Separate	101-500
<b>St Edmund Hall Library</b>	1990s	Local History	Region	Separate	101-500
<b>St John's College Library</b>	19th Century	No Name (Integrated)	Town/City incl. Institution	Integrated	501-1000