

This was a packed programme delivered to an audience of fifty delegates who participated vigorously and enthusiastically to the scholarly discussion in sessions and over a drink. Full details are available on the 'Writing England' website (<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/english/news/writing-england>). Orietta Da Rold wishes to thank Takako Kato and Hollie Morgan for their help, the speakers and the delegates for their contributions and good humour, and last but not least the sponsors: Brepols, British Library Publishing, Oxford University Press and, in particular, AMARC, for their generous support.

**SECURING THE NATION'S LITERARY HERITAGE**  
**The British Library, London**  
**9 June 2010.**

*Report by David Sutton, Director of Research Projects at Reading University Library. AMARC members will be familiar with his work on two indispensable resources, the Location Register of 20th-century English Literary Manuscripts (online at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/library/about-us/projects/lib-location-register.aspx>) and the WATCH project (Writers, Artists and their Copyright Holders, at <http://tyler.hrc.utexas.edu/>).*

In talking about locations of literary manuscripts, we always need to be aware of the 'Larkin trap.' This involves falling into the Eeyore-like gloom and pessimism which Philip Larkin regularly manifested when talking about literary papers – usually spiced with a carping tone of anti-Americanism.

Commentators who fall into the 'Larkin trap' have two main laments: first, that virtually all modern British and Irish literary manuscripts have been acquired by US institutions; and second, that this is a disaster for scholarship. The crude overstatement of these laments is more of a hindrance than a help to those of us who work to emphasise the importance of literary manuscripts and their key place in our own cultural heritage, and who want to encourage international cooperation.

The 'Larkin trap' was duly baited for **Securing the Nation's Literary Heritage**, an event jointly organised by the Royal Society of Literature and the UK Literary Heritage Working Group. Fortunately most of the contributors managed to avoid it most of the time; and writing in *The Guardian* a few days later, one of the panellists, Andrew Lycett gave a nicely nuanced view:

*'A conference at the British Library on Wednesday mulled over these issues. The consensus was positive: since British libraries have upped their game, the threat of American rivals hoovering up our literary heritage has receded. AIL [acceptance in lieu], remarkably, is now in its 100th year and has helped to keep the papers of Anthony Powell, Kathleen Raine and others in Britain. However, the need for its extension to living authors was emphasised. To the benefit of our wider culture, this would help to inculcate a habit of preservation of literary archives (not just those of*

*writers but also publishers and agents) for the nation.'*

The way in which British libraries upped their game, as Lycett puts it, is a remarkable thirty-year success-story. It culminates in the work of the Group for Literary Archives and Manuscripts (GLAM) and the UK Literary Heritage Working Group, both easy to Google, both founded in 2005, and both now actively promoting the cultural importance, the value and also the magic of literary manuscripts.

Speakers at the British Library event offered a wide range of views and perspectives. There were a number of accounts, notably by Victoria Glendinning and Andrew Lycett, of great journeys backwards and forwards across the USA in order to accomplish their research. Several speakers suggested that the view of cultural heritage here much more easily accommodates homes and gardens of a National Trust sort than it does archives, literary or otherwise. (I wonder, though, whether this is more the case in England than in Scotland, Wales and Ireland: an English problem perhaps. Certainly the pioneering roles of the National Library of Scotland and the National Library of Wales with modern literary archives deserve greater recognition.)

Andrew Motion spoke about his own engagement with literary papers, referring especially to those of Edward Thomas, Owen and Sassoon, and (of course) Philip Larkin. He also paid tribute to the change in collecting approaches by British and Irish literary archivists, and expressed his delight at the recent accessions of Alan Bennett, Ted Hughes and John Ber-

ger papers. He concluded that 'the playing field is much smoother than it used to be.'

Ronald Harwood gave an entertaining account of how his own papers ended up in the British Library, and told everyone how pleased he was to have his "stuff" alongside that of Harold Pinter.

Joan Winterkorn gave a well-informed account of how US collecting practices had developed, especially as US universities grew in the 1970s. She noted the preparedness to take risks and to deal with much younger authors; and suggested that this approach had made the collecting of modern and recent literary manuscripts mainstream worldwide. She talked about one of her own favourite collections: the Elaine Feinstein papers in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester.

In the main, the 'Larkin trap' was skirted, thank goodness. Many of us have been to meetings where laments are heard about the papers of 'those most English of authors' which have departed to the USA (and I know I have done it myself). The papers of Virginia Woolf in New York Public Library, Evelyn Waugh in the University of Texas, Angus Wilson in the University of Iowa, and J.R.R. Tolkien in the Marquette University in Milwaukee provide the easiest of examples over which to sigh.

Ultimately, however, this is a futile and backward-looking approach. The papers are there, usually beautifully conserved and attentively made available to the public, and (except in a tiny number of cases) they are not going to come back

across the Atlantic. The point is to look to the future, to celebrate the wonderful array of recent modern literary accessions here, and to continue to develop an awareness of literary manuscripts as a central part of the cultural heritage.

In this regard, I suggested to the British Library audience that we could learn from the French example, with its strong emphasis on local connections. The papers of major French writers often go not the great central institutions, but to the public library of their home town. The manuscripts of Flaubert in Rouen and Stendhal in Grenoble are well known, but we also find the papers of Sainte-Beuve in the public library at Boulogne-sur-Mer; the papers of Roger Vailland similarly in his home town of Bourg-en-Bresse; the papers of Marcel Aymé in the Bibliothèque municipale de Dole; the papers of Alfred Jarry in the town of Laval, where he was born; and a large collection of papers of Valéry Larbaud in the Bibliothèque municipale de Vichy.

A number of British institutions, such as the Universities of Exeter and Leicester, have started to take this localist approach to literary papers, and it certainly provides one intriguing way forward.

As someone who has spent thirty years working with literary manuscripts, I left the event at the British Library feeling that we really could now put all that Larkinian whingeing behind us and celebrate the new spirit of cooperation, adventure and positive thinking which is prevailing in the world of British and Irish literary archives.

**DC 2010 Archives & Records**  
**Washington DC, USA,**  
**10–15 August 2010**

*Report by Rose Roberto of Leeds University Library.*

Choosing Washington DC as a conference venue for archivists is like planting them in their natural habitat. Not only is DC home to the National Archives, the Library of Congress and the various Smithsonian museums along with other excellent centres of research like the Folger-Shakespeare Library; the city itself generates its share of records and history every day. From 9-14 August 2010, I attended a joint annual meeting of the Council of State Archivists (CoSA), the National Association of Government Archives and Record Administrators (NAGARA), and the Society of American Archivists (SAA), with the assistance of a bursary from AMARC. As the US is a large country, and this was a joint conference, it was also on a much larger scale than equivalent conferences in Britain—over 1900 people attended it. As the conference sessions and plenary talks themselves are online, I will focus on my own workshop, two tours, and my impression of a conference session that I particularly enjoyed.

On Tuesday morning, August 10th, I presented a workshop called 'Producing It Online: Planning and Expanding your Exhibition.' This was an introductory workshop aimed at providing a practical guide to using tools and creating e-resources. Discussions covered ideas, planning methods, and workflow process, giving participants basic knowledge of how to set up/design large or