

Historical Manuscripts Commission

Survey of archive cataloguing problems (England and Wales) 2002

Christopher Kitching

HMC Survey of archive cataloguing problems (England and Wales) 2002

Summary

With the help of six participating Regional Archive Councils and Archives Council Wales, HMC has undertaken a survey of cataloguing problems in record repositories across much of England and Wales (excluding London and the South East and the North West region).

The survey was intended first of all to demonstrate that the decline in the number of catalogues reaching the National Register of Archives can be largely explained by the declining pace of cataloguing in repositories, rather than by a failure on HMC's part to acquire existing catalogues. This is well borne out by the returns.

The survey was also intended to inform the work of national and regional bodies including Resource's Archives Task Force (which from the autumn of 2002 will be examining needs and priorities for archives), the participating Regional Archive Councils and Archives Council Wales, as well as grant-awarding bodies. It is hoped that a better grasp of both the quantity and the heritage quality of the uncatalogued research resources will encourage the allocation of funds and staff to address the problem locally, regionally and nationally.

The survey confirms the seriousness of the backlogs identified in mapping surveys and the recent regional archive strategies in England. Among other things it finds that:

- Many archive repositories have significant - and some have huge - cataloguing backlogs.
- Material of great national and local heritage significance, from the Middle Ages to the present day, remains uncatalogued and therefore substantially unusable by researchers.
- Archives of private origin, including many family and business archives of prime importance to the history and economic development of a region, are particularly likely to remain uncatalogued, especially if they are bulky or contain material that requires more than the usual professional expertise of archivists even at the cataloguing stage.
- The problem, however, also extends to the central administrative records of public bodies such as local authorities and the universities. As these will be covered by the Freedom of Information Act, a particular degree of urgency may attach to them.

- Some techniques for tackling the backlog have proved successful and may have wider application, but in many instances present staffing and funding resources make the problem insurmountable: it is growing worse year-on-year and will never be conquered unless additional resources are made available through local, regional or national initiatives which will have to be funded by both internal and external means.

Christopher Kitching
Historical Manuscripts Commission, November 2002

A. THE BACKGROUND

1. As reported in successive issues of the HMC *Annual review*, for several years past there has been a steady decline in the quantity of archive catalogues sent for filing in the National Register of Archives (NRA). We have suggested a number of explanations.

The shift to electronic cataloguing

2. In a few cases - but still only a few - the decline is due to a shift in repository practice from the production of hard-copy catalogues to that of electronic, on-line catalogues. This will certainly be an increasing trend, and it may well be that hard-copy catalogues will eventually cease to be produced either for the repository's own search room or for the NRA. In theory the decision could be made to print them out from the on-line version; but to many that would not seem a sensible long-term solution in an age where services are increasingly being demanded and delivered electronically.

3. Where existing hard-copy catalogues have been 'retro-converted' into electronic form and mounted on the Internet, either by an individual repository or by a networking project such as Access to Archives (A2A), HMC needs to establish whether they represent new information never previously communicated to the NRA in hard-copy, or whether the catalogues in question have already been registered and indexed in the NRA from hard-copy originals supplied. Our twin concerns are

- to identify and fill gaps in the coverage of our indexes so that the NRA remains comprehensive as a top-level finding-aid to the UK's archives, and
- to avoid redundant and irritating duplication of data in the NRA (and of indexing effort by our staff).

These concerns apply not only to catalogues but also to the collection-level entries, or summary descriptions, that are currently being assembled or compiled by a number of surveying and networking projects throughout the UK, with the great majority of which we are now in regular contact.

4. Successful but still far from complete links have been established from the NRA to on-line catalogues and collection-level data held by a number of networking projects, including Access to Archives (A2A), AIM25 and the HE hub. Inconsistencies of data input, especially in one of the most basic elements - the reference code that identifies a particular collection - are making this task more arduous than it need be, but full interoperability between the NRA and all electronic data holders remains our long-term aim. A necessary preliminary to achieving this will be the upgrading of the NRA computer system, and it is gratifying that funding for this was announced by the Department for Culture,

Media and Sport as part of the overall settlement which will lay the foundations for the new National Archives.

Catalogues that do exist but have still not been sent to the NRA?

5. A second reason for the decline in the number of catalogues reaching the NRA might be that, whilst finding aids are being produced, copies are not being sent in for filing. Of course we accept that log-jams in the transfer of catalogues do occur from time to time, and also that there are national and local organisations of whose archives the NRA is still unaware. As most readers of this report will know, we have established a team of regional and country liaison officers whose duties include making contact with organisations whose holdings are as yet unknown to the NRA. Our staff are always glad to receive catalogues for filing in the NRA. Their names and contact details are given on our website (www.hmc.gov.uk) or can be supplied on application to The Secretary, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Quality House, Quality Court, Chancery Lane London WC2A 1HP.

Cataloguing backlogs

6. If the progress towards electronic cataloguing, or the failure to send completed catalogues to the NRA, were the only, or even the main, reasons for the decline in the flow of catalogues, there would be little cause for nationwide concern: the catalogues would exist and the problem would simply lie in getting them into, or linked to, the NRA.

But all the evidence (from the annual reports of repositories and archive services, the mapping surveys, the regional archive strategies and direct HMC knowledge of collections in repositories and in private hands) suggests that *information is not reaching the NRA primarily because catalogues and other finding aids are not being compiled by repositories to the extent that they once were*, and moreover that backlogs of uncatalogued material are almost everywhere increasing.

7. Even before this survey, we knew that in many record repositories significant quantities of archives - some of them held for a very long time indeed (20, 30, even up to 60 years) - remain uncatalogued. The archives concerned are not all wholly inaccessible, because in places at least summary lists do exist. But they can scarcely be said to be amenable to sensible exploitation, because their detailed contents are largely unknown.

B. THE SURVEY AND ITS FINDINGS

The survey's objectives and method

8. With this in mind, HMC decided to launch in the spring of 2002 an enquiry into the cataloguing problems of archive repositories in England and Wales. The intentions were:

- to confirm our assumption that a general decline in the quantity of archival cataloguing is the main explanation for the drop in the number of lists being received for the NRA;
- to gather firmer evidence than hitherto about the scale and nature of, and the reasons for, cataloguing problems; and also about the strategy (if any) being adopted by repositories to tackle them;
- to ascertain whether the backlog includes collections of significant heritage value (both local and national), and to obtain at least an impression of the research resources that remain substantially inaccessible to the public for want of a catalogue;
- to use the results to inform Resource's Archives Task Force as it begins its work in the autumn of 2002, but also to demonstrate to funding bodies the **urgent need to support the first-time cataloguing of wholly uncatalogued material, and the improved cataloguing of poorly catalogued material**, as well as the (currently more popular) retrospective conversion of existing catalogues into digital formats.

HMC also undertook to feed back the results to the participating regions and to Archives Council Wales.

9. The survey was based on a short questionnaire (see Appendix A). This was devised by HMC and sent in draft to the Chairs of the Regional Archive Councils and of Archives Council Wales, asking whether they would find such a survey helpful at this point, or whether it would cut across their own initiatives in this area. If they were interested in participating they were also asked whether they would themselves prefer to be the agent for distributing and collecting the questionnaires or would prefer HMC to do this centrally. Whichever method was chosen, all the returns came to HMC. Six of the nine regions in England agreed to participate, and from these a total of 70 responses had been received by the end of July 2002 when the analysis was undertaken. The cut-off date for responses from Wales was 15 November, by which time 11 responses had been received, making a total of 81 responses to the survey.

10. The three non-participating regions in England were the North West (which has since obtained Resource funding for a more detailed, year-long cataloguing survey, "Logjam"), and London and the South East which have very large numbers of repositories and present a cataloguing challenge on a very much larger scale.

11. Different participating regions chose to circulate the questionnaire to somewhat different constituencies, or to leave circulation to HMC. In England the catchment included the local authority and university repositories. Each region also included at least a small sample of other specialist repositories, the only significant number of returns from this latter sector, however, being from the South West. In Wales returns were received only from local authority repositories. Returns from the principal public sector repositories (local authority and university) therefore predominate in the survey as a whole.

12. Specialist repositories outside the public sector, including business archives, have different kinds of holdings and different responsibilities and needs from those of the public sector repositories. Further research would be useful to gain a representative picture of the cataloguing challenges in the private sector, which is almost wholly unsupported by public funds.

Table 1: Questionnaires returned

Region	Local authority	University	Other specialist	Total
East	5	3	2	10
East Midlands	4	1	1	6
North East	5	1	1	7
South West	9	3	9	21
West Midlands	10	1	1	12
Yorkshire	11	2	1	14
Wales	11	-	-	11

Problems of interpretation: when can a collection be said to be 'catalogued'

13. Many respondents pointed out that whilst they held some material that was completely uncatalogued, they also held much that was catalogued inadequately by today's standards and on which more detailed work needed to be done. This might be because the level of detail provided was insufficient or because the format or presentation of the catalogue needed reconsideration (for example to secure conformity with ISAD(G) or in one case because it had been compiled in too much detail to see the wood for the trees). Common variants on this theme were that a catalogue of sorts was available for a given collection as a whole but parts of it were more detailed than others; or that some parts of a collection had been omitted altogether when the original catalogue was compiled and still needed tackling. A few respondents said that any material in need of re-cataloguing was included in their overall backlog figures, which might therefore be somewhat overstated in relation to other repositories because more generally the poorly catalogued material was seen as being in addition to the backlog of completely uncatalogued material.

General state of cataloguing

14. Among public sector repositories, only two replied that they had in effect no cataloguing backlog. Another was up to date apart from one very large solicitors' collection that is being tackled slowly, and two other large collections. A fourth local government repository was half-way through a 3-year HLF-supported project to eliminate its backlog, and one of the university repositories expected to have eliminated its backlog by 2002/3. A number of small specialist repositories such as Wells and Exeter cathedral archives also reported no problems. The great majority, however, reported significant backlogs.

15. Some respondents appeared to be broadly up to date with material acquired in recent years but still to have a large cataloguing backlog because in previous generations cataloguing had not kept pace with accessions, for example in the first rush to take in private records after a repository's foundation, or with the influx of large quantities of records simultaneously such as official records taken in after the local government reorganisations in the 1970s and 1980s.

The dilemma of how to tackle new accessions

16. All repositories aspire to, and most achieve, at least a summary description of all new accessions. Whilst this might be sufficient for repository control and identification purposes, and indeed to flag up the existence of the collection for the NRA, it is usually insufficient to allow adequate intellectual access to the material.

17. One fairly common reaction to the backlog of more detailed cataloguing has been to give priority to new accessions in order at least to prevent the backlog growing still worse. This however has the inescapable consequence of further postponing the day when the uncatalogued material from previous years' intake - no matter what its heritage importance - can be tackled. Some repositories indicated that their staffing situation was so acute that they could not even keep pace with cataloguing new accessions, but that instead even the newly accessioned material had to be prioritised, and some of it set aside to join the accumulated backlog. Where such pressures apply, the selection and prioritisation of accessions for cataloguing may well have to proceed on pragmatic grounds (e.g. what is manageable with available resources, what is likely to be most in demand), with the result that bulky collections (irrespective of their heritage or research value) and records of apparently more specialised interest or requiring unusual technical skills for cataloguing, are set aside for later consideration.

18. Among examples given, one repository reported receiving 147 accessions in 2000-01 of which only 40 were catalogued. One county record office reported that over half its intake each year remained uncatalogued, and another that, with some 400 accessions a year, there was no way the staff could keep pace. Many replied that only small new accessions were catalogued in any detail and the rest were at best described summarily.

Scale of the cataloguing backlog

19. A high proportion (74%) of respondents (Table 2) had measured the scale of their cataloguing backlog by one means or another. But, as some pointed out, this too takes up staff time, and in at least one case a survey had to be abandoned for lack of resources.

Table 2: Number of repositories that have measured cataloguing backlog

Region	Measure d	Not measured
East	10	0
East Midlands	4	2
North East	5	2
South West	18	3 (all specialist)
West Midlands	8	4
Yorkshire	6	8 (all local)
Wales	9	2

20. Since different repositories use different methods of measurement, this survey encouraged self-assessment by whatever yardstick was available. The measures (or guesstimates) proposed in the questionnaire were: quantity of uncatalogued records, proportion of total holdings uncatalogued, or staff time needed to eliminate the backlog.

21. Local government repositories now commonly measure the quantity of records in cubic (but sometimes still in linear) metres. In the university and private sectors other measures are still encountered (linear feet, cubic feet or the number of boxes). Standard measurement throughout the profession would assist statistical comparison.

22. Serious cataloguing problems are apparent whichever yardstick is used. In the following tables and analysis the water has been tested in a number of ways.

Table 3: Backlog measured by public sector repositories

(a) In cubic metres		
<i>Local government</i>		
Coventry	19	
NE Lincs	28	
Herefs		63
Teesside	100	
Northumberland	120	
Bristol		170
Staffs & Stoke	172	
Suffolk	190	
Shropshire	200	
Norfolk	230	
WYAS Kirklees	260	
<u>Herts</u>	<u>500</u>	
Conwy	9	
Powys		16
Denbighshire		100
West Glamorgan (max)	116	
Glamorgan	425	
<i>University</i>		
Churchill	22	
UEA	25	
York (Borthwick)	30	
Nottingham	85	

(b) In linear metres		
<i>Local government</i>		
Beds & Luton	114	
Gloucestershire	2240	
<u>Nottinghamshire</u>	<u>4000</u>	
Anglesey	70	
Pembrokeshire	100	
<i>University</i>		
Selwyn, Cambridge		50
Hull	1030	
Durham UL	1156	

24. Backlogs estimated as a percentage of total holdings were as shown in Table 4:

Table 4: Number of repositories estimating a given % cataloguing backlog

<i>Region</i>	<i>Up to 10% uncatalogued</i>	<i>Over 10% to 25%</i>	<i>Over 25% to 50%</i>	<i>Over 50% to 75%</i>	<i>Over 75%</i>
East	3	3	4	2	
East Midlands		1	2		
North East		2	2		
South West	4	5	1	1	1
West Midlands	3	1	1	1	
Yorkshire	2	1	1		
Wales	1	3	2		

25. Among local government repositories in England and Wales able to answer the question, estimates of the number of staff years required to eliminate the backlog were as shown in Table 5. (A staff year is taken to be the input of one full time member of staff for one year).

Table 5: Number of local government repositories estimating backlog in terms of a certain number of staff-years of cataloguing

<i>Under 5 staff years</i>	<i>5 to 10 years</i>	<i>Over 10 to 20 years</i>	<i>Over 20 to 30 years</i>	<i>Over 30 to 40 years</i>	<i>Over 40 years</i>
6	4	5	3	1	1*

*Birmingham City, with an estimated 200 years

26. There were too few applicable returns to warrant analysis of similar data for specialist repositories.

Reasons for the backlog: shortage of staffing resources

27. Repositories were asked which of the following factors applied:

- (1) Absolute inadequacy of the staff complement
- (2) Diversion of staff to public services
- (3) Diversion of staff to external bids for grant aid
- (4) Diversion of staff to catalogue-retroconversion projects
- (5) Other.

28. Unsurprisingly, virtually all respondents replied Yes to the first and second factors. In England 30% in each case replied Yes to the third and to the fourth factors. In Wales only two repositories replied Yes to the third and none to the fourth, reflecting the different stage reached in archival development in Wales. 'Other reasons' included for example records management and administrative work undertaken at the behest of the employing authority.

29. Particular challenges were faced by repositories which had only a single archivist (mostly specialist repositories), or only two archivists (even in the public sector), where cataloguing time was under extreme pressure from other demands, and where there was not even the capacity to spend time applying for grants to address the problem.

Strategies for addressing the problem

30. Many repositories have so far been unable to develop any effective strategy for tackling their cataloguing backlogs, although as explained above roughly three quarters have made a start by measuring the scale of the problem. Here and there, however, resources have been reallocated to cataloguing, and from different repositories come reports of:

- specific sectoral initiatives, such as the universities' Non Formula Funding grants and Research Support Libraries Programme, to put new resources into cataloguing

- successful applications for external grant aid (e.g. HLF) to support cataloguing projects
- systematic programmes to tackle the backlog in tandem with cataloguing new accessions to ensure the position does not worsen
- concentration, at least in the first instance, on collection/guide level entries to allow at least a broad overview of holdings
- cataloguing priority given to accessions to prevent the backlog increasing
- regular monitoring of progress.

Heritage value of the uncatalogued material

31. Respondents were invited to give examples of the kind of material of significant heritage value that remained uncatalogued or inadequately catalogued. Their returns are set out in the regional analyses (supplied in confidence to the respective RACs and ACW). They show that deposited records of private origin are the most common victims of cataloguing backlogs. But the problem also extends in places to Public Records (such as those of Quarter and Petty Sessions, the National Coal Board or hospitals), and to significant portions of the records of historic towns such as Exeter, Hereford, Newcastle, Plymouth, St Albans and Worcester, as well as to those of many county councils and predecessor bodies, and of the governing bodies of universities and colleges. There could be significant implications here for Freedom of Information.

32. Large, intractable collections of business records such as those of solicitors, architects and estate agents were identified as uncatalogued, particularly by local government repositories. Even the records of industries central to the economy and history of their region are affected: iron and steel-making in Glamorgan, Sheffield and Teesside, pottery in Staffordshire and Stoke, ship-building in Tyne and Wear, engineering and metal manufacture in Birmingham, fishing in Grimsby, as well as railways, water companies, cycle and motor manufacturers, and many others.

33. Several decades since their deposit in or acquisition by a record office, the papers of many individuals, families and estates are still often languishing in bulk and unlisted, or perhaps with the 'easier' (less bulky or less technically demanding) portions catalogued and the rest still not. Perhaps surprisingly the uncatalogued material still includes, here and there, notable medieval documents, Civil War material, the papers of prominent politicians of the last century or more, and material recognised as of great interest to local, regional and national history across a wide spectrum of politics, business, the arts and literature. Many diocesan and parochial records too remain substantially unlisted, as do those of countless charities, local organisations and local branches of national organisations such as political parties.

Other comments received

34. Among many other comments received from respondents the following are perhaps those of widest general interest. **It is emphasised that they represent the views of respondents, rather than those of HMC.**

- Local authorities, the universities and other governing bodies of repositories, are interested primarily in seeing good public services delivered. They tend to judge output by quantity rather than quality. They do not realise/care that effective access is dependent on good quality cataloguing, and that this is not being given priority. On the other hand, experience gained from dealing with the public and meeting their needs can and should inform cataloguing, so it is not always appropriate to think in terms of the 'diversion' of staff resources to front-of-house duties.
- Where archives are administered in a library environment, e.g. in many local authorities and at the universities, the kind of detailed cataloguing required for archives is neither widely understood nor sympathised with.
- The sheer size and bulk of some collections makes them daunting to catalogue. Some also require technical or specialist historical/palaeographical expertise that is not readily to hand even among qualified archivists.
- The unpredictable flow of accessions, often dependent on external offers of material, makes advance planning of the resources necessary for cataloguing difficult.
- Pressures other than those identified in the questionnaire withdraw resources from cataloguing. Examples given included meeting increasing demands from within the authority itself and from national and regional bodies for involvement in strategy, scrutiny and planning (such as Best Value issues, data protection, social inclusion) and for developing services such as records management.
- Cataloguing is on the whole being streamlined by new ICT applications. In their early stages these can slow down (or, as one respondent put it, even 'paralyse') the process. Most repositories, however, have quickly seen long-term benefits.
- Some feel that retrospective catalogue conversion has been given unjustified priority over new cataloguing, just because funding streams are available for it.
- Many archivists nowadays, especially senior archivists, have little or no time available for cataloguing, and in many cases the onus lies with junior or even non-professional staff.
- In the business archives sector additional problems apply, including the merger of businesses and companies and their respective archives, and the absence of professionally trained archive staff.
- Among small, specialist repositories in the private sector, there is often only a singleton, and sometimes only a part-time, archivist who may also be responsible for other (e.g. museum) collections. In these circumstances progress with cataloguing can be very constrained indeed.

C. CONCLUSIONS

35. Even though this survey covers only a non-systematic sample of repositories in England and Wales, the conclusion is inescapable that large - sometimes overwhelming - quantities of the archives held in public repositories remain uncatalogued or inadequately catalogued. Public and private resources respectively are being spent on storing such archives without any immediate prospect (or in some cases any prospect at all) that they can be extensively exploited for research, and this is clearly a matter of concern. The archives have at least been gathered in for posterity, and that is a worthy achievement. But in itself it is not enough. If they never reach the top of the priority list for cataloguing they will be unused or under-used, and could be seen as an unwelcome drain on the resources of the authority holding them. This would be an unworthy response to a heritage and educational asset of considerable potential. Local, regional and even national remedies are needed now.

36. Although the cataloguing problem in some places extends to official records of the parent bodies, the larger proportion of uncatalogued material throughout the regions sampled comprises records of private origin, including many that are still privately owned and whose owners have deposited them on loan in a public repository in the expectation (false, as it has so far turned out) that they will thereby be readily available to the public for research. It must be emphasised that this is not the whole story, because in most repositories by far the greater proportion of holdings have been catalogued in some fashion. But the returns to this survey leave no doubt whatever that there is a great mountain of uncatalogued material of genuine heritage significance awaiting attention.

37. In many cases the cataloguing backlog is already too large for the repository ever to conquer it on its own with its present resources, and this has been explicitly stated in some of the returns. Only a major injection of internal or external funds into a concentrated cataloguing programme is likely to solve or significantly reduce the problem.

38. Only to a very limited extent can matters be improved by the reallocation of existing staff resources within a repository, or by a fresh prioritisation of the objectives of individual archive services. However, service managers certainly need to review those options because experience in some services shows that a combination of techniques can improve the situation. They include:

- measuring the problem
- ring-fencing certain staff time for cataloguing
- seeking external grant aid where appropriate
- perhaps settling in the first instance for something less than a full catalogue, but still a finding aid that covers the main scope and content of the records
- setting firm targets and monitoring progress.

39. Investment in suitable ICT systems can both speed up the process of cataloguing and deliver output that better meets today's standards. It offers the hope at least of keeping pace with accessions, and might allow some marginal inroads to be made into the cataloguing backlog without additional staff resources. On the whole, however, ICT should be seen as a useful tool rather than a panacea. In almost every case, with or without ICT, additional staff resources, whether funded internally or externally, are going to be needed.

40. Governing bodies of repositories, of course, should not assume that the resources necessary to tackle the problem must come from external sources. Cataloguing (and its funding) has to be seen as a core responsibility by those who take in records for the public benefit. Some of the responses to the questionnaire suggest that there is still much education to be done to make public authorities in particular better aware of the treasures in their care and the need for cataloguing in the first place. To the extent that the backlogs apply to the administrative records of public authorities covered by the Freedom of Information Act (and where relevant those of their predecessor authorities), the situation will demand an urgent response if these bodies are to comply with their responsibilities under the Act.

41. But if a strong enough case is made, external funding bodies might be willing to assist with cataloguing other types of records, and we hope that this report will itself be instrumental in encouraging them to do so. There is an urgent need for additional funding for primary cataloguing as distinct from the retrospective conversion of existing catalogues into computerised formats. This is already being facilitated by awareness-raising initiatives such as Full Disclosure, and by programmes such as the second phase of Access to Archives (A2A) which, unlike the first phase, is not limited to the retroconversion of existing catalogues but also embraces some primary cataloguing and will therefore assist in tackling these backlogs. Generous HLF grants to individual repositories for primary cataloguing have already made a significant contribution, and HMC's submission to HLF's recent strategic review made clear what a priority this must assume in the archive world. For its part, the university sector has benefited from specific cataloguing grants under its Non-Formula Funding initiatives and subsequent programmes (limited to the HE sector).

42. In the present state of supply and demand in the archives job market, which is currently under review by the NCA, there is clearly some doubt whether there are enough trained archive cataloguers available to sustain an ambitious programme of additional cataloguing at a national level. However, a model for such a scheme might perhaps be seen in the central team responsible for coordinating the Access to Archives Programme (A2A), and the idea might at least merit further discussion. The regions might be better placed to consider whether small teams of experienced cataloguers (fixed or peripatetic) might be established, to be hired out to repositories in most need, or to have collections temporarily transferred to a particular location for cataloguing and return.

Attachments:

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Appendix B: List of respondents by region and country

[Limited confidential circulation]: Summary of findings by region.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

HMC SURVEY OF CATALOGUING PROBLEMS 2002

Name of Repository:

Region:

Name of respondent:

1. Please indicate [Yes or No] which of the following applies in the case of your repository: *(electronic respondents please delete as appropriate)*

Cataloguing is fully up to date and there are no appreciable backlogs. Y N
 Summary cataloguing is done for all current accessions, sufficient to allow access

to the accession in question. Y N

Summary cataloguing is done for selected (e.g. smaller) accessions but a significant

proportion of the intake each year remains uncatalogued and is added to the

backlog. Y N

If none of the above adequately describes your situation, please add further comments:

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2. Scale of your backlog

2.1 Have you measured (even crudely) the scale of your cataloguing backlog? Y N

2.2 If Yes, what are the results?

Please answer all question(s) for which you have data to hand. It would be specially helpful if you have a figure in cubic metres (section (c) below):

(a) number of staff years required to eliminate backlog	
(b) number of collections/accessions remaining uncatalogued to at least a basic level that permits access	
(c) bulk of uncatalogued material (cubic [preferred] or linear, <i>please specify which</i>)	
(d)= (b) or (c) expressed as a percentage of all holdings	
(e) most extreme case (e.g. some material held for 35 years still uncatalogued)	

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Additional comments:

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3. Heritage significance of uncatalogued material

In terms of historical or cultural interest, please give examples of important accessions/collections in your care that remain uncatalogued:

4. Reasons for the backlog

Please answer all questions:

Absolute inadequacy of the staff complement Y N

Diversion of staff who would otherwise be available for cataloguing to duties such as:

Public services (front-of-house activities) Y N

Bids for external grant aid (HLF etc) Y N

Retrospective conversion project(s) Y N

Other (*please specify*):

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Appendix B: List of respondents by region and country

EAST OF ENGLAND

Bedfordshire & Luton Archives & Records Service
CGNU Group Archive
Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge
Essex Record Office
Hertfordshire Archives
History of Advertising Trust Archive
Norfolk Record Office
Selwyn College Archives, Cambridge
Suffolk Record Office
University of East Anglia

EAST MIDLANDS

Derbyshire Record Office
Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, Record Office for
Lincolnshire Archives
Northampton, RC Diocese of
Nottingham, University of
Nottinghamshire Archives

NORTH EAST

Berwick upon Tweed Record Office
Durham County Record Office
Durham University Library Archives & Special Collections
Hexham & Newcastle Diocesan Archives (RC)
Northumberland Record Office (Melton Park and Morpeth)
Teesside Archives
Tyne & Wear Archives Service

SOUTH WEST

Bath Record Office
Bath University Library
Bristol Grammar School
Bristol Record Office
Bristol University Library: Special Collections
Cable & Wireless Archive
Cornwall Record Office
Dartington Hall Trust Archive Collection
Devon Record Office
Exeter Cathedral Archives
Exeter University Library
Gloucestershire Record Office
Longleat House

North Devon Record Office
Plymouth & West Devon Record Office
Royal Institution of Cornwall
Somerset Record Office
Tank Museum: Archive & Reference Library
TSW Film & Television Archive
Wells Cathedral Archives
Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office

WEST MIDLANDS

Birmingham City Archives
Coventry Archives
BP Archive
Dudley Archives & Local History Service
Herefordshire Record Office
Shropshire Records and Research Centre
Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent Archive Service
Walsall Local History Centre
Warwick, University Library of: Modern Records Centre
Warwickshire County Record Office
Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies
Worcestershire Record Office

YORKSHIRE

Barnsley Libraries
Doncaster Archives
Hull, University of: Brynmor Jones Library
North East Lincolnshire Archives
North Yorkshire County Record Office
Rotherham Archives & Local Studies
Sheffield Archives
West Yorkshire Archive Service: Wakefield HQ
WYAS: Bradford
WYAS: Calderdale
WYAS: Kirklees
WYAS: Leeds
York University: Borthwick Institute
AN Other [Not signed]

WALES

Anglesey Record Office
Carmarthenshire Archive Service
Conwy Archive Service
Denbighshire Record Office
Flintshire Record Office
Glamorgan Record Office

West Glamorgan Archive Service
Gwynedd Archives Service
Pembrokeshire Record Office
Powys County Archives Office
Wrexham Archives Service

Following the merger of the Historical Manuscripts Commission and the Public Record Office to form the National Archives in 2003, any comments on this survey may be sent

By post to:

The Secretary
The National Archives: Historical Manuscripts Commission
Kew
Richmond
Surrey TW9 4DU

By email to: chris.kitching@nationalarchives.gov.uk