

## *Essays in Honour of Michael Cook*

**Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies (LUCAS), ISBN**

*Edited by Margaret Procter and Caroline Williams*

Michael Cook's career in archives spans almost fifty years. During this time he has been at the forefront of almost every field of development in archives and records management. This volume of essays, written by some of his international friends and colleagues, reflects the breadth and depth of this contribution, in areas as diverse as automation, education and the development and application of professional standards.

I can do no better in summarising Michael Cook's character and contribution to the profession than to quote directly from the editors' introduction to this volume:

"This collection of essays celebrates a remarkable man. Michael Cook has, since the 1960s, been in the vanguard of professional development in archives and records management; his influence .....extends far beyond the United Kingdom. His international outlook ..... is one of his main characteristics. Equally, his innate ability to be at ease with any international gathering, and an instant empathy with the concerns of fellow professionals – whatever their provenance – has endeared him to successive generations of record keepers. His intellectual ability is not the least of the qualities which has contributed to the many international friendships he sustains, whether through his work in Africa, committee and publication work with the International Council on Archives and for UNESCO, or with long-standing colleagues at the University of Liverpool which has provided the basis for his major academic and professional work. Much of his strength in maintaining these professional and personal relationships comes from his capacity for listening, and, within a teaching context, enabling students to identify the issues – and then solutions – without any heavy-handed direction or interference, a 'hands-off' approach which may have been only fully appreciated in retrospect by hard-pressed students."

The essays in this wide-ranging collection are:-

- *History and memory: the Vatican archives and constructs of the past – Francis X Blouin*; this tackles the representativeness

of archives, using the complex web of records and institutions which comprise the Vatican archives. Does an archive truly represent an institution, and how does this sit with the 'historical memory'? What is the difference between the two, and how can the tension be eased?

- *Recovering memory, sharing memory: archives lost and displaced in the Asian-Pacific War and the responsibility of Japanese archives – Masahito Ando*; the role of memory is addressed in a totally different context here. Archivists have a specific duty as keepers of memory and this essay has proposals on how this can be implemented. The context is fascinating – the few surviving records from 1939-45 and the dangers of drawing historical conclusions from a less than comprehensive source.
- *Developing a records management system: human and technical challenges – Frank Scheelings and Patrick Temmerman*; this centres on the introduction of electronic records management systems and has as its focus the need for different disciplines to work together to achieve common targets, in this case records managers, archivists, sociologists and computer scientists.

*Archival education in consonance with a scientific-informational paradigm – Fernanda Ribeiro*; this analyses the change in emphasis of archival training, from the traditional history/technical framework to the modern scientific/informational (where the notion of information is paramount).

- *Changes and directions in archival research – the influence of Michael Cook's publications in China – An Xiaomi*; the need to focus on information as a resource is the theme of this essay, which highlights some of the publications

which have had a particular influence in China.

- *An African appreciation of Michael Cook – Anne Thurston, Yonapika Yonaz Shaid and Mwanahamisi Mtengula, Pino Akotia, Festus Khayundi, T M Lekaukau, Cletus Azangweo, Nathan Mnjama*; this list of distinguished African archivists is a sure reflection of the esteem in which Michael Cook is held in anglophone Africa.
- *Standardising archival descriptive standards: the case of the ‘content’ note – Marcel Caya*; this is a subject close to Michael Cook’s heart. It examines the development of various standards, assessing their convergence or lack of convergence, and uses an interesting case study.
- *The International Council on Archives and automation – Michael Roper*; a clear examination of the work of the ICA’s Committee on Automation, to which Michael Cook made frequent and valuable contributions.
- *Now and then: reflections on forty years in archives – David Vaisey*; this essay looks back on the many changes that have taken place over the past forty years in three main contexts – the place of archivists in relation to other heritage professions, the relationship of archivists with the user, and the attitude of the archival profession to regionalism.
- *The growth of records management in the UK: from insignificant cog to vital component? – Peter Emerson*; this looks on

the development of records management since 1966 and Michael Cook’s contribution to it.

This very worthwhile volume is published by Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies (LUCAS) and costs £10. ■