

International New Notes

Edited by Evelyn Wareham

Architect Appointed for the New Centre of the National Archives of France

Correspondent: Isabelle Neuschwander (France), Project Director

On 9 March 2004, the French President, Jacques Chirac announced his decision to construct a new centre for the National Archives of France. One year later, on 10 May 2005, the Minister of Culture and Communication, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, announced the name of the architect responsible for realising this significant project: Massimiliano Fuksas, of Italy, winner of the Grand National Architecture Prize in 1999.

Location of the new centre of the National Archives

The new centre will be constructed on a vast site located in the municipality of Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, north of Paris in the department of Seine-Saint-Denis – 14 kilometres from the heart of Paris, 18 km from the airport of Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle and 2.5 km from the royal basilica of Saint-Denis. This setting has numerous advantages and places the centre at the heart of an urban transport network that will make it accessible for researchers from the Ile de France, others parts of France and overseas. As the site is served by the Parisian metro (line 13, station Saint-Denis-Université), it will be accessible in around thirty minutes from the centre of Paris. In addition, the new centre is already part of in a quality research environment thanks to its close proximity to the Universities of Paris VIII and XIII. Actively supported by the local authorities, the new centre is a driving force in a project for the development and rezoning of an urban area.

The objectives of the new centre: One centre across three sites

The Pierrefitte-sur-Seine Centre adds to the existing Ile de France locations of the National Archives (in the Marais and at Fontainebleau, see: <www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr>), which, far from disappearing, will evolve in relation with this new project. Notably, the archives predating 1790, archives of the Paris Central Registry of Notaries, the historical library, and the Museum of the History of France will be kept in the historic location.

Fitted out with 320 linear kilometres of static and mobile shelving, the new centre will take in the records of the central administrations of the state from 1790 to the current day. Its growth capacity is expected to accommodate around thirty years of acquisitions. A real estate reserve has been maintained on the site in order to allow the construction of an extension. From the opening, 310 reading room seats will be made available to researchers for 160 linear kilometres of archives, constituting a remarkable historical heritage in several respects. A great wealth and diversity of *fonds* will be preserved and made accessible in the new centre, including: the *fonds* of the assemblies, presidential archives, archives of the ministries (with the exception of Foreign Affairs and Defence), *fonds* relating to the Second World War, and private *fonds* of national interest, as well as very recent holdings that are constantly growing. Four linear kilometres of records produced by the central administrations of state are added to the National Archives each year.

The project to establish a new centre is, naturally, aimed primarily to resolve the problems of saturation and poor, unsuited conservation conditions, which the National Archives has faced for a great number of years. But beyond a quantitative increase of storage capacity and a qualitative improvement in conservation conditions, the new centre should meet precise and ambitious objectives in order to respond to contemporary challenges and changes.

In the area of appraisal, it is a matter of keep pace with electronic government. The new centre will house a digital archiving platform, for which studies are already well underway.

To make finding aids accessible, it is important to accelerate the process of transmission through the Internet, in order to enable researchers to prepare their visit to the National Archives. The Historical Centre of National Archives (CHAN) and Centre of Contemporary Archives

(CAC) are already giving researchers access to several useful databases, but these vary significantly both in their scope and their level of description. One of the main professional challenges of the new centre will be to develop a unique and high-performing documentation information system. In this respect, EAD (Encoded Archival Description) will be the preferred standard in the production of current and future finding aids.

For public access, the diversity of the people using the National Archives needs to be taken into account. Like all other countries, the French National Archives are used by the public for different purposes. These days, the traditional users of archives rub shoulders with individuals, in ever increasing numbers, intent on researching their family history or wanting to prove their rights. The quality of public access and of our professional response will be at the heart of the success of the new centre.

Lastly, particular attention will be given to educational and cultural activities, in order to promote the heritage, historic and civic dimensions of archives.

The architectural project

The quantity of records to preserve, the scale of the surface areas and the diversity of the surrounding landscapes constitute many challenges for the architects asked to compete for the project. Massimiliano Fuksas put together his proposal based on an analysis of the geography of the location and the different levels of the site, looking for a dialogue with the surrounding city. His building is structured in two parts. To the east, a building that is 'well anchored to the ground, imposing, reflective and valuable' houses the archives stacks and the large reading room. 42 metres high and 180 metres long, it is covered with a 'skin' of aluminium, which frays into a diamond shaped pattern at the level of the reading room and the passageways. At the west, suspended, light, transparent spaces contain the public areas and offices. These spaces are multiplied in their entirety in a play of reflections on the aluminium facade of the archives building as well as in pools of water.

The pathways into and within the building are clearly differentiated. Researchers access the building by the south entrance, in immediate proximity to the metro exit. The entrance hall, exhibition gallery, reading areas and relaxation areas are all situated on the ground floor. From the

entrance hall, visitors also have access to the educational service and conference centre on the first floor, which will include a theatre with 300 seats.

The main building has eleven stories of stacks, each of 200 m², giving a total of 222 areas. These will in no way be work spaces and circulation will be restricted to retrieval of records, in order to maintain the stability of the climatic conditions. The long, straight corridors are livened up by light wells. Delivery of records is facilitated by a secure access at the north of the building. Staff members of the archives enter the building by a main entry at the west. The offices are situated on five connected levels, linked to the building by footbridges. Particular care has been given to the processing of archives. The rooms reserved for processing are specifically designed for this purpose. Situated at the interface of the offices and the stacks, they constitute the sole area for work on the archives such as research, reconditioning and arrangement.

Timetable and project leadership

A project team is currently in the process of being established reporting to the Director of the Archives of France, Martine de Boisdeffre. Led by a curator general, assisted since July 2005 by a deputy curator, a computer engineer, a secretariat and administrative assistant, this team will be strengthened as required to meet the needs of the project. During the phase of design and construction of the building, the team is being assisted by the Public Department for Cultural Works (EMOC), to which the Direction of French Archives has delegated control of works. In coordination with the relevant centres in Paris and Fontainebleau, the project team will be responsible for all the related work sites and in particular, the site for preparation of the archives before moving and the design of the information system.

A professional committee bringing together representatives of users and institutional and professional partners has also been established, and has met twice since September 2004. An internal consultation has also been initiated. This has resulted in the establishment of working groups that have met from November 2004 to February 2005 and will continue at the point when drafting resumes. Their purpose was to refine and elucidate the choices to be made both as regards the spatial and functional organisation and to support the project, in all its aspects and throughout its development. They were established around the

following themes: public archives; archiving on new media; private archives; conservation; outreach, public programs, educational and cultural programs; access, research use.

The phases of basic pre-project work, then of detailed pre-project work, will be underway from autumn. The start of construction could be in 2007, for delivery of the building in 2009.

Pages set up on the website of the Direction of Archives of France will enable researchers from all over the world to follow the progress of the project at: <www.archivesdefrance.culture.gouv.fr/>.

For many years, the National Archives, and especially its centres in the Ile de France, faced major difficulties, which mobilised the national and international community of researchers and archivists. The decision of the French Government to construct this new centre is the key to resolving this situation. It should facilitate the implementation of an ambitious professional and cultural policy in connection with the professional archives community and the world of research at national and international level.

Translation: Evelyn Wareham

Association of German Archivists Adopts Position Paper on Appraisal

Correspondent: Robert Kretzschmar (Germany), Working Group on Appraisal Member

On 15 October 2004, the working group on appraisal of the German Association of Archivists (VdA) adopted a position paper on archival appraisal. This is available in German and English versions on the website of the association at <<http://www.vda.archiv.net>>, as well as in the association's journal *Der Archivar* (issue 58/2005, pp. 88-94).

The working group, formed in December 2001, comprises around twenty archivists from various state and municipal archives, one church archives, one political party archives, one broadcasting archives and two university archives. One member works for the Foundation for

Reconciliation for the Dictatorship of the Socialist Unity Party (Sozialistische Einheitspartei, SED).

At its establishment, the overall purpose was to generate an intensive dialogue about questions relating to appraisal that spanned all types of archives. As an objective, the working group undertook to agree on 'theoretical' principles, on the basis of concrete examples, and in particular on methodological principles that would be supported by representatives of the various types of archives that make up the VdA.

The position paper of the working group is a first result of its work. It is intended to set up-to-date standards for archival appraisal, to specify the principles that should be taken into consideration, and to outline the essential series of tests. The target audience is archivists, who should find that it guides their daily work. At the same time, it should also be suitable for informing interested groups beyond the archives world, above all historical researchers, about the principles of archival appraisal. Most of all, however, the working group would like to drive forward the professional discussion on appraisal with this paper. Despite all this, our intention was not to produce a completed theory on archival appraisal, but rather to bring together useful rules of thumb and food for thought for everyday work, both those that apply across all records, and also for particular types of documents.

The paper was developed in seven working meetings, which were all characterised by an open-minded, extremely constructive atmosphere for discussion. Through individual members we had contact with a working group of the Federal Conference of Municipal Archives at the German Congress of Cities, which was working on a specific paper on principles for appraisal in municipal archives at roughly the same time (published in *Der Archivar*, issue 58/2005, pp. 87-88). Naturally, in addition to our general position paper, there should be more specific papers for particular types of archives, which are customised to their circumstances and can be aligned with their structures. This reflects the pluralism of the German archival field, which is anchored in the political structures of the German Federal Republic – in its federalism and municipal self-governance. It was in recognition of the diversity of the German archives field that the VdA working group, at its establishment in 2001, undertook to bring together general principles for archival appraisal applicable for all types of archives, in order to establish a common platform in the context of pluralism.

The paper is structured into the following sections: I. Basic Principles, II. Appraisal Methods, III. Appraisal of Large Quantities of Similar Case Files, IV. Appraisal of Statistical Records, V. Appraisal of Electronic Records, VI. Appraisal of Audio-Visual Records. The first section gives general methodological recommendations. The second then provides general guidance on the importance of in-depth analysis of the records, the application of selection types and prospective appraisal models. The subsequent sections provide ideas about the appraisal of particular types of records.

The position paper takes up the current state of discussions in Germany, without restating in detail the basic, accepted tenets of archival work, such as respect for the principle of provenance. In accordance with its character, it also does not engage directly with the appraisal debate that arose in the Federal Republic in the 1990s. From its recommendations, however, it is unspoken that the process of appraisal is seen as following a series of tests, in which both the function and content are to be weighed. The working group did not see functional and content-based approaches to appraisal as polar opposites, but rather as interwoven, mutually complementary approaches, which can only lead to a good result together. That appraisal is based on the functional context and thus on provenance is an unspoken, underlying principle of the position paper. This is also demonstrated by the published checklists referred to in the paper. The starting point for every appraisal is the agency in which the records were or are produced. Its tasks, responsibilities and working methods are first to be examined, and then the purpose for which it created the records and their possible uses.

The goal of archival appraisal is clearly defined in the position paper: to document political processes and social life; social life is to be interpreted as widely as possible. The working group follows an approach in which the developments and phenomena that characterise an era should be documented through the retention of authentic archival records – through an active structuring of appraisal, archives of the most diverse agencies come together to form a comprehensive body of records and thereby cooperate. In the end, the various records of government and non-government provenance should together form a resource base that is as diverse as possible.

In this scenario, the aim of the appraisal of particular records cannot be only to document the activities of the creating agency, but rather to

keep the most meaningful traces of those realities of life that are relevant to the records. In the development of this approach, the working group rejected the apparent conflict between evidential and informational value, which had dominated the appraisal discussion of the 1990s conceptually and terminologically; both aspects are fundamentally interrelated in the analysis of the documentary value of a record. Overall, the working group would like to see the various content and form-based perspectives of archival appraisal analysis brought together in practice, so that appraisal can be directed and controlled in regard to its content results. This necessitates an intensive consideration of the content dimension of the records concerned, and, based on this, the development of documentation strategies.

Thus in the context of the appraisal debate of the 1990s, with this position paper the working group declares itself in support of appraisal that takes into account the content and potential uses of the records. Of course, there was consensus among all members that archival material presents a plurality of research uses and that by no means all questions and research possibilities can be anticipated. In its open discussions, however, the working group came more and more to be convinced that the positivistic illusion of a quasi value-neutral appraisal on the basis of a purely formal series of tests cannot reach the goal of delivering archival records that offer full potential for use. In an appraisal, you have to envisage which spheres, which questions a source may provide information on, and you cannot avoid making content judgements on the basis of conceivable research uses. The final appraisal decision then demands – as a result of such analysis – the definition of transparent documentation aims. Only then can the ‘informational value’ of records be measured, only then can the results of archival appraisal be understood and evaluated.

The sections on ‘Basic Principles’ and ‘Appraisal Methods’ pick up a range of principles and methods that have already been discussed for some time, but which the working group nonetheless wanted to see adopted as a standard and respected in practice. These concern above all the development of models for prospective appraisal. In general, the working group tends to speak clearly against an appraisal method in which only the responsibilities and tasks of the individual creating agency are considered, as is the case with the PIVOT project undertaken in the Netherlands. On the other hand, it also takes a position against

the argument in which any prospective appraisal model is questioned in principle. In the recommendations, both the possibilities and also the limits of application of prospective appraisal models are outlined. Explicitly favoured is collaboration with the agencies undertaking the sorting and destruction. As far as possible, the Archives should also aim to have advisory influence on records management in the registries. Active cooperation with registry creators is considered especially necessary in relation to the introduction and further development of electronic processes, in order to ensure that archival requirements are considered sufficiently early. Great weight is also placed on cooperation and agreement across archives, which is mentioned in various points.

The recommendations regarding particular types of records – large quantities of similar case files, statistical, electronic records and audiovisual records – are based on the current stage of discussions, although they also go further in particular recommendations. In principle, the working group would like to know that such records are always appraised within the functional context of their creation and not treated as special areas that are analysed separately from the appraisal of other records; this is emphasised particularly for electronic records.

In this area, the working group was well aware of the extent to which practical experience in the appraisal of electronic records is lacking in Germany. While the strategies and methods for appraisal of analogue records have matured a great deal over recent years and it was possible for members of the working group to fall back on a wealth of knowledge from experience, for digital records we could formulate only theoretical recommendations. How these will translate into practice will be shown in coming years. Because as a basic principle the paper has developed from an awareness that the discussion on appraisal must be continued, that there are no ready recipes, but rather approaches and sign-posts, which must be reassessed continuously in our everyday work.

Translation: Evelyn Wareham

Japanese Digital Archives on the Internet

Correspondent: Chiyoko Ogawa (Japan), Documenting Japan International

Japanese E-Government policy

On 27 November 2000, the Information Technology (IT) Strategy Council of the Japanese Government released its 'Basic IT Strategy'. The introduction to the strategy states that: 'On the threshold of the 21st century, Japan must take revolutionary yet realistic actions promptly, without being bound by existing systems, practices and interests, in order to create a "knowledge-emergent society", where everyone can actively use information technology (IT) and fully enjoy its benefits'. Following this strategy, the Japanese government has been advancing its e-Japan strategies and Japanese archival institutions are also trying to progress their digital activities by developing their websites and giving online access to their holdings, including both finding aids and images of archival materials.

The Japan Center of Asian Historical Records (JACAR): The first Japanese digital archive on the World Wide Web

JACAR is a special digital archive, attached organisationally to the National Archives of Japan. It provides free access to millions of images together with online finding aids on its website at <<http://www.jacar.go.jp/>>. There are English, Japanese, Chinese and Korean versions of the top-level pages. In his welcome address on the webpage, Mr Yoneo Ishii, its Director General, describes JACAR as follows:

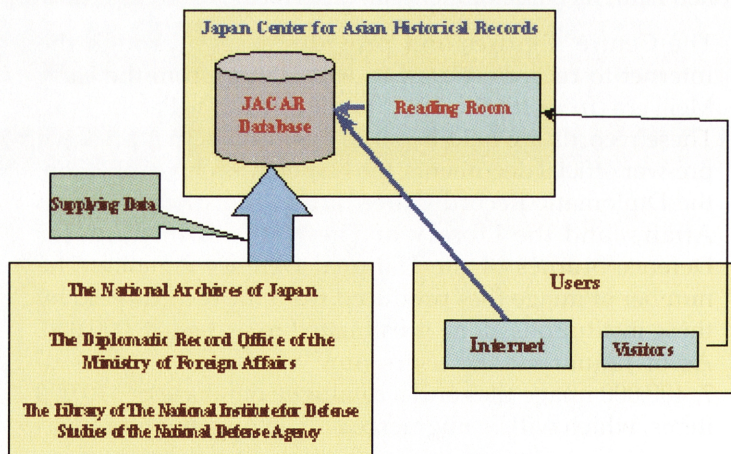
The Centre digitises and provides access through the Internet to records related to Asia dating from the early Meiji era (from 1868 to 1911) to the end of the Pacific War. These records are held by large institutions that preserve pre-war official documents: the National Archives of Japan, the Diplomatic Record Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Library of The National Institute for Defence Studies of the National Defence Agency. The number of image files produced from the records held by these institutions alone is estimated to exceed 28,000,000. As of January 2005, users now have ready access to 7, 400,000 image files and a catalogue database of 530,000 items, which will be augmented on an ongoing basis.

The Centre can be considered a full-fledged digital archive comprising digitised images of historical records and a database of catalogue information accessible through the Internet. Image data becomes online information upon processing by DjVu, the most advanced image compression technology developed for making large quantities of text contents accessible through the Internet. The catalogue consists of approximately the first 300 characters of each document – thus not only the title but also a portion of the text is searchable.

I, Chiyoko Ogawa, am proud to have successfully worked on the establishment of JACAR in 1999-2000 and have contributed to developing its hierarchical retrieval system by utilising the *International Standard for Archives Description, ISAD(G)*, for the first time in Japan. I also suggested the idea of including c.300 characters (equivalent to c.40 words in English) from each document in the free keyword search system. Both are currently the essential functions for the world-wide users of JACAR. In particular, the inclusion of the first 300 characters of each item for keyword searching proved highly effective and useful for the end users.

System for Accessing Information: The conceptual scheme of JACAR

<http://www.jacar.go.jp/asia_en/e_center/center_en.html>



National Archives of Japan's Digital Archive System and Digital Gallery

The National Archives of Japan, which is the parent organisation of JACAR, launched its Digital Archive System and Digital Gallery in April 2005 at <<http://www.digital.archives.go.jp/>>. The Digital Archive System offers researchers access to archival descriptions and the opportunity to view digitised images of archives held by the National Archives of Japan. Descriptions of c.570 000 volumes of public records transferred from the ministries and agencies, as well as the Cabinet Library Collection of over 430 000 books in Japanese and Chinese, are available from this system. Also available are c. 120 000 digitised images from about 2500 volumes of cabinet meeting records concerning post-war reforms, including the development of Japan's Constitution.

The Digital Gallery makes available high-resolution digital images of archives that are designated 'Important Cultural Property', as well as large-format and full-colour items. Accessible are 99 modern records and 124 valuable pre-modern pictorial items. The original Constitution of Japan, a picture map of the Shinbashi-Yokohama railroad dated 1872, and photographs of the Aizu Wakamatsu castle are a few examples from the modern records in the Gallery. Images are arranged into six categories: documents, maps, scrolls, photographs, drawings and posters. Pre-modern materials in the Gallery include 83 items from the 'Tempo no Kuni Ezu', which comprises maps of provinces compiled by the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1848 that are designated 'Important Cultural Properties' of Japan.

Websites of Japanese archival institutions

The website of the National Archives of Japan lists 46 prefectural and municipal archives, as well as four national institutions and ten other government-related or national university archives. All sixty of these are found on the National Archives' links page in Japanese, while in English you will find links to the forty-six prefectural and municipal archives. I tried to locate all forty-six of the listed links, to see how easy it is for English-speakers to access information about Japanese archives. This search revealed that two of the prefectural and municipal archives still had no websites, while ten links indicated errors or 'not found' errors, meaning that the links were to the respective government site and the archives sites could not easily be located. This rate of errors, prevalent also to some prominent institutions, seems too high. More

frequent link maintenance would be desirable to ensure better access to prefectural and municipal archives. Only one website had an English version: the Nagano Prefectural Museum of History. Other than in a few cases, the names of the institutions were usually indicated in English.

The UNESCO Archives Portal, perhaps the world's most extensive archives portal, also includes many Japanese archives. Six categories and fifteen links were returned when searching by the keyword 'Japan'. The search result from the UNESCO Archives Portal added several links to academic and university archives to the links provided by the National Archives of Japan. There are thirty-three links from the UNESCO Archives Portal, and for some reason ten of them have link problems such as those noted above. Most of the above mentioned websites are in the public archives sphere. I believe more information could also be found about academic and business archives.

Conclusion – More communication exchange through the Internet

In concluding, I would like say a little about the problem of language. Our mother tongue is Japanese. The archival materials available on the various websites mentioned above are in Japanese, and they represent our culture in the field of recorded memory. In spite of this, globalisation leads us to use the English language as the only common communication language in the cyber world. While there are many languages in the world of the Internet, each constitutes its own rather isolated cyber sphere. The Japanese language is one such secluded domain. Languages have established unseen boundaries in the cyber world, which are not the same as those in the physical world, yet still split people from one another according to their linguistic abilities. As time progresses, I notice that there are more websites that offer free automatic translation services. The results of English-Japanese/Japanese-English translations are still developmental, although I enjoy their convenience. I hope this automatic translation technology becomes more effective and helps people understand Japanese more easily, so that current digital archives in Japanese language can be understood by non-Japanese speakers and Japanese archival culture can become widely known through the Internet.

Records Management Improvement Program Launched by IRMT in Sierra Leone

Correspondent: Michael Hoyle (USA), Consultant with IRMT

Consultants with the International Records Management Trust (IRMT) have commenced a government records management improvement program in Sierra Leone. The project, which is funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), is being undertaken in conjunction with the creation of a human resource management office, led by Public Administration International and CoEn Consulting.

Sierra Leone is a resource rich country of approximately five million people located in West Africa. Following its discovery by Europeans in the 1460s the country was used first as a source for slaves, then with the establishment of Freetown in 1787, it became a home for former slaves. The country became a British Crown colony in 1808, which it was to remain until 1961 when it gained independence. Unfortunately, corruption, military coups, a one party state in the 1980's and other turmoil became prominent features of the political landscape. In 1991, a rebellion broke out which was to degenerate into a brutal civil war between government forces, the Revolutionary United Front and other factions. The war, fuelled by 'blood diamonds', and often involving drugged teenage recruits, was to kill and maim tens of thousands (amputations were a major terror tactic) and displace millions, many fleeing to neighbouring countries. A peace agreement was signed in 1999 and peacekeepers brought in to stabilize the country. In 2000, fighting resumed resulting in British intervention and the eventual stabilization of the country. Disarmament of the rebels was completed by 2002. Sierra Leone has its own war crimes tribunal and, as at 2005, United Nations peacekeepers are still a presence in the country.

Today, Sierra Leone is one of the poorest nations in the world (ranked bottom of the United Nations Development Program Development Index for which data is available) with 70% to 80% of the population unemployed and its economy and infrastructure still to recover from the war. Corruption remains rife, business opportunities limited and morale in the civil service low.

The records management improvement project aims to address long-standing concerns about the state of records in the Government of Sierra Leone. In August 2003, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah noted:

The poor storage and retrieval of information slows down work of the public service and impacts negatively on policy formulation, planning and financial control. The improvement of recordkeeping is absolutely essential for moving the reform process forward.

The Sierra Leone Government is attempting to rebuild a sound infrastructure, enhance economic management capacity and deal firmly with corruption as a basis for efficient and effective service delivery and the alleviation of poverty. It wants an integrated strategy linked to a sound legal and organisational structure and a capacity-building program.

In the past there was a good standard of centralised records management and a registry system following traditional British practice. However, recordkeeping practices deteriorated over time, and many vital records were lost during the civil war, though fortunately the National Archives survived. Today, chronic records management problems affect every government ministry, department and agency. Recordkeeping on most aspects of government business including financial transactions, resource allocations, policy development and case management is poor. Information is largely uncontrolled, records staff often untrained, registries poorly organised and storage insecure. Where records do exist they have often been altered and/or papers deliberately removed from files. Confidence in the records is almost non-existent. Computerised records and document management systems do not exist and electronic records, although starting to appear, particularly in terms of a government-wide integrated financial management system, are still few and far between.

Against this background records management in most instances has to be rebuilt from scratch. Needless to say this is a challenging task. IRMT consultants, including myself and other individuals based in the United Kingdom, the United States of America (including a citizen of Sierra Leone) and Ghana work very closely under the excellent leadership of Albert Moore, the Senior Government Archivist of Sierra Leone. A local team of registry and archives staff has been brought together and they

have received basic training in appraisal, business processes, functional analysis and file classification schemes. Pilot agencies have been identified, records management capacity assessments conducted and a broad survey of needs undertaken. Establishing a series of model registries is one goal of the project. In addition, identification of semi-current records and archival material held in the records centre run by the National Archives has been completed.

One of the key issues facing the Government of Sierra Leone is the necessity to gain control over establishment, personnel and payroll records. 'Ghost workers' (ie those who are on the payroll but who should not be) are prevalent, which has a substantial impact on the personnel budget and remuneration of civil servants. An information mapping exercise of personnel and financial records has been commenced to identify weak or non-existent records controls. Reorganising human resource records, building secure storage, training staff and developing a manual and guidelines are seen as priorities. Work has also commenced on new public records and archives legislation, as well as on a scheme of service, in order to strengthen the legal, regulatory and organisational frameworks. While it is hoped that there can be some quick wins, in the longer term it will be critical to monitor progress, evaluate results and assess the outcomes of the project.

ICA/SPO – A New Network for Sport Archives

Correspondent: Kenth Sjöblom (Finland), Vice President

In Vienna in August 2004, the General Assembly of the International Council on Archives (ICA) unanimously agreed on the establishment of a Provisional Section on Sports Archives (ICA/SPO). The Congress also passed a resolution:

Considering the growing importance of sport and the Olympic movement in contemporary societies and the necessity of preserving and promoting its archival and documentary heritage, [to] call on the International Olympic Committee, governments and civil society to support ICA projects intended to safeguard and promote the preservation and accessibility of archives of sport and of the Olympic movement.

Background on establishment

Before reporting more about the initial activities, goals and visions of ICA/SPO, let me give a brief historical background as to how this provisional section came about. Ideas about cooperation among sport and Olympic archives were raised already in the early 1990s. Before the International Congress on Archives in Beijing in 1996, the ICA Section for Business and Labour Archives assisted in undertaking a survey on institutions preserving sports documents. During the Beijing Congress an unofficial meeting was held, and a preliminary working group was established to continue the preparations before the next congress. However, not very much happened before the next International Congress on Archives in Seville in 2000. Despite some initiatives at a European ICA meeting in Barcelona in 1997 and during the Conference of the International Round Table on Archives (CITRA) in Edinburgh that same year, no proposals were put on the agenda of the General Assembly in Seville, and consequently no section – or even a working group – was established at that point. The project seemingly took a break within the ICA.

Meanwhile, in 2001, the International Association for Sports Information (IASI) held its congress in Lausanne, and in conjunction with this a workshop entitled ‘Sport and Archives’ was arranged by Cristina Bianchi, at that point head of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) historical archives. Along with a couple of Swiss archivists and a person from the Sydney organising committee, I was also invited to speak about the rather unique arrangements concerning sport archives in Finland. During the congress we also discussed the idea of creating a network for sport archives within IASI, since the project within ICA had not reached any result. Unfortunately the sports information specialists were even less interested than the archivists, so also this project came to a halt.

In 2003, during a meeting of the ICA Executive Committee in St Petersburg, the project took a fresh start within ICA. A ‘Statement of Objectives’ regarding the establishment of a section on sports archives was approved. This can be found on the section’s website at <www.ica.org/spo>. The idea was further promoted during the CITRA in Cape Town in October 2003, after which a steering committee was gathered in order to prepare for the establishment of the section in Vienna. This committee held a working meeting in Madrid in April

2004, chaired by Perrine Canavaggio, Deputy Secretary General of the ICA, in the absence of the section's President, Abdulla El Reyes (United Arab Emirates) and Vice President, Cristina Bianchi (IOC). Other participants in the meeting were Isabella Orefice (Italy), Secretary Françoise Bosman (France), Mbaye Thiam (Senegal), Vice President Alexandros Krauss (Greece) and Kenth Sjöblom (Finland). The meeting concentrated on the strategy for the Vienna Congress – how to get visibility and publicity, what kind of official program could be arranged within the congress.

Promoting and organising the section in Vienna

During the Vienna Congress, the new section was visible in many ways. It arranged a roundtable session entitled 'Sports Archives: Reaching out to Today's World', where Françoise Bosman, Alexandros Krauss and myself gave presentations (for details, see the congress website at <www.ica.wien2004.org>). This gathered some 30 to 40 participants, who formed the basis for a future contact network. We also arranged an exhibition on the revival of the Olympic Games in Greece and a display of old sports films in the Vienna City Archives, as well as presenting the section at the ICA stand in the congress exhibition.

Several working meetings were held during the congress, including an open meeting for anyone interested in the work of the sport archives section. During this meeting, the steering committee was also re-organised. I was elected Vice President alongside Alexandros Krauss, replacing Cristina Bianchi. Two new members were also elected, Fina Sola y Gasset (Barcelona, Spain) and Nassira Metritter (Algeria). In the next working meeting, Isabella Orefice was elected as treasurer and areas of responsibility were allocated among bureau members: organisation of the section/statutes/internal relations/relations to ICA (El Reyes, Krauss), search for sponsors and a mascot (Bosman, Orefice), contacts to researchers and universities (Sjöblom, Thiam), contacts and relations to sports media (Sola y Gasset, Metritter), publications and website of the section (Krauss, Thiam).

Working and planning meetings in Turin

Before leaving Vienna, the bureau of ICA/SPO decided to meet early in Italy in 2005. The idea was to try to get visibility for the section and

for the sport archive issue during the forthcoming winter Olympics in Turin in 2006. In mid-April in Turin, the bureau held a working meeting and appointed two new members: Klara Lutti (Sweden) and Nora Santarelli (Italy). Both were also given responsibility for the relations and contacts to IOC, national Olympic committees and the international sports organisations, assisted by Ms Bianchi.

As well as the bureau meeting, a planning meeting was held together with Italian archivists, representatives of sports organisations and the Italian Society for Sport History in order to prepare a seminar on 'Winter Sports Archives', which is scheduled to be held in January to February 2007 in the Turin-Aôsta region. The idea of cooperating with the Winter Olympics in 2006 had to be abandoned, since it was considered that the Olympics would be too huge a spectacle for the archive and documentation issue to get enough publicity – if any at all. The Italians are, however, concerned about how documentation of winter sports in general, and the Winter Olympics in particular, is managed in Italy. Thus, an international seminar with experts in the field of documentation and history could help to increase the understanding of the value of documentation. The planning meeting brought a lot of good ideas and a good structure to the seminar program. Now we will start the search for good speakers and members for the scientific committee.

In Turin, we were able to visit one of the oldest gymnastic clubs in Europe, the Reale Società Ginnastica di Torino (Turin Royal Gymnastics Society, est. 1844), and see its archives, and also to visit the Museo Nazionale della Montagna (National Museum of Mountains) and see the archives and library of the Club Alpino Italiano (Italian Alpine Club), as well as the Archivio di Stato (State Archives) in Turin.

Recent and future activities of ICA/SPO

The framework of the activities of ICA/SPO is gradually taking shape, and the bureau and its members are continuously trying to find means and arenas for promoting the sport archive cause. In early June 2005, Françoise Bosman, manager of the Centre for Labour Archives in Roubaix, France, coorganised a two-day seminar on 'Sports: From Archives to History', together with the French Institute for Political Research (known as Sciences Po). Both speakers and audience were predominantly French, with the main goal of forming a comprehensive picture of sports documentation in France, combined with a few

international examples as comparison. From 2 November to 5 November 2005 in Seville, there will be a European Congress on the History of Sport, arranged by the European Committee for Sport History (CESH), on the general theme 'Sport and Violence'. ICA/SPO will also be visible during that congress. I am responsible for organising two sessions on sport archives. One is a roundtable session on 'Violence and Sport Archives' with invited speakers, the other an open session where sport archives institutions, sport museums, sport collections and different types of projects related to sports documentation can be presented briefly. This is a means of raising awareness of archival issues among sports history researchers.

Alongside these seminars and congresses, ICA/SPO will continue to hold meetings, publish information about its activities on the website <www.ica.org/spo>, prepare a special issue for the ICA Journal *Comma*, undertake a new survey of sport archives institutions, search for sponsors for its activities and projects, and develop new means of promoting sport archives.

ICA Establishes New Section on Standards and Best Practices

Correspondent: Marion Beyea (Canada), Chair

From 30 May to 2 June 2005, the new Provisional Section on Professional Standards and Best Practices (ICA/SPS) of the International Council on Archives (ICA) held its first meeting in Bern. The aim was to formally constitute the ICA section, and to discuss our program of work and different projects. An interim Steering Committee was established, comprising: Marion Beyea (Canada), Chair; Blanca Desantes Fernandez (Spain) and Vitor Manoel Marques da Fonseca (Brazil), Vice Chairs; and as Secretary, Claire Sibille (France). The members present in Bern drafted by-laws defining the mission of the section, and agreed on an internal process by which standards will be adopted and promoted by ICA. Two working groups were constituted for specific standards work under the auspices of the section, one for descriptive standards and a second for standards in the area of appraisal. Other working groups will be constituted according to proposals made and needs identified by the section, project groups, archival associations and archivists.

ICA/SPS was established in Vienna in 2004 to provide an umbrella for activities related to standards that apply to all aspects of archival work.

The definition of standards is a broad one and includes: technical specifications, recommended practices, conventions, general guidelines, and codes. The objective of the work of the section is equally broad and quite pragmatic: to assist archivists in having the tools they need to do their work. Work on specific standards will be carried out by working groups of experts that may be formed by ICA, or by its sections or regional branches, or under the auspices of archival institutions, or associations of archivists, or allied professions. The intent is that standards work be open and inclusive and involve as many archivists as possible, who wish to participate in the development of standards. Ways will be sought to incorporate standards work undertaken by archivists whatever their working language or wherever they are based, and to bridge different archival traditions.

Such activities as the following, carried out by ICA/SPS or others, will forward standards work and coordination:

- Establishing a process for the development, endorsement and maintenance of standards for archival practice.
- Managing this process.
- Identifying and making known the work of archivists, archival institutions, associations of archivists and allied professions in the development of standards.
- Alerting the archival community to standards development in progress so archivists can become involved and have input.
- Considering what standards proposed or in development should be endorsed by ICA and bringing these into the ICA/SPS process for endorsement if appropriate
- Initiating standards development where it is deemed necessary.
- Maintaining and publicising lists of standards that are proposed for development or are under development, as well as a register of standards that are completed and endorsed.

Communication is critical to the success of work in the standards area. ICA/SPS will facilitate this by establishing contacts with associations,

institutions and allied professions where standards work is taking place in order to exchange information, and by monitoring standards activities in various other ways.

The ICA web site at <www.ica.org>, ICA's regular newsletter *Flash*, and other publications and avenues will be used to give notice of standards work underway, to serve as a base for communication of working groups, and to take standards being considered for endorsement through a formal vetting process. Information will also be communicated on the implementation of standards in archives, with examples and links to institutions with experience in applying standards. Another interest of the section will be support for training to prepare archivists to use the standards. This will be carried out in cooperation with various partners by means of activities ranging from maintaining a list of experts to developing and supporting the delivery of courses.

In our daily lives we rely on standards for safety, quality and efficiency, and to bring a consistency of terminology, process and product that makes it easier for us to communicate and understand. The latter is fundamental to make possible and facilitate communication: in the case of archival practice, this also includes communication among archivists and also between them and those who use their services. Similarly, in order to make progress in the large and challenging area of standards for archives, communication and exchange of information will be critical. Information about the section is available on the Internet at: <www.ica.org/sps>.