Aims of Group
1. to act as the historical conscience of the profession in Britain
2. to raise awareness of the importance of library and information history both in the UK and abroad
3. to promote activities – conferences, regional meetings etc. in support of objectives 1 and 2
4. To communicate research and publication in library and information history

Overview
Alistair Black has now taken over as editor of *Library History* and the journal is now available online. Chris Baggs has resigned as newsletter editor and we have not, as yet, found a replacement. Caroline Cooke has agreed to act as group archives officer.

Looking to the future and new initiatives there are several apparent areas of interest

1. Libraries under threat
2. Continuing to develop access to resources
3. The need to be more active regionally

- Lis-libhist, the Groups’ email discussion list has 248 subscribers, up a little from 246 last year
- Membership - Membership at 17th May 2005 was 792 an increase of 71 from early May 2004 (721). There are also three non CILIP members who pay a subscription direct to the group: 52 members live overseas. (grand total 795)
- Library History essay The Library History Award for 2004 has been won by Michelle Johansen. Her essay ‘A fault-line in library history: Charles Goss, the Society of Public Librarians, and “The Battle of the Books” in the late nineteenth century’, appeared in *Library History*, 19:2 (2003), 75-92. The essay’s main aims are: first, to show that the outcome of the 1890s ‘Battle of the Books’ (arguments for open- or closed- access libraries) was heavily influenced by the stranglehold which the Library Association had over the publication of library-related debate; secondly, to note that the L.A.’s dominance has continued to the present day and is an obstacle to the objective assessment of library history; and thirdly, to rehabilitate the reputation of Charles Goss, one of the leading supporters of the closed-access argument.
- Promoting access to resources – Edzell. An agreement has been reached with Angus Libraries to give library historians access to the historic library at Edzell and the resources associated with it. Edzell library is a perfect example of a late 19th century public library and represents the nearest we are ever likely to get to a museum of library history.
Conferences On the 16th and 17th June the School of Information Management, Leeds Metropolitan University played host to over 30 participants in a British Academy funded international conference on the ‘History of Libraries and the Working Classes since the Eighteenth Century’. The event was arranged in association with the Library and Information History Group of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals and the Library History Section of the International Federation of Library Associations. The keynote speaker was Jonathan Rose, Professor of History at Drew University, New Jersey. Speakers ranged across library types – not just public libraries, but miners, community and works libraries also – in a variety of geographical contexts: Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Britain and the United States.

The proceedings of the Third Annual Seminar on Library History, jointly convened in 2001 by the LIHG and the Wolfenbütteler Arbeitskreis für Bibliotheks-, Buch- und Mediengeschichte, were published as: Peter Vodosek, Alistair Black, and Peter Hoare, (eds), Mäzenatentum für Bibliotheken / Philanthropy for Libraries (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), 304pp, ISBN 3447051590. Two members of the LIHG committee were co-editors of the volume, and five committee members also contributed revised papers as essays for the volume. Preparation is currently underway for the Fourth Annual Seminar on Library History, Libraries and Innovation, organised by two LIHG committee members and due to take place at the British Library in September.

A History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland, which the LIHG has been involved with since its inception more than ten years ago, has now received the accolade of being styled a "Cambridge History" and is planned to be published by CUP in three volumes as The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland in 2006. The third volume, covering 1850-2000 and edited by Alistair Black and Peter Hoare, is now well advanced in production, while vols. 1 (to 1640) and 2 (1640-1850) are expected to follow very soon. The three volumes will be marketed as a set and will offer a unique panorama of library history across a millennium and a half. The third volume makes a special feature of the development of the library and information profession and the impact of modern technology, while surveying in detail the development of increasingly varied patterns of libraries. LIHG members are also contributing to the forthcoming History of the Book in Scotland.

Progress report: AHRB Historic Library Buildings Project

This is a three-year research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board. December 2004 saw the completion of the first phase of the project which was based at Leeds Metropolitan University School of Information Management. The project has now moved to Liverpool for phases two and three and is based at Liverpool University School of Architecture. The project is running under the joint direction of Professor Simon Pepper (Liverpool University) and Professor Alistair Black (Leeds Metropolitan
University. The research officer for the first phase of the project is Kaye Bagshaw (Liverpool University).

During the past year in-depth research has been carried out at the RIBA and CILIP libraries. Material has also been consulted at the British Library, the Thomas Parry Library in Aberystwyth and the Courtauld Institute Library.

Visits are planned to selected libraries throughout the coming year. The research findings have been recorded on an Access database which will be used as a research tool throughout the project. By the end of April 2005 information on almost 1000 existing library buildings and over 60 demolished buildings had been recorded in the database.

- Preservation and conservation – LIHG is now represented (by Peter Hoare) on the CILIP Preservation and Conservation Panel, a lively and active group covering a number of special interests. This allows us to develop our role as the "historical conscience" of CILIP and also to give practical advice matters concerning on historic libraries, though our link with the Historic Libraries Forum

- Meetings: Three committee meetings were held: Committee meeting and AGM held at School of Information Management, Leeds Metropolitan University during the conference on the ‘History of Libraries and the Working Classes since the Eighteenth Century’ both on 17th June 2004; Committee meeting and tour of the library, Chetham’s Library, Manchester, 8th November 2004; Committee meeting and tour of the library, Maughan Library, King’s College, London, 30th March 2005.

- Website usage – March 04 – March 05 Average daily unique visitors: 8
  Average weekly unique visitors: 59
  Average monthly unique visitors: 260

John Crawford
Chair LIHG 25/6/05