

# Local history collection

The local history collection has been available since the very start of the Town Library. At the beginning only newspaper articles had been collected, but as demand increased and possibilities broadened a wider range of documents was collected and has been accumulated ever since.

The flowing collecting work much helped by the enthusiastic readers resulted in a collection that was catalogued in a separate room. All sorts of documents can be found here that are catalogued into special bibliographies and the bibliographies of local authors and poets.

The collection is only available during opening hours. Documents are not allowed to loan. The reason is the trying experience of many years during which many valuable books have been 'lost' and their replacement is very time-consuming if ever likely.

Nowadays it is the 'fashion' to be a local patriot and to be interested in the past and present or even the future of one's hometown. There seems to be a growing demand for various school homeworks, essays, seminars and dissertations on this subject. We are here in the library to give all the help we can. In return all these works performed by the students are added to the collection.

Developing our current database is our prime goal. Since we are not entitled to receive liable copies, other sources are needed so building personal connections are much required. We are very lucky having established a good relation with the local press and thus all the issues of the local paper, Mezőkövesd News, are available in the library. A copy of each local school papers are also found on the shelves.

Supplying the works of local authors is done constantly. Finding books by contemporary authors is not difficult, since

many copies can be purchased. We get the earlier publications from second-hand bookshops. It did happen that an old book was given as a gift by a reader to the library.

It is human nature to treasure old things from the past such as old photos, old papers and old books. To help overcome this difficulty the computer is a wonderful friend making it possible to at least making a copy of a valuable document thus providing one for the library. This fact made the locals to bring in photos, postcards or other documents gladly since they are given back after the digitalization. The originals are undoubtedly more valuable so are the copies for the readers, students and all in search for literature for their dissertations and essays.

We also have the availability to make local publications. Invitation cards for various events and photos and videos made at local events are catalogued and stored on the computer. Modern digital programs are used to make them look antique. Digital photos are uploaded in jpg format and videos are in avi format. These are available only in the library and access to them is allowed only by the warden.

Tradition oblige to discover the values of the present , to preserve and cherish them for posterity. The challenge of the library is to provide these values and inspire the readers to be interested. These two aspects were the guideline to present the treasured database to the public in the hope to gain even more people to help adding to the local history collection.

To introduce the collection an exhibition was on display . Documents given by the local people and notes written in the visitors book were selected to put on display. Károly Zádory, the late warden, collected the notes written by writers who visited the library in the 60s, 70s and 80s. ( In the 1970s there would be 8- 10 meetings like this during a Readers' Week in the area) All these notes and photos taken were digitalized on the computer and enlarged providing the theme for the

exhibition, and presenting a valuable message of the so called 'copies'. We are very pleased even with the 'copies'.

The exhibition was a success that resulted in a contract with István Csörgő, postcard collector, who agreed on to provide his collection for the library. Whenever the local history postcard collection is growing bigger, he will get a copy. On the Cultural National Day of Hungary there were some 200 postcards on display. To the more than a hundred spectators, András Tállai, mayor of Mezőkövesd, said that the person adding a special postcard to the collection is entitled to a cd on which the images of all the postcards are burnt. This must have been very inspiring for the local people, accumulating a number of 559 postcards – all digitalized. There are 2247 photos on the computer, both old and recent ones. Certainly, all this would not have happened without the help of the very keen local historians such as József Bán, who offered many articles of his own library, and the civil organizations such as the Town Planning and Town Protecting Association, Association of the Patrons of Matyóföld Creators and Artists, Old Students Club, Retired Teachers Club and the Club of Civil Servants.

There was a joint exhibition with the Club of Civil Servants : photos, posters and documents on amateur theatricals between 1940-1960 were on display. All the fellows were so enthusiastic about the collecting and being in touch with each other.

A Mezőkövesd born old gentleman named József Márton, now a Budapest resident, one day surprised me with the copy of a piece of his collection. As a hobby he was taping matyó folk songs thus recording the people's names and voices. He gave me a collection of 261 songs and he has been following the cultural life of the town ever since.

We have even received a book published in America. The book is related to Mezőkövesd, since on one of the photos the steward

pictured is originally from our town. Thus our ' Mezőkövesd Who is Who' database is growing, too.

Local television broadcasting is given to the library on dvds. The programs are processed and the readers are welcome to get copies even of the earlier ones ( All rights reserved by Matyó Tv since 2007)

## **Purchasing a document**

We have a limited budget for storing development. There are no restrictions concerning local or general documents, though. The budget should be divided up wisely.

Local writers are sponsored by the local government with a defined amount of money. The amount of money and the persons are discussed by the board. The library is spending 50,000 Huf on books by these authors. The library is supporting the writers by putting their books on sale in the building free of charge.





