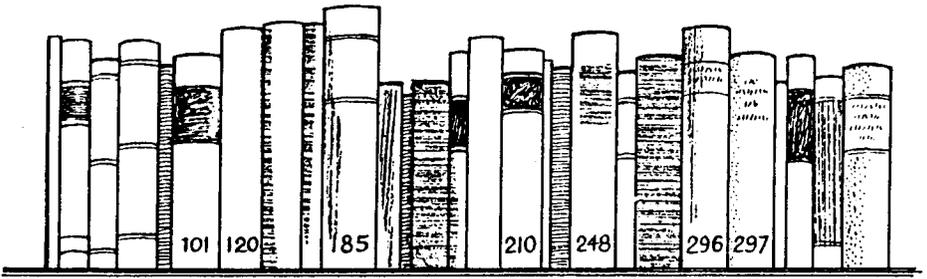


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# BULLETIN

*of the*

*Association of British Theological  
and Philosophical Libraries*

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## BULLETIN 1990

The *Bulletin* is published by the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries as a forum for professional exchange and development in the fields of theological and philosophical librarianship. ABTAPL was founded in 1956 to bring together librarians working with or interested in theological and philosophical literature in Great Britain. Twenty four issues of the *Bulletin* were issued between 1956 and 1966. After a period of abeyance, the *Bulletin* was revived in a New Series [Volume 1] by John Howard in 1974. It has been published in its present form, three times a year (March, June and November), since that time. Numbers 1-40 of the New Series (to November 1987) have been construed as Volume 1 of the New Series; Volume 2 began with March 1988. The *Bulletin* now has a circulation of about 250 copies, with about a third of that number in Europe, North America and the Commonwealth.

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## NOVEMBER 1989 - EDITORIAL

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At a day conference for librarians and Academics in May 1989, I somewhat innocently asked the question, "Are Librarians inherently conservative?". I meant this negatively, thinking of the image Librarians have of responding slowly to new conditions and needs. My question was certainly taken negatively, because I got a very strong response from Librarians who claimed they were *not* conservative (whether politically or professionally wasn't clear). At this point, an American lady, an academic, spoke up and pointed out very forcefully that if Librarians were not conservative, then she and other scholars like her would no longer have the historical materials they needed to work on. Conservation is our job. We are *meant* to be conservative.

It's a fairly simple play on words, to be sure, but no less important for all that: Fred Ratcliffe, in his paper on conservation in this issue, questions the value of radical enthusiasms for new technology at the cost of basic conservation awareness. We cannot evade the past, it is our responsibility; our innovations must be in how we carry out that responsibility.

This issue of the *Bulletin* is a special issue which takes up and develops some of the themes of the ABTAPL Spring Conference 1989 on Conservation and Disaster Planning. Our aim has been to mediate, in as convenient a form as possible, accounts of the main issues involved for librarians of small theological collections, together with news reports of events that have related

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**Dr. Clive Field** is Head of Publications and Promotion at The John Rylands University Library of Manchester.

**Mrs. Rosemary Seton** is Archivist at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

However, the National Preservation Advisory Committee knew that faced with the question "What steps are you taking to ensure that your collections will survive?", few libraries would be able to produce a preservation policy which described their aims and set their priorities. And I think that really has been the state of preservation, certainly until the beginning of this decade in many British University Libraries at least.

## LOOKING TO THE PAST

I would go further and say that it has not always been so. I have here some facts from John Oates' splendid history of the Cambridge University Library (p.14-15): payments for binding and chaining books are not infrequent in the Grace Book of the University (the Grace Book being where all University decisions are recorded).

In 1454/55, 7s 8d was paid to the Cambridge binder Gerard Wake "pro reparatione librorum", and 9d "pro reparatione aliorum librorum et superscriptione". In 1456, 8d was paid to Wake "pro ligatura librorum", and in 1456/57, 14d "pro catenatione librorum in communi libraria". (The Library was known until the middle of the nineteenth century as the Common Library, or the Public Library).

If you read on you will see that between 1457 and 1458 the accounts reveal that the Library was temporarily evacuated during a fire which broke out in King's College which abutted onto the west of the Library. The Grace Book records further that 12d was paid out "pro custodia librorum tempore quo ignis erat apud novum collegium", and 5s 6d was paid in repayment of expenses incurred "circa salvationem librariae" -- for the salvation of the Library. But there is more to it than that, because they paid 2s 8d for a cask of good beer, bread and cheese for nightwatchmen, 20d for two torches, and (it was not revealed until the following year's audit) 20d to Robert Coker for bread and beer for his workmen.

They had a Disaster Plan in the fifteenth century in Cambridge University Library, which is the oldest university library in continuous existence in the United Kingdom. They had nightwatchmen. They were clearly taking preventative steps to make sure that if disaster occurred they had a plan. And when disaster came -- near disaster -- all the books were saved.

I am sure that it was partly this concern for the well-being of the Library which persuaded Theodore Beza the great humanist, on 6th December 1581 to write to what he calls the "famous and in every way most celebrated University of Cambridge", and present to the University what is today its greatest treasure, the Codex Bezae. He says: "It is, reverend masters and fathers, to your University, as oldest among the truly Christian Universities, and the most celebrated for its many great names, that I have thought best to

significance, practical information about resources available, and further actions open to our readers.

Hence we have departed from the normal structure of our *Bulletin*, with an issue that divides into four major sections: the first containing the core papers from the ABTAPL Conference itself; Section II containing major papers from the Cathedral Libraries Conference held at York in June 1989, dealing with conservation issues, sale of rare materials, and a theological view of the librarian's responsibility towards her/his collections; Section III containing a response to Mary Hobbs' paper on sale of books from the John Rylands Library, and a selection of reports of activities related to conservation and case studies of recent disasters happening not too far from home; Section IV is what we hope will be our most useful section, containing bibliographical aids and practical guidelines for disaster planning and conservation work. Our normal presentation will resume with the issue for March 1990.

The compilation of this special issue has had its headaches: papers presented 'live' at Conferences had to be chased and re-edited for publication, some Conference papers had already been spoken for by other journals, and the supporting materials had to be compiled and edited, while your editor moved into a new job. I would like to acknowledge the assistance given by Alan Jesson, the organiser of the ABTAPL conference, who chased speakers for me and had the tape recording of Dr. Ratcliffe's address transcribed onto disk. I hope that the usefulness of this issue will justify its delay in appearing (February 1990). Comments will, of course, be gratefully received. Above all, whatever your politics, don't forget the inherent conservatism of at least this aspect of your professional lives.

PJL

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## CONSERVATION, PRESERVATION, DISASTERS AND DISASTER PLANNING by Fred Ratcliffe.

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*The keynote address delivered at the Easter 1989 ABTAPL Conference on Conservation and Disaster Planning -- prepared from a tape transcript.*

I would like to begin this address by quoting Patricia Chapman, who was the first National Preservation Officer of the newly established National Preservation Office. In *Library Conservation News* No.20 she wrote, "few librarians would deny their responsibility for ensuring the preservation of their collections for future generations."

second shelf above the water the University's Bursar appeared and ordered, "Everybody out!". Everybody was taken out: the water level was within an inch of the electricity mains.

That was the important lesson of that disaster. There are disasters in the sense that not only are books at risk, but human life is also very much in danger.

Later, (you may think my life has been made up of a series of disasters) just before we took over the Rylands Library in the late 1960s, when the Library was very full and we had actually taken to housing books in the cloisters behind very handsome grilles -- but nonetheless visible and accessible to the public -- some person threw a fire bomb that destroyed 5 presses of books. I was not in that building at the time but the sequence of events was reported to me by a member of my staff. "We evacuated the building sir", he said. I asked, "What about the books?". He replied "B\*\*\*\*\* the books -- we had to get everybody out!". That was the attitude and that is what they did.

The damage was not so serious in itself: 5 presses of not particularly valuable books, but the experience is important. What struck me about that event, as in the tropical storm, as in the fire, was the total unpreparedness of everybody in the Library to deal with those events. Nobody had the slightest idea where to begin, except (in the case of the Medical Library fire), the foreman binder. He was the only one who had any understanding of what to do. He was the one who issued orders: "Don't open the books, just leave it to me and my men to deal with." He was the man who interleaved every single volume which was wetted with sheets of blotting paper. He was the man who took charge of the whole operation. There was no librarian there whether it be the Chief Librarian who was my boss, or anyone on the medical site, or myself when I was Librarian, who had the least idea what to do about this situation.

If you have any doubt about that just think of that terrible flood in Florence in November 1966 when the Arno burst its banks and city archives were flooded to a great depth. The fact is, nobody knew what to do; and it was partly because nobody knew what to do that so much damage happened at that time -- there was massive unpreparedness. At a conference in Stanford some three years ago, that great Librarian from Holland, Liebers, was making his last public appearance. He talked about Florence in retrospect. He actually stated that the conservators did more damage to the books than the floods did, because the conservators too did not really know how to handle that kind of disaster.

## **BRITTLE BOOKS**

In the meantime, especially in the United States, we have the brittle book problem. And the brittle book -- built-in redundancy -- is going to come here.

give this text that it might be placed in its repository where, if I mistake me not, it will be honoured". The Beza Bible, that very important 6th century -- some people now say 5th century -- Bible, which Beza actually says was not in such good condition as it should have been), is now preserved in this University in at least as good a state as when we received it all those years ago.

## DISASTERS NEARER TO HOME

Not all universities, not all academic libraries have been as careful as Cambridge University Library in the sixteenth century. When I was a junior assistant cataloguer, in the University of Manchester in the late 1950's, I was called in along with all my colleagues to assist in salvaging the Manchester Medical Library, which was the University's Medical Library collection. It was partly housed under the laboratories of the Anatomy School; some 150,000 volumes, for the most part in good condition. When I was taken across to assist in the salvage operation, the fire had caused the roof to fall in, the floor of the Anatomy Department had collapsed, and it was a competition between the fire and the water of the Fire Brigade, to see which would win in the struggle to destroy the books. The saviour of the situation was the Head Binder and his small -- his very small -- staff.

Ever since that date in the late 1950's, I have been committed to in-house binderies. The importance of the operation which was carried out at that time, within 24 hours of the fire brigade allowing us back into the building, saved virtually all those books. They were saved by a man whom the University paid appallingly, and whose worth was never recognised until his retirement when he received an honorary MA, and the MBE. But for all those years he was never really paid properly for his job: payment of our conservation staff is still a bone of contention; a bone of contention with me, rather more than with my binders and with my conservators. They really are the most worthy people on the Library staff; they are the people who have made sure over the years that our Beza is the way it is, and that the University Library's holdings in Cambridge are in excellent condition.

Then again in Manchester -- this time as Librarian in the late 1960s -- we had a tropical storm one evening. In Manchester of all places! Five inches of rain fell in four hours, and that was the first time I had been able to say that Manchester is a wet place. (Its rainfall is usually, in fact, quite modest, 2" more than Cambridge). In the emergency, students using the Library in the evening were dragged in to help, and they were tremendous. They took their shoes and socks off, and they came down into the basement with me, also without shoes and socks, and we shifted something like 15,000 volumes in the matter of an hour. All the time the water was rising, but as we started on the

which is widely representative of libraries and archives. We hope that by the end of 1989 or certainly by the beginning of 1990, it will also be self-financing.

Not only was there great success there, but the library world also seemed to waken up. SCONUL established its own Working Party on Conservation, and the Library Association set up its Sub-Committee. The latter, however, has not been 100% successful. It is still very difficult to persuade the Library Association still that conservation is not just something passing in the night. It is not just this year's current flavour. It is something that is going to remain with us -- and it is something moreover that is not just to do with the Bezas, with the great books, it's to do with every single book that comes into every Library. Whether we like it or whether we don't, every book has some element of conservation applied to it when it comes into our possession. But it has been difficult, and is difficult to convince the Library Association, and I am referring here to the membership at large rather than the Chief Executive and his senior officers, who I think are really very firmly committed to conservation.

## DISASTER PLANNING

Disaster planning -- and this is what your conference is about -- deserves this long preamble because its entire success or its failure depends on everybody in the library profession being conservation aware. The main job, which takes priority over everything else as far as conservation is concerned, is simply inculcating conservation awareness in all our staff. Its success depends on each individual member of staff, at all levels. It depends on convincing our governing bodies that it deserves to be taken seriously, because it is a very expensive business. It depends probably more on our cleaners than it does on our Keepers of Early Printed Books and Manuscripts. Our users too, of course, must never let it be far from their mind.

Unless we keep this issue always before them, unless we can persuade them that it is not a passing fancy, then there will be no long term success in conservation. We have tried very hard to make up for all those years of failure to meet preservation requirements. In my own Library Syndicate preservation has featured since 1984 on every Agenda that the Library Syndicate has had before it. A Working Party on Conservation in the University Library has been established, and the minutes of that Working Party go to the University Library Syndicate. We have introduced into all the induction and regular training courses for established staff a conservation element.

I think probably the most profitable of all those courses were the two that we laid on for our cleaners. Our cleaners are very humble people, they are not highly educated and they are certainly not well-paid. But those people with their mops and their buckets and their dusters handle more books than

It is not coming here as quickly as it has come to the United States because we have not had the money to aid and abet this built-in redundancy. We have not promoted the kind of inhospitable surroundings for books which Americans have. We still cannot pump the heat into the buildings that our readers would prefer, nor can we give the lumens that they would like to see, nor are we able to air-condition every single aspect of every single building.

It is an interesting fact that if you bring a collection of books from a great country house in this country where it has been housed in surroundings which are inhospitable to humans, where they have been damp, cold, draughty unused, and you bring them into a modern university library building, within a year the rot will set in, as they get cooked by the heating and handled by the public.

In the United States the brittle book problem has had one tremendous advantage. It has drawn the attention of Librarians collectively to the real need for conservation. The fear of losing the heritage, losing the written word, has meant that the United States as early as 1965 was beginning to take conservation very seriously. As a result, in the 1970s they established their Preservation Office in the Library of Congress and promoted conservation in Library Schools as a major subject in the curriculum.

## CONSERVATION IN BRITISH LIBRARIES

Here in the United Kingdom in 1984, my report on conservation in British libraries was published, and I have to say that the writing of that report was one of the more dispiriting events in my professional life. Dispiriting, because it was clear that collectively Librarians had disregarded and jettisoned their age-old responsibilities to care for their books.

I think that the new media and the joy of experimenting with automation have taken us away from what are our traditional responsibilities. We have neglected the book. We are also now in the process of neglecting the other new media themselves. Whether they are microfilm, microfiche, disks or any other of these modern technological aids one thing is quite certain: that whilst new media are being proposed more and more as substitutes for books, increasingly we are becoming aware that they are very difficult to preserve and in the end will be very costly substitutes.

My report appeared in 1984 and although the writing of it was a dispiriting experience, because it discovered wholesale neglect across the land, it was heartening in its reception. Every recommendation was accepted and implemented, and most important of all was the establishing of the National Preservation Office in the Reference Division of the British Library.

This Office is operates as an independent body within the British Library. I am the Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Preservation Office,

Halon, they say is too expensive. Well if you have a disaster and you have got sprinklers it will certainly be very much cheaper to have had halon than it will be to clear up the mess of a sprinkler system.

We have to identify the hazards. We have to know what the potential flood areas in the building are. We have to know what the humidity levels are and we have to be aware that there are more problems for books in air-conditioning than there are in Legionnaire's disease for human beings.

We are currently planning an extension to this University Library in Cambridge and our architect has expressed great surprise that not only are we planning a building which will not have air-conditioning, but we are removing the air-conditioning from that building where we already have it. This is because three years ago when we had that memorably hot summer our air-conditioning system broke down for a fortnight. We couldn't open the windows. We could not ventilate the stacks. For a fortnight the temperature hovered around 100 degrees. It did not get cold at night because we couldn't let the heat out. Fungus developed on the walls and on the books in that period, which three years later we have still been unable to eradicate.

Disasters -- what is a disaster? I think the photocopying machine is a disaster. It is almost as big a disaster as Sellotape. But there are disasters and there are disasters and there are librarians still using Sellotape.

The National Preservation Office has just added security to its list of responsibilities. The greatest loss of books most libraries suffer is not in fact from disasters of the kind we have been talking about but from theft. More books disappear in readers' pockets or bags than ever decay on the shelves through brittle paper. A disaster happened in the University Library eighteen months ago, when we discovered someone was systematically removing books although our security, as you will see tomorrow, is tight. A reader was removing books wholesale from the Library, exporting them to Taiwan and reprinting them in Taiwan for sale in the Far East. That was a disaster. We lost very expensive books. The vigilance of the staff I could not criticize. Nevertheless that was a disaster. And our efforts have to be directed at cutting that kind of disaster out.

External binderies: well, you have heard my views on in-house binderies. We do all our binding in-house. In this regard, Librarians should be mindful of the fact that disasters take place outside of libraries too. It is less than twelve months ago that a major bindery in this country had a fire. Thirteen Faculty and Departmental libraries in Cambridge had books in that Bindery and not one single book was covered by any insurance policy whatsoever by the Bindery. That is another reason to look at in-house binderies.

Finally, the National Preservation Office and Dunn & Wilson -- supported very strongly by the Library Association -- have instituted an annual conservation prize. It is perhaps indicative of the attitude of Librarians to conservation that this year Dunn & Wilson rang me up two weeks before the

most of our staff. They have a tremendous contribution to make to the conservation of our stock in the University Library. Moreover, the joy of those people when we decided that they should have a course, that they should be instructed, if you like, in some of what they think of as the mystery of the Library, was itself a reward, and I can commend it to everyone.

Then we have, of course, our Disaster Plan: I hope I don't have to persuade you of its relevance and of its importance. When I tried to get a copy of this Plan today, I discovered that the Disaster Plan was known to the Working Party on Conservation, it was known to me and to David and to Alan, but no other people who were likely to be practically involved had ever seen it. We have a Disaster Plan which is a great mystery for the rest of the staff, and certainly for those people who are going to be required to implement it. It is so important if you have got a disaster plan to make sure that everybody knows you have it. Not just to issue it, and to discuss it at staff meetings or in committees: it has to be publicised as widely as it possibly can.

## WHAT IS A DISASTER?

We have had two disasters recently in Cambridge. I understand that you are to hear about one of them, the Union Society Library, tomorrow. In that instance, our Disaster Plan was put into action. We have to be careful when we use the word disaster. What does comprise a disaster? Does the roof have to fall in? Does the fire brigade have to be called? Or can a burst pipe be a disaster? They thought so in the Victoria and Albert Museum some time ago when they had a burst pipe, and the British Library sent out all its disaster team to deal with that particular problem. They turned out in great strength to put it right, but when they got back they found they had their own disaster. All the equipment was at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and their Disaster Plan was not available for the series of bursts which their own Library had developed over the weekend.

I am not going to talk about the details of our Disaster Plan. I am not going to talk about freeze drying. I am not really going to talk about the staffing responsibility or about the emergency roles of various members of staff. That is all in the document which we have circulated. The Disaster Plan should really be called a Disaster Prevention Plan. Everybody should have a Disaster Prevention Plan. I think it is vital if preservation is going to be as successful as everybody hopes. It is also vital that we build into our existing accommodation, and into all our new buildings, preventative measures that take possible disasters into account.

There is a lot of talk at the moment of the British Library's capitulation to the fire brigade and the fact that the British Library is going to have to have -- and the Treasury insist on it -- a sprinkler system in the Library.

Hence, in addition to the world famous collection of vellum leaved manuscripts there is also a distinguished collection of early printed books: some one hundred and thirty incunables and some two hundred more printed between 1500 and 1520, with many more sixteenth century printed books and a representative selection of books from later centuries. The College had books before Parker, some given, some bought by the society, and some of these survive. Further smaller collections came to the library in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and there has been a policy of purchase throughout the years.

## INITIATING THE PROJECT

In 1983 following lengthy correspondence between the Librarian, Professor Raymond Page, the Bursar, Mr. Christopher Taylor, and an old member of the College, Gaylord Donnelley of Chicago, the conservation project was commenced. The generosity of Gaylord Donnelley through the good offices of the American Friends of Cambridge University resulted in the commissioning of a report into conservation and preservation in the Parker Library.

The survey and subsequent report was carried out by my colleague Dr. Nicholas Pickwoad. The Pickwoad Report revealed that the Parker Library had fallen behind in its knowledge of the preservation and conservation requirements demanded by the collection. This is not surprising, for conservation in this field has experienced something of a revolution in the last twenty years and there was limited opportunity for this knowledge to be fed into this specialist private library.

I will not define in detail the findings of the Pickwoad Report, but I will describe some of the changes which have been made as a result of the project's work.

## THE READER

Improvements to facilities on the reading desks involved the introduction of much new equipment, and this can be listed as follows:

1. Long arm stand magnifying glass - not hand held and adjustable so that there is no necessity of bringing hands near to a manuscript
2. Ultra-violet light - used to give fluorescence to oxidized pigments, fading or partially erased inks and impressions in paper.
3. Long arm stand stereo binocular microscope - used for detailed examination of the manuscripts by scholars - this has proved especially useful in the reading of difficult glosses and for the

closing date to say they had had only five entries. Now the prize, you may think, is not worth a great deal. The individual who wins gets £100, and his library receives £2,000 worth of very fine binding at cost, (some three and a half or four thousand pounds at today's prices). This year all you had to do was to submit your disaster plan in order to be in the competition and perhaps win the prize. Well we submitted our Disaster Plan, and we did not win the prize, so something, at least, is being done elsewhere.

*Dr. F.W. Ratcliffe,  
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## **THE PARKER LIBRARY CONSERVATION PROJECT 1983 - 1989 by Nicholas Hadgraft**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Parker Library is the library of the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Matthew Parker, Master of the College from 1544 to 1553, and Archbishop of Canterbury from 1559 to his death in 1575, was the library's greatest benefactor.

Parker formed his outstanding collection on the ruins of the old monastic libraries, destroyed with the Reformation. It may seem remarkable to us today that a small library in Cambridge should hold the third most important collection of Anglo Saxon manuscripts in the world. The collections in the Parker Library are surpassed only by those in the British Library and the Bodleian Library. In addition, the Parker Library contains examples of the finest illuminated manuscripts surviving.

The Dover Bible of the twelfth century, the Peterborough Psalter of the fourteenth, and the Bury Bible are but three superb examples which spring to mind.

Parker's own library, though famed for its manuscripts was also rich in printed books which formed an important part of his bequest. To safeguard the collection, Parker prepared an inventory, which served as a checklist for the annual audit he required to be held on the anniversary of his birthday, 6 August.

monitoring was fitted to give access control to the library and to protect the manuscripts when the exhibition area is open to the public.

Alongside more sophisticated measures introduced came simpler but equally necessary improvements. Security boards with nylon woven cords were introduced to deter visitors from touching books on the general shelves. The device is obvious when one is near to the shelves but becomes virtually invisible at a distance and does not alter the general appearance of a famous room.

There are still problems in the library which require attention. The lighting system requires improvement, and we are hoping to model the new lighting along the lines of a design presently in use in the Long Room at Trinity College Dublin installed for the lighting of the Book of Kells. We will be dealing with this problem when funds for the problem become available. Plans have also been made for the installation of a system of blinds and curtains; for the present we are making do with existing blinds which have been completely overhauled and in some cases recently replaced.

Improvements to the exhibition cases in the library were undertaken as an early priority of the project. The cases used to be constructed with internal plinths of wood which ran parallel to the steeply raked glass. The cabinet maker cleared the void, and utilising contemporary materials, he reconstructed the cases internally with a horizontal display deck. The glass was lined with V/E perspex to exclude any ultra-violet light and the cases were finished with felt covers to exclude all light when not in use.

The newly modernised cases required exhibition display cradles. The cradles used are tailor-made in the College from folding box board along the lines of the design by Christopher Clarkson.

The library was a very dirty place in 1983. The conservation project has ensured that systematic cleaning is undertaken on a daily basis, and that an even more thorough rolling programme of cleaning is pursued. Every Saturday morning a Furbishing Team works in the library. The collection is surveyed, and for the present we are keeping manual records of the survey work.

## **PRESERVATION WORK ON THE BOOKS**

Following the surveying of each case of books that case is refurbished. Furbishing consists of cleaning with hogs-hair brushes the head and tail of the book, vacuum extraction of dirt and dust with a filtered cleaner, injection and pasting of degraded board corners, the making of minor repairs such as the insertion of a simple hand-made paper hollow if necessary. The moderate use of Klucel G on perished leather where no alternative treatment makes sense, and so on.

One of the problems which faces the furbishers at Corpus is the amount of previously applied British Museum Leather Dressing. The dressing had been

identification of erasures - in addition to being a useful tool in the examination of deteriorating pigment

4. Fibre optic cold light source - an essential instrument for the adequate use of the microscope, but also invaluable for backlighting
5. Wooden reading cradles designed by Nicholas Pickwoad designed specifically for the Parker Manuscripts.
6. Christopher Clarkson designed air blown foam book supports and weighted snakes to hold books open.

During the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries there have been rebinding programmes carried out upon the manuscripts.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that in the College archives is a document written over two hundred years ago which questions the advisability of rebinding the Parker manuscripts. The trade binding practices of the last two hundred years have not been suited to vellum leaved books. The glueing, rounding and backing of such items has caused much damage and has made it very difficult if not impossible to consult the books safely. The use of reading cradles allows scholars to continue using the manuscripts without damaging them, and they buy us time in which to find resources to deal with the manuscripts in order of priority.

Rules for reading room behaviour are clearly displayed on the desk and are sent to readers in advance. During the summer/autumn of 1985 we closed the library for five months and a massive programme of maintenance commenced.

## THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Ageing presses were found to be infected with woodworm and the joints in the presses were found to be giving way -- indeed there was a danger of total collapse in some instances. The room was systematically treated against worm, and the cases were glued, cramped and reconstructed. Every book in the room was removed from its shelf, even those above the library door, for which we were compelled to erect scaffolding to gain access. Each book was dusted, checked for worm infestation, and temporarily stored under sheets whilst work proceeded.

Damage arising from the furniture of the room was noted and measures were taken to prevent further damage. Books were found which had been grazed by the presence of shelf supports which were not rebated. The supports were removed, rebates cut, and new flush fitting supports inserted.

During the first major overhaul further new equipment was installed (which is already now the subject of upgrading) upon consultation between myself, the College's consulting engineer and the Bursar. Infra red beam smoke detectors were fitted, new intruder alarms were installed, and television

transformation was an essential requirement of the Pickwoad Report, and one for which the project can be justly proud.

## **PRESERVATION WORK ON THE MANUSCRIPTS**

Perhaps the greatest preservation achievement of the project to date, concerns the rehousing of the manuscripts. The work was a cooperative effort by the architect to the College and myself, in association with our carpenters Messrs. Nicole and Price. The problem, as set by Nicholas Pickwoad, was to house the collection of some six hundred manuscripts horizontally and allowing space for boxing. We also had to minimise the likely expansion of the collection so that it could be kept on site.

There are several advantages in storing books horizontally: for instance, the strain upon the sewing structure of the binding is avoided -- a factor which is especially important in the context of vellum leaved books. Horizontal storage also made for safer handling of the manuscripts from the shelf to the readers desk.

The Parker Manuscripts were originally bound in the expectation of horizontal storage, and their subsequent rebinding had made the need for such storage even more important to their well being.

Every manuscript was measured in three dimensional form. Four basic standardized boxes were agreed, with varying thickness dimensions. Box designs were agreed. The architect transferred the data onto an APPLE Macintosh computer, and using the EXCEL programme we manipulated the data to arrive at a new arrangement of books by size. Racking designs were then drawn.

The idea of racking was suggested by Nicholas Pickwoad as a space saver eliminating the need for shelves. The cupboards were emptied again! The carpenters arrived and final estimates were made. Timber was ordered and cut, and a special supply of Japanese oak was obtained which would blend with the wood of the library. Angled brass was ordered and was called in from merchants all over the country. The metal was cut and polished locally. Prefabricated conversion cabinet modules were assembled from the architects drawings and the brass was fitted with precision so that the boxes would fit the racks.

The units arrived and were so heavy that they had to be carried by five men. The modules were fitted into the now empty cupboards.

A structural engineer had previously been consulted to ensure that the library floor could take the strain of the immense weight that we were to place upon it. Temporary shelves were inserted into the racking, and the manuscripts returned to their medieval horizontal posture after many centuries of standing vertically on the shelf. The transformed cupboards have now been lined with oak panelling to exclude light and dust.

applied in too great a quantity and has caused many of the books to become sticky. It is also sad that many of the fine bindings have been permanently discoloured by the Hexane in that preparation. A further complication of the use of leather dressings containing Hexane arises from the disturbance of fats, oils and waxes that are already in the leather, causing even more stickiness. The team is very carefully removing the dressing and dirt by using small amounts of petroleum ether. We have purchased a Nederman's portable fume extraction unit for the safe undertaking of this work.

New boxes are being provided for valuable, vulnerable and important items. Most of the drop spine boxes are being made by myself. In addition to these boxes we are having made oak pressure boxes for the manuscripts and I will return to these in the context of our new storage system.

The regular maintenance of preservation records are a major concern of the project, for it is these records which ensure that the achievements of the programme are continued into the long term future. Since November 1984 the following records have been kept:

1. Manuscripts - frequency of use records
2. Manuscripts - records of condition and expectation of deterioration
3. Building maintenance records - including plumbing, wiring, roof security, boiler, structural records, heating system records etc.
4. Records of the Relative Humidity and Temperature.
5. Records of light intensity within the library.

These records and the publication of reports, exhibition catalogues and of the Newsletter have been made possible with the help of two micro-computers.

The keeping of accurate humidity and temperature records highlighted a significant problem with humidity in the library. During the height of winter the r/h could fall below 30%. Ideally, we would like to hold the humidity at 60% constant throughout the year at a temperature of 16c. In March 1986 we introduced two Defensor 4000 V humidifiers which have just about managed to hold the humidity between 50% and 60% throughout the following two full calendar years. There have been problems with condensation on the windows, and we would like to start a programme of double glazing; if the collection is to remain in the room in the long term this will be done.

In the meantime the boiler has been set deliberately low, and the temperature never rises above 17 c during the winter thus helping to combat condensation. An alternative to reduce condensation can be achieved with increased air flow, but in the middle of winter the room is cold enough and increased ventilation might be extremely unpopular.

Fluctuations in humidity and temperature will never be sudden unless the library experiences a mechanical failure in the boiler or humidifiers. This

## GRANT AID

Just eighteen months before, the Parker Library was given a Wolfson Trust Grant made under the British Library 1.3b award scheme. The College is very grateful to the Wolfson Trust and to the British Library for giving the substantial grant to the project which made possible the conservation of many of the manuscripts.

The Fifth Anniversary Conference was the 1988 event for the project and followed a year of very significant work in the Parker Library. The Conference was attended by one hundred and twenty delegates, and many new ideas were discussed by a distinguished list of speakers and delegates.

Finally, I must pay tribute to the generosity and inspiration of Gaylord Donnelley, without which I feel sure the project would have found it impossible to become established.

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## A NOTE ON THE REBINDING PROGRAMME FOR THE PARKER MANUSCRIPTS by Alan Farrant.

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The Parker manuscripts as a collection have undergone rebinding programmes more than once in their history. In Archbishop Parker's own time rebinding of many manuscripts took place.

Of interest to us as conservators is that stage when the books lost their non-adhesive structure and became glued, rounded and backed books. It seems likely that one of the most extensive rebinding programmes occurred in the eighteenth century. Indeed, the cover to MS 580 which I am currently in the process of rebinding into three parts, had an eighteenth century indenture containing information about Corpus Christi property as its cover.

For the most part the Parker manuscripts rebound in the eighteenth century had quarter calf bindings with parchment sides unlike MS 580 which was effectively little more than a glued vellum wrapper. The quarter calf bindings obviously started to break down fairly quickly; those which survive to this day tend to be in an advanced state of deterioration. The leather is perished, the hemp cords are breaking down, particularly at the joints, and

Boxes for manuscripts assume three basic designs:

1. Drop sided oak boxes, which give all round access to the volume which stands on a plinth within the box, for the largest manuscripts. This is moved around the room on an adjustable trolley for ease of transport. The computerized reorganisation of the manuscripts enabled us to ensure that all of the large heavy manuscripts could be stored at around waist height so that the Librarian would not slip a disc every time somebody wanted to look at the Bury Bible.
2. Lined oak boxes for the smaller manuscripts, with plenty of room to allow access and finger holes for the safe removal of the book.
3. Cloth covered lined boxes for the smallest manuscripts. Conversion of the existing cupboards housed one half of the total collection. The rehousing was completed with the construction of a massive supplementary island unit (13 foot long by five foot wide). This was assembled from pre-fabricated racks faced in oak to fit in with Wilkins's design for the Parker Library.

## CONSERVATION WORK ON THE MANUSCRIPTS

Once the project had achieved good conditions of storage and once the general preservation needs of the library had been attended to, it was possible to start thinking about the conservation of printed books and manuscripts.

The first of the Parker manuscripts to be tackled was MS 197b, an eighth century fragment of gospel. Since the work on MS 197b a number of other items have been tackled. Jane McAusland has repaired the fourteenth century block book the *Biblia Pauperum*, and rebinding was undertaken by Brigitte Bond. Jane McAusland has also conserved a number of very important single sheet items for us including the 1640 College Silver List and the letters of Charles I and Charles II belonging to the library. Alan Farrant has repaired the 14th century binding on the Greek manuscript of St. Mark's Gospel CCCC MS 224. Deborah Willis has conserved the leaves of MS 580 the Parker Roll. Malvern Jefferson of Cambridge University Library has conserved and rebound MS 280 a Henry of Huntingdon manuscript of the twelfth/thirteenth centuries. MS 33, the twelfth century glosses on the gospels of Mark and John dating from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have been rebound by James Cassells working under the direction of the late Sandy Cockerell. It is rather sad and yet at the same time satisfying to know that MS 33 being one of the first manuscripts to be conserved by the project, was in fact probably the last manuscript to be rebound in Sandy's workshop.

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## DISASTER PLANNING IN SMALL LIBRARIES by Nicholas Hadgraft.

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This paper concerns itself with disaster control planning in small libraries, but special reference will be made to the three libraries in the Cambridge Colleges Library Conservation Consortium. The Colleges in the group are Corpus Christi College, Downing College and King's College. The first college library to be covered by a disaster control plan was The Parker Library at Corpus Christi College and it is this plan which will be referred to as an example in most cases. The Handbook for Emergencies in The Parker Library is reproduced to accompany this paper.

### DISASTERS

According to the Oxford English Dictionary a disaster is "anything ruinous or distressing that befalls, a mishap, or a calamity". In the context of libraries a definition needs to be more precise and exact if it is to be useful. A disaster might be described as an event which has not been foreseen and which gives rise to damage the gravity of which varies with the extent of the calamity.

In 1966 the River Arno burst its banks and many of the art treasures of Italy were seriously damaged. The Florence experience has become recognised as a watershed (if you will excuse the pun) in the history of our thinking and planning for libraries. Nevertheless, it has taken more than the Florence floods to teach librarians and conservators the significance and necessity of disaster control planning.

Although disaster planning should aim at prevention, the fact that an institution has such a plan does not guarantee that a disaster will not strike. There have been many incidents over the twenty years following the Florence floods, some of which had devastating consequences. In 1972 at the University of Philadelphia the Temple Law Library was engulfed. In 1978 Stamford University Library was struck by disaster. This is to name but two examples of many from the USA. In this country accidental flooding has occurred at the

many boards are either detached or threaten to become detached. But this is not really the problem.

The glueing rounding and backing of the manuscripts presents the greatest threat to their future, for the books simply cannot open and be used safely. This is why the reading cradles designed by Nicholas Pickwood were constructed for the collection, and it helps to explain why the project went to such expense as an early priority. The cradles enable the collection to be consulted as safely as possible.

Doubtless by the twentieth century many of the successively rebound manuscripts had begun to break down. The glued structures were fortunately, in many cases, not strong enough to cope with the stresses involved in the operation of a vellum leaved book. Sewing structures on recessed cords soon collapsed ("soon" in terms of books which often approach in excess of a thousand years of age). It was therefore necessary to rebind the books anew and during the early decades of the twentieth century many manuscripts were rebound by local trade binders.

I think that it is important to understand and appreciate the difficulties facing both College and binders at this time. The College did not have access to informed and experienced conservators. The binders were honest tradesmen who did their very best for the books. One might like to imagine how difficult these alien creatures (the manuscripts) must have seemed to bookbinders used to printed paper books. The vellum leaves must have seemed very strange to handle and very difficult to bind.

Had these manuscripts been printed paper books the bindings would have been appropriate. Because they weren't, the twentieth century rebinding prior to this project was rooted in well intentioned misunderstanding. Clearly, now the manuscripts need releasing from the glue and constraints of a structure which is far removed from its medieval predecessor.

It is remarkable to consider that King's MS 34 currently on display in the Parker Library and rebound by Roger Powell, was possibly one of the first vellum manuscripts to be rebound with a truly non-adhesive structure since the medieval period. The work of Roger built upon that of Douglas Cockerell and running in parallel with that of Sandy Cockerell formed the inspiration for our thinking on manuscript binding today. Increasingly now, conservation binders are looking to the medieval period for their ideas about structural design.

It is good to think that the newly rebound Parker manuscripts are at last beginning to form the caucus of a collection with different binding characteristics, and are moving away from that uniformity of binding style so obvious in the rebinding programmes of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In time the books may begin to resemble a medieval collection outwardly as well as inwardly.

## 1. Prevention

Disaster planning must aim to prevent a calamitous event from occurring. Therefore a plan must incorporate regular checks on threats to the collections. For example the following potential hazards are checked on a six monthly basis in The Parker Library:

- a. the condition of wiring in the building
- b. the condition of the heating system
- c. the condition of plumbing
- d. the condition of fire extinguishing equipment
- e. the training of staff on the use of fire equipment
- f. the availability of the emergency telephone numbers in the handbook
- g. the working ability of fire and intruder alarm systems

Prevention of disaster tends to rely heavily upon good alarm systems, and it is important that these should be serviced regularly and that they should be brought up to date as often as possible. It is important to remember that fire increases in scale dramatically in its earliest stages. In 1985 a new infra-red beam fire detection system was brought into the library, to replace a 1927 bi-metallic strip heat detector (which the local fire prevention officer informed me would require a sizeable and very hot bonfire to trigger). The library is now about to modify and update the 1985 system with improved detection facilities. It is easy to understand our concern with the threat of fire when one considers that in the region of 50% of older buildings are completely destroyed when fire strikes, but a further 17% are saved solely because of the presence of good fire detection equipment.

Halon and CO<sub>2</sub> fire extinguishers have been placed in the libraries and archives of the Colleges within the Cambridge College Consortium, whilst water filled extinguishers have been removed from the vicinity of library and archive materials.

In an effort to safeguard the collections in the event of a fire it has proven helpful to invite the fire brigade to visit the libraries on a regular basis. This enables the fire watch to become familiar with the importance of the collection and to understand the importance of using dry methods of extinguishing fires in the building. It is understood that in the final resort water must be used to extinguish a fire. In a major conflagration the firemen must aim to save life as a first priority, and the structure of the building and its contents as a second priority. By maintaining a friendly and open dialogue with the fire brigade it is possible to explain the thinking behind the disaster plan and to build the plan into the emergency strategy adopted by the brigade

Victoria and Albert Museum, and fire broke out amongst the art treasures at Hampton Court. These experiences serve to emphasize the importance of disaster control planning, and the fact that in varying degrees all our collections are at risk.

We must work to minimise the risk, and to ensure that in the unlikely event of the unthinkable we are truly prepared to deal with the situation.

## DISASTER PLANNING

Library materials are susceptible to damage from a variety of causes, but perhaps the most serious problem arises from water. The water may come from flooding rivers, damaged pipes, overflowing drains, leaking roof gulleys and tiles, internal fire sprinkler systems or the fireman's hosepipe to list but a few possibilities. Certainly, in the case of the Cambridge College libraries in my care it is water that we fear most, though its source could only arise from one or two of the examples listed.

The formation of a disaster plan at Corpus Christi College, King's College and Downing College was taken very seriously. In the case of Corpus Christi it was one of the first problems tackled by the newly created Conservation Project in 1984. In response to the advice of the Conservation Consultant, Dr. Nicholas Pickwood, emergency procedures were described in the Handbook on Emergencies in the Parker Library and a number of support arrangements were organised with agencies outside the College.

The handbook is only a part of the overall disaster plan. It is that element of the plan which gives instruction on how to react to a disaster; but as I see it the total Disaster Plan should be seen in terms of four concepts:

1. Prevention
2. Reaction
3. Stabilization
4. Recovery or salvage

I am heavily indebted to Toby Murray, President of the Oklahoma Special Collections and Archives Network, and Chairperson of the Disaster Preparedness Committee of the Oklahoma Conservation Congress for the ideas underlying these concepts. Mrs. Murray's lecture delivered to the Institute of Paper Conservation Conference (Oxford 1986) was one of the most informative and best summaries of the Disaster Control Planning problem that I have heard, and I recommend that would-be planners should look at the post-prints to that Conference when they appear in September 1988.

I will deal with these four concepts in turn, discussing them in general whilst referring to the Parker Library plan as an example.

occurring by installing a comprehensive and very effective ionisation smoke detection system to all rooms and corridors in the library wing, and we have removed as many fire hazards as possible. All gas pipes have been removed from the rooms above the library.

Other preventive measures which have been incorporated to assist the disaster control plan at Corpus Christi include the fitting of a complex drain down valve system to the central heating water supply pipes, and the removal of all water supply pipes (other than central heating pipes) to the rooms above the library.

The prevention strategy is backed by the recording of six monthly maintenance checks. The Clerk of Works to the College (Mr. Ian Boundy) has been most helpful in ensuring that services and potential building hazards are always carefully checked. These checks have resulted in the replacement of the guttering above the south windows, the replacement of cracked window panes, the fixing of faulty window leads, the removal of dangerous electrical equipment and the removal of obsolete wiring, the treatment of wood with intumescent varnish, and the stabilisation of the entrance door to one hour fire resistance. A logbook of maintenance servicing and of work undertaken is kept in duplicate by the library and the maintenance department.

The heating system to the library itself has been fitted with several independent safety devices. Notwithstanding that, it is checked regularly and is the subject of a complete overhaul every few months. The system has been designed to operate on a restricted amount of water, so that in the event of a burst only a finite amount of water can escape. The damaging effect of heat from pipes running underneath book presses has been mitigated by lagging with an inexpensive but effective foam sleeve.

Conservation measures to book and manuscripts in the library have also been designed to minimise the risk of disaster damage.

The boxing of the manuscripts (the Parker Library contains approximately six hundred world famous manuscripts of which the majority are medieval and are written on vellum) is an important aspect of their preservation. The oak boxes are a major protection to the volumes and would significantly arrest the process of fire damage in the event of a disaster. The new storage racking system further affords protection from fire and the fireman's hosepipe.

In addition to the risk of fire the disaster plan anticipates the risk of theft. Various security devices and intruder alarms have been installed to cope with this threat. Amongst other features a television monitor and cameras have been situated to give access control to the library. In addition to a diverse collection of sophisticated electrically operated security devices the library has also introduced the simple deterrent of security boards, originally devised by Dr. Nicholas Pickwoad for use in National Trust properties.

in tackling a fire in the building - it is not possible to achieve this cooperation when the flames are licking at the windows.

In devising a plan for a large library it is essential to establish the managerial policy of the institution towards coping with emergencies in the institution. American planners have termed this the incorporation of a risk management programme. In the context of small libraries there is usually a clear guide-line on procedures involving danger to life, and this is usually disseminated in the form of a directive based on legislative regulations. In the case of the Cambridge College Libraries the aspect regarding the safety of people is governed by the general fire regulations for the Colleges which simply call for the immediate evacuation of any building on fire. The Parker Library Handbook on Emergencies primarily concerns itself with the safeguarding of *property* - and as a priority the Parker Manuscripts closely followed by the Early Printed Books. The plan is intended to assist the fire brigade or those authorised to act in the library to safeguard the collection in the event of fire.

In all libraries it is sensible to establish everyday working procedures which assist in preventing disaster. Such procedures should include the securing of all windows and doors, attention paid to anything which seems a potential threat such as the smell of anything burning, isolation of any electrical equipment when it is not required, checking electrical equipment in regular use for factors such as frayed wiring, accounting for keys, ensuring that alarm systems have been turned on before leaving the building, being aware of and reporting anything suspicious in the immediate vicinity of the building upon leaving.

Prevention of damage can be optimised by care with the design of a building. If you are ever in the fortunate position to influence the architect of a library building it is worth considering this fact -and one should make every effort to draw experts together in making designs. In planning for the new library to be constructed for King's College in Cambridge a number of individuals from the consultant engineers, the fire service and the architects are being carefully and systematically consulted and brought together so that the library design has optimum fire prevention characteristics. Because we are dealing with comparatively small institutions and therefore fewer people such cooperation and liaison is more likely to succeed.

Unfortunately, too often, we inherit old buildings with ancient collections. In many respects the Parker Library might be termed a low risk fire hazard, but from a design point of view it is not a very good building. With its hollow wall construction, and with the void above the Parker Library ceiling it presents many problems for fire fighters. Ideally, the College would like to remove the undergraduate accommodation from above the library taking it over for library use, but the College is land locked and for the present this is not a realistic proposition. We have therefore minimised the risk of a disaster

It should be understood that it takes many months successfully to create a complete disaster strategy and at King's and Downing the project has only been in existence since October 1987.

The plan at Corpus - as with all good plans - indicates who to contact and gives home as well as work telephone numbers. Staff listed on emergency call-out are given priority according to their relative expertise and distance from the library. It is a clear and well established understanding that curatorial and conservation staff will work closely together in any salvage operation. In large institutions with a complex disaster plan it is sensible to include a telephone tree for the contacting of numerous staff. In the case of the College libraries telephoning priorities are incorporated in emergency handbooks, and telephoning a few key people will trigger a process similar to the chain letter principle.

I have been working for the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College for four years and in the three years since the creation of the plan we have experienced one or two false alarms/tests when those involved did not know if the event was real or not. The library was attended within five minutes and the building was thoroughly checked. The system worked and in the event of a real incident the necessary personnel and equipment would have been on the scene probably at the same time as the fire brigade.

In the event of attendance by the fire brigade and the disaster team simultaneously, it is the Chief Fire Officer who takes command and who informs the disaster team when it is possible for the team to start working. It is very important that the fire officer is made aware of the existence of the team well in advance of any disaster, so that he can sort out with the team leader the role of the disaster team.

### **3. Disaster equipment**

In assembling a disaster kit I was strongly influenced by the experience and guidelines established by the National Library of Scotland, but I modified the kit to suit the special requirements of the libraries in my care. For example in the Parker Library Emergency Kit we keep amongst other things:

1. Hard helmets
2. Flash Lamps (lighting may have failed after a disaster)
3. Mops and buckets
4. Clean unprinted newsprint paper
5. Blotting paper
6. Impregnated tissue
7. Absorbent cloths
8. Plastic wrapping film
9. Freezer adhesive double sided tape

## 2. Reaction

At the very heart of a disaster plan is the notion of reaction to the disaster. It is imperative that when the alarm is sounded that the right people are contacted, and that they know precisely what to do. It is no good simply assembling a crowd of well intentioned people if they have no clear idea of their responsibilities. Nor is it sensible to assemble people without a clear chain of command - people must be aware of who is directing whom.

### *Disaster personnel:*

Toby Murray has advised on the structuring of an administrative hierarchy. It is suggested that this hierarchy be composed of a minimum of five people:

1. The team leader
2. Assembler and co-ordinator of work crews
3. Record Keeper
4. Recovery Co-ordinator
5. The "Gopher" (i.e. the person who fetches and carries or who arranges for the fetching and carrying of items for the other team members).

In the case of the Cambridge Colleges such an elaborate structure is not necessary, but we can easily see how such a team might be needed in a large institution. In the case of the colleges the staff have responsibilities which have been clearly defined; but the American example was very helpful in supplying definitions which enabled us to allocate specific disaster control responsibilities to staff involved with the plan. For example, the Parker Library Emergency Handbook draws to the disaster scene all relevant personnel, and their responsibilities have been clearly explained in a series of meetings. These meetings continue to be held to cope with changing circumstances and development of the plan itself.

All disaster plans must be supported by a team of people who can be called upon day or night, three hundred and sixty five days a year, to come as members of the disaster team. This was comparatively easily achieved in the colleges, where the duty porters can easily be incorporated into a disaster team, and institutions which house people all year round provide a source of help not readily available to every institution. With care small teams of efficient and trained personnel were assembled who could deal with disaster stricken library materials. In the cases of King's College and of Downing College this aspect of the plan is still in formation, but at Corpus the team has been in existence for several years.

#### 4. Stabilization and salvage

Having recovered damaged material from the site of a disaster it is vital that the team should know what to do with it.

It is a well established fact that wet books will start to suffer from mould damage between forty eight and seventy two hours from the initial wetting. Higher temperatures than normal, or incidents in tropical climates, may significantly accelerate this process of deterioration.

The Canadian Manual -- *An ounce of prevention : A handbook on disaster contingency planning for Archives, Libraries and Record Centres* (Ontario : Toronto Area Archivists Group Education Foundation, 1985) by John P. Barton and Johanna G. Wellheiser -- is a useful source of advice on the salvaging of different materials.

The team leader of the disaster crew should be in contact with experts from a variety of related areas of work. The Conservation Officer to the Cambridge Colleges has access to the a variety of experts including:

1. a mycologist
2. a chemist
3. a specialist in freeze drying
4. a specialist in blast freezing.

Through the College the Conservation Officer has access to:

1. a plumber
2. a carpenter and cabinet maker
3. porters and security staff
4. cleaners
5. a locksmith.

In stabilizing library materials in this country we tend to be dealing primarily with paper. The plan is to freeze the material and then to freeze dry it. In establishing the disaster plan for the Parker Library a contract was drawn up with a local blast freezing firm. The terms of the contract insist that the material is packed and then covered in a thin plastic film before being placed in the freezer. Packing may take place aboard a fleet of freezer lorries which the firm will dispatch immediately in the event of a major disaster. The lorries themselves run at a temperature equivalent to or below the temperature in the average domestic freezer, and arrangements have been made for the supply of protective clothing for those who may have to work in the lorries. The damaged material has to be covered in a thin film of plastic because the company deals with food and must of necessity demand hygienic standards.

10. Polythene sheeting
11. Roll of craft paper
12. Two foot jemmy for breaking into jammed or locked cases
13. Rope
14. Pencils
15. Damage record forms
16. Copies of the disaster plan
17. Supply of cardboard cartons
18. Supply of tacking pins
19. Supply of fungicide
20. Inventory and instructions for transfer to disaster scene and reception area.

The disaster cupboard/trolley should be regularly checked. The cupboard should be permanently locked against the possibility of somebody borrowing something from it. Keys to the cupboard are held by the disaster team and an emergency key is held in the College panic box. It is expressly forbidden to remove anything from the kit except in the event of an emergency. Useful suggestions about additions to the kit are always pursued and incorporated.

It is assumed that those dealing with a disaster have no specialist skills. Though this is unlikely to be the case, we cannot be sure that trained personnel will necessarily be available immediately. Instructions are simple and clear, do not demand any technical expertise and are expressed in easily understood English. The equipment that has been provided is similarly easy to use and whose function is fairly obvious. As many of the College staff as possible are being informed of the cupboard and the function of its contents.

In a major disaster, in a larger institution, it is possible to foresee greater needs. For instance, in the absence of power, portable generators may be needed, large electric fans may be wanted, de-humidifiers are likely to be required and so on. These are factors which a disaster planner must consider, and weigh against the likelihood of need. The Cambridge Colleges Conservation Consortium works in close cooperation with the Cambridge University Library Conservation Department and in the event of a major catastrophe we would be in contact with the department and through their offices we would be in touch with other experts to locate equipment and help not anticipated by the College Disaster plan.

Any disaster plan must include a physical layout or plan of the library. The plan must be in detail and must locate the most valued items in the collection. The plan of the Parker Library, for instance, is included in the full handbook on emergencies but has been edited from published copies for security reasons.

## 5. Insurance

Insurance against the cost of recovering damaged materials is a sensible precaution which needs careful consideration. Freezing and freeze drying, for instance, can be very costly if large numbers of volumes or if special materials have been affected.

Insurance policies must be regularly reviewed to take account of changing circumstances, collections and costs. Other insurance cover should be arranged to protect the library against the possibility of: damage to property, flood damage to the building, and crime, which can be broken down in terms of theft, burglary, and armed robbery.

I will not deal with the full implications of possible insurance needs which will inevitably vary considerably from one institution to another. Insurance is a highly complex subject and institutions must seek the advice of a specialist broker preferably with experience in dealing with works of art or similar.

## CONCLUSIONS

This paper has discussed some of the key concepts concerned with disaster control planning for small collections. I have endeavoured to relate the disaster planning experiences of the three Cambridge Colleges mentioned in the context of the overall strategies advocated by the major disaster planning manuals. It is not possible to anticipate the special needs of unusual libraries, and doubtless there are some aspects of our plans which do not apply to other collections. It is most important to understand that no plan is transferable, and that every institution has its special needs. Even a college across the road from Corpus Christi in Cambridge places very different demands upon the planner. It is for this reason that the only fully operational plan of the three colleges is that devised for Corpus, the two remaining plans are still in development.

To take but one example of special circumstances I will mention a very unfortunate fire which took place at Inverary Castle which occurred in recent years. John McIntyre Head of Conservation at the National Library of Scotland mentioned this example to me because it took two hours for the fire brigade to attend.

Unfortunately, this delay could not have been shortened even if the event were to re-occur in the future, because the general fire fighting demands of the area are not sufficient to justify a more local service. This example highlights the special and unique circumstances which can affect a library.

Hazards exist in every library and we should always be on the lookout for any item or situation which has the potential to become damaging. Libraries are often situated near other threatening sources of damage, and one

Within the College, there is a provision in the disaster plan to empty the College freezers of food should this be wise, and for these to be used for the temporary storage of salvaged materials.

In investigating facilities for blast freezing for Cambridge Libraries it was necessary to eliminate some firms for reasons of the collection's safety. One local firm was engaged in blastfreezing freshly butchered meat and the risk of damage to library materials in transit could not be eliminated. It is very important to ensure that the firms and facilities and services organised for a disaster control plan are truly compatible with the institution.

The Cambridge College Libraries in my care do not have to worry about the salvaging of media other than printed books, manuscript materials on paper and vellum and a few photographs. Films, microfilms, digital discs, computer floppy discs and microfiche would have to assume second place in any real disaster. However, staff are aware of the latest thinking about stabilisation procedures for some of these items and in the right circumstances these practices would be followed.

Naturally, one of our major concerns is with vellum leaved manuscripts. The Parker Library contains the third most important collection of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts in the world, and both King's College and Downing College own manuscript material on vellum of some considerable historical importance. In the case of wetting of these manuscripts, the procedure would be to freeze them, and then expert advice would be sought. It is good to know that once frozen, books are stabilized and the disaster control team can afford to relax. The college disaster plans have an agreement with a freeze drying agency to which work can be transferred.

Knowledge of the effects of freeze drying vellum is very confused and limited. Some institutions have warned against freeze drying vellum, but I can find no evidence of the detrimental effects of freeze drying vellum. I do have some knowledge of a disaster in which vellum bindings were freeze dried with very encouraging results.

In the light of this experience the Parker Library, in conjunction with the Bookbinding Department at West Dean College in West Sussex has devised a research project to investigate the likely effects of freeze drying vellum manuscripts. The initial experiments are being carried out by one of the Cambridge University departments, and we are hoping to present the first set of results in the not too distant future. It is essential that this research should receive some financial support, and we should be very interested to hear from any institution wishing to share in this research project. The research will eventually demonstrate the effects upon pigments/illuminations/gesso on the parchment support when freeze drying occurs.

Disasters may be man made or they may be acts of God. It really does not matter in what form the disaster is delivered the effects may be just as destructive. Unlikely though it may seem the inevitable will occur from time to time. Even in Cambridge fires do happen, and aeroplanes can crash, thieves may conspire.

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## THE CONSERVATION OF MATERIALS by Edmund King.

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### INTRODUCTION

In being asked to address this conference, it was useful to keep the title general, so that I might develop the theme of conservation in a wide context. My own experiences come into this, and it is as a Librarian who has gained a degree of knowledge in preservation matters that I present myself to this conference.

Much time and effort has been spent on defining the word "conservation". What does the word mean? The Oxford English Dictionary states: "to keep in safety, or from harm, decay, or loss, to preserve with care; now usually to preserve in its existing state from destruction or change."

It is my intention today to emphasise those measures which require active intervention to repair books by people with requisite skills; also, those measures which assist in the conservation of books through "good housekeeping".

"Good housekeeping" demands decisions and is crucial to the overall wellbeing of a collection. Good housekeeping may be defined as all those measures concerning safety, storage, cleaning, climate, which if left unattended to, could result in the accelerated decay of books.

### DECAY AND REASONS FOR IT

All objects are subject to aging; man-made artefacts are no different. Decay may or may not involve a change in the external appearance of an object.

must always anticipate that disaster will happen and pray that it never does. In recent months the Bursar at Corpus Christi was requested by myself to politely request that a very large pile of branches and garden rubbish be removed from the library wall by the neighbours of the College.

People outside the institution, as in this case, are usually only too willing to help in disaster control planning when an adequate explanation is given.

We live in a potentially frightening world, and in a world which can all too easily become hostile to our library collections. Crime and terrorism are a sad symptom of the modern age, and curators must face up to such realities. The American examples of recent years have demonstrated how devastating acts of vandalism can be; and even in Cambridge we have witnessed thefts and vandalism to important collections. It is difficult to know how to deal with such threats. In an age when machinery is ever more complex the risk of break down and of consequent disaster is increased. Floods resulting from defective plumbing have occurred in very important British collections in recent years. Good disaster planning undoubtedly combats the chance of catastrophe and it also minimizes damage when disaster is not prevented. The experience of the Hampton Court fire may well have been the first occasion in this country when a disaster plan saved a major collection from the devastating effects of a fire. In this case virtually every item was rescued undamaged although a large part of the building was seriously affected and in the accommodation areas there was a loss of life.

Hampton Court highlighted the importance of the special relationship between the planner and the emergency service.

Increasingly with the growth in knowledge about disaster control planning fire officers are becoming willing to listen to those with specialist knowledge about important historic collections.

Whilst the fireman is the best person to tell you how to extinguish a fire it is the librarian, curator or archivist who can tell the fireman how best to use his knowledge in a way which will maximize the fire fighters' effect. In time, disaster teams may have to become more deeply involved with the tackling of the disaster itself and may have to be trained to work more directly alongside emergency services. Certainly, this is the message which emerged from the Hampton Court experience, where the team were very well trained and practised in disaster limitation responsibilities.

Anyone who imagines that disaster control planning is some kind of boring joke, and such people still exist, is a fool. It is important to ensure that all library staff understand the great importance of the disaster plan, for with this understanding incorporated in everyday library working practices there is a good chance that disasters will be prevented. The fact that nothing has happened for five hundred years does not guarantee that it will not happen tomorrow. Indeed, if the former were the case none of us would need to bother about a life assurance policy.

As a fungicide of low toxicity, thymol may well be effective in tackling the outbreak. Consultation with a specialist is necessary in dealing with more severe outbreaks. Restoring a climatic equilibrium is also effective, with dry cleaning of the mould as appropriate.

## ATMOSPHERE TOO DRY

Too little moisture in the atmosphere can be as harmful to paper or parchment as having too much. Cellulose in paper can be made brittle by prolonged removal of moisture. Vellum can be just as sensitive as paper to fluctuations in moisture, and the results show more obviously. When vellum dries out, it can warp the boards to which it is attached. Vellum can cockle to quite an extent when dried out after exposure to excessive moisture. It is fluctuations in temperature or humidity, particularly sudden ones, which can shrink vellum quite severely.

Conservation solutions involving flattening or restretching is time consuming work that should be undertaken by an expert.

Extremes of heat from fire result in the breakdown of the structure of matter. At the British Library there are many examples of damage from fire and water owing to bombing in the last war.

## INSECTS

Those conditions which promote the growth of mould can also allow insects to establish a life cycle. Warmth and humidity offer the right conditions for them to feed on the components of books: paper, parchment, leather, pastes or glues. The damage done depends upon which feature of the structure was desirable to the insect in question. We have all seen examples of insect damage.

If insects are seen, action should be taken immediately to isolate books affected and to clean and treat the area of the stack in which they were found. It is better by far to spend money and time to create stable storage conditions which lessen the chances of an attack of mould or insects. Clearing up after these have happened is so much more expensive.

## LIGHT

I will touch briefly on the damage to materials that light can cause. Ultra violet light, possessing a shorter wavelength than visible light, is the more destructive to bindings, papers and inks. It is remarkable how quickly damage occurs

Being commonly made from cellulose, paper is part of this process, as are animal skins. It is one of the wonders of human endeavour in the field of manuscript and printed book production, that the use of good quality materials has often resulted in great durability. Many manuscripts and early printed books remain in a superb condition.

One of the great ironies of our recent history has been the production of vast quantities of inherently poor quality paper, which will ensure that the majority of books printed since the middle of the nineteenth century will not survive very long, compared with those produced centuries ago.

It is no more than common sense to say that the books and MS in collections will last longer if looked after properly. Whilst we all know this, achieving proper care for collections has, and always will, cost time and money. With regard to our climate, we are greatly assisted in the UK by having average temperatures and humidities which do not by themselves significantly threaten the existence of our books and MS. Provided that library storage areas are not exposed to excessive light or heat or moisture at any one time, and that a decent circulation of air is maintained within storage areas, then problems that affect many volumes simultaneously are less likely to occur.

## MOULD

However, paper's known ability to absorb moisture from the atmosphere rapidly and in quantity can have spectacular results if allowed to go unchecked. The most telling example that I have encountered in recent years is the case of the store where the relative humidity rose greatly owing to venting of heat and moisture in the storage area from a heating plant. At an average of 85-90% relative humidity (RH) for two weeks, it was obvious that micro-organisms would culture; and they did. The cost of the resulting need to clean the mould from objects and in the storage area far outweighed the time it would have taken to divert the source of the problem with engineering staff and reduce the levels of RH.

When RH levels are above 65% for any length of time, action to reduce the moisture content of the air must be taken. It may not be cheap to remedy such situations, but it is invariably cheaper than coping with the consequences of mould.

Mould damage to paper and bindings can be significant, for mould will grow quickly given the right conditions. The microbes exist everywhere and can grow on diverse matter given half a chance. For example, spores can culture and then grow over the surface of an LP disc, and also on record sleeves. Mould will begin to destroy paper fibres in a relatively short space of time. It is essential to remove it. The type of attention required will depend upon the severity of the growth.

## SALVAGE PLANNING

Before talking about conservation measures, I should like to dwell upon the merits of preventing loss to collections through the actions of fire or water. Some planning, or at least thinking, should be done on the basis of "if it can happen, it will." Certain considerations must be taken into account, such as:

- who is authorised to deal with an emergency and when?
- how do you get people to help with salvage work after the event?
- what is it most important to save in a collection? What are the priorities for salvage?
- what arrangements are necessary with other organisations to treat affected materials?

Much effort can be put into this area. It is important to be prepared. The examples of Florence in 1966 and the USSR Academy of Sciences Leningrad State Library in 1988 are the most prominent examples of what could happen to any library. In the latter case, some 400,000 books were destroyed, and half a million books damaged by water.

## ACTIVE CONSERVATION: SURVEYING AND CHOICES

So far, I have talked about "passive" preservation measures relating to the storage and environment of materials, and the possible consequences if they are not followed. I should now like to consider more active conservation measures.

Many libraries are faced with the consequences of decay to books inherited from previous generations. The question we are constantly faced with is: "What choices do I have regarding the repair of books?". When there are large backlogs of books awaiting repair, the important thing to do is to plan your choices. If possible, try to group similar kinds of work together. Almost invariably, decisions about the repair of one volume are related to other volumes in the same or other libraries.

It may well be necessary to carry out some form of survey of the stock to see how large the problem is. When doing this, bear in mind the physical condition of the books. Surveying means checking to ascertain the actual condition of the volumes. The survey needs to take into account the importance of the text, and its likely future level of usage.

Even when you know what you would like to repair, choices have to be made because repairs cost money. Repairs may be cheap or expensive,

when there is exposure to strong light levels. All you have to do is to leave your own newspaper in strong sunlight for a few days and you can see the results for yourself. If you look at leather bound books that have been shelved in direct sunlight, you can easily see the bleaching effects on the spines. The dye in modern buckram is also susceptible to bleaching by light. It is always best to display or to store books in areas of low light levels.

## PEOPLE

Mishandling of materials by people can often accelerate decay. Quite often, thoughtlessness, carelessness, or stupidity show how easily this can be done. Part of the good housekeeping strategy involves vigilance on the part of library staff to prevent mishandling of books.

Even removing a book from its shelf can cause damage. Spine coverings can easily tear under the pressure placed at the head of the spine. Removal of books from reader use is one of the sanctions which may be applied if the book is becoming too fragile to be handled. In my experience, the greater the amount of handling of books, the greater the attendant risks of accelerated decay. The number of times a book has to be handled by different people from its position on the shelf to a reader's desk and back again can significantly influence the amount of cumulative damage that can occur.

Admittedly, some books do not take much mishandling to make their condition worse. There are many volumes whose binding structure is too weak to support the weight of the paper in the first place. Slowing down decay by usage is not a matter of applying policy by rote. Librarians must be aware of books structures and make the effort continually to see books as they go out or are returned from readers, so that books in a worsening condition may be noted and acted upon.

## SUMMARY

I have mentioned some of the ways in which materials in libraries can be harmed. Sensible precautionary measures exercised continuously contribute significantly to avoiding accelerated damage to books. Being aware of what should or should not be done can contribute greatly to this process. For example, the purchase of thermohygrographs and thermometers is relatively cheap and allows the librarian to obtain some knowledge of conditions in storage areas and reading rooms. Installing air conditioning is by contrast expensive. It is a long term commitment, because the plant must be maintained and eventually replaced.

It is worth remembering that there is very little point in spending money on conservation work on individual volumes if poor storage conditions are likely to invalidate wholly or in part the quality and cost of the repair.

and the approximate cost per hour were £10, then seventy pounds may seem a lot of money. However, a lot of work has gone into the volume. It is useful to keep a sense of proportion in relation to the costs of conservation repair work. Having recently been involved in a minor car accident which resulted in a bill for labour of around £15 per hour, I am encouraged to think that the rate for the conservation of books is not so expensive after all.

## LAMINATION

The matter of lamination has been the subject of much discussion recently. In lamination, sheets of tissue are applied to both sides of the original sheet. The adhesive on the inner side of each sheet of tissue is transparent, and when the two sheets of tissue are heat-set onto the original, the result is a reinforced sheet of paper. The work can be reversed, but in practice it is costly in terms of the time needed to do this.

It is suggested that lamination is used only on sheets of paper that are otherwise too fragile to handle, or if the book under consideration is not worth the expense of traditional paper repair. It is not easy to generalise about this, and whenever possible, book by book and even section by section consideration is really necessary, because papers vary widely in response to deacidification.

## SPRAY DEACIDIFICATION

There may well be circumstances in which the pulling apart of a volume is undesirable, so valuable are the features of its structure. The paper must receive treatment, however, as its quality is now poor. In such circumstances, it may be possible to have the paper deacidified using a spray of methyl magnesium methoxide, without pulling the volume apart.

## REPAIR

Paper repair can be a matter which causes real practical difficulties. The morality of keeping intact and unaltered what has come down to us vies with the need in many cases to repair a volume so that it is fit for use. Undoubtedly repair work alters the status of a book, but it cannot be said that it should not take place because of this. Physical necessity may well demand individual hand repair of torn portions of a leaf; or that the joining of torn paper be undertaken with strips of good quality tissue. Provided it is sensitively carried out, repair makes a book fit for use. Not repairing a book will mean in many cases that the book may not be consulted without endangering its existence.

Decisions must be taken regarding repair work. Instructions for repair must be clear. In making instructions, two points are vital. Firstly, some

according to the perceived value of the object. Much the cheapest solution is to decide to leave a book or MS. alone if the paper and inks are in sound condition. Protection may be all that is necessary, and various types of boxes can be made to provide this. There need be no repair to the book.

## **FURBISHING**

Minor repairs are possible to books. Reattaching loose covers to text block; tipping in loose pages; cleaning leather; taking dirt and dust out of books; repairing leather or paper tears -- all this work can be carried out by suitably qualified staff. The repairs prevent damage to books from becoming worse and are relatively cheap to carry out.

## **MICROFILMING**

Much has been made in recent years of the usefulness of microfilm in providing copies of books more cheaply than full repair work would cost. Given the scale of the poor paper problem which we face, it is most necessary that some form of copying take place before we lose texts in their entirety. The making of a microfilm and the restriction of reader use of the book can be said to contribute to the conservation of the original only in so far as lack of use means that the original is likely to last longer than it would otherwise have done. Whilst discussion continues regarding the durability of the new optical disc systems, microfilm remains a practical and durable method for the securing of copies, provided proper processing measures are carried out.

## **ACIDIFICATION AND ITS REMOVAL**

I have mentioned the poor quality of many modern book papers. The ability of paper to take up moisture means that it can absorb acids that are in the atmosphere. Commonly known phenomena are the absorption of sulphur dioxide and sulphuric acid which lead to the breakdown of the cellulose molecules of which the paper is composed. The main purpose of the deacidification of paper is to remove acids and also to leave enough residual chemical matter to slow down the future take up of acids by the cellulose. This "buffer" as it is known, may commonly be of magnesium or of calcium. The methods employed are explained in the British Standard number 4971 Part 1 (1988).

For deacidification to be effective, this normally means the pulling apart of volumes and the immersion of the leaves in prepared solutions. The leaves then have to be dried, recollated, repaired as appropriate, re sewn and a new case attached to the text block. Not surprisingly, these processes take time to complete and time is money. If, say, this sequence took seven hours in total

knowledge of book structures and their history and their materials is essential for informed decisions to be made. Secondly, there has to be recognition by both librarian and restorer that instructions may need to be altered during the course of repair work. Flexibility of thinking is important for successful work. Neither librarians' instructions nor conservators' ideas should be rigidly adhered to. The development of experience on both sides lends more certainty to agreed decisions.

Conservation involves change. Librarians have to accept that previous decay may have endangered the book to the extent that changes to the appearance of a book through conservation work must be accepted. The librarian has the right to decide what level of change is made and also what not to change. There is a clear need to make choices, but they are never likely to be easy ones.

## CONCLUSIONS

There has only been time to dwell briefly on some points relating to the conservation of materials. It is often said that experience lends wisdom. In the field of conservation, experience, I find, merely teaches me how much more there is to learn.

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## LOOKING AT MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS IN CATHEDRAL LIBRARIES: TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF CONSERVATION by Alan Piper.

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What I am going to say in this paper may not be entirely what one might expect from my title. For this reason, and also so that what I say may be set in its personal context, there is need for a little autobiography to start with.

I have been employed since 1968 as a member of academic staff in Durham University's Department of Palaeography and Diplomatic, based in the half of the Department known as the Prior's Kitchen. This means that I am

intimately associated with the arrangements that resulted from the establishment of a joint scheme between the University and the Cathedral forty years ago. The purpose of the scheme, funded by the Pilgrim Trust, was to provide a centre of expertise in medieval manuscript material to serve the needs of both the Cathedral archives and the Cathedral's manuscript books, both of them collections of quite exceptional importance. In practical concrete terms this means that the Pilgrim Trust met the costs of building a reading-room which is so placed that it is convenient for the fetching of manuscripts from the Library strong-room and of archives from the converted medieval kitchen.

Among the members of the Department I am the one who has specialized in the medieval book. Before coming to Durham I was introduced to the problems of cataloguing medieval manuscripts by Dr Malcolm Parkes, who was engaged in preparing a catalogue of the collection at Keble College Oxford; one way and another the task of indexing his catalogue fell to me. I also had the great good fortune to attend the last course of instruction on codicology given by the late Dr. Neil Ker before he retired as Reader in Palaeography at Oxford in 1968. This foundation was greatly strengthened by two years working with Dr. Ian Doyle, between 1981 and 1983, on the preparation of a catalogue of the medieval manuscript books belonging to Durham University Library.

That's my professional background, which is much as you might guess. What you would not perhaps guess is the personal background: a licensed reader for almost twenty years, chairman of the Durham diocesan Mission Committee, and a member of the Bishop's Council. I mention these personal details because I share with the members of chapters here tonight, and no doubt with many of their lay assistants, a concern for the advancement of the Kingdom, and a desire to be able to see my own activities, and those of the institutions with which I am closely involved, in a theological framework. He came that we might be made whole, and I believe that the Spirit He sent to us is constantly unsettling us when we would settle for unintegrated, compartmentalized, lives. So it is of concern to me not only that collections of medieval manuscripts should be safely preserved, but that the reason and manner in which this is done should have an articulated Christian rationale.

The theological dimension is not one which will have occurred to those who kindly invited me this evening, so don't blame them for it. What they knew was that my experience and availability when Neil Ker died in 1982 resulted in the task of completing his catalogue of *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries* being given to me; the typescript of that was delivered to the Oxford University Press last month. This task primarily entailed dealing with the manuscripts belonging to institutions in the latter part of the alphabet, from P onwards. As it happens almost half the Cathedral Libraries holding medieval manuscripts come in the latter part of the alphabet: Peterborough, Ripon,

Rochester, St Albans, Salisbury, Truro, Wells, Winchester, Worcester and York. Among the rest Durham is my home base and I have worked at Canterbury, Exeter and Lincoln, which leaves Bangor, Bristol, Carlisle, Chester, Chichester, Gloucester, Hereford, Lichfield, Liverpool, Newcastle and Norwich, several of which have only a very few medieval manuscripts.

But what am I to say to you? It would be so easy to be anecdotal; that might be the more agreeable course at this stage of quite a long day, although I might find it hard to resist remarking on the deadliness of some places that I have visited, as against the liveliness of others. Nonetheless the past year offers a much more substantial starting-point.

## SALE OF MANUSCRIPTS

I mean of course the debate sparked off by the news that one Cathedral chapter had reached the point where the fulfilment of its primary responsibilities left no other effective course open than the sale of a major medieval manuscript: Hereford and the *Mappa Mundi*. This has been an interesting debate, particularly interesting for its silences. Among those who contributed so vociferously in urging that the Map should not be sold, there were none that I saw who were able to articulate any theological argument against the course of action that the Hereford chapter appeared to be entertaining, and it would be interesting to know whether any of the many who no doubt wrote to the chapter were able to marshal such an argument. Clearly the chapter of Hereford had not itself seen any weighty theological reasons for keeping their Map, or there would never have been any question of disposing of it in the first place.

Is it possible to give a convincing account, in terms of bringing in the Kingdom, to justify Cathedral chapters retaining collections of medieval manuscripts? After all some of these collections are extremely valuable, and caring for them involves the expenditure of time, effort and money that could be used in other ways.

There are powerful historical arguments for preserving intact large collections that were formed to serve the needs of the very institutions which, in reformed guise, still hold them; obvious examples in this category are Durham, Hereford, Lincoln, Salisbury, Worcester. But what would be lost if those collections were transferred tomorrow to the British Library? In some cases the separation of the book-collections from the archives would be a serious loss for the advancement of knowledge, for the connections between the two would be all but impossible to discern. The feeling that would come first to most minds, however, is that the historical identity of the institutions in question had been seriously diminished, that the manuscripts had been removed from the places where they belonged, that chapters had failed in being good stewards of the treasures entrusted to their care.

That of course in Christian terms is largely rubbish. While churches have learnt, albeit rather slowly, that communal identities should not be wantonly destroyed, such identities are to be defended for the sense of purpose and the framework of shared values that they instil and hand on, but hardly when they reinforce local pride or possessiveness. For chapters, their principal treasure is of course the Gospel that they are given to proclaim; they know that the value of all else is derived from the contribution that it makes to that central task -- even though others would like to see them as upholders of refined middle-class cultural values.

Anglicans are perhaps less robust than some about subordinating the incidental to the central task. One important Roman Catholic institution has recently sold almost all its medieval manuscripts. My feelings about this are somewhat mixed: I spent a number of days of my life putting the descriptions of those manuscripts into final form; but in fact those were the basis for the sale-catalogue descriptions, and so the effort was not wasted, while I met a number of interesting people during my visit, and the rhododendrons were unforgettable. In terms of the institution's particular purposes I find it impossible to condemn what has been done; indeed I think it likely that the right Christian course of action was followed. But the institution in question is not one that attracts the general public in significant numbers, and that makes it fundamentally different from our major Cathedrals.

## PILGRIMAGE

The general public comes in droves to Cathedrals. One of the principal female characters in Patrick White's *The Riders in the Chariot* was brought up as a country-woman in the Fens; a definitive, perhaps the definitive, experience of her life was a visit to Ely Cathedral when the organ was being played, Bach's architecture of sound matching the physical structure to give her an abiding sense of the transcendent. Those who talk to Cathedral visitors will know that experiences of this kind are not at all uncommon; those who count the money from the collecting boxes will know that the organ being played well enhances generosity. Coming to a Cathedral can be an experience of a very different kind from visiting the British Museum, and the sense that this is so is probably more generally prevalent than is sometimes thought, although not readily articulated by many visitors. Pilgrimage is a much over-used word, though very apt, given the mixture of motives that informed many medieval pilgrims, some of whom received something far more valuable than what they set out to gain.

Pilgrims went of course to shrines, and so they do now. Today the word shrine suggests a place in which the dead are commemorated, with chilling cleanliness and good order, in a hush of sepulchral reverence -- like some

Cathedral Libraries in fact. The reality of a medieval shrine was quite different, with its colour and clutter, its bustle of the infirm, the devout and the simply curious, its regular round of resplendent ritual, with censuring and singing and ringing of bells, an experience which would perhaps put even our most unbuttoned charismatics in the shade.

By conceiving of our Cathedrals as shrines of a more medieval style, as many-faceted sacramental signs, pointing by a diversity of means, we may begin to see how their great variety of treasures serve to forward their over-arching purpose: individual men and women encountering God. It is not difficult to glimpse the impact the physical structures can make: if you regularly use the main entrance of a Cathedral you will be well aware of the reactions of those who enter it for the first time, and perhaps the saddest aspect of the turn-stiles that now control some entrances is the way in which they distract the visitor from experiencing the initial impact of the building.

If you have ever spent time quietly in the vicinity of a display of medieval manuscripts, you will be aware that these too can stimulate a sense of wonderment on the part of visitors, particularly when the books in question have belonged to the Cathedral from a very early date. The impression of the care and time, of the artistic skill involved in producing such an object as a medieval manuscript, is a powerful one, conveying how highly valued were such means of enlarging and deepening the understanding of the things of God, of offering to Him the sacrifice of praise in the liturgy. This is part of the same aesthetic response that the building itself can create, and such a response is but a small step short of wonderment and worship. It is all the stronger when the manuscripts remain where they were used in the Middle Ages, when those who view them today know that they are looking at the means by which those who stood on the very same ground sang God's praises and drew closer to Him. The particularity of place can render more real the viewer's sense of being grasped and carried up in the hand of God.

## DISPLAY OF MANUSCRIPTS

If then medieval manuscripts can serve the mission which Cathedrals are called to fulfil -- the bringing of men and women into a closer encounter with God - a number of consequences ensue. First, and most obviously, medieval manuscripts should be displayed to the public. Here I find myself somewhat torn. It is quite clear that medieval manuscripts are put at risk by displaying them. In the strong-room they are more secure, more likely to be kept in an atmosphere that is at the optimum temperature and humidity level, and with their leaves not exposed to the light. On display those conditions cannot be fully achieved. Yet no major repository of medieval manuscripts has turned its face entirely against displaying any of its holdings: those who provide the

sums expended on acquiring and keeping such objects will only understand the importance of doing so if they have the opportunity to see them.

Equally, in the context of a Christian institution, display is an opportunity for mission and a way of answering for the time and energy spent on the collections. Within that framework display becomes an imperative and it is a matter of taking the utmost care and expert advice over such questions as security, atmosphere and levels of lighting.

To make the most of the aesthetic response that manuscripts can stimulate requires of course that any display be adequately supported by explanatory material, both of a general kind and of a particular kind. The former needs to be very basic: "written by hand, with a goose quill, using ink made from lamp-black and oak-galls, on carefully prepared sheep or calf skin" is not too basic. The particulars of an individual manuscript should perhaps contain two elements: details that are unique to it, such as its making, content or later history, and reference to features which exemplify more general aspects of manuscript-making or keeping, such as the page layout, markings that show that it was made in a university context, identifiable styles of decoration, and so forth.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CATALOGUES

At this point you will naturally begin to feel that you are being asked to fly. "How can we be expected to do that?", you will ask. For me one of the fundamental gains of preparing descriptions of manuscripts in Cathedral collections is that it will provide those who have the care of those collections with modern detailed information that can be used when books are put on display. In some ways it has to be admitted that the descriptions are not cast in the most readily useable form for that purpose: the conventions adopted when the project began were very much those of the academic manuscript catalogue. On the other hand the descriptions do therefore attempt above all things to be accurate. No doubt they fall short of achieving this on occasion, but at all times the truth is the first principle, and hence the absence of chatty speculation; only what can be safely said is said.

Time was when this was not the case with the explanatory material accompanying displays of manuscripts. Wishful thinking was all too often a very conspicuous feature; the temptation to elaborate tenuous connections with notable historical personages was apparently almost irresistible, and local production would be posited on the slenderest of grounds. By and large that trend has been reversed. It is part of our clearer understanding of the theological importance of the aesthetic response to our Cathedrals and their treasures to see that beauty and truth are two sides of a single coin. Falsehood corrodes beauty; the power of the Gospel is that it is both awesomely beautiful and true. And so in our own particular area of responsibility truth and

accuracy must be abiding concerns, if we are to be faithful to the Spirit that undergirds the institutions that we serve.

Neil Ker had a passion for the truth, and this sustained his endeavour to publish descriptions of all western medieval manuscripts in public or corporate ownership in Great Britain, outside the major institutions. He did not see himself as meeting only the needs of scholars; he also saw very clearly that many of those who have the care of medieval manuscripts were busy people, with multifarious demands on their time, and little opportunity to become conversant with the intricacies of palaeography and codicology. He sought therefore in his descriptions to provide the information that a scholar might reasonably request by letter from a Librarian, and in general was extremely disciplined in not going further than that; the details that Ker's descriptions do not provide are generally the details that a scholar ought to come to investigate in person, either because they are of such an intricate nature or because they involve a high degree of subjectivity, the latter applying most especially in matters artistic.

Ker's restraint was also manifested in another way, and one which is more relevant to Cathedral collections than to any other category of institution. He did not seek to replace existing published catalogues, and so it was only York among the very large collections where he undertook descriptions of all the manuscripts; for Durham, Lincoln, Salisbury and Worcester he envisaged providing descriptions only for those manuscripts not included in the published catalogues, while Hereford was left out on account of the catalogue being prepared by Sir Roger Mynors. This was not because he regarded the existing catalogues as adequate, but having in the case of Eton College embarked on the replacement of an inadequate published catalogue, he saw that doing the same in parallel cases would so enlarge his undertaking that he could have no hope of completing it.

That decision reflected his priorities: it was more important that there should be published descriptions of the small groups of manuscripts at Perth and Paisley, Taunton and Truro, Warrington and Wigan, for these would most probably otherwise remain uncatalogued and unknown. The Cathedral collections by contrast were well known, and much more likely in due time to find their modern cataloguers. And that has proved to be the case. A new catalogue for Lincoln is in the hands of the publisher; a recent very detailed study of the early manuscripts at Salisbury represents a major step towards replacing the old catalogue; for Hereford there are the materials assembled by Mynors; and for Durham, where the existing catalogue is much the oldest and by far the least adequate in giving no physical description whatever of the books, a substantial supplementary accumulation of information is already available in the reading-room.

It is not entirely unrealistic to look to a day in the not-too-distant future when, alongside the volumes of Ker's great enterprise, it will be possible to set

catalogues that complete the modern coverage of medieval manuscripts in the English Cathedrals. Indeed that possibility is now sufficiently achievable for it to represent something of a challenge, and so perhaps the time is approaching when consideration should be given to the practical steps required to meet it. After all it has not proved impossible by any means to find funding for major but well defined and supervised cataloguing projects for printed books in Cathedral Libraries, and there is no obvious reason why medieval manuscripts should be different.

Naturally, as Ker's disciple, I hope that the will and the way will be found to realize his vision. I hope it also as part of my more fundamental discipleship, as part of my concern that the Church should carry out its mission more effectively, for I do believe that Cathedrals have the richest resources for touching those who can be brought to a closer encounter with God by way of an aesthetic response.

I can vouch that even hard-headed scholars, who may well come in greater numbers in consequence of better catalogues, are touched by doing their work in the places with which the manuscripts have been long associated, and where the daily round of worship speaks of the continuum back to the period when the manuscripts were made and beyond. It is, I have found, important to remind oneself of this, for it is so easy to lapse into unhelpfulness and inflexibility when dealing with readers, forgetting that they are people who may well, by better treatment, be brought closer to God.

After all, we belong to institutions that point to higher things; if we do not care about people, then we nullify our institutions' fundamental purpose. Equally, if we do not care about truth, we fail, as my bishop has recently been saying in characteristically robust fashion, to reflect the transcendent reality that we would proclaim.

*Alan J. Piper, Dept. of Palaeography and Diplomatic,  
University of Durham, The Prior's Kitchen, The College, Durham DH1 3EQ.*

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## THE SALE OF BOOKS FROM CATHEDRAL LIBRARIES by Mary Hobbs.

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### THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY

I feel I am here as a sheep in wolf's clothing today, since many of you were expecting this important subject to be covered by Nicolas Barker. I have asked him, therefore, as seems only fair, if I may start from his own words,

especially since not everyone may have seen his important article in *The Book Collector* of April, 1988. True, it was not at all about Cathedral Libraries, but what he tellingly called "The Rape of the Rylands", that splendid private Library established for the University of Manchester in 1892 by Mrs. John Rylands from her late husband's collection, housed by her in a fine neo-gothic building, together with the books of the 2nd Earl Spencer which she had acquired to enrich it.

Here are Nicolas Barker's opening words -- I won't need to underline their topicality today in another Cathedral context, but perhaps the less said about that for the moment the better!

"The University of Manchester has now had its way with its Library: it has sold almost a hundred of its best books for a relatively small sum. It has destroyed the integrity of a great part of the bibliothecal wealth of this country. It has also alienated public opinion, and with it any hope of raising the funds from other sources, to support the Institute whose needs were the nominal cause of the sale. Finally, it has opened the door, unless perhaps the almost unanimous outcry has shut it again, to any other attempt to meet the needs of the present by selling the heritage of the past". He hits the nail on the head: "It is a story in which stupidity and duplicity go hand in hand, an eternal human characteristic".

Mr Barker wrote his first protest, to *The Independent*, at that significant point (I quote him) "where all private remonstrance had failed, and public protest seemed the last resort -- not with much, if any, expectation of arresting the sale, but rather that posterity should know that the event was not ignored, still less approved, at the time."

## CATHEDRAL LIBRARIES

Let me remind you, as early examples of posterity, of just a few episodes we know from our own Cathedral Libraries. The Ripon books are in the safe keeping of the Brotherton Library at Leeds University, and some of the rarer books and the manuscripts from Ely, at least, and the Peterborough old books are with Cambridge University Library (they understandably reserved the right to sell duplicates within their own collection).

But would this kind of deposit be the answer, say, at St Paul's or Lincoln? Surely there, the books are better studied in the context of their beautiful Wren Libraries, which cannot fail to produce that sense of awe and the transcendent that Alan Piper has spoken of<sup>1</sup>.

What about the books sold to A.S.W. Rosenbach from York in 1930? (I shall come back to them later). What about the older books among the large number of later 18th and 19th century books sold or dispersed from St Alban's Library in 1984? This is a particularly disturbing example. Elena Warburton, the

Librarian, pleaded with the Cathedral Librarians' Conference to monitor the impending sales, yet its Chairman only closed the stable doors after the horses had departed. In fact, Mrs Warburton and her successor, Susan Knox managed to avert the original much worse threat and now see the remaining books well housed in what is a useful working Library. But this instance shows how vulnerable books may be to a Canon Librarian or Dean with a low opinion of the place of older books, in what are often ephemeral schemes for the mission of a Cathedral, and who are ignorant of the value of what they inherit.

On the other hand, one must always distinguish between parish-church Cathedrals such as St. Albans, and those which have inherited large, centuries-old collections: the case is by no means black and white.

It was Dean Sydney Evans who was Chairman of the Cathedral Librarians Conference at this time. There are many advantages in having a Dean as Chairman, for his ready access to the Deans and Provosts, but there can be the disadvantage of divergent interests and points of view. Two years later, in 1986, he became alarmed over this very instance and asked Anthony Hobson to draft a letter to all Deans and Provosts on the value of the books in their care. Unfortunately, he sent it out in his own name as a Dean, and did not consult with the Secretary of the Librarians, or their representative on the Bibliographical Society's Cathedral Libraries Committee. He then retired, and Mr. Hobson had to report, in answer to an enquiry from the Cathedrals Advisory Commission, that not surprisingly, there had been "no reaction" to the letter, possibly because no-one knew to whom to respond.

As a final example, take those books sold from my own Library at Chichester. I unearthed a sizeable "Chichester collection" in the University of London Library, of the sale of which there seems no record, but the ones to which I refer are those sold in 1947 and 1949, which have disappeared from view. All my efforts through the pages of *The Book Collector* failed to locate more than a single one (through the keen observation of Mr Paul Morgan) until yesterday, when I was delighted to discover Nicolas Barker had another. Those of you who know my preoccupation (or obsession!) with the works of Bishop Henry King of Chichester will appreciate my feelings on seeing that among the books in the 1949 sale, Henry King's own copy of St Ambrose's works, one of his two favourite Fathers, with annotations in his own hand, had sold for £4. Aldovrandus's *Ornithologiae*, replete with woodcuts of birds, went for £4.10 -- which of us would not have provided that measly sum from our own pockets? Admittedly, a 1524 Linacre raised £115, but the point was made that that was exceedingly rare.

## SION COLLEGE LIBRARY

Then there is the case of Sion College. Admittedly it is not a Cathedral Library, but those who know about books were given no chance to see that

suitable homes were found before its treasures went onto the open market. Those of us who saw what remained last November were somewhat concerned that the Librarian seemed to care more for her 19th-century material, contemporary with their great Victorian Gothic rebuilding, and we found ourselves casually handling Caxtons (not that we were not immensely appreciative of the unheard-of privilege!) and other priceless volumes left around for our interest. This July's Sotheby's sale includes two of the originally sold volumes, returning commercially at highly inflated prices.

## RATIONALE FOR THE SALE OF BOOKS: THEY ARE DUPLICATES

Let me draw out the parallels between Cathedral Library books and the Rylands affair. Nicolas Barker highlighted elements with which we are only too familiar. The books were said to be duplicates: "No harm in selling them, you might think. If you have two or more copies of the same book, get rid of the surplus."

This argument clearly weighed with our forefathers. At Chichester, for instance, many of the Henry King Library books were replaced by more modern editions in the later 18th century, partly through the argument used with the Rylands books, that they were out of date or in poor condition. It is within this century that the understanding that books may be valuable for more than their contents has become general, among Librarians at least. As Nicolas Barker puts it: "All books produced before the machine age differ, some trivially, some spectacularly". It may be in bindings or in text, in illustrations or in illumination - all these, as well as association, must be taken into consideration before pronouncing on "duplicates".

Both the original Rylands collections were historical: their copies of valuable and old books were famous individually, but there was also their collective value (a point equally valid for bequests of modern Libraries) -- their historic unity as integral collections. Nicolas Barker, commenting on the fact that some of the best books had been removed (because those are the ones which must be sold if money is the objective), remarked: "You would not remove a trilith or two from Stonehenge, or a duplicate pinnacle from King's College chapel, on the grounds that there were enough left to show what they looked like". We have also been told much about what nonsense later sales make of the Union Catalogue and earlier printed catalogues.

At Manchester, Sotheby's (whose conflicting interests could hardly make for impartiality) were brought in to value the "duplicates". "Those deemed more important, as possessing early bindings or marginal notes, were retained", we are told, but no-one considered that later bindings might still be interesting, and so might be the hands through which they had passed. I think of William Hayley's thanks to the Dean and Chapter of Chichester for the use of their

books, inscribed by him before his poem 'The Triumphs of Temper', or the polyglot Bible given to the missionary Joseph Wolff on his wedding day in 1827 by the evangelical Charles Simeon, which later came into the hands of the explorer David Livingstone. (Sotheby's approach to the Rylands books was one stage better, however, than the consultation at Chichester in 1946 when the so-called "expert in books" called in to make the choice of volumes to be sold was a local historian, W.D. Peckham.)

## SECRECY

Sotheby's catalogue was devious about the provenance of the Rylands books: it diverted attention to the benefits to be accrued by the sale. "Fuss and secretiveness", as Nicolas Barker calls it, seems to be another all too frequent accompaniment of such transactions by Deans and Chapters. Some of you will already have heard me tell of the dramatic events of 1947, when Bishop Bell of Chichester, dining in the Athenaeum, was greeted by an acquaintance with "Ah, Bishop, I see you are selling your books!" He was shown the catalogue and rushed out, dinner untouched, to take the train to Chichester and confront the Dean, Duncan Jones, and the Librarian, Lowther Clark.

Sotheby's were unable to cancel the sale -- it was within three days -- but they agreed to the withdrawal of seven of the best books, and a further three, expensive even for those days, were bought by a mysterious Canon Clark, none other than that same Librarian. But that was in 1947, and no-one has been able to explain to me why the second part of that sale went forward in 1949! Some of the most interesting books appeared then, though admittedly in poor condition: Theodore de Bry's *America*, for instance, for £7, and the first edition of Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum*, whose original purchase by the Dean and Chapter is proudly recorded in an 18th-century catalogue. (It is that very edition that Nicolas Barker bought, for £2.10: David, the Cambridge bookseller, had paid £1.10 for it, which shows what an honest man he was!).

Bernard Barr's account<sup>2</sup> of the sale of the books at York provides another notorious example. He writes, "Public knowledge of the circumstances ... is distorted in the extreme, owing ultimately to the chapter's unfortunate secrecy at the time, and its discretion immediately afterwards, when those who had given advice in private declined to defend it in public". He also refers to the grossly fictionalised account in the biography of one of the leading *dramatis personae*.

Again, as with the Rylands affair, one often finds that people round about are not aware of the real issues, and that members of the Chapter, who wish to be loyal and supportive, may nevertheless not understand exactly what they are acceding to. Others merely refuse to believe such a move can actually be contemplated (or such a breach of good faith with the past, in the case of

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Libraries like the Rylands or historical collections like that of Tobie Mathew at York). They do not take reports seriously until too late. The secrecy was partly enforced on the York Chapter by the buyers, understandably anxious lest anything should prevent the sale. A year later, when the public discovered what had happened, the Chapter had to take up a defensive and evasive position.

## HEREFORD AND THE MAPPA MUNDI

Some of the public pronouncements of Deans and others in such a position are embarrassingly naïve and self-contradictory. I hope Canon Tiller will forgive my taking two examples from Hereford, but it is a fruitful source of such remarks, and my actual list is much longer! In a letter to the Cathedrals Advisory Commission, the Dean said that to achieve the £7m they sought would mean this would be "the only time a Dean and chapter of Hereford would find themselves in such an invidious position". 'Your Twenty Questions Answered', a leaflet put out to allay the fears of local bodies, however, not surprisingly states, "No-one could possibly guarantee that [such a sum] would solve the financial problems of the Cathedral forever".

The answer to another question, "Do you need to spend money on the Library?" was "This is our greatest treasure - unique in the world. It needs to be housed and displayed properly". Hear, Hear! But in its statement to the Press, the chapter said it had considered 4 possibilities:

- 1) to sell the entire Library collection
- 2) to sell part of it
- 3) to sell some of their properties
- 4) to negotiate with the Government and other national bodies and institutions with a view to selling the collection to the nation at a preferential price, but on condition that it remains *in situ* (it is hard to see just what the nation had to gain from the last, which surely would be no different from a straight grant.)

One is glad the Library is now safe, but it might not have been!

## ACCOUNTABILITY

The form of pride which refuses, as at York, to reverse decisions to sell, once made (another common feature with Deans and Chapters), whatever the weight of more informed public reaction and in the face of offers to raise the money in other ways, is, one suspects, a desperate assertion, with which one has

sympathy, of a Chapter's inviolable, but sometimes, it must be confessed, irresponsible, autonomy. Next week, in this very place, the General Synod considers the draft Care of Cathedrals Measure, which makes it necessary for Deans and Chapters to submit first to a Cathedrals Fabric Commission for approval any proposal for "the sale, loan or other disposal of any object designated ... as being of outstanding architectural, archaeological, artistic or historic interest" - on the last two points, the sale of books will have to be scrutinised.

The immediate cause of the York sale in 1930 was the need for urgent structural repairs to the Minster. At that earlier period, there were generally no other methods of fund-raising available but the sale of some assets: Ripon sold its three Caxtons to refound its choir school; St Edmundsbury sold another for neo-Georgian chairs and candelabra to improve its Library (it has now sold the Library!). But again, one must remember that parish-church Cathedrals like these are in a different category: few parish churches possessed Libraries, though of course there are such fine collections as the Kedderminster Library at Langley Marish, and the Old Heathfield Vicarage books in Sussex. (These are now housed in Chichester Cathedral Library, because when the vicarage was sold, they were moved into the new one where they suffered from central heating. But the books were already mutilated: Charles Cotton's Poems - what had he done to be singled out? - were gouged away under the binding to provide a box, perhaps for the safe concealment of jewelry, and Montague's Ornithological Dictionary has lost all but two dull black-and-white examples of its hand-coloured plates.)

## ALTERNATIVES TO SELLING BOOKS

Today, the situation has altered in two ways. People are more aware of the need to conserve the past, and there are sophisticated methods of doing this, as we heard yesterday. And when local appeals fail, public bodies such as the government, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Royal Commission for Historical MSS, and various private bodies and individuals are concerned to help any proven and reasonable need.

The good to come out of the Mappa Mundi affair, as Hereford points out, is that national bodies, as well as ecclesiastical, are aware as never before of the need to take seriously the funding of Cathedrals, if they are to continue as guardians of our culture and tourist attractions, in addition to their prime purpose of worship and mission (that is the word in the new Measure, not "ministry", as Alan Piper would have it). Various methods of creating a National Cathedrals Fund are being actively explored at present, and suggestions for retaining the Mappa Mundi have ranged from tourist taxes to time-sharing!

## YORK CATHEDRAL SALES

Returning to the York books, the American bookseller and bibliophile A.S.W. Rosenbach had already tried to buy the York Gospels earlier. Faced with a crisis over the fabric, the Dean now decided to listen to him. He could hardly sell that particular volume: it would have been awkward to explain why the next Archbishop of York, not to mention lesser dignitaries, were not able to take the oath on the York Gospels, without a Civil War to account for their loss (when an unexplained delay in their return at the Restoration involved a disappointed bishop of Chichester!).

The Dean agreed instead to sell two unique Caxtons which (Oh, invidious and plausible phrase!) "had no particular connection with the Minster". Characteristically, advice was sought, not from a books expert, but from an -- admittedly eminent, in this case -- ecclesiastical historian, and an ecclesiastical lawyer who decided (correctly, at the time) that the Chapter had the power to sell. Rosenbach only agreed to give them the full £20,000 they wanted in return for 33 other books, as well as the Caxtons (he sold them immediately to the Pierpont Morgan Library).

The Librarian of the time, Canon Frederick Harrison, was duly praised for saving the Minster. (I hope that, unlike his colleague, Canon Cheslyn Jones of Chichester, after their sale, he did not then proceed to pulp some 100 or so horrifyingly anonymous "books in poor condition"!). Among those sold at York which had "no connection" with the Minster were books from the important historical Libraries of Archbishop Tobie Mathew and Marmaduke Fothergill, including the two volumes of Erasmus's New Testament of 1519, printed on vellum and with the editor's autograph inscription to Bishop Tunstall of Durham - Bernard Barr has already demonstrated the connection between York and Durham which the York Library reveals.

Another characteristic feature of the sorry business is that the money realised by the sale was after all inadequate in the end to pay for the architect's main recommendations. Bernard Barr comments bitterly "Relatively few of them were carried out, and the Minster did not collapse". There are a few crumbs of comfort. As far as the matter was then understood, the Chapter did try to observe safeguards (though they did not appreciate the importance of the Mathews and Fothergill books). Moreover, many years later, the unspent money was converted into a Library Fund! And one must remember that, though the British Museum complained at the time, they were only prepared to meet half the amount offered by Rosenbach, which would have defeated the object of the sale. But let me remind you also of the recent failure of the Rylands sale to achieve the high prices estimated by Sotheby's, once the really spectacular books had gone.

## LOSS OF GOODWILL

Though the York sale had perhaps more justification, at its time, than some later ones, Bernard Barr sums up the modern view of such an affair: "it was against the trust implicit in the gifts of the Mathew and Fothergill collections, it deprived the Library of some fine books which gave it no inconsiderable part of its reputation and which for various reasons people were prepared to come a long way to see, and it damaged public respect and potential benefactors' confidence in the Library as a secure and permanent repository."

This loss of goodwill has already taken place at Hereford: witness the opinions expressed publicly by Roy Strong and the Duke of Grafton (patron of their last appeal and Chairman of the Cathedrals Advisory Council) and by scores of private individuals, like one of the Cathedral Friends who on a visit to my own Library said he washed his hands of a Cathedral which could contemplate such a breach of trust with the past and with local people who had supported it. This loss of local "pride of identity" (as Alan Piper called it) is not the least of the damage created by present threatened sales, at Hereford and elsewhere.

One disturbing factor in many sales of books is the often ephemeral considerations involved and the personal nature of the advice accepted on such occasions, and perhaps more alarmingly, the short-term needs for which the sale is to furnish the means (though this may be more apparent in retrospect). At Ripon, for instance, I understand it was decided that the Library room would be better employed as a modern working Library and a room for meetings. But the meeting room proved unnecessary and the modern books which have replaced the historic collection sit incongruously, as if aware that they are out of place in those ancient surroundings. Most Cathedrals have found parallel siting for modern theological books, so that the old "Library rooms" can still play their part in creating awe and a sense of the numinous in readers and visitors.

## WHY SELL?

The question still remains, as Nicolas Barker pointed out, "Why sell the books?" He characterises this as "a mean-minded dislike of owning such frankly aristocratic objects" and points out that the clergy ("bumbling and greedy", as he calls them) have always been afraid of books. I think it is rather that they are regarded as of no practical use now, and certainly of no use to what is regarded as the great purpose of all ecclesiastical buildings today, "Mission". A frequent and perhaps understandable argument is the cost of maintaining such a fragile asset, and the fact that no-one ever sees or uses them. Their invisibility, compared with the fact that the Mappa Mundi could at least be seen as a major content of the Cathedral, is a great danger and temptation.

But today, generous grants have been made available for restoration and rebinding, from the government through the British Library, but also from several smaller private bodies like the Pilgrim Trust and the Marc Fitch Trust. (Some Chapters are in danger of forgetting, however, that acceptance of such a grant binds those who enjoy them not to sell any volumes in future without consulting those bodies).

This view that the books are useless today disregards several important facts. Scholars from all over the world will increasingly find opportunity to make use of them, now that their location can be easily discovered through the Cathedral Libraries Union Catalogue. They do so for a variety of reasons. Some books are unique to a particular Cathedral, or at any rate extremely rare. Others may draw scholars who want to examine all available copies of a book -- I found that the York copy of a Henry King sermon I was editing had an autograph inscription to the Earl of Bridgewater: this was important because at the same date, John Donne had dedicated one of his sermons to the same earl. Other scholars may come because if they live in York, a copy of a rare book close at hand is an advantage over one in London, Oxford or Cambridge.

To view Cathedral Libraries as useless museum-collections is frankly short-sighted, as Penelope Morgan at Hereford or Enid Nixon at Westminster or Suzanne Eward at Salisbury could tell you. The reason Hereford is having to consider the rehousing of its chained Library is just the inadequacy of access for such a popular tourist attraction, and the want of space to enable the flow of the many visitors.

Salisbury converted the disaster of losing its elms from the Cathedral green into a triumph of good design with its new neo-classical Library shelving. It can be seen by visitors from the antechamber, and beneath, good, frequently changed displays are shown. Wells is another Cathedral which recognises the value of the Library to visitors by maintaining constantly changing, well-documented, small exhibitions of their treasures, with scholarly duplicated catalogues. Others would do well to emulate these Libraries. Books must be seen to work, as today, tourist attraction is the beginning of a Cathedral's mission, as well as of its economy.

## CATHEDRALS ADVISORY COMMISSION

At this point, I must say a few words about my original subject. The Cathedrals Advisory Commission is the Church of England's own advisory body for Cathedrals. At present, consultation is only voluntary, though many Cathedrals already use it, but the new Measure makes it statutory in certain instances, as in the one quoted above, about "sale loan or disposal" of any object of outstanding artistic interest. (Hereford claimed it did not consult because it thought we were only concerned with matters of fabric -- though I notice they are now asking advice over commissioning a modern statue.)

It is not always recognised that we can advise over books as well as other "contents" of a Cathedral. In practice, such matters as binding and conservation would be referred to the Books and Manuscripts subcommittee of the Council for the Care of Churches (which has Geoffrey Bill of Lambeth as its chairman, and of which Paul Morgan is a member), but the Cathedrals Advisory Commission, whose officers work from the same building as the Council (83, London Wall), has also advised over the housing of books, sources of grant and other matters. It is not, as some think, automatically against sales in all cases: recently, it actually helped Newcastle Cathedral to negotiate the sale of a Tintoretto, which had no long-standing link with the building, to the local museum. Moreover, as it is a nationally accepted body (which it must take pains to remain, under the new measure) it can help Cathedrals to liaise with such bodies as the Royal Fine Arts Commission.

The Commission has about 17 members. Its composition is liable to change every 5 years, when the Church of England elects a new General Synod. Its lay chairman, appointed by the Archbishops, has for some years been the Duke of Grafton, who holds other offices with the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings and the Joint Amenities Societies. The Vice-Chairman, appointed by the Archbishops in consultation with Standing Committee and the Deans and Provosts is Professor Peter Lasko (until his recent retirement Director of the Courtauld Institute). There are two Deans, Wells and Norwich, nominated by their colleagues, five General Synod members (there will be up to seven according to the new measure) who must be used to Cathedrals, one at least of whom is on a Cathedral administrative chapter. Two members are nominated by the CCC (at present, me as its vice-chairman, and Lady Pamela Wedgwood, as an art historian and chairman of the CCC fabrics subcommittee). There are two Cathedral architects and provision in future for surveyors too, and up to nine specialists appointed after wide consultation. In practice, these include nominations from such bodies as the Royal Academy (at present the sculptor Michael Kenny), Royal Fine Arts Commission, the Society of Antiquaries and the RIBA.

There is no provision, however, for the interests of Cathedral Libraries. I would like us to send in an amendment to add "books" to section (g) of the new schedule, which lists the areas to be represented: I am prepared to move this, so that not only the Mappa Mundi and those copies of the Magna Carta at present in danger, but the Winchester Bible, the York and Lichfield Gospels, the Caxtons and other important and interesting books may not be sold without consultation simply as assets.<sup>3</sup>

## NOTES

1. See paper printed above.

2. In G.E.Aylmer and R. Cant, eds., *York Minster Library*, OUP 1977, pp.526-30.

3. This amendment was accepted, July 1989.

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## RISING FROM THE ASHES: THE RYLANDS PHOENIX by Clive Field.

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*This article is a response to Mary Hobbs' paper, 'The sale of books from Cathedral Libraries' printed above.*

Librarians, bibliophiles and heritage experts will be indebted to Dr. Mary Hobbs for her fascinating account of the sale of books from Cathedral libraries. It has to be said, however, that its usefulness is to some extent diminished by a narrow preoccupation with twentieth century developments. After all, Lincoln Cathedral was selling incunables to the Second Earl Spencer in the early 1810s.

In stating her case against such sales, Dr. Hobbs draws several parallels with, and derives various lessons from, the sale of ninety-two second copies at Sotheby's by the John Rylands University Library of Manchester on 14 April 1988. Her treatment of what came to be known as 'The Rylands Affair' appears to be based entirely upon the arguments, so strenuously, and emotionally, advanced at the time by Nicholas Barker, notably in his articles 'When a University is Driven to Selling some of its Best Books' (*The Independent*, 7 April 1988 and 'The Rape of the Rylands' (*The Book Collector* Vol.37 n.2, Summer 1988, p.169-84).

Because Dr. Hobbs produces no fresh evidence or innovative comment on the Rylands sale, and because her brief is for Cathedral Libraries and not research libraries generally, a detailed rebuttal of her thesis is inappropriate here. However, readers of this *Bulletin* may find it useful to be signposted to relevant statements of the Library's position and to know of developments which have taken place in the two years subsequent to the sale.

### THE DEFENCE

For an institution which was to be the subject of "rape" (according to Nicholas Barker) and "cruel and inhuman murder" (in the eyes of Peter Stockham), the John Rylands University Library had a surprising amount to say in its own defence at the time of the sale. Despite the inevitable difficulties in obtaining fair treatment at the hands of a media clamouring for scandal and controversy,

the Library did not shrink from justifying its position, both in private and in public. For example, letters from Professor Brian Cox, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Manchester and Chairman of the Library Committee, and/or Dr. Michael Pegg, Director and University Librarian, appeared in *The Independent* (4 April 1988), *The Times* (7 April 1988), and *The Times Literary Supplement* (15 April 1988). There was an amicable and reasoned exchange of views on the subject between myself and Daniel McDowell of The Chaucer Head in York, one of the few critics of the Rylands Library's actions to speak as an authentic representative of northern interests rather than as the epitome of southern, and especially metropolitan, affluence; this took place initially on 'The Early Show', BBC Radio Manchester, 13 April 1988, with a replay, chaired by Brian Redhead, on 'Today', BBC Radio 4, on 14 April 1988. Various expressions of sympathy and support for the Library at the time of the sale also came from external and independent quarters, including Simon Jenkins in his 'A Treasure Trove, Rotting in the Attic' (*The Sunday Times*, 10 April 1988), and an editorial writer in *The Times*, 16 April 1988.

The Library has similarly taken every opportunity to present its perspective on the sale since the heat of the battle has passed. A full listing of relevant materials would be out of place here, but a few examples may be noted. Important for its attempt to set the sale firmly within the context of the Library's wider promotional strategy was my own paper 'A Literary Paradise Regained: The John Rylands University Library of Manchester [Part 2]', *Bookdealer*, 3 November 1988, p.5-10. Michael Schmidt's 'The Rylands Affair' (*PN Review* vol.15 n.5, p.8-12) offers some refreshing thoughts on the Library's acquisition of the Althorp collection in the 1890s and on the issues raised by the retaliatory behaviour of Lord Crawford in withdrawing his family's deposited collections from the Library in 1988.

The Library has also been a case study for several projects on the problems of promoting and safeguarding research collections which have been undertaken by postgraduate students of librarianship and information science. Especially useful in this regard is the September 1989 University of Sheffield M.A. dissertation by Michael T. Richardson on 'The exploitation of older materials in academic libraries', which compares the experiences of the John Rylands University Library, the Bodleian Library, the libraries of Trinity and St. John's Colleges in Cambridge, Chetham's Library, the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and the Linen Hall Library in Belfast.

## THE JUSTIFICATION

That the Rylands sale was controversial and raised important questions of principle in a greyish area, nobody here in Manchester would deny. But at the

end of the day, the only justification for the sale is that it would enable the Library to rescue its special collections division from an uncertain future.

Dr. Hobbs has a touching faith in the willingness of "public bodies such as the government ... and various private bodies and individuals ... to help any proven and reasonable need", but her experience is not entirely borne out by the Rylands staff in the numerous discussions and negotiations which they have had over recent years. Certainly, any hope that may have been nurtured that the new Universities Funding Council was about to give special-factor funding to hard-pressed research libraries such as the Rylands has been quickly dispelled. Sponsorship opportunities do exist on a small scale, and the Rylands has not been slow to seize upon them as they present themselves, but the sheer enormity of the task involved in preserving a research library such as the Rylands, with its five million plus books and manuscripts, and a half century or more of relative and chronic underfunding, places it in a much higher league of problem-solving for the twenty-first century and beyond than the Cathedral libraries which Dr. Hobbs considers, and it demanded an initial capitalisation which only the Sotheby's sale could have created.

## THE CONSEQUENCES

What, then, has happened with the £1.5 million net which the Sotheby's sale generated? All this money has been invested, with provision for capital growth, in a special trust fund in the name of the John Rylands Research Institute, and can be drawn upon only for the needs of that Institute, not for normal Library or University purposes.

As readers of *The Times Higher Education Supplement* and *The Times Literary Supplement* of 2 February 1990 will know, full-time academic and academic-related posts and bursaries are regularly offered by the Library to promote both cataloguing and research on its special collections. A whole corridor in the Library is now populated by the first holders of such posts.

The purchase of books and manuscripts in areas of unquestioned international excellence in the Library's special collections has recommenced. Conservation work, both remedial and preventative, is beginning on some of the worst affected collections. A lively and ambitious publications programme has been instituted, as described in the eight-page leaflet *Recent and Forthcoming Publications, 1990*, which is available from the Library upon request. The Library's public exhibition programme has been reinvigorated, and the Library's impact on the wider life of Manchester and the North-West maximised through association with the English Tourist Board's Strategic Development Initiative in Manchester. The Library's free community newsletter, *Town and Gown*, inaugurated in 1988 and carrying reports of all these developments, is now in its third issue with a circulation of well over three thousand copies.

## THEOLOGY

This progress can be better visualised when related to a particular subject discipline, and theology is as good an example as any. In the publishing field, two completely new surveys of the Library's research holdings in this area have been prepared by the present author: 'Sources for the study of Protestant Nonconformity in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester' (*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* vol.71 n.2, Summer 1989 p.103-139; also reprinted as a pamphlet, price £2.50 plus postage), and *Theology and church history: a guide to research resources in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* (1990, 35p., £1.50 plus postage).

Negotiations are at an advanced stage with the Meckler Corporation for the publication of a catalogue of the Library's Christian Brethren Archive, by far the richest single resource for this denomination anywhere in the world. A contract has been signed and filming started for a mammoth ten-year microfiche programme from Inter Documentation Company of Leiden, entitled *The People Called Methodists: a Documentary History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain and Ireland*, which will be based on the Library's Methodist Archives and Research Centre. A full colour facsimile of the famous Rylands Haggadah, the fourteenth century Sephardi masterpiece, has been published by Thames and Hudson with a lengthy introduction, notes on the illuminations, transcription and English translation by Professor Raphael Loewe of University College London. A colour microfiche version of the equally renowned Rylands Beatus will shortly be available from Edition Helga Lengsfelder of Munich. Several other related projects are also close to realisation.

The Library's theological holdings have likewise received their fair share of the new blood posts made possible by the interest on the Sotheby's sale. Already up and running are two initiatives on the uncatalogued Hebrew manuscripts: a three year, full-time research associateship on the Moss gaster codices (which number almost four hundred), occupied by Alexander Samely, and a much longer-term, but part-time, handlisting programme on the more than ten thousand Genizah fragments of the tenth to nineteenth centuries, now being undertaken by Dr. Abraham David of the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. The Rylands Syriac manuscripts of the seventh to twentieth centuries, which include Old Testaments, New Testaments, gospel lectionaries, Bible commentaries, psalters and religious poetry, are shortly to be catalogued by Dr. J.F. Coakley of the University of Lancaster. An appointment is also pending for a bibliographical assistant to carry out a major machine-readable cataloguing operation on the Library's several thousand Methodist pamphlets of the nineteenth century, a project which is being run in conjunction with the *Nineteenth Century Short-Title Catalogue*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and which has attracted some minority funding from the Methodist Church.

## CONCLUSIONS

Many of the Library's severest critics, at the time of the sale and since, perhaps even Dr. Hobbs herself, are not noted for being regular users of the Library's research collections, nor even for visiting the Library on a casual basis. Some, though clearly here not Dr. Hobbs, direct their attacks from positions of relative and enviable affluence and security. High-minded principles are laudable in the abstract, but they rarely solve real-life problems. The Rylands makes no apologies for having thrown down the gauntlet to other research libraries of the world, for having challenged the assumptions that nobody dared to question. The death by a thousand government cuts is not a prospect which any great institution of learning and culture can or should contemplate with equanimity. The John Rylands University Library has taken unilateral action to safeguard its own future and will surely go from strength to strength. What fate, one wonders, will befall some of those other research libraries -- perhaps even a few Cathedral libraries -- which have so nobly clung to their principles against all the odds?

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## RELIGIOUS ARCHIVES CONFERENCE by Rosemary Seton.

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Thursday, October 12th 1989 may well prove to be a significant date in the annals of religious archivology. About fifty archivists, librarians and administrators, as well as a sprinkling of academics gathered together in the Lecture Theatre of London University's School of Oriental and African Studies. There were present representatives of the Catholic Archives Society, the British Council of Churches, Selly Oak Colleges Central Library, the Methodist Church, Leicestershire Record Office, the Orthodox Church of the British Isles, the Church Missionary Society, the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research to name but a few.

It had long been felt that the archivists of churches and religious societies and organisations worked in some isolation and did not, in general, feel themselves to be well-informed about each other's activities. Then too, religious

archives in the British Isles were very scattered, some remaining with their creating bodies while others had been deposited in local record offices or institutional libraries and repositories. Here, the staff who administered them often acquired a subject specialism and, so to speak, became 'religious archivists'. Both custodians and users found that information about the whereabouts of religious archives was sparse and elusive. The business of the day conference was to discuss these and other matters of common interest and to exchange news and information.

## THE MORNING SESSION

Father A.P. Dolan, Chairman of the Catholic Archives Society, was the first speaker. His paper concerned the development and growth of the Society since its formation in 1979. He outlines its academic and cultural purposes and described the ways in which both are advanced through publications and conferences.

The next two speakers were academics who provided a user's view of religious archives. Professor Richard Gray of the School of Oriental and African Studies outlined the specific and wider importance of religious archives for research. Archives were essential for the study of church history, but were also of great use to secular scholarship: for example, missionary records often acted as sources of information on industry and agriculture in developing nations. Religious archives could thus demonstrate the importance of the churches' enterprise for the world, and might even overturn the stereotypes of the historian. Specific needs of researchers included ease of access, clear guides to collections and sufficient back-up material.

Dr. Clyde Binfield of the University of Sheffield drew on personal experience in stressing the importance of ease of access and the provision of basic facilities, most of which he acknowledged were often beyond the archivist's control. More achievable goals were improved guides to collections and contextual resources, and increased cross-referencing with material in other repositories. He saw the archivist as subject specialist rather than administrator and suggested that readers could be used as allies in obtaining new material.

## THE AFTERNOON SESSION

The emphasis of the afternoon papers was practical, and to some extent technical. Rosemary Keen of the Church Missionary Society spoke about the problems of the divided archive, based on her work with the Society. The Society's archives were situated in three different locations: on-site records at headquarters and an off-site storage repository (both in London), while the

historical archives were on deposit at Birmingham University. She emphasised the importance of listing and cataloguing all records placed in the care of busy academic institutions and outlined her strategy for dealing with off-site records in London.

Malcolm Thomas of the Society of Friends introduced the topic of thesaurus construction in religious archives. He provided sheets with examples, and discussion centred on the need for clarification of terminology. It was suggested that different denominations might wish to produce guides to their own special terms and that a comprehensive thesaurus might wish to build on these terms.

Christopher Kitching of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts spoke of the advisory and information services available from the Commission and particularly how these could help participants.

The papers generated lively discussion which greatly benefited from the variety and range of organisations represented. Phraseology had at times a distinctive flavour. There was reference for example to the "theology of archives" which one speaker saw as the "record of God at work in the community". One participant wondered whether there were denominational differences in attitudes to religious archives. Points raised indicated a wealth of topics which could be dealt with in depth at future conferences. These included closure dates and confidentiality; the difficulties of access to ecclesiastical records; the temporary loan of records; weeding; the significance of religious ephemera and the need for a directory of religious archives. One non-participant wrote in urging the pressing need for an archive of contemporary church magazines. Several speakers hoped that a future forum would allow for the meeting of different interest groups. The presence among us of a member of the American Theological Library Association and an observer from the Anglo-Jewish Archives indicated other possible future themes.

## CONCLUSIONS AND THE FUTURE

All in all it was felt that the day had been a great success and was worth repeating in another year's time. Not least had participants benefited from the opportunity to chat amongst themselves in the intervals between the formal sessions. The proceedings of the conference would be put together and published by the Society of Archivists Specialist Repositories Group. A steering committee was set up and a register of interested persons and organisations would be maintained. Further comments and suggestions from interested persons would also be welcomed at the address given below. This account of the day conference is based on the reports of K. Cann, J. Fox and A. Peacock, to whom I am greatly indebted.

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**FLOOD AT PARTNERSHIP HOUSE LIBRARY, LONDON** by Margaret Ecclestone

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On 10th August 1989 I organised a showing of the British Library Preservation Office's video, *When Disaster Strikes* with Mr. Robert Hill from the Preservation Office as a speaker. The meeting was attended by seven members of staff from the World Mission Association, including the Building Services Manager and the Handyman, two members of staff from USPG, three from CMS, one each from the Partnership for World Mission and the Christian Medical Fellowship Library, and the two Church House archivists and their assistant.

The showing was timely, because in the early hours of 12th October a valve in the hot water pipe on the first floor burst, flooding the north end of the Library. The water came down through the Library ceiling at various points and continued through the building to flood the stationery room and archives on the lower ground floor.

The north west corner of the Library was the worst affected, and about 160 books on India had to be dried over a period of days in a wind tunnel made in the Library out of plastic sheets with cold air fans at each end. Forty-six books have had to be sent to a binders for an estimate of the cost of rebinding, and 18 ceiling panels will have to be replaced. The veneer on the end panels of two bookstacks was also damaged, as was a large area of carpet. The latter had immediate treatment to dry it out. The electric wiring and lighting was, fortunately, apparently unaffected.

The necessity for a contingency plan for the Library, and possible other information stores in different parts of the building has been highlighted by this event, and a working party has been convened to draw one up.

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*Flood at Partnership House: Librarian Margaret Ecclestone demonstrates  
improvised wind tunnel. Photo: courtesy USPG 1989.*

On the evening of Saturday, 26 November 1988 a serious fire broke out in a Reception Room beyond the bar in the Cambridge Union. The probable cause was a cigarette left smouldering in an armchair overnight. The fire was not discovered until 8.00am the following Sunday morning, when the Chief Clerk made his routine security inspection of the building. It took over fifty fire fighters to bring the blaze under control. By the time the fire was extinguished, the Reception Room was completely gutted, and the bar extensively damaged by smoke.

The Union's Library is situated directly above the Reception Room and bar. By 8.00 am on the Sunday morning, the flames were beginning to spread to the floor of the Library itself. There is little doubt that, had the fire been left to burn for another hour, the Library and its contents would have been completely destroyed.

Through great good fortune, the Library suffered no fire or water damage. There is, however, significant smoke damage to the collection of nineteenth century monographs. In order to let the smoke and heat out of the Reception Room on the ground floor, the fire officers who fought the blaze broke through the ceiling of that room into the Library above. They then opened or broke the glass of the tall windows on the south and west sides of the Library to let the heat and smoke out of the building.

Within thirty-six hours of the fire being discovered on Sunday morning, I contacted Dr. Ratcliffe in the University Library for advice on how to deal with the emergency. He suggested at once that the disaster plan for the University's libraries be invoked. On Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning, members of staff from the Conservation Department in the University Library visited the site of the fire in the Union. Their report on the books was reassuring. They stated that damage seemed to have been superficial, and was limited to dirt and gritty deposits from the smoke damage; they recommended that all affected books be removed to a clean area before the messy task of renovating the Library began; a cleaning and refurbishing operation could then be commenced, which would reveal any more serious problems that existed.

Although the bookstock appears to have suffered minimal permanent damage, the furnishings and fittings in the Library have not been so fortunate. The carpet was damaged as the floor was smashed to let out the smoke and heat from the room below. The glass panes of several windows were smashed and the beading of the windows ripped off. In particular, much of the panelling in that part of the room was ripped off the walls and some appeared to have been smashed. Throughout the length of that part of the Library, a sooty deposit of ash lingered on all the fixtures and fittings.

It was a bitter experience for me to see historical collections of this kind exposed to such a threat, the more so since I had been responsible for the collections for only a matter of months. The fire officers assured me that it is only through sheer luck that the Library was not completely destroyed.

Nevertheless, we have been galvanised into action to ensure that the Library is restored and improved as a result of this disaster. We are taking advice from the Conservation department of the University Library to implement a policy of rebinding and conservation. Difficult decisions on the nature and growth of the collections will be faced with renewed vigour. We are all determined to learn from such a bitter experience and to ensure that the Library's valuable historical collections are not threatened in such a way in the future.

*This paper was originally published in the Cambridge University Libraries Information Bulletin New Series no.24, Lent Term 1989, and is reproduced here by kind permission of the Editor. Paul Ayris gave a presentation at the ABTAPL Easter Conference based on this paper, and entitled 'Crisis Management'.*

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## INTRODUCTION TO CONSERVATION IN LIBRARIES: RECENT LITERATURE by Robert Hill

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From our staff library at the National Preservation Office I have selected some introductory reading for members of ABTAPL which, by offering a mixture of guidance and advice, can be used by librarians to solve their particular variations on a set of common problems.

As a starting point I suggest *Caring for books and documents* by A.D. Baynes-Cope (Rev. ed. British Museum Publications, 1989). After a brief account of the materials of which books and documents are made, the author considers what their enemies are and how to outwit them. Finally, he shows how this knowledge can be used to secure an environment in which books and documents can be kept safely with a minimum of cost. A second edition is forthcoming of this short book which grew out of the author's experience in answering queries sent to the British Museum Research Laboratory.

Once the general principles have been understood, it is helpful to move on to a more discursive book such as *Library and archives conservation: 1980s and beyond*, by George and Dorothy Cunha (Scarecrow Press, 1983). The Cunhas

put conservation in the broad context of collection management, paying attention to conservation planning and education as well as the more technical issues of restoration. Their work is in two volumes, the second being a compendious bibliography. Despite the North American orientation this is a valuable reference book for the UK reader.

For browsing I suggest *Conservation in the library: a handbook of use and care of traditional and non-traditional materials*, edited by Susan Swartzburg (Greenwood Press, 1983). Besides paper documents and book bindings, there are chapters on non-print media such as photographs, slides, microforms and sound recordings. As no substantive general book on preservation has been published in the United Kingdom, librarians find themselves in the position of having to glean what they can from this and similar North American publications.

Since its foundation in 1984 the National Preservation Office has become the focus of advice on conservation to libraries and other repositories in the United Kingdom. Among the NPO's publications are a survival kit, guidelines on preservation and security, and papers from its annual conferences. *Library Conservation News*, a quarterly journal, is valuable for developing an understanding of conservation problems and practices and for keeping up with the relevant literature. (National Preservation Office, The British Library, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG; Tel. 01-323-7620).

An effective conservation programme needs careful thought in order to make best use of slender financial resources. Here it is useful to distinguish between those problems which require the skills of a conservator, and simpler tasks which might be done by library assistants working under careful supervision. These tasks might include cleaning and dusting and minor repairs to general library books. As a guide I recommend the manual by Carolyn Horton, *Cleaning and preserving bindings and related materials* (2nd ed.; American Library Association, 1981). Of course, a professional conservator should be consulted on the treatment of historic, rare or fragile documents.

"How to do it" books should be approached with caution, as it is generally easier to learn by joining an evening class in book repair. So I will suggest two titles which might be used as background reading: *Cleaning and caring for books* by Robert L. Shep (Sheppard Press, 1982), and *Books: their care and repair* by Jane Greenfield (H.W. Wilson, 1983).

Each of the books I have mentioned includes a bibliography. As they are all fairly recent, they should be readily available. In case of difficulty, BLISS, the former Library Association Library, will probably be able to help: 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE. Tel. 01-323-7688.

*Robert Hill, Preservation Services, The British Library, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG. Tel. 01-323-7620.*

During the last fifteen years librarians have been much concerned with the automation of their catalogues, book ordering systems, and the introduction of online bibliographical searching and CD Roms. In the midst of all this, they have sometimes been guilty of neglecting the preservation and conservation of the books and manuscripts under their custodianship.

However, the publication of the Ratcliffe Report in 1984, the subsequent Library Association conference in 1986 at Harrogate entitled "Preserving the Word", and the introduction of what looks like an annual event, a national competition for librarians organised by the National Preservation Office and sponsored by the Dunn and Wilson Group called "Keeping our Word", has helped to focus the attention of many librarians on the preservation and conservation of their stock.

It is not merely a lack of awareness that has prevented librarians from realising the importance of looking after the books on their shelves. The pressure of other preoccupations, such as the increased demand for easy access to information, has seemed more immediate.

## PRESERVATION

Theological libraries frequently contain rare and irreplaceable items, but in too many cases, little time or effort has been expended on their preservation. For example, how many librarians have given adequate consideration to the conditions in which the books are stored: Is the environment too hot or too cold? Are the users allowed to do their own photocopying, and if so are they shown how to do so *without* putting too much pressure on the spines of the books? Are rare books consulted only in the library, or are they allowed out for home use? Is there a policy of microfilming books which are consulted periodically but are likely to be damaged by regular use? Are books which are damaged withdrawn from stock and/or temporarily boxed before the books are sent off to a bindery? Are precautions taken to ensure that manuscripts are not damaged whilst temporarily housed in exhibition cases? What about the cleaning and protection of the collection?

## DISASTERS

Unfortunately, the work done on preservation and conservation of a collection cannot prepare for unforeseen disasters such as fire or flood or even

vandalism. Tragically, disasters have struck many libraries that were unprepared, where a properly implemented disaster plan might have mitigated the damage. The following bibliography includes references to disaster plans which might be adapted to individual library needs.

Obviously, fire and water can cause immeasurable damage to any collection of books, and it is in the interests of the library if staff can prepare for a disaster -- not merely by insuring the collection, but also by:

- (1) appointing someone to be in charge of the implementation of such a plan;
- (2) making formal decisions about the relative importance and value of various parts of the collection;
- (3) making contact with the fire brigade so that they are aware of the reasons for decisions made in the event of fire;
- (4) deciding which items in the collection should be deep frozen in the event of water damage, to prevent growth of mould.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following bibliography contains samples of both books and periodical articles (many originating in the United States), which in some way describe the setting up and implementation of disaster plans. Items covered include:

- (A) The need to insure the library's buildings and stock;
- (B) The need to teach library school students the importance of preservation, conservation and disaster planning;
- (C) How to set up a disaster plan;
- (D) How to set about the restoration of damaged books.

All of the references are to books and periodicals which were available in the Library Association Library (BLISS) in May 1989. For regular information and news on conservation and disaster planning, two periodicals are important: *Conservation administration news* [CAN] - a quarterly publication of the University of Tulsa McFarlin Library, 600 South College Avenue, Tulsa, Oklahoma (ISSN 0912-2912); and *Conservation news* - a quarterly publication from The National Preservation Office, The British Library, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG (ISSN 0265-041X).

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## A. GENERAL

### A.1 Surveys

#### A.1.1 Cunha, George Martin and Cunha, Dorothy

*Library and archives conservation: 1980s and beyond.* (Metuchen, NJ/London: Scarecrow Press, 1979). 2 vols. ISBN 0-8108-1587-7.

Covers a wide range of related topics - one of which is disasters in libraries. "The best way to handle disasters is to assume that they can and probably will happen to you and plan accordingly." Volume 2 contains an extensive bibliography. This is a key text book, reprinted in 1983, but becoming a little dated.

#### A.1.2 Fox, Lisa L.

'A two year perspective on library preservation' in *Library resources and technical services* v.30 n.3 (1986) p.290-310.

Deals with all aspects of preservation, conservation and disaster planning.

#### A.1.3 Sable, Martin

'The protection of the library and archive: an international bibliography' in *Library and archival security* v.5 n.2-3 (1983) p.1-183.

#### A.1.4 Kemp, Toby

'Bibliographies on disasters, disaster preparedness and disaster recovery' in *Conservation administration news* n.11 (1982) p.11-13.

Mainly refers to North American titles. Includes reference to accounts of actual disasters.

#### A.1.5 National Preservation Office

'Preservation: a survival guide' - a pack of ten leaflets covering different aspects of preservation and disaster planning, with facts and lists of further reading. [Address given above].

#### A.1.6 Ratcliffe, F.W.

*Preservation policies and conservation in British libraries.* (Boston Spa: BLLD, 1984). (Library and Information Science Reports; 25). ISBN 0-7123-3035-6.

### **A.1.7 Library Association**

*Preserving the word: the Library Association Conference proceedings, Harrogate, 1986.* (London: Library Association, 1987). 147p. ISBN 0-85365-847-1.

A selection of addresses from leading experts in the field. Covers most aspects of preservation and conservation and includes a chapter on 'The Florence Flood of 1966' by P. Waters (p.113-128).

### **A.1.8 Ashman, John**

'Preventative care in the library' in *Refer: Journal of the ISG* v.5 no.3 (1989) p.1-6.

A brief basic guide to preservation and conservation issues, outlining terminology, sources of damage, possible remedies, and equipment to be used.

## **A.2 Insurance and protection**

### **A.2.1 Myers, Gerald E.**

*Insurance manual for libraries.* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1977). 64p. ISBN 0-8389-02367.

Helps librarians and insurance agents by providing a checklist of what needs to be insured. Gives examples of insurance policies.

### **A.2.2 National Fire Protection Association**

*Protection of libraries and library collections.* (Boston: N.F.P.A., 1980). 55p. ISBN n/a.

The National Fire Protection Association was set up in 1896 to give advice on fire protection in a wide range of industries. It stresses the importance of insuring buildings not normally susceptible to disasters.

## **B. EDUCATION AND AWARENESS**

### **B.1.1 Feather, J. and Lusher, A.**

*The teaching of conservation in LIS schools in Great Britain.* (London: British Library, 1985). (British Library Research Paper; 49). ISBN 0-7123-3175-1.

Draws attention to the need to heighten awareness of conservation in library schools. Gives the response of library

schools to the Ratcliffe Report. 13 out of 15 schools offer some kind of conservation training.

- B.1.2 Chapman, Patricia**  
'The National Preservation Office' in *Archives* v.xix no.81 (1989) p.26-29.  
An account of its history, structure and work.

## C. DISASTER PLANNING

### C.1 General

- C.1.1 Jenkin, Ian Tregarthen**  
*Disaster planning and preparedness: a survey of practices and procedures.* (London: British Library, 1988). (British Library Research and Development Report; 5925).  
Analyses the results of a questionnaire sent out to libraries to find out whether institutions were insured; how up to date the insurance was, and how liable the building was to arson, theft and/or other disasters.
- C.1.2 Kelly, Michael**  
'Library disaster planning in Colorado' *Colorado libraries* v.7 n.2 (1981) p.18-25.  
Special issue devoted to the subject of disaster planning.
- C.1.3 Streit, Samuel**  
'Antediluvian considerations: the library structure and disaster prevention' *Conservation administration news* n.11 (1982) p.3-5.  
Stresses the importance of maintaining buildings - e.g. installing fire detectors and water alert devices to forestall possible disasters.
- C.1.4 England, Claire and Evans, Karen**  
*Disaster management for libraries: planning and process.* (London: LA Publishing/Clive Bingley, 1989). ISBN 0-88802-197-6.  
A practical handbook containing tips for planning responses to emergencies in the library, as well as practical advice on disaster prevention.

### C.1.5 Barbour, Giles

'Noah's Ark, or thoughts before and after the flood' in *Archives* v.xvi no.70 (1983) p.151-161.

An extended biblical simile, described by David Thomas as "one of the earliest and best expressed publications on this subject".

## C.2 Disaster plans

### C.2.1 Jenkin, Ian Tregarthen

*Disaster planning and preparedness: an outline disaster control plan.* (London: British Library, 1987). (British Library Information Guide; 5). 87p. ISBN 0-7123-31034.

Written with particular reference to the small library. Contains sections on how to sort out material for freezing and who needs to be alerted in the event of a disaster. Complete with bibliography and lists of useful organisations as well as lists of items to be checked when a building is surveyed for potential hazards.

### C.2.2 Patterson, Robert H.

'Disaster planning in Wyoming' *Colorado libraries* v.7 n.2 (1981) p.26-28.

Contains questionnaire to help librarians set up a disaster plan.

### C.2.3 Price, Robin

'Preparing for disaster' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* v.7 n.3 (1983) p.167-172.

Stresses the need for a coordinated disaster plan.

### C.2.4 New York University Library

*New York University Library disaster plan workbook.* (New York: New York University, 1984).

As the title suggests, this is a workbook which allows the librarian to write down details pertaining to his or her own particular library and situation. For example, insurance policies, telephone numbers of disaster team, supplies of materials needed by salvage disaster team, dates when equipment was last updated and checked.

**C.2.5 Anderson, Hazel**

*National Library of Scotland: planning manual for disaster control in Scottish libraries and record offices.* (Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland, 1985). ISBN 0-902220-691.

Gives an example of a model disaster plan. Written originally for the National Library of Scotland but can be used by other institutions.

**C.2.6 George, Susan C. and Naslund, Cheryle T.**

'Library disasters: a learning plan' in *College and research library news* April (1986) p.251-257.

Water crises and materials for coping with them.

**C.2.7 Butler, Randall**

'Inland Empire Libraries: disaster response network' in *Conservation administration news* n.34 (1988) p.8-9.

Good description of a disaster plan.

**C.3 Practical salvage and case studies**

**C.3.1 Waters, Peter**

*Procedures for salvage of water damaged library materials.* 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1979). 30p. ISBN 0-84440151-X. (First edition 1975).

With a cover depicting the Florence flood of 1966, Mr. Waters gives practical advice on what to do if the catalogue has been destroyed and how to dry materials without initial freezing. He reminds the reader that following a correct procedure in the first place will prevent unnecessary expenses in salvaging damaged items.

**C.3.2 Behrendt, Elisabeth C.**

'Drying out the USPG' in *Colorado libraries* v.7 n.3 (1981) p.30-32.

Describes a flood disaster at the Geological Survey, Denver: the drying out process and transfer of the library to a new site.

**C.3.3 Simmons, Laurie**

'Jewish Consumptives' Relief Society Archives' in *Colorado libraries* v.7 n.3 (1981) p.24-27.

Items which were rarely consulted but were very scarce

were relegated to a back room store and subsequently damaged by a leaking pipe. Gives advice on how to deal with mildew and gives some idea of the time and effort required to get the collection dried and back on the shelves.

**C.3.4 Marrelli, Nancy**

'Fire and flood at Concordia University Archives, January 1982' in *Archivaria* v.17 (1983-4) p.266-274.

Stresses the need to be prepared with a salvage plan.

**C.3.5 Baker, Richard C.**

'Ark building workshop for Worcester Libraries' in *Conservation administration news* n.21 (1985) p.1-2; 19-21.

Describes a simulated disaster workshop.

**C.3.6 National Preservation Office**

'If disaster strikes' - a video from the National Preservation Office of the British Library [address given above]. 20 mins.

Hire: £11.50 per week VAT incl. Sale: £34.50 VAT incl.

Ruth Gibson,  
Cataloguing Dept.,  
Birmingham University Library,  
PO Box 363,  
Birmingham B15 2TT.

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**GUIDELINES FOR DISASTER PLANNING IN THE OXFORD COLLEGES  
CONSERVATION CONSORTIUM: I - Disaster Prevention by Nancy Bell.**

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The following guidelines were prepared with the situation of Oxford College Libraries specifically in mind. They are reproduced here for the suggestions they may provide for disaster planning in other, smaller or larger institutions.

The disaster planning project for the Oxford Colleges Conservation Consortium will last throughout the academic year 1989-90, and falls into three major stages, corresponding to the main elements of a disaster plan: 1. *Disaster Prevention*; 2. *Reaction to a Disaster*; 3. *Salvage Operations after a Disaster*. The guidelines reproduced here cover only the first, *Prevention* stage of disaster

planning. The documents for the final two stages will be reproduced in further issues of the *Bulletin* as they become available.

## PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

A disaster in one form or another can and will occur in your library at some time. Each year collections are damaged or destroyed through floods, fire, theft. Reducing the risk of a disaster by preparing for an emergency is an essential first step in any preservation plans.

The following guidelines are not a specific plan for dealing with emergencies in individual libraries. They are a working document intended to provide a step by step outline which will help each library in the Consortium to reduce the risk of a disaster and write an emergency plan for their own institutions.

### Preparing a Plan

One person should oversee the formulation of the plan. However, it should be done in collaboration with key members of the College's staff, including the Bursar, Head Porter, Clerk of Works, and the College Architect if any. The plan will only be useful if all interested parties are apprised of the scheme.

Once your plan is drafted it must be presented to members of the College staff so that they can react knowledgeably in the event of an emergency. It is vitally important that the plan be checked annually and modified as necessary to reflect changes in personnel, policies or technologies.

## 1. PREVENTION

As the literature reminds us, the best way to cope with a disaster is to prevent or reduce the risk of an emergency occurring. Certainly some disasters cannot be predicted but much can be done to reduce the risks.

Begin your emergency plan by checking thoroughly your Library building and environment, noting any potential hazards, or any areas in need of improvement.

### 1.1 PREVENTING DAMAGE FROM FLOODS

Familiarise yourself with the building, noting any potential hazards. Use the following checklist as a guide.

- (a). What are the building materials?
- (b). Are there any flat roofs or skylights?
- (c). Where are the drains and gutters located? Are they inspected frequently?
- (d). Are there pipes running through your Library, including storage areas?

- (e). Are your collections stored below ground?
- (f). Are your collections in close proximity to chemistry laboratories or chemical storage areas?
- (g). Do you know where the heating and air conditioning systems are located?
- (h). Are the kitchens, or washroom facilities in close proximity to the collections?
- (i). Are there any streams running beneath your Library building?
- (j). Are there routine inspections of plumbing and electricity systems?
- (k). Is the heating turned off during holiday periods? Many floods occur in winter when pipes become frozen.
- (l). Have flood alarms been installed?
- (m). Have safety valves been installed in the air conditioning system?
- (n). What materials in your collection are sensitive to changes in temperature and relative humidity?
- (o). Are book stores next to damp walls?
- (p). Are books shelved too tightly? If packed too tightly, saturated books will bulge outwards and fall from shelving units.

## 1.2 PREVENTING DAMAGE FROM FIRE

In the event of a fire in your Library it is the responsibility of the fire brigade to save life first and consider physical property second. With this in mind every step should be taken to reduce the chances of a fire starting in the first place.

- (a). Are there ionisation smoke detectors installed in your Library?
- (b). Is the signal/ alarm connected to the porters' lodge/ switchboard/ fire brigade?
- (c). Are there routine inspections of fire detection and electrical equipment?
- (d). Is the wiring in the Library housed in a protective conduit?
- (e). Are your materials housed in an area unobstructed and free of all unnecessary paper and materials?
- (f). Is your collection housed in an area protected by fire rated doors and floors?
- (g). In the event of a fire, are master plans of the collections available outside College as well as inside? Do they indicate the priority areas for salvaging materials -- "snatch lists"?
- (h). Is there a catalogue of the collection housed outside the Library?
- (i). Is there sufficient water pressure in College to fight a fire?
- (j). Are there a sufficient number of portable fire extinguishers, of a sort suitable to use in a Library (Halon extinguishers), available to extinguish a small fire?

### 1.3 PREVENTING THEFT

- (a). Are all windows and doors secure?
- (b). Who has access to the collections?
- (c). Are the most valuable items in your collections secure?
- (d). Are all items counted before being presented to a reader?
- (e). Is the building checked for security outside office hours?
- (f). What are the procedures should a theft occur?

## 2. INSURANCE

Are there any existing policies for the collections and the building, and what do they cover? Do you know the value of your collections?

### 2.1 FIRE

Inform the broker immediately, stating the extent of the damage. If the collection is a total loss, leave it as it is. If it is a partial loss, leave as much undisturbed as possible. Make a note of what is damaged and if possible, provide an approximate value.

### 2.2 WATER

Inform the brokers immediately. The brokers may want to see the extent of the damage before the salvage operation begins. If this is not possible (e.g. on public holidays), take as many photographs as possible of the damage.

### 2.3 THEFT

Inform the police immediately. Take immediate steps to ensure that the premises are secure. Inform the broker and draw up a complete inventory of materials stolen, with any costs involved.

*Nancy Bell, c/o The Library, Corpus Christi College, Oxford OX1 4JF.*

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## FURTHER RESOURCES

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The National Preservation Office is a good place to start for any advice or suggestions of literature. Robert Hill of that Office has for example produced four extremely good A4 pages entitled 'Disasters: a survival guide' with a short bibliography; his office has also published a six page list of addresses of suppliers of conservation materials and equipment, and a two page 'Disaster

Control Resource List' giving the kinds of things you will need to have on hand in an emergency. This is in addition to the more widely disseminated leaflets on preservation guidelines, security, photographic conservation, and so on. Contact Robert Hill at the address given on page 69 above.

Nancy Bell of the Oxford Colleges Conservation Consortium has also worked on lists of suppliers of materials and equipment, on guidelines for insurance contracts, agreements governing loan of materials for exhibitions, as well as on conservation and disaster planning. She is available at reasonable rates for detailed consultancy on conservation needs. Contact her at the address given on page 80.

The Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts advises and refers enquirers who are responsible for archives materials in the U.K. Dr. Chris Kitching of the Commission has a particular interest in religious archives. Contact him at RCHM, Quality House, Quality Court, Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1HP.

I have a small range of materials, including literature on bookrests for large fragile volumes, disaster plans from Cambridge, lists of suppliers and so on, which I am happy to supply to any interested readers with a particular need.  
PJL

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**A Missions Librarians Day Conference** is being planned by the Selly Oak Colleges Central Library and the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies on Wednesday June 6th 1989. Interested Librarians should contact Patrick Lambe at Central Library, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham B29 6LQ, (Tel. 021-472-4231).

**Librarian's Christian Fellowship and ABTAPL** are planning a joint visit to Lambeth Palace Library at 3.00pm on Thursday 22nd March 1990. Contact LCF Secretary Graham Hedges, 34 Thurlestone Avenue, Seven Kings, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU (Tel. 01-599-1310 - home; 01-871-6351 - office). *You need to contact Graham as soon as possible in order to secure a place.*

**A National Manuscripts Conservation Trust** has been set up to make awards for the preservation of manuscripts (medieval or modern) provided the owners can match half the amount. Grants are administered through the British Library. Contact Stephanie Kenna, British Library Research and Development Department, 2 Sheraton Street, London W1V 4BH (Tel. 01-323-7048).

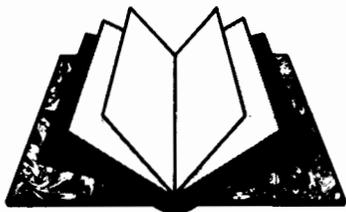
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