

BULLETIN

of the

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BULLETIN 2019

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The photo on the front cover, supplied by Kate Rogers,
shows a part of the library in the New Room,
John Wesley's Chapel, in Bristol.
There is an article about this library on p16-18.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2019 ABTAPL AUTUMN CONFERENCE

Thursday 7th November 2019
at William Booth College
from 12.30pm (lunch provided)

guest speaker: Liz Jolly, Chief Librarian of the British Library

followed by the Autumn Meeting and a tour of the Heritage Centre

2019 ABTAPL TRAINING DAY

‘First Steps in Archives’: elementary training for those with responsibility for records and archives within a religious context but who are not from an archives or records management background.

Thursday 28th November 2019: 10.30am – 4pm (time tbc)

College of the Nazarene, Dene Road, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 2GU

course leaders: Dr Tim Powell
(Senior Adviser on Independent Archives, The National Archives)
and Norman James (Chair of the Religious Archives Group)

£30 for non-members, £20 for members
(including tea, coffee and lunch)

For further information or to book a place
please contact anna.james@stx.ox.ac.uk.

2020 ABTAPL SPRING CONFERENCE & AGM

Thurs 2nd – Sat 4th April 2020
in Cardiff

(details to be confirmed)

Editorial

In this issue we have five very different articles which all relate in various ways to the subject of what it means to be a theological librarian.

First, what does it mean to be a theological librarian in the North American context? Helen Stocker, from the Nazarene Theological College, reports on what she learned during her visit to the Atla Conference in Vancouver, Canada, as a representative of ABTAPL.

Second, what does it mean to make theological librarianship your career? Which is more important: being ‘theological’ or being ‘a librarian’? Hannie Riley, from Wycliffe Hall, shares a talk she gave on this topic earlier in the summer.

Third, how can theological librarians help to make people aware of significant social issues? Winette Field, of the William Booth College, shares some notes of her experience in putting together a ‘Black History’ display last October, especially within the context of the history of the Salvation Army.

Fourth, how can theological librarians inspire the present generation at the same time as preserving an important theological heritage? Kate Rogers describes her experience as Collections Manager for the library and archives in ‘The New Room’ in Bristol; the oldest Methodist building in the world.

Finally, what is a week in the life of a theological librarian really like? Michael Gale, from the Queen’s Foundation, tells us all the highs and lows of a week in May!

If any of these articles have inspired you, don’t forget that you, too, could be a contributor to the Bulletin. What makes your library special? Have you tried anything new recently? Do get in touch with your ideas for an article!

Richard Johnson
(editor)

Report of the Atla¹ Conference, 12th to 15th June 2019 Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre, Canada

In June this year, I represented ABTAPL at the Atla Conference which was held in Vancouver, Canada. It was my first visit to Canada and I was fortunate to have a university friend who lived just outside of the city and was able to show me some sights before the Conference began.

Vancouver and its surrounding area are beautiful and it was wonderful to have an opportunity to spend time in places such as Stanley Park, where I had time to enjoy the view and reflect on various workplace situations. It was



acknowledged throughout the Conference that we were meeting on the unceded territory of some of the First Nations communities. The Conference opened with us being welcomed by a representative of one of the First Nations communities and the words of the song he sang to us were translated as “Welcome respected ones, welcome loved ones”.

I spent part of the ten hour flight to Vancouver trying to decide which sessions I would attend (a very difficult decision). Atla used a great app called Sched where I could see the up to date information on each session and also create my own schedule. It even emailed me each morning to remind me which sessions I was going to that day, very useful as I was a little jetlagged throughout the conference.

The schedule is still available and you can get a sense of the sessions that took place here; <https://atlaannual2019.sched.com/>

¹ The eagle eyed amongst you might have spotted that ATLA is now written as Atla. This is part of their recent rebrand and they now say (or at least try) to say Atla rather than A-T-L-A.

During the conference, the plenary sessions included presentations on open access, the Xwi7xwa library in Vancouver and the history of faith in the Pacific Northwest. The breakout sessions I attended covered topics such as; how to encourage a reluctant user to use eBooks, research support for postgraduate students, managing change in libraries and how to create and run a library escape room. I also attended both the Atla Update session and the Business Meeting where I had the opportunity to learn more about Atla, its products and accomplishments over the last year. Full details of each of the sessions will be published in the Proceedings of the Conference which will be available via the Atla website and through AtlaSerials. If you have any questions or would like to know more about the sessions I attended, then please do get in touch on hstocker@nazarene.ac.uk.

It is difficult to do justice to my experiences at the conference in a short article, but I would sum up some of what I learned in the following way.

1. Things are the same...yet different in libraries around the world.

As I met with other librarians and attended the various sessions, it was reassuring to hear that they also face issues such as; budgetary constraints, the effect on the library of an increasing number of distance students and the difficulty of engaging reluctant library users. At the same time, the sessions I went to on research support also demonstrated the differences between us in terms of pedagogy. I marvelled at the lengths one librarian went to support his Masters student as they completed their dissertations, but I would not (even if I had the time to) provide that level of support to an undergraduate student, let alone a Masters student. However, as a good number of our students and PhD supervisors do come from this context, it was helpful to learn more about this particular group of library users.

2. It is an exciting time to be a theological librarian

With the closure of some theological institutions and a declining number of students choosing to study theology, you could be forgiven for being despondent about the future of theological libraries. But a couple of the sessions I attended gave me particular hope about the future of this area of librarianship. The first session was a panel discussion that built on an essay published in *Theological Librarianship* and can be found here:



<https://theolib.atla.com/theolib/article/view/411>. The article argued that the three habits necessary to cultivating a thriving small theological library are; staying attuned to needs, optimizing resources and acting boldly. During the session each of the three panellists shared how they applied these habits in their own libraries. The second session was a panel discussion on maintaining and building trust in the midst of change and it was reassuring to hear how the panellists had managed this and also lived to tell the tale!

There are also some exciting electronic resources and software which ABTAPL libraries might be interested in. Atla continues its mission to provide access to scholarly material and their developments in open access with Atla Open Press and Atla Digital Library are particularly interesting. Bloomsbury will also be releasing *Theology and Religion* online in the Autumn and they are actively seeking feedback from librarians on future development. I had a phone conversation with Bloomsbury just before I went to the Conference (where I got £50 worth of free books for the library) and also attended a breakfast during the conference where they were gathering the thoughts of librarians. They asked some really great

questions and were interested to learn about us as a library, so I am hopeful that the product will be both good and affordable. Zoom was also mentioned in numerous sessions and a good number of libraries are using the software to deliver information literacy sessions to distance students. I shall be looking into Zoom further as well as StepBible and MeeScan, which were also mentioned during the Conference.

3. ABTAPL is an amazing organisation!

I really enjoyed my first Atla Conference due to the variety of sessions on offer, opportunity to connect with librarians from all over the world and the chance to spend time in such a beautiful city. But, it also enabled me to see how great ABTAPL is and appreciate it even more. For our size (and budget), we really do offer some superb professional development opportunities and we should be proud of that. Being smaller also makes it easier for us to welcome new members and we can really get to know each other. I write this article just short of my sixth anniversary in my role at NTC and my involvement with ABTAPL has been so beneficial throughout that time. Thank you to each of you who I have met at conferences or corresponded with by email.

It was an honour to represent ABTAPL at the Atla Conference and I am grateful for their financial support. I am also keen to share my experiences with the wider network, so please do get in touch if you would like to know more.

Helen Stocker
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Librarian & Learning Support Co-Ordinator
Nazarene Theological College
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My perspective on being a theological librarian as a career²

I feel very much honoured to stand in front of you to talk about my profession, especially about the job I am currently doing and am passionate about. Being a librarian was one of my childhood wishes and being a theological librarian is what I hope to do until I retire.

To make my talk more useful and informative to you, as well as sharing my personal experiences and career path I have taken, I also wanted to offer you a more objective perspective too. So I spoke to some theological librarians at a conference in April and circulated a short questionnaire to ask the UK theological librarians' opinions. Also I have read a couple of articles on this topic too. This has enlightened me with some interesting points.

Campbell and Keck (2019)³ state 'The career path to theological librarianship is circuitous'. The reason for them to claim such a statement is that there is no one simple way to get into this occupation, unlike other subject librarianships. Normally you gain some experiences at a library setting and obtain a degree or postgraduate qualification in librarianship. You are pretty much ready to apply for a librarian job then. However to the theological librarian profession there is a wide variety of pathways, diverse credentials and various scenarios. Some have a ministerial position but no library experience or qualification, and vice versa.

This is also partly because there is a strong sense of confusion over what theological librarians really are. There are two viewpoints on this profession according to Campbell and Keck (2019). One sees theological librarians as "people performing ministry" and the other as "people who provide linkages among theology, church, scholarship, education, diverse constituencies, and both scholarly and popular literature". This depends on which part of the job title the focus is on: 'Theological' or 'Librarian'. Theological is

² This talk was given as part of a summer school to theology postgraduate students from America.

³ Campbell, K and Keck, A. (2019), 'Theological librarianship as career path', chapter 4, [to be published]

translated to ministry and Librarian to occupation. Depending on the emphasis, pathways to the profession shifts.

Compared to other subject librarianship, this is unique to theology. Being a health care librarian doesn't automatically translate to the librarian being a medical doctor or health care worker. A business librarian is not a business man, or an architecture librarian an architect, or a mathematics librarian a mathematician.

It is because the subject itself has a strong religious dimension and often personal faith is involved. Many are hired to work for organisations, institutes or seminaries which have affiliation to a particular denomination or religious group. These factors tend to draw librarians who appreciate a faith perspective or religious commitment. In this case, librarians are likely to believe their role as a personal calling into ministry by God. Many small theological colleges or seminaries tend to see the librarian's role in this way.

The other end of the spectrum puts more weight on the title "librarian" rather than "theological". This viewpoint sees the theological librarian as an occupation like any other subject librarianship. This focuses on academic support, research provision and service excellence. This view tends to be taken by big universities and academic libraries.

These two different views are easily and mistakenly understood as being somehow in conflict and tension, on the opposite sides of a scale. However, both are, in fact, add-on enhancements to conduct the librarian job effectively. These two elements actually boost the role at a holistic level, giving greater fulfilment and job satisfaction to the librarian.

Having religious faith actually increases interest in the subject field you are working in. This makes the librarian become more enthusiastic in their library provision and service. If you believe that you are called to serve by God, the dedication and commitment to their roles and involvement with their organisation are often remarkable. Some even make financial sacrifice, being content with

less salary and poor career progress, as many theological librarians are working for rather small seminaries, often as a lone worker.

This brings me to why the librarian qualification is so important. Often working alone with a tight budget, where you cannot rely on other co-workers' skills and strengths, or your further training opportunities, it is key that you have acquired an appropriate qualification and skills prior to the job.

Librarianship, in this current digital world, is no longer limited to the inside of the library's physical provision. Librarians have to develop new IT skills and continue to update them in order to provide quality and legitimate information to the library users and support them to also attain study skills and carry out their learning and research in a digital environment.

Therefore many librarians said that the ideal credentials for a theological librarian would be both a degree in theology followed by a postgraduate degree in library/information studies.

Having said that I personally have not taken this perfect route. I've got an MSc in Library Science. As I said earlier there are many various way to land the theological librarian's job. I even met someone who has not got any librarian experience, qualification or background, but is full of enthusiasm to serve in their organisation and is doing a great job.

Is the librarian profession's future bright?

It really depends on how willing you are to adapt to this ever changing digital world. With rapid IT development, traditional librarianship has already changed its title to many different forms, such as knowledge specialist, learning resources coordinator or information professionals.

Even within the profession, the importance of subject knowledge is far less appreciated. A new trend in many big institutes and Higher Education is changing library staffing structures due to budget

constraints. They have far fewer or no subject specific librarians, or have a librarian who covers multiple subjects. Theology tends to be a less popular discipline in big academic universities so the need of theological librarianship is likely minimal.

In its place, many new technical librarian roles have been created, so a new breed of librarian has emerged to meet this trend, such as reference librarian, reader services librarian, copyright librarian, data research librarian and so on.

So, is the theological librarians' future bright?

Theological libraries' existence goes hand and hand with the fate of theology seminaries, ministerial training colleges or faith organisations. For example, the decline of Christian faith in the Western world has a critical impact on these religious places. The number is dwindling, so less job opportunities exist in this sector.

However, if we open our eyes to the whole world, and see where the growth of Christianity is in the rest of the world, all is not lost. Many new seminaries have started off in other parts of the world. Following where God is moving leads to new opportunities.

Before I wrap up my talk, I would like to finish off with some positive points on being a theological librarian.

Firstly, most disciplines do not tend to have their own school or seminaries. This is limited to only a few subjects which enjoy their own specialist librarians. These are business schools, medical schools, law schools and theological seminaries. Relatively speaking, there are more opportunities in these libraries than other disciplines.

Secondly, many librarians from my survey mentioned their job fulfilment. As most theological librarians work in a small college or seminary, they are often on their own, and some are even part-time. That is also my case. They tend to work with a small budget and have to be able to do a bit of everything.

In spite of these limitations, many responded noting high job satisfaction, expressing they felt they landed a dream job. I believe there are two reason for this. One is that they are in the job where their faith is placed. The other is they talked about the vast, wide-ranging role and characteristic of the jobs they carry out.

They talked about the freedom. One librarian even said “extraordinary” freedom. Freedom to plan and lead exciting projects, such as dealing with legacy materials, historical archives and special collections. Also one librarian from a particular denomination shared her experience of a project which required her to travel the third world to set up their denominational libraries and their world- wide library system. Some visits were paid by their seminary but some were covered by the librarian herself.

Next, opportunities. Meeting various interesting individuals is exciting, for example, ‘100 students one day and the Bishop the next’.

There is involvement in exciting services. One librarian said that she was cooking dinner for 40 one evening. I am sure that this wasn’t in her job description.

Lastly community. One respondent claimed, ‘there is more of a sense of community in the organisations you work in.’ One added: ‘I’ve worked in 3 non-theological libraries before this role and in my experience the readers here tend to be much nicer and not write in the books so much.’ I agree. This is very important to the librarians.

Please let me conclude with my own experience.

After a year of working in this role, I have tried to meet students’ needs in conventional ways but also less traditional ones too. I have recently purchased many books covering various equality issues and updated the book display by the foyer with them. This has been intentional as I believe the library should broaden the students’ perspective to the current issues as well as challenging their

scholarly critical thinking. It was also to support a student-led meeting to discuss feminism and other inclusion topics at their conference in May. Not surprisingly I have had some backlash from a few but also support from many. I want to diversify our collections and, whichever side you take, learn from each other's perspectives to some degree. I prayed this simple silent display would also bring healing to some. Thankfully a couple of students said that they were even in tears when they saw the display.

Thank God for this little input I can make by doing the job I love.

Hannie Riley
Librarian
Wycliffe Hall
University of Oxford

Black History Display Challenge Notes **(a talk given at the ABTAPL Conference, Apr 2019)**

The project – A display to celebrate Black History month (October 2018), focusing on Black Christians in UK; whether settlers, visitors or British born.

Grounding the work – A special focus was placed on Black Salvationists and experiences in the UK. The rationale for this was to ensure that those reading the resource could see the relevance of the subject to the denomination.

Putting the display together – there were 4 stages:

1. Identifying Black denominational members – using books, and Commissioning brochures, in the Library collection; searching online and accessing both the Black Cultural Archive and the denomination’s archive catalogue.
2. Sharing the information gathered with the denomination’s archive staff. A further search of their resources then took place to see what they had on specific people.
3. Being aware of ethical considerations - living people were approached re consent for inclusion in the display, but photos of people in public publications were considered acceptable for inclusion.
4. Putting the display together using PowerPoint – a deliberate decision was made to place it outside the Library space in order for more people to engage with it.

The final display included material from 1835 – 2015 with extracts from newspapers, books and magazines. Some general history was included in order to provide context; for example, a timeline (created as a bi-product of my MA dissertation) covered 1971 – 2000.

The wording on some “slides” was highlighted in order to create conversation, and critical thought; for example, against Joshua Darkin’s nickname I wrote “Note the language of the day!”. There were also explanations of certain historical contexts, such as the use of the banjo in Salvation Army Bands.

Impact – A number of wider conversations took place, including reminiscences, with external social media events being based on the back of the research done. These arose due to the increased profile for the Library service within the denomination.

Lessons learnt

1. Work like this may well conflict with the image people have of the Library service in terms of spaces it can occupy and messages it can deliver.
2. There needs to be a long lead period in putting together the event.
3. Allowing the piece to unfold over the month kept people’s attention, but also disenfranchised those not interested.
4. Always check the College calendar re other events taking place which might impact the project.

Further steps – Consideration of other issues which can be used to link Library stock and denominational history, or work, with displays:

- Women in the Church – International Women’s Day
- Fair Trade / Social enterprises – Fair Trade fortnight
- Homelessness – Homelessness Week
- Study skills / Lifelong learning - Learning at work week

Winette Field
William Booth College

Library and Archives at the New Room, John Wesley's Chapel

In the heart of a busy shopping district in Bristol lies John Wesley's Chapel. The New Room, as it is more commonly known was built in 1739, making it the oldest Methodist building in the world.

I started as Collections Manager at the New Room in April 2017 and after a couple of months in post embarked upon the enormous and exciting task of setting up a library and archives in a new purpose-built facility. In July of the same year we opened the doors to our new Visitor Centre. As well as being home to the library, this fabulous fully-accessible building provides space for our new café, education room, and access to venue hire facilities. The project, funded by the Heritage Lottery has also allowed for the Museum above the chapel to be completed re-designed by Bristol based company Cod Steaks. It tells the story of early Methodism, the lives of John and Charles Wesley and how Methodism spread throughout Britain, America and across the rest of the world. It allows visitors to discover the challenges faced by Wesley in his fight for social justice and inspires them to continue that vital work today.

The first library at the New Room was created by John Wesley. This was lost when the building was sold in 1808 but a new library collection was started in the 1930s. The reference library now contains over 8,000 books, pamphlets and bound journals of Methodist history, local studies, biographies, and critical studies of John and Charles Wesley and their works. It is located on the first floor of the visitor centre and we welcome anyone who wants to use our collections and ask for research advice. Our service is open to everyone, free of charge. In addition to those doing research, we welcome those who want to improve their understanding of the Christian faith, Methodism and various aspects of family or local history.

Since last year we have received a large number of donations to our existing library. These have included books from the former Wesley College in Bristol, as well as volumes from the Methodist Music

Society and a variety of other private collections. Our collection of hymnody is extensive and we are particularly fond of the many local chapel history pamphlets we have acquired over the years.

We are currently embarking on some exciting projects including transcribing letters from the archives and an oral history project working with a university intern to capture the memories of those with a connection to the New Room.

What's here at the New Room library?

- the works of John and Charles Wesley, many printed in Bristol in the 18th century.
- books and pamphlets on Methodist history and biography.
- Minutes of Conference of the Methodist Church and its various sections, since 1745
- The Proceedings of The Wesley Historical Society since its inception and almost all of the regional publications.
- an almost complete run of The Arminian/Wesleyan and Methodist Magazine.
- Methodist and other hymn books since 1737.
- an extensive collection of local histories, many for particular chapels, especially for Bristol, Gloucestershire and Somerset.

The library is attracting not only those with an interest in early Methodism and church history, but researchers with broader interests, including visual culture in the 18th century and the history of campaigning for social justice. The library and archives at the New Room are a fantastic resource for researchers. Our library volunteers are happy to help and we love a challenge, so do get in touch.

We have a growing number of volunteers joining the collections team who are using their skills and experience to improve the access to our collections for every researcher who visits us. We are open four mornings a week and provide ongoing training for all our

volunteers. If you are interested in learning more about volunteering, please email collections@newroombristol.org.uk. We are always on the look out for people with experience in library and archive work.

Library Opening Times (closed on Bank Holidays)

Monday	10.30am - 1pm
Tuesday	10.30am - 1pm
Wednesday	10.30am - 1pm
Friday	10.30am - 1pm

Facilities include worktop benches for researchers, toilets, free wifi and power for your laptop and devices. You can also enjoy a break from your research in our café or pay a visit to our museum.

Interested in using the Library and Archives for your research?

Download our User Registration form or come in and speak to one of our Collections Volunteers. Like all archives, we ask you to follow our guidelines and procedures so that we can protect documents. Please read a copy of these guidelines and procedures before submitting your user registration form.

If you would like to discuss the possibility of using the library for an extended period outside of opening hours or wish to consult our archives, please email me at collections@newroombristol.org.uk or call 0117 9264740.

Kate Rogers
Collections Manager

A week in the life of a theological librarian

The following has been inspired by reading *The diary of a bookseller* by Shaun Bythell, who runs a second hand bookshop in Wigtown in south west Scotland. While my life is too boring to merit a book, it occurred to me that a diary of a week in my library might be of interest to other theological librarians. The week I have chosen was not pre-planned. It simply happened to be the week after I finished the book. No week at Queen's can be described as typical. Each week falls within the rhythms of the academic year which are likely to determine the particular focus of my work, but nevertheless certain activities are typical and tend to recur.

This week is the third week of the summer term. All our campus-based students are on site. Half of them – the 'leavers' – are on an intensive, not-for-credit 'Bridging into Ministry' programme, which involves visiting speakers and topics not covered in the taught modules. Our students do not do exams, so the library is not home to the intensive period of revision which some other institutions experience. In fact the library is often quieter during term time than people expect, just as it can be busier during the so-called vacation.

The library is located on the ground floor of a residential building in a leafy corner of the campus. Access is via swipe card (to the outer door of the building and the inner door of the library). Student access is 24/7. External users (of which we have over a hundred who are active in any given year) can let themselves in during the day. The library operates a self-issue system, but I do most of the discharging of books myself. A small number of students are authorised to discharge books on my behalf to cover the periods – such as residential weekends – when I am not in.

I have one assistant, my colleague Jane, who has been working with me for fourteen years. Jane and I used to work at the Orchard Centre in Selly Oak, so we go back a long way. I left to come to Queen's in 2002 shortly after the Orchard Centre was taken over by the University of Birmingham, which – in its wisdom – released Jane when she reached a certain age. Their loss has been our gain. Jane

works four hours per week, usually on a Thursday morning. Her flexibility and reliability have been a great asset.

Monday May 13th

A bright, fine morning. I cycle into work along the canal towpath, and today it is a pleasure. Last week I got wet twice.

The first job on a Monday morning is to discharge any books in the Returns box and generally tidy up after the weekend. Three cohorts of students have been in since Friday, one for the day on Saturday, the other two for a residential weekend. Each cohort has a library rep who is empowered to discharge books on my behalf, and they seem to have done a good job. There are only a few books in the box, and some new reservations have appeared on the Reservations Table. I also have some volunteer shelvers who do most of the shelving of returned books, but their schedules are less predictable in the summer term, and I quite often do some shelving myself, especially on a Monday. I also check the blue loans folder, which is the back-up option if a student forgets their self-issue login, or if the self-issue pc is down. Three students have used the folder over the weekend. Two have filled it in correctly, and I add their loans to the system. But one has got it all wrong and I can't even identify who they are.

The second job is to check and respond to emails. Fifteen have come in over the weekend, some of which I can delete without reading (including two new "friend suggestions" from Facebook, even though the library's Facebook page has been dormant for over two years).

The only email which I spend much time on is the agenda for tomorrow's Academic Management Group meeting, which comes with ten associated documents. AMG is not a meeting I look forward to. It is the group to which the Library Committee reports, so usually I will give a report based on the latest set of minutes, but the Library Committee is not due to meet till June so on this occasion there are no minutes to report on. Instead I need to be prepared to respond to

library-related issues which may surface elsewhere, such as in the QAA's final report on their visit in March or the latest module evaluations. The latter can be especially tricky as they tend to throw up comments such as "not enough books", but without much context.

I collect the post mid-morning. It includes a Brill Art History catalogue, which goes straight to recycling. Most publishers no longer send us print catalogues, which I regret because tutors like to browse catalogues in the staff room over coffee. But Brill continue to send us all and sundry. The post also includes two journals from Wiley, which is really good news. They have been disputing our subscription renewal, even though we have sent them evidence that our cheque has been cashed, and this appears to be the first acknowledgement that our payment has been received.

In the afternoon I do some weeding. This year we are planning to weed 1500 books from the Dewey 300s-800s. The rationale for this is that the 270s-280s (Church History, Denominational Studies) are completely full but hard to weed, and they are areas in which we are constantly adding new stock. So we are weeding less specialist areas (social sciences, literature) to free up space. I have already done much of the work, producing lists which include usage figures (our data now goes back fourteen years, so it is instructive), and marking up provisional withdrawals. I consult tutors on subjects such as Economics (330s), which is still heavily used in the Ethics module, but in other areas I back my own judgement. Today I removed around 100 books from the 360s.

There were only four enquiries today. One was from a first-year part-time student who has barely used the library's services all year. I think her tutor had pointed her in my direction, so we spent around twenty minutes working through a reading list, finding and borrowing a book, and locating a couple of online articles. It felt like time well spent.

Books borrowed	34
Books discharged	14

⁴ Emails read	16
Emails sent	10
Enquiries	4
Books catalogued	5

Tuesday May 14th

Another sparkling, early summer day. On days like this the Queen’s campus is at its most attractive, and students are drawn to gathering in small groups on or around the lawn, especially in the period after lunch. It feels very tranquil.

This morning I arrived to find the self-issue pc not working. This happens around once a week, and is a concern. The problem is easy to fix. You just reset the pc. But nevertheless the library relies on its self-service systems, and the self-issue pc is an essential part of that. We first reported the problem to our new IT support company (based in Chesterfield) in November. In December they came in and replaced a dodgy cable, but the problem recurred in January, and since then we have had no response from them.

At 10 o’clock I had an appointment with a new external library user. We register around forty new external members each year, some of whom are former students who are now in ministry, and who therefore don’t need much training. Others are students at other institutions, to whom we offer reading rights. Today’s visitor is a lay minister in the Diocese of Worcester, and his induction took about twenty minutes.

The mid-morning break is quite an affair at Queen’s. The staff room is often a hive of noise and laughter. It can be a good opportunity to liaise with tutors about library matters, which I have always valued as one of the benefits of working in a small institution. But

⁴ I have excluded from these figures emails which I delete without reading. This includes most of the Marvin emails – the discussion list for the Heritage library management system – as well as the Facebook “friend suggestions”.

sometimes the conversation goes well over my head. Today the discussion, prompted by a report in the *Church Times*, was on the “seal of confession”, a priest’s obligation under canon law not to disclose a confession.

The dining room was very full at lunch today. I usually sit with admin staff at lunch. As non-chapel goers we are encouraged to go to lunch early, before the main influx at 1 o’clock. But today we are joined by the British & Irish Association of Practical Theology (BIAPT), one of a number of outside groups who take the opportunity to use Queen’s as a venue for conferences and meetings. Having been at Queen’s for nearly seventeen years, I often recognise former students on these occasions (though I rarely remember their names). Today I was warmly greeted by someone whom I didn’t recognise at all.

The AMG meeting started at 1.45 and was scheduled to run to 4.15. It is as informal as a formal meeting can be, chaired with a light touch, and characterised by friendly banter between staff and student representatives. I briefly report on the results of the recent annual library survey and on our purchase of e-books from Ebsco’s GOBI platform (a new source for us). I explain why we decided to go for the ‘credits’ model rather than the ‘one user’ model. I emphasise how expensive e-books are. The rest of the agenda does not require my intervention, though it is tempting to comment on the banality of much of what external reviewers’ say about the library. But nothing is said about “not enough books”, and the meeting finishes at 3.15. O joy.

Today’s emails included another enquiry about external membership, and a query about an unpaid invoice. My emails out were mainly concerned with circulation matters. I have also set up borrower records and logins for six new students who are due to register for a PG Certificate module on Thursday.

Tuesday is the day when our part-time students come in for their evening teaching, so it tends to be the busiest day in the library, with some students arriving early to take the opportunity of some study

time. Enquiries today have included two students who needed to sort out their overdue library books, one student who couldn't find a book (it was on loan), an enquiry about books on pilgrimage, a request for advice on referencing a book without an author, and someone wanting to use the stapler.

On Tuesdays I stay till 7 pm. The library goes quiet at 5, when most students are in chapel, which gives me the chance to tidy up, discharge returned books, and email students whose reservations have come in. At 6 we all go to supper. This is the one occasion in the week when I am more likely to sit with students. This evening I heard all about yesterday's trip to the crematorium (as part of the 'Bridging' programme) in rather more detail than I was expecting, "and tomorrow we are going to the undertaker's ...". At this point I took my leave.

Books borrowed	80
Books discharged	62
Emails read	13
Emails sent	14
Enquiries	12
Head count (11 am)	8
Head count (3.30 pm)	12

Wednesday May 15th

Among yesterday's emails was one from a retired Anglican priest: "I am in the process of downsizing ..", which is the familiar precursor to an offer of old theological books. In recent years I have been greatly assisted in responding to offers of donations by our student book steward, who allows me to share his or her contact details with the donor and makes all the necessary arrangements for the delivery of the books. More often than not they go straight to the student common room. Sarah, who has been an excellent book steward this year, tells me that there are benefits both ways. There are often pastoral opportunities in responding to donors who are experiencing

retirement or bereavement. I have no hesitation in putting my current enquirer in touch with her.

I parcelled up a book for one of our Methodist students. We have around thirty students on the Queen's Connexional Course (QCC), which is a national part-time training pathway for Methodist ordinands. They visit Queen's six times a year for residential weekends and the Easter School, but do most of their study at a distance. We encourage them to stock up when they are on site, but we also offer them a postal service.

Having dealt with the emails, I turn to the cataloguing. Dawson's, our main supplier, used to send us a box per week, but now they send us little parcels almost every day, sometimes just one book at a time. It means that I tend to do a little cataloguing each day. A couple of weeks ago I ordered a lot of books for our new Introduction to Black Theology module, and these have now started to come in. I have been struggling to classify "intersectionality", which is a new word to me. It appears to have emerged as a branch of feminism (305.4), but I see on COPAC that Durham University has put it at 301, and the British Library catalogue records (which I import via Heritage's QuickCat) suggest 305, a multidisciplinary number. I plump for 305⁵.

A quiet afternoon. Another 89 books weeded from the 360s. A couple of requests on the ABTAPL list which I couldn't help with. The *ABTAPL Bulletin* arrived in the post today – well done, Richard! It includes four of the papers presented at our recent conference in Malvern. Although I attended the conference, it is helpful to read the edited versions and compare them with my own notes. I often pick up something new.

Books borrowed	25
Books discharged	28
Emails read	18

⁵ For the origins of the term, see https://www.cjr.org/language_corner/intersectionality.php

Emails sent	18
Enquiries	1
Head count (11.30 am)	4
Head count (3.00 pm)	6
Books catalogued	9

Thursday May 16th

Among the overnight emails was a request from a student for the Sage login. We subscribe to nine Sage journals, and the login for off-site access is particularly complicated, requiring students to set up a personal account and then ‘activate’ a ‘token’. The instructions run to two pages. To make things easier we were hoping to install EZproxy (authentication software) this year. We asked our IT support company to install a trial version in January, but we are still waiting.

I send out overdue notices on Thursday. I run a report on Heritage, and email borrowers using a template (our firewall prevents us from sending out automated notices). The advantage of this ‘manual’ process is that I can exercise some discretion over the wording of the email. Today 105 books were overdue (out of a total of 1112 current loans) to 43 borrowers. 38 of those were “first overdues” – in other words, the books were less than a week overdue. Four were second overdues, and only one was a third overdue. That is pretty good.

I also send out reservation notices two or three times a week. I run a report on Heritage, on the basis of which I may notify borrowers that they have reservations ready for collection, or books which have been reserved. I also use the report to identify titles which are in high demand. If there are more reservations on a title than the number of copies in stock, this may be an indicator that we need to buy more copies. Today there were only seventeen titles reserved, a low figure, but maybe typical of the summer term.

Jane was in this morning. She did the processing (a dozen or so books), a couple of minor repairs, stamped “withdrawn” on all the

weeded books, and removed a batch of 7-day stickers (from books which are no longer on reading lists). Brenda joined us for coffee, and Jane brought in a cake. Brenda is another former Orchard Centre colleague who comes in once a year to help with the stock check, which this year will start in a couple of weeks' time.

Another Thursday job, and one which I particularly enjoy, is putting out the new books. Our New Books Display holds up to twenty eight books, of which roughly half will be new in any given week. Library users are invited to "sign up" to borrow them. I move them to the Reservations Table for collection the following Thursday. Today eight books had been signed up, and I shelved another two. I put out ten new books, and emailed a notification to the tutors who had recommended them.

The six new PG Certificate students arrived for their library induction at 3 pm. They are doing one module this term and one module next term. Two of them were ordinands here some years ago. A typical library induction takes about half an hour. Most students also receive information skills training, either in a classroom setting (the main cohorts of new students in the autumn term) or one-to-one, but a group of this size with limited time is encouraged to make use of support materials on the library website. Four of the students live locally and should be able to make full use of the library. The other two will be more reliant on our online resources.

This afternoon I had an email from Richard Debenham at Ebsco inviting me to a webinar on e-book collection development next week in collaboration with IS Oxford, suppliers of Heritage. Ebsco have been assiduous in marketing their products to ABTAPL libraries, and at the moment – on e-books – they are successfully scratching where we itch. Our recent purchases on the GOBI platform led directly from a visit by Richard last term. So I have signed up for the webinar.

I also exchanged emails with Mike at Bristol Baptist College. One of his books turned up in our Returns box recently. Fortunately I was

able to identify the student who had returned it, and she popped in today to collect it.

One of today's enquiries was from a new user of the printer. A couple of years ago we installed Papercut software in the library for printing and copying, which has been much more reliable than the old EMOS card system. Users give me some money which I credit to their account, and they log in to "release" their work from the printer or to make a photocopy. The keypad is a bit fiddly at first, but otherwise it is a good system. Last year over 5,000 pages were produced on each device.

Books borrowed	55
Books discharged	73
Emails read	23
Emails sent	54
Enquiries	10
Head count (12 am)	5
Head count (3.00 pm)	5
Books catalogued	2

Friday May 17th

A quiet day in the library, even though the campus has been unusually busy for a Friday, with a URC group on site for the second day of a conference, and a number of our QCC leavers in early for their residential weekend in order to meet with their prospective superintendents. One of them took the opportunity of some study time in the library this morning.

I spent the morning weeding again. I find that doubts creep in when it comes to actually removing books from the shelf. There is a 'just-in-case' argument for retaining most of our titles. But then I look at the usage figures, and ponder the relevance of a book written in the context of the 1980s or even the 1990s, and usually stick to my guns. I rarely regret weeding. More often I regret that I didn't dispose of more.

There are a couple of regular Friday afternoon jobs. One is to circulate the latest journals in the staff room. A few years ago I wrote about print journals in the *ABTAPL Bulletin*, and questioned their value ⁶. If they are to have a place in the library, then at the very least tutors need to be aware of them and to have the opportunity to browse the latest issues. One of today's new issues was the *Journal of Theological Studies*, our most expensive subscription. Along with the journals I circulate the *Church Times*, the *Methodist Recorder*, and *The Tablet*, though not before I have had a quick look at the book reviews. Although most of the books we buy are recommended directly by tutors, I find the church press is a useful back-up for books they may have missed. Today I spotted a couple of titles to add to the list. The Dawson's book order is the other regular Friday afternoon job.

Of the 105 books which were overdue yesterday morning, only nineteen are still overdue. That is not bad.

Books borrowed	49
Books discharged	37
Emails read	19
Emails sent	11
Enquiries	2
Head count (11.45 am)	5
Head count (3.30 pm)	4
Books catalogued	0

Michael Gale
Librarian
The Queen's Foundation

⁶ Vol. 22 No.1 March 2015 (p.14-18)

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USEFUL WEBSITES

ABTAPL: <http://www.abtapl.org.uk/>

ABTAPL Bulletin online archive:
https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_abtapl_01.php

ANZTLA Ejournal:
<http://ejournal.anztla.org>

ATLA: <http://www.atla.com>

ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials:
<http://www.ebscohost.com/academic/atla-religion-database-with-atlaserials>

BETH: <http://www.beth.be>

Christians in Library and Information Services:
<http://christianlis.org.uk/>

Theology on the Web:
<https://theologyontheweb.org.uk/>

End Notes and Quotes

‘I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library’.
(Jorge Luis Borges)

‘Congratulations on the new library, because it isn’t just a library. It’s a spaceship that will take you to the farthest reaches of the universe, a time machine that will take you to the far past and the far future, a teacher that knows more than any human being, a friend that will amuse you and console you – and most of all, a gateway, to a better and happier and more useful life’. (Isaac Asimov)

‘For him that stealeth a Book from this Library, let it change into a serpent in his hand and rend him. Let him be struck with Palsy, and all his Members blasted. Let him languish in Pain crying aloud for Mercy and let there be no surcease to his Agony till he sink in Dissolution. Let Bookworms gnaw his Entrails in token of the Worm that dieth not, and when at last he goeth to his final Punishment, let the flames of Hell consume him for ever and aye’. (Curse Against Book Stealers, Monastery of San Pedro, Barcelona)

‘If you have a garden and a library you have everything you need’.
(Cicero)