

BULLETIN
of the
Association of British Theological
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Autumn 2019



BULLETIN 2019

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. It is a member of BETH (European Theological Libraries). The *Bulletin* is published three times a year (Spring, Summer and Autumn) and now has a circulation of approximately 200 copies, with about one third of that number going to libraries in Europe, North America, and the Commonwealth. The *Bulletin* is indexed in LISA (Library & Information Science Abstracts). ISSN 0305-781X

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Email: sally.gibbs@regents-tc.ac.uk

Vice-Chair: Hannie Riley, Librarian, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford
Email: librarian@wycliffe.ox.ac.uk

Hon. Secretary: Christine Purcell, Academic Liaison Librarian, Durham University
Email: c.w.purcell@durham.ac.uk

Hon. Editor: Richard Johnson, Kingsbury House, Main Road, Withern, Alford, Lincs. LN13 0LD
E-mail: richard@qohelthresources.co.uk

Conf. Secretary: Gudrun Warren, Librarian and Curator, Norwich Cathedral
Email: gwarren@cathedral.org.uk

Training Co-ordinator: Anna James, Librarian, Pusey House, Oxford
Email: pusey.librarian@stx.ox.ac.uk

Elected Members: Jayne Downey, Librarian, Sarum College Library
Winette Field, Librarian, William Booth College
Dr. Penelope Hall, Edinburgh

ABTAPL Website: <http://www.abtapl.org.uk> E-Mailing List: abtapl@jiscmail.ac.uk

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Date: January 2020

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Institutional	£40.00 (\$50.00, €45.00)
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**Sally Gibbs
Hon. Treasurer, ABTAPL
Elim International Centre
De Walden Road
West Malvern
Worcs.
WR14 4DF**

01684 588966

Sally.Gibbs@REGENTS-TC.AC.UK

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If you wish to be kept in touch with ABTAPL events, but do not wish to be part of the JISC mailing list (hence avoiding the many requests for articles and ILLs), please provide a personal e-mail below.

E-mail:.....

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CONTENTS

Dates for your Diary	4
Editorial	5
Stress and the Theological Librarian	6
Chair's Report on the Autumn Meeting	14
New funding opportunities	17
Report of the BETH 48 th Assembly, 7- 10 September 2019, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.	19
First Steps in Archives	22
Libraries, Learning and Religious Identities: Britain, Ireland, and the European Context; The Durham Residential Research Library Inaugural Conference	26
Librarians in Literature 1. G.K. Chesterton <i>The Return of Don Quixote</i>	31
ABTAPL Spring Conference 2020: Cardiff – the capital city of Wales	.34

The cover photo shows BETH attendees visiting the medieval Divinity
School during the BETH conference, held in Oxford in September.

(See a report of the conference on p19 in the Bulletin.)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2020 ABTAPL SPRING CONFERENCE & AGM

Thurs 2nd – Sat 4th April 2020
in Cardiff

(see application form on p35-36)

2020 ABTAPL AUTUMN CONFERENCE

(in London; details to be confirmed)

2021 ABTAPL SPRING CONFERENCE & AGM

(details to be confirmed)

Editorial

As you will have noticed, this issue begins with a membership renewal form that requires filling in and sending to Sally! Do it now, while you remember! However, you may not have yet noticed that it ends with an application form for the 2020 Spring Conference to be held in Cardiff. If you know you are intending to come, do that now as well, and send the form to Gudrun. If all goes according to plan these forms should match one another, so that they can be carefully torn out without destroying the integrity of the rest of the magazine.

Otherwise we begin this issue with an important article by Michael Gale on the workplace stress felt by a solo librarian. Being self-employed myself there was much that I could relate to! It would be very interesting to hear about the experience of others in similar situations, or in bigger institutions.

We also have reports from four conferences:

- the ABTAPL Autumn Meeting in London;
- the BETH 48th Assembly in Oxford;
- the ABTAPL Training Day in Manchester;
- the Residential Research Library Conference in Durham;

and two smaller articles, on:

- the new ABTAPL grants scheme, to aid professional development;
- things to look forward to at our 2020 conference in Cardiff!

Many thanks to all those who have taken the time to write these articles; the Bulletin wouldn't exist without you!

And because I had two spare pages to fill I've decided, rather than leaving them blank, to start a new occasional series: 'Librarians in Literature'; beginning with Michael Herne, the librarian in G.K. Chesterton's 'The Return of Don Quixote'.

Richard Johnson
(editor)

Stress and the theological librarian

Workplace stress¹ is a tricky subject to write about. It may say as much about the employee as it does about the workplace environment or the job. It is impossible to dissociate the two. But it is an important subject because if we can identify the particular causes of stress in our work, then we may be able to do something to address them, or at least be able to understand them better.

I have been working in my present post for seventeen years, and I often find it stressful. I write as someone who is no doubt predisposed to stress, and I find other aspects of life stressful, too, as I suspect many of us do, and for good reason. There is plenty to be stressed about. So what follows should not be taken as a criticism of my employer, or my job, for both of which I am very grateful. Much of what I say will not be unique to theological libraries. But I think that there is something distinctive about working as a solo (or almost solo) librarian in a theological institution. ABTAPL members who are not solo librarians may find this article less relevant.

The literature

Quite a lot has been written about workplace stress in libraries, but much less about the experience of the solo librarian. I found the report of a case study conducted in a further education college library particularly helpful in providing an overview of the research and identifying common themes². It is perhaps not surprising that students were often identified as a cause of stress, though the report's authors emphasise that the same research shows that our

¹ I use the term in a general sense and as a layperson. CILIP does not have an agreed definition, but in an email to me (dated 2.9.19) it stated that it is "guided by" organisations such as the Health & Safety Executive, which defines workplace stress as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them" (cited at <http://www.workstress.net/what-stress>).

² Liz Farler and Judith Broady-Preston, "Workplace stress in libraries: a case study", *Aslib Proceedings* 64:3, 2012, p.225-240.

interactions with library users are also a significant source of job satisfaction. I'm sure we can all echo the truth of that paradox.

Among other causes of stress, the report identified institutional change (often in response to external pressures), job insecurity, and a lack of control over day-to-day work. I am aware that some ABTAPL librarians have experienced the challenge of working in failing institutions, and others who have been required to justify or re-apply for their own posts. I am grateful that this has not been my experience. But at least as solo librarians we are likely to have a greater degree of independence in our work than our colleagues in other sectors. It is certainly something which I greatly value in my job. The report also identified “technostress”, the stress which arises from the rapid pace of technological change, which I suspect affects librarians across all sectors, and which I discuss below.

An earlier study also identified work overload and management issues as key causes of stress amongst library staff³. And a study published in 2016 examined workplace stress from a gender perspective, with a particular focus on work/life balance and comparative status⁴. So there is clearly much further reading for those who are inclined to pursue it. But my focus will be very much on my own experience of working as a solo librarian in a theological college.

Isolation

The most obvious difference between our working experience and that of librarians in other sectors is that as solo librarians we are isolated. We cannot retreat from the wear and tear of the front line into the comforting presence of fellow librarians. Our colleagues – tutors and administrative staff alike – may all be wonderful people, but they are not ‘one of us’. They cannot share our particular angst

³ Charles Bunge, “Stress in the library workplace”, *Library Trends* 38:1, 1989, p.92-102.

⁴ Quinn Galbraith et al, “The impact of faculty status and gender on employee well-being in academic libraries”, *College & Research Libraries* 77:1, 2016, p.71-86.

any more than we can share theirs. Even within the staff group, we are neither one thing nor the other. We are not ‘tutors’⁵, though we may (and hopefully do) attend meetings such as academic boards, but nor are we fully on a par with administrative staff. We don’t belong to a ‘team’. Even my terms and conditions of employment tend to fall between two stools.

What can we do about this? Of course our colleagues may often be very supportive, and ABTAPL members will need no reminding that our network can also be a very supportive environment in this respect, especially for those of us who are able to meet in person and build relationships over time. But it is also worth remembering that there are likely to be colleagues in our institutions who experience a similar sense of isolation. They may not be librarians, but they may be as ‘solo’ in their roles as we are. Getting alongside colleagues whose experience of the workplace may have much in common with our own could be mutually beneficial.

The small institution

There are many benefits from working in a small institution. I have always valued the opportunity to build relationships with tutors (in the staffroom over coffee, for example) in ways which would not be possible in a larger institution. I love the independence which being a solo librarian brings (I suspect that this is at the heart of why most of us do the jobs we do). And sometimes small institutions have a flexibility to get on and do things which would be slowed up by bureaucracy in a larger organisation.

But while small institutions may be more nimble, they are more likely to fall short on capacity and infrastructure, those essential support systems which enable a larger organisation to flourish. IT support is a case in point. As librarians we operate in an environment in which IT systems are becoming both increasingly complex and all pervasive. Services which used to be ‘standalone’ are now networked, integrated, and often remote. We need advice in our

⁵ I am aware that some ABTAPL librarians do have this role, and may feel differently

decision-making, support in implementation, and assistance when things go wrong. “Technostress”, as it is referred to in the literature, may affect librarians across all sectors, but it is much more likely to be experienced in small institutions.

Status

In Elizabeth Strout’s novel, *Abide with me*, the main character, a priest by the name of Tyler Caskey ministering in a small New England town in the 1950s, suffers a breakdown and retreats to his old theological college, where he seeks the advice of his former tutor. “I wonder if there’s a job here in the library, George”, he asks. The implication is clear: when you are at a really low ebb, a theological library post could be the one for you. I found something similar when I helped run a training course for theological librarians in Nigeria several years ago. The job of running the library was often given to the most junior staff member.

Status is closely linked to respect, and a lack of it can affect the way both our colleagues and students behave towards us. It can affect our own confidence and sense of self-worth. A professional qualification, which I am aware can sometimes be a sensitive issue within ABTAPL circles, may go some way towards addressing the need for status, but on its own it is not enough. I find that students are sometimes surprised to discover that librarianship is a ‘profession’ at all. In my post I value the opportunity I am given to report to our Academic Management Group, and to the summer meeting of the Governors. Above all, being line managed by the Principal, who also chairs the Library Committee, is a powerful signal that the library – and therefore the librarian – has an important role within the institution.

The stereotype

Status is just one aspect of a wider problem of perception. Many jobs suffer from the burden of the ‘stereotype’, the expectation that we are a certain sort of person or will act in a certain sort of way because of what we do. And librarians are no exception. There is a

column in CILIP's *Information Professional* which has been trading on this for years⁶. To a certain extent we have to take this on the chin. We are not the only ones, and it probably could be worse. However as solo librarians, the stereotype can become more personal. The 'librarian' is 'me', not 'us'.

I particularly struggle with the stereotype of the librarian as 'gatekeeper', in which our systems and rules are perceived as an obstacle to the convenience of our users. The stereotype persists because there is inevitably some truth in it. Libraries are cooperative enterprises. Some rules, such as copyright, are imposed upon us, while others, such as loan entitlements, we devise ourselves. They are designed to ensure that all our various stakeholders are treated fairly. But there is a personal cost when those systems and rules are perceived to be the problem.

The front line

The cost is exacerbated because as solo librarians we tend to operate on the front line. We are always available, always on call. While in my experience our students are for the most part courteous and polite, many are also high achievers in other walks of life. They may have strong, confident personalities. They understand that there is some flexibility in the way the library operates, so they push the boundaries. They practice their assertiveness. The simple wear and tear which arises from constantly negotiating library entitlements can be costly, too.

And it is not just students. Staff may also have strong, confident personalities. While the relationship between librarian and student is in part regulated by the power dynamic which operates in any academic institution, the relationship between colleagues is one in which there is more room for negotiation. More simply, we get to know each other over time, to understand our colleagues' working styles and preferences, to respect their gifts and strengths and to make allowance for their foibles. Nevertheless it can be hard

⁶ The column, Mediawatching, tracks references to the profession in the media.

negotiating with staff who may not share our perspective. While good structures – supportive line management, a strong library committee – can go some way to alleviating the personal cost, there is no getting round the fact that as solo librarians we are on our own. We need some inner resilience to do our job.

The scapegoat

In our annual library survey we invite students to suggest one thing which they think would improve the library service. The most common response is “more books”. This is not a comment on the total book stock, which is quite substantial, but on the availability of reading list titles. ABTAPL members will need no reminding of the ways in which librarians seek to manage the demand for access to core texts: multiple copies, short loan categories, online reservations, and e-book provision all have a part to play. But it is inevitable that from time to time students will experience some frustration when a particular title is not available just at the point when they want it.

The same comment crops up in other places. As higher education becomes more student-focussed, student feedback is more frequently sought. Our students are invited to complete module evaluations, to contribute to a student forum, and to participate in the National Student Survey.

It is frustrating when these comments appear out of context because there is little that the librarian can do. Which books? Which module? Have you tried using the reservations system? But perhaps that is not the point. It seems to me that complaining about library books is sometimes a symptom of more general dissatisfaction, making the library a scapegoat for other grievances. It is an easy target. It takes no responsibility. It is an opportunity to have a good moan when the alternative is to seek a constructive solution.

We recently had a more positive experience when one of our student cohorts (a part-time group with more reason than most to find library access challenging) got together with their library rep to present a group response to the library survey. The outcome was a useful

conversation and additional library provision in the form of a book box.

The imposter

Failure is stressful. As librarians we experience failure in some degree every day. We fail when our systems fail, when others let us down, and through our own shortcomings. We fail when a book isn't where it should be, when a reservation isn't returned on time, when our suppliers don't deliver and when our IT systems malfunction. We fail when we don't know the answer to a question, or can't fix a problem, or aren't as helpful as we might be.

Do our failures cause us more stress than those of librarians in other sectors? I think yes and no. As solo librarians in small institutions operating in an increasingly complex technological environment we have multiple responsibilities with often patchy support. None of us have the complete skills set. I suspect most of us feel inadequate in some aspect of our work. We may even feel like imposters from time to time.

But on the other hand in my experience our library users are on the whole remarkably generous in the face of our failures, even in the context of a higher education environment which prioritises the student experience and fosters a sense of entitlement. Our system failures are accepted with forbearance, our personal failings passed over. If anything I sometimes wonder if our students are too generous, our poor performance too easily tolerated. As an institution, do we get away with our failures because so many of our students are training for a calling which is defined by grace? If we do, then we have a particular reason to be grateful.

Reflections

In the introduction to the report of the case study referred to earlier, research is cited which claims that librarians report higher levels of work-related stress than four other occupational groups, including teachers, police, rail and fire service personnel. This rather

extraordinary claim contrasts with the more common perception of librarianship as a largely stress-free profession⁷. What are we to make of this? One possibility, referred to in the case study, is that librarianship as a career choice may attract people with a predisposition to stress on the basis of its reputation.

What about our own sector? Stress is a sensitive subject and I have not attempted to canvas opinion. I have no idea if workplace stress is more or less prevalent in ABTAPL libraries than elsewhere. But I am suggesting that there are good reasons why our libraries are unlikely to be stress-free zones, and that the first step towards managing the stress we may experience is to understand its causes. Several years ago I received careers counselling, which helped me to understand my own preferences, my strengths and weaknesses, in a workplace context. In the years since I have often drawn on that understanding in response to various work-related situations, enabling me to be less hard on myself in my failures and informing decisions about when and when not to take on new responsibilities. If these reflections can help others to do likewise, then they will have been worthwhile.

Michael Gale
Librarian
The Queen's Foundation

⁷ Liz Farler and Judith Broady-Preston, op. cit., p.225 & 229

Chair's Report on the Autumn Meeting

We received a very hospitable welcome to William Booth College in Denmark Hill, Southwark, south London. It is a large and imposing campus, the buildings – all of a style – were designed by the architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, who was also the architect for Cambridge University Library, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, Battersea Power Station, Liverpool Cathedral, and he designed the iconic red telephone box. As the campus was opened in 1929 the influence of art deco and a nod to modernism are clear.

At the Autumn Meeting, attended by 21 members and three guests, we briefly explained a reshuffle within the ABTAPL committee caused by resignations and a retirement. We are starting a new scheme to offer grants/bursaries to members and non-members for particular projects or meeting/conference attendance (see the article elsewhere in this bulletin). We are also looking for suggestions of majority world libraries who are in need of some financial support and welcome any ideas from all members and Bulletin readers. We will decide on the worthiest cause(s) and vote at the AGM at the Spring Conference.

The Spring Conference 2020 is to be held in Cardiff from April 2nd to 4th – please see the application form in this Bulletin. We are arranging the schedule so that the (optional) visits are on the first afternoon, the bulk of the continuing professional development training is on the Friday, and our ABTAPL input which includes our regular and ever-popular TeachMeet, the Open Forum, as well as our AGM and Spring Meeting will be on the Saturday morning. Keep your eyes open for the full schedule as it is finalised. We are staying in a very comfortable Clayton Hotel in central Cardiff, very near the train station, and will take a coach journey on the Friday to St Padarn's Institute for our training sessions. It is worth noting that ABTAPL funds will be subsidising the costs for this conference allowing the fee for members to stay at the same rate as recent years.

Our Autumn Meeting in November 2020 will be held in London again (the decision was taken at the Spring Conference in Durham

that London is the best venue for these meetings) and probably at the British Library or the London Library. Again, watch out for information nearer the time.

Our Spring Conference in 2021 was going to be in Edinburgh, but as New College will be closed then, we are postponing our visit north and for 2021 will probably be in Oxford.

Dr Penny Hall, and our Hon. Sec. Christine Purcell reported on the BETH conference held in Wycliffe College, Oxford, in September. Please see their article in this Bulletin.

Our next training day, *First Steps in Archives*, is on November 28th at Nazarene Theological College, Manchester. It is fully booked with a waiting list. We are always looking for ideas for training sessions, please get in touch with your ideas.

The ‘any other business’ included an invitation for any members to take over the ABTAPL Twitter account for a day or a week – to let us know what happens in your library/archive etc. or to cover a special event. Anna James will give a full explanation of how to run the account; please get in touch with her for details on anna.james.libraries@outlook.com.

Our ABTAPL Bulletin editor asked for articles for forthcoming issues. It would be brilliant to hear about your library/archives in a short article.

We were reminded that regular member to member communication happens by our JISCMail account – see the ABTAPL web site Discussion List for a link where you can subscribe. But please be aware that there are some on the list who may not be members, and may be from other nations (regarding copyright queries etc.)

Our guest speaker for the Autumn Meeting was Liz Jolly, Chief Librarian of the British Library. She delivered a thought-provoking presentation which combined her own journey to such a prestigious post with her career-long focus on collaboration. She quoted Ros

Carnwell and Alex Carson in stating “Collaboration... is what we do when we engage successfully in a ‘partnership’.” This is particularly apposite for an ABTAPL audience as our members often comment that the collaboration or networking of the membership is what is most appreciated.

The Chief Librarian’s role is mostly to do with custodianship, research, business, learning and international liaison.

Liz’s career journey was atypical in that she purposely chose to work in higher education institutions that had formerly been polytechnics etc. But it was this very resolve and strength of purpose – that education should be available for all – that caused her boss to choose her over the other candidates when the vacancy arose as Chief Librarian of the British Library.

She outlined the collaborative work of the British Library: the Business and IP Centre – supporting small business owners, entrepreneurs and inventors; with the Arts Council and Carnegie UK towards a ‘single digital presence’ for UK public libraries; ensuring inclusion and diversity.

Liz emphasized the importance of personal integrity and clear vision and values – finding your own pole star to guide you on your career path; knowing your lines in the sand.

She also stressed the importance of *librarians*, not just libraries, in this changing world, quoting David Lankes “The mission of librarians is to improve society through facilitating knowledge creation in their communities.”

Her talk was informative and inspiring, but most of all, encouraging. She kindly answered questions from the audience at the end.

Following this address the attendees were invited to visit the International Heritage Centre where the archivists had displayed for us examples of women in the Salvation Army over its history. They were well-chosen and fascinating to read. The artefacts in the

Heritage Centre give a clear picture of the mission and social action which have marked the Salvationist movement since its inception. It is a well-displayed and informative collection and well worth a visit from a church history and social history viewpoint.

The afternoon culminated with a visit to the college library. Many librarians love visiting their colleague's libraries to investigate layout, storage, stock, study aids, subscriptions etc. I picked up some ideas I can immediately implement in the Regents Theological College library.

Our thanks to Winette Field, the librarian at William Booth College, for organising our venue, a delicious lunch, and the afternoon visits.

Sally Gibbs
ABTAPL Chair

New funding opportunities

Training, CPD, Personal Development, Upskilling, Learning Development Pathways – call it what you like, we are all expected, and to a certain extent measured by, how we keep up to date with new developments, trends and specific areas of professional practice. ABTAPL can help you in various ways:

1. Autumn training day – practical skills provided, often delivered by experts in their field
2. Spring Conference – speakers, visits, displays and teach meet sessions over 48 hours; plus a chance for face to face contact with colleagues and suppliers. (See the application form at the back for details of the 2020 Spring Conference).

3. Autumn Meeting – this is not just a business meeting but an opportunity to hear from leaders in their field. In the last couple of years this has included Liz Jolly (British Library) and Nick Poole (CILIP CDEO).
4. Digital library – we are looking at the possibility of providing ongoing support through the creation of an e-library accessible to members of ABTAPL.

In recognition that not all individuals can find the funds to attend events, or can ask for additional funds from their employers, ABTAPL is proud to launch its grants scheme.

This is an opportunity to apply for:

- A free place at the Spring Conference or
- Up to £250, over 2 years, for money to attend a course, buy books, pay for travel, fund a CPD project, and develop yourself.

Full details can be found on our website but in general, applications will be reviewed by ABTAPL twice a year, and those supported will be asked to pass on their learning via an article in the Bulletin and a teach meet session (in person or via a video) the following year at the Spring Conference.

Funding is not just for new professionals or students; ABTAPL is keen to support any development of the Theological Library sector.

Please do consider applying and help us help you strengthen your practice.

Winette Field
ABTAPL Committee Member

Report of the BETH 48th Assembly, 7- 10 September 2019, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

ABTAPL was well represented at this recent BETH [Bibliothèques Européennes de Théologie] conference.

The conference opened on Saturday evening with a welcome from Hannie Riley, Librarian at Wycliffe Hall. She explained the history of Wycliffe Hall, and the University of Oxford education system which has more than 100 libraries, making it the largest library system in the UK. After the welcome, the group of 60 attendees from 19 countries toured Wycliffe Hall and library. The first evening ended with dinner at the Ashmolean Museum Rooftop Restaurant, which offered a wonderful view on the city.

On Sunday morning we were treated to a tour of the Bodleian Library, kindly sponsored by Browns Books for Students. We had the chance to view the most beautiful parts of the Bodleian Library: the 15th-century Divinity School and Duke Humfrey's medieval library, as well as current exhibitions in the new Weston Library.

In the afternoon we had the official welcome from the president of BETH, Geert Harmanny, after which followed reports from 12 national European theological library associations and libraries (including ABTAPL).

This was followed by a special session on libraries serving libraries.

First was a report from the International Theological Librarianship Education Task Force, and their two projects: Institute for Theological Librarians and The Theological Librarian's Handbook series.

ABTAPL member Helen Stocker from the Nazarene Theological College then shared her work on implementing ILS systems in 22 countries around the world, and Nina Sundnes Drønen from VID Specialized University in Norway told us about her one-week library training course in theological libraries in rural Madagascar.

At the end of the day, two sister associations, Atla and IFLA SIG Relindial, gave their reports and updates, and there was a discussion on different opportunities for collaboration.

The first presentation on Monday morning was by Simone Kortekaas from Wageningen University in the Netherlands and was related to how researchers, students, and the general interested public seek, read and use scholarly publications in the 21st century. Kortekaas opened her presentation with a statement that 95% of what her users are looking for can be found on the internet. So, her advice is to stop worrying about discovery, and put more effort into offering the remaining 5% a great service. Students and researchers come to libraries for the study spaces, not the resources. But we need to tell the world what we have, so libraries need to make sure that their metadata is harvested by search engines and try to be more creative with services by making them more personal.

The next presentation was by Johan Tilstra, founder of the Lean Library, a browser plugin which simplifies access to a library's subscribed e-resources and which is used by many leading libraries.

The rest of the morning presentations on Monday focused on the state of religious information library services in France and library services of Polish theological libraries.

In the afternoon we went to visit Pusey House library and heard about how they revived the usage of their space and holdings by cooperating with a student writing group called the Oxford Scriptorium.

The final presentations on Monday included a talk by Hannie Riley on engaging library users, and the role and implementation of bibliotherapy in Hungarian libraries.

Tuesday began with a talk by Alan Danskin from the British Library on the practical use of OCLC FAST (Faceted Application of Subject Terminology) a general subject indexing vocabulary.

Then we heard from Brother Cornelis, a Dominican brother specializing in medieval oriental studies at Utrecht University. He presented a typical (digital) workflow of scholars today, explaining how this has changed their ways of using libraries.

This was followed by speakers from Belgium, Finland and Germany: the Maurits Sabbe Library in Leuven, the University of Eastern Finland, the Bible Collection of the State Library in Stuttgart, and the Johannes a Lasco Library in Emden, Germany. We heard how these libraries are trying to answer the needs of their users, promote their collections and find new ways to participate in public and cultural life.

After lunch, we enjoyed a visit to the Angus Library and Archive at Regent Park's College, which holds the leading collection of Baptist history and heritage worldwide. Some wonderful artefacts, photographs and diaries were on display.#

The final presentation was from a representative of De Gruyter who demonstrated the online *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. The meeting ended with closing remarks from the President, Geert Harmanny and a slide show of Lviv, Ukraine, the venue for next year's conference.

Presentations from the conference are available on the BETH website: <https://theo.kuleuven.be/apps/press/beth/2019/09/17/beth-2019-oxford-reflection/>

Thanks to Wycliffe Hall, especially Hannie Riley, for their hospitality and organisation, and the hard work of the whole Board of BETH in preparation of this conference. We look forward to the 49th Assembly next year in Lviv.

Christine Purcell and Penny Hall
ABTAPL committee members

First Steps in Archives

A record event

The ABTAPL First Steps in Archives event was held on 28th November 2019 at the Nazarene Theological College in Manchester. The training day, arranged in partnership with the Religious Archives Group (RAG) and The National Archives (TNA), was designed for those working with records and archives but who were not from an archives or records management background. Twenty-two delegates attended the training day.

Welcome and registration took place at 10:30 over coffee, tea and biscuits in the college's Conservatory. After we had shaken the rain from our brollies and warmed up, we moved to the Emmanuel Centre for the first session.

What are records and archives?

Norman James (Chair of the Religious Archives Group) began the day with a discussion on the nature of archives. He offered the formal definition of an archive as “materials created by a person, family or organisation [...] and preserved because of the enduring value contained in them or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator[...]" (ISO 16175-1:2010). For those new to archives, he explained that a significant difference between archives and libraries is that, for archives, the value lies in the relationship between documents, and therefore the original arrangement of the documents is as important as the content. If the order is lost, much of its evidential value will be lost as well.

From this definition, Norman introduced the three principles used to manage collections: provenance, original order, and collective control. Provenance pertains to the ownership history and provides a context for the material. Original order means the order in which the documents were originally created or used (established by the creator or last working order), and the principle of collective control sees the archive managed as a grouping, not as individual items. He

emphasised that these principles should be the foundation of all archival activities and that an understanding of the working order and the relationship between documents enhances their value by placing them in context.

Collecting and keeping archives

Tim Powell (Senior Adviser on Independent Archives, The National Archives) followed with a presentation on collecting and keeping archive material. He discussed the importance of developing a collection policy that reflects the organisation's mission statement. He recommended that the board or head of the organisation should formally adopt the policy. This, he argued, was important since it needs to be an organisational decision to obtain resources and support for development.

The collection policy should also define the content and scope and set out a rationale for keeping the archive. The creation and development of an archive can seem self-explanatory, but Tim argued that clearly defining the parameters would direct future management decisions. In addition, the policy supports compliance with copyright and data protection by recording the terms of acquisition of material as well as developing a records retention schedule outlining the process of disposal. Finally, the policy should include the agreed criteria for refusing material. Tim gave an encouraging tip for those archivists averse to turning away donations, for example, due to a lack of resources or because the material does not fit within the scope of the archive. His suggestion was to direct eager donors to a more appropriate archive or the local records office. Having a written collection policy in place provides an authority in which to refer in such cases.

Storage and risk management

The day then turned to other practical considerations in keeping archives. Norman delved into storage and risk management describing the potential hazards awaiting the physical materials themselves: fire, flood and damp, pests, and theft. He also discussed

various issues with the site and building in which the archives are housed, both location-specific and structural. He also talked about potential ways to mitigate these issues where no better solution could be found. He demonstrated a simple, adaptable, do-it-yourself risk analysis that assigned the values 1-3 for low, medium, or high-risk levels respectively. He then had us put this into practice with an exercise that stimulated a good discussion.

A sandwich lunch was provided at 13:00 and we braved the rain again to enjoy a quick bite and chat in the Conservatory before returning for an afternoon of more archival inspiration.

Arrangement and description of archives

The day continued with a session on the arrangement and description of archives. Tim provided a few words of comfort saying that there was no one right way to arrange an archive. Common sense, he said, should be used. He advised that having a good working knowledge of the organisation could help determine how to arrange the archive. Tim accompanied his presentation with a practical exercise quickly demonstrating the value of this perspective as well as the importance of seeing the archive as a whole.

Tim also touched on record description explaining the importance of maintaining the relationship of the documents to each other and their creator. He outlined the ISAD(G) standard for archival description. The standard sets out rules for multi-levelled description that supports the relational hierarchy of archives. He provided a list of resources for cataloguing that included support for managing collections in The National Archive's catalogue Discovery.

Providing access to archives

The final presentation was by Lianne Smith (Archivist for Christian Brethren at The University of Manchester) on providing access to archives. Focusing on access via reading rooms, Lianne raised the issue that access needs to be given with respect to the archive's other function, that of preserving material for future generations. The aim

is to balance these two services through mitigation, the main risks being theft, damage, and legal. She touched on various aspects, including general premise security and reading room location, but also delved into the physical arrangement of furniture and access procedures for readers. She followed this with a discussion of reading room rules and provided some good tips on how an archive can best facilitate access instead of simply having a list of do-nots. These included providing acid-free markers, a pencil sharpener, and even support for photography.

And that's an archive!

The day came to a fitting close with a tour of the Nazarene Theological College's archive. Andy Newing showed us around the stacks and discussed the work he has done. This provided a lovely case study demonstrating what we had learned. To learn more about NTCs archive please visit: <https://nazarene.ac.uk/about-us/ntc-archives/>

Many thanks to Anna James (APTAPL Training Co-ordinator) and all the course leaders for an invaluable and enjoyable training event. All our archives will now be in top form!

Jacqueline Vigilanti
(Rare Books Cataloguer,
Nazarene Theological College)

Libraries, Learning and Religious Identities: Britain, Ireland, and the European Context; The Durham Residential Research Library Inaugural Conference

The 2018 ABTAPL conference took place in Durham. We stayed at St Chad's College, visited the cathedral and university collections, and saw the imposing gothic library of the former Jesuit school and seminary at Ushaw College, where a new Residential Research Library was just about to open. Eighteen months later I returned for the Residential Research Library's celebratory launch conference at the end of their first year of operation.

Durham Collections

The conference was a very intense 3-day event, with over 40 papers delivered on library and book history. The Durham papers discussed the libraries in Durham together and separately, ranging in scope from investigations into the history of individual items, to a keynote speech on a project which aims to recreate Durham Priory Library online by digitising its manuscripts wherever in the world they are to be found.⁸ This speaker was engaged on the technical side of the project, and he allowed us to handle blocks of minerals used by mediaeval monks for illuminating manuscripts (poison); to consider whether it is a good idea to buy a spectrometer on Amazon ('lux can kill'), and whether you should lick an 800-year-old manuscript (no).⁹

The earliest known group of books in Durham was at Durham Priory (founded 1083), which received a significant boost in the late 14th century with a bequest from Bishop Thomas Hatfield to become one of the greatest mediaeval libraries in England¹⁰ The cathedral took on the responsibility of the library at the English Reformation, but the political chaos of the time – not to mention organic causes such

⁸ Durham Priory Library Recreated. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.durhampriory.ac.uk/>.

⁹ Beeby. *Shining Light on Medieval Manuscripts*.

¹⁰ Ciola. *Durham Priory Library's 13-14th Century Logical & Scientific Manuscripts*; Cronin. *Historical writing. the Priory Library and 'Reformed' Monastic Identity in 15th-Century Durham*.

as weeding – meant that the collection did not come through unscathed. 341 manuscripts and 52 printed books remain in the cathedral collections; 12 manuscripts and 2 printed books at Durham University Library; and 50 printed books at Ushaw College; with 175 manuscripts and 41 printed books scattered in other libraries in the UK.¹¹

Durham Cathedral Library was placed on a secure foundation by Bishop John Cosin in the 1620s, and the conference was a 350th birthday party for Cosin's Library, as well as a launch party for the new library. An interesting series of papers was presented on the first day showing how Cosin's changing thought can be traced through records of books he owned as an aggressive High Church propagator in the pre-Civil War era; to an eirenic position during a difficult exile in France during the Commonwealth where the local Dissenters were kind to him, while the elite Roman Catholics were not; to a measured respect for the people who held views which differed from his own when his fortunes were restored with those of the monarchy.¹²

The University and Ushaw College were both 19th century establishments: Durham University was founded in 1832 as a new University without direct links to any older institutions, and consequently formed its library from scratch, building on a donation of the library of Bishop van Mildert.¹³ Ushaw's history is more complex. From the mid-16th century, English Catholic boys were sent abroad for their education to English schools established at Douai and St Omer. In the late 18th century when diplomatic and ecclesiastical difficulties arose during the French revolution, these schools returned to England, and Douai's important library was lost in the turmoil. Once the school had settled at Ushaw, the librarian

¹¹ Beeby. *Shining Light on Medieval Manuscripts*.

¹² Maber. *Bishop Cosin's Library*; D Pearson. *John Cosin & Durham Cathedral Library*; S Mandelbrote. *John Cosin & the Library at Peterhouse*.

¹³ Durham University. (2019). A History of Durham University Library Early History. Retrieved from https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/library/library_history_early.pdf.

Thomas Wilkinson obsessively recreated Douai's holdings, benefitting – as did many other UK libraries of the era – from the forced dissolution of monastic libraries throughout Europe in the politically volatile 1840s.¹⁴ Thus Durham contains a real mediaeval library, a 15th century recreation, and a 19th century imitation, as well as the parallel University library, all of which have essentially developed in isolation. It was noted that libraries often behave like toddlers engaging in parallel play – happily carrying out exactly the same jobs alongside each other, instead of ‘playing’ together.¹⁵ This has certainly been the case in the tiny city of Durham.

Not Durham...

Most of the conference ran in two parallel strands, vaguely divided into Durham, and Not Durham. The Not Durham libraries under consideration mostly bore similarities to one or more of the collections in Durham. These included Roman Catholic organisations sent abroad at the dissolution of the monasteries,¹⁶ other Pories,¹⁷ secret Roman Catholic libraries,¹⁸ personal Anglican libraries which became available to the public,¹⁹ and religious libraries in Scotland, Ireland and Wales.²⁰ I mostly attended this parallel strand, and my paper on Pusey House was presented as part of this. Despite the title of the conference, I'm not sure that the contribution of libraries to religious identity was discussed as fully as it might have been. I was a little confused to find that it did not

¹⁴ Bush. *Recreating Douai* ; J Williams *European Religious Houses as the Provenance of Early Printed Books in Ushaw*.

¹⁵ McCafferty. Chairing *The English College in Rome*.

¹⁶ McCafferty. *Making & Naming Continental Libraries for Irish Franciscans, 1607-c.1700* ; Whitehead. *Opening up the Pre-1798 library of the Venerable English College* ; Thomas. *The Welsh Jesuit Missionary Library*.

¹⁷ King. *Using Network Analysis to Map the Life of Syon Abbey's Libraries*.

¹⁸ Pickman. *The Library of the Bar Convent in York*.

¹⁹ Westerhof. *Private & Public Identities in the Sharp Family Library* ; Deconinck-Brossard. *John Sharp & his Three Favourite Libraries*.

²⁰ Crawford. *Libraries & Religious Controversy in Early 19th Century Scotland* ; Whan. *Libraries, Reading & Varieties of 'Protestantism' in Ulster*.

seem to be widely acknowledged that religious identity continues to exist, and that a library can be both historic and current simultaneously, and may still exist to contribute to spiritual formation.²¹ The problem was sufficiently acute that I found myself having to subtly rewrite my paper in the breaks between other people's papers, to make my presentation more bibliographic – this felt a reasonable adjustment – and less 'religious', which felt rather more like I was doing something of a disservice to my workplace.

Fairly inevitably, the question of identity was more crucial to libraries which had been crafted by groups who did not hold power at the time of their creation: there was little about Catholic identity before the Reformation, and little about Anglican identity afterwards. However, post-Reformation Catholic libraries often developed with a strong ethos of preserving Recusant history as a precious inheritance to be learned in private, with the hope that the identity might once again become public and national. In contrast, Non-Conformists frequently developed libraries in a very public way, not merely for use, but also as a visible defence against accusations of ignorance, coarseness and emotionalism which were often cast against Dissenters.²²

Reflections

Academic needs have changed during the 21st century. In addition to the obvious development of electronic resources, there has been a huge growth in postgraduate research students and in precariously employed early career researchers, but expansion of facilities available have not kept pace with the expansion of numbers. Now, as in the late Victorian era, philanthropy and charity are remedying the deficiencies to under-resourced scholars: not only in terms of providing books, but also in the equally important areas of providing space to work in and community to learn with. 19th century

²¹ James. *A Case Study on Pusey House Library*.

²² Potten. *The Private Libraries of Two Northern Congregational Ministers* ; Eckersley. *Female Donors to Dissenting Academy Libraries* ; Rivers. *The Formation, Arrangement, and Dispersal of a Major 19th Century Wesleyan Methodist Book Collection*.

independent libraries – long since relegated to the role of gentlemen’s clubs – are returning to their original educational purpose to fill in these gaps. If Gladstone’s Library in Hawarden was the first to realise the potential of a residential library, it seems unlikely that the new facility at Durham will be the last.²³

The longevity of individual libraries can be something of a Darwinian game of chance: the ‘fittest’ survive, but this can sometimes be through neglect rather than activity. But equally, conscious adaptation may be essential to survival. The conference covered a timespan of over 1,000 years, and all of the libraries discussed had been through brief interludes of abundance sprinkled amongst long stretches of poverty and neglect: many had been dispersed (between 896 and 1996); all (I think) had at some point been at risk of disposal, but all had in some way survived. Dispersal is usually seen as failure, but any library being discussed at an academic conference 1,100 years later must have done something right. I think by far the biggest take-home point is what resilient organisms libraries are.

Acknowledgements

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²³ Gladstone’s Library. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.gladstoneslibrary.org/>.

Durham University, (2019). *A History of Durham University Library Early History*, Retrieved from https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/library/library_history_early.pdf.

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Anna James
Librarian and Archivist, Pusey House, Oxford

Librarians in Literature

1. G.K. Chesterton *The Return of Don Quixote*

The story begins with the search at Seawood Abbey for someone to play the part of a Troubadour in a Medieval play:

“Don't talk nonsense,” said Archer, irritably, “it's a small part, but he has to do all sorts of things. Why, he has to kiss the princess's hand.”
“The butler would do it like a Zephyr,” replied Murrel, “but perhaps we ought to look lower in the hierarchy. If he won't do it I will ask the footmen, and if they won't I will ask the groom, and if he won't I will ask the stable-boy, and if he won't I will ask the knife-boy, and if he won't I will ask whatever is lower and viler than a knife-boy. And if that fails I will go lower still, and ask the librarian. Why, of course! The very thing! The librarian!”...

The librarian at Seawood had once had his name in the papers; though he was probably unaware of the fact. It was during the great Camel Controversy of 1906, when Professor Otto Elk, that devastating Hebrew scholar, was conducting his great and gallant campaign against the Book of Deuteronomy; and had availed himself of the obscure librarian's peculiar intimacy with the Palaeo-Hittites. The learned reader is warned that these were no vulgar Hittites; but a yet more remote race covered by the same name. He really knew a prodigious amount about these Hittites, but only, as he would carefully explain, from the unification of the kingdom by Pan-El-Zaga (popularly and foolishly called Pan-Ul-Zaga) to the disastrous battle of Uli-Zamul, after which the true Palaeo-Hittite civilisation, of course, can hardly be said to have continued. In his case it can be said seriously that nobody knew how much he knew. He had never written a book upon his Hittites; if he had it would have been a library. But nobody could have reviewed it but himself.

He agrees to take the part, but needs to research it thoroughly:

“Of course, I might look you up something in the library,” he said, turning towards the shelves. “There's a very good French series on all aspects of the period on the top shelf, I think.”

The library was a quite unusually high room, with a sloping roof pitched as high as the roof of a church. Indeed it is not impossible that it had been the roof of a church or at least of a chapel for it was part of the old wing that had represented Seawood Abbey when it really was an abbey. Therefore, the top shelf meant something more like the top of a precipice than the top of an ordinary bookcase. It could only be scaled by a very long library ladder, which was at that moment leaning against the library shelves. The librarian, in his new impulse of movement, was at the top of the tall ladder before anybody could stop him; rummaging in a row of dusty volumes diminished by distance and quite indistinguishable. He pulled a big volume from the rank of volumes; and finding it rather awkward to examine while balancing on the top of a ladder, he hoisted himself on to the shelf, in the gap left by the book, and sat there as if he were a new and valuable folio presented to the library. It was rather dark up there under the roof; but an electric light hung there and he

calmly turned it on. A silence followed and he continued to sit there on his remote perch, with his long legs dangling in mid-air and his head entirely invisible behind the leather wall of the large volume.

And Michael Herne continued to devour volume after volume about the history, philosophy, theology, ethics and economics of the four medieval centuries, in the hope of fitting himself to deliver the fifteen lines of blank verse allotted by Miss Ashley to the Second Troubadour.

He performs the part supremely well, but then refuses to change out of his costume afterwards:

“Why do you call my attire fantastic?” asked Herne. “It’s very much simpler than yours. It just goes over your head and there you are... Do you know,” he added abruptly and in a lowered voice, “there’s something very satisfying about wearing a hood... something symbolical...”

The daughter of Lord Seawood supports his stance, and gradually...

there grew up, half in jest and yet more and more in earnest, a new fashionable “medievalism”; a chase in which all the young men followed the lady who followed the librarian.

And then the Prime Minister visits Seawood Abbey...

“Well,” said the Prime Minister, and laid down the paper slowly on the little round table. “Well, we’ve got it at last.”

“Got what?” demanded his distracted friend.

“Our last chance,” said the Prime Minister...

Thus did the librarian who refused to change his clothes contrive to change his country. For out of this small and grotesque incident came all that famous revolution, or reaction, which transformed the face of English society...

But you’ll have to read the book to find out what happens next...

ABTAPL Spring Conference 2020: Cardiff – the capital city of Wales

We are looking forward to our Spring Conference in Cardiff, Thursday 2 – Saturday 4 April 2020. There will be optional visits in the afternoon of Thursday 2 April to the library of the National Museum of Wales, the Welsh Government Library and Cardiff University Special Collections. These must be booked in advance as numbers are limited; further details in due course, but the first tour is likely to be 2pm at the earliest.

Friday will concentrate on CPD and will be at St Padarn's Institute (www.stpadarns.ac.uk) and will include sessions on information literacy, catalogue systems and rare books cataloguing.

We will stay in the stunning high-rise Clayton Hotel in Cardiff (www.claytonhotelcardiff.com), scarcely 2 minutes' walk from Cardiff Central station. Check-in is from 3pm, with the possibility of leaving luggage before that time. Our Saturday morning sessions will be held in the hotel; these will include TeachMeet and Open Forum sessions – offers for presentations or questions for the Open Forum are welcomed.

As well as the formal CPD opportunities, the ABTAPL Spring Conference provides the chance to extend professional networks, continuing conversations beyond the formal sessions, and learning from how other librarians are dealing with similar situations.

Full details of conference fees are available on the booking form. This year we are introducing an "Early Bird" discount for full price conference bookings, in addition to non-residential and day rates. Bursaries are available: for further details and application form please contact as below.

For queries please contact the ABTAPL Conference Secretary, Gudrun Warren: gwarren@cathedral.org.uk. Please complete the booking form here or from the website: <https://abtapl.org.uk/notice-of-meetings/>.



Spring Conference at Clayton Hotel, Cardiff
Thursday 2 – Saturday 4 April 2020
Booking Form

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I / We wish to attend the ABTAPL Spring Conference at the following fee (please tick):

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