

BULLETIN

of the

Association of British Theological

and Philosophical Libraries



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Autumn 2020



BULLETIN 2020

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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***Bulletin of the Association of British Theological
and Philosophical Libraries***

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The photo on the front cover shows visitors to
the Heritage Centre of the New Testament Church of God;
see the article on p14f.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Apologies that we cannot be definite about future plans,
but we live in strange times!

2021 ABTAPL SPRING CONFERENCE & AGM

This virtual conference will be held via zoom
on Fri 26th March 2021.

Further details will be announced nearer the time.

2021 ABTAPL AUTUMN CONFERENCE

Details will be announced nearer the time.

2022 ABTAPL SPRING CONFERENCE & AGM

We are expecting the conference to be based in Cardiff
from 7-9 Apr 2022.

Once again, further details will be announced nearer the time.

Editorial

A glance at the Contents page will show that once again the Covid-19 pandemic is having a significant impact on our thoughts at this time, as well as on our day-to-day lives. Having shared with us last year what a typical week in his working life was like, Michael Gale revisits the idea and outlines a typical week ‘in the age of Covid’; I’m sure that a comparison of the two will one day prove fascinating for a future researcher!

For all of us the pandemic has brought new challenges, and some people have unavoidably struggled during this time. Sally Gibbs (our Chair) and Gudrun Warren have put together various ideas on staying well during this time; especially for those who may be struggling with anxiety or other mental health issues.

It would be interesting to know how many library Risk Assessment plans (if you even have one!) had a section dealing with pandemics! Probably not many! Risk Assessment is a topic which we hope to follow up in more detail during the next year, and in this issue Winette Field introduces the subject for us.

However, sometimes it’s good to take our eyes off our present situation and recover what Radio 4 calls ‘The Long View’, and Judith Powles helps us to do this with an overview of the history of ABTAPL since 1956. This will eventually appear in the festschrift to mark the occasion of the 50th anniversary of BETH in 2022.

Finally, taking a similar ‘Long View’, Phyllis Thompson outlines the work of the Heritage Centre of the New Testament Church of God as it seeks to place the present mission of the church within the wider context of its history.

Do fill in the ABTAPL membership form if you have not already sent one to Sally.

We hope you all have a safe Christmas!

Richard Johnson (editor)

ABTAPL: An Overview

ABTAPL is the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries, an organisation of libraries and librarians working with theological and philosophical collections and related materials in the UK and beyond. Membership is not confined to professional librarians and anyone who has an interest in theology and/or philosophy may join. It provides for its members an informal network for sharing information and experience, for consultation, for advice and for support for both individual problems and continuing professional development. Some members have spent all of their working lives in a specialist library; others have transferred from the public service; some have bookselling experience; some carry library responsibilities because they lecture in theology or in philosophy. The only membership qualification is to have an interest in the bibliography, librarianship or management of our specialist subjects. All are welcome in ABTAPL.

HISTORICAL ROOTS

ABTAPL was founded in 1956 at a meeting held at the University of London's Senate House to bring together librarians working with or interested in theological and philosophical literature in Great Britain. Its purpose was to improve the bibliographical information available, to bring to light some of the little known collections on these subjects and to help smaller libraries which lacked professional expertise. Originally it was intended to be the United Kingdom member of an international theological libraries organisation which had been set up in 1954 following a meeting convened by the World Council of Churches under the auspices of UNESCO. Unfortunately, this international body did not survive long, but many of its aims and objectives are now carried out by the *Bibliothèques Européennes de Théologie (BETH)*.

Some of ABTAPL's original objectives can be found in an earlier organisation, SCOTAPLL (the Standing Conference of Theological and Philosophical Libraries in London). After World War 2 the

UK's Library Association was keen to develop co-operative schemes which would make materials of all kinds more accessible. One of these ideas was a project for allocating to each library service in Greater London and the surrounding counties a section of knowledge which they could then develop and build into a significant collection. On being allocated the fields of Philosophy and Religion, Westminster City Library, under the leadership of Robert L. Collison, Reference Librarian from 1948-59, began to contact other libraries, initially in the London area, likely to have substantial collections in these subject areas.

From this initial contact, an ecumenical group of librarians was formed which "constituted a friendly circle, flexible but long-lasting, that gradually extended itself over the whole country"¹. The Rev. Roger Thomas, librarian at Dr Williams's Library, generously made his library available as headquarters for the new group and provided "just that degree of stability and encouragement that was so valuable."² From the very beginning institutions representing other faiths were included, e.g. the Jewish Historical Society and the Buddhist Society. For its first few years ABTAPL worked alongside SCOTAPLL, with the latter acting as a regional branch of the national association. However by 1964 SCOTAPLL had ceased as a separate entity, transferring its funds to ABTAPL.

This description of ABTAPL's roots helps to explain its broad multi-faith and non-denominational ethos.

EARLY YEARS UP TO 1974

From its inception, the Association continued a regular pattern of meetings as established by SCOTAPLL. A Bulletin was launched which included articles describing theological and philosophical libraries, features on professional matters, information about new publications, forthcoming meetings and other notices of interest to

¹ Robert L. Collison, "SCOTAPLL and ABTAPL: the early years," *Bulletin of ABTAPL*. New Series 1, no.34/35 (March 1986): 13-15, p.13.

² Collison, "SCOTAPLL and ABTAPL", 13.

members. This became one of the Association's most successful ventures. John Howard, in his overview of ABTAPL in 1974, highlighted that the chief evidence on which any assessment of an Association's success or failure should be based is the written record and in this case the Bulletin. He said "In my opinion, the Bulletin is not only the evidence, it was also the success of ABTAPL."³

Sadly when the Bulletin Editor stood down in 1966, the Association virtually came to a standstill with only 5 meetings between 1966 and 1974. John Howard described this period as "the doldrums"⁴ and ascribed it to a lack of leaders. He recognised that too many libraries in small theological colleges and seminaries did not have the funds to support full-time qualified librarians, and the staff member in charge usually had other responsibilities.

1974 ONWARDS

Fortunately for ABTAPL, when John became Chairman in 1974, he put all of his energies into reviving the Association. When he stood down from this role in 1982 he then took on the editorship of the Bulletin from 1983 until 1987 and he remained on the Committee until 1996. During this lengthy period his enthusiasm had the effect of revitalizing the Association. In recognition of John's services to ABTAPL, John was made an Honorary Life Member - a very rare honour.

Under John's Chairmanship the new committee proposed the following:⁵

- Regular talks and visits to appropriate libraries in Greater London

³ John V. Howard, "The Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries: a personal view of its past, present and future. Part 1", *Bulletin of ABTAPL*, New Series 1, no.1 (Dec.1974): 12-15, p.12. [*Hereafter described as Howard, "Personal View. Part 1"*]

⁴ Howard, "Personal View. Part 1,"13.

⁵ Howard, "Personal View. Part 1,"15.

- Revival of the Bulletin, for current information on the bibliography and librarianship of religion and philosophy
- Publication of a *Directory of Theological Libraries in Britain*
- Possible compilation of *British Union List of Serials in Religion*

All these objectives were achieved and the Association has continued its pattern of regular meetings and visits ever since. A new series of the Bulletin began and a Union List of Periodicals was established, as well as a directory of Theological Libraries.⁶ Other publications followed, such as the “Religious Bibliographies in Serial Literature”.⁷

RESIDENTIAL CONFERENCES

Perhaps one of the most significant ventures was the introduction of the annual residential conference beginning in Durham in 1978. These conferences were organised for many years by Mary Elliott of King’s College London, Honorary Secretary and Conference Organiser from 1974 to 1986. Like John Howard, Mary’s enthusiasm for ABTAPL helped to ensure that the Association continued to thrive over the following years and she too was made an Honorary Life Member of ABTAPL.

The residential conference became invaluable not only for showing the wide variety of modern library practice in many different institutions, but also giving opportunities to meet other librarians in the same specialisations, especially for those working in isolation with no prospects of otherwise broadening their professional education. Long standing friendships have been formed and new professional networks developed.

⁶ Emma R.M Lea, *A guide to the theological libraries of Great Britain and Ireland*, edited by Alan F. Jesson (London: ABTAPL Publishing, 1986).

⁷ Michael J. Walsh, compiler, *Religious Bibliographies in Serial Literature: a Guide* (London: Mansell, 1981).

Over the years many places and libraries have been visited and many themes explored, such as disaster planning, archive administration, library design, and management techniques. In particular, 2 conferences stand out, the Golden Jubilee Conference in Prague in 2006 and the Diamond Jubilee Conference in Rome in 2016, both ably organised by Alan Linfield. At both, the delegates were incredibly privileged to see wonderful libraries with bibliographic treasures rarely on view. *[For an overview of ABTAPL's conferences see the address given by Judith Powles on the first evening of the Rome conference. ⁸]*

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Mary Elliott not only organized the UK meetings and conferences over the years but also she became ABTAPL's representative at the meetings of the Conseil International des Associations des Bibliothèques de Théologie, now BETH. This fruitful relationship has continued ever since, with Penelope Hall and Marion Smith amongst others representing ABTAPL for many years.

ABTAPL has also developed excellent relations with other national associations including ATLA and ANZTLA, with delegates from ABTAPL attending their meetings and vice versa. Much has been gained from this mutual cooperation.

CURRENT POSITION

Membership in 2020 is 129, made up of 95 institutional members, 10 personal members and 24 retired members. Although the closure and/or merger of various institutions and collections has inevitably led to some resignations, it is positive to record that new members are still joining and some former members rejoining.

⁸ Judith C. Powles, "Weather, Welcomes - and Wheelie Bins: an affectionate look-back at the ABTAPL Spring (usually) Conference," *Bulletin of ABTAPL*. New Series 23, no.2 (Summer 2016): 9-26.

ACTIVITIES

ABTAPL continues to meet twice a year—a day meeting is held in the Autumn, which includes a visit to a library in the specialisation, and a residential three-day conference held in the Spring. In recent years there has been a discussion whether the Autumn meeting should continue but a survey reinforced that people appreciated meeting in person to network and mingle. Because of the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the Spring conference had to be cancelled but the Autumn meeting is being held online. It may be possible to hold future conferences as a hybrid with some attendees in person and others online.

PUBLICATIONS

The full list of current publications can be found on ABTAPL's website. These include the *Bulletin*, the *Union List of Periodicals*, a *Directory of Current Institutional Members* and the *ABTAPL Guidelines for Theological Libraries*.

DISCUSSION LIST

ABTAPL has a free online discussion list which can be used for loan requests, advice on a number of topics or indeed anything within the subject areas. <<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/abtapl.html>>

TRAINING DAYS

These sessions, on topics such as copyright, social media, and archive administration, were established to provide an inexpensive means of professional development for members and have proved to be very successful.

CURRENT AND FUTURE PROJECTS

The biggest project launched in 2019 was the collection of Dawson eBooks for librarian/archivist, made available to ABTAPL members. Subsequently Dawson ceased trading but ABTAPL has successfully switched all the Dawsonera ebook titles to Brown's VLeBooks. A benchmarking exercise is being continued and extended with more libraries being encouraged to take part.

AND FINALLY

The Association records its thanks to the many officers and committee members, too many to name here, who have given their time over the years on a voluntary basis, in addition to everything else they do. Without their service, commitment and enthusiasm ABTAPL would not be the flourishing organisation it is today.

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Judith Powles
ABTAPL Chair 1992-2008

The New Testament Church of God - Heritage Centre

[<https://ntcg.org.uk/history/>]

'One generation *after another* will celebrate Your great works; they will pass on the story of Your powerful acts to their children.' (Psalm 145:4, The Voice)

As a relatively new member of the religious archives assemblage and a new member of the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries it was most heartening to read *Memory and Mission: Methodist and Roman Catholic perspectives on archives as tools for evangelism* by William Johnstone (Catholic Archives Society, 2019). Not only did it help to put the challenges we face in the New Testament Church of God Heritage Centre into perspective, it offered a framework within which to review and convey our aspirations, and perhaps most of all it gave us the assurance that ours is not an uncommon experience.

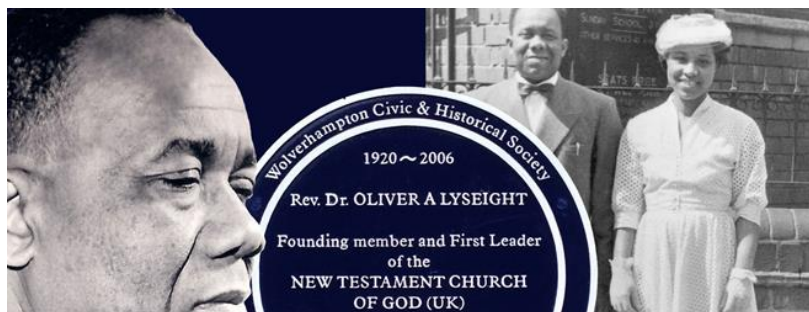
Under the banner of 'Celebrating our Heritage, Embracing our Future' we are developing the Centre to present the story of the New Testament Church of God in England and Wales with reference to our global history.

Our repository contains the Roswith Gerloff collection. Dr Roswith Gerloff (1933-2013) produced some influential work on the social, cultural and missiological merit of the African Caribbean Diaspora contribution to Black Pentecostalism in Britain and to the Christian faith. Her resource significantly widens the scope of the material in the Heritage Centre and the opportunities on offer for research, and for learning about the development of African Caribbean Pentecostalism and the emergence of Black Majority Churches (BMC) outside the historic 'mainstream' denominations, and our contribution to Christianity and its expression via Pentecostalism and ecumenism in the United Kingdom as well as in the global sphere.

We are also developing a collection of MA and PhD Theses on aspects of the Black Majority Church life, whether theology, liturgy, ecclesiology, missiology or traditions, which members of the Church, theological students, academics and researchers can use to bring our story to a wider audience.

In recognition of the founding leader of the NTCG in the UK, Oliver Lyseight, and as part of the Centre's contribution to wider conversations about the BMCs and Pentecostalism, we organise a series of annual lectures from which two publications have been produced: *The Challenges of Black Pentecostal Leadership in the 21st century*, and *The Challenges of Pentecostal Theology in the 21st century*, with a third in the making: *Womanhood in Christian Faith Communities*. For further information, visit:

<https://ntcg.org.uk/education/events/oliver-lyseight-annual-lecture/>



<https://patrickvernon.org.uk/rev-dr-oliver-a-lyseight-historic-blue-plaque-unveiling/>

We are often encouraged by the feedback from well wishers and visitors to our Heritage Centre. Comments include the following:

'We believe that in the long term, the archive will provide a valuable resource for academic research as well as for members of the church and general public.' Prof Jon Stobart (The University of Northampton)

'To the best of my knowledge, there is nowhere in the country that hosts comparative material relating to the development of the BMCs and Black Christianity in general. I expect that the Roswith Gerloff Archive will build upon the resource currently owned by them by collecting and bringing into one place other books, research papers, tapes and DVDs that together add up to an excellent research centre and a place for the preservation of cultural memory for and about the Black Christian community in Britain.' Bishop Dr Joe Aldred (Churches Together in England)

'A walk down memory lane to see friends, teachers, mentors, spiritual guides....Thank you all for making it happen. We have documented for the futures lest they forget. Well done.' Decima Francis MBE (Boyhood to Manhood Foundation)

'Enjoyed looking at my history' Zara Bailey-Maxwell (Young member of the NTCG)

'Very impressed with the great achievement... makes me feel very proud as a member of the body of Christ' Merdella Gutherie (NTCG Church leader)

'Congratulations for establishing the Heritage Centre and the Roswith Gerloff Collection. We have a heritage to celebrate that has helped to shape Christianity in the UK and world wide.' Dr Dulcie Dixon (The Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education).

Despite such a welcome endorsement of our effort, it can sometimes be quite discouraging to note that this area of work is not as highly appreciated in our denomination as it might be. From reading Johnstone's booklet I see that we are not alone. The Archive is like a 'third cousin' in the pecking order for resources. Most of us are engaged as volunteers with a passion for the archive's agenda, seeking answers for the questions we pose and reflect on as we imagine a better future. In the foreword to this little booklet Peter Philips (Archivist, Shrewsbury Diocese) highlights an important question, 'How [can] archives be put to the service of the local

Church?' He then presents a reasonable premise for our *raison d'être*: 'As Christians we have a different approach to our history from that of an increasingly secular world... Our tradition is not to be treasured merely as a museum piece, but as an aid to reflection on the ways in which our history is contextualized, and engages with new situations and circumstances.'" (p vii)

Set within the context of our denomination's global story, the purpose of the Heritage Centre (as stated by our Historical Commission) is to promote the preservation, understanding, and appreciation of the history and heritage of the Church of God, worldwide. It gives special attention to the collecting and preserving of historical documents and to the writing of history at all levels: the local church, the various jurisdictions, the departments and institutions of the church, and the general church. It also seeks to produce, and to encourage the production of, historical materials (written, audio-visual, Internet) and to promote occasions for the church to remember, appreciate and celebrate its history and heritage. [Church of God Heritage Ministries: <https://ntcg.org.uk/history/links-partners/>]

Whether overtly or covertly, our purpose, as Johnstone observes, might be better understood 'By placing [it] firmly within the context of the Christian understanding of mission, it will help to establish the relevance of archives and their potential to assist in one of the core aims of the Church.' (p1)

In addition to the critical task of seeking funds to develop our Centre we have the added task of positively engaging our local members, and our local and national leadership, in the aims and objectives of our Heritage Centre. 'Heritage Ministries' is deemed to be a good starting point. Dr David Muir (the Academic Guardian of the Roswith Gerloff Collection and Archives), states that 'Black [majority] Churches present real opportunities for intercultural learning and shared ministry' [NTCG Heritage Centre flyer]. Amongst other strategies, we are developing links with the Heritage and Interpretation course leaders at the University of Leicester to assist us in the effort to:

- gather and share the story of our denominational pilgrimage from the Caribbean to the UK from our perspective;
- contribute to the mission and ministry of the Church;
- provide opportunities to members and others to scrutinize and gain in-depth understanding of the church's theological and ecclesiastical tradition;
- contribute to and sustain our corporate memory of the past;
- present various tools and means to interpret our past;
- identify lessons for the immediate and long term future;
- collect and present memoirs to substantiate the spiritual formation of the church members/leaders;
- document our Pentecostal heritage and legacy.

Membership of ABTAPL gives us the privileged opportunities for meaningful conversations with peers, shared learning and the potential for collaborative engagements in the interests of our individual and corporate religious archive initiatives.

ABTAPL members are welcome to make an appointment to visit the Heritage Centre after the Covid-19 related restrictions have been lifted. Visits are set for Thursdays but arrangements can be made on other days if necessary.

Phyllis Thompson

Rev Phyllis Thompson is a Pentecostal educator. She has a background in development education and Pastoral ministry in the UK. She served as the National Education Director for the New Testament Church of God in England and Wales from 2007-2018. She is the pioneer and co-ordinator of the New Testament Church of God Heritage Centre and the Oliver Lyseight Lectures. Phyllis is currently a member of the leadership team of her local Church in Northampton, England, and a member of the European Pentecostal Theological Association [EPTA] Executive Committee. She sits on the Church of a God International Education Board and is a member of the Church of God International Historical Commission. She has written on topics to do with Black Majority Churches, and women in Christian leadership. Recent publications include her contribution to *Faith of our Fathers* (Pathway Press 2009), *Challenges of Black Pentecostal Leadership in the 21st Century* (SPCK 2013) and *Challenges of Pentecostal Theology in the 21st Century* (SPCK 2020) the latter two for which she is the editor.

A week in the life of a theological librarian in the age of Covid

Last year I wrote ‘A week in the life of a theological librarian’ for the *ABTAPL Bulletin*⁹. I had reason to re-read it recently – we have a new Principal, and I thought it would help him to get an idea of what I do – and I was struck by how much my daily working life has changed under Covid. In May 2019 my day was full of people – students in the library, the bustle and camaraderie of the staff room, the sociability of the dining hall, visitors around the campus, faces old and new.

But now the Queen’s campus has a very different feel. Although we have about twenty-five residential students on site, and a small number of staff, the campus as a place of learning is essentially closed. All teaching is online. At the time of writing, Birmingham has just been placed in the Government’s new Tier 2 category, which means that people from different households cannot meet socially indoors. We are still processing what that means for us, though there are exceptions for educational and work settings.

The library has been closed since March. I was fortunate to be able to continue to come into work. I live locally, I commute by bicycle, and the library is located in a building which is isolated from the rest of the campus. With some additional protocols in place for my health and safety, I carried on, and surprisingly perhaps, there was plenty to do. I took the opportunity to upgrade our Heritage library management system, completed the year’s weeding programme, and navigated the transition to a new e-books platform following the demise of Dawsonera in June. I also had to deal with a serious computer hardware failure, which wasn’t easy given that our outsourced IT support is now based in Chesterfield.

Initially we provided no loans service (at that stage there was no one on site to handle the post). The Common Awards Hub, which resources Anglican training institutions nationwide, stepped up and negotiated e-book deals with generous publishers. The Copyright

⁹ *ABTAPL Bulletin* Vol.26 No.2 Summer 2019, p.19-29.

Licencing Agency (CLA) relaxed its restrictions on scanning. Somehow our students made it through to the end of term.

In June we began to think about the autumn term. The Library Committee met on Zoom. I presented two papers, ‘Coming out of the lockdown’ and ‘Interim library provision’, in which I attempted to set out the pros and cons of various scenarios for the new academic year. Two things became clear to me. One was that any scenario which involved people coming into the library would be fraught with difficulty, while offering a postal / collection service would be manageable and equitable to all students. The second was that if the demand for borrowing was anything like at normal levels, then the circulation system – based on the rapid turnover of 7-day loans – would simply not work. We would need to reduce the demand and scale up our e-provision ¹⁰. In July and August we piloted a postal / collection service.

So what was my working day like during this period? It was certainly quiet. I brought in my own kettle and tea bags and used the fridge in the Student Common Room. At lunch I sat in my office and listened to Test Match Special or BBC Sounds. Occasionally one of my colleagues would knock on my window and we would have a chat through the glass (a small number of tutors live on site and carried on using their offices in another building). As the summer progressed we took to sitting out – socially distanced – on the benches which are located around the site. By July, my assistant, Jane, who had been ‘shielding’, was allowed to visit, bringing homemade cakes and biscuits. By August she was back at work.

In September we started using Hermes to deliver books, a system which is still under review (some parcels have gone missing). Induction Week came and went. Under normal circumstances I run a programme of library inductions and information skills classes at which I meet new students for the first time. There is a feeling of excitement, a raising of the tempo. This year I produced some

¹⁰ In September the Library Committee agreed “that tutors should actively promote e-resources as an alternative to book borrowing while not discouraging book borrowing per se”.

YouTube videos instead. One advantage of videos is that students can watch them in their own time and at their own pace. But for me Induction Week created barely a ripple in my life.

Much of my time in September was spent working with colleagues to transfer the former St John's Nottingham distance learning modules which Queen's has taken on following the closure of St John's. I retrieved scans from the CLA's Digital Content Store and liaised with former St John's (now Queen's) tutors to make them available via our Moodle.

Meanwhile the beginning of term at the end of the month was marked by the re-opening of the dining hall almost six months to the day since it was last in service. For those of us who can make use of it (residential students and a smattering of staff) it has been a great blessing. We sit two to a table, socially distanced, and enjoy a modicum of normality as well as a good meal.

But at the same time Birmingham went into a 'local lockdown'. Staff were once again asked to work from home where possible. The reintroduction of face-to-face meetings proved to be a false dawn and we returned to Zoom. My colleague Jane was asked to stay away.

So this week in the life of a theological librarian in the age of Covid will have a very different feel to it. It is offered for interest, and for posterity.

Monday October 19th

Back in May 2019 Monday morning began with tidying up after a busy residential weekend. This Monday in October 2020 begins with a dribble of books in the Returned Books box, which is now located in the foyer of the Admin Building at the entrance to the campus.

The second job, as then, is to check and respond to emails. Twenty-two have come in over the weekend, including three more "friend

suggestions” from Facebook, even though the library’s Facebook page has been dormant for over three years. There are three emails from students acknowledging receipt of Hermes deliveries, one of which is particularly good news, as the package had gone missing for almost four weeks; a weekly order status report from Askews (of whom more later); two publishers’ catalogues; a copyright query from a tutor; and a student complaining that the door code to the store room (where the books for collection are held) had changed. This was entirely my fault. Notification of the change was circulated to all residential students, but not to non-residential students, so when the latter choose to collect their books, I need to remember to give them the new number. On this occasion someone was present to help, so the student was not inconvenienced.

The main job on a Monday in the age of Covid is to fulfil the book requests for the collection / postal service. This service is offered to all students, who can choose their preferred method of delivery. Students choosing the postal method are required to send me an email confirming their address. When we launched the service in the summer, we had no idea what the uptake would be, and in a sense we still don’t. Like the Covid figures, the numbers are rising, but we are not sure where they are heading. In the meantime we are offering a twice-weekly service. The cut-off points for ordering are 1 pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. I run a report which lists all the books which have been reserved, go round the library picking them off the shelf, issue them, and take those which are to be collected to the Admin Building.

The postal service requires more work. In the light of the problems we have been having with Hermes, we prefer to use Royal Mail when we can. In practice this means that we use Royal Mail when the package will fit through the letter box, and Hermes when it won’t. I take the Royal Mail parcels over to Reception and request the Hermes collection online.

But this week another problem arose. I discovered this morning that one colleague is unwell and that another is working from home. Last week’s post was still sitting at Reception. So today I have had to get

to grips with the postage, stamp up last week's Royal Mail parcels as well as today's, and send out emails to those students who might be wondering where their books have got to. Plus the usual Hermes batch. It took most of the afternoon. A rather fraught day.

Books discharged	23
Books put out for collection	23
Books / parcels posted ¹¹	13 / 6
Emails received and opened ¹²	14
Emails sent	17
Books catalogued	0

Tuesday October 20th

Among this morning's emails is a circular from a colleague with some initial feedback from students on their experience of digital delivery ("generally appreciative and positive recognise the challenges ..." etc). There was no mention of library services.

There is also an email from a student of another institution asking about external membership. It has always been important to me that we are able to offer some level of service to anyone who asks, even if it is only reading rights. But now the library is closed, and while we continue to offer the collection service to existing external members, we are not registering new members. I have to disappoint the enquirer.

The main job today is cataloguing the books we have inherited from St John's. Because we are continuing to make use of their scans, we need to 'own' the originals from which they were made. So we identified the titles we needed, submitted a list to St John's before they closed, and acquired c. 200 books. We are not obliged to catalogue them all, but we are adding some to stock. Today I

¹¹ Not including those which missed the post the previous week!

¹² I have excluded from these figures emails which I delete unopened. With the benefit of Outlook's Preview, which enables me to 'read' without opening, this is a large number.

catalogued twenty-five. In the absence of my colleague, Jane, I also have to do the processing, which involves de-commissioning the St John's stamps as well as adding our own. It turns out to be quite a long job.

A Tuesday in term time used to be the busiest day of the week, with part-time students coming into the library prior to their classes in the evening. I would usually work to 7 pm. I would meet students in the dining hall for the evening meal. But now there are no part-time students on site, there is no evening meal, and there is no reason for me to work late. So I go home at 5.

Books discharged	10
Books put out for collection	0
Books / parcels posted	0 / 0
Emails received and opened	30
Emails sent	11
Books catalogued	25

Wednesday October 21st

I was in late this morning. Last night my boiler broke down and I had to stay home to try to get it fixed. When I arrive at midday I am under pressure to deliver the collection / postal service. It is after 3 pm by the time I take the Royal Mail parcels to the post box, which is a five-minute walk from the campus. The light drizzle reflects my mood.

I have two phone calls today. One is from Jane offering me some apples. The other is from the widower of a former external library member who has recently come across her old library card. Before my time the library used to offer life memberships, which I have always honoured though we no longer offer them. But one consequence is that our 'life members' remain on the system until – well, until I hear that they are no longer with us.

Among the emails there is another copyright query from a conscientious tutor. She has the UK edition of a book. The library holds the US edition. The CLA permits scanning from the UK edition but not the US edition. It is the same book (Jisc's Library Hub Discover has a single, merged catalogue record). It is so frustrating. We could buy the book on Amazon or we could contact the US publisher. I ask the tutor whether it is worth the effort.

Books discharged	4
Books put out for collection	18
Books / parcels posted	7 / 4
Emails received and opened	15
Emails sent	17
Books catalogued	0

Thursday October 22nd

A bright, sunny day, and it starts well. The engineer manages to fix my boiler at the second attempt, and I am in work by 10.30.

I still send out overdue notices on Thursdays, though there are now fewer of them. The number of books on loan is down by half (457 compared with 930 this time last year), but the number of new loans is nearer a quarter of what we would normally expect (1076 in October 2019 – the figure so far for this month is 238). There were only twelve library users with overdue books this week.

This figure does not include those books which are still 'overdue' from before lockdown. Like many libraries we renewed books on behalf of our users over the summer. We recognised that for many people returning library books was not easy, either because they were 'shielding', or because of travel restrictions, or the lack of easy access to a post office. Since the end of September we have no longer been automatically renewing books, but have extended the online renewals entitlement, and in the meantime I have been gently (I hope) trying to persuade those last few borrowers to return their books. There were eleven of them at the last count.

Since the demise of Dawsons we have been using Askews to supply our printed books, and this week we received their latest delivery, which I have catalogued today. But the numbers are down. Only two of our tutors are continuing to recommend new books on a regular basis, and with the focus on e-provision there has been no demand for multiple copies. Weekly orders have become monthly orders, and deliveries have become occasional. New book cataloguing is no longer a weekly activity.

This afternoon I have a meeting with our new Principal, Clive. This is a tough time to be taking on a new post. How do you get to know your new team when so many of us are working from home? I think we both appreciate a face-to-face meeting. Clive briefs me on the progress of some recent new appointments. Interviews were held on Monday. In normal circumstances I might have met the candidates in the staff room, but on this occasion the only indication that something was up was the sight of one of my colleagues wearing a tie.

I use the meeting to brief Clive on library matters. The library budget will need to be presented to the next meeting of the Library Committee. In these uncertain times it is hard to know how much we should be spending on our resources. The cost of journals continues to rise, but for six months the printed issues have been almost entirely unused.

On Thursday afternoons I used to put new books out on the New Books Display, but that is now redundant. Instead I email the tutors who have recommended the books to let them know that they are now available.

Books discharged	16
Books put out for collection	0
Books / parcels posted	0 / 0
Emails received and opened	24
Emails sent	25
Books catalogued	6

Friday October 23rd

This morning I catch up with a backlog of CLA forms. Tutors send me forms when they put new scans up on Moodle and I use them to fill in the CLA record sheet, which is how we report our scanning to the CLA at the end of the year ¹³. I can trust some tutors to have checked their scanning on the CLA's Check Permissions tool, but not others. But this batch is clear of any problems, and the job doesn't take me very long. My only concern is that there aren't very many forms. Does this mean that there isn't very much new scanning? Or that tutors aren't reporting it? The termly 'spot check' will reveal some omissions, but not all.

I also respond to a couple of emails from students about their library books. I am surprised by the absence of enquiries about access to online resources. Silence is always hard to interpret. It may mean that the information skills videos were so effective that everyone is happily making use of the online provision. Or it may mean that students have got stuck and are reluctant to say so. I had one enquiry earlier in the week about access to a Sage journal. These are always a problem because off-site users have to set up their own personal account, and the instructions for doing so run to two pages. So I sent off the instructions with the usual "let me know how you get on", but I haven't heard back. It is hard to know what to conclude.

This afternoon I run off another reservations report and put out seven more books for collection.

Friday afternoons have become my 'housework' time. The postal service produces a lot of waste which I take to the recycling bin, and my office no longer gets cleaned so I do it myself. I also catch up with the shelving – there is no one to do it for me now.

¹³ We are in the third year of the CLA's three-year cycle, so we only have to report new scans.

Books discharged	9
Books put out for collection	7
Books / parcels posted	0 / 0
Emails received and opened	8
Emails sent	6
Books catalogued	0

Reflections

The age of Covid presents professional challenges for librarians. It is likely to hasten the shift from face-to-face to virtual, and from print to online. There will be some benefits. I have already noted the advantages of YouTube videos for information skills. But there are losses, too. Educators will need to reflect on a pedagogy which is driven by technology and its long-term impact on learning. Do bite-sized chunks of content foster deep thinking? Should learning resources be selected on the basis of online availability? And for those of us who are presiding over libraries devoid of users, how do we even attempt to measure the impact of the loss of browsing as a means of discovery?

These are the megatrends which I will continue to observe with interest, highlight when appropriate, and respond to as best I can. But I will not lose sleep over them as they are largely outside my control.

I am more concerned about my experience as a solo librarian. I think there have been some benefits. When I came in on Wednesday I was quite relieved not to be bombarded with a backlog of enquiries about missing books and paper jams. I had a lot to do and I needed to get on. There have been times when my working life has felt like a bit of a holiday, and the prospect of reopening has seemed daunting.

On the other hand I am not entirely happy about my new role as a postman. I reckon I now spend 20% of my time servicing the collection / postal service, and while this is a necessary and –

hopefully – temporary task, there is also the prospect of it taking over more of my time in the short term.

A more serious concern is the strong sense of detachment which has come to characterise my working life. One of the things which has struck me this week is how empty my diary has become. My meeting with Clive was my only engagement. In normal circumstances I would have had meetings with students, appointments to register new external members, notes of visitors. My daily face-to-face interactions with library users would have provided me with a regular supply of feedback on the library service.

I particularly regret the lack of contact with my colleagues. I have barely seen some of them for over six months, and while most of us have longstanding relationships to fall back on, that is not true of new staff. I think this is a real challenge. Liaison is a key task for a solo librarian, and without the informal contact which the staff room, for example, facilitates, there is a risk that I lose touch with what is happening on the ground. Silence is not necessarily an indicator that all is well.

Last year I wrote in the *ABTAPL Bulletin* about isolation in the context of workplace stress¹⁴. But detachment feels slightly different. It affects one's sense of belonging, of being part of a common purpose. The age of Covid exacerbates isolation and increases the risk of detachment. I am still searching for a solution to that.

Michael Gale
Librarian
The Queen's Foundation

¹⁴ *ABTAPL Bulletin* Vol.26 No.3 Autumn 2019, p.6-13.

Staying well through this pandemic

by Sally Gibbs and Gudrun Warren

Sally:

As I mentioned in the Chair's Report at the online AGM, the Covid-19 pandemic is affecting all of us. For many, our emotions are heightened at the moment; things we normally cope with easily can seem extraordinarily difficult. Those of us who already had challenging personal circumstances have found them worsened because of the many restrictions we are having to endure. In our work lives, some of us are frantically busy with added responsibilities and covering tasks usually undertaken by others; while some of us are far quieter than normal – which in itself can be disturbing on many levels. The stress we are all experiencing manifests differently for each of us.

You may have noticed that students/library users or colleagues are more demanding than usual; we need to cut them some slack. Likewise, we need to cut ourselves some slack. It is OK not to be or feel OK. You might be calmly sailing through these strange times, but if so need to be alert for those who are struggling. We need to be aware that people may need more of our time just now. It can be irritating or frustrating when others take up a lot of our time, but it may be very important for them to have this contact, and frankly it might be the only meaningful communication they – or you – are getting at the moment. We are blessed with multiple means of communication so it is good to be willing to chat via email, TEAMS, Zoom, WhatsApp, whatever. With this in mind, we are initiating some Zoom lunchtime informal drop-ins, starting in January 2021.

Gudrun has some great ideas for helping us to stay well.

Gudrun: Wellbeing: how to help yourself cope in daily life.

Please note: if you have serious issues with mental health, you should consult your doctor. If you are experiencing problems, talk to a friend - partly because talking helps, and partly because when you

really need the help you may not be in a position to ask for that help, so having a friend to encourage you or even to advocate for you can be life saving.

But long before reaching a point of crisis, there are techniques you can employ to help you cope. The most basic of these is to breathe. It may sound silly; after all, none of us would be alive if we didn't breathe. But how well do you breathe? If you have singing or forms of sport as a hobby, you will probably have been taught to breathe deeply from the diaphragm, but not everyone has learnt this. So now, as you are reading this, concentrate on your breathing. Notice the breath entering your body, bringing with it essential oxygen that nourishes you. Let your belly expand (in fact, the diaphragm moves downwards to allow more space for the lungs), let your lungs fill with fresh air, notice how your whole being responds to that life-giving air. Breathe out, expelling the used air to allow space for a fresh intake of breath; if you don't breathe out properly, you can't take in new air properly and your breaths will become more superficial and less beneficial. You can practise counting as you breathe: in to a count of four, out to a count of five (or five to nine) - effectively, an in-breath takes less time than an out-breath. As you concentrate on your breathing, feel the breath entering your body, notice how the effects travel right to the extremities of your body, down your legs, into your feet and toes, your arms hands and feet. Each breath is fuelling the blood travelling throughout your body, invigorating every part of you. Return your attention to the outside; do you notice a difference in how you are feeling, and how you perceive your surroundings?

Breathing exercises are useful if you experience anxiety: typically, when anxious your breathing becomes shallower, and so you enter a cycle of feeling worse because you aren't breathing so well, which in turn raises your anxiety and causes you to breathe even less well. If you notice this cycle beginning, take an intentionally deep breath to break the cycle and to draw your attention to the problem. Then concentrate on your breathing, just for a matter of seconds, to reset your body and your mind.

Many of us spend our waking (and possibly also our sleeping) hours with our mind constantly chattering: we may be thinking about things that have happened, planning what is to happen, rehearsing conversations, writing a shopping list. One way to improve wellbeing is to attempt to break in on the constant bombardment and give yourself a break, some time out, some time just to be with yourself, to recover and to re-energize. Whilst it's not always a bad thing to let your mind wander (in fact, it can be very positive), it can also drain huge amounts of time and energy. And if you are under stress mentally already, then you need to channel energy, not expend it worthlessly. It's worth reflecting on what your mind serves up to you - giving this some attention has a few benefits. Awareness of what your mental chatter involves will help you spot when it starts; it is such an incessant part of many people's existence that simply noticing it is difficult. However, the simple act of noticing it necessarily puts a momentary brake on it - you can't be ruminating and noticing your rumination at the same time, at least not beyond the split second when you begin to notice it. If your rumination is making you uncomfortable - perhaps a sense of working yourself up, or running yourself down - then noticing the content may help you address the issue. What are the things you typically say to yourself in such moments? Are there particular phrases you use repeatedly that hurt you, make you feel worse? Are those things necessary, sensible, constructive - if they are hurting you, then almost certainly not. By capturing those negative thoughts, bringing them out into the open, you can begin to question their role in your life and perhaps decide that it's time they had no place in your life. You might also question what set you off on your train of rumination - was it something someone said to you? Something you did? We each have different triggers for sending us into negative thinking, and identifying yours can help you notice when they occur, and prompt you to take a step back rather than just plunging into a negative train of thought that will make you feel worse. At the point when you notice negative thinking beginning, you could just focus on your breathing to give yourself space not to react (immediate, automatic and without consideration) but instead to respond (considered, mindful and aware).

Another fundamental technique for increasing awareness and quieting negative thoughts is the 'body scan'. In this, you focus on each part of your body in turn, directing your attention to it, noticing how it feels, then gradually expanding that attention to encompass the whole of your body. You can start by noticing your feet, work up your legs to your belly, chest, up your back into your shoulders, down each arm and then up your neck into your head. Some people prefer to work the other way from head to feet. Either way, whilst bringing each individual part of your body into focus, be increasingly aware of the totality of your presence, and sense how you are rooted - your feet to the ground, your weight pressing into the chair on which you are sitting, the reality of your own presence. When you return your awareness to your surroundings, try to retain a sense of that reality of your presence, grounding you in your daily life even when things may seem overwhelming.

More extended meditations involve longer periods of sitting with yourself in silence; like most things, meditating is both a skill and a discipline which take time and effort to practise. But meditation doesn't have to be something you do every day for an hour at a time; indeed, if you've never tried it before then try for two or three minutes. The aim is to give yourself a break from the chatter, from the reactionary approach to life that jerks you from one crisis to another and leaves you feeling out of control. Instead, meditation offers you a safe space to become at peace with yourself, to grow internally so that you have more resilience in the face of what life throws at you. Meditation may not come easily, and indeed may not suit you at all, so don't assume you are a failure if it doesn't appear to work - a 'bad' session may in fact be very productive.

If you find when you get anxious that you are drawn to exercise, then develop that as your approach to helping yourself. Exercise, too, can be done mindfully: if you take a walk, notice the feel of the surface beneath your feet, listen to the sound made by your feet on the ground. Allow your senses to inform your experience: what else can you hear as you walk - traffic, children playing, birdsong, the wind rustling the leaves? What can you smell - the scent of earth and fallen leaves after rain, late flowering shrubs, car exhaust fumes?

What can you see - different shades of green in hedges, grass, crops beginning to grow, the different colours of front doors in a row of houses?

Above all, find someone you trust and talk to them. Talking - and, just as importantly, being listened to - can transform the way you feel. Simply being able to enunciate your concerns can help to put them in perspective or help you to see a way to deal with them. If you find people wanting to talk to you, perhaps people who haven't previously shown much inclination to do so, then consider that maybe they need this outlet, and try to give them your attention - listening, really listening to another person is another skill, and another gift that can be life-giving, not only for them but also for you. If you are anxious and somebody comes to you to talk, focusing your attention on that other person who needs you is another way of setting your own worries in perspective, seeing a bigger picture, breaking out of an unhealthy pattern of rumination. This isn't saying 'their problems are worse than yours so snap out of it', because everybody's problems and concerns are worthy of respect. But one of the most valuable things you can do when you are feeling bad is to stay connected to other people, whether those people are tried and tested friends or fresh encounters that perhaps have been sent to you at this time both for their sake and for yours.

The essential idea with these suggestions is that wellbeing, our mental state, can become worse if we allow ourselves to be caught up in negative thoughts, anxieties and uncontrollable worries, allowing them to run us. Small techniques for breaking the cycle of negative thoughts may be enough to keep us feeling well. We may need more help than that, but breaking the immediate cycle may be enough to help us see that we need more help.

Some resources:

There are lots of apps out there for meditation and mindfulness, just search Google or app store for some ideas, or ask around for ideas. Do try out a range, as the approach may or may not suit you.

www.mindful.org has a range of resources including basic meditations and suggestions of apps to try.

The UCLA Health website and app gives some guided meditations, further information on mental health and ways to support wellbeing: <https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/default.cfm>

The Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Health Trust offers a range of booklets giving advice on various physical and mental health issues, with further advice and resources: <https://web.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp/>

All in the mind - this Radio 4 programme discusses a range of mental health issues; previous episodes are available on BBC Sounds.

Sally Gibbs
(ABTAPL Chair)

Gudrun Warren
(Librarian and Curator, Norwich Cathedral)

Risk Mitigation

Whilst currently very important this area of work has been relevant for some time. You'll know the scene well, I'm sure. The teaching team, and key support staff, are sat in a room (those were the days) with external academics conducting a course revalidation or a QAA appraisal. The visitors are trying to work out the viability of your course offering long term; or who, other than the Programme Director, knows the finer points of procedure? In other words, can your institution survive a crisis?

It's a huge question and as librarians we have an obligation to work out:

- How we deal with threats to our stock and space - Physical disaster plans
- How we deal with threats to our clients and staff - Health and safety guidelines
- How we deal with personnel changes via death, illness, promotion or leaving the institution - Systems information
- How we deal with the information life cycle – Information governance

To be fair a Library manual is a daunting prospect. Time consuming, hard to keep up to date, a bit tedious but vital as a means of continuity.

In response to both our contemporary situation, and the summer survey, the committee is hoping to offer a chance to look at Risk Management during the Spring Conference, with the possibility of a more in-depth look at the topic in the summer.

If you have any experience in this area, please do get in touch.

In the mean time if you would like to do some reading our eBook offering includes:

Bawden, David *Introduction to Information Science* London: Facet, 2012

Crockett, Margaret *The no-nonsense guide to archives and recordkeeping* (London: Facet, 2016)

Fritts, Jack E. *Mistakes in academic library management: grievous errors and how to avoid them* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press Inc., 2009)

Lambe, Patrick *Organizing knowledge: taxonomies, knowledge and organization effectiveness* (Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2007)

Matassa, Freda *Valuing Your Collection: A practical guide for museums, libraries and archives* (London: Facet, 2017)

Matthews, Joseph R. *The evaluation and measurement of library services* (2nd ed.) (Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited, 2017)

Millar, Laura A. *Archives: Principles and Practices* (London: Facet, 2017)

O'Connor, Steve *Library management in disruptive times: skills and knowledge for an uncertain future* (London: Facet, 2017)

W.E. Field
ABTAPL Committee