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## **A process to be managed: research studies in preservation management in UK libraries**

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**'A PROCESS TO BE MANAGED'**

**RESEARCH STUDIES IN PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT  
IN UK LIBRARIES**

**by**

**GRAHAM MATTHEWS**

**Published works submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the award of  
the Doctor of Philosophy degree of  
Loughborough University**

**December 1997**

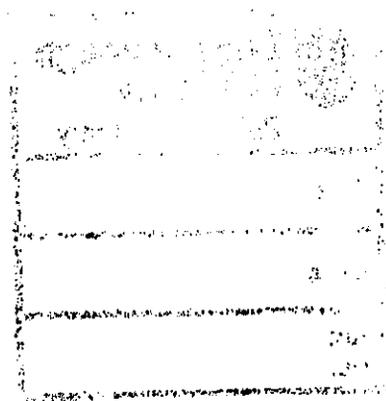
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## ABSTRACT

The studies investigate and analyse the management of preservation in libraries in the United Kingdom (UK).

The submission comprises five studies which relate to key themes within preservation management in UK libraries: preliminary studies; a large-scale investigative survey of preservation policy and practice in all sectors in UK libraries; an investigation of current practice in a specific aspect of preservation management, disaster management, in all sectors of UK libraries and other related organisations; an investigation of the preservation of collections in a specific subject area, Russian materials, in a selection of UK libraries; and, studies in three areas of preservation management on the current agenda: digital materials, preservation surveys and research.

The studies provide an overview of preservation management in UK libraries; demonstrate that preservation in UK libraries needs to be managed; show that it can be managed; suggest further work to be done and ways in which preservation management in UK libraries can be developed.



## **DEDICATION**

To Joan, Christopher and Robin

For all your time I've spent on this

Thank you!

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BLRDD	British Library Research and Development Department
BLRIC	British Library Research and Innovation Centre
CAN	Conservation Administration News
CPA	Commission on Preservation and Access
CURL	Consortium of Research Libraries
ECPA	European Commission on Preservation and Access
HEFC	Higher Education Funding Councils
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee of the Higher Education Funding Council
LIC	Library and Information Commission
LIR	Library and Information Research Report
NPO	National Preservation Office
NPO PAPS	National Preservation Office Preservation Administrators' Panel
RLG	Research Libraries Group

SCONUL      Standing Conference of National and University  
Libraries

SCONUL      Standing Conference of National and University  
ACOSEEM    Libraries Advisory Committee on Slavonic and East  
European Materials

UGC          University Grants Committee

UK          United Kingdom

UKPA        United Kingdom Preservation Administrators

US          United States

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to all my colleagues in the Department of Information and Library Studies, Loughborough University for putting up with me during the work on these studies. I am also grateful to project funders and all those librarians and others who have participated in the studies in so many ways.

Above all, I should like to express my sincere thanks to those I have worked with so closely on the studies, Professor John Feather, Paul Eden, Alan Poulter and Emma Blagg. I have enjoyed working with them and greatly value their encouragement and support.

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## CO-AUTHORED PUBLICATIONS - A NOTE

The following information is provided in addition to the % involvement in co-authored works given at the end of the bibliographic details for each work included in this submission.

### *Preliminary Studies*

These are the sole work of the author. These items derive largely from the BLRDD funded research into the preservation of Russian/Soviet materials in UK libraries and the development of teaching materials on preservation management while the author was at Liverpool Polytechnic.

### *General Study*

The author was co-director of the project and was fully and equally involved in all its stages and publications.

### *Disaster Management*

The author submitted the proposal for this project and (as Project Head) was fully and equally involved in all its stages and publications.

### *Russian/Soviet materials*

The author submitted the proposal for this project which he solely undertook. The award was made under the BLRDD Small Grants Scheme to help 'new' researchers.

### *Current Agenda*

#### *Preservation of digital materials*

The author was approached by BLRIC for advice on this topic and subsequently negotiated the initial proposal to undertake the project. As he was then collaborating with him in developing teaching of preservation management and records management, the author asked colleague, Alan Poulter, an expert in information technology, to work with him. The author was fully and equally involved in all stages of the project and publications.

*Surveying collections*

Sole authorship. The author worked on this item from 1990 onwards, drawing on the Russian/Soviet materials research and literature. Some material was also included from the Loughborough Study.

*Research*

The author was commissioned by BLRIC to undertake this project and it is his sole work.

*General*

The author was invited to submit this paper which he wrote alone.

## **COPYRIGHT**

Copyright holders are indicated at the end of each reference in the *List of Works Submitted*.

## LIST OF WORKS SUBMITTED

### PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT IN BRITISH LIBRARIES: PRELIMINARY STUDIES

Matthews, Graham (1990) Preservation and library management. *Library Management*, 11 (4), 4-9. (Copyright: MCB University Press Ltd)

Matthews, Graham (1991) The literature of preservation: 80s review/90s preview. In: *Preservation and publication. Proceedings of a seminar at York University 17-18 July 1990*. London: National Preservation Office, The British Library, 9-19. (National Preservation Office Seminar Papers 5) ISBN 0 7123 0244 1 (Copyright: Author)

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### PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT IN BRITISH LIBRARIES: A GENERAL STUDY

Eden, Paul, Feather, John and Matthews, Graham (1993) Preservation policies and conservation in British academic libraries in 1993: a survey. *British Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 8 (2), 65-88. (33%) (Copyright: Joint, Taylor Graham and authors)

Eden, Paul, Feather, John and Matthews, Graham (1994) Of special concern? Preservation in perspective. *Public Library Journal*, 9 (2), 33-34, 36-38. (33%) (Copyright: Public Libraries Group of the Library Association)

Eden, Paul, Feather, John and Matthews, Graham (1994) Preservation and library management: a reconsideration. *Library Management*, 15 (4), 5-11. (33%) (Copyright: MCB University Press Limited)

Feather, John, Matthews, Graham and Eden, Paul (1996) *Preservation management. Policies and practices in British libraries*. Aldershot: Gower. xii, 174pp. ISBN 0 566 07622 5. (33%) (Copyright: Authors)

*Please note that this book is submitted separately from the two bound volumes containing the other works submitted.*

Feather, John, Matthews, Graham, and Eden, Paul (1997) *Preservation management in Britain: present practice and future strategy*. In: *Piecing together the jigsaw: the framework for a national preservation strategy for libraries and archives. Proceedings of the National Preservation Office Conference 18-20 September 1995, York, organised by the National Preservation Office*. London: National Preservation Office, The British Library, 3-10. ISBN 0 7123 4504 3. (33%) (Copyright: Authors)

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## **PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT IN BRITISH LIBRARIES: DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

Matthews, Graham (1994) *Disaster management: controlling the plan*. *Managing Information*, 1 (7/8), 24-27. (Copyright: Aslib, The Association for Information Management)

Matthews, Graham and Eden, Paul (1995) *Disaster management: guidelines for library managers*. In: Howell, Alan, Mansell, Heather and Roubos-Bennett, Marion (comps.). *Redefining disasters: a decade of counter-disaster planning. Papers submitted by speakers Wednesday 20 - Friday 22 September 1995 State Library of New South Wales Sydney, Australia*. Sydney: Conservation Access, State Library of New South Wales, 137-151. ISBN 0 7310 6600 6. (75%) (Copyright: The State Library of New South Wales)

Matthews, Graham and Eden, Paul (1995) *Disaster management in academic libraries: a brief overview*. In: Revill, Don (ed.). *Working papers on disaster management*.

[Brighton]: SCONUL, 3-9. ISBN 0907130 52 6. (75%) (Copyright: Authors)

Eden, Paul and Matthews, Graham (1996) Disaster management in libraries. *Library Management*, 17 (3), 5-12. (Copyright: MCB University Press Limited) (Reprinted in: (1997) *Facilities*, 15 (1/2), 42-49.) (50%)

Matthews, Graham (1996) Disasters in libraries: lessons from Norwich, guidelines from Loughborough. Paper presented at the United Kingdom Serials Group 19th Annual Conference, 1996, Keele University. *Serials*, 9 (3), 245-250. (Copyright: United Kingdom Serials Group)

Matthews, Graham and Eden, Paul (1996) *Disaster management in British libraries: project report with guidelines for library managers*. London: British Library Research and Development Department. (Library and Information Research Report 109) x, 176pp. ISBN 0 7123 3306 1. (50%) (Copyright: The British Library Board)

Matthews, Graham and Eden, Paul (1996) Disaster management training in libraries. *Library Review*, 45 (1), 30-38. (50%) (Copyright: MCB University Press Limited)

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## **PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT IN BRITISH LIBRARIES: RUSSIAN MATERIALS**

Matthews, Graham (1991) *Preservation of Russian and Soviet materials in British libraries. Report to the British Library Research and Development Department on project SI/SG/014*. Liverpool: Liverpool Polytechnic Press. (British Library Research and Development Department Report 6033; School of Information Science and Technology, Librarianship and Information Studies Division, Liverpool Polytechnic, Occasional Paper 16) viii, 63pp. ISBN 0 901537 23 3 (Copyright: The British Library Board)

## **PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT IN BRITISH LIBRARIES: THE CURRENT AGENDA**

### ***Preservation and Digital Materials***

Matthews, Graham, Poulter, Alan and Blagg, Emma (1997). *Preservation of digital materials. Policy and strategy issues for the UK*. London: British Library Research and Innovation Centre. (British Library Research and Innovation Report 41; JISC/NPO Studies on the Preservation of Electronic Materials) viii, 44pp. ISBN 0 7123 3313 4. (33%)

(Also available at:

<<http://info.lboro.ac.uk/departments/lis/staff/apoulter/digpres.html#contents>>)

(Copyright: Joint Information Systems Committee of the Higher Education Funding Bodies)

### ***Surveying Collections***

Matthews, Graham (1995) Surveying collections: the importance of condition assessment for preservation management. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 27 (4), 227-236. (Copyright: Bowker-Saur)

### ***Research***

Matthews, Graham (1996) *Research in preservation management*. London: British Library Research and Innovation Centre. (British Library Research and Innovation Report 30). viii, 57pp. (Copyright: The British Library Board)

### ***General***

Matthews, Graham (1997) Preservation management. *Library and Information Briefings*, (73). 19pp. (Copyright: The British Library Board and South Bank University)

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 AIM and OBJECTIVES**

The overall aim and objectives of this study are:

### **AIM**

To investigate and analyse the management of preservation in libraries in the United Kingdom (UK)

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To provide an overview of preservation management in UK libraries
2. To demonstrate that preservation in UK libraries needs to be managed
3. To show that preservation in UK libraries can be managed
4. To recommend ways in which preservation management in UK libraries can be developed.

## 1.2 STRUCTURE

The studies in this submission relate to five themes within preservation management:

Preliminary studies in preservation management in UK libraries

A large-scale investigative survey of preservation policy and practice in all sectors of UK libraries

An investigation of current practice in a specific aspect of preservation management, disaster management, in all sectors of UK libraries and other related organisations

An investigation of the preservation of collections in a specific subject area, Russian materials, in a selection of UK libraries

Studies in three key areas of preservation management on the current agenda: digital materials, preservation surveys and research.

Each of the above studies has its own aims and objectives which are in line with and contribute to the overall aims and objectives of the submission as stated above. Thus the body of work in this submission, while consisting of separate, but related, studies, is presented as a coherent entity. This is underlined in the Introduction which precedes the published analyses of the research.

In the Introduction the focus is on the key themes and issues which have arisen from the above studies. It is not intended to repeat all of the discussion or findings of individual studies which are available in the published accounts herein. Rather, significant comment, observation or findings are extracted as appropriate.

### **1.3 METHODOLOGY**

It is not intended in this Introduction to repeat in detail the contents of the published documents which follow. The five research studies on which this thesis is based made use of various methods, both qualitative and quantitative. For the methodologies applied in individual projects, please see the published accounts herein.

### **1.4 SCOPE**

The research studies presented in this thesis were undertaken in the period 1989 - 1996. Other research and aspects of the author's work undertaken during this period also contribute to aspects of this thesis. These will be referred to at appropriate points in the text.

Whilst the focus is on preservation management in UK libraries, input from elsewhere, such as Australia and the United States (US) is considered and included where appropriate.

### **1.5 CONTEXT WITHIN THE WIDER LITERATURE**

The theoretical context of the publications within the wider literature is provided in the publications themselves. Each of the studies was preceded by a literature search to identify relevant, earlier research and publications which were duly considered. As well as the UK literature, that from elsewhere in the world was included. Where appropriate, this was also undertaken with regard to activity beyond libraries (e.g. archives).

## 2. PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT

The definitions of preservation and conservation are central to a clear understanding of what preservation management involves.

### 2.1 DEFINITIONS

One of the key issues which has been addressed in the last ten years is the definition of preservation and conservation. At the beginning of this period, the two terms were used almost interchangeably - and, often, incorrectly. There are now definitions which are, generally, agreed, nationally and internationally. (See, Feather, Matthews and Eden, 1996, pp.3-5.)

A recent investigation of preservation policy and practice in UK libraries (Feather, Matthews and Eden, 1996) (referred to hereafter as the Loughborough Study), however, highlighted the fact that whilst these definitions now exist, librarians' perceptions of 'preservation' and 'conservation' vary considerably (Feather, Matthews and Eden, 1996, pp.28-37). There still seems to be room for improvement in raising awareness of these definitions at grass roots level. This has implications, for instance, in the assessment of preservation activity on a national or regional basis. What constitutes preservation (and conservation) activity must be clearly understood by all. For instance, some respondents to the Loughborough Study when asked to give total expenditure on preservation and conservation activities noted that the figures they provided were only for binding, others that they were for binding and miscellaneous repairs, while another excluded 'routine binding' (Eden, Feather and Matthews, 1993, p.77). Broadly speaking,

Preservation is any activity, largely preventative, which aims to protect and secure library materials to ensure their availability, access and use. In this broad sense, it includes such matters as disaster control planning, education and awareness, and of course, conservation. Preservation is thus a broad umbrella term encompassing many

activities. (Feather, Matthews and Eden, p.5)

The definitions used in this thesis are:

### **Preservation**

The managerial, financial and technical issues involved in preserving library materials in all formats - and/or their information content - so as to maximise their useful life.

### **Conservation**

The maintenance and/or repair of individual items.

(Feather, Matthews and Eden, p.5)

### **Preservation management**

The management of those activities outlined above in the definition of Preservation.

## **2.2 BACKGROUND**

The low level of preservation and conservation activity in British libraries was strongly criticised in the Ratcliffe Report of 1984 (Ratcliffe, 1984), which made various recommendations as to how the situation might be improved. The Loughborough Study (Feather, Matthews and Eden, 1996), undertaken a decade later, revealed evidence of greater awareness of preservation issues among many British librarians and a growth in preservation-related activities. There is now a refocusing of preservation goals and objectives at a national level as evidenced by the recent review of the role of the National Preservation Office (NPO) (Ferris, 1996) and the deliberations of the recently established committee of United Kingdom Preservation

Administrators (UKPA).

Whilst there is thus now increasing attention paid to preservation matters in British libraries, much still remains to be done and the effective management of this is essential if the activity to date is to be successfully maintained and developed. This is essential not just because preservation is an end in itself, but to ensure continuing access to information by all sectors of society as the application of new information technologies revolutionise information service provision. Along with great opportunities for those concerned with preserving and making available information in a variety of forms to a multitude of users, there are also risks. Both the opportunities and the risks must be managed.

### **2.3 'A PROCESS TO BE MANAGED'**

In a paper on preservation and library management published in 1990, the author considered the place of preservation in library management, and argued that it should be integrated in the overall management of libraries (Matthews, 1990). Preservation itself must, indeed, be managed, but not in isolation. The financial, human, policy and planning, and technical requirements and implications of preservation must be managed as an integral part of other library services and functions.

Preservation management is, furthermore, a continuous process. The management of change is vital here, too, as in other aspects of library management.

Preservation is a process to be managed, not a problem to be solved. 'Solutions' - whether a new building or a reformatting project - are necessarily temporary: the holdings outgrow the building; the paper no longer crumbles, but it is essential to continuously recopy the digital image or to find security storage for the microform masters. Preservation management is a continuum. (Peterson, 1997)

## REFERENCES

Eden, Paul, Feather, John and Matthews, Graham (1993) Preservation and conservation in British academic libraries in 1993: a survey. *British Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 8 (2), 65-88.

Feather, John, Matthews, Graham and Eden, Paul (1996) *Preservation management. Policies and practices in British libraries*. Aldershot: Gower.

Ferris, Valerie (1996) 'To boldly go...' a new look for the National Preservation Office. *Library Conservation News*, (50), 1-2.

Matthews, Graham (1990) Preservation and library management. *Library Management*, 11 (4), 4-9.

Peterson, Trudy Huskamp (1997) Putting records first to make them last. In: Lusenet, Yola de (ed.) *Choosing to preserve. Towards a cooperative strategy for long-term access to the intellectual heritage. Papers of the international conference organized by the European Commission on Preservation and Access and Die Deutsche Bibliothek, Leipzig/Frankfurt am Main March 29-30, 1996*. European Commission on Preservation and Access: Amsterdam, 97-104.

Ratcliffe, F.W. with the assistance of Patterson, D. (1984) *Preservation policies and conservation in British libraries: report of the Cambridge University Library Conservation Project*. London: The British Library. (Library and Information Research Report 25)

### 3. THE STUDIES

The studies are introduced in the following order:

- Preliminary studies
- A general study
- Disaster management
- Collections in a specific area
- The current agenda

The introduction to each of these is preceded by the bibliographic details of the works submitted for that topic and is followed by copies of the text of the submitted works (with the exception of Feather, John, Matthews, Graham and Eden, Paul (1996) *Preservation management. Policies and practices in British libraries*. Aldershot: Gower, which is submitted separately from the two bound volumes).

### 3.1 PRELIMINARY STUDIES IN PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT IN UK LIBRARIES

Preservation and library management (1990) *Library Management*, 11 (4), 4-9.

The literature of preservation: 80s review/90s preview (1991) In: *Preservation and publication. Proceedings of a seminar at York University 17-18 July 1990*. London: National Preservation Office, The British Library, 9-19.

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The renewed interest in preservation in libraries in the UK was predated in US libraries by about 10 years. According to Buchanan, the first decade of activity in the US began about 1967 and in that decade 'frequent articles appeared ... describing preservation problems in the nation's libraries and offering potential approaches for solutions' (Buchanan, 1988, p.3). In the second decade, the need 'for sharing ideas and communication resulted in the founding of two journalistic endeavours - CAN [Conservation Administration News] and the Abbey Newsletter... The literature began to reflect the emergence of a philosophy, as well as policy and procedure - a sign of growing maturity' (Buchanan, 1988, p.3).

Whilst Ratcliffe notes in the account of the method used in his research that the literature was searched (Ratcliffe, 1984, p.10), it is interesting to note that he does not '... discuss in any depth either conservation in its historical context or its treatment in the professional literature' (Ratcliffe, 1984, p.2). Indeed, the references to the Report number only 45 and these include 'op cit' and notes (Ratcliffe, 1984, p.70-72). The two major bibliographies to which he refers (Ratcliffe, 1984, p.2) are both US publications (Banks, 1981, and Cunha and Cunha, 1983).

As a major part of these preliminary studies, comprehensive literature searches were undertaken and overviews with a UK focus provided in the professional literature (Matthews, 1990b; Matthews, 1991). One of these overviews ends:

Preservation needs to be integrated into overall library management and policy if the recent momentum is to be maintained and developed. The future literature can both reflect and influence the degree to which this is achieved. (Matthews, 1990b, p.13)

These overviews of the literature were augmented with a review of key activities and a discussion of the key issues relating to preservation management in the UK (Matthews, 1990a).

The Ratcliffe Report (1984), and the subsequent implementation of many of its recommendations, instigated activity in various aspects of preservation in UK libraries. By 1990 the author felt confident enough to note that '... a British literature which reflects this is developing' (Matthews, 1990a, p.5). This literature, it was suggested, reflected the aspects of preservation which were being addressed and provided insight into the management issues relating to them. 'In the main, those [publications] of British origin from the beginning and middle of the decade [1980s] look at preservation in general and discuss and promote awareness of the problem, but other more recent ones reflect advances in the specific areas which have been tackled here to date. Indeed, this is underlined by the fact that articles are not just appearing in the "general" mainstream journals now, but also in those serving groups within the profession with special interests' (Matthews, 1990a, p.5).

By the beginning of the 1990s, this study of the literature had identified the major aspects of preservation which were beginning to be addressed in the UK. The author, however, at this time, was keen not merely to describe these activities, but to consider how they might '... be managed effectively in terms of preservation management and overall library management' (Matthews, 1990a, p.4), adding that '... there is now a more general awareness of preservation issues and their implications for library management. The challenge now to library and information managers is to recognise which elements of preservation are relevant to the management of their collections and services, to acknowledge them, and, drawing on the experience and framework which now exist, to convert awareness into action, to develop and extend preservation

programmes, policy and co-operation' (Matthews, 1990a, p.8).

The preliminary studies also provided a contextual background for the major studies which followed. In particular, they provided a comprehensive base for the Loughborough Study and were further developed during this. This is evident in the first chapter of *Preservation management, A decade of development* (Feather, Matthews and Eden, pp.1-25) where it is noted that:

Our major source of information for tracking down developments over the last decade or so has been a literature survey and access to the minutes of various committees. (Feather, Matthews and Eden, p.1)

Whilst acknowledging that '... the literature alone can be no definitive record of actual activity' (Feather, Matthews and Eden, p.1), if taken together '... with knowledge from the authors' own involvement and activity over this period and informal discussions with those prominent in the field' (Feather, Matthews and Eden, p.1), this approach has resulted in the identification of key developments and activities in preservation, and sources which relate to them.

In 1990, the preliminary studies revealed areas where preservation activity in the UK had been or was taking place. The major impact they revealed was that of the NPO, since its establishment in 1984. The activities of the NPO, together with other agencies such as the professional associations, could be seen to be raising overall awareness of preservation issues. Specific areas where there was evidence of activity (awareness raising and other) include: conservation techniques, disaster control planning, education and training, environmental control, policy, security and substitution (in particular, microfilm programmes); the international or worldwide dimension was also beginning to be addressed (Matthews, 1990a). The depth of treatment afforded to each of the above, however, varied, and, much took place as individual initiatives in a seemingly uncoordinated manner.

Many librarians with whom the author spoke still afforded preservation low priority

(Matthews, 1990, p.7). Indeed, the preliminary studies indicated the need for effective promotion and management of preservation activities within individual libraries. These librarians also suggested that if preservation were not to continue to be seen as an 'idiosyncratic anachronism', it must quickly be integrated into overall library planning and management and considered along with other matters of personnel, funding, collection development, services and their delivery. Furthermore, it must be backed by senior management. The author questioned the extent to which such an approach had been taken up in UK libraries, noting that: 'Much preservation activity to date has been achieved through the commitment and enthusiasm of individuals' (Matthews, 1990, p.7). The significance of local and national coordination of activity as well as that in individual libraries was also highlighted. The preliminary studies underlined that if the 'commitment and enthusiasm' were to be maintained and harnessed:

It is essential that national and local policy and resources are available to support this and to provide a cooperative framework through which both national and local initiatives can be coordinated, developed and rationalised. (Matthews, 1990, p.7)

Thus, the second half of the 1980s, after the publication of the Ratcliffe Report (1984) and the establishment of the NPO, was a time primarily of profile and awareness raising, with promotion of preservation moving from one topic to another with varying degrees of take up by individual libraries and cooperative groups. The preliminary studies revealed that if this momentum was to be maintained and built upon, the management of preservation needed to be formally addressed within individual libraries, their parent organisations, and at national level.

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Banks, P.N. (1981) *A selective bibliography on the conservation of research library materials*. Chicago: Newberry Library.

Buchanan, Sally A. (1988) The third decade: directions for preservation conservation. *Conservation Administration News* (33), 3, 10.

Cunha, G.M. and Cunha, D.G. (1983) *Library and archives conservation: 1980s and beyond*. Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press.

Feather, John, Matthews, Graham and Eden, Paul (1996) *Preservation management. Policies and practices in British libraries*. Aldershot: Gower.

Matthews, Graham (1990a) Preservation and library management. *Library Management*, 11 (4), 4-9.

Matthews, Graham (1990b) Preservation literature review. *Cablis*, (21), 12-14.

Matthews, Graham (1991) The literature of preservation: 80s review/90s preview (1991) In: *Preservation and publication. Proceedings of a seminar at York University 17-18 July 1990*. London: National Preservation Office, The British Library, 9-19.

Ratcliffe, F.W. with Patterson, D. (1984) *Preservation policies and conservation in British libraries: report of the Cambridge University Library Conservation Project*. London: The British Library. (Library and Information Research Report 25)

### 3.2 A GENERAL STUDY - THE LOUGHBOROUGH STUDY

Eden, Paul, Feather, John and Matthews, Graham (1993) Preservation policies and conservation in British academic libraries in 1993: a survey. *British Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 8 (2), 65-88.

Eden, Paul, Feather, John and Matthews, Graham (1994) Of special concern? Preservation in perspective. *Public Library Journal*, 9 (2), 33-34, 36-38.

Eden, Paul, Feather, John and Matthews, Graham (1994) Preservation and library management: a reconsideration. *Library Management*, 15 (4), 5-11.

Feather, John, Matthews, Graham and Eden, Paul (1996) *Preservation management. Policies and practices in British libraries*. Aldershot: Gower.  
(Submitted separately from these two bound volumes.)

Feather, John, Matthews, Graham and Eden, Paul (1997) Preservation management in Britain: present practice and future strategy. In: *Piecing together the jigsaw: the framework for a national preservation strategy for libraries and archives. Proceedings of the National Preservation Office Conference 18-20 September 1995, York, organised by the National Preservation Office*. London: National Preservation Office, The British Library, 3-10.

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This study was '... a systematic and comprehensive attempt to investigate the situation as it stands ... ' (Eden and Matthews, 1994, p.5) in the wake of developments stimulated by the publication of the Ratcliffe Report in 1984 (Ratcliffe, 1984).

There was a high response rate to questionnaires which were sent to 682 British libraries (173 public, 228 academic and 281 special). 488 libraries (71.55%) returned completed questionnaires: 132 public libraries (76.30%), 177 academic libraries

(77.63%), 177 special libraries (62.99%) and there were 2 anonymous returns.

Analysis of these responses provided an overview of the state of preservation activity, and inactivity, in UK libraries, and, in particular, an indication of how preservation had developed since the publication of the Ratcliffe Report in 1984. The major activity, with the NPO as the main player, was a raising of awareness of preservation issues. The other key areas in which developments had taken place were: preservation of audiovisual materials, conservation, digital technology, disaster management, education and training, policy, security, storage and environment, substitution and surveying collections. Findings were widely published for different audiences (see, for example, for public libraries, Eden, Feather and Matthews, 1993, and, for academic libraries, Eden, Feather and Matthews, 1994), and they formed the basis of a book on preservation management (Feather, Matthews and Eden, 1996).

Some of the main managerial issues highlighted by the results were summarised in an article in *Library Management* (Eden, Feather and Matthews, 1994). These issues are: responsibility for preservation, preservation policies and priorities, disaster control planning, staff training and user education; cooperative ventures, factors inhibiting preservation activity and spending on preservation. Indeed, the factor respondents most commonly selected as inhibiting preservation/conservation activity was 'finance'; the next was 'storage conditions', followed by 'general staffing levels'.

The study also emphasised the impact of broader professional initiatives and political developments on preservation management in libraries and the need for a coordinated national preservation policy:

At a national level, as we have indicated, there have been major reassessments of both university and public libraries which were undertaken more or less contemporaneously with our own work. In the light of the recommendations of both Follett and the Public Library review, and the somewhat earlier recommendations of Enright and his colleagues for the British Library, we detect a real move towards

recognising the practical implications of the idea that no library can stand alone. Although this has been a commonplace of librarianship for half a century, it is only under the financial pressures of the 1980s, and with the assistance of parallel developments in information and communication technology, that it has become possible to envisage how truly national collection, retention and access policies can be developed. (Feather, Matthews and Eden, 1996, p.140)

Whilst stressing the need for national policy, the study emphasised that there are local as well as national collections which have historical significance and whose preservation must be managed and funded.

This will involve individual libraries working within a national context and in liaison with other organisations with a heritage role such as archives:

The recognition that this is a common burden as well as a common heritage is essential if such collections are not to be endangered. (Feather, Matthews and Eden, 1996, p.146)

At the time of the survey, 1992-1993, the potential of digitisation as a means to facilitate the preservation of information and the related issues of preserving information in digital formats were just becoming apparent. These underlined the constant need to review preservation management in the light of new developments, and its significance with regard to access to information:

No doubt preservation needs will change as librarians place an even greater reliance on electronic information systems and image creation, both as a means of increasing access to their collections and as a means of surrogate preservation. Nevertheless, aside from the fact that these media will present their own preservation problems, whatever the changes in store for librarians - whether professional, financial or technological - their fundamental role, that of ensuring the availability

of information to clients as and when they require it, will remain. This role, along with the manager's need to make the most of available resources, means that a carefully and well managed preservation policy should be an essential aspect of effective resource management. (Eden, Feather and Matthews, 1994, p.10)

The findings of the Loughborough Study and subsequent work which has developed out of it, such as Feather and Eden's research into preservation policy in archives and record offices (Feather and Eden, 1997) and Matthews's into research in preservation management (Matthews, 1996), have had professional impact through informing senior policy makers at national level as they deliberate the development of a national preservation policy

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### 3.3 DISASTER MANAGEMENT

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This research was distinctive in that it sought the up-to-date views of not just librarians and archivists but those of a wide range of individuals and organisations with different interests and experience of disasters in libraries and elsewhere. These included fire officers, museums officers, an architect, representatives from commercial binders, disaster salvage and recovery companies, heritage organisations, an insurance company and loss adjusters. It should also be noted that the research was undertaken (albeit, coincidentally), immediately after the fire which destroyed Norwich Central Library and much was learned from talking with those involved in this incident and its aftermath. The main outcome of the research, guidelines on disaster management for library managers (Matthews and Eden, 1996(a)), are therefore based not on theory but on a broad range of practical experience and expertise.

In the context of libraries, a disaster is:

any incident which threatens human safety and/or damages, or threatens to damage, a library's buildings, collections, contents, facilities or services (Matthews and Eden, 1996(a), p.4)

The cause and scale of such incidents can vary. A mere glance through the pages of the professional literature reveals brief reports of different disasters and their impact in UK libraries. Matthews and Eden (1995, p.149) give bibliographic details of such reports which appeared in the *Library Association Record*, 1991-1995. Accounts of individual disasters and their aftermath have also been published (see Matthews and Eden, 1996(a), p.171, for bibliographic details).

In spite of such highly publicised incidents,

Unfortunately, disaster management seems still to be one of those managerial activities which are put off until a later date, often because the likelihood of experiencing a disaster is thought to be so remote: the "it won't happen here" attitude. (Eden and Matthews, 1996, p.7)

Of those libraries who responded to the Loughborough Study questionnaire, only 29.3% reported that they had a disaster control plan written *or otherwise* (Eden, Feather and Matthews, 1994, p.6). Matthews and Eden's later research found that only 20.10% had a *written* disaster control plan (Matthews and Eden, 1996(a), p.7).

If ever further proof were needed that a disaster could happen anywhere, anytime, it came in the destruction of Norwich Central Library in August 1994 (see, for example, Hayman, 1995; Kennedy, 1995; Pearson, 1995).

This research revealed many management issues which need to be addressed if disasters are to be prevented or their effects minimised. As one fire safety officer put it, effective disaster management requires: "Management, management and more management" (Matthews and Eden, 1996(a), p.11).

Two key issues which emerged from the research, one aimed at preventing disasters, the other dealing with their impact, illustrate this. Firstly, the significance of preventive measures and the need to undertake risk assessment and management:

...the term "risk management" has been used to highlight the need to "move the defensive line to a much earlier stage, tackling the problem at source ... by the elimination of risk that can be removed and the management of those that remain" (McIntyre, 1995, p.133). [Moreover] It is perhaps easier to identify and acknowledge risks to libraries and collections than it is to accept the possibility of a disaster. It may also be easier to persuade funders to support the *management of known risks*, than to approve expenditure on something which *might or might not* happen. (Eden and Matthews, 1996, pp.6-7)

Secondly, the need to plan in advance for continuity of service after a disaster:

The emergency arrangements already made for setting up temporary services, accommodation and storage should be implemented

immediately as necessitated by prevailing circumstances. Decisions on interim service provision may need to be made at the same time as longer-term issues, such as re-building work. In the case of a major disaster, attention needs to be given to how the short-, medium- and long-term functions of the service can be managed. Appropriate management structures and teams with clearly defined responsibilities will therefore need to be established. Both individuals and teams may need to react to events as they unfold. (Eden and Matthews, 1996(a), p.11)

The research revealed many aspects of management which could be improved with regard to disaster prevention, preparedness, reaction and recovery, the four key stages of disaster management. It identified sixteen key areas of activity within these which require particular attention: advice, expertise and services; buildings, contents and facilities; collections; computers; emergency equipment and supplies; finance; handling and salvaging damaged materials; health and safety; human resources; insurance; public relations; security, service continuity and access; training, and the written disaster control plan. These have all been incorporated in the guidelines (Matthews and Eden, 1996(a)) and presented in such a way as to help library managers initiate disaster management arrangements and procedures or to review and update existing ones.

After the Norwich Central Library fire, in particular, there was great demand from librarians for advice and guidance on disaster management. The report (Matthews and Eden, 1996(a)) of the research provides background information and brief discussion of topical issues such as the advantages and disadvantages of fire detection and suppression systems. The main outcome of the research, guidelines on disaster management for library managers (Matthews and Eden, 1996(a)), based on a broad range of experience and expertise, offer up-to-date guidance with an emphasis on the practical. The research, furthermore, underlines the relationship of effective disaster management within overall preservation management.

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