

BULLETIN

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The photo on the front cover is a picture of the Biblioteca Casanatense,
and was taken by Donald Mitchell

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

2016 ABTAPL AUTUMN CONFERENCE

Thurs 3 November 2016 at 2.30pm

Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London

2017 ABTAPL SPRING CONFERENCE & AGM

Thurs 30 March – Sat 1 April 2017

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

www.woodbrooke.org.uk

2017 ABTAPL AUTUMN CONFERENCE

November 2017

Editorial

In *Orthodoxy*, G.K. Chesterton wrote: ‘All roads lead to Rome; which is one reason why many people never get there.’ Whatever he meant, at least this charge can no longer be laid at the feet of ABTAPL as this year, after 60 years, the Spring Conference was finally held in Rome.

This issue of the ABTAPL Bulletin is devoted to reports and talks from the conference. Anna Williams begins with an overview of the conference, and then Judy Powles relates her personal history of ABTAPL conferences over the years. Alan Linfield and Gudrun Warren then describe visits made by the delegates to notable libraries in the city.

The Conference was not all about tourism, though! CPD (Continuing Professional Development) was also high on the agenda, and we conclude this issue with two papers that were read at the conference. Rachel Champion discusses how librarians can encourage self-directed research, and then Helen Stocker describes her experience of bringing an automated library management system to Swaziland.

In the next issue of the Bulletin there will be more papers from the CPD part of the conference.

For those were able to be at the conference I hope this issue will bring back lots of good memories; for those who could not be there, myself included, it’s been good to get a flavour (albeit second-hand) of what went on. Many thanks to all those who have contributed!

Do check the ABTAPL website to see a number of photos from the conference!

Richard Johnson
(editor)

The ABTAPL 60th Anniversary Spring Conference, Rome

Finally, after many years of trying, the correct circumstances aligned and I was able to attend the ABTAPL Spring Conference held at Domus Carmelitana, Rome. To be able to attend the 60th Anniversary Conference was both as useful and enjoyable as I had imagined and saying that there was CPD during the conference would be understatement; the week included talks by individual ABTAPL members, a TeachMeet, talks from organisations, tours of libraries and archives, AGM and Spring meetings and invaluable networking amongst individuals. In addition, there were tours of places of historic and religious interest - of worldwide as well as Italian significance, people we met along the way who gave guided tours but also shared something of themselves, plus the bustling vibrant city of Rome with its monuments and historical sites, high class designer stores and stalls with wonderfully tacky souvenirs. Beautiful weather all week, an excellent hotel, delicious food, excellent coffee and last but, for some at the conference by no means least, gelato in too many flavours to try in one week! A thoroughly enjoyable time, both on a professional and personal basis. So here are my conference highlights as a first-time Spring Conference attendee.

The first presentation on the Wednesday evening, 'Weather, Welcomes and ... Wheelie Bins', was a light-hearted retrospective of the ABTAPL Spring Conference by **Judy Powles** who has attended almost every conference since 1989. I am glad to be a part of the new memories made this year and look forward to them being added to the collective ABTAPL memories!

Thursday began with **Emma Walsh** (Regent's Park College), *Letting Your Light Shine: Using collections to help raise the libraries profile*. Emma included really useful practical ideas and tips on communicating the distinctive benefits of libraries and their staff both to the institution and more widely, and highlighted library staff as the gatekeepers to resources who provide a unique knowledge to the institution. However, what stuck with me, and what has been a motivating idea for me since, is Emma's very individual approach to publicity: 'they don't get away with not knowing why the library is of benefit [to the institution]'. We cannot assume that ensuring that there are excellent resources is enough, we have to be out there highlighting the benefits to the institution.

Emma was followed by **Rachel Campion** (Luther King House), *The Role of Librarians in Encouraging and enabling self-directed research: developing an awareness of library anxiety and taking steps to reduce it*. Rachel's

study in this area led her to question why there are students who are intelligent yet struggle to use library, even though they are repeatedly shown. Despite the library environment being exciting for many of us, for some it is uncomfortable and anxiety inducing. Sometimes as a gateway to resources and information a librarian can become a barrier, appearing to those with library anxiety as aloof, proud and exclusive, fitting in to all the negative stereotypes attached to the profession. The mere order of the library can be interpreted as control and protection. Conversely, Rachel characterised the librarian as an ‘embedded librarian’ who is ‘at heart of teaching and learning in institutions’. This approach has led to her development of specific strategies to remove the perceived barriers, including library sessions as a part of teaching rather than at the beginning of the year, ensuring that tutors make good use of electronic resources to encourage students, providing access to all information but not spoon-feeding, and enabling the transfer of critical thinking from other areas of life (e.g. the process involved in choosing a new mobile phone).

Thursday afternoon included visits to **Biblioteca Angelica** and Biblioteca Casanatense, excellently organised by **Alan Linfield** (as were the other excursions and the hotel). The Biblioteca Angelica, established in 1604 by Bishop Angelo Rocca, was the first public library in modern age Europe and today it holds 180,000 volumes of manuscripts and 1,100 incunabula and is still in use by the public. Here we were shown many interesting and beautiful manuscripts and facsimiles, including Dante’s Divine Comedy from the 14th Century. The **Biblioteca Casanatense**, was opened in 1701 by Dominican Friars, with 25,000 books left to them by Cardinal Casanate with the instruction in his will for it to be a public library. Today it contains 400,000 volumes, 6,000 manuscripts and 2,200 incunabula. Though both buildings were impressive the Biblioteca Casanatense was breathtaking when walking in, first noticing the two handmade 10-foot-tall globes dating from the 18th Century and then the huge space behind them with ancient texts lining the walls. Again we were given access to manuscripts, all of which have been digitised and are available online – though nothing can compare to the thrill of seeing close-up such rare and beautiful manuscripts.

Thursday finished with a TeachMeet, facilitated by **Helen Stocker** (Nazarene Theological College), where six ABTAPL members gave 10 minute talks, sharing their expertise and thinking. **Chris Leftley**, in *Space – the final frontier* talked about his experience in coping with limitations of space, weeding books and justifying the space that seemingly unused books take. **Kate Wiseman** talked about *The Art of Plate Spinning*, discussing the multiple roles that many of us have to our jobs and sharing the ways in

which she has dealt with this. In *Stand and Deliver*, **Sally Gibbs**, shared her experience of setting up and using a standing desk. As most of us had little or no direct experience in this area this was a really useful introduction. **Helen Stocker** shared her recent experience using OPALS Open Source automated library system in *Library Management Systems – the next chapter?* **Gudrun Warren** reflected on *A year in the life of a librarian*, from her experiences at Norwich Cathedral Library and the significant time she spends in activities such as exhibitions and displays. The final talk was given by **Michael Gale**, *What does ‘good’ look like?*, in which Michael shared his thinking about benchmarking, standards and quality in theological libraries. Michael asked us to think about next year’s conference (Birmingham 2017) and consider what library users value most and also what we each value most that supports us in our jobs.

On Friday, **Kate Wiseman** (All Nations Christian College), started the day with *E-quipped to serve: A Christ-centred approach to e-learning*, based on her PhD thesis (March 2015). Kate outlined that though mission training has traditionally been delivered in ‘face-to-face’ learning and teaching communities, it is now possible to effectively deliver holistic mission training through e-learning. Kate was followed by **Greg Taylor** (American Theological Library Association) who, with seemingly boundless enthusiasm and energy, shared some thoughts on *Copyright and Licensing Issues in scholarly communication*. Greg outlined some of the history about approaches to copyright up to the digital age, including the historical debate about authors rights and audience rights. These opposing views being broadly represented by the Continental (French) tradition vs Anglo-American tradition. Greg then moved on to copyright licensing, in more practical terms, from ATLA’s point of view.

I must confess that Friday afternoon’s visit to the **Vatican Secret Archives** was the part of the conference programme that I had looked forward to the most, and it didn’t disappoint! The archives were started in the 8th Century and they are the longest running archives. To give an idea of the extent of the archives, our guide explained that there is twice as much historical information about Denmark than in the Danish state archives. There are 40 archivists working at the Vatican and 100’s across the world who collaborate. Documents are made available a papacy at a time, and the practice (not law) has been that with each Pope the next set of archives are released, and the next set waiting to be released by Pope Francis, are those of Pius XII (1939-1958). These are of great interest as they cover the war years. When Vatican archives are released there is no redaction or items held back and this is what makes them so valuable for historians. After

leaving all of our bags in lockers we were escorted past the archivists' desks, where the public are not permitted, and into the archive itself. Sadly, no photography is permitted but most of the archives are kept in large rooms with no windows full of closely lined shelves. But as well as these large areas, there are also small climate controlled rooms for more sensitive documents. In and around these functional rooms there are also beautiful rooms with frescos on the ceilings and walls and also many, many stairs – we actually climbed 5 stories during the tour but these are higher than standard stories because of the high ceilings so it felt more like 9 stories! After many interesting stops on the way (I have to leave some mystery!) we emerged on a roof top high above the Vatican, looking down at the courtyard with the Pigna ("The Pine cone"). We had a panoramic view of the Vatican and Rome and were finally permitted to use our cameras – definitely worth all of the stairs!

We all returned quite tired from this visit and after dinner we had a short talk from **Laura Morris** (Brill Publishing). Laura explained that Brill Publishing is fairly small but prolific, publishing 800 books per year and 265 journals including 16 e-only titles, holding a unique place in the area of humanities and social sciences. Laura then went on to highlight some recent resources of interest to ABTAPL members including *the Index to the Study of Religions Online* (the online version of the Brill journal *Science of Religion*), a Cross-searchable Database and Bibliography of Journal Articles, and also the *Vocabulary for the Study of Religion Online* which provides an overview of critical terms in the study of religion, plus themes and issues for future research. We ended the evening with a screening of 'Roman Holiday' from 1953 with Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn – a perfect end to the day.

There was no let up on Saturday and we headed off to tours of **The Vatican Museum, Sistine Chapel and St Peter's Basilica**. The museum was packed with antiquities (and packed with people!) and we only had time to scratch the surface of all that is there and similarly with St Peter's Basilica. Our guide took time to explain in detail the fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel of 'The Last Judgment' by Michelangelo before we went in and I appreciated this almost as much as seeing the fresco itself. I felt as if I knew Michelangelo just a little bit and I appreciated his occasional irreverent style!

Saturday evening finished with a walk (or a bus ride) to the **Trevi Fountain** which was well worth seeing lit up for the evening. We then moved on to the nearby **Ristorante Fontana de Venere** where we had a very memorable

evening with delicious food and serenading by the waiters - all together now... Volare! oh oh!

Sunday brought some well-earned free time and while some went to the Concelebrated Holy Mass in Saint Peter's Square with Pope Francis, others explored ancient monuments, went shopping, or just rested! Then, after our final dinner at Domus Carmelitana, we all gathered for the **ABTAPL AGM and Spring Meeting**, chaired by **Carol Reekie**. After an overview of finances from Donald Mitchell (Treasurer), there were thanks for committee members who were standing down - **Honor Hania** as Secretary and **Jayne Downey** as Editor, and the election of new committee members - **Donald Mitchell**, Treasurer; **Emma Walsh**, Secretary; **Richard Johnson**, Editor. There were also thanks to **Brill, Bloomsbury and BETH** for their sponsorship of the conference. In the Spring meeting, it was time to look ahead for training ideas for next year and the dates for the next conferences (which have gone straight into my diary!).

I am well aware that this piece is longer than I would usually write. I haven't even mentioned the drinks receptions on the roof terrace and the beautiful view from there, but I have just scratched the surface of what was an excellent conference, where I have met colleagues, struck up friendships, gained from shared thoughts and experiences, and visited amazing places – I would do it all again tomorrow, except maybe the swollen feet and blisters from all the walking on cobblestones!

Anna Williams
Librarian and Information Officer
St Padarn's Institute

**Weather, Welcomes - and Wheelie Bins:
an affectionate look-back at the ABTAPL Spring (usually) Conference**

Exactly 12 months ago in March 2015 I visited Italy for the first time and wondered why it had taken me nearly 63 years to get here. Now 12 months on, I am here again enjoying this wonderful country.

You may wonder why I mention my first trip to Italy this time last year – the reason is that it coincided with the ABTAPL conference in Cambridge, meaning that for the first time in 27 years I missed this gathering of the ABTAPL clan. Sorry ABTAPLers – the lure of Florence with my family was just too great!

From 1989 until 2014 I attended every single conference without exception and it is because of this that I have been asked to put a few thoughts and memories together, hopefully to entertain you in this graveyard slot when everyone is collapsing with weariness after their travelling from far and wide.

I shall repeat here something our former Hon. Sec, Mary Elliott, said in the piece she wrote for the Golden Jubilee Bulletin – “Of course, perversely, it's the non-professional aspects of conferences that stick in the memory”¹. And that is exactly the case for me and for many of you!

Some of you may be wondering about the title of this presentation:-

Weather – this is because we all seem to remember the extremes of weather experienced during the conferences. We have encountered everything from snow to almost tropical conditions.

Welcomes – this is because so many ABTAPL members have commented on the warmth of the welcome given to them, both by the conference host and also by the other delegates. However there have also been a few conferences where the host institution would not pass the charm school test.

And Wheelie bins? – well I will come onto that in due course.

I'll begin by giving a bit of historical background to the legendary Spring Conference which, unlike the Association, has not been going for the past 60 years. From what I can gather the first residential conference took place

¹ ABTAPL Bulletin, Vol.13, no.2, June 2006, p.23. [*Hereafter described as Bulletin*]

in Durham in 1978. But before that ABTAPL had some input into the Library Association's Universities, Colleges and Research Section residential conference at the University of Surrey in 1975. According to Mary Elliott, "ABTAPL made a successful, if modest, contribution to the Conference".²

And it is here that ABTAPL must acknowledge the huge debt it owes to the Hon. Secretary of the time, Mary Elliott. It is largely due to Mary and also to the late John Howard that the conferences became such a huge part of the Association's life.

Over the next almost 40 years (this is our 39th residential conference), conferences have been held in university halls of residences, conference centres, retreat houses and more recently hotels. It is fair to say that the accommodation has been very varied, ranging from Spartan to complete luxury. There was also the tradition for going "North" one year and "South" the next so that nobody felt disadvantaged in terms of travel distances.

Over the years the start and end days have varied with, in more recent years, a pattern emerging for a Thursday to Saturday model as opposed to the original weekend format of Friday to Sunday. The committee in my time as Chairman had long discussions on this subject but some of the key factors were that it was often difficult to organize visits on Saturdays/Sundays and Sunday travel could be very long given the inevitable engineering works on the line. My own experience of the Glasgow conference in 1993 bore this out and I will refer to this later.

Regarding location, the winner in the venue popularity stakes is Cambridge with 4 conferences. Bristol, Durham, Manchester, Oxford and Salisbury are runners up with 3 each. Some of the "one-hit wonders" include Chichester, Lancaster, Leicester, Lincoln and Exeter.

For many years there was no such thing as a specific Conference Secretary. The poor Hon Secretary seemed to do most of the organizing, Mary Elliott with help from John Howard, and later Alan Jesson. But eventually the role of Conference Secretary came into being and we enjoyed conferences organized by Margaret Ecclestone, Rosemary Pugh, Alan Linfield and Rachel Campion with help from people on the ground such as Dorothy Wright in Manchester, Evelyn Cornell in Leicester, Dorothy Anderson in Belfast and more recently Jenny Monds and Jayne Downey in Salisbury and

² Bulletin, NS no.3, June 1975, p.2

then Carol Reekie in Cambridge. And here we are in Rome with Alan ably leading us again! As for the future.....

And what of conference delegates over the years? Each year along with a “hard core” of old (and not so old) faithfuls there have been newbies - some new to theological and philosophical librarianship, others taking the plunge to attend after some (or indeed many) years in post. There have also been many visitors from overseas, near and far. It has always been good to welcome them. At some conferences there have been representatives from commercial companies joining us – they have had to run the gauntlet of ABTAPL ire over subscription rates, book prices, etc. etc. but on the whole I think that they have found it helpful, as have we, being able to discuss things positively face to face.

And of course there have been a few eccentrics along the way, many of whom have been sorely missed when they were no longer able to join us. Marion Smith has a lovely memory of Pat Mugliston, who retired in 1988 but who kept coming to conferences until, as John Howard commented in her obituary in 2004, “increasing deafness and the multiplication of her cats made it too difficult for her”.³ Marion says, I remember Pat at the Maynooth conference. We were walking back to the college and her face lit up when she saw a trailer loaded with a speed-boat (I think – either that or a fast car!). I think we were all totally surprised when we learned that Pat at her death was a double millionaire and had left a bequest to her 2 cats, Matilda and Top Cat.

All these people have added to the rich tapestry of the ABTAPL Spring Conference.

Many people remember not only the conferences but also the travelling to and from the venues, sometimes in British Rail adversity! There was so much camaraderie, interesting conversations, etc. etc. I have never forgotten Mary Elliott on one journey enthusing about this wonderful book a sort of crime story set in a medieval monastery complete with labyrinthine library. You guessed it – Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose*. I just had to buy it on my return and I was immediately hooked – though it is one of those Marmite books – you either love it or hate it!

So returning to that first conference all those years ago in **1978** at **St John’s College, Durham**, Mary Elliott describes it as “a modest affair, but which

³ Bulletin, Vol.11, no.1, March 2004, p.6

attracted 27 members, more than our previous half-day meetings”⁴. This comment is in itself significant as it just goes to show that there was an interest amongst the members to get together professionally for a longer period than had been the norm with the half day meeting. The conference seemed to consist of a series of interesting visits rather than having a specific theme or speakers. However I rather enjoyed the comment in the 1978 June Bulletin “Minds and bodies relaxed in the atmosphere of bookshops and pubs, of godly learning and good living, of Bede and Cuthbert, of Norman architecture, Anglican chant and the whole Christian tradition that Durham has preserved through the centuries”⁵. It conjures up such a wonderful picture.

The following year, **1979**, was held at **St Deiniol’s Library, Hawarden** (now the Gladstone Library). This one seems to have stuck in many people’s memories but not for the best reasons! I rather gather that the Warden of the time was not one of those people who knew the words “Warm Welcome”. Apparently he ran the place with military precision and not all ABTAPL members could cope with this. Mary remembers that several delegates travelled on a London-Holyhead train which was held up for a considerable time - no explanation given. Only later they learnt of the murder of Airey Neave; the train had been searched in case the perpetrator was on board. Mary also comments how, on the lighter side, they met the “totally Trollopian Vice-Dean of Chester Cathedral.”⁶ One interesting point about this conference, though, was the introduction of a seminar on cataloguing and classification, the first sign of a “Continuing Professional Development” element, though I don’t suppose that phrase was used then.

In **1980** the conference headed for **York** to the rather romantic sounding **Hazlewood Castle, Tadcaster**. This was a historic house, owned for centuries by one family, but in 1972 it had become the home of Carmelite monks and a centre for their work in Yorkshire. The 18th century stable block had been converted into a guest house for visitors and it was here that ABTAPL took up residence. The main highlight of this weekend for John Howard, as he recorded in his memoir at the Golden Jubilee Conference, was “the involuntary defenestration during the night of a lady member who had lost the key of her room”!⁷ Reading the conference report I felt absolutely exhausted by hearing of the number of visits packed into one day

⁴ Bulletin, Vol.13, no.2, June 2006, p.23.

⁵ Bulletin, June 1978, p.2.

⁶ Bulletin, Vol.13, no.2, June 2006, p.23.

⁷ Bulletin, Vol.13, no.2, June 2006, p.21

beginning with the Bar Convent followed by York Minster Library. The late Alan Smith gives a lovely description of the party after lunch “motoring across the North Yorkshire Moors to Shandy Hall, Coxwold, the parsonage for eight years of the novelist Laurence Sterne”.⁸ And then they headed for Ampleforth Abbey for another visit. No wonder Alan describes the conference as “most enjoyable, if hectic”.⁹

1981 saw the first of 3 conferences at **Bristol**, this one being held at **Trinity College** but with a fairly small number, a core of about 15. Again the main memories of the conference seem to be the many visits on the Saturday, starting with Trinity’s own Library, then Wesley College followed by Bristol Baptist College, the highlight of this being the removal from the safe for ABTAPL members to see of the unique extant copy of Tyndale’s 1526 New Testament – As the conference report comments “probably the most valuable individual book in the whole of Bristol”.¹⁰ There followed a trip to Downside Abbey. I was intrigued to read of the evening talk by a local bookseller, on the occultist writer A.E. Waite, who died in 1939. Peter Larkin’s report describes “At first sight this appeared rather remote from usual ABTAPL territory, but so many were the ramifications of Waite’s own influences, and so absorbing was Mr. Gilbert’s advocacy of the value of his subject that much discussion followed the lecture, which had been illustrated with slides”.¹¹

The first of ABTAPL’s 4 **Cambridge** conferences took place in **1982**, on that occasion staying at **Selwyn College**. According to Lionel Madden writing the conference report “The weekend started in fine style with the rare treat of a talk by Professor Owen Chadwick, Master of Selwyn”.¹² After a visit to Westcott House, Lionel describes how “Fortified by lunch some of us ventured on an exhausting afternoon tour of some of the colleges and their chapels under the guidance of a knowledgeable lady of determined manner, extraordinary rapidity of movement, and indefatigable zeal for Foxe’s Book of Martyrs”.¹³ The final comment by Lionel struck a chord – “My only regret, as I listened to the reminiscences of long established members, is that I did not begin attending them years ago”.

⁸ Bulletin, New Series no.18, June 1980, p.2

⁹ Bulletin, NS no.18, June 1980, p.3

¹⁰ Bulletin, NS no. 21, June 1981, p.2

¹¹ Bulletin, NS no.21, June 1981, p.3

¹² Bulletin, NS no.24, June 1982, p.2

¹³ Bulletin, NS no.24, June 1982, p.3

In **1983** ABTAPL headed across the border into Scotland for the first time with the conference being held at the Scottish Episcopal Church's **Theological College in Edinburgh**. By all accounts this venue was very Spartan and so cold that warm pyjamas had to be lent to a delegate from Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), the late Goma Ndamba. I was intrigued to read in the Bulletin report that John Howard, who organized the conference, "had more than his fair share of ill-luck".¹⁴ What did this mean, I wonder? Also Michael Walsh writing the report talks of a gloomy account of the problems faced by Dr Stephen Pattison in his attempts to supervise the host library. The gloom continued the following morning when members visited the library of the Scottish Congregational College. As Michael comments "Both institutions provided object-lessons in the problems faced by under-funded, understaffed and under-used collections of religious literature".¹⁵ Oh dear!

1984 saw 22 members heading to **Manchester** to stay at **St Anselm Hall**. There were the usual visits, including the Deansgate building of the University Library (the John Rylands Library). Nothing out of the ordinary seemed to have occurred though it was interesting to read John Howard's comment on the Sunday morning service held in the Hall's octagonal chapel which many ABTAPL members attended. He said "this was a moving occasion, being the first time ABTAPL had included such a service as part of the programme. It helped to confirm and enlarge the spirit of engagement in a common task which the weekend had stimulated".¹⁶

31 ABTAPL members turned their faces south in **1985** to stay at **Chichester Theological College**. This seems to have been the highest turn out so far and the conference had a specific theme "The Education of Theological Librarians". Also it was the first time the conference had continued into the Sunday afternoon. Apart from the various visits members enjoyed the professional input and, as Ruth Gibson in her report commented, "Many felt that the papers had enhanced a feeling of professionalism amongst its members".¹⁷

As a result of the desire expressed in Chichester for younger members and less experienced members to receive advice on various aspects of theological librarianship, the **1986** conference started a day earlier to

¹⁴ Bulletin, NS no.27, June 1983, p.2

¹⁵ Bulletin, NS no.27, June 1983, p.2

¹⁶ Bulletin, NS no.30, June 1984, p.2

¹⁷ Bulletin, NS no.33, June 1985, p.3

accommodate a training day. Consequently 14 members arrived at **Manchester College, Oxford**, on the Thursday evening ready to enjoy a variety of practical sessions during Friday before the rest of the delegates joined the conference in the evening. Visits were packed in as usual, including Blackwell's distribution centre and the Bodleian Library. However Elizabeth Williams's report noted that during the afternoon's visits to various college libraries "There was so much to see that we had to cancel our scheduled visit to Oriel College".¹⁸ Thanks were expressed to Mary Elliott for her organization of the conference on this "very unspring-like weekend".

I am very grateful to Alan Jesson for his recollections of the next two conferences held at **Lancaster** in **1987** and **Lincoln Theological College** in **1988** as there are no reports in the Bulletin. However Alan's own recollection of Lancaster are, as he puts it, "a bit of a blur" as he had recently slipped a disc! He does particularly remember the visit to Stonyhurst College by coach which was a journey over narrow and rough country roads. Getting off the coach at Stoneyhurst was not at all comfortable! Alan remembers the presentations and lectures as first class, including in particular a talk on Victorian religious literature, though Helen Greenwood, a visitor from New Zealand, described all the papers given as "Scholarly rather than practical"(!)

The Lincoln conference was the first conference Alan Jesson organized as ABTAPL's new Hon. Secretary but he inherited it half-way through and did not do the initial arrangements. As he remarks, "Had I been able to do a preliminary visit to Edward King House I think that I might have gone elsewhere". It turned out that most people had to share rooms which were "pretty primitive". Alan came down early the first morning to find one of the delegates on his way out with his bag packed. His room-mate not only snored but moaned and talked in his sleep, and this poor man had had no sleep at all. Fortunately Alan managed to find him an alternative and he stayed on. After that things got better!

And now we are in **1989** in **Cambridge** – my very first conference. I had been told about the Spartan accommodation of Lincoln the previous year and the biting cold winds so I was totally unprepared for the luxury of a lovely modern bedroom at **Fitzwilliam College** complete with hotel style toiletries, etc. laid out on the bed and the glorious sunshine showing Cambridge at its best. If truth be told, I was also rather worried about being

¹⁸ Bulletin, NS no.36, June 1986, p.2

a newbie amongst these potentially “strange” theological and philosophical librarians for a whole weekend but I needn’t have been so concerned. From the outset I was made to feel so welcome and I warmed immediately to this group of people, many of whom I now consider to be close friends. The theme of this conference was “Conservation and Disaster Planning” and my recollection is of many interesting, practical talks on the subject – all these are reproduced in the November Bulletin for that year.¹⁹ However there were so many talks packed in that, unusually for an ABTAPL conference, there were no scheduled visits. My plan had been to do some touristy things on the Sunday after the conference had finished but, sadly, the sunshine had disappeared and heavy rain descended.

1990 saw us head for **Birmingham**, staying out at **Selly Oak** – I think it was at Westhill College (now demolished, I believe). The theme of this conference was “Multi-culturalism”, highly appropriate considering our location. With no report in the Bulletin I am having to rely on my own memory. Unusually nothing comes to mind about the accommodation or weather so there couldn’t have been any problems or otherwise with either! However I do have a recollection of driving round and round the grey concrete of the Central Library in Birmingham trying to find the vehicle entrance! Another memory is of the warm welcome given to us by the Library staff, including our late friend, Alan Smith, who later took over editing the Bulletin, and also Marion Smith, with us in Rome, who, with Andrew Lacey, took over the editorship following Alan’s sudden and tragic death in March 1992, aged 42.

The accommodation for the **1991** conference at **Hatfield College, Durham**, sticks in my mind. My room was half way up an Oxbridge type wooden staircase. It was so incredibly noisy as heavy-footed undergraduates (allowed to stay up for the vacation) pounded up and down the staircase at all times of day and night. The theme for this conference was ‘Strategic Planning for Libraries’ or as Alan Jesson described it in the conference invitation “a rather up market way of saying “How to run your library better”!. As Ruth Gibson commented in her report “Anyone who joined us anticipating a restful weekend would have had quite a shock. It is true that we had only one library visit, but the weekend was led in such a way that no one could take a back seat”.²⁰ This was my first introduction to a type of management exercise, where we divided into groups each with a large piece of paper and were invited to work on mission statements using SWOT

¹⁹ Bulletin, Vol.2, no.6, pp.4-33

²⁰ Bulletin, Vol.2, no.11, p.3

analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). For a little light relief we did, however, manage to see Durham Cathedral Library. I think that some members came away from that conference feeling a little shell-shocked, though many of us found this new way of looking both at our own libraries and also ABTAPL itself very helpful.

And possibly to the dismay of those shell-shocked members, the following year continued the management theme and here I introduce the Wheelie Bins! So in **1992** (my first as ABTAPL Chairman) we stayed at **Salisbury and Wells Theological College**, now Sarum College (in the days before the refurbishment which we enjoyed in later years). It turns out that the planned main speaker had pulled out virtually at the last minute leaving Alan Jesson in a mild state of panic (his words). Fortunately one of his friends at church worked for an organisation in Cambridge specialising in management training and offered him at a bargain rate the package usually aimed at local government officers. This saw us again dividing into groups, each of us being given a specific role within a fictional local authority and told to fight our corner for funding. My remit was the environment and I had to speak on behalf of retaining wheelie bins, amongst other things! Votes were cast and I am pleased to say that I won on behalf of wheelie bins everywhere. It did turn out to be a valuable exercise as so many of us were then, as now, facing threats to funding within our institutions and to be able to “fight our corners” was particularly helpful. There must have been some visits during this conference but Wheelie Bins dominate my memory!

It was back to Scotland in **1993**, this time to **Jordanhill College in Glasgow**. My memory is of arriving with a group of other ABTAPL members at the main station and looking hopelessly around us for a sign to the local station which we needed to get us out to Jordanhill. A lovely local gentleman came to our rescue – none of us could understand a word he said as his accent was so thick but he kindly led us down steps, round corners and finally onto the platform. I don't remember that much about the conference, apart from a line of black taxis which arrived on the Friday evening to take us for a special visit to the Mitchell Library, floodlit for our benefit (well perhaps not!). However I do remember very clearly the journey home on the Sunday. We left Glasgow as normal but on reaching Carlisle the announcement was made that there was good news and bad news. The bad news was that the train was having to divert, the good news (according to the announcer) was that the diversion was going to be along the famous Carlisle to Settle line. The fact that they were removing the buffet car at Carlisle was not included in the announcement but we only discovered later on our very long, cold journey home that there were no

refreshments to be had so the wonderful scenery rather passed us by on that bleak Sunday afternoon. We were very late getting home.

Our second trip to **Bristol** took place in **1994** staying at **The Hawthorns**, part of the University. The various visits mirrored the earlier conference with once again the glimpse of the Tyndale Bible at Bristol Baptist College being one of the highlights. It was almost immediately after that conference that we heard that the Bible had been sold to the British Library for a million pounds. As Jean Woods wrote in her conference report “Those who missed seeing the book at Bristol will soon be able to see it on show in the British Library, though not with the intimacy with which we were able to see it in the small chapel of Bristol Baptist College”.²¹

1995 was something of a first when we went “abroad” for our conference – to **St Patrick’s College, Maynooth**, just outside **Dublin**. The College was celebrating the 200th anniversary of its foundation and the conference took as its theme “Maynooth’s 200 years: the old and the new”. Some 30 of us attended, including my late husband John who was to accompany me on so many subsequent conferences. Sadly (or perversely as Mary might comment) the memory which strikes me most is that of our room in the Pugin designed seminary being at the end of the long corridor on the “Men’s floor”. To reach the ladies’ bathroom I had to walk the length of the top corridor, go down a wide stone staircase and then go along the corridor on the floor beneath which had been designated for the female attendees. On the Sunday morning (Palm Sunday) I came out of our room in my dressing gown armed with my soap bag ready for the long trek, only to find myself being passed by a steady stream of earnest young seminarians on their way to the Chapel. Embarrassment all round – or perhaps not!

Another clear memory was our first evening meal which seemed to be more of a high tea with pots of tea on the table and plates of bread and butter – a rather low key affair. We were expecting the same the following evening and the majority of us were therefore under-dressed accordingly, only to be taken aback by the very formal anniversary dinner, complete with wine bearing the Maynooth anniversary labels, which had been laid on for everyone staying on that evening. A final anecdote from me is of an evening expedition into Dublin which some of us took, returning on the local bus only to find that the gates were locked. To this day I can’t remember how we got in – but we must have somehow!

²¹ Bulletin, Vol.3, no.2, p.21

In **1996** we returned to **Oxford**, this time staying at **Regent's Park College**. The conference included a visit to Pusey House where I remember Penny Hall's eyes lighting up at the sight of the organ in the chapel there and then she was actually allowed to play it. I don't remember much more about the conference except that we watched a couple of training videos featuring John Cleese. One, I recall, was on answering the telephone effectively! Rosemary Pugh remembers being very grateful for Alan Jesson's car mechanic skills when her car wouldn't start at the end of the conference. Multi-talented librarians.

Moving onto **1997** in **Winchester**, the stapled rabbit immediately comes to mind as do the many hills we walked up and down during the course of the conference. We stayed at **King Alfred's College** and this year's theme was "Design and Display", the conference running from Saturday to Monday. The main session on the Sunday afternoon was devoted to a demonstration on display techniques given by a rather dynamic couple who seemed to have a fetish with a staple gun. I remember distinctly letting out a howl of anguish as a poor soft toy rabbit was stapled with great relish to a display board by its ears. There was also a "hands-on" participation exercise – I was totally useless. This same couple were of an artistic temperament and our poor Hon. Secretary of the time, Andrew Lacey, had to display the patience of a saint as they complained about access and other issues before and after the presentation. It was in Winchester that the decision to move the AGM to the Spring residential conference was made. So the AGM became a highlight (or not!) of the weekend. We did, that weekend, also see the Winchester Bible, a great treat.

In **1998** we returned to **Manchester**, staying at **St Anselm Hall** again but moving round the corner to Luther King House for our conference sessions. This conference was ably organised by Dorothy Wright with the theme of Multiculturalism and Nonconformity and featured an excellent mix of talks and visits. It also featured stuffing envelopes with questionnaires for the Guide to Theological Libraries! Another memory is of a fantastic cream tea given to members attending the pre-conference THUG meeting at the Nazarene College. Food plays such an important part in my memories!

And food (and wine) played a large part in the following year's conference in **1999** organised by Andrew Lacey at **Trinity Hall, Cambridge** with the theme "The new small library", taking advantage of the fact that a number of Cambridge colleges had built new or refurbished their old libraries. The new Jerwood Library at Trinity Hall was particularly impressive – I remember seeing the window seats in the Library where students could sit

and read as they looked out watching the river flow past. Less impressive was Andrew's office which was more of a broom cupboard. We also had visits to Sidney Sussex and Jesus College. As for our meals, despite the fact that we sat on long benches, the quality of the food and wine was superb and not to be forgotten!

2000 in York was a special year in the annals. However for me personally and one or two others it is a year to be forgotten. This was the year when the residential conference moved from Spring to Autumn so that the ABTAPL conference could follow immediately the BETH conference which was being hosted by ABTAPL at the **College of Ripon and York St John**. Graham Cornish, an ABTAPL committee member for many years, who was at that time working at the British Library, Boston Spa, helped greatly with the organisation. Rather than revisit all the difficulties experienced, which involved a significant theft from one of the overseas visitors, anyone wishing to find out more is invited to read my report in the Bulletin for that year.²² I would like to repeat my thanks to Andrew Lacey for all that he did to help. And this is probably the moment to thank Andrew as well for the many wonderful talks on a variety of historical topics relevant to our particular venue which he has given to us over the years as our "resident academic". Similarly Graham Cornish has over many years added to our professional knowledge with his many sessions on copyright issues.

It wasn't all bad though in York and we had some wonderful times with our BETH friends though it may have sounded a bit like the Tower of Babel at times. A visit to Ampleforth Abbey particularly stands out. We had been invited to attend Evensong but were relegated to the gallery at the back of the Abbey as we "wouldn't understand the service as it was in Latin". We were also told to keep very quiet. Given that a large number of us were well versed in Latin and well understood how services of this nature were conducted we felt a little put down – or even peeved if I am being honest! We were also not allowed access to the monastery library, though we did see the school library with its Mouseman furniture. The other perverse memory is of our visit to the Bar Convent. If I say "The Hand" some of you may shudder as I do. In the Chapel there a very special relic, carefully covered with a cloth. This relic is the perfectly preserved hand of St Margaret Clitherow. When the nun showing us round asked if we would like her to remove the cloth. I think most of us were willing that cloth to stay put but one delegate piped up "Yes, please" and the cloth was ceremonially removed. The hand is indeed well preserved but that is all I will say!

²² Bulletin, Vol.7, no.3, p.4 onwards

Just 6 months later in Spring **2001** we were meeting again, this time in **Exeter at St Luke's College** with the theme "Cataloguing the specialist collections in today's theological libraries", the first conference organised by Rosemary Pugh. Rosemary and her lovely husband, John, often with their camper van became permanent fixture on the delegate list for each conference. I don't remember too much about the detail except that there was a good mix of visits and talks. Rosemary remembers us all arriving at the accommodation block but having to wait absolutely ages for someone to come and let us in. Some of us had en-suite rooms and others didn't and it was after this conference that the committee decided to recommend en-suite for all. Also there was a school party in the same block as some of us. One night they decided to have a game of football in the corridor after we had all gone to bed. We were not amused. For those of us who had been in York it also brought back bad memories of the rowdy student reunion which had caused so many problems at that conference.

In **2002** it was north again, this time staying at **Chester College** with rooms containing little ensuite "pods" (for want of a better word). Here we again had a mixture of talks and visits, one of which was a return to St Deiniol's. Fortunately for those who had attended the infamous 1979 conference the Warden was no longer there and we had a very warm welcome from Patsy Williams and her colleagues. Graham Cornish also led some very interesting and informative sessions on copyright. Canon Roy Barker gave a very entertaining talk on the Cathedral Library in lieu of a visit as it was sadly being refurbished. I think this was the first conference where the popular "Open Forum" session was featured.

Our second visit to **Salisbury** occurred in **2003**, again staying at **Sarum College**. If I mention "the lunch bags" many of you will instantly recall the picture, which was subsequently featured on the website and the ABTAPL publicity leaflet, showing all the delegates clutching white paper bags in a thick mist! The theme of this conference was "A theology of religious record keeping" and we had some memorable visits including Downside Abbey (who could forget the wonderful welcome given to us by the charming Dom Daniel Rees?) and Wells Cathedral with their 2 lovely librarians. I also remember the visit to Salisbury Cathedral Library and being "welcomed" by the rather fierce Librarian who was keen to point out the cupboard housing a toilet specially built to save her having to go up and down the many steps leading back down into the Cathedral. More perverse memories!

My distinct memory of the **2004** conference held in **Leicester**, staying at **Beaumont Hall** near the Botanical Gardens, is of the visit to the Jain Centre in central Leicester. This had been originally been a nonconformist Chapel but its frontage had been remodelled with Jain carvings. I had never seen anything like it before. Again we had a very warm welcome and I learned much about Jain spirituality. Of course, much of the conference focussed on multiculturalism. Another thing I remember is that we had 2 representatives from Continuum joining us for the whole conference. A baptism by fire for them I suspect! Evelyn Cornell then on the staff at the University Library had done much to help with the organisation of the conference and it was highly successful.

Durham in **2005** certainly sticks in my mind, first of all because of the weather. We had snow! This was the second conference my husband accompanied me and afterwards he commented on what a privilege it had been to go where no man or woman usually ever went. He was referring in particular to the visit to Auckland Castle, the home of the Bishop of Durham (then Tom Wright). As Carol Reekie recalls, “The Bishop gave us the run of his study - rare books intermingled with personal family possessions, it was a joy to see”. I remember the guide saying to us that she had never been in that room before as it was definitely off the tourist route. Carol also says “We also saw the well known paintings of the 12 tribes of Abraham (only 1 was missing). After our visit, I recall there was a lot of controversy about selling these”.²³ (These were the Zubaran paintings which the Church Commissioners were proposing to sell but fortunately a campaign saved them). We were indeed privileged. On a more negative note we stayed at Collingwood College where, although the rooms were very comfortable, I have to say it was the worst shower experience I have ever had. Apparently my shriek as the cold water hit me was heard for miles!

And now the icing on the Conferences cake – the Golden Jubilee Conference in **Prague** extended to 5 days in **2006** based at the **International Baptist Theological Seminary** just outside the city. What an amazing experience for the 50 plus delegates who attended. The word “privilege” again comes to mind as, thanks to the amazing work of Alan Linfield (his first as solo conference secretary) with his on-the-spot

²³ These were the Zubaran paintings <http://aucklandcastle.org/exhibitions/zurbaran-paintings> which the Church Commissioners were proposing to sell but fortunately a campaign to save them led by Jonathan Ruffer raised millions.

connections in Prague we were able to visit collections rarely seen by ordinary tourists, for example the library of the Nostitz Palace (where we were followed round by a security guard carrying a large gun) and the theology and philosophy libraries of the Strahov Monastery. Carol again recalls “the bus routes being changed because a James Bond film with Daniel Craig was being filmed - something Alan could not have foreseen but he coped admirably”. And who could forget that brightly coloured jester’s hat? Where is it now? Many of us will also recall that amazing conference dinner in a restaurant overlooking Prague. I remember with affection our late colleague John Howard who gave a marvellous overview of the first 50 years of ABTAPL. It was largely down to him, following a prompt from Graham Cornish (as I discovered from Graham only recently) that the almost moribund association had been resurrected. It is good to mention Lesley Utting’s recollection here, joining the conference from New Zealand “it was a wonderful setting to meet and make lifelong professional connections. The welcome was warm and this set the tone for the whole conference. Therefore the location, the programme, the visits and the people made this conference a highlight of my library career”. Exactly so.

That was a hard act to follow but in **2007** Alan surpassed himself with the accommodation we found in **Edinburgh** at the **Salisbury Green Hotel**, part of the University’s Pollock Halls complex – the first time ABTAPL had stayed in a hotel. Talk about quirky rooms. I think most of us were totally taken aback by the baronial style luxury – our room had, for example, its own little tower room – you went through a tiny door, up some stairs and then could sit in the turret window seat looking out at amazing views over Arthur’s seat. During the conference there was another good mix of interesting visits and talks, including one by Anthony Brewerton an expert in library marketing. Marion Smith recalls introducing Humeyra Ceylan to John Howard in Edinburgh not long after she took over the Bulletin. Marion says “it felt a bit like passing on the baton in a relay”. Perhaps one of the more memorable events was the sudden arrival of the haar (sea fog) which swept in and totally obliterated the day’s glorious sunshine as we walked from the Scottish Catholic Archives to New College. It makes me shiver to think about it!

And now we move in **2008** from Scotland to Ireland again, this time to the north where we stayed at **Stranmillis University College** in **Belfast**, my last conference as Chairman. An extra day was added to the conference so that we could maximise our time in Northern Ireland. During the time we packed in visits both within the city itself and outside plus talks and presentations. Perhaps the highlight for most of us was on the Friday

morning when we boarded a coach to Armagh. We ate our packed lunches on the steps of St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral, much to the surprise of a large group gathering for a wedding. The coach then took us through the stunning scenery of the Mountains of Mourne and the coast road to Downpatrick, where we went to the Down County Museum and the Saint Patrick Centre. As Christine Ainsley recalls "Maybe we could remember the Irish idea of time: that bus tour over the Mournes for example (shall we eat lunch now, In Armagh, or when we get to Downpatrick?) and arriving at the Patrick centre after it had closed!". One of the sad things at this conference is that we had to acknowledge the death of David Parry who had been booked to attend. I am sure that Dave himself would have acknowledged that he was one of our eccentrics – I still don't know why a china pig accompanied him at mealtimes at so many of our conferences!

In **2009** we found ourselves back in **Oxford** this time staying at **Worcester College** with the attendance (43 delegates) higher than any previous conference other than the Golden Jubilee. The weather was absolutely amazing for the entire time. The food and accommodation were excellent, there were really interesting visits and it was hard to remember anything detracting from our enjoyment, professional and personal. I particularly enjoyed the optional afternoon visit to Yarnton Manor, the home of the Oxford Centre for Jewish and Hebrew studies.

The amazing weather continued the following year in **2010** when we returned to **Bristol**. This was the first conference organized by Rachel Champion and what an excellent job she did especially in negotiating a great rate for us to stay at the **Mercure Brigstow hotel** near the river. We enjoyed all the visits, which included the New Room (John Wesley's first chapel) and Charles Wesley's house, but I particularly remember the final session on the use and process of 'marketing strategy' within the theological library sector. We certainly felt that we had earned our keep professionally so to speak. It was sad to hear at that conference that Wesley College was under threat of closure.

Rachel again did us proud in **2011** when we stayed at the **Maid's Head Hotel** in **Norwich**, apparently the oldest hotel in the UK. The weather was once again fabulous and I just remember a day packed full of visits, all done against the backdrop of completely blue skies and sunshine. The visit to the Julian Centre stands out for me especially as it was such a peaceful place. Sally Gibbs recalling her second conference says "I remember waiting in the new grand foyer at Norwich Cathedral for the Dean who was going to show us the Cathedral library. One member of the Cathedral clergy asked

what collective noun should be used for a group of librarians – I suggested a ‘pedant’. We went on to discuss what term could be used for a group of clergy, my idea was a ‘gossip of clergy’. He already had the term ready for a collection of Deans and was delighted to tell us... a ‘forest’ of course!”

In **2012** we found ourselves a little closer to home for our Conference Secretary as we paid our third visit to **Manchester**, this time staying at **Luther King House**. Sadly the weather lived up to the Manchester reputation and we were decidedly damp as we walked around the city between the various visits to the John Rylands Library and Chetham’s where we saw the famous chained library. However the welcome everywhere was warm, the accommodation very comfortable, and as always the company excellent. We also enjoyed a really informative and practical session on disaster planning and management given by Emma Dadson of Harwell Document Restoration Services.

Rain followed us in **2013** when we once again crossed the border into Scotland staying at the **Beardmore Hotel** (now called the Golden Jubilee Conference Hotel) in **Glasgow**. This was quite an adventure for me as I had flown from Stansted Airport where I had fallen foul of the security check (I had forgotten to remove my mobile phone from the front pocket of my suitcase) and had had the entire contents of my suitcase flung out onto the table before the somewhat unpleasant airport official. I remember wondering where we were going as the hotel shuttle approached what appeared to be the main entrance of a hospital. It turned out there was a shared entrance with the Golden Jubilee Hospital.

Some of the conference is a bit of a blur as I was about to exchange contracts on the house I was hoping to move to. I remember trying to balance a mobile phone against one ear while trying to hold on to my umbrella being battered by the wind and rain and trying to make sense of what the estate agent and then solicitor was trying to tell me. However I definitely could not forget our visit to the Glasgow School of Art and the wonderful Charles Rennie Mackintosh designed library. How terrible to know that the amazing place was completely gutted by that dreadful fire in 2014. To help our professional development our colleague Graham Cornish once again gave us the benefit of his expertise talking about e-copyright. I know that I was able to make good use of his advice on my return to Spurgeon’s in regard to our online site.

In **2014** we returned to **Sarum College** where Jenny Monds and Jayne Downey had organized a most enjoyable conference. I especially remember the trip to Winchester and especially the Winchester College Fellows’

Library where we saw so many treasures. Sally Gibbs has a particular memory, “Out of all the conference library visits I have experienced the artefact that has left the deepest impression was at the Winchester College Alumni Library (2014). We were shown a very rare Algonquin New Testament which early traders would have handed out to Native Americans – giving what they could not understand to people who could not read. The Winchester boys had asked if it might be sold to raise the funds to have their football pitch astro-turfed. The librarian had replied that it was so valuable the sale would pay for the whole of Winchester to be astro-turfed, then to us he added that probably the whole of the south of England could be so treated. I barely have a memory of the book itself, it seemed small and insignificant, it was the astronomic value which astounded me. I suppose the impact was all the greater because we have had such tight budgets in recent years. While many theological libraries struggle to keep their modules resourced, some other institutions are sitting on vast, probably inestimable treasures.”

For the **2015** conference I had to turn to the report in the Bulletin as I was enjoying the sunshine in Tuscany. From all accounts you had a great time staying at **Westminster College, Cambridge**, enjoying a packed programme of visits and talks all put together so well by Carol. The description of the Cambridge sunshine and the visit to Fitzwilliam College brought me full circle to that first conference I attended there in 1989.

And now here we are in Rome.

So many wonderful memories – all that weather, good and bad, all those welcomes mostly warm – and even those wheelie bins!

Here’s to the next however many years of the ABTAPL Spring conference. And with thanks to all those colleagues, past and present, too many to name, who have contributed so much to the conference experience. If I had a glass I would raise it so I will let Leonardo do it instead.

Judith Powles

The Vatican Secret Archives – exposed (a little)

The afternoon of the second full day of our Rome conference was devoted to a guided visit of the *Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum*, truly something granted only to the privileged few. Before we could reach the threshold of this *sacrum sanctorum* of the archive world, we first had to get past the Swiss guard on duty at the Porta Angelica of Vatican City, and then complete the 'border crossing' formalities that had to be gone through before our group could gain admission.

Those who may have been expecting to enter a Dan Brown world of conspiracy and secrecy may have been slightly disappointed to discover that the 'secrecy' of these archives is something of an illusion. Certainly they were closed to all non-Vatican scholars for centuries, but this all changed in 1881, when Leo XIII opened them for access to all bona fide researchers, and although very strict access criteria do indeed apply, they are hardly more stringent than those of many other specialist archives elsewhere. In fact, the *secretum* in the title of the archives is perhaps better understood as 'private', expressing the fact that the archive is deemed to be the personal property of the Pope. None of this of course will ever be allowed to get in the way of a good story, or of conspiracy theories concerning concealed caches of secret and potentially subversive documents, so no doubt the mystique of the archives will persist in the public imagination!

The archive's main function is to preserve the various deeds and documents pertaining to the government of the worldwide Roman Catholic Church. As such it contains, among others, acts promulgated by the Holy See, the papers of the Vatican State Secretariat, papal bulls and correspondence, plus many other varied documents which have been accumulated over the centuries. The earliest document in the collection dates from the 8th Century. For purposes of access, documents are classified primarily by papacy, with access currently open to those up to and including the papacy of Pius XI (1922-1939). A few later exceptions to this rule do exist, for example the papers of the Second Vatican Council are now available. The papers of the papacy of Pius XII, which will naturally be of huge interest, are now due to be released, although Pope Francis has yet to authorise this; so it was very tantalising to pass a set of boxes marked 'Pius XII, 1943' at one point of our tour!

Several reading rooms are provided, one being set aside for consulting original documents, two for printed materials and digitised reproductions, and one for consulting the various indices. Unsurprisingly, there is no single

comprehensive catalogue, although a valiant attempt was made at compiling one in the 19th Century, which is still in use.

As can be imagined, the archives occupy an enormous area of storage space, with some 80km of shelving currently in use. There is apparently still plenty of room for expansion. The various documents are distributed among a number of storage areas, with the especially valuable items being stored in acid-free boxes in air-conditioned and humidity-controlled strongrooms. The most impressive of these storage areas is undoubtedly the two cavernous labyrinthine chambers known collectively as 'the bunker', one of which we were shown. These came into use in 1980. The bunker has a storage capacity of 31,000 cubic metres with 43 linear kilometres of shelving, and uses an ingenious system of revolving shelving units which provides high-density and efficient storage – and a potential trap for the unwary – a ball of string would appear to be an essential safety precaution! The bunker is made of reinforced fire-proof concrete, and since, (barring perhaps a nuclear strike), the only other threat would be flood, it has been built *upwards*, rather than underground, so as to move it as high above the river as possible. The archive also has comprehensive conservation and photographic/digitisation facilities.

Possibly for most of us the high-point (quite literally) of our tour was a visit to the Tower of the Winds, one of the most famous buildings of the Vatican, which is located on top of the archive buildings. This was built in the late 16th century as an astronomical observatory, and from which the calculations were made to formulate the Gregorian Calendar. The tower has two floors and a mezzanine. On the first floor is the Sundial or Meridian Room, richly decorated with frescoes. It was also at one time the residence of Queen Christina of Sweden following her conversion to Catholicism. The sundial of the room's name consists of a straight line in white marble, aligned north-south, which was used to measure the height of the sun at noon at different times of the year. Shutters make the room lightproof apart from a small pinhole through which the rays of the sun could be tracked against the meridian line. The observations made with this sundial confirmed that the old Julian Calendar was inaccurate and needed replacing. The mezzanine is also richly decorated with frescoes, perhaps the most fascinating showing views of Rome as it appeared in the 16th Century, with the domeless basilica of St Peter's, it being then still under construction.

We turned from these historical views of Rome to the real thing, when the shutters were opened to lead us out onto a balcony from which a breathtaking panorama across the rooftops of Rome lay before us. When the

next day we toured the Vatican Museums, our guide was amazed (and a bit envious) when she discovered we had been up on the Tower the day before, as she had never been able to get up there herself! It was indeed a memorable way to round off a tour granted only to a few.

Alan Linfield

Thursday afternoon visits to libraries

a) Biblioteca Angelica

An unpretentious entrance, up a winding marble staircase, and we emerged into a world we recognized: walls lined with wooden card catalogue cabinets, and the request to be quiet! The reading room is spectacular: a rectangular room with seemingly vertiginous shelves accessed by narrow galleries; wooden reading desks, and a large desk near the far end where the reading room sat in state. One of the display cases near the entrance held a number of books sadly in need of conservation, along with a plea for donations towards this task.

The library was founded in the sixteenth century by the donation by Angelo Rocco of some 20,000 books to an Augustinian friary; in 1604 the library opened as the first public library in Europe in the modern era. Subsequently, former students and others left collections to the library, the most important donation being that of Cardinal Dominico Passionei who gave 40,000 volumes on religious controversies to the library in 1762. The eighteenth century saw restoration of both church and library, the reading room being finished around 1765; towards the end of the eighteenth century three Augustinian friars compiled a handwritten catalogue of the printed books, which our guide showed to us, saying that it continues to be of use today.

The total number of books in the library now stands at around 120,000; subjects covered include the Augustinian order, the works of St Augustine, important Italian writers and religious controversies. It became a state library in 1873 and the public are entitled to access any of the books. The university provides some student helpers to assist with the running of the library. In addition to the main printed book collection (which includes some 20,000 books printed in the sixteenth century), the library holds some 3,000 manuscripts and 1,100 incunabula.

We were taken down a flight of stairs behind the reading room attendant's desk to a suite of seminar and meeting rooms in the basement below the

reading room, where we were shown a selection of manuscripts and incunabula:

1) A manuscript made around 1029-1039 in the Bologna area; this region was very important for ink illumination and for music notation. The manuscript was a gospels: the gospels written in Carolingian script, with notation added for singing. The musical notation of the eleventh century is significantly different from later plainsong notation: staves are not yet in use, and the notes themselves are curiously more akin to our modern note forms than the intervening square notation.

2) A facsimile edition of a manuscript of eighteen poems about a battle near Naples; the original manuscript was from the first half of the thirteenth century.

3) A late fifteenth century manuscript of Dante's *Comedia*, with thirty-four illuminations in colour and gold leaf, written in Gothic script.

4) The first printed book made in Italy. It was printed in the monastery of St Scholastica in Subiaco, near Rome, and is an edition of Cicero. The printers were Germans who had worked with Gutenberg before moving to Italy where the first printing was done in 1465. The book is printed on paper, with illuminated initials added by hand.

5) The first Italian printing of the works of Dante, printed in 1472 by another German printer, again with illuminated initials added. The script is a humanist font, known as "modern", as opposed to the "antiqua" script which resembled Carolingian script. This book was printed in Foligno, Umbria.

6) *Vecchio*, translated from Latin into Italian, printed in 1476, with hand illuminated initials and elaborate marginal decoration commissioned by Cardinal Domenico Passionei.

7) Augustine's *City of God*, printed in Gothic script (also known as Black Letter); this script continued to be used in Italy for law and religious books as it was seen as a "high" script. The text was decorated with illuminated frames and much gold leaf.

8) Examples of Aldines – books printed by Aldus Manutius, who worked in Venice in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. He invented the "pocket book", a format he used especially for classical Greek and Latin

books; he also invented a Greek script for printed books. The format meant books could be printed cheaply.

9) Botanical books by Matthioli, a sixteenth century botanist; this demonstrated a wealth of printed illustrations – engravings which were then hand-coloured.

b) Biblioteca Catanense

Cardinal Casanate willed 25,000 books, money and property to the Dominicans if they promised to build a new library to be open to the public. The library was designed by an architect who had already done other work for the Dominicans. The Cardinal died before the building was finished; the library opened on 1 November 1701.

The Great Hall, measuring some 60 metres by 50 metres, houses 60,000 printed books dating from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. They are arranged by subject in twenty-seven classes, and then by size – the biggest at the bottom. The manuscripts, which are now kept in a safe (strong room?) were originally housed in the room next to the Great Hall, to which storage rooms were added to hold the most precious material. The hall was carefully designed for its purpose: the windows sit above the book shelves, maximizing the space for books whilst minimizing light damage to the books. Natural light by which to see is maximized by the design of the vault: painted white, the roof has arches over the windows to direct the light downwards into the hall. Subjects include history, philosophy, medicine, law and theology; the east end of the hall is dominated by a statue of the Cardinal; above him on the wall is an image of St Thomas Aquinas, one of the most famous Dominicans and a symbol of learning. Our guide pointed out spaces on the shelves and explained that some of the books have been removed to be read, some for restoration, and some for a digitization project for which the library is co-operating with Google Books. There are now 400,000 books altogether in the collections, including nineteenth century specialization in the history of Rome, theology and law. There are 6,000 manuscripts, 2,200 incunabula, 10,000 engravings and an important music collection including autographed scores of Paganini.

The library was held by the Dominicans until the early twentieth century. It was used for censorship, so contains a number of “forbidden books”; there is no specific “forbidden books” section, to make it slighter harder for them to be found, but they are kept on the second floor gallery, ‘out of temptation’. The censorship sign is a cross: the more crosses, the more

dangerous the book is considered to be, with the maximum number being four (only one book has four crosses). Traditionally the library's conservation was carried out in-house, but since it was taken over by the Italian state conservation has moved off-site. The Great Hall was made into a museum when the State took over running of the library, and the reading room was moved to a smaller and warmer room.

In the eighteenth century scientific instruments were purchased to enhance the book collections, including the two huge globes standing in the Great Hall. Made in 1716 by a famous cartographer who worked for the King of France, they were handmade and painted. One represents the then known world, the other the celestial. Another instrument on display is an armillary sphere – to find the position of the moon, sun etc.; it has the earth in the centre of the solar system. To commemorate the three hundredth anniversary of these spheres an exhibition of cartography is being planned.

The library relies on its card catalogue, and still uses the book catalogue printed in 1761. The reading rooms accommodate thirty readers; library users are principally students, some using their own books and some studying the library's own collections. The Institute (previously Ministry) of Culture is now responsible for the library and purchasing continues for both historic and modern book collections. The library is open to anyone, but you must be at least 8 years old to use the books.

In the Great Hall our guides showed us some prized items from the collections:

1) The 'Theatre Medicinalis' is one of only four extant and dates from the end of the fourteenth century. It comprises large pictures of plants, trees, birds and humans, each picture accompanied by a short explanation of when to use it medicinally, its properties, what plants are good, which are dangerous, and how to avoid the danger.

2) A unique herbal dating from the end of the fourteenth century, it bears the arms of Emperor Sigmund (or Sigismund) IV, the last Holy Roman Emperor of the House of Luxembourg (Emperor 1433-1437) and was originally held in the Corvinian Library in Budapest. The manuscript was made in the workshop of di Grassi, in northern Italy, using an Italian Guelphic script; it was one of the last medieval painted herbals and depicts animals, plants and trees. It comprises some 700 pages worked by two or three scribes and a number of different illuminates, probably worked by six or seven people in total.

3) A missal made in northern France or Flanders for the Duc de Berry, whose arms adorn the manuscript. In his lavish patronage of art, the Duc de Berry is probably best known for the Très Riches Heures by the Limbourg brothers. The missal we saw is not by the Limbourg brothers, but was probably made in the same area in which they were working, Guelders; it is a stunningly fine piece of work. We were shown two full page miniatures, of Christ on the cross and Christ in triumph. The manuscript has had a chequered history: it was stolen in the nineteenth century; pages removed from it were found in another museum and were reunited with the main work. It came to this library as a gift from Pope Benedict XIII, and has a provenance note made by a Dominican friar in 1728.

4) The Biblioteca Catanense holds the second extant piece of Italian printing, a copy of Lactantius printed in October 1465. (I found this a particular highlight: I have a 1474 Italian printed Lactantius in my collection, so it felt almost like meeting his elder brother!) There is clearly some rivalry between these two libraries about their early Italian printed books, as the Biblioteca Catanense were keen to tell us that although the Biblioteca Angelica holds the first extant printing, there is believed to have been a grammar of Donatus printed before either of the two earliest books we were shown today; the Donatus has been lost, although the Biblioteca Catanense suggested that it is not known whether it has been destroyed or is simply lying somewhere unidentified.

5) From the “forbidden books” collection we saw Copernicus’ work, complete with the annotations made by the Inquisitors. These two libraries provided a fascinating insight into the bibliographic world of Rome, both in terms of the collections held and the way the libraries are managed; both were slightly reminiscent of the Tardis, with unprepossessing entrances revealing amazingly rich interiors.

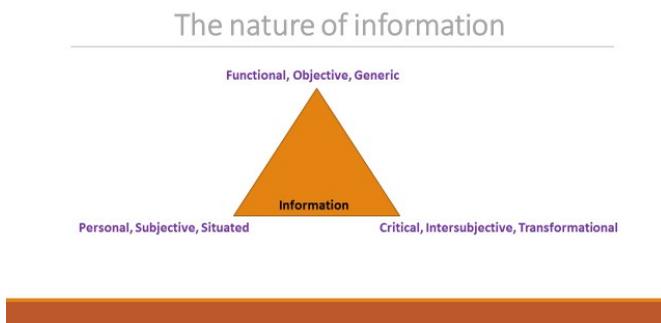
Gudrun Warren

The role of librarians in encouraging and enabling self-directed research: developing an awareness of library anxiety and taking steps to reduce it

Rachel Campion has been Learning Resources Tutor at Luther King House Educational Trust, Manchester since 2000. She is a past ABTAPL Conference Secretary and is currently studying for an MA via distance learning with the University of Manchester in Digital Technologies, Communication and Education. This article is based on a paper presented at the 2016 ABTAPL Conference.

What is it about libraries that can make some users nervous, anxious and not know where to begin? What can we as librarians do to encourage our users to engage with the library more effectively as they search for and apply the information and knowledge held therein? This paper will look at some commonly held perceptions of libraries and librarians; what we can do to challenge those perceptions and attitudes that are unhelpful to our users; and how we can apply adult education theories to help us develop the way we give inductions and teach information literacy.

I work for an Educational Trust that is validated by a major UK University. Around half of our undergraduates are not sponsored by their denomination to train for ministry in the Christian church. Our learning community is diverse but inclusive and supportive, with a high percentage of BME students and those in receipt of DSA. All our students are adult learners with a strong sense of vocation. Some students struggle to engage academically and see some of the assignments as ‘jumping through hoops’ to reach their final goal of deeper engagement with Christian ministry in their particular contexts.



As the above diagram demonstrates, and as I outlined in my presentation at the ABTAPL Spring Conference 2015, the nature of information could be seen as triadic, with the different facets affecting not only how we teach information literacy/'study skills', but also how we handle, store and disseminate information and attribute worth and value to it. I graduated from "library school" (as it was affectionately known back in the day) with an over-riding idea that information was only functional, objective and generic and the library service I went on to manage should primarily reflect that. Over the years I have come to realise the importance of the library in reflecting all three natures of information, and this has helped me to offer a more inclusive and relevant service to the particular cohort of students within my context.

My main motivation for changing my approach was a growing realisation that some students seemed confused, anxious, unsure and unwilling/unable to ask for help when in the library, and yet some of these students were otherwise comfortable in an academic environment. As Cooke (2010, 218) writes, libraries can be seen as "overwhelming...secretive, mysterious places". Is there anything we can do to change this, or is it in fact the user's problem, not ours? Brophy (2001, 91) described the librarian as "agent; guide; mediator; broker; gateway...expert intermediary". This view puts the librarian firmly in control of the user's access to information but I wonder whether I always know what is best for my users and whether there are occasions when I should let them find out for themselves.

Reflecting on my job, my role, my library and ultimately my profession led me to further research the self-image of librarians and how we view our roles. In the face of continued threats, many library professionals have to justify their role and the existence of the service they provide. With thriving libraries taking more resources to run, extra pressure is created when libraries themselves do not generate significant income. It is difficult to quantify the value of a 'successful' library in non-monetary terms. The image of a stern, middle-aged, white woman working in a peaceful, book-filled environment and having the opportunity to sit and read all day is still very much alive as the popular stereotype. How much does this play on our own anxiety over the future of our libraries, and does it influence our users by increasing their levels of anxiety – even if our own personas and our libraries are far different?

Zinn (in Cooke, 2010, 208; *my italics*) writes,

The library is the ultimate place for independent lifelong learning where adults have the opportunity to make discoveries and retrieve information that is potentially *life changing*. In this sense, the library is a venue for progressive adult education, where *the learner takes an active role in learning* and *the librarian is more of an information coach or guide*.

I find the idea of changing someone's life through giving them the opportunity to discover and retrieve information to be incredibly exciting. But how realistic is this? Can all learners be as 'active' as Zinn suggests? Here we assume that all library users are capable of higher order thinking – using past knowledge and experience to construct new knowledge, a process known as 'transference'. This is very much a learner-centred approach, where students are able to realise their own needs and then ask the librarian to guide them. Certainly in my context, not all students are capable of this.

As part of my studies, I have researched a phenomenon known as 'information anxiety' (also termed 'information overload' or 'technostress'). Key characteristics include an inability to self-direct or ask for help; feelings of confusion, disorientation and being overwhelmed; facing a paradox of having too much choice of information, and taking the quickest (but not necessarily the best) option; an inability to think critically and a lack of higher order thinking. In my context, I particularly notice this amongst some students who have previous educational experience of rote learning outside the UK. Students may have an idea of what they are looking for, but have no idea if it exists or how to find it. They may have no idea of what they are looking for, but start searching for it anyway.

A related phenomenon is 'library anxiety', outlined in five scenarios by Eklof (2013, 248-50); not understanding information; not knowing if certain information exists; anxiety around communicating with the librarian; and not knowing where, or how, to access information. A lack of understanding of the layout/classification system of a library is a major part of anxiety, and while every library needs a system of organisation, care needs to be taken so that the tools of the librarian do not work better for the librarian themselves than they do for the user.

A certain amount of anxiety is to be expected when a student is presented with a new challenge or an unfamiliar situation. As transference takes place, previous learning constructs are reshaped in the light of new knowledge and experience. Some students will not feel any anxiety, or if they do it is quickly overcome. However, for other students who struggle

with higher order thinking, it is a huge stumbling block that seriously impairs their library experience. As Bell (2011, 121) writes,

students' fears are due to a feeling that other students are competent at library use while they alone are incompetent; this lack of competence is somehow shameful and must be kept hidden; asking questions will lead to a revelation of their inadequacy.

How can I improve my communication with users, to ensure that issues of anxiety are addressed, that negative stereotypes are challenged and the library fulfils its potential as being life changing? This is a challenge for me, with a high number of students who have English as a second or other language. Some want too much help (can't self-direct) and some won't ask for help when they need it. I have noticed that within some cultures, a man is reluctant to ask a (white) woman for help. The use of what I have termed 'library-speak' (see illustration) does not help either, with students unsure of words I take for granted and use every day in my job. I've learned to use these words with care, and always explain/clarify what they mean in layperson's terms.



I've also gained an understanding of adult education theory, and as Zinn's quote (above) illustrates, the library plays a vital part in adult education so this is very relevant to me. Knowles (in Jarvis, 2006, 186) states that adult learners are self-directed; their life experience informs their learning; they want to actively participate in the learning process; their learning needs to be relevant to their lives and they are highly motivated to learn. Clearly not all adult learners display all these characteristics in equal measure! Of

particular relevance to adult learners are barriers to new learning created by prior educational experiences, conceptions, expectations and habits. For these students, support in the transference process is vital if they are to progress and achieve.

Librarians should be encouraged to “create a learning environment that encourages intellectual curiosity...diligent, focused and systematic approaches when facing problems” (Kwon, 2008, 129). Intellectual curiosity, self-direction, self-discovery and allowing space for “serendipity, intuition and experimentation” (O’Connor, 2008, 83) are important if we are to reduce anxiety and encourage higher order thinking. Taking a wider view of the nature of information and its subjective, critical, transformative features can help students to transfer life experience in order to inform learning. Some students are always going to need more support than others, but I have tried to remember that the support needs to be appropriate to each individual, rather than taking a standardised approach. Individual learning styles and personalities should be taken into account as far as possible. Developing a greater awareness of the processes involved in student library use (what they think, feel and do as they learn) has helped. I have also started to include material on critical thinking and critical analysis in information literacy sessions to encourage higher order thinking. It’s an ongoing process, but we are seeing positive results with more students engaging with the library and feeling ‘at home’ there.

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Rachel Campion

Librarians on the Move: Helping to Bring an Automated Library Management System to Swaziland and Beyond.....

In my role at the Nazarene Theological College in Manchester, I have been extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with librarians at other Nazarene institutions around the world. As a result of that work I went to Swaziland in January 2016 as part of a team of librarians from the USA, Canada, Malawi and South Africa to help implement the first automated library management system (LMS) at Southern Africa Nazarene University (SANU).

There are 53 Nazarene institutions around the world and more than half of them do not have an automated LMS. The International Board of Education (IBOE) for the Church of the Nazarene recently committed to provide the financial and practical resources to change this. They sort the advice of librarians and OPALS (Open Source Automated Library System) was chosen as the system that would be funded by the IBOE for any institution that needed it.

SANU had been requesting help with an automated LMS for the last two years, so it was an obvious place for the OPALS project to be launched. Their best system was a fully functional card catalogue in Theology Faculty library, but the libraries for the Faculties of Education and Health Sciences were reliant on a book list and knowledgeable librarians to help students to find the books.

For almost three weeks, we worked alongside the brilliant team at SANU to implement OPALS and were able to add 1500 items to the catalogue and barcode more than 8,000 books. In the last six months the team at SANU (assisted by volunteers) have added almost 5,000 items to the catalogue and their jobs have been transformed as a result of OPALS. In a recent email to the team, Lungile Seyama (Head Librarian at SANU said this; “Being part of a transformed team is truly amazing. It’s evident that giants have been awakened in each members self. Everyone is realising what they are capable of doing and are giving their whole.”

OPALS is also spreading to other institutions and work has begun on automated library management systems in Malawi, South Africa, Mozambique, the Philippines and Cornwall. In March 2016, I also made the recommendation that we should also move to OPALS and will be making the transition over the summer so that the system can be launched in time for the start of the academic year. It is a little daunting to be moving to a new system, but OPALS is such an enjoyable system to use and the support that I have received so far has been so good, that I am confident that the transition will go relatively smoothly.

It is difficult to put into words quite what a privilege it has been to be a part of this project and it will always be a high point of my career. If you would like to learn more about the project or OPALS please join ‘Mission: Nazarene Librarians’ on Facebook or email me on hstocker@nazarene.ac.uk.

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