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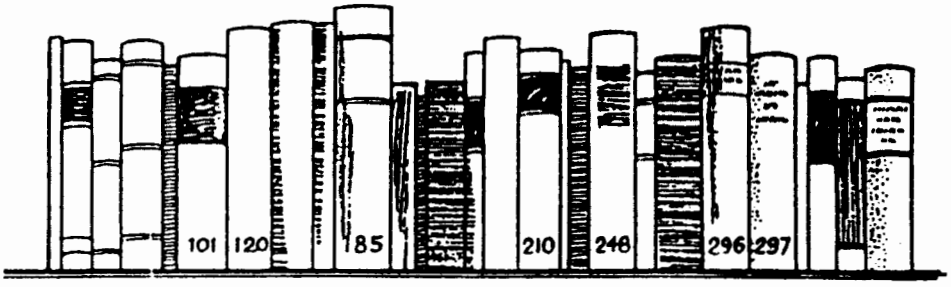

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Editorial

As a new editor of the Bulletin, there are one or two thoughts which I would like to share with you.

I wonder how many ABTAPL members realise that there are no longer any specialist Philosophy and Religion departments in British public libraries. The department within Birmingham Central Library was founded in the early 1970s and that within the Mitchell Library in Glasgow a few years later. Both have now become part of Social Sciences sections; in both cases the numbers of specialist staff will have reduced, partly as a result of the restructuring process and partly because the vast range of subjects covered by the new department will inevitably mean that staff need a shallower knowledge across more subject areas.

What will be the effects of changes resulting from the National Review of Public Libraries (see March 1994 *Bulletin*) and the local government, discussed in this Bulletin? Large public library systems, such as Birmingham and Glasgow, are regarded as regional (sometimes national) resources and, as such, provide support for students of all subjects and at all levels. For several years groups from schools outside Birmingham have come to use our material for project work in RE because their own local library authority is unable to provide the range of resources required. Presumably this situation can only worsen if smaller public libraries result from local government reorganisation.

I believe that anything that affects public libraries is likely to affect all of us, even if only indirectly. If schoolchildren need to use public libraries for their project work and other studies any threat to that facility may mean that those students' examination results and enthusiasm for their subjects are undermined so that their very future as students in further or higher education is threatened. Furthermore, it is worrying that all the important views of those future library users are not being given the emphasis they deserve. Whilst initial public responses to the National Review of Public Libraries were to be made by the end of June, with the draft report due to appear in autumn 1994 when further comments can be made, the initial request for responses appeared to make no provision for direct consultation with children and schools - and how much press coverage did you see?

Marion Smith
Birmingham Central Library.

The agony and the ecstasy: automating the Library of St. John's College, Nottingham.

by Andrew Lacey

The word one could be assured of hearing at any gathering of theological librarians from the late 80s onwards was 'automation'. It almost became a ritual incantation. The other phenomenon which accompanied the use of this work was the sense that everyone was waiting for someone else to do it first, so that we could all learn from their mistakes; so we all stood on the brink, waiting for someone else to take the plunge. This short article is about how we at St. John's took the plunge, and how bracing it was! I hope to describe briefly what we have done, and discuss some of the pitfalls and successes we have met along the way.

I have been rather appalled at the way in which the phrase "Let's automate the Library!" can be spoken in less than ten seconds, but commits you to years of work, and I think that is an important point to begin with. Automation, at first glance appears attractive, particularly to College authorities who have visions of being at the cutting edge. It conjures up images of computers and fast response, of networks and downloading, of a Library which looks like a cross between the flight-deck of Concorde and Command Headquarters for `Desert Storm'. It is important to realise at the beginning that automating any collection over 20,000 items is a major project, which demands a lot of staff time, a lot of discussion and planning, and a lot of investment and support from the institution.

The Library at St. John's was founded with the College in 1863, and it moved around the various sites the College occupied in London, until in 1973 the College moved to its present home in Nottingham. The Library grew considerably in size and scope, to the extent that it became cramped in its original location. So, in 1979, the College raised funds to construct a purpose built Library and Reading Room which currently holds a stock of between 35-40,000 books and a wide range of journals. Annual accessions are between 700-1,000 books and we subscribe to about 100 journals and periodicals. The major project once automation is complete is the expansion of the Library building, as we are filling up fast!

I am the second qualified Librarian to work at St. Johns. My predecessor, Ruth Gibson, was faced with the daunting task of putting the collection into professional order after a century of being managed by a tutor-librarian, during which time there had been no co-ordinated

cataloguing or classifying procedures. In the balmy days of MSC Community Programme it was possible to recruit a team of cataloguers and classifiers, who, under Ruth's capable leadership, recatalogued and reclassified the collection using AACR2 and a modified version of the Library of Congress system. The rigour and professionalism with which this recataloguing was done has been immensely helpful in the process of automation because we have been working from cataloguing data which is relatively easy to transfer onto a database. This should be taken into account when planning an automation project, as the work involved in recataloguing and automating at the same time is considerably more than that involved in just transferring records from catalogue cards to a database.

As with everyone who considers automation, the first thing we did was to look at what is currently available on the computer market. This was in 1990-91, and I am aware that the computer world moves so rapidly that things have changed since then. The major problem that we faced was that with a collection between 35 - 40,000 items we were reaching the upper limits of the micro-systems; the response time is affected and there is room for expansion. To move into the mini field was prohibitive for financial reasons. Another problem was that it is very difficult to get practical, disinterested advice from computer companies who are hoping that you will buy their product, and it is very easy to be fooled by the sales pitch, the jargon of the computer world which makes as much sense to me as classical Mongolian, and the pressure actually to get the project off the ground.

We spent the first two years of the project assessing and discussing the needs of the Library and the College in terms of automation, and the merits ore otherwise of the systems available. We invited reps to come to the College to demonstrate their wares, and visited computer fairs an exhibitions to see what was available. Out of the mountains of brochures and options a few conclusions emerged. The first that there were very few systems available on the market to match the size of our Library and our needs as users. For example, all readers sign their own books and journals in and out of the Library, so that any issue system had to be both foolproof, comprehensive and easy to use. In practice the systems we looked at had awful graphics because they were designed for Library staff to use, not readers. Although this does raise the question of why designers don't provide attractive graphics for the staff who are going to have to use them!

The other major problem was that with a collection of 35-40,000 items and our rate of growth the micro systems were too small, with

only one or two terminals available. As I've said, the move to the next stage of a mini system was prohibitive on financial grounds, and the College does not have a mainframe we could plunge the Library into.

All these discoveries pushed us into the conclusion that if we could not find an off-the-peg systems which suited our needs and pocket then we should create our own. We were fortunate in having within college members of staff and students who were highly proficient programmers and were capable of creating and maintaining such a system. What we would have done if that expertise had not been available is difficult to say!

The task fell into two parts. The first was to devise a circulation system so that we could dispense with the folders in which people had up till then signed books in and out. The second part was to transfer the catalogue records from cards to a database.

Creating the circulation system was relatively easy, and is an example of the benefits of designing one's own system. We were able to create graphics and use colour to design screens which allow readers to sign books out, return or renew them, and to search to find who has a book that's on loan. As we are still working with a card catalogue this issue system requires the reader to type in authors and titles; this will obviously change when the catalogue is on-line when the reader will simply run a light pen over a barcode to issue a book. This circulation system has now been in operation for about two years and has worked very well. Most students have found it easy to use, even those who shrink from anything connected with computers! One major advantage of the system is that it allows overdue recalls to be generated and processed in about 15 - 2 minutes, whereas with the folders writing recalls could take most of the day. It is an example that computers can on occasions be used to liberate people from boring jobs!

The second task, namely the transfer of the catalogue records, was far more formidable. We spent a long time trying to find a method which would mean that we didn't have to type in 35,000 records. We looked into buying records from OCLC and other such places, we tried scanning the cards but found the print was too small! We tried all sorts of things but were always thrown back on the fact that, at the end of the day, there was no substitute for actually typing in each catalogue record separately. With so many records it was a daunting task; in the end we had a team of between 6 and 10 data inputters who were paid

piecework basis to type in records from the stock cards. It took 18 months to enter 32,500 records. The data inputters all had Apple Macs at home so they could type in data from the accessions cards at their own convenience and then return the floppy disk to the Library where it was downloaded and sorted into the master database. In this way the data inputters did not need to work in the Library. As I've said, this task was made a lot easier because the data was in such good shape.

Having got the majority of the records onto the database, the current task is bar-coding the books. There have been three people working fairly consistently on this since Christmas, and it is hoped to be completed by the summer. When this is completed, and when the issue system is amended, the system will be ready to be tried out on the unsuspecting readers, and we will know whether four years of planing and work has paid off! Tasks for the future include key-wording and bibliographic checking, as we gradually refine and expand the data, but the priority at the moment is to get the system up and running for the start of the next academic year.

Having got to this point, and being of a cynical turn of mind, I ask myself the obvious question "Is it worth all the effort, because there is always more agony than ecstasy in this game?!" I have to say that despite the formidable obstacles involved, despite the cost and despite the amount of work the rewards and opportunities brought by automation far outweigh the problems. The initial work of choosing a retail system, of designing one's own, the task of converting card catalogues into databases, etc. are one off tasks: they take time but once they are completed they will never need to be done again. Now we have nearly all our records on the database, and they are in a format which can be moved around, made available on the JANET network and changed to MARC if necessary; we have something which is flexible and which will form the basis of the Library catalogue and integrated system into the next century.

Automation also means that the stock can be made to work more effectively. With a system that can be searched by author, subject, keyword or any combination of these, the potential for exploiting the resources is greatly increased compared with basic author/title searching which we have at the moment. We will be able to construct and print bibliographies for students quickly and easily, a service of particular value when linked to CD-rom searching.

The other advantages of automation have to do with style and credibility. We live in a technological age whether we like it or not, and automation can enhance the position of the Library within an organi-

sation. People are familiar with computers and respect what they make possible. If libraries do not embrace the new technology and keep pace with it, they will be dismissed as reactionary and irrelevant. This can also go a long way to maintain the position of the librarian, if they are perceived as people who are comfortable with IT and people who can manage change effectively. Another by-product of automation in an increasingly competitive market is that it impresses potential students. When I conduct Library tours for potential students at St. John's most of them are impressed by the computers and flashing lights we have in the Library: it demonstrates that the organisation takes the development of the Library seriously, as well as showing that we are trying to find ways of enhancing and expanding the services we offer.

In the Middle Ages they used to chain books to the wall, now it is our computers which we bolt down; perhaps an indication of where our priorities lie. For us at St. John's the major decision was to create our own system rather than buying one off -the-peg. At the end of the day everyone's circumstances are different - the needs of the organisation and the readers, the amount of time, money and personnel which can be allocated to the project, and the end results which are required. The answers to these questions will determine how you proceed. From someone who is just beginning to emerge from the agony, I would suggest that you should initiate an automation project with clear goals and objectives. Don't be intimidated by the so-called experts and sales people. when they start talking classical Mongolian; tell them what you want, and if they cannot give it to you then move on to something else. Make sure your ideas and policies keep in step with the changes the new technology will bring to the way the Library is used: spend time discussing and exploring all the implications of automation - it will change things in ways you may not expect!

Automating a collection is not easy - it creates new problems as well as solving some old ones. It takes time and money and planning. But when you begin to see the project coming together, and when you can see readers getting more out of the Library and using the collection more effectively because of automation, then the time and the effort begin to make sense.

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William Tyndale (1494 - 1536), and his local context in South Gloucestershire and Bristol

by J.H. Bettey

The Authorised Version of the Bible which was produced in 1611 by a group of scholars assembled on the orders of James I, was to become the most influential book in the English language. In more than three and a half centuries since its publication many people have wondered how a translation of such uniform genius, with countless memorable phrases that have greatly enriched the English language, could have been produced by a committee. The reason is that the scholars working for King James based their translation almost entirely on the work of William Tyndale who had translated the whole of the New Testament and half of the Old Testament into English during the 1520s. William Tyndale was born about 1494 at Slimbridge which is in the Vale of Berkeley in south Gloucestershire some twenty miles north of Bristol, and the Quincentenary of his birth is being celebrated in a series of services, conferences, seminars and lectures during the autumn of 1994. The event will also be marked by the publication of a new biography of Tyndale by Professor David Daniell of London University. This paper will consider the few definite facts which are known about Tyndale's early life, and will survey the religious situation in south Gloucestershire and Bristol during his formative years.

The basic details of Tyndale's life are well known. He was the younger son of a fairly affluent family of yeomen farmers, with several branches of the family settled in adjacent parishes of the Vale of Berkeley, including Slimbridge, Stinchcombe and North Nibley, all part of the low-lying lands situated between the river Severn to the west and the escarpment of the Cotswolds to the east. As well as agriculture, this was a region which depended on the production of woollen cloth; it was also dominated by great estates such as the lands of the Berkeley family with their formidable fortress of Berkeley castle, and the lands of the Church, notably the wealthy abbeys such as the Cistercian abbey at Kingswood near Wotton-under-Edge and the rich Benedictine house of St Peter's Gloucester, which was later to become the cathedral.

In a survey of 1522, William Tyndale's brother, Edward Tyndale, is shown as a prosperous farmer of Hurst Farm, Slimbridge. He was also a receiver of rents for the Berkeley family and acted as steward for the lands of Tewkesbury abbey. The patronage of the parish of

Slimbridge was a possession of Magdalen College, Oxford, and it was rents from Slimbridge that paid the choristers to sing from Magdalen tower on Mayday. The connection with Magdalen College no doubt explains how William Tyndale was able to become a student at Magdalen Hall, within Magdalen College, which later became Hertford College.

Tyndale went to Oxford in c1506 and remained there until 1516 becoming proficient in Latin and Greek.. He was ordained in c1514 and in 1516 decided to remove to Cambridge in order to continue his study of Greek. In Cambridge he would have encountered a fierce debate about the state of the Church, the conditions of the clergy and the justification for many of its beliefs and practices. Tyndale's sympathies were strongly on the side of those pressing for reform in the Church and for the abandonment of many of its contemporary doctrines. In 1522, Tyndale decided upon a bold change in the direction of his career, and abandoned his scholarly surroundings at Cambridge to become tutor to the young children of Sir John Walsh at Little Sodbury manor, on the steep escarpment of the Cotswolds, only a few miles to the south of Slimbridge, and little more than ten miles from the populous town and busy port of Bristol where there was a long tradition of religious dissent and Lollard beliefs. Sir John Walsh was one of a group of gentry in that neighbourhood who favoured reform in the Church and he was married to Anne Poyntz, a daughter of the Poyntz family of nearby Iron Acton who were also prominent supporters of change in the Church, and who were later to profit greatly from the suppression of monasteries.

Tyndale remained at Little Sodbury for more than a year, his light duties enabling him to preach at various places in the district including Bristol, and also giving him leisure to translate the *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* (Manual of a Christian Soldier) of Erasmus into English. His preaching and discussions with local clergy and gentry brought him into conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities in the diocese of Worcester which then included Gloucestershire east of the Severn and most of the town of Bristol, and these controversies at Little Sodbury confirmed his resolve to translate the Scriptures into English. It was during an argument with a cleric at Little Sodbury that Tyndale declared:

'If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost'.

Later, in the preface to his translation of the first of the Old Testament in 1530 he wrote:

> *'which thing only moved me to translate the New Testament. Because I perceived by experience, how that it was impossible to stablish the lay people in any truth, except the Scripture were plainly before their eyes in their mother tongue, that they might see the process, order and meaning of the text ...'*

The rest of Tyndale's short life can be summarised briefly. In July 1523 he left Little Sodbury for London where he hoped to receive the help and support of Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall in his project for the translation of the Bible into English. Being rebuffed by the Bishop and harassed by the ecclesiastical authorities, he left London in the Spring of 1524 and was to spend the rest of his life in various towns of Germany and the Low Countries, perfecting his knowledge of Hebrew, working on his translations and supervising their publication, while moving from place to place to avoid the constant danger of arrest. His translation of the New Testament was printed at Cologne and Worms and published in 1526. The pocket-sized volumes were then smuggled into England where they were assiduously confiscated and publicly burnt by the church authorities. The sole surviving complete copy is now in the Baptist College at Bristol, 'the greatest treasure of all English printed Bibles'.

In 1530 Tyndale's translation into English of the first five books of the Old Testament were published, having been printed at Hamburg and Antwerp. Thereafter, Tyndale devoted himself to supervising further printings and revisions, the conveyance of his volumes in to England, and to further literary work and the production of pamphlets. His fame and the eager reception of his translations by reformers in England meant that he was in increasing danger. In May 1535, while in Antwerp, he was betrayed and arrested. He remained in prison in Vilvorde castle near Antwerp for more than sixteen months, until in August 1536 he was condemned as a heretic and in October 1536 he was executed and burnt. His last words as later recorded by John Foxe in the Book of Martyrs were

> *'Lord, open the King of England's eyes'.*

Two years later this prayer was to be answered, when the Royal

Injunctions of 1538 ordered the English clergy

> *"to provide one book of the whole Bible of the largest volume in English, and the same set up in some convenient place in the church where your parishioners may most commodiously resort to the same and read it".*

The local context.

Few documentary sources to survive to provide much detail about the state of the Church in south Gloucestershire during William Tyndale's lifetime, but for the pre-Reformation Church in Bristol a great wealth of documentary evidence is available. As a port Bristol was second only to London in importance, with a flourishing trade to all parts of Europe, while it was from Bristol in 497 that John Cabot had made his remarkable voyage to the New World and to the New Found Land. But in spite of its large population and commercial strength, Bristol had no cathedral, and most of the town was at the furthest point of the large diocese of Worcester, while the rest was within the diocese of Bath and Wells. The skyline of the town was dominated by churches including two wealthy abbeys, the churches of the four major orders of friars, no less than eighteen parish churches within and around the town walls, and numerous hospitals almshouses and chantry chapels. Churchwardens' accounts, inventories, deeds, lists of benefactors and legal records survive for several of the parish churches and other institutions, and provide abundant evidence of the very active church life and of the central part which the churches played in community life. The records also reveal the splendour of the churches, the magnificence of their furnishings and the lavish gifts and bequests that were made to them by the laity.

As in neighbouring Gloucestershire and Somerset , many of the Bristol churches had been rebuilt or enlarged on the grandest scale during the previous century. Evidence of their relevance to the communities in each parish is seen in the annual round of festivals, civic ceremonies, processions, masses for benefactors, dirges and obits which marked the passage of each year. The churchwardens' accounts of St Ewen's give details of the active parish life as well as of the fine furnishings and colourful appearance of the church. Bequests of jewels, vestments, banners, images, books and plate came from the wealthy parishioners, and a detailed inventory of 1455 shows the magnificence of the church interior, including the chapel of the Guild

of Merchant Tailors within the church which was dedicated to their patron saint, St. John the Baptist, who seems a curious choice as a patron for tailors. Likewise the very full records of All Saints' church starting 1446 show that the church was ablaze with colour, lights, images and rich furnishings, and provide details of the many benefactors from among the prosperous merchant community of the parish. There were eight altars, all decorated and hung about with elaborate tapestries; the great rood screen with its huge figures of the crucified Christ and of the Blessed Virgin and St. John, included twenty-two images of the saints and numerous lights and candles. In the nave there were wall-paintings, stained -glass windows and banners suspended from the roof. The inventories of church goods also list service books, vestments, seven silver chalices, crosses, censers, candlesticks, bells and other precious items. The list of benefactors shows the stream of gifts which came to the church in the decades before the Reformation as well as the money which was given by pious donors to provide masses for the repose of their souls. One example of a generous benefactor was Alice Chester whose husband, Henry Chester, was a rich merchant who died in 1470. During the next few years Alice's gifts to All Saints' church included a carved tabernacle, the gilding of the altar of Our Lady, numerous images, a new front to the rood altar with five statues, vestments, tapestries, a silver cross for processions, and a new rood loft carved with the Trinity, St. Michael, and St. Christopher and numerous other images. The other Bristol churches for which documentary evidence survives, notably St. Nicholas, St. Mary Redcliffe and St. John the Baptist, were similarly rich in furnishings and equally involved in the religious and social life of the community. It is impossible to read the late medieval and early sixteenth-century accounts of these and other Bristol churches without being struck by the evidence of the real enthusiasm which existed amongst the parishioners for the enrichment of their churches. Whether this enthusiasm was engendered by an understandable desire to escape the fires of hell, or by rivalry with neighbouring parishes, or by genuine religious zeal makes no difference to the result of all this activity which was to produce superb churches full of the most elaborate and costly furnishings.

But there was another aspect to the religious situation in Bristol during the decades before the Reformation. The Church in Bristol was not without its critics, and although it is impossible to gain any idea of the views of more than a few of the 10,000 or more inhabitants, the storm of controversy which greeted the preaching of reforming ideas during the 1520s and 1530s indicates that there were many in the town

who were ready to welcome reform. During the fifteenth century the teachings of John Wycliffe and the Lollards had found some favour in Bristol as well as among the cloth workers of south Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, and there are numerous references to the trials of Bristolians for heresy. Open-air pulpits existed in several churchyards, including one on College Green outside the Augustinian abbey in Bristol, and one which survives in the churchyard at Iron Acton. These were used by critics of the church, and for example, there is a record of the prominent reformer, John Erly, preaching at Iron Acton and of many people going to hear him. Erly was befriended and protected by Tyndale's patron, Sir John Walsh, and by Sir Nicholas Poyntz of Iron Acton. Another popular preacher was Hugh Latimer who was later to become Bishop of Worcester. Such preachers poured scorn on what they regarded as the abuse of pilgrimages, the cult of the Virgin, the veneration of saints and their relics, the use of images and many of the trappings of late-medieval religion. Latimer was rector of West Kington near the Fosse way and wrote with distress and indignation of the crowds of pilgrims he saw travelling to the monastery at Hailes to the shrine of the Holy Blood.

'You would wonder to see how they come by flocks out of the west country to many images, but chiefly to the blood of Hailes. And they believe verily that was in Christ's body, shed upon the mount of Calvary for our salvation.'

Similarly, Richard Layton, one of Thomas Cromwell's commissioners for investigating the state of the monasteries, could write with total cynicism from Bristol of the relics he had found, which included the seamless robe of Christ, Our Lady's smock, the remains of the Last Supper, part of the manger from Bethlehem and parts of the bodies of numerous saints.

The strength of feeling on both sides in the debate over the church was revealed in 1533 when Hugh Latimer was invited to give three Lenten sermons in Bristol. These gave rise to violent protests from conservative preachers and to a 'battle of the pulpits' which created such controversy and discord in the town that it came to the attention of Thomas Cromwell. It was against this background that the first steps were taken during the 1530s to dismantle much of the ecclesiastical edifice which only a few years earlier had seemed so secure.

The changing attitude of many of the laity towards the Church

owed much to their greatly increased knowledge of the Scriptures and thus to the dedicated work of the Gloucestershire priest and scholar, William Tyndale. It is appropriate, therefore, to end this account with Tyndale's own words to readers of his translation of the New Testament:

> *'Give diligence, reader, I exhort thee that thou come with a pure mind, and as the Scripture saith, with a single eye, unto the words of health and of eternal life; by the which;, if we repent and believe them, we are born anew, created afresh, and enjoy the fruits of the blood of Christ .... the grace that cometh of Christ be with them that love him. Pray for us'*

Dr. J.H. Bettey
Reader in Local History
University of Bristol

Local Government Review: the Threat to Public Libraries

All parts of the UK are subject to local government reorganisation. In Scotland and Wales, bills have been published setting out the new structures and, in England, the Local Government Commission will have made recommendations on all county areas by the end of 1994.

In Northern Ireland, public libraries are not managed by local authorities but by Education and Library Boards. Even these are to be reorganised. In virtually all cases, the new systems are planned to be up and running by April 1996, with shadow authorities having been set up the year before.

In England and Wales especially, it looks as if the new authorities running libraries will be smaller. In Wales, 13 authorities responsible for libraries will become 21 and, on current form, it seems as if the Local Government Commission for England will treble the number of authorities running public libraries in the counties. As public library systems are run as integrated networks, this means that there will be high costs in disaggregating services between the new authorities and, owing to the lack of economies of scale, higher costs in maintaining a similar level of service to that currently provided. In fact, as the

additional funding is unlikely to be found, it will mean a decline in the standards of service.

Public libraries are, in one sense, the most local of services and it is an understandable misconception that individual branches and mobiles could operate very effectively independently. In fact, they are dependent on the resources available within the whole county network to ensure that they can provide the 'comprehensive and efficient' service the Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964) requires. These resources include the stock, staff expertise and capital plant such as mobile libraries or computer systems, which a county system can provide.

Take stock, for instance. Over the 20 years since the last local government reorganisation in 1974, counties have developed integrated stocks serving the needs of their whole area. This means stock rotates between branches, with many small, rural branches having up to 100% of their stock refreshed each year; duplicate copies of titles can be kept to a minimum as, if requested, items can be transferred from one part of the system to another; and specialist collections can be held by one branch on behalf of the whole system.

There will be no fair way of dividing this stock between new authorities. Each would have to spend a great deal of money to restore balance to the part of the stock they inherited. Some would be left with expensive specialist collections to maintain whilst others would find it difficult to ensure smaller branches had their stock regularly refreshed. With smaller purchasing funds, all would find it difficult to buy a proper representation of newly-published material (78,000 books are published each year in the UK alone), especially as they would, together, need to buy more duplicated copies of popular material than the former county.

The same is true of specialist staff. One small stock purchasing unit will currently buy, catalogue and classify all stock for a county system. This will either have to be replicated in each new authority or be the subject of a joint arrangement between them. But then, the same is true of other specialist services such as local history, central music and drama services (providing for amateur drama groups and orchestras), services to ethnic minority groups, business information services, community information services, services to the housebound, school library services and agency services to hospitals and prisons.

Others could be mentioned. Who is going to provide these services in the new authorities and how?

The network is also evident in the use of mobiles and computer systems. Currently, the routes of mobile services are planned in the most cost effective manner across a whole county. The routes are unlikely to coincide with the boundaries of the new authorities and the likelihood is that more mobiles will have to be run by the new authorities to produce the same level of service. In the case of computer systems, most authorities operate county-wide systems which include details of all registered borrowers, the stock and its status (on loan, reserved, etc.) as well as things such as online public access catalogues or community information files. Simply disentangling the relevant records for the new authorities will be expensive and difficult enough but there must be doubt about the capability of smaller authorities to invest in the major new library systems necessary to maintain and develop the standards of service currently available.

The viability of smaller authorities is highly questionable in library terms. Either they must spend a great deal more to produce the same level of service or they must enter into a complex series of joint arrangements with other authorities which would undermine the very accountability that they were meant to enhance. Or, perhaps, the current county library systems will become independent library service providers, with each new authority contracting in a service from them, and in this way achieve the market place approach that compulsory competitive tendering is meant to promote.

But most likely is that the standard of service to the local user will simply decline, as will the contribution that public library systems make to the regional and national library networks of the UK. Local government reorganisation is starting to happen all over the country now. After almost 100 years of public library development, a major dismantling of the system is being planned. It's time someone said something to stop this madness.

Guy Daines.

This article is reprinted (slightly edited) from The Library Campaigner, 47 (Spring 1994) with the permission of the author and of the Library Campaign.

Set up 10 years ago, the Library Campaign grew out of, and still largely deals with, the public authority library systems. However, its remit is the defence of all publicly-funded libraries and the editor of The Campaigner *is willing to include articles concerning threats to services offered by members of ABTAPL.*

According to its manifesto, the Library Campaign stands for:

The defence of all publicly-funded library and information services from cuts, whether national or local.

The improvements of services provided by publicly-funded library and information services, and wider promotion amongst the public and library workers of the range and depth of services currently provided and needed.

The right of access to library materials and information without charge.

The provision of a free library and information service as an essential ingredient of a democratic society.

The support of other campaigns engaged in fights against public expenditure cuts, especially where such cuts worsen the services and benefits due to already disadvantaged groups.

In seeking to achieve these objectives the Campaign will:

Stimulate the establishment of local campaign groups by the provision of information, publicity materials and other independent action groups.

Support campaigning activities undertaken by trades unions and other independent action groups.

Disseminate information on local initiatives through *The Library Campaigner*, regional conferences and other means.

Campaign politically whilst remaining independent of all political parties.

The Campaign can be contacted at the following address:

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ABTAPL Spring Conference, Bristol, 9-11 April 1994
by Jean Woods

1994 is being celebrated as the Quincentennial of William Tyndale and the main conference focus was on Tyndale and the genius of his Bible translation.

Twenty-two members gathered at The Hawthorns, where we enjoyed the warm welcome, comfortable surroundings and good food provided by for us by Bristol University. We also appreciated a weekend of beautiful weather, the rain giving way to sunshine just as we arrived.

On Saturday evening Dr Joseph Bettey, Reader in Local History at the University of Bristol gave us an excellent introduction to William Tyndale, concentrating on his early life in South Gloucestershire and Bristol. Tyndale's achievements as a Bible translator, the persecution he endured as he sought to publish the Scriptures and his arrest in the Low Countries and execution for heresy in 1536 were outlined for us. Dr. Bettey then illustrated the local religious background to Tyndale's life with some superb slides which conveyed vividly the wealth of Bristol in Tyndale's time and the abundance of magnificent churches in the city and surrounding countryside. This show of church prosperity gave rise to Lollard activity, and Bristol was a hotbed of controversy, as Dr. Bettey confirmed from local records. Many, including Tyndale, preached in open air pulpits against the excesses of the Church. Tyndale's association with the area ceased after 1523 when he moved to London and then to the continent to pursue his translation work, which culminated in the first printed English New Testament, and later became the basis for the 1611 Authorised Version of the Bible.

Dr. Bettey whetted our appetites, pointing out the fine churches and their contents that still remain in Bristol and on Sunday morning we were able to worship in and explore the churches and the city.

Conservation

On Sunday afternoon Mr. Raymond Tate of Period Book Binders, Bath, addressed us on practical conservation matters. We had the opportunity to inspect the fine examples of workmanship he brought with him. As well as the exquisite bindings and gold tooling, he also showed examples of the use of appropriate and sympathetic binding

materials for the more everyday publications that most of us deal with. Occasionally his firm receives bizarre requests; one such, which Mr. Tate declined to accept, was to tool a map of Africa on an elephant's ear!

At the end of a stimulating session Mr. Tate recommended four regular routines for librarians to follow.

1. Look at one shelf per week. Note poor bindings, loose pages and plates. If the binding is sound tip in loose pages at the time of inspection.

2. Earmark poor bindings for professional attention; secure loose boards/spines with tape (NOT `Sellotape' or other adhesive varieties, though).

3. Install window blinds if possible.

4. Dust regularly.

Annual Meeting

A dominant issue discussed at the meeting ws the need to design ABTAPL weekends with programmes that could be validated as part of training courses leading to a qualification; employers would then be more willing to meet the costs and send members to the Conference.

The invitation, given last year, to hold a Spring Conference at Maynooth College, near Dublin, was extended again and we all voted enthusiastically to accept in 1995 should that prove feasible.

Bristol Baptist College

On Monday morning we walked the short distance to the College to see its great treasure, the only known complete copy of the first edition (1526) of William Tyndale's translation of the New Testament. Stella Read, the Librarian, gave us a short history of Tyndale's work as a translator and then allowed us to have a close look at this most carefully preserved volume., an even greater privilege than we realised at the time - see Appendix. The volume's provenance is uncertain, but it was annotated and beautifully illuminated by an early owner. It was in the library of the second Earl of Oxford in the early eighteenth century and in 1760 Andrew Gifford, an assistant librarian at the British

Museum, bought it for £20.00 He had been a tutor at the College for two years and he bequeathed the New Testament, with his other books, to the College in 1784. The College has been fortunate in its benefactor. It was founded in 1679 by Edward Terrill, who gave 200 books, and is the oldest national training college of Dissenters in the world, part of the rich tradition of the dissenting academies. Other valuable material owned by the College includes letters from William Carey and a run of the early Serampore Press publications. The present building dates from 1916 and the association with Tyndale is commemorated in a memorial stained glass window over the staircase. The main College Library has been put into excellent order by Stella Read in her "retirement", and we are grateful to her and her colleague for their time and hospitality, which included home-made cake.

Wesley College

A late addition to the programme for those able to stay was the visit on Monday afternoon to Wesley College, the oldest theological college in British Methodism. The Library is housed in an earlier chapel which has been adapted with the addition of a mezzanine floor. Its stock of c. 23,000 volumes is a major resource for the history of methodism. The special collections are housed in a secure stack and include the Library of the Methodist Church Music Society (on deposit), tracts and pamphlets relating to Methodism (especially divisions and controversies) and the archive collection which is particularly rich in Wesley letters, documents and memorabilia, some of which were displayed for us. Among them were the certificate of ordination of ordination of Henry Moore by Charles Wesley on 27th February 1789, which marked the split with the Church of England and the evolution of Methodism as a separate body; and locks of hair from three early women preachers! The Library has recently started to use American Catalog Carder software. [*A review is to follow - Ed.*] John Farrell, the Librarian, had suggested to Gresswell's that they should stock it and advertise it in their catalogue. They acted on his suggestion and rewarded his enterprise with a bottle of champagne!

Our visit to Wesley College concluded anothe excellent Spring Weekend, and we are all most grateful to our hosts and speakers and to Margaret Ecclestone, Judith Powles and Alan Jesson for their hard work on our behalf. I hope that this brief account has communicated some of the pleasures and benefits we derive from our Spring Weekends and will encourage any newcomers to join us next spring [*which*

will be at Maynooth - Hon Sec.]

Appendix

Tyndale New Testament

When we saw this at Bristol Baptist College we little realised that within a fortnight it would be the property of the British Library, purchased from the College for £1,000,000. It is quite fitting, perhaps, that since the College was bequeathed the volume by an assistant Librarian in the British Museum it shoulkd now return there. 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 which which we were able to see it in the small chapel of Bristol Baptist College.

Jean Woods.

Salisbury and Wells Theological College becomes Sarum College.

As some ABTAPL members will know, Salisbury and Wells Theological College has been faced with closure for a while, as a result of plans to rationalise the Church of England's training facilities. The College was formerly part of the School of Theology and Religion at Southampton University. The following extract is taken from the publication announcing its "rebirth".

"Sarum College is an ecumenical community of men and women based on Christian values and committed to the enrichment of the intellectual, spiritual and personal lives of all. Formerly occupied by Salisbury Theological College since its foundation in 1864, and later by Salisbury and Wells Theological College , it is now the home of the Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme, training candidates for Ordination from seven Church of England Dioceses and the Methodist and United Reformed Churches in the South of England. Sarum College occupies a fine Queen Anne Canon's House facing on the Bishop's Walk, in the shadow of Salisbury's magnificent mediaeval Cathedral ... .

In addition to the original Canonry, the College buildings include a fine Victorian flint and brick extension designed by Butterfield

Association Newsletter (May 1994) featured an article on this Library, founded in the 12th century. In 1950, on the dissolution on the monasteries in Czechoslovakia, the Abbey was taken over by the state, which installed a Museum of Czech Literature there, to include the Strahov Library. The Abbey was returned to the Premonstratension Order in 1990, and in 1991 the Library, with is original collection was transferred back to the order. The aim is now to provide services to the academic community and the public; there are professional staff, regular acquisitions and relevant technology is being introduced. Visitors are very welcome.

What every Librarian should know about Faith in Print is the title of a small brochure issued by the Christian Book Promotion Trust to explain their project to increase the availability of Christian books to a wider public through the library service. Copies are available from the Trust at The Market House, Cantelupe Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 3BH, tel 0342 312750/715889

Christian Broadcasting Library Service. Over 10,000 Christian books and videos have been supplied free of charge to public libraries and school resource centres in the UK and Ireland during the Service's first full year of operation, according to information recently put out by the organisation. Further information is available from J. Roger Alsford, Christian Broadcasting Library Service, 28 Lilac Grove, Broadmeadows, South Normanton, Derbyshire, DE55 3NP, tel 0773 861802

The Catalogue of the Mendham Collection was officially launched in June. The Collection represents most of the personal library of the Revd Joseph Mendham, an Anglican priest of Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire and the author of books and pamphlets on the controversy with the Church of Rome, 1820-1850, and consists of nearly 5,000 books and pamphlets on the religious and political controversies of the 16th to 19th centuries. It includes officially printed Roman Catholic ephemera. There are rare editions and versions of ecclesiastical works and some early printed books of great interest, including four incunable which appear to be unique and several others which have only one alternative published location. The Collection now belongs to the Law Society and is housed in Canterbury Cathedral Library.

The new catalogue (the Collection was first catalogued in 1871) runs to 644 pages of A4 text and 16 pages of photographs, is printed on acid free paper in cloth binding and costs £125.00 sterling. The ISBN is 1 85328 265 0.

... and other extensions have been added in the early 1930s, 1960s and 1980s, the most extensive being in the early 1970s, when Wells Theological College was amalgamated with Salisbury, and the Library, Refectory and New Chapel were added.

Sarum College is therefore in an excellent position to offer facilities to Parish and Church Groups or other organisations for Retreats, Conferences, and Seminars and also to individuals for private study."

The College Library is to be funded partly by the Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme and partly by subscription.

Marion Smith
Birmingham Central Library.

Notes and News

Mowbrays and SPCK Bookshops: from July Mowbray Christian Bookshops in Cambridge and Birmingham become SPCK Bookshops as part of an exchange between Dillons, owners of Mowbray and SPCK. Dillons are acquiring the Durham University Bookshop from SPCK and will retain ownership of the Mowbray name.

Library of Anglican Spirituality: This series, edited by Susan Howatch, was launched by Mowbray publishers in May 1994.

Your Christian Bookshop: In May 1994 this scheme was launched by the Christian Media Group. Using an 0800 telephone number, the scheme connects members of the public to the nearest Christian bookshop participating in the scheme which can then take orders,

Welsh Religious History Society: In Inaugurated in 1933, the Society succeeds the Historical Society of the Church in Wales and the Journal of Welsh Ecclesiastical History. The Society will produce the Journal of Welsh Religious History (annual) and occasional publications, as well as organising lectures, seminars, visits, etc.

Strahov Abbey Library, Prague: The American Theological Library

REVIEW

Reviews in Religion and Theology. SCM Press; published quarterly February 1994 onwards. ISSN 1350-7303. Edited by Gareth Jones, Department of Theology, University of Birmingham, this journal is available from SCM Press, 26-30 Tottenham Road, London N1 4BZ Tel 071-249 7626; Fax 071-249 3776. Price £4.00/US$30.00, post free; Airmail £5.00/US$10.00 extra

It feels slightly strange to review a journal consisting almost entirely of reviews - but the very necessity bears out the editor's contention that the sheer weight of published material is threatening to overwhelm research and teaching. *RRT* aims to provide a reliable and wide-ranging guide to this proliferation.

RRT uses a variety of review formats to attain this end. If the first issue is anything to go by, the "Editor's Choice" is a brief review, intended to highlight a book of importance to theological study from the wider academic world. Then follow review articles: in this issue a long (ten page) discussion on Dennis Nineham's *Christianity Medieval and Modern* by Rowan Williams, and a shorter article by Michael Goulder on Rudolph Schnackenberg's commentary on the Johannine epistles. The main bulk of the periodical is given over to shorter reviews by a regular pool of contributors drawn from the academic world. Finally, there is a section of brief notices, about the length of this review. *RRT* is clearly in the tradition of *Theology* in size, layout and presentation. It may also be suspected of Anglican bias - one of the reviews flagged for the next edition is that of the General Synod debate on women's ordination.

The opening editorial states that the review guidelines emphasise an objective and informative discussion of the book in question, and disallow "snide and personalised commentary". Goulder's article (referred to above) puts this particular principle severely to the test. Whilst it avoids personal attack, Goulder's criticisms deal harshly with part of Schnackenberg's position and leave the reader uninformed as to the rest. Articles must be culturally inclusive, and well written "because this is not a journal of deposit, but rather an energetic basis for interested reading and discussion."

In fact, although libraries are never mentioned, *RRT* aims to be the librarians' friend. In the current flood of new publications such a friend may well turn out to be most helpful.

Jonathan Clark
Tutor,
Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Team