

Preservation and Management of Nationally Significant Materials

Lorraine Mitchell & Robin McComiskey

In late 2005, Whitley College Library, through the efforts of the then Senior Librarian Kerrie Hunter, was awarded a Community Heritage Grant from the National Library of Australia, to the value of \$6,500.

This grant was earmarked for two projects: the undertaking of a preservations survey of the Whitley historical collection, and a workshop for the members of the Victorian Chapter of ANZTLA on the preservation and management of nationally significant collections.

Melbourne based conservator, Guy Morel visited the Whitley library during April and May, and his interim report identifying strengths and weaknesses in the current management of the collection has been received. It will form the basis of developing an action plan for the needed improvements to current collection practices, a plan that may include further applications for funds and grants to enable this work to be carried out. The report will support such application.

The second phase of the project occurred on May 18, when Whitley hosted the preservation workshop. Conservator, Kim Morris who has extensive experience with the Australian War Memorial, and the National Library of Australia was contracted by CAVAL to facilitate the day. It was attended by 13 members of staff from several theological libraries in Melbourne, and proved to be a most informative and helpful event.

For the un-initiated, the handling of historical materials – often in fragile or damaged conditions, and with varying degrees of deterioration – is sufficiently daunting to cause most to want to put it all back in the cupboard and hope that someone else will deal with it!. There is also a deep suspicion that to do anything will be an expensive exercise.

Using a combination of lecture, small group exercises, and practical demonstrations, a range of topics were addressed:

- storage and display environments (lighting, temperature, pest control etc.)

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- how to identify items of significance
- the difference between preservation, conservation and restoration
- risk management
- practical and inexpensive storage options
- dealing with photographs, books, papers, works of art
- training needs for staff and others wanting to access the material

The feedback from participants at the end of the day revealed that much of the apprehension about handling historically significant materials had been dispelled, and it had been most pleasing to learn that solutions need not involve the purchase of expensive materials, nor take inordinate amounts of time and effort. In many cases, placing an item in an unsealed plastic bag or copy-safe ring binder plastic pocket is sufficient to protect it and arrest further deterioration. Kim demonstrated how easily a custom made box can be constructed using acid-free cardboard.

It was a most worthwhile workshop from which we all felt a good deal more confident in being able to handle and manage the valuable and historically significant materials in our collections.

Award for Carolyn Willadsen

Carolyn Willadsen has been nominated for an Award for Outstanding Service to the Brisbane College of Theology. The nomination has the support of the principals at the three BCT member schools: St Paul's Theological College (Catholic), St Francis' Theological College (Anglican) and Trinity Theological College (Uniting Church).

The Nomination:

“That Carolyn Willadsen be presented with an award at the 2006 graduation ceremony in acknowledgement of her achievement and contribution to theological librarianship and the BCT”

Carolyn has been with the Pius XII Seminary, and more recently as librarian for ACU-St Paul's College at Banyo, for nearly 25 years. Many students and scholars have commented on her quick response and knowledge of theology and library expertise. Theological librarians throughout Australia and New Zealand value Carolyn's expertise and knowledge of the field. Her general knowledge of theology and its resources is outstanding, whether in systematic theology, biblical studies, Greek, Latin, or other related areas.