

guidelines that emerged from years of cooperative microfilming projects. In earlier models, RLG facilitated the meetings of seasoned practitioners, which then led to wider symposia designed in large measure to focus best practice. There is strong evidence in these publications that RLG can assemble talent, recruit participants, and document the result. This is an important start. Future symposia should transcend their all-important educational role and begin formulating a shared sense of purpose, priority, and procedure that typifies past collaborative efforts.—*Paul Conway, Preservation Department, Yale University Library*

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Preservation Management: Policies and Practices in British Libraries.

John Feather, Graham Matthews and Paul Eden. Hampshire, England and Brookfield, Vt.: Gower, 1996. 174p. \$67.95 (ISBN 0-566-07622-5). LC 95-36428.

According to the authors, this book began as a study of preservation management practices in the libraries of Britain in the early 1990s. The authors initially were following in the footsteps of F.W. Ratcliffe and D. Patterson (1984) who produced the influential *Preservation Policies and Conservation in British Libraries: Report of the Cambridge Univer-*

sity Library Conservation Project, known simply as the Ratcliffe Report. This report strongly criticized the state of preservation and conservation in British libraries and made recommendations for improvement. Great changes have taken place in British libraries since publication of the Ratcliffe Report. To determine how preservation management practices have changed, the authors conducted a survey. They sent 682 questionnaires to public, academic, and special libraries in Britain. Four hundred eighty-eight completed questionnaires were returned—a response rate of 71.55%. When analyzing these responses in the context of current developments in library and information service provision, the authors realized that preservation management was now considered in terms of access and use of books and information. This new perspective is reflected throughout the book.

Information in the book is based on the results of the survey, literature in the field, the authors' work experience (which unfortunately is only briefly described on the dust jacket) and the authors' conversations with their colleagues. The book consists of seven chapters, each of which is divided into several sections. Chapter one is impressively documented with 165 notes, but all the chapters have numerous references cited. The description on the book's dust jacket states that the book first puts the survey results into historical context and then "moves on to the findings about management attitudes and practices. Policy issues are considered, and some of the national and international prescriptive policy documents issued by professional organizations are compared with those from British libraries. The differences between the two form the basis of suggestions about how individual libraries might develop preservation policies and also what national policies could be considered."

One of the most interesting and informative chapters for me was the first, "A Decade of Development." Here the authors discuss developments that have taken place since publication of the Ratcliffe Report and assess the influence the report has had on bringing about these

changes. Topics include awareness raising, education and training, preservation policy, disaster management, security, surveying the collections, storage and environment, exhibitions and loans, audiovisual materials, substitution, digital technology, and conservation. The chapter is easy to read and provides a good overview of preservation-related developments in British libraries during the past decade. It is a valuable historic record and, by documenting developments of the past ten years, provides a point of reference from which to compare past and future events.

The authors state that chapters 2 and 3 are the factual foundation of the book, where they present their survey findings on managerial attitudes and management practices. In chapter 2, "Perceptions of Preservation," they "analyze the understanding and the experiences of preservation" (p. 48). In chapter 3, "Preservation in Practice," they look at the "existence and implementation of preservation policies in British libraries" (p. 74). Chapter 4, "Priorities in Preservation," "gives a broader professional, technological, and political context" in which the findings provided in chapters 2 and 3 can be understood (p. x). I found these three chapters difficult to read. A massive amount of information is introduced, and often the same information is presented repeatedly from different points of view when different issues and topics are discussed. This tends to be confusing, and keeping track of the detail and the different lines of thought becomes arduous.

In chapter 5, "Preservation Policy Guidelines," the authors undertake "to establish whether or not there is a commonly accepted understanding of what constitutes a preservation policy" (p. 97). To do this they look at guidelines that have been published by various organizations. The authors state that they are seeking norms against which to measure practice. Unfortunately, at least one of the guidelines they chose, albeit a prestigious one, is outdated and is in need of updating and improvement. In chapter 6, "Preservation Policies in Practice," the authors identify how preservation "policies work in practice,

and how they can be developed" (p. 97). These two chapters provided more detail than my attention level could support, perhaps because the same information presented in chapters 2 and 3 is analyzed yet again, but from still another perspective. The discussion seems belabored and overcomplicated, and more thorough than is perhaps useful. In chapter 6 it may be best for those readers seeking only an overview to skip to the section "Some Observations" near the end of the chapter, in which the authors suggest broad outlines of how a library might address policy issues. Readers, however, who want a detailed analysis of preservation policy documents and issues in British libraries would find the entire chapter useful.

"Planning for Preservation," the seventh and final chapter, is interesting and is a valuable contribution to the body of literature on preservation planning. The authors suggest how preservation policies might be developed in institutions, and they indicate the national policies they think should be considered in the immediate future. They state that their suggestions are based on all the information presented in the book, particularly their analysis of practice.

In general, this is a worthwhile book of permanent research value, and it is a solid contribution to the literature on preservation planning. It contains information that does not exist elsewhere. It presents original research, and by citing extensively both primary and secondary sources in the field, it serves as a reference source. The book will appeal to different people in different ways. If one is doing research on a particular aspect of preservation policy or practice, or seeks an in-depth, detailed understanding of developments in preservation management attitudes and activities, the information contained in this book is invaluable. If, on the other hand, one is interested only in gaining a general understanding or an overview of preservation management in British libraries, this book is also useful. I suggest, however, that latter readers concentrate on chapters 1, 7, and perhaps the section of chapter 6 titled "Some Observations." These

parts of the book are informative, interesting, readable, and easy to follow. The rest of the book is more difficult to read. Parts of the text are dense and packed with detail and quotes. Also, the book is unavoidably repetitious: the authors tried to present as balanced and accurate a view as possible; to this end, the same information is presented repeatedly in different contexts and from different points of view.

As in British libraries, great changes have taken place in United States libraries in the past decade. Many of these changes have been caused by the same or similar technological and economic developments that caused the changes in Great Britain. Like our British colleagues, we have been forced to look at preservation in new ways and to change our approach to preservation management. We now think in terms of preventive conservation, and we endeavor to make the most effective use of new technologies to preserve not just single items, but entire collections, and to make them available for future use. This correlates with what the authors of this book mean when they state that "access, retention, and preservation cannot be separated from each other," (p.155) and that preservation management is now considered in terms of access and use of books and information.

The development and acceptance of new preservation management policies and practices appears to be farther along in the United States than in Great Britain. This is due in part to stronger advocacy in the United States. Several libraries have full-time preservation librarians with specialized preservation training whose sole responsibility is to ensure preservation of the collections in their charge and to advocate and initiate policies and practices that will serve this end. Many other libraries have staff who carry out this responsibility on a part-time basis in addition to their other job responsibilities. The library and preservation communities add support by being active and vocal in their promotion and debate of preservation issues. The authors of this book recognize the importance of advocacy in promoting preservation in British libraries. They explain that they offer their book "not simply

as a report on a piece of research, but as a contribution to a debate . . . about how . . . Britain can exploit its written and printed heritage while preserving it for those who will come after us" (p. x). The authors know that by making librarians aware and knowledgeable of preservation management policies and practices, they enable them to advocate and initiate policies and practices of their own that will contribute to preservation of collections in their institutions.—*Sherelyn Ogden, Preservation Consultant and Conservator, Library and Archival Materials, St. Paul, Minnesota*

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Serials Management: A Practical Guide. Chiou-Sen Dora Chen. Chicago: American Library Assn., 1996. 186p. \$30 (ISBN 0-8389-0658-3).

The Roman poet and satirist Horace wrote: "Do you wish to instruct? Be brief, that the mind may catch thy precepts and the more easily retain them." While reading this book, I was constantly struck by how succinctly, clearly, and methodically the author presents the concepts and methods involved in serials management.

The book touches on all aspects of serials management except cataloging, with the major emphasis on acquisitions. Throughout the book, the author strives to keep the reader aware of the need to understand the general workings of other sections of the library that are supported by the acquisitions function, especially collection development and public services. The first two chapters together lay the foundation for a practical understanding of serials work. In chapter 1, titled "Definition and Character of Serials," Chen provides the reader with definitions and explanations of the various types of serials and their behavior. For example, the section on monographic series employs standard textbook definitions with