

## Preservation in the UK: past and present

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## Outline

- The National Preservation Office (NPO)
- The Preservation Advisory Centre
- Current challenges
- Opportunities
- Aspirations for the Preservation Advisory Centre

## The National Preservation Office

- Promote awareness of pressing conservation problems, and the need for good practices
- Provide information and referral services on preservation issues
- Instigate and initiate debate on important national developments
- Encourage co-operative initiatives

## The National Preservation Office

- Piecing together the jigsaw: the framework for a national preservation strategy for libraries and archives (1995)
- [www.bl.uk/blpac/pdf/conf1995.pdf](http://www.bl.uk/blpac/pdf/conf1995.pdf)



## The National Preservation Office

- Components for developing a national strategy
  - Identify and locate the written and documentary heritage
  - Assess its preservation condition
  - Identify, agree and address preservation priorities and record preservation actions
  - Ensure personnel at all levels have access to appropriate education and training
  - Ensure funding is applied according to accepted best practice [in preservation]

## The National Preservation Office

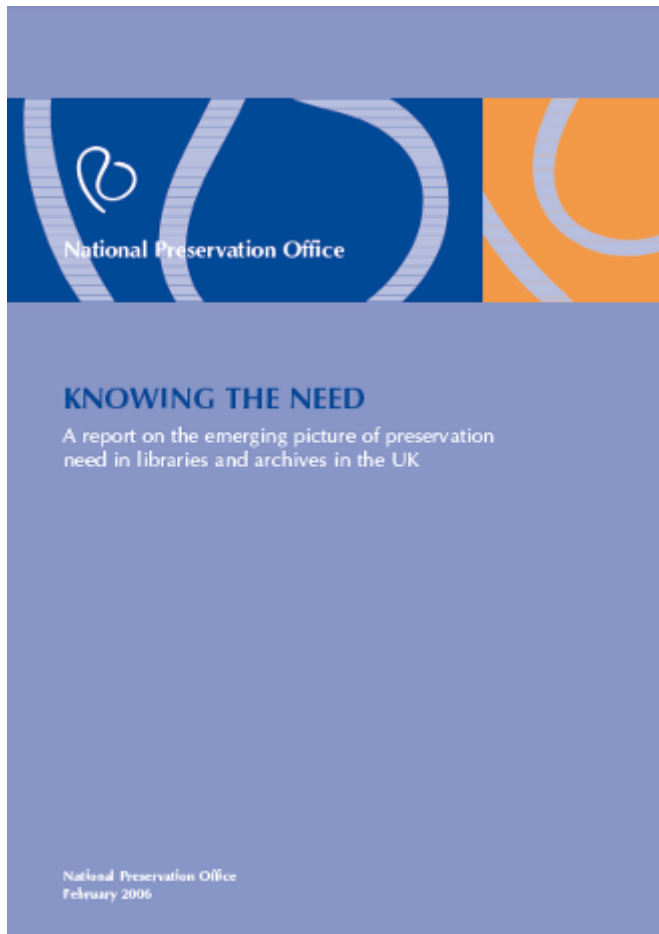
- Overview of preservation in the UK, 1991-2000 and 2001-2005 by Alison Walker, Head of the National Preservation Office

<http://www.bl.uk/blpac/journal/5/news.html>

## **Museums, Libraries & Archives Council (MLA)**

- 'Preserving the past for the future' (2002)
  - Provided an overview of collections management and stewardship issues
  - Set out MLA's stewardship work programme

## Knowing the Need



- 97 surveys
- 79 institutions
- 43,632 items
- Estimated collection size of 28 million items



## Preservation Assessment Survey

- Access
- Level of use / demand
- Usability
- Importance
- Preservation measures
- Physical condition

## Preservation Priority Band profile

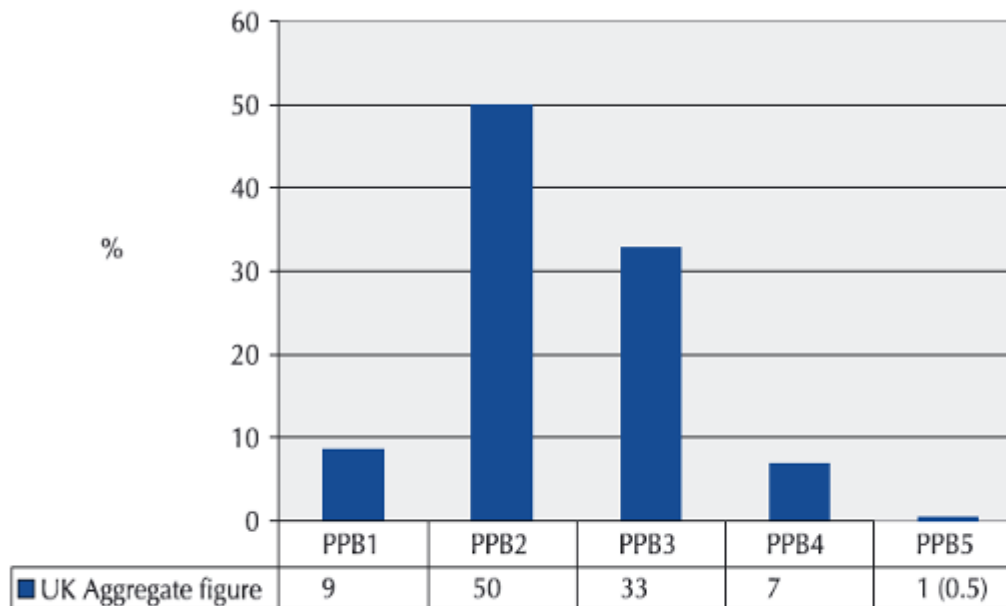
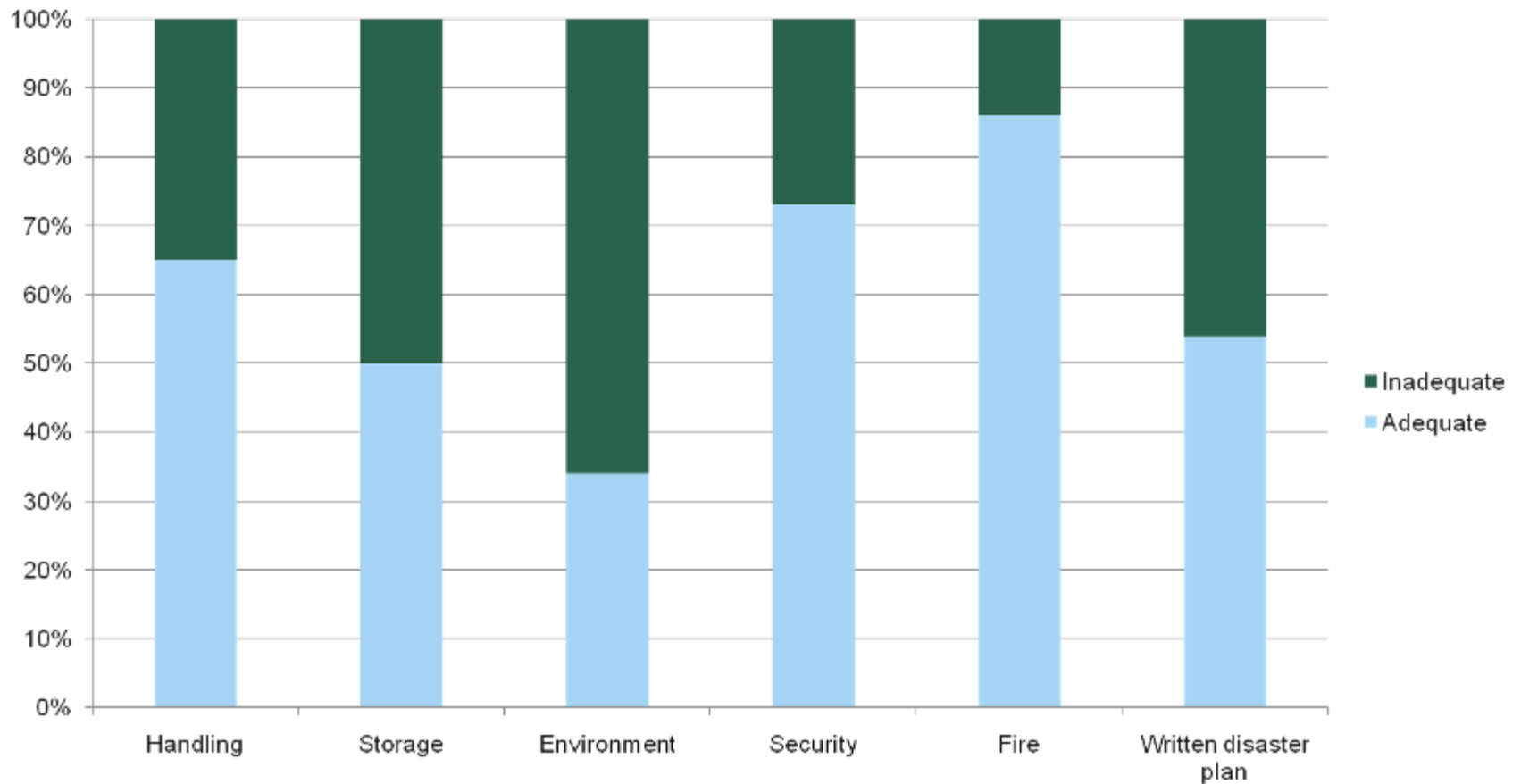


Figure 1

## Knowing the Need



## Combining the findings

	% of all items surveyed in inadequate conditions	% of unstable material in inadequate conditions
Handling	35	51
Storage	50	70
Environment	66	76
Security	27	48
Fire	14	35
Written disaster plan	46	63

## Knowing the Need: conclusions

- The key issues for the UK are:
  - Environmental monitoring
  - Storage
  - Packaging
  - Surface dirt
  - Disaster planning
  - Damage to bindings
  - Acidic paper

## Knowing the Need: conclusions

- High level actions:
  - Achieving an equilibrium for unstable material
  - Identifying/implementing appropriate methods for retarding/correcting brittle paper
  - Extensive and consistent use of surrogates
  - Ensuring there is an appropriately skilled workforce

## Knowing the Need: conclusions

- Institutional actions:
  - Housekeeping measures – cleaning and packaging
  - Disaster planning
  - Conservation
  - Storage
  - Environmental monitoring and control

## Knowing the need and meeting the need (2007)

### Meeting the Need

We advocate a coordinated approach, emphasising the need for good storage and accommodation, good professional practice and an appropriately skilled workforce. At national and regional levels, the evaluation of need should be followed up by monitoring, support and advocacy.

	NEED	ACTION	NATIONAL/REGIONAL FOCUS
<b>STORAGE</b>	Appropriate buildings, environment, and accommodation	Capital investment, upgrading	Monitor developments and their impact; support for capital bids; advocating performance measures for the accommodation of collections
<b>GOOD PRACTICE</b>	Preservation – handling, disaster planning, security, packaging	Training, information	Provide resources; work towards incremental improvement; support and advocate effective prioritisation of effort; advocate performance measures for the care of collections; continuing needs assessment
<b>PEOPLE</b>	Conservation resources – skills, staff, facilities	Workforce and skills development	Advocacy and support for skills development; targeted training programmes



## Preservation Advisory Centre goals

- To build a community of people with the knowledge, tools and support to actively take part in the preservation of library and archive collections
- To create an environment in which the public value of investment in preservation is recognised by users and funders
- To build on the work of the National Preservation Office and establish the Preservation Advisory Centre as a leading provider of preservation guidance and services

## Strategic objectives

- To extend the reach of training, guidance and preservation management services to libraries and archives of all type in the UK and Ireland.
- To develop innovative products, services and methods of delivery to support preservation activity.
- To build partnerships with like-minded organisations and work with these organisations to achieve maximum impact and avoid duplication.
- To provide a focus for preservation activity by raising awareness of preservation need and advocating for support and investment.

## Information services

- Preservation guidance booklets
  - [www.bl.uk/blpac/publications.html](http://www.bl.uk/blpac/publications.html)
- Website
  - [www.bl.uk/blpac](http://www.bl.uk/blpac)
- Enquiry service
  - [blpac@bl.uk](mailto:blpac@bl.uk)
- E-newsletter
  - <https://forms.bl.uk/newsletters>
- Twitter
  - [@BL\\_PAC](https://twitter.com/BL_PAC)



## Training and events

- Workshops
- Training days
- Seminars
- Conferences
- [www.bl.uk/blpac/events.html](http://www.bl.uk/blpac/events.html)



## E-induction resource










induction

**Preservation Advisory Centre**  
RLUK Research Libraries UK

- Introduction
- ▼ The importance of caring for collections
  - Definitions
  - Why is collection care important? (video)
- ▼ Deterioration and damage
  - Key points
  - Additional information
- ▼ Handling books
  - Retrieving books (including video)
  - Damage from using the collection
  - Using the collection
  - Helping the users
  - When should you use gloves? (quiz)
  - Key points
  - Additional information
- ▶ Transporting books
- ▶ Copying books
- ▶ Storing books
- ▶ Environmental conditions
- ▶ Mould
- ▶ Pests
- ▶ Security

Helping the users

**READING ROOM REQUIREMENTS**

✓	=	 <small>Show for inspection</small>	 <small>Penicils</small>	 <small>Check the books</small>
✗	=	 <small>Coats, bags and umbrellas</small>	 <small>Pens or highlighters</small>	 <small>Sharp implements</small>
<b>Collection items cannot be removed from any Reading Room</b>				
 <small>Food, drink, bottles, water, sweets or gum</small>	 <small>Sharp implements</small>	 <small>Coats</small>		

**PLEASE CONSIDER OTHER RESEARCHERS**  
We aim to provide a pleasant and appropriate place for all researchers to undertake their work.  
When in our Reading Rooms, we require you to be considerate towards other Readers and behave in a way that does not disturb them.  
Please try to make as little noise as possible.

**Helping the users**

The common topics addressed by guidelines or conditions relating to use of reading rooms include

- coats and bags in reading rooms
- use of electronic equipment
- rules on sticky notes and pens
- food (particularly sweets and gum) and drink
- number of volumes per reader issued
- handling and copying

Always be mindful that you may need to make exceptions to guidelines to accommodate users with disabilities or impairments, or those who need extra help/support.

Video transcripts

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## Preservation management tools

- Preservation Assessment Survey
- Preservation Health Check

## Other areas of activity

- Advocacy
- Knowing the Need 2012

## How do we approach preservation today?

- Preservation supports access
- A risk-based approach provides a framework for slowing deterioration and supporting long-term access
- Evidence underpins decision-making
- Policy, strategy, actions
- Collaboration



## Challenges

- Resources
  - Minimising the impact of risks on collections
  - Balance between physical and digital preservation
  - Energy efficiency and environmental impact of storage
  - Storage
  - Demonstrating value
- 
- Helen Shenton, Strategic challenges for preservation in libraries and archives [www.bl.uk/blpac/forum.html](http://www.bl.uk/blpac/forum.html)

## Opportunities

- Resources
- Minimising the impact of risks on collections
- Balance between physical and digital preservation
- Energy efficiency and environmental impact of storage
- Storage
- Demonstrating value

## Aspirations

- Preservation supports access
- A greater understanding of the benefits that good preservation practice bring
- Clarity about preservation surrogacy in a digital age
- Convergence of thinking about the strategic issues for physical and digital preservation
- Continued cooperation on preservation issues

## Thank you

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