



# Preparing for Extreme Events

## A Conservator's Perspective

Icon Book and Paper Group AGM 30 March 2019 – Panel discussion

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# I'll be covering....

Brief case studies – *help required and provided*

Implementation of Hague Convention – conservator's perspective

Emergency Planning and Guidance

Training

Networks & Support

Broad perspective: UK and International

# Case studies...

Increasingly cultural heritage is being regarded as a human right...  
and its vital role recognised in recovery



National Library & Archive  
©McGuire Gibson



Dr Saad Eskander



Invasion of Iraq 2003 – destruction and looting

Arsonists set fire to Iraq National Library and Archive - destroyed 60% of archives & 95% of rare book collection

Dr Eskander visited overseas to appeal to professionals  
In UK the British Library and National Archives responded – provided digitised documents and publications to help rebuild the collection and the BL hosted his blog and raised money to fund books

*“Restore something of your institution asap to give the impression of normality” and “Moral support is as important as material support.....”*

Dr Eskander

# Royal College of Surgeons WWII



*Susan Isaac, Information Service Manager – blog*

<https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/library-and-publications/library/blog/evacuating-the-library-in-world-war-ii/>

- Started to evacuate the collections in 1939, moving the most valuable 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century books etc to the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.
- 1940 c.58,000 items sent to a private house in Worcestershire – 2 barns and dining room
- 1941 c.30,000 to castle in Wales, plus accommodation for the librarian. Took weeks to pack, and set up shelving.
- Only ‘modern’ books left in the library
- 1941 RCS hit by incendiaries
- Library largely survived – protected by cast iron doors: damage to ceiling, windows, books thrown to the floor, dirty and covered with splinters of glass

# Prague floods 2002...



Severe flooding: Institute of Archaeology with extensive library, National Museum....

An urgent call for help was launched. The Vltava River flooded the Institute up to 3 metres high.

*"We are forced to seek support and help concerning the salvage and restoration of the damaged finds and collections..... Most welcome would be collaboration concerning restoration of books and other materials, for instance for defreezing and drying, donation of publications etc."*

*"Solidarity was very important, as demonstrated by Danish colleagues." " We are particularly grateful to a group of conservators from the Struer Museum, Denmark, who offered to help with defrosting and drying of books for free immediately after the flood."*

# Help requested/ received

- Equipment for scanning, photocopying damaged documentation and transfer to digital versions
- **Conservators from the Struer Museum, Denmark, offered to help with defrosting and drying of books for free immediately after the flood. They took books to Denmark to treat and used “Arctic drying”, creating a large wind tunnel in an old lorry, allowing the cold wind to blow through, in effect freeze drying the books**
- Donation of publications
- A committee was set up to to make new contacts and keep in touch with people and institutions from different countries, and coordinate donations of book. Coordination in UK was through Durham University

# Cologne City Archive – March 2009



- Two people died
- 3 buildings collapsed
- 65,000 documents, 100,000 + maps, 50,000 posters, 20 miles of shelves
- By September 2009: 85% retrieved
- Conservation expected to take 30+ years

*Meeting with the Dr Ulrich Fischer, Deputy Director Cologne Archives in 2011  
– Churchill Fellowship*

<https://www.wcmt.org.uk/fellows/reports/disaster-planning-training-risk-mitigation-dealing-aftermath#downloads>

<https://www.wcmt.org.uk/users/fionamacalister2011>



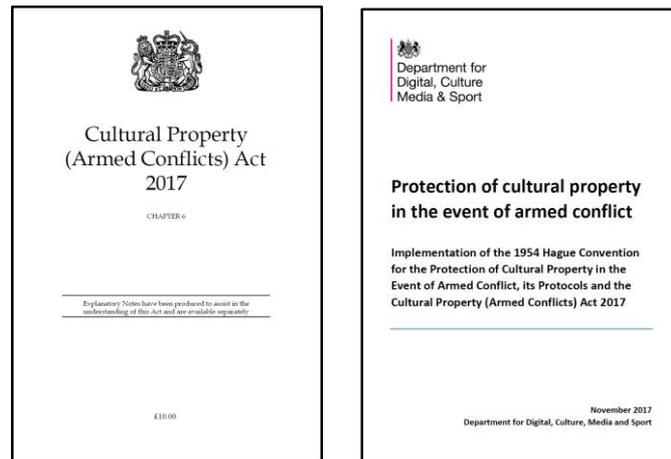
# Help received...

- **Impact on staff**
- 2000 people helped during initial 6 months
- German county archives, major national archives and libraries all sent people to assist
- Two joint missions from Blue Shield: Blue Shield Netherlands/Belgium and Netherlands/Belgium/Switzerland
- The Czech Republic sent several groups for five weeks each
- UK - staff from the Essex County Record Office and National Archives
- Costs for volunteers and professional help were covered, including accommodation
- The Red Cross provided food, and travelling expenses were reimbursed
- The City Administration classified and filtered emails. There was also a person in Cologne running a website "*We're saving our City Archives*" and the archives received 800 volunteers through this initiative

# Implementation of Hague Convention

The Cultural Property (Armed Conflict) Act 2017 and the two associated protocols came into effect in December 2017.

The *Implementation Guidance*, does not, at the time of writing, require organisations to take any additional measures beyond their normal emergency planning procedures.



- <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/protection-cultural-property-event-armed-conflict-implementation-1954-hague-convention/>
- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/661733/Guidance\\_on\\_implementation\\_of\\_the\\_Convention\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/661733/Guidance_on_implementation_of_the_Convention_-_final.pdf)
- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/6/contents/enacted>



*Emblem in place on a building of cultural significance, Krefeld, Germany.*

# Libraries and Archives Accreditation

## Requirement 2.4.4

The archive service has a tested disaster recovery plan and procedures, which enables it to respond effectively to emergency situations and ensure business continuity. Emergency planning relates to all buildings that house archive collections and services.

### What assessment is looking for

Disaster recovery and continuity plans are of particular importance and should be based upon a risk assessment of the potential threats. Archive services should consider:

- Risk assessment of threats
- Procedures and processes to be followed before, during and after an emergency event
- Arrangements for the workforce, visitors, collections and business continuity, on all sites.
- How the plan will be developed, disseminated and tested
- Evidence of how the archive service works with the emergency services, and of any other relevant emergency plans
- The procedure for reviewing the disaster recovery and continuity plans

- <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/archive-service-accreditation-standard-june-2018.pdf>
- <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/archive-service-accreditation-guidance-june-2018.pdf>



# Emergency Planning Guidance



Beyond the normal planning considerations, it would be wise to consider the following:

1. Has an alternative location for at least part of the archive been identified?
2. Has the site been identified as a site of alternative use in the event of a major national incident? This may also apply during other types of incidents such as a major flood. Is the collection going to be accessible? If not, are there any additional measures which could be planned for and put into effect in the event of this? Aspects which would need to be considered include:

How security is maintained

Monitoring the condition of the collection

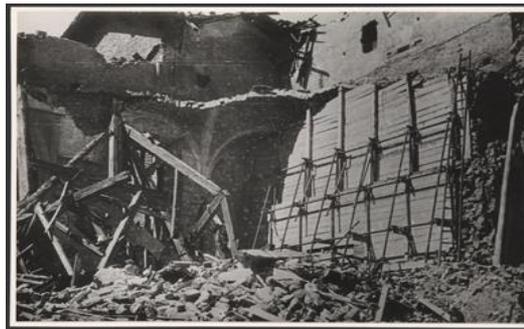
How data protection measures are fully maintained

# Guidance – Armed conflict

3. Are there any additional protective measures that may be required, beyond those which would be implemented during other incidents? Eg. Boarding of windows, additional physical protection, false walls to protect or hide elements
4. Are there any additional training needs for staff?
5. Are there any additional welfare needs which could be planned for?
6. Are there any opportunities to develop links with the armed forces? For example, in areas prone to widespread flooding where the armed forces may provide additional support for the emergency services



Air raid damage to the Naval Gallery at the Imperial War Museum, London, 31 January 1941. © IWM (MH 127)



Milan, Leonardo's last supper  
'Photograph taken or collected on behalf of Allied Military Government, Division of Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives (MFA&A)'



Fig. 10. Some of the books belonging to the Archiginasio Library transferred to some premises of the building that housed the Civic Museum, after the bombing raids of January 29<sup>th</sup> 1944 and October 11<sup>th</sup> 1944 (Bersani, Roncuzzi Roversi Monaco 1995: 134)

[http://www.academia.edu/12133984/The\\_Civic\\_Museum\\_of\\_Bologna\\_during\\_the\\_Second\\_World\\_War](http://www.academia.edu/12133984/The_Civic_Museum_of_Bologna_during_the_Second_World_War)  
Ref: Anna Tulliach

# Plan for welfare before, during and after emergencies...

- Physical support
- Mental & emotional support

What we can do

What organisations can do

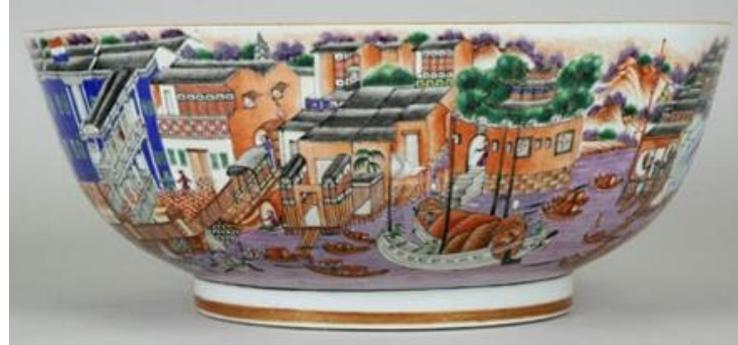
Will depend in part on the type and scale of an incident

*“There is nothing like the feeling of opening a room in a building you love more than any other place on earth and seeing it full of flames.”*



# Effects on Staff **Immediate impact**

“And whilst this is happening – this is how you will feel:  
I'm going to die if this collection goes whilst I'm in charge.”



# Effects on Staff **Long term impact**

“Hardest thing? How you feel. I cannot overstate the trauma of this kind of event....” *Post a fire*

“You can feel very protected and loved and cared for by colleagues and volunteers. Many acts of kindness and solidarity really make a big difference.”  
*Post a fire*



**Coughton Court - *flood***



**Cologne Archives**



Firefighters battling a blaze on Sunday at the 200-year-old **National Museum of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro**. Credit Leo Correa/Associated Press

# British Museum

## Iraqi Archaeologists Training Programme

POST CONFLICT DAMAGE ASSESSMENT COLLECTIONS - MUSEUMS Part 1

Name of Assessors: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>INSTITUTION:</b>	
<b>STAFF WELFARE:</b> Are the staff traumatised, injured, homeless, in need of specialist support?	
<b>SECURITY:</b> is the site secure? Y/N List actions required to make site secure	
<b>BUILDING DAMAGE ASSESSMENT:</b> Has an assessment been carried out?	Y/N
<b>HAZARDS:</b> What are the hazards?	
List actions needed to reduce the risks	
Is it safe to enter? Has a risk assessment been completed? Y/N	
<b>INVENTORY:</b> Is the inventory available? Y/N	
<b>RECORDS:</b> Are the collection records available? Y/N	
<b>AREAS – ROOMS AFFECTED:</b> List rooms affected, including offices, conservation lab, galleries, stores	
<b>ACCESS:</b> Are collections accessible? Y/N If not describe what is preventing access	

### STAFF WELFARE:

Are staff traumatised, injured, homeless, in need of specialist support?

### HAZARDS:

Unstable structures, unexploded armaments, decaying matter....

# Training...

- ICCROM *First aid for cultural heritage course*
- Disaster Risk Management of Cultural Heritage, The Institute of Disaster Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage, Ritsumeikan University Kyoto (with ICOMOS Icorp, ICOM, UNESCO ICCROM)
- Historic England 3 day Emergency Salvage Course – c.800 trained to date
  - Training with F&RS – mutual benefits: response structures, communications, handling... **Developed out of NT/EH/DCMS course**



- British Library, Harwell Document Restoration Services, Museum of London, Regional days etc

# Collaboration is key: Networks

## **EXAMPLES - National, Regional and City Wide**

### ➤ **National**

UK Blue Shield

ICOMOS UK – Icorp UK

[DCMS Emergency Planning Group – disbanded 2013  
Training Sub-Group – Course established late 2008 etc]

Northern Ireland Committee for Heritage Emergencies

Emergency Planning Network for Wales

### ➤ **Regional**

East Midlands Museums Service – REDS

Yorkshire & Humberside – RRN

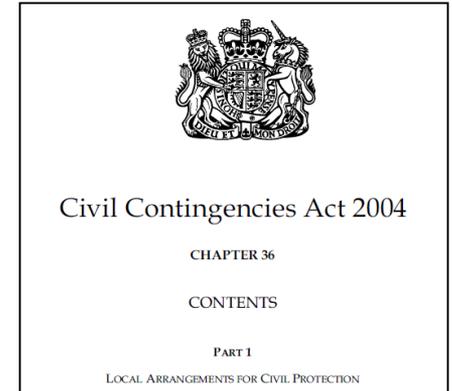
### ➤ **City Wide**

London Network & London Heritage Salvage Network

Scottish Networks

– Glasgow Area Disaster Planning Network - GADPN

– Edinburgh Collections Response Network - ECRN



Local Resilience Forums

# Importance of good working relationships...

## Glasgow School of Art Fire

University of Glasgow Centre for Textile Conservation  
GADPN and individuals who were members of CERN  
Volunteer rota – experienced and understood archives  
Bar-coding of boxed material before transportation



## Clandon Park

National Trust accepted assistance from  
Historic Royal Palaces



# National/International Entities

ICOM

Disaster Risk  
Management Committee

ICMS - Museum Security  
International Committee for  
Museum Security



International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works



International Council on Archives  
Conseil International des Archives

ICOM international  
council  
of museums  
UK



CILIP The library  
and information  
association

ARA Archives & Records  
Association  
UK & Ireland

icomos<sup>uk</sup>  
international council on  
monuments & sites uk

ICOMOS  
international council on monuments and sites

ICORP  
international committee on risk preparedness



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

# International Networks

- Blue Shield – national committees differ
- ICOMOS – Icorp **individuals apply**
- ICOM – Disaster Relief Management Committee - **individuals invited to be members**
- UNESCO ICCROM – *with ICOMOS, Smithsonian, Crowdfunder for gathering data in emergencies.* ICCROM representatives?
- IIC – Well established interest
  - A founder of IIC, George Stout, was a ‘Monument Man’
  - Advocate Award 2012 for support of Blue Shield to Patrick Boylan, Dinu Bumbaru, George MacKenzie, Marie-Thérèse Varlamoff
  - Conference dialogue 2018 <https://www.iiconservation.org/content/watch-culture-cannot-wait-point-matter-dialogue> Sept 2018
- Major museums, such as the Smithsonian – *Collections/ Conservation divisions, with AIC, ICCROM, Blue Shield USA and others*
- *Brazil fire.....UNESCO mission was invited by the Brazilian government to carry out an assessment of the building and collections*

# What we, and our organisations, and professional bodies can do...

- Prepare ourselves and our organisations
- Strengthen networks (professional, community, local) and build relationships
- Provide education and training
- Provide expert advice and guidance from a distance
- Support professional colleagues
- Assistance on site when situation is one we've trained for
- Carry out Post Disaster Needs Assessments
- Gather information about heritage sites in advance in an agreed format required for UK Blue Shield/ CPP unit
  - British Overseas Territories
  - E.g. Commonwealth Association of Museums  
<http://www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam/about/index.html>
  - <http://www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam/publications/museums.html>

# For us to consider: Greater collaboration

- Greater collaboration – a good thing?
- Appetite for structured collaboration?
- Role of professional bodies, organisations etc?
- Purpose: sharing knowledge, support
- Responding to incidents?
- Integration with other professions



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*Thank you!*

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