

are: (1) cost of fiche equipment is lower, (2) fiche equipment has less mechanical problems, (3) the cost of COM fiche is cheaper than COM film, and (4) the library's users found fiche easier to use.

All but three of these articles are revised versions of papers published in *Microdoc*. This duplication of publishing seems a bit unnecessary. However, the collection of these articles in one publication may have some advantages to British readership. This publication would have been greatly enhanced for the American library reader if a glossary of abbreviations had been included.

Even with the limitations cited above and the additional one of the brevity of each article, this publication has merit for the American librarian. The positive points are: (1) the diversity of applications of COM in British libraries, (2) the strong trend in Britain to COM fiche and reasons for this trend, and (3) the cooperative approach to library COM problems.—*Helen R. Citron, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta.*

Morris, John. *Managing the Library Fire Risk*. 2d ed. Berkeley: University of California, 1979. 147p. \$14. LC 78-22603. ISBN 0-9602278-1-4. (Available from: Office of Risk Management and Safety, 469 University Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.)

This book may easily become the librarian's best friend by suggesting ways to lessen the risk of fire in the library and by lightening the director's concern, if disaster strikes, about a decision made in a hurry to salvage the collection. Recently experiencing the impact of such a burden in directing an early Sunday morning rescue operation of a water-damaged collection of periodicals, I know how soothing it is to be able to confirm one's own decision in print.

*Managing the Library Fire Risk* is written explicitly for library administrators. Its main goal is to convince librarians that books do burn, that they are very combustible, but also that they don't have to be vulnerable to fire igniting arson, malfunctioning equipment, or natural causes of damage. Half of the book's ten chapters dramatize the immense destructive power of library fires, well demonstrated by the Gondring Library fire in California that was started by a single

paper match dropped into a bookdrop, and which ended in \$200,000 damage (p.100).

The two introductory chapters of the book sketch the extent of fire risk, further documented by a historical overview of the world's major library fires (chapter IX and appendix 6). A case study of Temple University's Law Library fire in 1972 (chapter IV) examines in detail the lessons learned. A separate chapter on arson (chapter III) discusses one of the currently most prevailing causes of library fires.

The other five chapters of the book deal with fire prevention. Fires can be avoided, and if started, can be localized. For example, 70 percent of all fires in libraries equipped with automatic sprinklers are put out by the action of a single sprinkler head, minimizing the water damage of the volumes saved (p.29).

In a seemingly mislabeled chapter, "Alternatives for Protecting the Library Fire Risk" (chapter V), Morris reviews available fire protection systems, each reducing (not protecting) the risk of fires, by improving the protection against them. "Disaster Preparedness and Fire Prevention" (chapter VI) lists some water emergency and fire prevention guidelines; while the "Automatic Fire Protection System" (chapter VIII) discusses different types of detection and fire-extinguishing systems. Additional data are also provided by inclusion of manufacturers' descriptions of their fire preventive hardware.

The author's basic optimism is expressed in the chapter "Salvage of Wet Books" (chapter VII); the optimism is illustrated by his reference to a very successful restoration of a copy of *Merchant's Almanac*, recovered from a shipwreck sunk more than 100 years ago (p.47). The content of the book is brought up to date in the last chapter, "Library Risk Management: Current Topics."

The publication is richly illustrated with most of the same photographs used in both the first and the second editions. In fact, the present edition does not replace the one published in 1975; it merely expands its coverage by adding two chapters (chapters IX and X) and three appendixes to the practically unchanged main body of the first edition. Even the dust jacket of the second, bound edition is the same as the cover of

the first, paperback edition. The bibliography is, however, updated by the inclusion of approximately fifty new titles. Missing in both editions are references to fire prevention economics and to types of fire insurance that may be available to libraries.

The book is not a vade mecum of fire prevention or salvage operations. Rather, it is a plea for a paradoxical, yet unavoidable strategy facing the librarian: to invest the fast depleting budget in an expensive fire preventive system and to limit a very essential free access to book collections, by tightening security measures—all in order to decrease a statistically moderate fire risk. This paradox parallels the equally paradoxical concept of modern fire prevention strategy to fight library's deadly enemy, the fire, with an equally evil enemy, the fire-extinguishing water.

The book should be purchased by every library. A second copy could be given to the organization's risk manager, who may be as impotent in trying to include the coverage of library in the institution's fire insurance as is the librarian, trying to persuade superiors to install a fire prevention system in the library before, not after, it burns down.—*Joseph Z. Nitecki, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.*

Corkill, Cynthia, and Mann, Margaret. *Information Needs in the Humanities: Two Postal Surveys*. CRUS Occasional Paper, 2. BLR&DD Report Number 5455. Sheffield: Centre for Research on User Studies, University of Sheffield, 1978. 135p. \$15 (including postage overseas); £6 (including postage in U.K.) ISBN 0-906088-01-1. ISSN 0140-3834. (Available from: Centre for Research on User Studies, Univ. of Sheffield, Western Bank, Sheffield S10 2TN.)

This survey of information needs in the humanities is part of a wider project under way at the Centre for Research on User Studies, University of Sheffield, in conjunction with the British Library Reference Division. Preliminary investigation at Sheffield and a longitudinal study still in progress at that university give focus and direction to the survey at hand.

Hypotheses about the humanities scholar include: heavy reliance on library materials,

need for access to a large number of titles, greater relative importance of older materials, and the propensity of the humanities researcher to work alone. The five areas chosen to represent "humanities" are English, French, history, music, and philosophy.

Following a pilot survey, separate sets of questionnaires were sent to Ph.D. students and to academic staff (faculty) in thirty-five selected universities in the United Kingdom. There were 612 codable questionnaires returned by the academic staff and 203 returned by the Ph.D. students, giving overall response rates of 64.4 percent and 76 percent respectively. Both questionnaires dealt with the respondents' academic background, current research in progress, degree of difficulty experienced in obtaining research materials, extent of use of the British Library Reference Division, and methods of keeping up to date in one's field. Replies were analyzed by computer and reflected in the sixty-two tables, which comprise over half of the work itself (p.62-135).

The discussion of the methodology, procedure, tabulation, and interpretation of the responses is highly detailed and informative. A frank attempt is made to reveal potential flaws and problems in each stage of the study. One especially distressing response of the Ph.D. students as a group was that fewer than half of them had asked their own library staff for help or advice in doing their research; those who *did* seek such aid were mainly interested in interlibrary loan services and not in consulting subject/information specialists for their expertise (cf., p.38, 56).

Comments made in responses of the academic staff would sound familiar to their counterparts in the United States: neither sufficient time nor money for research activities, necessity to travel extensively in order to consult needed materials, delays in receiving items through interlibrary loan, inaccessibility of some materials altogether, high cost of books and journals, and general problems of keeping current. The two humanities areas illustrating extremes in the responses proved to be history and philosophy, with history researchers making very heavy use of libraries other than their own,