



INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL SCIENCES: GEOLOGY
MUSEUM BUILDING

TO: ALL DEPARTMENTS	SUBJECT: START OF TERM
FROM: DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCE	DATE: 18/08/2014

TO ALL CONCERNED:

As we approach the beginning of a new academic year, I would like to reiterate some campus rules that must be adhered to at all times:

- Chewing gum is strictly forbidden. To briefly elaborate, the act of chewing causes the gum to heat up and stiffen. Therefore, upon its removal from a human mouth, the sudden drop in temperature causes it to adhere to any surface on which it has been placed. FYI: chewing gum is usually water-insoluble and near impossible to detach once it has been stuck somewhere.

- Smoking is permissible but must be practised outside and at least ten paces away from the edges of any buildings, monuments, sculptures or any other significant feature of the college architecture.

- Lipstick is also allowed providing that it NEVER comes into contact with the facade or inner walls of any building, monument, sculpture or any other significant feature of the college architecture.

Should any of these statutes be disobeyed, an alarm will sound around campus until the rule-breaking has discontinued. Historical buildings are a non-renewable resource that must be safeguarded for future generations.

If you wish to respond to this message, please observe the regular office hours of 11:00 - 18:00 from Monday to Friday and note that we are available for discussion until 19:00 on Thursday, 16:45 on Saturday and closed on Sundays.

I have attached a map to my office for your convenience.





INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

OLD LIBRARY

TO: DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCE	SUBJECT: START OF TERM
FROM: OLD LIBRARY	DATE: 19/08/2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Thank you for your note (date Aug 18).

I was so touched by your passionate plea for sensitivity and self-restraint whilst in the vicinity of historical buildings. I am driven to distraction on this particular issue. You would be astounded if you knew just how many bibliophilic students (and staff!) have been caught in a passionate embrace with the library facade. Covering our walls in sticky kisses is a trend that seems to have crept over from no. 21 Westland Row, the site of the plaque devoted to Oscar Wilde.

What began as a mildly amusing - perhaps even touching - gesture, is now a serious threat to the integrity of the building. Aside from being a general nuisance to staff, each time the stones are cleaned they become more porous and therefore more prone to disintegration. The notes of loosened dust rise upwards and slip in through the library's many windows. Once inside they mingle with the skin and hair particles left behind by thousands of tourists and settle in their millions all over our collection, accelerating its decay as well. The building, being ravished by hungry lips on its exterior, is now accidentally devouring itself from the inside out. We are becoming more sarcophagus than library.

But I am at a loss for what to do. I have witnessed the fervour in their little faces as they persist, ignoring the bitter taste of the solution now painted on all lower level walls (the same used to deter habitual nail-biters). This double exfoliation must end! I defer to the Geology Department's expertise on the matter of stone preservation. Any advice appreciated.





INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL SCIENCES: GEOLOGY
MUSEUM BUILDING

TO: OLD LIBRARY	SUBJECT: RE: "STONE PRESERVATION"
FROM: THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES	DATE: 20/08/2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

In response to your query dated 19/08/14, I'm not certain that I fully comprehend your use of the expression "stone preservation". As I'm sure you understand, rocks do not need any assistance in this matter!

However, we are capable of giving thorough advice on methods for preserving a building's ashlar and structural integrity as well as directions for cleaning stone walls to the best possible standard. We are in total agreement that the Old Library is an irreplaceable monument and should be respected as such. Architecture of a certain age was constructed to take advantage of natural sources of heat, light and air ventilation and it is with this in mind that we suggest that you abstain from using an artificial heating system during the coming winter months. This would not only assist in stabilising the atmosphere in the Long Room but may also discourage visitors who are perhaps becoming a little too comfortable with their surroundings. Overall it seems that you have been taking the correct course of action.

We have notified the highest authority on discipline in regard to the frankly nauseating activities you described in your letter.

Regards

PS- Apologies, I am not entirely well versed in this subject but it did occur to me that there should be a rational reasoning behind these sudden outbursts. It is possible that the current, campus-wide hysteria is a symptom of 'Sick Building Syndrome'. Certainly the atmospheric dust you describe could provoke such an illness, which can cause: headaches; depression; dizziness; oppressive eyelids; foreign body sensation; disturbances of consciousness and disturbances of heart rate among sufferers.





INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

OLD LIBRARY

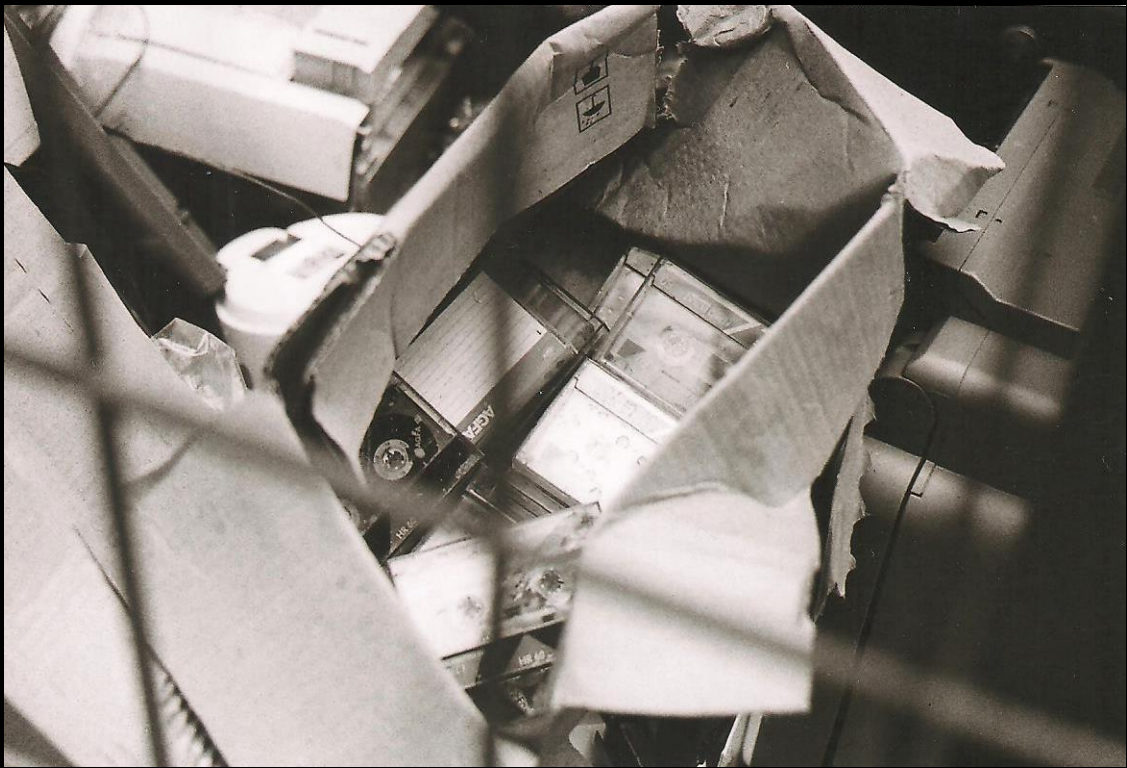
TO: DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES	SUBJECT: SICK BUILDING SYNDROME
FROM: OLD LIBRARY	DATE: 21/08/2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

"I began to notice that there were some quaint little specks floating in the rays of the moonlight. They were like the tiniest grains of dust, and they whirled around and gathered in clusters in a nebulous sort of way. I watched them with a sense of soothing, and a sort of calm stole over me. I leaned back in the embrasure of a more comfortable position so that I could enjoy more fully the aerial gambolling. Something made me start up, a low, piteous howling of dogs somewhere far below in the valley, which was hidden from my sight. Louder it seemed to ring in my ears, and the floating motes of dust to take new shapes to the sound as they danced in the moonlight. I felt myself struggling to awake to some call of my instincts; nay, my very soul was struggling, and my half-remembered sensibilities were striving to answer the call. I was becoming hypnotised! Quicker and quicker danced the dust, and the moon beams seemed to quiver as they went by me into the mass of gloom beyond. More and more they gathered till they seemed to take dim phantom shapes. And then I started, broad awake and in full possession of my senses, and ran screaming from the place."

Since you mentioned Sick Building Syndrome, I thought you might enjoy this short passage from Bram Stoker's Dracula. Does it not sound like a similar phenomenon?! Actually the Count is never far from our thoughts in these parts. Some of the writing in our old manuscripts is sadly disappearing. I fancy that vampires, confused by the blood-like iron gall ink and the vellum surfaces, have been stealing through the windows at night and nibbling away at the words on the pages. Yet another kiss of death, ha ha!





INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF BOTANICAL SCIENCES

TO: THE OLD LIBRARY	SUBJECT: IRON GALL AND MAYBE MORE?
FROM: DEPARTMENT OF BOTANICAL SCIENCES	DATE: 21/08/2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

It was really nice to hear from you this morning. It's been a while.

You can imagine my disappointment as I realised that your memo had been sent to this department in error. And then when I noticed the personal nature of your exchange with the Geology Department, I hesitated to get in touch.

But in the end I supposed it would be a shame to neglect an opportunity to share with you some comforting information regarding your ink situation. Unlike other inks, iron gall (concocted from the exquisite sap of the acacia tree and precious oak galls) mingles with paper's fibres, the two becoming forever entangled. This is what makes it so... reliable.

Feel free to include our department in any future discussions on this matter. Awaiting your response with impatience.

Warm regards.





INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM
COLLEGE ESTATE BUILDINGS OFFICE

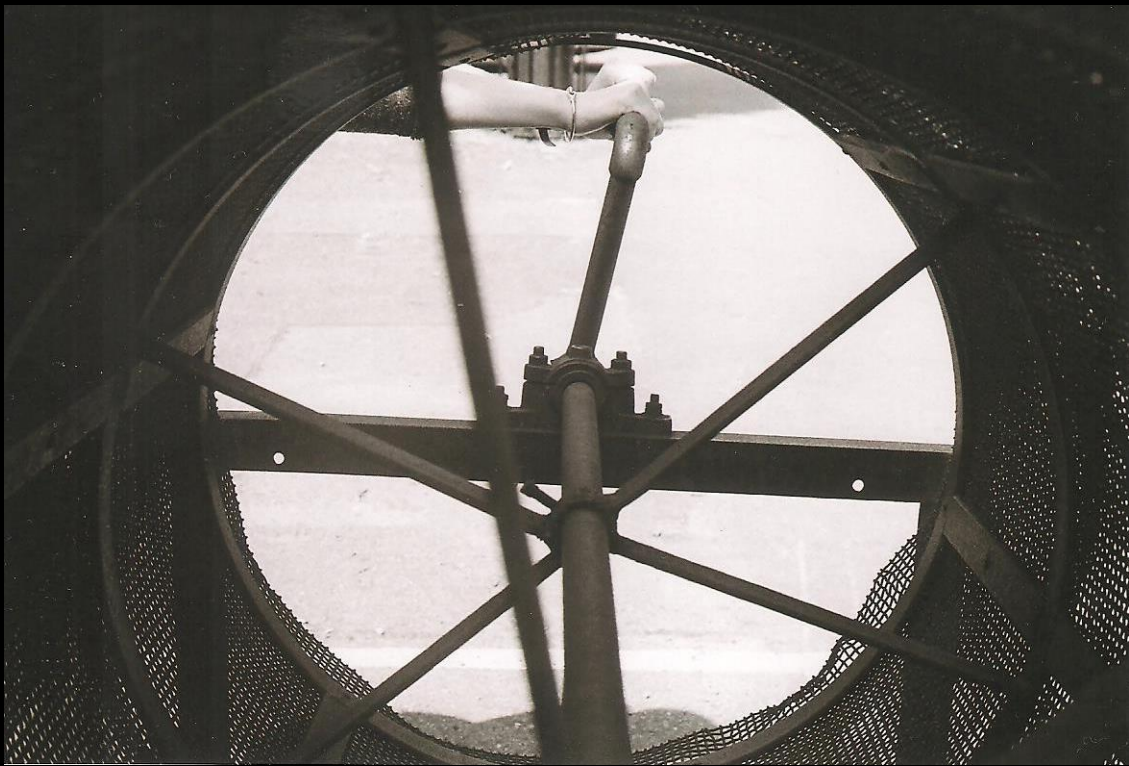
TO: ALL DEPARTMENTS	SUBJECT: MINOR ALERT
FROM: THE COLLEGE ESTATE BUILDINGS AND MAINTENANCE OFFICE	DATE: 22/08/2014

TO ALL CONCERNED:

This is a status yellow weather warning.

Regrettably, the college rain gauge has fallen from its usual position on a south facing chimney of the Museum building and was located early this morning turned on its side near the Cricket Pitch. Consequently, the device was not able to accurately collect and record precipitation since yesterday evening. In light of this disturbance, and while we have no precise rainfall reading, the Buildings Office urges all departments to take preventative action against potential localised flood hazards. Be aware that the underground River Stein and Gallow's Stream run from the South West to the North West and the South East to North East corners of campus. In the case of an emergency, these are the areas that would be significantly affected. Please report any suspicion of unprecedented indoor saturation to the Buildings Office without hesitation.

Thank you for your cooperation.



INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL SCIENCES: GEOLOGY
MUSEUM BUILDING

TO: OLD LIBRARY	SUBJECT: RE: MINOR ALERT
FROM: DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCE	DATE: 22/08/2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

In consideration of this morning's flood warning, we thought you would be relieved to learn that books and manuscripts dating from the early 19th century can absorb between 80-200% of their original weight in moisture. It seems to us that you will be in a very good position indeed should any emergencies arise. I was also speaking with a fellow from the subcommittee on dendrology at the Botany Department who assured me that the overgrown Oregon Maple trees that stand behind the Old Library can ingurgitate a disproportionate amount of liquid. However, I am unconvinced that any such tree would be capable of averting a great catastrophe in this case.

Best Wishes.





INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

OLD LIBRARY

TO: ALL DEPARTMENTS	SUBJECT: RE: MINOR ALERT
FROM: OLD LIBRARY	DATE: 22/08/2014

Don't talk to me about floods. The flood began in 1801 when we became a legal deposit library and it continues to this day. The shelves heave under the weight of so many words -so many worlds contained in such volumes of volumes. The books, the manuscripts, the maps, the music, the people, the skin, the hair, the clothes, the respiration, the perspiration, the pollen, the stone, the stars, the city, the noise. Like a plume from a volcano there is a cloud of dust rising up through our central staircase and dispersing throughout the room. What we have here is a crowded atmosphere in the Greek sense of the word (atmós-vapour, smoke; sphaira - globe, ball). Of course we enjoy the most beautiful sunsets as a result. Gazing through one of our many fine windows of an evening, from a particular spot in the middle of the shelves, one can admire the deep red glow that appears to settle over the campus.

Wet days are a different matter.

The sun's feeble rays, already struggling through rain clouds, cannot penetrate the thick miasma that we inhabit. Scholars and tourists alike must feel their way through the room guided only by a velvet rope. They cast their minds into the gloom that they might conjure an impression of the library, and feverishly hope that they do not become irretrievably lost amongst the stacks. More than once our staff members have discovered some poor sod cowering in a remote corner of the building, wrapped shivering and sobbing in the large dust jacket of an eschatological treatise and begging to be saved. Sic transit in gloria mundi!

I had a dream, which was not all a dream.
The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless, and pathless, and in the icy earth
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;
Morn came and went - and came, and brought no day

- Lord Byron, 1816





INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL SCIENCES: GEOLOGY
MUSEUM BUILDING

TO:	OLD LIBRARY	SUBJECT:	COMMUNICATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE
FROM:	THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES	DATE:	23/08/2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

We will gladly engage in discussion, debate and information exchange on matters of concern to our specific department. However, in response to your last note we must affirm the following guidelines from the Communications Policy and Procedure handbook before moving forward:

EXHIBIT A: UNIVERSITY LETTERHEAD MODEL FORMATS

A I.I. Official University stationary, including interdepartmental memorandum letterhead, shall be used only to conduct official University business. University letterhead shall not be used for personal purposes.

With respect to these guidelines, we regret to inform you that it is no longer appropriate for us to indulge in correspondence unrelated to our particular area of study.

Regards.





INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

OLD LIBRARY

TO:	DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCE	SUBJECT:	ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ
FROM:	OLD LIBRARY	DATE:	24/08/2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

A swarm of flies became trapped in the library this morning! They must have found their way in through one of the upstairs windows and have been gathering in numbers all day. Despite the best attempts of staff members we cannot seem to herd them out. Last seen forming a diabolically thick, black, chaotic wig on the bust of Sir William Rowan Hamilton, I do not see them now, although I can hear the high-pitched whine surging through the building. The whole room is vibrating with the noise; brightness and shadow have blurred to form a grey haze through which the books are now only faintly perceptible.

The colour-drain had already begun of course: over two centuries of light have dulled the spines of many once vivid volumes. Or perhaps the books, sensing their own impermanence, have simply blanched with fear... Time here might be measured in terms of fading shades of red, purple and green, while the world and our understanding of it slowly recede from view.

But let us rejoice in the confusion! Great richness of information is yet to be uncovered in the layers of time and dust, of light and shade: an idea that you, with your geological perspective, can surely understand. It's sedimentary, my dear Watson ;-)

And when that day dawns, or sunset reddens, how joyous we shall all be! Facts will be regarded as discreditable, Truth will be found mourning over her fetters, and Romance, with her temper of wonder, will return to the land. The very aspect of the world will change to our startled eyes.

- Oscar Wilde, 1891.



