A HISTORY OF PEST MANAGEMENT
AT THE BODLEIAN LIBRARIES

INTRODUCTION
This timeline displays the changing approaches to pest management at the Bodleian Libraries from its opening in 1602 to the present. The timeline will describe the evolution of treatments and attitudes towards pest management in the context of changing institutional resources and priorities. The results of our research will allow the Bodleian Conservation Department to put current practice into context and continue to research and improve on methods used.

CURRENT IPM PROGRAMME
Consistent monitoring using blunder traps and analysis of catch findings. Pest Database created and updated after each trapping session. Periodic reports produced for library management.

REFERENCES
2. Micrographia, Robert Hooke, 1665 (pp. 208–210).
5. Bodleian Conservation and Information Departmental Records (1)

PAST PRACTICES
There is little information concerning pest management from the opening of the Bodleian to the early 20th Century. It is assumed, based on findings and known treatments, that the Bodleian would have used various methods to control pests. These may have included the use of poisonous or repellent materials incorporated into bindings, varnishes and lacquers.

RESEARCH
The basis of this research project is to codify the history of pest management at the Bodleian Libraries, with the view to examine the types of pests causing damage to collections, the treatments used and attitudes towards management of collections.

OBSERVATION AND CONCLUSION
The linear history displays the overall progression to more passive methods and treatments. This can be seen in the abundance of passive techniques being used today, rather than chemical treatments and fumigation. The current preventative approach to monitoring pest activity is preferred, as opposed to the often disjointed and reactionary practices of the past.

TIMELINE

1602  The Bodleian Library Opens
Sir Thomas Bodley comments to his librarian on the presence of bookworm in Bodleian collections

1665  Hook’s Micrographia
The correct identification of a silverfish as ‘a small silver coloured bookworm, and moth’ further demonstrates a lack of knowledge regarding library and archive pest identification. 1

1923  Ravages of the Bookworm
Bookworm infestation found in 30,000 Oriental volumes. All the woodwork and shelving treated using carbonic and benzene. Books were wiped clean; infestation recurred. 1

1931  The New Bodleian Library
The Bodleian plans to build a new Library building, incorporating a fumigation room for treating infested items. Library completed in 1940, but used for war purposes. 1

1946  The New Bodleian opens and used as a working library.

1950s-60s  No specific knowledge of problems or treatments.

1970s  Chemical Treatments used on Collections
Infested volumes treated with PDB (moth balls) inside transit cases. 1

1980s  Continued Use of Chemicals to Treat Buildings and Collections
Thymol used as treatment for pests and mould in both crystal and impregnated paper form. 1

1985  Invasion of the Red Spider Mites
Doktor sprayed on walls and fittings to treat Red Spider mite infestation.

I’m a Larva not a Fighter  1990s
Fixtures and fittings still treated with insecticides, but moving towards lower toxicity.

Silverfish infestations in Maps Reading Room and Conservation Workshop, treated using Pyrethroids. 1

Introduction to IPM activities
The freezing of books was introduced. David Pinniger consulted for treatment of Book Beetle infestation of four volumes. 1

Recognition of increased pest activity coinciding with public events. 1

Advice given from Bob Child stating that Conservation staff should be trained to identify pests and signs of infestation. Strengthened collaboration with the Museum of Natural History in Oxford through Dr George McGavin.

Moth infestation outside exhibition cases on display (October).

Preservation Officer post created
Pest management would become part of the officer’s remit.

Investigation by Dr George McGavin into common furniture beetle life cycle after larva found asleep in bound volume. Larva was inoculated to encourage growth, but it unfortunately died.

Deathwatch beetle found in timbers of Clarendon Building. The treatment is unknown. Various Bear cats found in alum-tawed woodboard binding.

Prevention is Better than Cure
1991  1994
1997  2000s
2007  2010
2011

First preventive conservation team created within the Bodleian.
Official freezing programme introduced
Integrated Pest Management strategy set up with David Pinniger, the Bodleian’s first consistent and widespread monitoring programme.
Bodleian Library joins UK IPM Group, leading to increased collaboration with other institutions.
Bodleian Library Preventive Team takes part in organising committee for Pest Odyssey.
Increased awareness and staff training for library acquisitions. New acquisitions assessed for any signs of pest damage before entering the collection.

Anomia treatment trialled by Preventive Conservation team.

New Weston Library opens with dedicated quarantine space for storage and treatment of infested items.

FUTURE
Continued efforts of the Preventive Conservation team to provide a consistent pest management programme across library sites and research new forms of passive treatment.

“I hope those little worms about the covers of your books come by reason of their newness, and that hereafter they will away” 1

例：历史上对书虫的识别，1665年，霍克的《显微镜》}