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Waller, R.R. 1987 An experimental ammonia gas treatment method for oxidizing pyritic mineral specimens. Pre-prints of 8th triennial meeting of ICOM Committee for Conservation, working group 13, Natural History Collections. Sydney, 1987. pp 625-630

A tale of effective smoke detectors

Kate Andrew, Ludlow Museum

Whilst carrying out a geology collection survey at Bolton Museum and Art Gallery, I experienced a minor fire at first hand. The fire alarm sounded at about 12 midday. The building, which includes an aquarium and public library as well as the museum and art gallery, was quickly and efficiently evacuated and staff and visitors gathered outside on the other side of the road.

The fire brigade arrived within a matter of minutes and entered the building, the fire detection system indicated the source of the alarm to be one of the public toilets. A fire in a toilet paper dispenser was rapidly put out, the building checked over and after about forty five minutes from the alarm sounding, the building was open to the public again.

As with the Eccles College fire, the cause was apparently arson, but an effective fire detection system and an automatic fire alarm brought a rapid response with only minor damage.

Fire at National Museum of Natural History, Paris

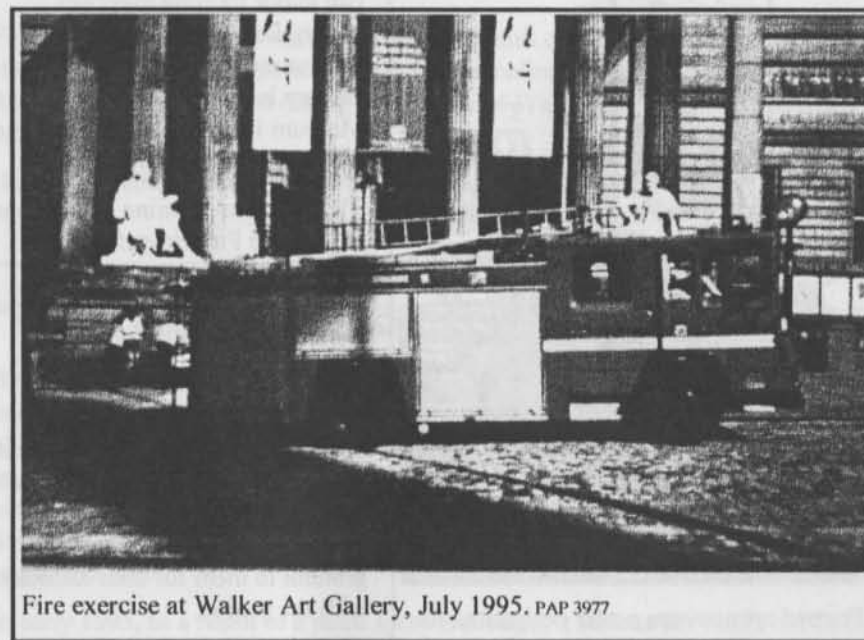
BCG nearly didn't see the star attraction of the 1996 trip to Paris. Declan Butler writing in *Nature* (30th January 1997, #378) reports that a serious fire at the National Museum of Natural History in Paris in August 1996 got within metres of the world's largest herbarium, some 8 million specimens. Decades of neglect have allowed the buildings to fall into a dangerous state of decay with many areas of the museum failing to meet minimum safety requirements, antiquated electrical systems, dangerous roofs and poorly stored chemicals. A major report by the CNE, an independent advisory committee to the French Government, has led to the government agreeing to carry out a detailed audit of museum improvement requirements before the summer of 1997.

Fire Procedures at National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside

Sally-Ann Yates, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside

The Conservation Centre of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside was developed to support NMGM's seven venues in and around Liverpool. The rich and varied collections held by the Walker and Lady Lever Art Galleries, Sudley House, Liverpool Museum, Merseyside Maritime Museum incorporating HM Customs and Excise Museum and Museum of Liverpool Life draw an average of 1.3 million visits a year.

With so many buildings and collections to consider - everything from full-sized ships through to natural history collections - emergency preparedness is the top priority. Conservation staff operating from the new centre have concentrated on protection and salvage of objects from the new centre. The commonly used words 'emergency' and 'disaster' cover a wide range of events. From a small water leak to a major fire, physical damage or even total destruction may be the fate of any objects in the vicinity.



Fire exercise at Walker Art Gallery, July 1995. PAP 3977