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WILLIAMS, Caroline. *Managing Archives: foundations, principles and practice.* **Oxford: Chandos Publishing. 2006.**
xvii, 248 pages. Biblio. & index. ISBN 1 84334 112 3. £39.00.

I am a professional librarian working in a large architectural practice, and was asked to manage the disposal of some project archives, and to take responsibility for the company archives. As I looked the piles of boxes and papers in the cupboard and wondered where to start, I realised that managing archives is very different from the skills required in librarianship. I was concerned that I would not get it right and decided to look into archive management in more detail. Fortuitously, the book review offer appeared within the same month.

I found *Managing Archives: foundations, principles and practice* did what it said on the title page. It gave me insight into the basic building blocks of managing archives going back to first principles of what are archives, asking how are they defined, how they differ from records, and looking at content, context, structure, format, and authenticity. The book also looks at the selection, appraisal and acquisition of archives, setting out examples of policy documents, guidelines and agreements. The examples of definitions and policy statements from different institutions in various countries show the breadth of knowledge of the author and help you appreciate the complexity and variance within this academic subject.

The book is aimed at the complete beginner like myself and is good at including all types of readers, from someone working in a national archive to someone involved with a private archive like myself. It includes examples from various sectors and in different formats. I found the book particularly useful when it came to the practical description of how to arrange the content. The author cites the many different standards and rules concerning archives, picking out the salient points for the specific examples she is highlighting, without going too much into them.

The chapter on access, reference and advocacy is aimed at archives in the public domain, and describes how best to provide access and encourage people to utilise and exploit the collections. The chapter on conservation is very comprehensive, covering everything from buildings, to lighting and storage, and made me realise how badly our project records are currently kept. Importantly it also covers the preservation of digital archives and information and the inherent issues associated with these formats.

The index, notes and bibliography, which are usefully ordered by subject, are very comprehensive for when you need to address a specific topic and for finding further, more in-depth information on any particular aspects of archive management.

I found the last chapter on 'Managing and archive service' to be most useful in my current situation. It made me think about the position an am currently in, where I want to go, what I have to do to get there, and what resources and skills I need to get there.

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I will be dipping into this book time and time again to address the practical issues I face with my real life project, which I think is high recommendation for any book.

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