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The publication features two case studies, the first is an analysis of the appraisal carried out by English Heritage on options for the conservation of the Chiswick Tables, and the second shows how Worcester City Museum Service used this tool to decide on suitable premises to re-house its reserve collection. After the cost/benefits appraisal, English Heritage was subsequently awarded 75 per cent funding for the conservation of the Chiswick Tables by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Heritage Lottery Fund now recommends that museums carry out a cost/benefits appraisal as part of their business plan.

May Cassar, MGC Environmental Adviser and author of the publication, commented: "The purpose of *Cost/benefits Appraisals for Collection Care* is to draw museums' attention to the wider issues and consequences of decisions which are frequently being made using solely financial criteria. *Cost/benefits Appraisals for Collection Care* is an invaluable guide for everyone involved in prioritising resources in museums."

Cost/benefits Appraisals for Collection Care is available from MGC Publications priced £12.00 plus £1.25 p&p (UK), £2.50 (Overseas). Payment details as above.

Note from NSCG Editor:

The reports given on these publications have come from the MGC themselves. If any of our members have obtained these publications and would like to review and comment on their practical application the Editor would be most grateful. Reviews of any new publications concerning the care and conservation in any area of natural science collections are invited.



The two new publications from the Conservation and Collection Care section of the Museums & Galleries Commission are reviewed here by Kate Andrew.

**Cost/benefits appraisals for Collection Care by May Cassar
ISBN 0 948630 64 7 price £12.00**

May Cassar spoke on her work in developing and testing cost/benefits appraisals for collection care as the keynote speaker at our 1997 AGM and joint meeting with the Biological Curator's Group. This new publication will clarify those notes scribbled in the dark and complete the half-copied down tables.

Cost/benefit appraisals can offer a structured route for discussing and quantifying options for collection care projects and making an informed decision rather than attempting to draw together opinions from a group discussion or relying on personal "gut feelings".

May has set out her methodology in this new publication and presented two actual worked examples that used the appraisals, one project was assessing options for re-housing an entire museum service, the other conserving a newly acquired object. Scorings and calculations are required and at first sight may be a little off-putting, but a careful reading of the text with reference to the worked examples should clear this hurdle. Master scoring sheets are included at the end of the book to be photocopied and used for the exercise. The other book reviewed here offers copies of the publication in alternative formats, perhaps the tables could be provided on computer disc from this book too. The concept could also usefully be developed into a one-day training course with this book as the course manual.

Although the author warns that this team approach to problem solving would not be appropriate in all management environments, it would be very useful to institutions operating project teams, particularly for bids to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The approach is perhaps analogous to the equal opportunities interview and selection procedure. This book allows the interested team to try the approach themselves and present the results as a coherent argument to funding bodies.