
News from Member Libraries

University of Birmingham

STAFF NEWS

Christine Abbott has recently been promoted to a new post of Director of Planning at the university, and takes up her new role in January 2002. Christine has been Assistant Director, Planning and Administration, in the university's Information Services since they were first converged in 1995. She has made a major contribution to the development of Information Services in the past six years, and will be greatly missed. Her colleagues are pleased that she is not leaving the university and will still be a familiar figure around campus. Christine will continue as HIMSS Project Director until the project ends in February/March 2002.

We also say farewell, though not goodbye, to Marie-Pierre Detraz. Marie-Pierre has been appointed to the post of CURL Executive Secretary, and leaves her present post of RSLP (Research Support Libraries Programme) Project Co-ordinator for Information Services in January. The CURL Office will be in Birmingham for the duration of Marie-Pierre's incumbency. From January, Jackie Hwang, currently Bibliographic Services Team Leader, will be looking after the RSLP projects for the rest of the RSLP programme.

Meline Nielsen has been appointed to a newly established post of Research Collections Development Manager. Her remit is to explore opportunities for the promotion of Birmingham's special collections and their exploitation for research, and for teaching and learning purposes, through digitisation and subsequent access via the web. Elsewhere in this issue, Meline reflects on some of the challenges posed by her new post.

The post of Director of Information Services has now been advertised. In the mean time, Michele Shoebridge continues in the role of Acting Director, which she has ably occupied since the departure of Dr Clive Field for the British Library in July.

IS WEBSITE

In response to the university's internet action plan and to better meet the needs of a web-enabled campus, Information Services will be overhauling its own Web pages over the next 12 months.

The existing web presence of Information Services consists of a large and complex collection of sites made up of over 10000 pages, spread over a number of web servers and maintained by over 50 authors. It has been a successful and popular 'site', to which many staff contributed. It is, however, due for a complete overhaul, and the implementation of the internet action plan, together with a revision of the university's corporate image, mean that this is the ideal time to undertake the work. A new post of IS Web Developer was established earlier this year, Jon Winterbourn was appointed and Jon's work is already well under way.

As with similar websites in other institutions, the IS website serves many functions: a shop-window, a method of service-delivery, a subject gateway. The re-development work will also seek to make the web the default planning and delivery method of IS services.

A particular challenge includes the creation of a structure offering clarity to users, while adequately representing a converged service within a reasonably small number of menu items. To tackle this and other issues, a Web Advisory Group has been set up with representatives from all areas of IS.

The first area for Jon to tackle was the staff intranet. It has adopted a new template and now accommodates a number of automated services, and will be further developed over the next few months to offer quick access to services for members of staff and wider access to management information including statistics and accounts.

In parallel, Jon has been working on other areas of the IS website, and IS has recently completed sites delivering its training catalogue (www.istraining.bham.ac.uk) and its support of WebCT (www.webLearn.bham.ac.uk). Other projects still ongoing include one looking to develop an IS Research Support Gateway, and another a gateway of Electronic Information Resources.

YMCA ARCHIVES

The university recently marked the deposit of the archives of the YMCA with a ceremony held on 23 October. The event was attended by 60 guests,

representing the YMCA, the university and other interested parties, and provided the opportunity to view an exhibition featuring some of the deposited archives and a number of artefacts associated with George Williams, the founder of the YMCA.

This archive is one of the most significant additions to the university's research collections in recent years. The collection is an extremely rich source for social, religious and political history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It complements and enhances the university's other collections of Christian-based institutional archives, which include those of the Church Mission Society and the Student Christian Movement. Now a very substantial archive, it occupies 50 metres of shelving in more than 300 boxes and ranges in date from the 1840s up to 1970. The main deposits of material have come from the YMCA George Williams College Library and YMCA England but smaller additions have come from other sources including both local associations and individuals connected with YMCA. As a resource which can be used by a wide variety of people, from local and family historians to undergraduate and post-graduate students, is already attracting visitors and enquiries from people in this country and overseas. It is impossible to do justice to the range of themes and topics for which the archive can be used but to give a flavour of the breadth of the archive, we have already had researchers using the collection for the following subjects: religion and the British soldier; architecture of YMCA buildings; and the role of the YMCA in promoting the cult of sport and physical fitness. Personal enquiries to date have included one from a man in New Zealand who had been placed on the British Boys for British farms training scheme in the 1950s; and another from a former soldier with the British Army in Germany who had fond memories of a YMCA canteen on the Dusseldorf to Berlin autobahn in a disused windmill.

With the minutes of the YMCA National Council, starting from 1882, are those many of its committees and sub-committees, together with copies of the YMCA journals, annual reports and conference reports, and national printed publicity and other literature. Substantial quantities of material relating to the YMCA's work during the Great War include photographs of war emergency work at home and abroad, printed reports, pamphlets, cuttings and some manuscript correspondence and notes.

The archive also includes a large collection of printed and other materials relating to local

YMCAs and to the district unions, dating from the mid nineteenth century up to about 1922, together with some minute books and other records of a small but growing number of local YMCAs and of unions of local YMCAs. In addition, the collection includes archives of the Association of YMCA Secretaries dating from 1890; a large collection of printed literature and publications of the World Alliance of the YMCAs; and a small, but again expanding quantity of papers of individuals connected with the YMCA. These include a diary and scrap album of Gypsy Smith, evangelist and YMCA war worker, who undertook mission work amongst troops in France in the first world war; a diary of W E Shipton, Secretary of the City of London YMCA, 1851-80; and a diary of a visit to America in 1883 by William Hind Smith, then National YMCA Secretary.

Some conservation work has already been undertaken. For example, a very fine series of photographs illustrating the work of the YMCA during the first world war have been put into protective sleeves so that they can be handled without causing damage. A large sequence of folders of early printed materials relating to local associations has been cleaned, the rusty staples and pins removed and replaced with archival thread, and the contents of the folders repackaged in acid free materials. This work has been managed by the conservator in the university's bookbinding department, with much of the work being done by an invaluable team of volunteers.

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Bournemouth University

NEW LEARNING CENTRE AND LIBRARY

Following a successful HEFCE Poor Estates Initiative bid, which will provide 50% of the funding, a new Library and Learning Centre is being built on the university's Talbot campus. The project, including refurbishment of the existing libraries for learning and teaching facilities will cost £7.8 million.

The new five-storey building will be attached to the current Dorset House Library. It will allow all library facilities on the Talbot campus to be collocated, and bring together Academic Services staff into one building. Much more than a traditional library, the new Library and Learning Centre will focus on encouraging students to maximise their

potential through the skills of information acquisition and management, and independent learning.

Work on the building began in May and a photographic record of progress can be viewed at http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/academic_services/html/new_library_news.html. The new building is scheduled for occupation in September 2002, and completion at Christmas 2002.

DORSET COAST DIGITAL ARCHIVE

Following a successful bid for £480,000 - one of the largest grants awarded in the South West - from the National Lottery's New Opportunities Fund, Bournemouth University's Academic Services is to lead a major project to digitise Dorset's history and heritage.

The Dorset Coast Digital Archive (DCDA) will feature over 200,000 maps, charts, newspapers, aerial and other photographs and artefacts (from paintings to pistols) relating to the man-made and natural history of the region. All this material - and more in the years to come - will be digitised to form an electronic 'Domesday Book' for the 21st century and beyond. The project will also create a geographic information system (GIS) for the Dorset Coast and immediate hinterland.

All these resources will then be made available via the internet to give students, teachers, surveyors, environmentalists and a host of other interested parties 24-hour access to the archive.

Other major partners in the DCDA include Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council and the Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society.

More information is available at <http://www.dcca.org.uk/> or from David Ball, University Librarian.

NEW PROJECT TARGETS HEALTH INFORMATION FOR ALL

A grant of nearly £30,000 from the British Library Co-operation and Partnership Programme, combined with contributions totalling over £62,000 from a range of partners, will be spent on creating a pilot - provisionally titled *HealthInfo4U* - to make high quality information about conventional and complementary medicine more accessible to the general public.

Partners on the project include Bournemouth University, the British Library, and NHS trusts and public library authorities in Bournemouth, Poole,

Essex, and Wiltshire. Technical support is provided by Health Communication Network.

The project will create access to much of the journal-based and other information on health issues currently available to health care professionals, but not the general public. Tapping into the information held by the British Nursing Index (BNI), the Allied and Complementary MEDicine Database (AMED), and other sources, it will ultimately provide the expert patient, their advocates and representatives with the health literature they require.

More information can be found at <http://www.bnipius.co.uk/html/current.html> or from Jill Beard, Deputy University Librarian.

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University of Cambridge

SATURDAY AFTERNOON OPENING

Funded in part by grants from Trinity College and the Research Support Libraries Programme, opening hours have been extended from 9.00-13.00 to 9.00-17.00. A restricted service will be offered on Saturday afternoons.

WELLCOME TRUST GRANT

The Darwin Correspondence Project, which aims to publish the complete, edited texts of all letters written by or to Charles Darwin, has been awarded a £700,000 grant by the Wellcome Trust to support its editorial team in Cambridge for a further five years. (A second team is based in the United States.)

The University Library's Darwin archive contains the largest collection of Darwin letter in the world. The letters are the best source for understanding Darwin as a person, and offer insight into Darwin as a scientist. The twelfth volume of the *Correspondence*, covering 1864, was published by Cambridge University Press in July, bringing the number of letters published to nearly 5000. The series is expected to run to thirty-two volumes. The Wellcome Trust has been a major sponsor of the Project since 1996.

NEW READING ROOMS

The new Munby Rare Books Room and Manuscripts Reading Room, on the first and third floor of the library's north-west corner, opened in Sep-

tember. The architects are the Harry Faulkner-Brown Howe Partnership, which is responsible for the ongoing extension of Giles Gilbert Scott's 1934 building. Generous funding was provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Seating capacity has substantially increased and PCs and a quiet area have been installed.

University of Gloucestershire
(formerly Cheltenham & Gloucester
College of Higher Education)

UNIVERSITY TITLE

With excellent timing the announcement of University title arrived just in time for this year's awards ceremonies. The institution was awarded taught degree awarding powers in 1992 and research degree awarding powers in 1998. An application for university title was submitted and during the academic year 1999-2000 we were subject to close scrutiny as the final part of the process – equivalent to 60 days of institutional audit! Much work is currently taking place to re-brand the website and the domain name will change within the next month.

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

A second external validation of the quality of our services was indicated when, following assessment against the Investor in People Standard on 16 and 17 October the Faculty was recognised as meeting the standard on 17 October 2001. This is excellent news for the Faculty as it is the first area of the University to achieve recognition.

The following comment was made by the assessor in her report:

'The Faculty of Learning and Information Services has provided excellent development opportunities to its staff over a number of years. More recently, people development has become more systematic: teams have been involved in the production of their annual targets and clearer priorities have been established for staff development.'

Clare Hetherington, who led the initiative on behalf of the Faculty, has now been seconded for half of her time to roll out the programme to other departments within the university.

LEARNING CENTRES

BUILDINGS

On a warm autumn day under a clear blue sky the topping out ceremony was held for the new learning centre at Oxstalls (Gloucester). The site, which will open in September 2002, will house sports and exercise science and leisure management courses. The learning centre, with the capacity for 260 workstations, will focus on the electronic delivery of information and aims to act as a focus for innovative methods of course delivery.

Francis Close Hall Learning Centre, the original nineteenth century building, underwent a major refurbishment last year but although the quality of the environment was considerably enhanced, including improved access for wheelchair users, the overall space was not increased. The transfer of two academic schools onto that site emphasised the mismatch between availability of space for study and shelving for stock, so the summer of 2001 involved another addition to the learning centre to accommodate the teaching resources collection. With the rigorous weeding of current stock, and planning for the transfer, taking into account the issues of placing stock in rooms built in 1847 for domestic use - wooden floors with the occasional supporting joist and stone walls filled with rubble – it was a very busy summer.

The Park site has increased its accommodation by the incorporation of the former assembly hall (following the demolition of part of the stage and its concrete base to allow access) and now contains less used book stock in an open access stack. We have also created a series of bookable group study rooms and quiet carrel-based study areas that are now being well used by students.

STUDENT INDUCTIONS

A working group of staff from Learning Centres and Learning Technology Support contributed to a major revision of the induction video used to provide an overview of services and facilities to large groups of first year students. The result is a professional quality presentation using graphics and sound, including input from students talking to camera on the value of the learning centres to their studies.

WEBCT TO THE RESCUE

Faced with 450 new Education students and 750 Sport, Environment and Leisure level one students who all needed to be inducted into the mysteries of Learning Centre services and resources by the end of week 4 the Senior Information Advisers for

the area decided that a new method of delivery was called for. WebCT proved an excellent vehicle for delivering information to large numbers of students in a structured way. The students were able to work through the tutorials at their own pace, and to return to the programme later and refresh their skills when they felt they needed it. The project was a collaborative effort involving staff from Learning Centres, Learning Development Team, and not least ICT services to ensure the stability of the network and the capacity of the WebCT server. The development of similar projects for other subject areas will take place during the year.

ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

This year saw the launch of the Whittington Press archive with ongoing acquisitions of the back catalogue of books to add to the complete set of the Press's Matrix journal, books, posters, leaflets and ephemeral works already in stock. The Whittington Press was started by John Randle at Whittington Court in 1972 initially as a weekend hobby, but it soon came to dominate his working life. The one constant in the eclectic range of Whittington Press books remains the annual volume of *Matrix*, the acclaimed review of the activities of small presses around the world.

ONLINE BOOKSHOP

A link with Amazon.co.uk has been established on the university intranet allowing students to go directly from module booklists to the relevant page on Amazon and place an order. Although we started the semester with three groups of modules for level one students the service is proving so popular that it has already been extended.

HYPERION

Hyperion is the Digital Media Archive package linked to our Unicorn catalogue. Building on the successful implementation of three pilot projects students now have access to a growing range of information across the network: the Electronic Reserve Collection containing module readers and exam papers; archival photographs covering buildings, official visits and year group photos mainly from the archives of St Paul's and St Mary's colleges; publications, our Faculty newsletter 'Information news'; and the beginnings of a slide collection for landscape design.

ONLINE INTERLIBRARY LOANS

Another popular new service is the interlibrary loan module of Unicorn, and despite some teething problems (some of which will apparently be solved by a system upgrade in February!) gener-

ally the student response has been very positive. We are however thinking about setting up a recording to explain why electronic signatures are not acceptable!

LEARNING TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

The Department of Learning Technology Support was formed in 1998 by LIS to facilitate the application of learning technology to teaching, learning and assessment, formalising the Faculty's activities in this area. Staff development workshops and individual assistance are key activities for the Learning Technology and Skills Support Team. The Team supports WebCT developments, the use of WebBoard computer aided conferencing and QuestionMark Perception computer aided assessment. Generic training is provided for the use of Microsoft Office software, as well as staff development in the use of specialist software to support quality improvements for learning, teaching and assessment.

ON-LINE LEARNING DEVELOPMENTS

Demand has grown rapidly in the area of e-learning, with the development of on-line course delivery, assessment and communications. Two years ago there were no on-line modules: now there over 100, representing over 4000 student and staff registrations.

STUDENT SKILLS

The Faculty of Learning and Information Services continues its focus on student skills development, promoting and expanding the opportunities available for students to improve their ICT fluency, through the LIS Information Skills Programme and scheme field modules. One of these, Using the Internet for Learning is taught entirely on-line using WebCT. In addition training materials for generic MS software is being added to the university intranet.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

The Department of Learning Technology Support has been successfully involved in several externally funded collaborative projects, which contribute directly to our support for teaching and learning. These include the TLTP3 - funded DIVERSE Project and the JISC - funded CITSCAPES project.

The CITSCAPES project, which will continue through 2001-02, extends its survey of student ICT skills development in higher education institutions in Britain to include further education. The DIVERSE project promoted innovative use of video to support student learning

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Leeds Metropolitan University

CHARTER MARK

Learning Support Services at Leeds Metropolitan University have been awarded the Charter Mark for excellence in public service. The application was co-ordinated by Norma Thompson and Katherine Everest but the successful award of the Charter Mark is a credit to all staff in Learning Support Services. Leeds Metropolitan University are the first modern university library and the first converged service to be awarded the Charter Mark. The award will be presented on 26 February 2002.

TELEPHONE AND EMAIL INFORMATION SERVICES

We are working hard at improving our services to off-campus users. In particular, we have recognised that we need to provide better enquiry services to those who are using our service remotely. A dedicated telephone enquiry service is now in operation between 10.00 and 16.30. Users can ring the enquiry service if they need support, advice or information. Providing this dedicated service improves the quality of service received by telephone enquirers. Students and staff can now also email the Electronic Information Desk if they need support, advice or information. The service aims to offer the same kind of support available to on-campus users from the Learning Centre Information Desks. Users will normally receive a reply within two working days.

24-HOUR IT ACCESS

In the past year Learning Support Services piloted a scheme giving students 24-hour access to some IT facilities at peak times during the year. This proved to be so successful that it will be repeated this year. 24-hour access to IT facilities will resume shortly before Christmas in the peak weeks.

LEARNING CENTRE ONLINE

This summer the Learning Centre web pages were redesigned and relaunched under the banner of 'Learning Centre Online'. This re-design of our web pages has created a one-stop shop for information research and covers our services both on and off campus and in print and electronic format. Work is being undertaken to evaluate users' reactions to 'Learning Centre Online'.

SKILLS FOR LEARNING

The new web-based version of *Skills for learning* went live in August. The new system includes updated material and has a new, clearer look. It is now hosted on the Hyperion Digital Media Archive, part of the SIRSI Unicorn library management system. We have adapted and incorporated the pilot information skills tutorial developed by the Queensland University of Technology. The Skills for Learning Advisory Group, with representatives from each of the faculties, has been convened to look at future development of the materials in *Skills for learning*. A project is also being initiated to develop high quality, freely available, study skills materials at pre-entry level. These materials are being developed in partnership with local schools and further education colleges as part of the university's widening participation initiative.

ONLINE READING LIST PROJECT

Our Learning Advisers are continuing to work closely with academic staff to encourage them to supply reading lists early for this project and to promote it among staff and students. Reading lists are being loaded onto the SIRSI Unicorn library management system and, following some customisation of the interface, have been available online from September.

CAMPUS PIPELINE

The university took the decision last year to implement a student portal via Campus Pipeline. This will provide an authenticated interface for students to the full range of university resources, including our virtual learning environment based on WebCT, the WebCat learning centre catalogue, and our full range of electronic resources. The first stage of this has been to load the software onto a test server so that we can start experimenting with the interface. We plan to have a live system by summer 2002.

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University of Lincoln

The university has a new name, which was launched on 8 October. From 1 February 2002, the department of Learning Support will have a new structure, which has been devised following a process review. Its new name will be Learning Resources. The Support Manager in the new department will be in charge of a Curriculum Sup-

port Team (formerly known as Learning Advisers) and a Technical Services Team (covering IT and media support). The new Resources Manager will be in charge of a Circulation Services Team and a Purchasing Team. Expressions of interest in posts in the new structure were required by late November and it is hoped that staff will know what their new posts will be by Christmas. The Support Manager's post will be filled by Philippa Dyson. The Resources Manager is to be appointed. The Cottingham Road Campus will close in July 2003, when most of the department will be located in Lincoln, except for 21 staff who will be based at the City Campus, Hull.

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University of Liverpool

STAFFING NEWS

Carole Rhodes, the Engineering Librarian, will be on maternity leave during 2002. Her post is filled temporarily by Pennie Street, the Periodicals and Document Supply Manager. Diana Goodier took early retirement in September from her post of User Services Manager in the Harold Cohen Library; she has been replaced by Laura Oldham, previously Librarian at the Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts.

USER SURVEYS

The Information Services User Survey was a year-long project funded by the university to create a set of web-based questionnaires to evaluate user opinion on and use of the Library, Computing Services Department and other services contributing to the university's information strategy. The task was undertaken by Dr Ruairaidh Hill, an established researcher working on the project half-time throughout 2001.

Comprehensive surveys targeted at students were run in May - June and similar staff surveys were run in September - November. Another survey, focused particularly on the concerns of first year undergraduates, was run November - December. The questions posed included those from the SCONUL Template.

Survey completion rates were high and while the results revealed few surprises they do help to legitimise the conventional wisdom of earlier years. The findings will be used to inform the library's next strategic plan. We intend to conduct

further surveys, using the same methodology, even though this project has formally ended.

ISSUES

The library newsletter has been radically overhauled recently. *Issues*, the new publication, represents further collaboration with CSD since it features news from both services. It is published in hardcopy and electronic versions three times per year. Significant sponsorship has been secured from the campus bookshop. We already exchange copies of the newsletter with several SCONUL libraries but would welcome the opportunity to swap with other members as well.

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University of Newcastle upon Tyne

This autumn term has been characterised by the usual frenetic activity from a service delivery perspective which, combined with higher than usual staff turnover in the library assistant grade and much staff illness, have contributed to the almost universal sigh of relief which greeted the end of term!

Library developments this term have included:

The Cabinet Office have confirmed the award of the Charter Mark to the library for the third time in succession! The Charter Mark revalidation took place in October when the entire library was subjected to a day long very intensive scrutiny of systems, procedures, standards, and documentation together with all the underpinning documentation to support our application. A substantial amount of hard work over many months went into this award and we are all very pleased at the outcome.

The selection of Aleph as our new LMS to replace our rapidly ageing Geac Advance system is the end product of a lengthy series of meetings, systems demonstrations and library visits. System implementation will begin in the New Year and we are planning to have Aleph operational for the start of the 2002/03 session. The New Year will also see the implementation of smart card payment for photocopying. So, all in all, a very busy 2002 is projected.

A new staff training room equipped with computers and the usual range of audiovisual equipment was opened in September and is proving very

useful not only for library staff development but also for small group teaching with students and lecturers.

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Oxford Brookes University Library

NEW SECURITY SYSTEM INSTALLED

Over the last academic year, the Headington Library has been targeted by thieves stealing from students. Two hundred thefts or attempted thefts from our customers were reported. This has obviously been distressing for both the students involved and the staff who have tried to support them.

The library has run campaigns to raise awareness of personal security (working with academic colleagues and the Students' Union to maximise publicity) and introduced a series of security patrols to promote safe working in the library. Despite all these efforts, crimes against students continued.

Over the summer vacation, the library installed new security gates at the Headington Library entrance in the hope to cut down personal theft. Although we do not wish to tempt fate –we still advise our customers to remain vigilant and we have continued to run staff patrols– this has led to a drastic cut in incidents.



Lending services librarian Linda Dixon gets to grips with our new entrance gates.

The new gates are the first in a two-stage process. Over the Christmas vacation the enquiry desk will be redesigned to support this change and facilitate a freer flow of customer traffic at the library entrance.

VIRTUAL INFORMATION SKILLS TEACHING

Library staff have designed an online quiz using WebCT aimed at developing the library and information skills of 1st Year undergraduate students. This exercise was trialled with 250 biological and molecular sciences students this autumn term.

As an assessed part of a taught module, the quiz consists of 20 'tailored' questions which require students to look at, use and evaluate a variety of online information sources (e.g. library catalogue, databases, internet resources), all accessed via existing subject information web pages developed by library staff (available via www.brookes.ac.uk/services/library/).

So far the staff/student response has been good, with benefits to all involved:

- Library staff were able to deliver a broad range of information to a large number of students (potentially many more in future), whilst reducing their time spent teaching, and no marking of papers was required.
- Students could complete the quiz in their own time – day or night. Feedback suggests that students found this to be a fun and flexible way of developing their information skills.
- It proved a good opportunity for library staff to share their experience and knowledge with academic colleagues ...also contributing to *their* understanding of the nature of the library's resources!

Overall, our experience was very positive. Our information skills group is keen to develop this further at Brookes and is currently exploring options for taking this forward.

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University of Plymouth

INFORMATION AND LEARNING SERVICES

In June 2000 Academic and Information Services was restructured by Chancellery with library, computing and media moving into Information and Learning Services (ILS). The Director, Bob Sharpe, initiated an internal review process, involving all team leaders and senior managers with an external facilitator, to review the management style and structure of the new organisation. From this has come a re-organisation of Information and Communication Systems (ICS), a change of title for Public Services (now Customer Services), and the creation of a new post – Plymouth library manager. Chris Watson has just joined us to take up that post.

We have decided to adopt a more open style of management, and have agreed a set of principles to guide the way we wish to work. Tangible outcomes from this are:

- monthly open meetings to which all staff are invited to raise issues with the senior management team
- a regular newsletter to all ILS staff
- the creation of an e-mail distribution list for team leaders to improve access to management team meetings minutes and other information.

We are currently developing a communications strategy for ILS. An awayday with an external facilitator for team leaders and the management team is scheduled for this month to review progress and help us identify our goals for 2002.

PLYMOUTH LIBRARY REFURBISHMENT

We are in the closing weeks of a five-year project to refurbish the library on our Plymouth campus. The building was opened in 1976, with a low-maintenance, flexible construction design, distinctly resembling to a multi-storey car park without the ramps. We have refurbished a floor a year – replacing power, data lines, lighting and carpets, installing a suspended ceiling and painting the previously bare blockwork walls. This has allowed us to reconfigure the layout of the building – two subject floors providing a quite study environment, and a multi-disciplinary entrance floor, with issue counter, group study, short loan, careers information, open access computing and the media workshop. The overall look and feel inside the building has been improved to provide a more office-like environment, with (near) flood wiring for power and data.

The final 18 months of the project have seen the replacement of our air-conditioning system with a environmentally friendly and cost-effective combined heat and power system (CHP) which allows the excess heat generated in the library to be converted into power for other university buildings. This, combined with control of some of the lighting by motion detectors, has substantially reduced running costs and environmental impact.

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University of Reading

UK LIBRARIES+

In October 2001 Reading University Library joined more than half the UK's higher education institution libraries in membership of the free co-operative 'UK Libraries Plus' scheme. Nick Hollis, Circulation Services Manager, will be co-ordinating progress of the scheme at Reading.

FINZI CENTENARY DAY

A day-long event in November marked the centenary of the birth of the English composer, Gerald Finzi (1901-1956) whose collections of literature and printed music are housed in the library. It was jointly organised by the library with the departments of music and english in acknowledgement of the Finzi Collections as one of the University's greatest musical and literary assets.



The event was attended by Gerald's son, Christopher Finzi, and representatives of the Finzi Trust. Andrew Burn of Bournemouth Orchestras gave a biographical lecture on Finzi. Paul Spicer, conductor of the acclaimed Finzi Singers, led a session on Finzi's compositional style outlining his fusion of poetry and music. Music was performed by student soloists and the University Chamber Choir, directed by David Skinner, to illustrate the session. The day closed with the annual Finzi Poetry Reading given by John Fuller, a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford who read a wide selection of his own verse. The Music Liaison Librarian, Christo-

pher Cipkin provided an exhibition of items from the Finzi Collections and the Finzi Friends' stall provided a rare opportunity to purchase a wide selection of Finzi recordings.

NEW LIBRARIAN

Following interviews held in November, we are pleased to announce that Julia Munro has been appointed as our new University Librarian. She has been Acting University Librarian since the resignation of the former Librarian, Sheila Corral.

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University of Wales College of Medicine, Cardiff

Following a review of its information function the University of Wales College of Medicine has restructured the links between the Library, Computing and Media Services by establishing a new Division of Information Services. Library and Computing are each led by a Director while Media currently has an Acting Head. The newly established post of Director of Computing Services will be filled shortly. Mr S J Pritchard has been confirmed as Director of Library Services and, for 2001/04, as Chair of the Division, with Dr Alison Weightman as Acting Deputy Director of Library Services. Dr Weightman previously headed the Library Support Unit for Research Evidence (SURE) responsible for developing evidence-based approaches to healthcare education and practice. The significance of the restructuring is reflected by the invitation to the Chair of the Division to join the Management Board Executive thereby ensuring that Information Services contributes to the strategic management of the College at the highest level.

Related recent developments include:

- A new emphasis on utilising technology to ensure equity of access to and provision of library and knowledge based services to all members of the College regardless of geographic location. This is particularly important in view of UWCM's extensive provision of undergraduate education at NHS and other locations across Wales.
- The College has secured £2m from the Science Research Investment Fund to upgrade its core network infrastructure to GRID spec-

ifications. Close collaboration within the Division and with Cardiff University will ensure that this investment realises maximum benefit to the College.

UWCM AND UNIVERSITY OF WALES, SWANSEA

Collaboration between UWCM, the University of Wales Swansea and Swansea NHS Trust has seen the establishment of the Swansea Clinical School. A formalisation and extension of UWCM's medical undergraduate clinical placement programme, the new school will support the training of increased numbers of medical undergraduates within Wales and has received capital funding from the National Assembly.

The library and IT needs of students and staff are being met by the provision of enhanced and extended facilities on the NHS Trust site at Singleton Hospital and by new library and Postgraduate Centre development at Morrison and Cefn Coed Hospitals. Developments on the university campus include additional IT facilities and a skills laboratory.

The longstanding relationship between the Swansea NHS Trust and UWCM libraries – as part of UWCM's collaboration with NHS Wales – has been strengthened by the addition of the University College Swansea. This is neatly symbolised by the imminent implementation of the Voyager LMS as a joint project involving UWCM and all Postgraduate/NHS Trust Libraries in Wales and which is also the system used by the University College Swansea.

Similar collaborations have been proposed involving Newport, Bangor and UWCM.

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In the last SCONUL newsletter we highlighted some changes to be undertaken over the summer period. It is pleasing to report that all of these have been carried out successfully, and we also found time for one or two other things as well.

NEW STUDENT PCs

The former Arts Reading Room in the Library and Information Centre has been redesigned and renamed the Study Hall. The West side now con-

tains 150 new student PCs, purchased through the HEFCW Capital Grant for Student IT. Forty of the machines are located in the separate Postgraduate Study Area, and are intended for use by post-graduate students only. So far this has been difficult to monitor, but we hope to find a technical solution whereby only postgraduate accounts will be able to log into these particular PCs.

All the new machines have small base units located under the desks, and flat screens, which mean that they take up relatively little desk space. The theory is that the new study spaces may be used both for PC work and for traditional study. In practice they are mostly used for Hotmail, as are most of our student PCs... but the newly-refurbished area makes a good impression on visitors, as evidenced by the frequent sightings of our Vice Chancellor patrolling the area accompanied by a range of important-looking People in Suits.

MEDIA STUDIES

A new media studies degree has started this session at Swansea. Following visits to other libraries supporting such degrees, we have bought a number of video and DVD players and located these in the study hall, with borrowable headphones at the issue desk. The machines are situated in dedicated study carrels, which are very popular... for students wanting a quiet place to read books. Once in a while however, a student does actually come to watch a film. We already have a sizable collection of videos, and we are continuing to add to this and to our new DVD collection. The material has been moved from a closed-access area behind the issue desk, and is now on the open shelves within the normal book sequence.

NEW LAW LIBRARY

The Law Library has been moved from its former rather cramped accommodation on the ground floor, into the former Science Reading Room on level 4 of the 1937 building. The move recognises the dynamic growth in recent years of the Law department, in terms of both student numbers and library stock. The 216 square metre library will house the main law collection and reading area, with seating for 80 students. The new library was formally opened in September by the Honourable Mr Justice John Thomas Kt, Senior Presiding Judge, Wales and Chester Circuit. A new brass plaque has been installed to commemorate the opening, alongside the original plaque which marks the 'first' opening of the library in 1937 by the Duke of Kent.

NEW SILENT STUDY AREA

Following the various reshuffles above, we have been able to re-designate the former Law Reading Room on level 1 as a silent study area, with study accommodation in the form of single carrels, and no PCs or photocopiers in the vicinity. So far so good... this area does seem to remain silent, and is appreciated by the students who prefer this type of study space.

NEW LIS WEB SITE

The previous LIS web went live in September 1998, merging the former Library and Academic Computing webs and incorporating the new UWS web style. By early 2001 it was clear that the site suffered from poor navigation, outdated information and a monotonous appearance. A Web Development Group (chaired by Martin Price) was formed to revitalise the site and by September a completely redesigned and restructured LIS web was in place: only the URL remained the same. The full story behind this breathless rush to judgement will appear in a future issue of the Newsletter. Meanwhile, the fruits of our labours can be seen at <http://www.swan.ac.uk/lis/> so you can decide for yourself how successful we've been in eliminating the faults of the old site.

NATURAL SCIENCES LIBRARY

Following the early retirement of Carol Hindley this summer some internal reorganisation has taken place to ensure continuity of LIS services in the Natural Sciences Library. Alasdair Montgomery (Science & Engineering Librarian) has assumed managerial responsibility for NSL, with day to day operation being overseen by Caroline Rauter. Subject support is provided by the Science & Engineering Team, which comprises Alasdair, Susan Glen and Neil Smyth.

LIS QUALITY REVIEW

All sections of the university are expected to undergo a Quality Review once every five years. Following discussions between Chris West, Director of LIS, and Peter Townsend, Pro Vice Chancellor (Administration), it was agreed that LIS should be reviewed as a whole (rather than section by section as is the norm with administrative departments), and that the review should be carried out by one external reviewer. We were pleased that Dr Nick Smith, Director of Library and Information Services at Aston University, accepted the university's invitation to act as our reviewer.

Nick visited LIS over two days in June, and interviewed a range of groups and individuals within

LIS, as well as students and academic staff drawn from our various user representatives' sub-committees. He was provided with the full range of strategic planning and other documentation in advance of his visit.

Senior LIS staff had the opportunity to comment on an early draft of Nick's report, before the final version was distributed to senior university staff and discussed at user sub-committees. The full report is available on the LIS website at <http://www.swan.ac.uk/lis> - see the section 'Reports and policy documents'. Nick made a number of useful recommendations which will feed into our planning process over forthcoming sessions, highlighting in particular the risks associated with having increasing numbers of LIS staff funded from income.

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COLLABORATIVE TRAINING

As a result of the Library and Learning Resources (LLR) membership of Newport Libraries and Information Services (NEWLIS), a day of disability awareness training was organised at UWCN. Staff from both the Newport Library and Information Service and the LLR took part in the training.

Topics included perceptions and definitions of disability; the law on disability and how it applies to libraries, and what actions we can take to lessen the restrictions on library users who may experience problems using our services.

Among the outcomes of the day was the acknowledgement that improving services to those with disabilities resulted in an improvement in service levels for all library users.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FUND (NOF) ICT TRAINING FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY STAFF

As a result of NEWLIS (see above) being approved as a training provider, staff at UWCN are delivering a one day programme over six sessions to nearly sixty staff from the Newport Library and Information Service. The day covers module 6 of the expected outcomes *Supporting users to ensure effective learning*.

Although familiar with training LLR users, the programme for the public library staff required us to put together material with a different emphasis. The sessions supported by handouts included *The structure of the education system*, *Electronic learning resources for lifelong learning*, and a hands-on search for web resources.

It has been a rewarding experience, enabling us to look at little bit outside ourselves and see life from our public library colleagues point of view.

From the evaluation sheets, it seems the sessions have been very well received.

STOCKTAKE

The summer saw the fourth and final year of stocktaking for staff on the Caerleon Campus. It is satisfying to know that items which say 'On Shelf' should now be on the shelf.

The LLRs on both campuses have now had a full stocktake so hopefully we won't have to do it again for at least ten years!

NEW LOOK GUIDES

Conscious that we might not be getting our message across as effectively as we might, the Information Skills and Publicity Project Group looked at ways of improving our advertising. Fortunately money from a successful bid enabled us to have new guides professionally designed.

The A5 guide to the *Distance Learning Service* is extremely attractive and colourful and advertises much better our service to distance learners.

The *Library and Learning Resources Guide* is a departure for us in two ways. Firstly it includes all the services we offer (previous guides only gave a snapshot), secondly its format. It is CD size, includes eight colourful pages and is printed on high quality paper making it look and feel good. Indeed it has proved so popular with our students that we have had to make an additional print run.

STUDY SKILLS

The Centre for Learning Development (CLD), the LLR's learning and teaching arm, has been active in promoting support for students who require support in their studies. Recently *Study Zones* have been established, offering both a drop-in facility and a point of referral from academic staff.

The *Student IT Induction* programme is run collaboratively between the CLD and the IT and Media Department. They have just completed a very suc-

successful programme for a second year. The programme offers training in basic IT skills including logging on; printing, managing files and accessing email.

Further support is offered by the LEAD (Let's Enable And Develop) Programme, an innovatively titled series of workshops aimed at supporting students. *Points of view* looks at how to analyse an argument, spot an assumption and evaluate evidence; *In the beginning* offers advice on how to write the perfect introduction, and *Make your Powerpoint* advises on impressing an audience with visuals.

QUEST

Waste Management Resource Centre

The QUEST (Quality of Life, Environment and Sustainability) project, has been established as a result of funding from the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme, via Newport Borough Council.

The overall aim of the project is to engage the local community in environmental and sustainability issues.

We are working closely with the School of Humanities and Science to establish a Waste Management Resource Centre in the LLR. The extra funding will enable us to add to our existing material on environmental management, advantageous to both our undergraduate and post-graduate students, and which in addition attract local SMEs. A newly designed website at <http://quest.newport.ac.uk/> provides access to relevant web-based material and resources.

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STAFFING

ISLS continued to build on the staff restructuring that took place in 2000/01 both in Information Systems (IS) and in the libraries.

During the past year or so we have:

- Re-structured the library teams to create four new deputy library manager posts to reflect the recent physical expansions and mergers and to support the library managers in the

day to day running of the libraries. We recruited internally to all four posts.

- Made a temporary secondment to systems team permanent.
- Appointed Ann Sainsbury as library manager for the Cavendish Campus. Carole was previously employed as the principal librarian in the technology faculty team at the University of Plymouth.
- Appointed Carole Symes as library manager for the Harrow Learning Resources Centre in April 2001. Carole was previously employed as a campus learning resources manager at the London Guildhall University.
- Appointed Pat Barclay as digital resources librarian. This was an internal appointment and Pat had previously worked in the Marylebone campus library
- Re-designated our library assistants as information assistants to reflect the changed nature of their role.
- Introduced two key secondments to underpin library services: one in support of distance learners and off campus support and the other to the Web OPAC re-design project.
- Facilitated an assistant librarian from Harrow LRC to undertake a one-year staff exchange with the Victoria University of Technology in Australia.
- Led an initiative to develop the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) as a staff development option for all ISLS staff and has successfully negotiated with the British Computer Society to become a recognised test centre. ECDL will form part of a planned IT skills strategy for staff and students in the university.
- In addition to the existing IS training and information officer a new post was created for a training and information officer (online learning) in order to support the training and information needs of users in central university units who are working in support of online learning, including libraries.

QUALITY

ISLS continues to make significant improvements to service quality and the university achieved a

maximum score of 4 for learning resources in the four subject reviews held recently (Subjects allied to medicine, Politics, Tourism, and Business and management).

The ISLS Quality Committee (which includes representatives from campus computing/ AV services) continued to oversee internal cross-University quality initiatives and standards for library, computing and AV services. Recent activities have included

- Annual user questionnaire and activities to follow up specific issues highlighted for action including the library system, book availability and computing issues. Book availability remains a key issue and two surveys, held in November 2000 and 2001, demonstrated that Westminster has moved above the national average from 60.75% to 64%. Interestingly, and in contrast, availability of journals is rated much higher, with both printed and electronic articles rated highly by the vast majority of our users. Quality of advice and support provided by the library staff also continues to be very highly rated in the questionnaire returns.
- A survey of users of the extended opening facilities at Harrow LRC took place in the second semester. Take up of this facility continues to be good, with the lowest numbers on Friday and Saturday nights in the first semester, and the highest on weekdays in the second semester. The added service that most students would like to see is an open copy shop: although this would not be possible without additional staff, we hope to automate some of the other services, such as disk sales. We also plan to introduce self-issue as an additional service out of hours at Harrow (as well as during normal hours at all libraries).

CAVENDISH LIBRARY PROJECT

A major achievement during the year was the extension and refurbishment of the lower floor. This has allowed us to relocate and collocate the book-stock (including general reference books and computer manuals) and to integrate the School of Integrated Health stock from the Regent campus library – the final part of the jigsaw that has resulted in the Regent campus library becoming a dedicated resource for those Schools within the campus. The Cavendish library now has a more spacious new entrance, new library counter and enquiries point, a new current journals

display, additional reader spaces and new furniture throughout. New OPACs have been installed using thin client technology alongside some 80 open access PCs (funded by HEFCE capital) and two dedicated library user support IT rooms. In addition, a microfilm/fiche reader printer, new colour photocopier, CCTV and a tannoy system were installed. Disabled users now have better facilities with an adapted OPAC for wheelchair users and dedicated IT facilities as well as adapted toilet facilities.

The upper floor refurbishment was postponed because of plans for the Cavendish campus refurbishment, although we now anticipate being able to proceed with the upper floor in summer 2002. In addition, the staff offices were refitted in July 2001 to improve the overall working space and new signage is being prepared for lower floor.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Recent improvements and activities include

- Re-design of the library web pages to improve navigation and developed **infoLinX**, a single access point or gateway to internal and external electronic sources of information (including e-journals, databases, contents services, resources by subject, library catalogue and exam papers online) with enhanced FAQ service.
- Upgrade of the library management system (Aleph 500) to version 14.2 to give users enhanced functionality.
- Re-design of the Web OPAC interface to make it more user friendly.
- SFX purchased (another Ex Libris product). This service will be launched in early 2002 and will provide content-sensitive linking facilities to full text articles, to extended services such as information about authors (citations for example), to other subject relevant gateways on the web and to the journal in which an article is published.
- While cataloguing of electronic resources remains a challenge we have made progress and developed a procedure for addition of subject headings to e-journal catalogue records despite international e-cataloguing standards being somewhat difficult to implement.

OPENING HOURS REVIEW

We ran a pilot extended opening hours in the summer vacation (weekends and evenings, June – September 2001) in order to cater better for part time students. Each library opened two evenings a week (rather than one) plus one weekend day in order to spread the benefit evenly. The pilot was successful and will be reviewed in autumn 2001.

Term time opening at the Cavendish library was extended by 4.5 hours a week to bring it into line with the others.

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

The university has identified as a key quality issue anti-social student behaviour by some library users to the detriment of the majority. As a result we have revised our library sanctions procedures covering late return/renewal of books and other library materials; unauthorised removal of library materials and general behaviour in the library. The new policy brings together new and existing policies on matters such as late return of books, security incidents, noise, eating and drinking, use of mobile phones etc., tying the new procedures more closely into existing disciplinary procedures. Implementation in the coming year should lead to a noticeable improvement in the library environment and more appropriate use of zoned study space by users.

SERVICES

- Two new learning skills/academic literacy areas, funded by HEFCE capital, were set up in the Harrow LRC and Marylebone library and launched in autumn 2001. In addition the Harrow LRC special needs area was enhanced with new specialist software and the addition of study skills materials.
- The development of a service for distance learners (with funding for a half time post from the Harrow Business School) has continued into a second year and we have found that the named enquiry service is working very well. An inter library loans service for periodicals has been trialled and a postal service for books launched in September 2001.
- Information skills and information literacy has continued to be a major area of activity and the issue was discussed at the ISLS Executive Group away day in July 2001. We ran a successful in-house workshop on information skills development chaired by Hilary

Johnson of University College Northampton, and are developing promising links with the school teaching & learning co-ordinators on this issue. It is a major theme for the university information strategy work in the coming year.

- The work of the Research Support Group continues to be successful, underpinned by formal, continued liaison with the Research Students Committee and the Graduate School Board. During 2000/01 the Group continued to organise training days for researchers, which are well attended and popular and supplemented by focus groups and a dedicated web page. We signed a CHEST licence for EndNote bibliographic software and we are investigating web based postgraduate training material.
- The Special Needs Group continues into its third year of activity, keeping library managers informed on issues relating to library provision for disabled students; following through the introduction of assistive technology areas in each of the campus libraries and keeping up-to-date on developments in the provision of library/information services to disabled students. The past year we have increased targeted provision of library services to disabled students such as the extended loans service. A new leaflet publicises library services available to students with special needs, supplementing the 'Library services for students with disabilities' web page which is regularly updated and serves as the main publicity for ISLS services for students with disabilities as well as being a gateway to other web resources on disability issues and legislation. All our libraries and the LRC now have special needs PCs with software packages and assistive technology including JAWS, Zoom text and textHELP! as well as scanners and CCTV readers that screen magnifies. We are also involved in the new M25 Consortium group on supporting disability/special needs.
- With regard to access we took an active role in the M25 Consortium access and pilot borrowing scheme being one of the institutions surveyed in depth and are pleased to be part of this scheme now it has been launched as a full consortial service. We remain committed to the UK Libraries Plus scheme and hosted the first meeting of the UK Libraries

Plus Steering Group. We are represented on Working/Steering groups for both schemes.

ARCHIVE SERVICES

ISLS continues to add new accessions to the archive and to receive a growing number of reader visits and research enquiries. A preservation management consultant has advised us on suggested improvements to the archive storage areas and these are being implemented where possible. Recently we purchased an automated management system, CALM2000 Plus for Archives, to improve access to the contents of the archives.

The archivist has continued in her role as deputy director of the AIM25 Project, funded by the Research Support Libraries Programme (RSLP) to provide networked access to descriptions of archives of more than 50 higher education institutions, royal colleges and learned societies in London. The database can be searched from the project's web site at www.aim25.ac.uk. University of Westminster data will be added later in 2001.

We have embarked on a records management pilot project from September 2001 under the direction of the archivist and a project steering group. The proposal to investigate the management of student records within the devolved structure was supported by the Trustees and a records manager, Charlotte Brunskill, has been appointed for two years. One campus and the central departments will be reviewed during the project and it is expected that issues such as legislative requirements, records storage, long-term preservation of digital records and retention schedules will all be explored.

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News from JISC (the UK higher education funding bodies' Joint Information Systems Committee)

The Resource Discovery Network (RDN) has launched a new service called RDN-include. This allows ResourceFinder, the RDN search engine, to be added free of charge to higher and further education institutions' websites.

The great value of this new service is that students and staff can now use the RDN search facilities and discover high-quality web resources while remaining within the familiar look-and-feel of their university or college's website. It also means that users can now access the resources provided by their own institution alongside those that are nationally-provided, such as the RDN's, adding value to both sets of resources.

Over the last few years the RDN has built up a strong reputation within further and higher education through the quality of its work in discovering, cataloguing and making available high-quality web resources for the benefit of learning and teaching. We currently give access to around 35,000 web resources all of which are hand-picked by subject specialists, quality-assured and freely available to all within further and higher education in the UK. Both research and the experience of many suggest that this service is needed more than ever as students and staff become more and more familiar with information technology and the internet and its uses to support their work.

RDN-include is important because it will bring the RDN and its services to educational institutions themselves, enabling users to access quality-assured resources within a familiar web environment. For example Manchester Metropolitan University currently use RDN-include on their institutional website and their staff and students have