

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND LIBRARY  
REPORT OF THE JAMES FORSYTH LIBRARIAN  
FOR THE YEAR 1953

1. GENERAL:

It may be remembered that in the annual report for 1952 it was suggested that the prospect for 1953 could be viewed 'optimistically in the light of what has been achieved in 1952'. Happily this optimism has been completely justified.

The two features of the work for 1952 which formed the basis for this prognostication; changing prices of books and increased flow of material into the library, have again characterised operations during 1953.

For the first time in many years it is possible to record a fall in the average price of new books taken into the library. In 1953 the Library paid, on the average, 36/- per book, as opposed to 39/- in 1952. As to the intake of new material, this showed an increase of more than 38% over the corresponding figure for 1952, the volume of new cataloguing increasing by 41% with, it will be noted, no increase in the cataloguing staff.

From the point of view of central processing it has been a particularly satisfactory year. Lost it should be thought however, that the solution has now been found to all our problems, I shall devote a large proportion of this report to certain less satisfactory features of which the major ones are: the rapid over-crowding of the Main Library building and the parallel situation in certain Departmental libraries, the rate of ordering by Departments and the lack of any effective follow-up system for outstanding orders.

2. STAFF:

Quite a number of alterations to staff were recorded during the year. Miss A. Meyers, B.A. resigned from the cataloguing staff to travel abroad, her place being taken by Miss B. McDougall, B.A., former librarian of the Fryer Memorial Library of Australian Literature. Mr. John R. Hanscomb, B.Sc., officer in charge of Orders and Accessions, resigned to take a post in the Physics Department, his place being filled by Mr. B. Scott, formerly officer in charge of Periodicals and Exchange. The latter vacancy was filled by the appointment of Mr. C.T. Fleak, B.A. Mrs. Woodforde (née Griffin) resigned as from 31st December 1952, her place being filled by Miss A. Thatcher. Miss A. Muir resigned to be married and was replaced by Miss J. Doig.

During the year, as a result of a submission made to the Senate Committee on staffing and ancillaries, two further positions were created and filled, respectively, by Miss R. Gracie, Library Assistant, and Peter James, Junior Library Assistant. Mr. James subsequently resigned to continue his studies full-time and Mr. B. Barbour was appointed in a temporary capacity, pending a permanent replacement after the Public Examinations.

Miss Gracie transferred later in the year to become Library Assistant in charge of the Chemistry and Geology libraries her place being taken by Miss J. McLeod. Miss McLeod later resigned to return to Tasmania and was replaced by Miss S. Mansfield.

2. STAFF (cont'd):

Miss F. Sinclair, curator of the Darnell Fine Arts Collection, who as noted in last year's report, was attached part-time to the Main Library, was transferred, as detailed below to the Department of Architecture.

In the Departmental Libraries, Miss J. Symes, B.A., resigned from the Agriculture, Entomology and Botany Libraries and was replaced by Miss V. Hall. During the year, the Senate approved a re-staffing of the Geology, Chemistry and Architecture Libraries, whereby Miss F. Sinclair, Curator of the Darnell Fine Arts Collection, became attached full-time to the Department of Architecture and Miss R. Gracie of the Main Library Staff was appointed, as noted above, to supervise both the Chemistry and Geology Libraries.

Miss N. Merigan, B.A. resigned from the Veterinary Science Library and was replaced by Miss S. Windom, B.Sc. The Medical School Library staff was changed by the resignation of Miss M. Blakeway and the appointment of Miss J. Briggs, B.A. Miss J. Siddons B.A., librarian of the Thomas Thatcher Memorial Library, resigned to travel abroad and was replaced by Miss B. Truesdale.

During the year the Library Committee investigated the staffing of Departmental Libraries with particular reference to the vacancy then existing in the Veterinary Science Library and decided that the question of the appointment of graduates in preference to non-graduates to such positions must be determined on the merits of each case as it occurred. It confirmed the appointment of graduates to the Medical School, the Agriculture, Entomology and Botany Libraries, the Engineering Library and the Veterinary Science Library. A strong recommendation was also included, however, that the attainment, within two years of first taking up duty, of the Preliminary Certificate of the Library Association of Australia be required for confirmation of such appointments in the future of graduates without previous library experience. It was agreed also that all such appointees be attached to the Main Library for a preliminary period of training.

In the course of the year the Vice-Chancellor determined that, taking the whole University Library into consideration, administrative expenses had now reached a point where they were equivalent to the sums expended on library materials. At his request, accordingly, the Library Committee appointed a sub-committee to consider the raison d'être of each of the Departmental Libraries.

I must make special mention again of the continuing success of the staff in gaining professional qualification by examination. Miss J. Oakeley, B.A., completed in one year the full requirements of the Qualifying Examination conducted by the Library Association of Australia, gaining merits in two papers and Miss A. Meyer's completed the remaining units she required for this examination.

3. CENTRAL PROCESSING:

The major development of 1953 took place in this sphere. It was two-fold. In the first place, the appointment of an extra Junior Library Assistant enabled the institution of full pre-catalogue checking. There are two main advantages in

3. CENTRAL PROCESSING (cont'd)

this. Firstly, it eliminates largely the possibility of book orders being forwarded by the University Bookshop to incorrect publishers and so makes deliveries speedier and more certain. Secondly, it relieves the cataloguing staff of a considerable amount of routine checking, both for multiple copies and for full bibliographic detail.

In the second place, the appointment of a Junior Library Attendant rendered possible finally the introduction of a routine of card-duplication. This again has a two-fold advantage. Firstly, it reduces by at least 50% the work of the typing staff. Secondly, it makes it possible to distribute catalogue cards much more generously and so keep Departments more closely in touch with the growth of the library. The actual details of the duplication routine, including the modification of existing stationery and equipment are unique in Australia and probably in the world. As such they were outlined in an article by myself in the Australian Library Journal (Aust. Lib. J., Vol. 2, No. 5, p.61.) which attracted considerable attention and correspondence.

I cannot emphasize too strongly that these two major improvements, especially the latter, have cut effectively the Gordian knot of centralised book processing in your Library and have been responsible, in the first year of operation alone, for a saving by the University of several hundred pounds.

During this year also a modified system of ledger keeping was introduced which enabled the elimination of two further processes in the order and accession routine.

In line with the policy of eliminating costly decentralised processing, the Main Library assumed responsibility during 1953 for ordering, accessioning and cataloguing stock for the Thatcher Memorial Library. This has allowed the Thatcher Library staff to concentrate on those problems of stock circulation and reader use which are their particular responsibility.

4. DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARIES:

In 1953, as well as continuing to attend to Departmental Libraries through central processing and through the detaching of Main Library Staff to assist and replace Departmental officers during annual leave, pending new appointments and for other reasons, an all-out attempt was made to complete the re-organisation of a major Departmental library, Engineering.

This task was undertaken not only because of the pressing need of the library concerned but also as a species of pilot project to establish whether the major task of re-classification and back subject cataloguing could be undertaken with existing staff.

It cannot be claimed that more than about 50% success was achieved. By dint of detaching two of the four cataloguers it was possible almost completely to re-classify the Engineering library, removing past inconsistencies and co-operating with the Faculty in interpreting the classification schedules as favourably as possible to their interests. It was not possible, however, even to start on the other section of the project, namely, applying subject cataloguing to the books received before this aspect of central processing was introduced in mid-1951.

4. DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARIES: (cont'd)

Well before the re-classification, with its consequent re-lettering and re-shelving of books, was completed it was found necessary to detach a third cataloguer to Veterinary Science and the single cataloguer left at the Main Library, with such sporadic help as could be given by the Librarian, was faced with cataloguing a back-log of over 1,000 new books. In the process of clearing these priority was given to Departmental orders and, as a result, some hundreds of books for the Main Library remained uncatalogued for months.

It appears clear that to cope in any way adequately with current accessions no Departmental project can be undertaken which reduces the present cataloguing staff by more than one at a time. The position then which has to be faced is that it will be impossible to cover subject processing of older material without increasing the cataloguing staff. In round figures this means that there are some 100,000 volumes in the Library to which there can be no adequate subject approach unless some extra cataloguers are appointed.

It is fair to state that there is still considerable discussion in the Library profession over the need for full subject cataloguing of older material, but there seems to be good reason for extending it to cover at least material published in the last twenty years. Even this reduced category would involve no less than 45,000 volumes needing practically complete processing; or, work equivalent to 15 full cataloguer years.

5. THE MAIN LIBRARY BUILDING:

Since the presentation of the previous annual report nothing whatever has been achieved in alleviation of the space problem in the Main Library Building.

In last year's report it was pointed out that three years expansion was the absolute maximum remaining in the bookstack. Twelve months later I must report that this was a dangerous piece of optimism. There is every reason to fear that by the end of this year every available shelf will be jammed tight.

Two factors again have contributed to this. First, the agreement to house the Fryer Memorial Library of Australian Literature involving a sacrifice of over 800 square feet of floor space. Second, the increased intake of material and the anticipated acceleration in it due to increased funds, particularly for the modern languages.

In 1953, 4812 new books were shelved in the open access stack, 302 bound volumes of periodicals in the Periodical Room and over 2,500 of bound and unbound periodicals into the reserve bookstack. This amounts to nearly 800 linear feet of shelving or more than 260 shelves, 160 of them in the open access stack alone. In this area, the open access stack, there are, at time of writing, only 127 empty shelves to accommodate new accessions. Even this space was made available only by rigorous "weeding out" of the English Literature section which resulted in completely occupying the portion of the reserve bookstack available for books.

5. THE MAIN LIBRARY BUILDING: (cont'd)

Nor, as has been emphasized before, is this the full extent of the danger, which already has resulted in the stacking of two thousand volumes on the floor. It has also caused the cessation of central storage of material from Departmental libraries.

The central storage function of the Main Library is quite vital to the economy of the whole library structure. Obviously it is impracticable to attempt to provide infinite expansion at thirty-eight separate points and yet this is what is involved if one central storage area cannot relieve the Departmental libraries from time to time of their lesser-used stock.

All in all, the accommodation situation well merits that rather over-worked term desperate. I would like to recommend, in the strongest terms, that the construction authority be asked to allot an immediate priority to the provision of a mezzanine bookstack over the existing steel shelving in the open access stack.

6. BOOK DELIVERIES:

The introduction of full pre-catalogue checking must have immensely simplified the task of the University Bookshop in obtaining books on library orders. It seems therefore that the time is ripe for considering whether that organisation might not provide a follow-up service for outstanding orders. The Library is prepared immediately to commence reminding the bookshop of orders which have failed to arrive within a reasonable period. It is not prepared to do so unless there is some guarantee that the Bookshop will, in fact, take action on any such reminders.

I emphasize this point of the non-following-up of orders since it is the last remaining defect in our co-operation. The introduction of simplified order forms and the final negotiation of a mutually satisfactory agreement on prices have improved Library-Bookshop relations to a point of some considerable efficiency. But the Library will continue to attract criticism so long as this dead weight of unfulfilled orders remains. Merely to pass the blame onto the Bookshop is a negative and unsatisfactory solution; the position must be faced, I feel, that it is the unanimous and legitimate opinion of the Library's patrons that it is an essential part of its function to check overdue orders and that in the present circumstances this cannot be done. It is the Library's opinion that the Bookshop should provide its share of the facilities for this, even if it entails a reduction in its profits due to the appointment of extra staff.

7. THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA:

The Library has continued to associate with this body. During 1953 the Librarian was honoured to act as President of the Queensland Branch and to attend, as proxy councillor, the Annual Meeting of the Federal Council of the Association held in Sydney. At this meeting, in recognition of the growing importance of this State in Library matters, he was appointed editor of the Australian Library Journal.

7. THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA: (cont'd)

Opportunity was taken, at this meeting, of holding an informal gathering of University Librarians from all states of the Commonwealth, at which the suggestion was made and supported unanimously that the appropriate authorities be approached with a view to convening a formal conference to discuss matters of mutual concern.

8. THE LIBRARY VOTE:

Following the report for 1952 I have appended hereto an analysis on a subject basis of new book accessions during the year. It is clear that there are still considerable areas of knowledge receiving inadequate representation in our collection.

It is necessary to sound a note of warning in relation to the placing of orders against the Library vote. Year by year the Senate has been increasing the financial provision made for library services. Whether or not the present provision is adequate on an absolute basis it must be conceded that it is immensely more generous than it was five years ago. It is abundantly clear that there is no difficulty in selecting sufficient books for purchase to more than cover the vote, but orders for these books must, in fairness, be placed early enough in the year to allow a reasonable chance of their being satisfied and paid for during the current year.

Unfortunately it has been the case and was so especially in the year under review that far too great a proportion of orders was lodged too late in the year for this to be possible. The financial authorities can not be blamed for suspecting that some at least of this "last-minute" ordering is prompted by a determination to cover the allotted vote at all costs and perhaps without any careful consideration of the value of the books so ordered. Particularly, the Accountant can not be criticised unduly for being loth to inflate his budget by having to carry forward substantial sums to cover unfilled orders.

It is true that a number of factors conspire to make early ordering difficult but some of them are more apparent than real. It is, for instance, quite legitimate for Departments to commence ordering well before the final vote for the year is made public, providing they do not exceed, up to that time, a reasonable proportion of the previous years vote.

Certainly it is exceedingly frustrating to find Departments as late as the end of November still with substantial unallotted balances and to know, at the same time, that other Departments are impatiently awaiting the availability of the following years vote to purchase urgently needed material.

It has even been suggested quite seriously that after a certain point in the year, any unreasonably large credit balances might be transferred automatically to the discretion of the Librarian for the purchasing of readily available and urgently-needed material for other Departments. The Committee may care to consider this proposition.

9. BINDING:

The binding position remains unsatisfactory. During the year the sub-committee connected with this matter was active and, with the backing of the Library Committee, made certain tentative proposals which, it was hoped, might culminate in the establishment of a Library Bindery. The particular binder in question was not prepared, however, to consider an offer to join the staff but suggested instead, as a counter-proposal, binding a certain quota per year at a reduced rate. The sub-committee recommended this offer be accepted, but, on the Vice-Chancellor's instructions, the matter was deferred to allow old established firms the opportunity of considering competition on the same basis. The general result has been that practically all binding firms have agreed to reductions in price the general effect of which will be fairly considerable during 1954.

On the question of establishing a bindery, the sub-committee is being increasingly drawn to the conclusion that at any rate as a start, the Committee should think in terms of providing a bindery sufficiently large to cope with those aspects of binding which are at present completely neglected, principally book repairs and that, at least for the present, the binding of periodical volumes be left to commercial binders.

There still seems to be at least some chance of effecting economies by checking the binding of multiple copies and by encouraging the use of cheaper binding methods for less used material.

10. STATISTICS:

(i) Summary of Expenditure on Library Vote:

1952		1953	
£	£	£	£
		<u>Payments for the year</u>	
		<u>were:-</u>	
8088		Books	8280
4720		Periodicals	5347
3251		Binding	2479
<u>542</u>		Sundries	<u>931</u>
16601		<u>Total Payments</u>	17037
		<u>Against which receipts</u>	
		<u>were:-</u>	
	<u>16743</u>	Library Vote	<u>18793</u>
		<u>Resulting in a credit</u>	
	142	<u>balance of: -</u>	1756

10. STATISTICS: (cont'd)

(ii) Accessions

1952			1953	
<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>		<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
4095		Books	5266	
<u>643</u>		Purchased	<u>1416</u>	
	4738	Donated		6682
		Total		
		Periodicals (bound vols. only)		
1466		Purchases	1974	
<u>1124</u>		Donated	<u>615</u>	
	2590	Total		2589
	7328	Total (all items)		9271
	<u>1561</u>	Loss, withdrawn		<u>103*</u>
	<u>5767</u>	Net Increase		<u>9374</u>

\* NOTE: Old stock discovered in Departmental libraries more than balanced withdrawals.

(iii) Total Bookstock

<u>31.12.52</u>	<u>31.12.53</u>
108,141	117,515

(iv) Staff

1952			1953	
1		Librarian	1	
1		Assistant Librarian	1	
		Main Library		
		Senior Library Assistants		
4		Cataloguers	4	
1		Orders and Accessions officer	1	
1		Periodicals and Exchange officer	1	
4		Library Assistants	2	
-		Junior Lib. Assistants	3	
-		Junior Library Attendant	1	
	12	Total		14
		Departmental Libraries		
-		Senior Library Assistants	2	
3		Library Assistants	3	
1		Junior Library Assistants	1	
	<u>4</u>	Total		<u>5</u>
	16	TOTAL STAFF		19

NOTE: In addition, thirteen further Departmental libraries and seven other service points are supervised by Departmental staff, full or part-time.



10. STATISTICS: (cont'd)(v) Subject analysis of accessions (Books only)

D.C. Class	Subject	Purchases		Donations	
		1952	1953	1952	1953
000-099	Generalia	91	93	15	9
100-129)	Philosophy	66	110	26	26
160-199)					
130-159	Psychology	104	84	7	8
200-299	Religion	43	133	10	29
300-329	Sociology				
	Pol. Science	138	159	13	37
330-339	Economics	278	353	20	48
340-349	Law	146	178	42	68
350-369	Administration				
	and Welfare	30	60	4	15
370-379	Education	339	243	11	36
380-399	Commerce &				
	Folklore	19	20	5	3
400-499	Language	97	134	4	26
500-509	Gen. Science	41	52	8	8
510-519	Mathematics	38	57	2	3
520-539	Astronomy &				
	Physics	87	117	15	9
540-549	Chemistry	121	87	8	7
550-569	Geology and				
	Paleontology	103	97	21	13
570-579	Biology	135	93	11	5
580-589	Botany	60	77	13	9
590-599	Zoology	79	79	26	15
600-609	Gen. Appl.				
	Sciences	8	1	-	-
610-619	Med. Science	242	308	45	55
620-629	Engineering	216	201	20	8
630-639	Agriculture	121	139	15	23
640-699	Home Economics				
	Business Chem.				
	Tech.	212	221	15	22
700-799	Fine Arts (inc.				
	Architecture)	152	176	18	52
800-819	Gen. Literature				
	Amer. Lit.	54	80	4	53
820-829	English Lit.	400	785	67	401
830-839	German Lit.	18	100	4	43
840-849	French Lit.	36	104	7	51
850-869	Italian Lit.				
	Spanish Lit.	7	5	4	9
870-889	Latin Lit.				
	Greek Lit.	79	85	3	12
890-899	Other Lit.	7	22	1	12
900-909	Gen. History	23	27	13	6
910-919	Geography	104	76	15	22
920-929	Gen. Biography	17	4	2	3
930-939	Ancient Hist.	33	47	11	5
940-999	Modern Hist.	276	520	119	228
	Darnell Pacific				
	Collection	74	138	4	37
	Darnell Art	1	1	14	-
TOTAL		4095	5265	643	1415