

Library Consultative Group

Notes of the 84th meeting held on Wednesday, 19 February 1997

- Present: Dr. T. Arvanitis (COGS), K. Berggreen (Bookshop), Ms. Liz Cooper (SPRU), R. Discombe (Computing Service), Ms. Rilka Dragneva (SEI), Ms. M. Duru (AFRAS SJC), Ms. B. Merchant (SPRU), Ms. S. Hinchliffe (CCE), Dr. L. Martell (SOCS), Mrs. R. McGoldrick, (CCS SJC), Mrs. L. Newman (Library), Mrs. L. Nicholls, (Library), A.N. Peasgood (Librarian), Ms. D. Sheridan (Library), Dr. F. Watts (BIOLS)
- Apologies: Prof. B. Graham (EURO), Ms. L. Dart (USIE), Ms. C. Culver (Students' Union), Dr. M. Howard (CCS), Dr. L. John (BIOLS), Dr. J. Rusted (EP/BIOLS), Prof. C. Watts (EAM), Dr. G. Wraith (SMS)

648. The notes of the 83rd meeting were confirmed.

649. There were no matters arising.

650. Library Annual Report 1995/96 was received without comment.

651. [The Librarian's Report](#), November 1996-February 1997, was noted.

Refurbishment. The Librarian emphasised the report of delay in refurbishment of Library Stages 1-3 possibly resulting in work continuing into the autumn term, and the difficult choices to be made in keeping the project within budget.

Periodicals Site Licence Initiative. The letter to Deans mentioned in the Librarian's report would be sent shortly. Recently one of the participating publishers gave notice that it would withdraw at the end of the pilot period.

Copyright. The Copyright Licensing Agency has recently extended the terms of the present Licence to 31 July, also allowing enlargement of copies for people with poor vision without additional charge or payment. This new clause was welcomed and appropriate specialists within the Library had been fully briefed as to the detail.

21st Century Task Force. The Librarian, responding to a request for amplification of the circulated report, said that in comments on the recommendations of the Task Force it had been pointed out that, on the whole, it would not be a good strategy for the University to set out to attract more 'traditional academic applicants' despite the fact that it spends significantly more on its library service than the national average; those applicants would be more likely to establish that there are few other libraries of academic importance in the vicinity whereas likely competitor universities have wider ranges of good library support nearby. He had also pointed out that while the organisation of the Library at present does not make its use straightforward, the planned rearrangement in the extension and refurbishment would enable less academic users to be well served in one straightforward area. Finally, he had pointed out that more of the student body would be likely to need support of various kinds in use of the Library than the 'traditional academic' element. This importance of "User Education" explained its featuring in future business for the next meeting of this group.

652. Pushchairs in the Library

This matter was brought to the Consultative Group by Ruth McGoldrick, who had written to the Librarian (LCG/84/6) complaining about the inaccessibility of the Library for women with children in pushchairs; they were refused entry by way of the entrance for disabled users; she felt that they (and disabled students) could be issued with a swipe card to gain entry at that door. It was difficult, or impossible, to carry a heavy child up the main steps or to function properly once in the Library while holding a baby; moreover it was possible that a pushchair left unattended outside would be stolen while the owner was in the Library. She felt that the present policy discriminated against women attending university, since more women than men have care of babies and small children. Their numbers would increase due to unemployment; they

should enjoy equal rights of access to the Library and to the books needed to complete their degree. She understood the University had an Equal Opportunities policy; it was unreasonable to attract women with children to the University and not make sufficient provision for them; inadequate child care facilities were another example of this.

The Librarian told the Group that he had discussed this item with PVC Streeter as this was not just a Library matter, but campus-wide. PVC Streeter agreed that it was a complex subject and asked for a full report on points made in this discussion. He noted that the Library regulations allowed children to enter the building; many libraries do not and he asked whether the Library, like some of the Science buildings, should not allow access by children.

In the following discussion it was noted:

Issuing swipe cards to the door for wheelchair and pushchair users was not an acceptable solution because this door was not covered by the security system. If the security system was extended there, it would need to be staffed full-time, further increasing costs.

On the issue of principle as to whether children should be allowed into the Library, there were arguments for children being excluded, but if the principle is accepted that children should be allowed, steps should be taken to ensure this is implemented without discrimination.

There is a problem of insufficient child care facilities at the University. Most library users would prefer to use convenient and affordable facilities rather than bring babies and children to the Library with them.

Parents bringing children to the Library should exercise control; some children do cause noise and disruption but a suggestion that parents should be fined if their children were disruptive would be difficult to administer as it would be a matter of personal *opinion* as to whether a child was behaving or not. Maybe students should be able to bring children into the Library building to take or return books but not spend time in study areas.

Tutors present were asked whether they allowed children in classes and whether, where there was a school-wide policy not to allow children, parents were able to make alternative arrangements, or whether the policy depressed admissions to the school. It was reported that Biology (the only Science school with a faculty representative at the meeting) did not allow children but their lectures are mixed with practical sessions; students with children do have difficulties and some have left. Arts faculty present had all allowed children to their lectures at some time and had mixed feelings; some had asked students to leave because their children were being disruptive and one felt unable to refuse permission for a child to be present at a teaching session, knowing that in excluding the child the parent would be excluded also.

Issues relating to Library access would be added to a report being prepared on disabled access from Euro to PVC Streeter.

653 Enquiries

Dorothy Sheridan, Chair of the Library Task Force on Enquiries, described their work in planning for a revamped Library service when the extension and refurbishment of the Library is complete. Two enquiry points were envisaged, one on the ground floor offering some of the services at present provided by Library Porters, the General Enquiries Desk and Reader Services, and one on the first floor, at the top of the present main stairs, offering fuller, in depth service: advanced search enquiries, a comprehensive reference service (Quick Reference and Class Z stocks will be moved there), and a range of electronic services. The Group were asked for their views on the present and proposed service. It was felt that the presented restricted hours at the GED were not a problem given that some enquiries out of hours could be dealt with at Loan Enquiries instead. Concern was expressed that the new services would generate noise and disturbance on the first floor, but it was explained that this had been taken into consideration when planning the extended Library. All service points on the ground and first floor levels would be on the south side of an East/West dividing route while the area to the north of it will be for book stacks and reading space.

654 Queuing to return books.

This item was deferred to the Summer term meeting as its promoter had had to leave before it was reached.

655 Defacement of stock

Recent contributions to the Library Suggestions Book showed substantial concern and awareness of this problem, which was world-wide and part of the modern learning culture which accepts note making in books. Linda Newman, Head of Reader Services, described Library efforts to deter defacement and to detect culprits. Action would be taken against readers who could be proved to have defaced a book; if the defacement could not be removed the reader would be charged with the cost of replacement of the book plus a processing charge for doing so. Publicity was felt to be the only weapon and in addition to new notices recently placed at Loan Enquiries, a bookmark would soon be distributed reminding readers not to deface Library books.

This subject could be included in the remit of the Library Standing Committee on User Education, whose work would be the subject of an item on the agenda of the next meeting.

656 Any other business.

Short Loan books could not be renewed, even if the catalogue indicated that another copy was on the shelf, because

- staff at the Book Borrowing and Returns counter, already under considerable pressure, would have to use additional computer screens to access the data needed;
- there would be no guarantee that the other copy or copies would be on the shelf - they could well be in use in the building;