

University of Sussex
Library Consultative Group

Notes of the 96th meeting held on Wednesday, 21 February, 2001

- Present:** Stephen Ashby (CCS SJC), Kristian Berggreen (Bookshop), Dr Jane Cowan (CCS), Roger Discombe (Computing Service), Zaki El-Salahi (AFRAS SJC), Farini Fazil (AFRAS SJC), Maggie Fieldhouse (Sub-Librarian), , Sara Hinchliffe (CCE), Barbara Merchant (SPRU), Professor Robin Milner-Gulland (EURO), Linda Newman, (Sub-Librarian), Jo Rees-Davies (Library), Dr. Gareth Rowlands (CPES), Rene Schilling (Maths), Dorothy Sheridan (Library - Head, Special Collections), Deborah Shorley (Librarian (Chair)), Professor Cedric Watts (EAM), Paul Yates (USIE), Robert Young (EIT)
- Apologies:** Dr. J. Bridgeman (SLS), Dr. Denise de Caires Narain (AFRAS), Andrew Harvey (GRC (HUMS)), Dr. Luke Martell (SCS)

743. The notes of the 95th meeting were confirmed.

744. Matters arising.

735. The Group was reminded that following the review and referendum on Short Loan borrowing periods last year, the Short Loan borrowing period for the Easter and Summer vacations this year will be two weeks. Normal fines will be charged and, as usual, loans will not be renewable. Library users' views will taken into consideration when the situation is again reviewed for next year.

740. Librarian's report. With regard to subject budgets, the Librarian confirmed that her previous report was correct but she had still to make a decision and would preserve the status quo for the moment.

741. Lewes flood. The Group received agenda paper LCG/96/3b reporting considerable but slow progress. Library services were largely unaffected but special arrangements continue for those readers reporting problems.

The insurance company were granting special funds for time spent on dealing with the loss of materials including payment of temporary staff, but not for preparing the claim. It was estimated that preparation of the claim would take six months but a date for final settlement of the claim (hopefully a one-off) was not known.

A sample of restored material from the Chester Music Collection was being brought to the Library for inspection in a few days.

The Librarian would be giving a presentation to the Blue Shield Initiative at the British Library. The Blue Shield Initiative is a new organisation which aims to offer expert advice and support to other libraries which have undergone disasters when required.

742. The shape of the academic year. No change now likely.

745. Library Annual Report 1999/2000 was received.

Noted in particular the drop in building occupancy which reflected a general trend in the UK. (However, so far this year records of building occupancy on sample days showed an increase.)

Noted a request for more financial information in the next annual report (e.g. breakdown of spending between text books/research monographs), also a short executive summary.

746. Update on Librarian's Report of November 2000.

The structural review of the Library had been taking up much of the Librarian's time. Input from members of this Group addressed to her either personally or by Email would be welcomed.

747. Withdrawal of Library Suggestions Book. Library staff felt the Suggestions Book attracted comment rather than suggestions and did not fulfill its purpose. The on-line suggestions version drew more serious comment but was not always the most convenient method. So next term a Suggestions Box would be introduced giving users more opportunity to make comments instantly.

748. Managed Learning Environments. Maggie Fieldhouse, Sub-Librarian gave a presentation. This was an initiative of the IT Advisory Group aimed at the year 2003/4. It was not only a common interface to on-line information and services to support learning and teaching but would provide uniform access to multiple resources. Support units are involved in discussions with the Administration Computing Service, and the University will be encouraged to see this as the way forward with the Library having an important role to play. It would be important to receive support at the highest level.

749. Special Collections: increased opening hours. The Special Collections Section had brought together three Library sections: Manuscripts, Mass-Observation Archive and Rare Books as well as the embryonic collection of the University's own archives. This term opening hours of the Section had increased from three days a week to four. As a result the Section received more researchers, some visiting the section for periods from a day to several months; others were in communication via the website from all over the world.

750. Points raised by the AFRAS Student Joint Committee:

- Books to students ratio. Noted that this University Library provides far more books per student than other comparable UK university libraries. The problem of users not finding available material might be improved by (1) better user education (2) peer pressure on fellow students to return periodicals to their proper place, (3) prompter reshelving by Library staff, particularly of periodicals. Readers should be encouraged to enquire when unable to find a book or journal.
- Improved user education (of faculty as well as students), regarding reading lists and essential reading would help improve use of Library collections. Library staff were also keen that the Library have a role in curriculum planning.

There had been particular problems with reading lists related to the new computer system. Reading lists were requested last June but many were not received and work is now underway to deal with the backlog.

- Proposal for Book Funds. Settlement of the insurance claim following the Lewes flood would be used to replace the knowledge lost, not necessarily in the form of books and journals, although specific titles which had been lost and were still needed would be replaced if possible. The Library was determined to ensure it received the full settlement.
- Reshelving. This topic had been covered elsewhere.
- Staffing. The Library had been unsuccessful in recruiting students to shelve books. In any case, students were no less expensive to employ and the Library could not offer the flexibility in working hours they frequently needed.
- Lavatories. The appalling condition of the public lavatories in the Library was acknowledged. The Library would continue to lobby Building & Services Division. No action previously taken had been successful in preventing graffiti.

- Mobile phones. The Librarian asked for suggestions to stop people using mobile phones in the Library, especially in the silence zones. She reported that methods used in other libraries had not proved successful.

751. Any other business.

Stolen books. In response to a query the Group was told that the procedure for replacing stolen books was the same as that for any books reported missing from the shelves. After shelf checking and searching by Library staff steps could be taken to replace the missing item straight away if appropriate, although if there were multiple copies of the item the search might be delayed until vacation time.

Sponsorship. The Alumni Fund had provided a substantial amount of money and book plates appear in books paid for in this way. The Library had also applied for grants for specific work, e.g. The Mass-Observation Archive had received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.