

## **Twenty-ninth Annual Report and Accounts 2001-02**

Our Role

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## **Our role is to help people discover knowledge**

The British Library's collections are unique in their breadth, depth, and quality. Our role is to help people discover the knowledge contained in our collections, and to enable that knowledge to be used both now and in the future. We believe the British Library can make a difference to people's lives - enhancing and enriching them in so many different ways:

- through the pursuit of world-class scholarship and research
- by supporting academic excellence
- by aiding scientific advances
- by adding commercial value for businesses
- through the stimulation of ideas and creative expression
- by deepening the community's sense of history
- through increasing the nation's cultural well-being

We shall continue to be innovative in the ways we exploit our collections as a resource for the nation and the world. We are proud of our mission.

## **Key facts**

- We deliver a wider range of services than any other library in the world
- The British Library is the UK's national library and our services are used by every university and public library authority in the country
- As a major international research library, we serve users from 180 countries
- We receive Government funding and also earn £28 million annually, 40% of which is from overseas trade
- Our Document Supply Centre specialises in scientific, business and medical information and supplies over 3 million items EACH YEAR DIRECT to PEOPLE IN THEIR workplace
- The Library is used by 91% of the UK's top 100 R&D companies
- 75% of all new commercial registrations are small and medium sized businesses
- Over 400,000 visits are made each year to OUR reading rooms, and over 3 million scientific and 2 million humanities items are consulted
- Our online catalogues give access to 36 million items and 6.9 million searches were made last year
- 2.6 million items were acquired last year
- 44 metres of publications arrive at the Library every working day and the collection now fills 594 kms of shelving

## **Chairman's Introduction**

This is my first year as Chairman of the British Library Board. It has been a revelation. I had viewed the Library as a great memory bank, with a heritage collection attracting scholars from across the globe. Now I know that is only half the picture. The Library makes an enormous contribution to research in science, technology and medicine, helping sustain Britain's reputation for discovery and innovation.

The Library is not only a vital component of the academic research infrastructure, it also provides an important service to top UK industrial concerns and smaller businesses in the enterprise sector. Thousands of laboratories and research and development units rely on the British Library to provide the critical international research information that drives their business.

The Library is also a marvellous resource for enrichment and learning. Our superb building at St Pancras, an oasis on the busy Euston Road, draws an ever-wider public to exhibitions and special displays of contemporary interest. Our website has developed significantly in the past year; new features for schools include Voices of the Holocaust, a moving record of the testimony of survivors.

The Library exists to promote deeper understanding and stimulate the building of knowledge in each succeeding generation: widening our impact by digital means is a crucial part of our mission.

Electronic and web-based materials are becoming increasingly important. For the Library to remain relevant in the digital age we need to capture this material for the benefit of future generations. Meantime rumours of the death of the book have been greatly exaggerated; our collections are the 'beating heart' of the Library and continue to grow at 11km per annum. My concern is to ensure that we obtain the necessary investment in infrastructure that will sustain the collections, and enable them to be used (via media ancient and modern) by everyone who can benefit from them.

Ready access to knowledge is a critical component of the informed, inclusive and innovative society. The British Library is a world-class resource at the heart of the UK library network. We are forging effective partnerships that will help us to bring the world's intellectual, scientific and cultural heritage into homes, offices, schools and colleges throughout the country.

The Government recognises the unique role that the Library plays in the modern information society, and we were delighted that the Prime Minister and three Ministers of State were able to visit the Library during the past year to see our work at first hand. Thousands of people use the Library every day: this Annual Report shows some of the practical outcomes of their work, and demonstrates how our input achieves so much impact. The Prime Minister described today's Library as a 'beacon of excellence'. I am determined that the British Library will remain worthy of that description.

Lord Eatwell  
Chairman

## **Chief Executive's Summary of the Year**

A feature of the year under review was the major public consultation we undertook in conjunction with the publication of New Strategic Directions. This was an extremely positive exercise that attracted a high level of response - evidence of the great interest that our users and stakeholders have in their national library and of its importance to them. Of those who

expressed a definite view, 93% were positively supportive of our strategy. Our intention to ensure improved coverage of the published output of the UK in the National Published Archive was strongly endorsed. Respondents urged us to develop our collections of digital material and to archive significant UK websites. Widespread support was expressed for our proposal to improve and broaden access to the collection by developing our online catalogues and digitising significant material.

[Six major priorities](#) are now guiding our planning into the medium term. In last year's report I also announced a new organisational structure designed to make the Library more open to outside influences and more responsive to the needs of our users and stakeholders. By the middle of this year, the Library's new Executive Team was in place. We have undertaken fundamental reviews of many of the Library's activities to assess their effectiveness and capacity to deliver on our strategic priorities. We have now completed the restructuring of the Library's second tier of management; the result is a powerful blend of the Library's existing expertise and new skills from the wider library community, complemented by an injection of key specialisms from sectors beyond the library world.

We are pursuing a fundamental programme of change. Our aim is to modernise the British Library to deliver better and more responsive services. It will be apparent that the degree of upheaval resulting from the structural and strategic changes has had an impact on some of our service and performance levels during the year. This is a transitional consequence of the steps we are taking to improve delivery in the longer term. However, the core work of the Library - serving our users and maintaining our collections - has continued.

From the survey of achievements set out in this Report, I should like to underline two particular highlights of the year. The strength of a great research library derives from the richness of its collection and I am pleased to report significant acquisitions this year, including the theatrical archives of Sir Ralph Richardson and Sir John Gielgud, which join the papers of Sir Laurence Olivier in the national collection. Also, in this the 40th anniversary year of the Library's Document Supply Centre, the receipt of the 100 millionth request provided a timely reminder of the continuing importance of the Library in underpinning the wider network of UK libraries.

The Library directly serves the thousands who use our services each year by supporting them in their research and learning; but millions more in turn benefit from the value we bring, often without their realising it. The Case Studies that appear throughout this Report provide cogent illustration of the Library's contribution.

We recognise that successful partnerships enable organisations to achieve more by working together than they could do on their own. During the year we have developed important strategic alliances with both the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Arts and Humanities Research Board. These reflect our common purpose in ensuring the research excellence and international competitiveness of the UK. Sir Howard Newby, Chief Executive of HEFCE, said: 'At the Funding Council we regard the work of the British Library as an absolutely key and crucial resource for Higher Education and Further Education now and even more so in the future.'

We are also working with the Society of Chief Librarians, with a view to engaging more closely with the public libraries to bring our collections and services to a much wider audience. Crucially, our bid to the National Lottery New Opportunities Fund to develop digital content for multiple audiences was successful. Our project, In Place, is now under way

and will deliver up to 100,000 pictures, maps, sounds and texts of both regional and national interest.

Our achievements were recognised by the Prime Minister when he visited the Library in October 2001. He said the British Library was 'amongst the finest anywhere', and this accolade confirms that our contribution to national life is recognised by Government. Whilst our sponsoring body is the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, we serve the objectives of a range of Government Departments, including Education and Skills, Trade and Industry, and Health. Since our contribution tends to be made behind the scenes - underpinning medical breakthroughs, enabling pioneering product development, supporting world-class academic research - it was gratifying to hear the Library attract such explicit recognition.

The British Library is numbered among the finest libraries in the world. The challenge before us is how to sustain that position. The contribution and commitment of the Library's staff is crucial. The staff has responded positively to the major changes under way, but we still have some way to go before we will have in place the modern working practices and the flexible workforce we need going forward.

We must also respond to the new expectations of the Library, and rise to the opportunities offered by communications technology for opening up access to our collections and services. We have submitted a funding bid to the Government's Spending Review, the outcome of which will determine our financial circumstances to 2006. The bid seeks crucially to meet the cost of sustaining all that is best in our traditional functions: at risk is our widespread collecting of significant overseas publications for the benefit of UK research, and our storage and care of the National Published Archive, the 'memory of the nation'. But our submission also advances the case for innovation: to migrate our services to the online environment wherever appropriate, to extend our collections and preservation remit into the electronic domain, and to widen in innovative ways our services to new user communities.

Lynne Brindley  
Chief Executive

## **Shaping the Future: Our Strategic Priorities**

### **Developing and enhancing our catalogues**

The development of more web-based catalogues will be the primary means of opening up access to the collections. We will improve catalogue coverage and quality, and upgrade existing catalogues that contain records created before the establishment of modern bibliographic standards. We will also improve resource discovery, nationally and internationally, through collaboration.

### **Developing an integrated architecture for the hybrid library**

The term 'hybrid library' refers to the collection of material in print, electronic and other media we hold and give access to. The challenge associated with the hybrid library is to ensure that users can discover and use materials in different formats, from local and remote sources, in an integrated seamless way. We are developing an information systems' architecture for the hybrid library, based on accepted standards and protocols, that will ensure full interoperability between our major new developments and existing systems. This will enable us to streamline our internal operations and the way we connect with customers.

## **Improving collection access through digitisation**

Our priority is to develop a coherent digitisation strategy that will state our criteria for selection of content and will contain business models for digital capture and access. Significant projects are outlined elsewhere in this Report which indicate the scope of the digitisation programmes that the Library is beginning to take forward.

## **Improving the way users meet the Library**

Our goal is to make our services easier to use. As a first priority we are reviewing our principal points of contact in order to provide an integrated service. For example, we are setting up a single phone enquiry service to deal with incoming general queries swiftly and connect callers requiring specialist help directly to the appropriate person. We continue to develop our contact systems to make sure they meet users' expectations effectively.

## **Modernising our services**

We are transforming our services to improve their efficiency and ensure that they add value for our users. To do so, we continue to build our understanding of the needs of our different user communities in order to align services with what they want in terms of accessibility and integration. This will require us to reshape the services we offer so that we provide services that are responsive and adaptable as users' requirements develop.

## **Developing life-cycle collection management policies**

The context in which we are developing our collections and collection management is both national and international. We are taking a more integrated approach to our stewardship of the collections and considering all aspects of how material is brought into the Library, catalogued, shelved, retrieved for users and stored for the long-term. This will enable us to develop a better understanding of the interdependencies and costs of each stage of the life-cycle.

## **The Year's Headlines**

### [Connecting with research](#)

- 100 million requests in 40 years
- Elsevier Access
- Catalogue boost
- Retrospective conversion
- Doctors at the cutting edge

### [Working together](#)

- New alliances
- Peak Practice
- Music returns to its roots
- Maintaining standards

### [Reaching Our Public](#)

- The Lie of the Land
- Photo opportunity
- Website rewrite
- Schools on the map

### [Holding the past](#)

- A golden age of English theatre
- Unpublished George Eliot
- Ted Hughes' dreams

- Telling stories
- When will a machine win a Nobel Prize?

#### Digital highlights

- The Number One Book
- Mediaeval Baebes launch £15 million Missal
- Funding In Place
- Moving Here
- Beijing digitising

#### Collecting the present

- Japanese masterpieces donated
- Websites have an average life of just 44 days

#### Securing the future

- Voluntary e-deposit

## **Connecting with research**

### **100 million requests in 40 years**

The Library's Document Supply Centre in Yorkshire provides copies of scientific, technical and medical research material, mainly to Higher Education and business. This year it celebrated its 40th anniversary and the receipt of its 100 millionth order. Ian Leadley, who has worked at the Centre since 1964 and is now US Sales Manager, has seen great changes: 'The Centre was founded after Sputnik was launched and the UK Government became concerned that published material about the Russian space programme was not easily available to researchers in the UK. As the National Lending Library we loaned books and journals to universities - that was before photocopiers became commonplace. Once we became part of the British Library in 1973, the operation grew quickly, and we always made use of the latest technology - from punch cards to telex systems. Now an increasing amount of our material is sent electronically, and we have agreements with publishers to store their e-journals.'

### **Elsevier Access**

One major example of recent agreements is the partnership signed with Elsevier Science, the world's largest publisher of research journals. The agreement enables online access to over 1,000 Elsevier titles for users in our Reading Rooms as well as for use in our document supply services. Derk Haank, Chairman of Elsevier Science, welcomed the partnership, referring to the Library as 'a cornerstone in creating flexible and innovative ways to give the widest possible access to our scientific publications for librarians and researchers in the UK and across the world'.

### **Catalogue boost**

We are extending our online catalogues and have increased the rate of record creation for key areas of the collections. We also completed work on the Serial Title Register, which records in a single file the Library's serial holdings. Initially for the benefit of internal users, we intend to mount the Register online. This is a timely development since the Register will also

provide substantial input to the UK Serials Union Catalogue (SUNCAT) project, a collaboration with other key players in the UK library network.

## **Retrospective conversion**

We continued to improve our online catalogues by converting earlier catalogue formats to web-readable systems. 450,000 out-of-print specialist books were added to the catalogue this year, all of which are available for loan through the UK library system. These are a great resource for lifelong learners unable to get older research material from local sources.

## **Doctors at the cutting edge**

The National Electronic Library for Health, the NHS-supported online information service, now provides free access to the Library's Electronic Table of Contents (Zetoc™) database - the list of over 20 million major scientific and medical articles and conference reports published worldwide. New information is input daily, so healthcare professionals know that they're in touch with the latest knowledge.

## **Reaching Our Public**

### **The Lie of the Land**

The Library's major exhibition during the year showed how maps distorted reality, often for political purposes. Popular events ran in parallel with the exhibition, including our first simultaneous webcast. Stephen Dorril, an expert on the intelligence agencies, talked to the Map Librarian Peter Barber about Secret Lives, Secret Maps. Their discussion with the audience was filmed and transmitted online, allowing viewers to e-mail questions to the live debate.

### **Photo opportunity**

Superb images of India from the Library's collection of 19th century photographs were exhibited at the School of Oriental and African Studies to mark our publication of India: Pioneering Photographers. Coincidentally, the Library also acquired a rare copy of the first book to announce the invention of photography, Fox Talbot's Some Account of the Art of Photogenic Drawing, published in 1839.

### **Website rewrite**

[www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk) was successfully redesigned this year to provide clearer layout and features to enhance navigation. Better access for people with disabilities has proved a significant benefit. Use continues to grow, and the new site gives us an improved platform for launching further web-based services.

### **Schools on the map**

Historic maps to support evidence-based work in the National Curriculum History syllabus are explored on our website for schools. Mapping History provides structured investigations and activities to illuminate these primary sources for teachers and students.

## **Telling stories**

A collection of recordings by and about the House of Windsor was published on CD. Drawn from the National Sound Archive, The Royal Story features the voices of the family, coverage of great Royal events and the reminiscences of friends. The Library also published Stephen van Dulken's acclaimed *Inventing the 19th Century*, the top 100 innovations which transformed our lives, and the stories behind their success. From denim jeans to Tiddlywinks and the telephone, the Library's Patent Collection houses them all.

## **When will a machine win a Nobel Prize?**

The events programme at St Pancras continues to attract capacity crowds. Events Manager Colin Wight's personal favourite this year was *When will a machine win a Nobel Prize?* He said: 'The debate gave a fascinating insight into artificial intelligence and creativity. Tony Gilland from the Institute of Ideas, Igor Aleksander, author of *How to Build a Mind*, Baroness Susan Greenfield, Director of The Royal Institution and Professor Kjell Espmark, poet and Chair of the Swedish Academy's Nobel Committee, formed the panel. Susan Greenfield said it wouldn't be long before we'd be able to share each other's thoughts using implanted microchips. The audience suggested that machines would develop emotions, and the human brain was just another machine after all. So when would a machine win a Nobel Prize? "Probably never", said the poet, and the scientists agreed.'

## **Digital highlights**

### **The Number One book**

Caxton's printing of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the first book printed in England, is being digitised thanks to a team from Keio University in Tokyo. The Library holds first and second editions, the latter with lively woodcut illustrations, and both will be available online at [www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk). A copy of the first edition recently changed hands for over £4.5 million, the highest price ever paid for a printed book.

### **Mediaeval Baebes launch £15 million Missal**

A three-dimensional digitised version of the Sherborne Missal was unveiled by the top selling group, in the presence of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, after our fund-raising campaign secured £15 million to buy the manuscript for the nation. The Missal uses our Turning the Pages™ system to give users the opportunity to leaf through the manuscript and examine its exquisite images of birds and beasts in detail. The Sherborne Missal has also been released on CD-Rom, and its digitisation was made possible with the generous support of the Headley Trust.

### **Funding In Place**

The Library was awarded £3.25 million from the New Opportunities Fund to create *In Place*, a website exploring life in the UK over the past millennium. We will be working with three partners to create the site: the Royal Photographic Society and the Universities of Portsmouth and Strathclyde. Our collections will provide up to 100,000 maps, photographs, illuminated manuscripts, newspapers and Victorian ephemera, as well as recordings of UK wildlife, oral history, dialect and song and ethnographic recordings from Africa and Asia. Three themes are



under development: Your Place in the Nation will present geographical and topographical material; Britain in Sight and Sound will display diverse aspects of British culture and identity; and Beyond Britain will chart the lives of those in former British territories and the Commonwealth.

## **Moving Here**

This project, led by the Public Record Office and supported by the New Opportunities Fund, is building a web resource recording the movement of communities into England. Thirty libraries, museums and archives are partners in Moving Here, and the British Library is contributing to the Irish, Jewish and South Asian themes. For its South Asian contribution, it has benefitted from the advice of Rozina Visram, whose pioneering book *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History*, drawing extensively on our India Office Records, was published in May 2002. The Library's Co-operation and Partnership Programme is also funding London Metropolitan Archives to gather data on Black and Asian Londoners from parish registers and other sources. The project is bringing to light glimpses of remarkable stories like that of 'Charles, a boy by Estimacon x or xii yers olde brought by Sir Walter Rawlie from Guiana Baptised 13 Februarij 1597'.

## **Beijing digitising**

The National Library of China is putting its ancient Dunhuang manuscripts online. The International Dunhuang Project, named after the caves on the Silk Road where the collection was discovered, has established a cataloguing and digitisation studio in China thanks to the generosity of the Sino-British Fellowship Trust. The British Library's digitisation of its Dunhuang archive is being accelerated with funding from the Mellon Foundation and the Arts and Humanities Research Board. The collaboration will reunite material dispersed a century ago.

## **Working together**

### **New alliances**

A strategic alliance signed with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) signalled the Library's commitment to providing high quality information, cost-effectively, to the academic and research communities and lifelong learners. The alliance prepares the ground for further joint activity to ensure that UK research maintains its world-class position by exploiting the full potential of new digital information sources. Future co-operation has been reinforced by new concordats signed by the Library with the Arts and Humanities Research Board, the Natural History Museum, the London School of Economics, Royal Holloway College and the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies. The concordats identify shared strategies and opportunities for practical co-operation in the development of the national information infrastructure across key fields of research.

### **Peak Practice**

Co-operation and Partnership grants totalling £315,000 were distributed this year by the Library, and Resource and the Research Support Libraries Programme gave additional funding to many recipients. Ten projects were awarded funds, including £36,000 to the

Peakland Heritage website to illustrate life in the Peak District, using material from local collections and the British Library. ([www.peaklandheritage.org.uk](http://www.peaklandheritage.org.uk))

## **Music returns to its roots**

The Library received three Heritage Lottery awards for projects, among them the grant to the [National Sound Archive](#) to collect, catalogue and digitise 2,000 hours of Britain's traditional music. The Archive will work with folk music collectors to detail the recordings on [Cadensa](#), its online catalogue. Janet Topp Fargion, the curator in charge of the project, explained: 'Many of the traditions documented in the recordings are in danger of dying out. One of our aims is to foster a more widespread appreciation of the music and a rejuvenation of its performance.'

## **Maintaining standards**

In support of international bibliographic standards, the Library worked with the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals to widen the UK consultation on the development of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2). We have completed the consultation on the transition from UKMARC to MARC21, the international cataloguing standard, and have concluded agreements with the Library of Congress and the National Library of Canada on maintenance and development of the MARC21 format. The Library is participating in Interparty, an EU-funded project aimed at establishing online and on-demand checking of personal and corporate identities to support discovery of resources, rights ownership and negotiation of agreements.

## **Holding the past**

### **A golden age of English theatre**

The archives of Sir Ralph Richardson and Sir John Gielgud joined the Lord Olivier collection to complete our holdings of the triumvirate of 'the first knights of the English stage'. The collections give direct insight into their lives, the development of their classic roles and their ground-breaking work with new playwrights.

### **Unpublished George Eliot**

Letters from the writer of Middlemarch were bought by the Library to complement our holdings of the manuscripts of her novels. Most of the letters were sent to Jane Senior, one of the first women to achieve a major Government position and with whom she developed 'an inspirational friendship'.

### **Ted Hughes' dreams**

We received a major collection of Ted Hughes' letters in which the former Poet Laureate discusses his writing, events in his life, his personal relationships - including that with fellow poet Sylvia Plath - even his dreams. The letters were sent over a period of nearly thirty years to critic and bibliographer Keith Sagar, who became a close personal friend. Some contain unfinished poems and prose which Hughes sent to Sagar for comment.

# Collecting the present

## Japanese masterpieces donated

Superb examples of contemporary Japanese calligraphy worth £250,000 were given to the Library through the good offices of Mrs Kyoko Horie, a Japanese calligraphy expert. Her contribution was inspired by the Library's Dunhuang collection which contains examples of early Chinese calligraphy from which Japanese calligraphy evolved.

## Websites have an average life of just 44 days

The Library has completed a project to capture the fleeting world of the web. Just before the 2001 General Election we began to archive 100 UK websites of cultural and historic significance. By the end of the pilot project 5% of the sites had disappeared, demonstrating how quickly significant information and creativity is lost. Concern about such loss has brought the Library and 18 other UK Higher Education and cultural bodies together to define strategies and share skills. The Digital Preservation Coalition will ensure that the care of digital resources for future generations is tackled co-operatively at a national level.

# Securing the future

## Voluntary e-deposit

100 electronic publishers have signed up to deposit their e-publications in the Library. The Government has agreed that legislation is needed to ensure that e-publications join the National Published Archive, but until a new law is enacted, the Library is working with key publishers on a voluntary basis to identify the technical and practical issues that will be involved. Anthony Watkinson from the Publishers Association said: 'The Association is fully committed to the importance of secure archiving for our national heritage of published material in digital form. We are pleased to have found so many areas of consensus in working with the copyright libraries and other publishing bodies.'

**The following sections of the Annual Report are only available in PDF format.**

- [Performance Highlights of the Year](#)
- [Performance Statistics 2001-02](#)
- [The Board and Executive Team](#)
- [Organisational Structure](#)
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