

**THE BRITISH LIBRARY
ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN NATIONAL
LIBRARIANS**

Introduction

On 1 July 1994, the British Library passed its twenty first anniversary of providing services from London and Boston Spa. Throughout the next year, it continued to broaden access to its collection (now standing at 15 million volumes, 38 million patents and 19 million other items including manuscripts, newspaper volumes, serial titles, music, stamps, microform, theses and photographs) and to fulfill its national and international roles.

Meantime the Library continued to consult its users through a variety of means, including user surveys, focus groups, contact days and through its Advisory Committee structure. A major effort during the year was directed towards seeking opportunities for closer working relationships with the higher education sector, following the publication of the 'Follett Report', of the Joint Funding Councils' Library Review Group.

During the year the Library completed a major review considering how working from a single principal building in London at Saint Pancras will allow it to make efficiency and quality gains at a strategic level. Our main aim is to realign our resources and efforts in the areas of performance where rapid progress is necessary: satisfying user's needs, improving access, corporate collection development and corporate collection management. The first phase of a management reorganisation took effect on 1 July 1995, grouping Library directorates concerned with acquiring material or providing services, irrespective of location in London or Boston Spa. With duplication of activity reduced, a further rationalisation will take place in April 1996.

The Library's gross expenditure in 1994/95 was £112 million. The Government provided £80 million through grant-in-aid, and the Library received £32 million through sales of goods and services.

Legislation

The internal Working Group, established last year to develop, and seek government support for, the Library's proposal for the legal deposit of non-print publications, produced a draft set of selection guidelines for publications traditionally associated with print and now appearing in electronic form or microform. It began to determine appropriate means of securing bibliographic control of non-print publications. A preliminary consultation took place with 55 institutions responsible for, or with a direct interest in, the national published archive: a first draft of a proposal for government was produced. Concomitantly, the Library continued to foster discussion regarding the management and development of the nation's legal deposit collections in general with the other five Copyright Libraries, with particular emphasis given to the problems of local materials and preservation.

The new agreement reached with the Copyright Licensing Agency will permit the Library to transmit electronic documents on a royalty-paid basis via fax. This agreement provides a useful platform for further discussions with publishers on electronic storage and transmission.

New Building

Delays and problems with the Saint Pancras Construction Project continued, but in November the Secretary of State was able to announce that remedial solutions to the technical problems had been found and that the Project budget had been revised to meet the cost of both the

remedial work and the subsequent delays to the project. The Department of National Heritage now plans to hand over the building to the Library in the last quarter of 1996, with facilities for some readers therefore available before the end of 1997. Occupational Planning is now proceeding on the basis of a single move into the complete building, allowing a more efficient transfer than the previously planned phased moves. Work has begun on integrating the three Automation projects, the 'Online Catalogue', the Readers Admission System (both already in operation elsewhere) and the Automated Book Request System, in a 'Virtual Saint Pancras', a simulation of operational areas of the building at an existing site.

The Library gave consideration during the year as to how it might involve and work with the private sector in future Library development of the land to the north of the Saint Pancras site. Meanwhile, the Library embarked on the construction of a new building at Boston Spa to house 50 kilometres of material which will be moved from the older buildings in Woolwich in 1995/96.

Automation and data processing

'[www](#)' was launched on the Internet as a pilot service for guiding users through the diversity of services offered by the Library. Previews of major exhibitions on Keats and Purcell were made available via [www](#) using text, image and sound files. The connection to SuperJANET (the high speed Joint Academic Network) was established. Work continued on providing access to the Library's OPAC via Z39.50/SR protocols (the international standard for direct OPAC-to-OPAC inter-organisation network communication). Specifications are being developed to allow the Library to send and receive bibliographic records in different MARC, i.e. machine-readable, formats.

The Photographic Digitisation project, which uses pioneering technology for retrieval of digitised material, represented the Library and its Initiatives for Access programme at the exhibition accompanying the G7 Conference on the Information Superhighway. Much progress has been made during the year on the Digitisation of Ageing Microfilm Project (DAMP): both Yale University Library and the National Library of Scotland have expressed interest. Work continued digitising and documenting material from collections right across the Library, including printed books, music, philatelic, newspapers and the Oriental and India Office.

The programme of retrospective cataloguing continued, to a timetable designed to mount four major specialist catalogues on the OPAC per year up to 1997, in preparation for the provision of services from Saint Pancras. Thus, two new databases (the Document Supply Centre monographs file and the Music retrospective catalogue) were added this year, whilst a further 25 Online Catalogue terminals were installed in existing reading rooms, bringing the total to 60. The Newspaper Library printed catalogue was also converted to machine-readable form and it is planned to mount this on the OPAC in early 1996. The retrospective conversion of the catalogue of the Map Library progressed, and feasibility studies were undertaken into the retrospective conversion of Manuscript and the Science Reference and Information Service Catalogues, as well as into the provision of a new Non-Roman Scripts cataloguing facility.

Exhibitions and Acquisitions

During the year, the Library was able to continue its policy of maintaining a programme of high profile exhibitions during the build-up to Saint Pancras, with two major exhibitions, *All Change: Russian Avant-Garde Books, 1912-1934* and *Let There Be Light: William Tyndale and the Making of the English Bible*. The acquisition of Tyndale's 1526 translation of the New Testament attracted a great deal of interest from the press and the public (as did the

acquisition of the Evelyn Archive, the Purcell Manuscript and the Hastings Album), and this interest was maintained for the exhibition. In addition to the two major exhibitions, the Library arranged 15 small displays on subjects ranging from *Alchemy* to the 1994 South African elections, and including *Early Italian Renaissance Music* and the exhibition of the 1994 *Designer Bookbinding Competition* which also included volumes designed by Fellows of Designer Bookbinders for the short-listed titles for the 1994 Book Prize.

International Co-operation

The Library's Research and Development Department continued its work on the European Library Plan, acting as the UK National Focal Point, and will continue to do so until this responsibility passes to the new Libraries and Information Services Commission. The Library also has responsibility for the operations of the ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) UK centre in co-operation with the International centre in Paris. In addition, as part of its collaborative work in Europe, the Library has established, with funding support from the SOROS Foundation, a scheme for providing placements in the Library for four Russian librarians, for three months each, to gain knowledge of the library and its work and to assist in our Russian collections. It has also made a 'special relationship' agreement with the National Library of Russia in Saint Petersburg for the exchange of materials and for close collaboration over a range of activities.

Elsewhere, work progressed on the Anglo-American Authority File Project, and the CEC-funded Projects INCIPIT and CoBRA (Computerised Bibliographic Records), and the Library was invited to join the US Program of Co-operative Cataloguing (with the Library of Congress), and to participate in the US SACO Programme.

Consultancy Services launched a number of initiatives to expand business, including the start of the procedure to register with the World Bank and other relevant Aid agencies overseas, and steps toward increasing the number of joint ventures with external consultants and researchers. International Office continued to advise the Library as a whole including the production of a paper on the Library's international role and by organising a series of meetings to further the British Library/British Council Concordat (including a meeting in Singapore in June 1994).

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