

BRITISH LIBRARY REPORT TO CENL

Following the opening of the new St Pancras building in 1998 the building has proved to be hugely successful with the library's users. The reading rooms give users a superb working environment and greatly enhanced levels of service. The software systems, handling the entire process of locating and delivering any one of 12 million volumes to any of the 12,509 reader places in 11 reading rooms, has continued to work without a major hitch from day one. In the first full year of operation 43,000 new passes were issued and 880,000 items were supplied to reading rooms. With the move to St Pancras complete the British Library concentrated on conducting the largest ever consultation exercise to find out what our users and stakeholders want from their national library. This completed, the task of planning and implementing change is underway. As custodian of the nation's written heritage our priority this year was to make that heritage available to the widest possible audience. Over 600,000 visitors were received at St Pancras and over 4.2 million documents were supplied remotely through the Document Supply Service.

FUNDING

As reported in last year's report to the CENL, the Library received a favourable Grant-in-aid settlement for the new three-year funding/planning period, 1999/2000 - 2001/02. Whilst falling short of the level that the Library considered necessary to fund its ambitious programmes, Government support for the period is higher than expected, increasing the Library's operational funding baseline over the 3-year period by some £11m above the indicative planning figures previously issued.

Taken together with substantial efficiency and economy savings achieved in the context of a Zero-Based Review undertaken in 1998/99, this has enabled the Library to resource plans for:

- achieving a significant step increase in the real terms funding baseline for its Acquisitions Programme (at 115% of the real terms 1998/99 funding level) and sustaining that increase in real terms over the three year period against book and serial price inflation;
- establishing a significantly increased funding baseline for its Conservation Programme, rising in real terms in 2001/02 to 135% of its 1998/99 funding level;
- establishing a Co-operation and Partnership Programme with a £500k challenge fund to facilitate the effective participation of other institutions in partnership activities;

- initiating the procurement process associated with a limited, but not insubstantial, programme of investment in technical infrastructure under its digital library programme;
- increasing reading room opening hours by extending opening for its generalist reading rooms from 53 to 60 hours per week.

LEGISLATION

The Library awaits legislation on the extension of legal deposit to material published in digital form. Meantime, the Library is working to achieve a code of practice as an interim measure for the voluntary deposit of non-print publications

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Library has always been at the forefront in exploiting computer applications in libraries. IT now underpins all aspects of the Library's work, including mission critical services to both on-site and remote users.

Information systems have been a vital element in opening and operating the reading room services in the Library's new building at St Pancras. Access to the Library's collection at the new building is principally via the St Pancras Integrated System, which generates reader passes, allows readers to search the eight million records in the Library's Online Catalogue, and relays orders to the book stores. The system handled almost a million requests in 1999-00, surveys showing that users are satisfied with its performance.

Following the opening of the final reading rooms at the new building in July 1999, the system was named as one of nine Medallists in the prestigious British Computer Society Awards for IT, 1999. The Library was successful in a field of ninety one entrants, and was the only public sector Medallist.

The quality of the Library's approach to IT was also recognised with the award of a National Heritage/NP Museum of the Year Multi Media award to the 'Turning the Pages' multimedia system which allows visitors to the Library's galleries to browse through digital versions of its treasures.

The Library is already developing the next generation of St Pancras systems through its Access Development Programme. The existing Online Catalogue will be replaced with a 'Z39.50 compliant' system available for searching both in the reading rooms and remotely. It will be linked seamlessly with stand-alone catalogues for newspapers, manuscripts, and sound recordings. Key catalogues not already automated will also be added. In 1999-00 users conducted 5m searches on the current Web version of the Online Catalogue.

Work continues on the Corporate Bibliographic System, which will integrate and underpin the Library's cataloguing, bibliographic, and information systems. Implementation will commence in 2000. The system will support up to two thousand concurrent users and handle up to thirty million records.

As it seeks to meet its users' needs in the developing knowledge society the Library is exploiting new digital and networking technologies to provide much wider access to its collection and to satisfy its obligation of maintaining the national published archive, which increasingly includes digital items. The engine for much of this work is the Library's digital library programme.

Under its Digital Library Programme, the British Library proposes to implement a 'digital library' infrastructure - the Digital Library System - to store the growing output of published digital products and digitised parts of the collection, and to provide wider and faster access to these holdings. This technology will provide users regardless of geographic location with easy access to this information, subject to any copyright restrictions, through computer networks. It will ensure that in the new digital environment the British Library remains the major source of information serving scholarship, research and innovation in the United Kingdom. This 'digital library' supports the UK Government's initiatives on the 'information society' and the four objectives of The Department for Culture, Media and Sport as set out in A New Cultural Framework, as follows:

- the promotion of access for the many not just the few through remote access to catalogues and the digital collection.
- the pursuit of excellence and innovation in academia and science-based industries through digital document delivery services, including research articles and patents, vital for scholarship and industrial research and development.
- the nurturing of educational opportunity through online connections to networks serving education all sectors of which - higher, further, continuing and school - would wish to access the collections for student and faculty use
- fostering of the creative industries through remote online access to the UK's pre-eminent cultural holdings in the arts and humanities.

The procurement of this basic digital infrastructure is now underway with the shortlist of potential suppliers due to be announced on April 6, 2000. The contract for the project will be awarded in June and the Digital Library System will be implemented by the middle of 2001.

The Library has already begun implementing other measures to provide reading room and remote access to digital materials.

It is placing a high priority on collecting digital materials and is acquiring appropriate items by purchase and voluntary deposit as it awaits introduction by the Government, when parliamentary time becomes available, of legislation to extend legal deposit to UK non-print publishing.

During 1999-00 the Library installed a new system for accessing CD-ROMs and DVDs in the reading rooms. It also implemented an electronic storage and retrieval system providing access to over nine hundred major science serial titles both in the reading rooms and by remote document supply. The Library is seeking to secure further agreements with publishers for electronic storage and delivery. Prototype support systems are being developed.

Web initiatives included improvements to the Web version of the **inside** service, which provides contents information on journals and conference proceedings and also document ordering facilities. More than three quarters of the requests for remote access to the Library's collection handled by the Document Supply Centre at Boston Spa are now sent electronically.

The Library's main Website attracts over 3m 'transactions' a month. The Library plans to introduce new Web-based services for a general audience.

In the first initiative of its kind by a government-funded body, the British Library held a live Online Open Meeting on the Internet in March 2000 to publicise its latest *Annual Report* and to stimulate discussion with key stakeholders. The meeting was the Library's response to challenges posed by the Cabinet Office document *Quangos: opening the doors* to make the operations of public bodies more open, accountable and effective. Hundreds of Library users around the world took part.

The Library ran a very successful Date 2000 programme in the run up to the change of date at the end of 1999, with no significant problems experienced in the new year. It is also implementing many 'spend-to-save' changes that will secure better value for money from the limited funds available and release resources for the new technological developments that will benefit users.

Acquisitions

The Library noted the strongly expressed views from its Strategic Review that extra funding should be made available for collection development and co-operation. Overall the recommended allocations provide a real terms increase of over 15% over the costs of the previous year.

Acquisitions expenditure in £k

| | Total expenditure | Income / external funding | Government fund expenditure |
|-------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | £k | £k | £k |
| Fy98 | 11812 | 598 | 11214 |
| Fy99 | 13411 | 3686 | 9725 |

Allocation of acquisitions budgets FY1999

£K

Serials **6653**

Books **2289**

Modern English language 1504

Antiquarian 173

West European 238

East European 125

Oriental 249

Manuscripts **3200**

Patents **406**

Other materials **863**

Music 39

Maps 27

Sound 43

Newspapers 166

Reports, conferences etc 502

Theses 86

Electronic materials

Gross expenditure **13411**

Significant historical items acquired included:

Maps: a volume of manuscript charts and tables dated c.1760, explaining in detail how the French would set about invading southern England

Music: Film scores of Alan Rawsthorne (gift)

Papers of Harold Rosenthal, writer on opera (purchase)

The autograph manuscript of Sullivan's opera 'Ruddigore' (purchase), with aid of a grant from the D'Oyly Carter Trust)

Manuscripts: Pre-eminent acquisition of the year was the archive of

Lord (Laurence) Olivier (purchase with the aid of the HLF plus other donors)

OIOC: Painting by Chinnery of Sir Arthur Wellesley (later Duke of Wellington) and other officers in India (purchase)

Among the ca. 2,000 items added to the collection by Early Printed Collections, a number were very rare or unrecorded. These included:

- 'A compendious and most marueilous history of the latter tymes of the Jewes commune weale' (London, 1588) - the first edition of this translation of 'Yossipon', one of the earliest secular texts to be translated directly from the Hebrew. From the library of Richard Stonley, teller of the Exchequer of Receipt to Elizabeth I.
- Ballet et musique pour le divertissement du roy de la Grande Bretagne (London, 1674) - the only known surviving copy of the libretto for an entertainment given as part of the celebrations for the second marriage of James, Duke of York, to Mary of Modena.
- A subject for conversation and reflection at the tea table. (London, 1788) - one of only three surviving copies of William Cowper's anti-slavery poem
- The novel newspaper Vols. I-XIX. (London, 1839-46) - an extremely rare serial publication, reprinting ca. 80 novels, mostly American, for the benefit of British readers, and as a deliberate counter-campaign of piracy against American writing.
- Poems chiefly on the superstitions of Obeah. (London, 1816)
- A rare collection of verse, of which only one other copy is known. This copy bears the ownership signatures of William Wordsworth, and his son, and is bound in the familiar 'Cottonian' style devised by Mrs. Southey.
- The Bee. The magazine of the Blackburn Technical School. November 1891. With a frontispiece by Aubrey Beardsley.
- A three-volume set of the Holy Bible (Bath, 1785), acquired by bequest from Dr Froma Somerville - the fore-edges of the books are decorated with paintings hidden under gilt, the subjects including St Paul's Cathedral, and Arley Hall, the country seat of John Johnson who commissioned the bindings. Documents accompanying the bequest confirm that the fore-edge paintings (of excellent quality) were contemporary with the binding.
- An early solution to the longitude problem by John Carte (Hamburg, 1708) printed in German with English texts and unrecorded maps.
- Over 300 German items from the Library of Prince Fürstenberg at Donaueschingen, including early school play summaries, funeral sermons, legal ephemera and 18th-century directories.

PRESERVATION

In response to the Strategic Review Consultation Exercise carried out in 1998, the Library allocated £1million more Grant-in-Aid to Preservation in FY1999 than it spent in FY 1998. This level of funding will be maintained over the following three years. The additional funds enabled the levels of external binding and conservation microfilming contracts to be increased for the first time since 1986. It also enabled specific preservation projects to be carried out on very vulnerable collection material, at St Pancras and the Colindale Newspaper Library using contract conservators.

Exhibitions

The new exhibition galleries at St Pancras continued to attract increasing numbers of visitors. The first special exhibition in the Pearson Gallery, 'Post Impressions:

the Art of the Stamp and 1000 Years of Inspiration', was seen by over 143,000 visitors. To celebrate the Millennium the Library redisplayed the treasures of its Bible collections in the John Ritblat Gallery and the major Millennium exhibition 'Chapter & Verse: 1000 Years of English Literature' opened on World Book Day 2000. Two further treasures were digitised for the Library's innovative computer-based interactive 'Turning the Pages', which won the National Heritage/NPI Museum of the Year Multimedia Award. During the year over 270 schools participated in education programmes at the Library and a new web site specifically for education was launched. A wide range of performances, lectures, study days and other events was held for audiences of both adults and children.

Publishing

The British Library has a flourishing and expanding publishing programme, with over 600 titles in print. More than 50 new titles were published in the last year. Titles are published both under the Library's own imprint and in association with other publishers. All illustrated books are co-published with leading US publishers, and are often also sold as book club editions. Bibliographies and reference works are published on CD-ROM and microform as well as in printed form, and some are made available online. There is also an expanding list of general and illustrated books, based primarily on the Library's extensive historic collections. Highlights of this year's programme included Landmarks in Western Science: From Prehistory to the Atomic Age; English Maps: A History; and The British Inheritance: A Treasury of Historic Documents. Other titles that attracted considerable media coverage were the audio CD The Century in Sound and the special slipcased edition of Patrick O'Brian's first two novels, Caesar and Hussein. In the science technology and business area 'Employment and Health', and 'British Patents of Invention' were lead titles.

Co-operation and partnership

A key theme arising from the Library's 1998 Strategic Review was the need for it to co-ordinate its activities, and co-operate much more closely, with other libraries both in the UK and internationally. It was seen as essential that, to ensure maximum national benefit, the Library should seek to establish a co-operative framework with other libraries for collection development, preservation, provision of access, record creation and bibliographic services.

As an outcome of the Review, the Library set up a new unit in April 1999 to develop and co-ordinate the Library's Co-operation and Partnership Programme (CPP) in the areas mentioned. The unit's purpose is to co-ordinate existing and new British Library co-operative activities, provide an external focus and point of contact relating to co-operation, and administer the BL's new Co-operation and Partnership Fund to support co-operative and partnership initiatives. Allocations for this fund are £250K in 1999/2000 and £500K in each of 2000/10 and 2001/02. Key areas of action under the programme have included:

- the commissioning of a survey of UK library co-operative activity;
- the development of a library co-operation website;

- co-operation with other UK legal deposit libraries on the deposit and archiving of UK publications, including the extension of deposit to non-print publications;
- the establishment of a high-level task force to explore and take forward areas of collaboration with the UK higher education sector . A series of strategic studies are being jointly funded on i) the need for mechanisms and the feasibility of the creation of a national body for co-ordinating the development of a distributed national collection of library research resources, ii) administration of and services based on 'legacy collections' (i.e. collections of older material not in regular use); iii) the feasibility of centralised or distributed approaches to national union catalogues of monographs and serials;
- participation in ten collaborative collection management projects under the Higher Education Research Support Libraries Programme (RSLP);
- support for a national strategy for and programme of retrospective conversion;
- financial support from the Co-operation and Partnership Fund for projects in the 2000/01 financial year Think Tank and Policy Unit

POLICY UNIT AND THINK TANK

To coincide with the transfer of research funding for the UK library and information sector from the British Library to the Library and Information Commission, the British Library Board decided to set up a Think Tank and associated Policy Unit to bring to the attention of the Library issues of strategic importance and to enable the Library to develop its capacity to think radically. The Policy Unit was set up in April 1999. The Think Tank was set up in September 1999 and has met twice during the course of the year.

The Library's Think Tank and Policy Unit have a remit to help the Library become more outward looking and to provide a constant spur to question and change so that the Library is better able to cope with increasing uncertainty as the environment becomes ever more diverse and dynamic.

In its first year, the Policy Unit has undertaken studies on the scale of future publishing, trends in information provision in Science, Technology and Business, looking at the future through national libraries, market research in patents, and market penetration of remote document supply services. At its first two meetings, the Think Tank has raised many challenging questions for the Library: it has questioned the need for the Library in the long term, it has encouraged the Library to determine who the future users will be and to focus upon their needs, it has encouraged the Library to change the focus away from "collection first" to "users first" and has urged the Library to investigate trends in information provision in the humanities as well as the sciences.

The Library is determined to ensure that recommendations are followed through so that it can make the most of its Think Tank and Policy Unit which, together, have the potential to change the dynamic of the Library for the good.