
News from member libraries

University of Birmingham

STAFF

Diane Job has been appointed as Director of Library Services, effective 1 September 2009. Diane was previously responsible for the leadership of the faculty of medicine libraries at Imperial College London. Library services is one of six divisions within academic services.

REFURBISHMENT

The feasibility study stage of the main library refurbishment project is now well under way and is expected to be completed in autumn 2009. Initial planning is already under way for relocation and decant of services and collections during the period of the refurbishment work, which could take up to five years.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS MOVES

Special collections, which had previously been part of library services, became a separate division within academic services in 2009. The university is currently in the process of developing a new facility for special collections, which will bring all the collections, public service and conservation facilities together into one purpose-built space spread over three floors at the heart of the main Edgbaston campus. The new accommodation is expected to be completed by autumn 2009 and includes exhibition facilities, a seminar room for up to 30 people and research space, together with an estimated ten years of expansion space for collections, two purpose-built storage areas for archives and rare books, a reprographics suite, staff accommodation and a purpose-built conservation studio. The new facility, to be named the 'Cadbury research library', forms part of a refurbishment of the iconic Muirhead Tower, one of the most easily recognizable buildings on the main Edgbaston campus.

STOCK MOVES

A number of major stock moves were undertaken during the summer vacation 2009:

- In the main library, stock was transferred onto mobile shelving in an area that had previously been occupied by special collections

(see above). This has improved access to our printed collections, by easing shelving overcrowding and simplifying the arrangement of stock in certain areas of the main library.

- Following a decision to transfer teaching for education courses from the Selly Oak campus to the Edgbaston campus from 2009/10, we have also been working to accommodate stock for these courses into our education library (and, to a lesser extent, other sites).

NEW GUIDE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS CONFUSED BY LIBRARY JARGON

Aware that librarians are as guilty as any experts of using jargon that means nothing to anyone else, library services has produced a basic 'jargon-busting guide' aimed specifically at students whose first language is not English.

The guide, written in the special English used by the BBC World Service, is an A-Z listing of the most common words and phrases that students might see or hear when they are using library services, facilities and resources. Copies are available in all libraries run by library services and will be handed out to new students at the beginning of term.

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Edge Hill University

RFID

Following a successful project to implement self-issue four years ago, the summer months have seen a further project to embed RFID technologies into the collections. With self-issue hitting the 95% target that was set, RFID has been chosen to improve stock management, ensuring that the library catalogue and the items on the shelf are a direct match.

Studies show that up to 12% of stock can be misplaced where RFID isn't in use, meaning we can add an extra 10,000 books from stock to circulation this September (2009). The introduction of a returns chute and sorter and RFID self-issue will mean that queue lengths are reduced. We continue to work with 3M as our partner, and will be the first UK site to implement this new model of returns sorter.

LEARNING SERVICES WEB PAGES

A cross-service team has been working to completely remodel the learning services web pages. Code named W-ALTER (Web-Alter), a full review of learning services' web presence was undertaken, looking not only at the student-facing sites but also at the intranet, blogs and wikis.

Due to launch mid-September, the new web site will offer a richer experience, showing video clips, blog posts, updated news feeds and personalised subject areas. In addition, a staff intranet has been developed to ensure that academic colleagues have access to everything they need through every stage of their teaching, learning and research.

INDUCTION FACELIFT

Edge Hill University is now one of the UK's most rapidly expanding universities and with learning services' student inductions more popular than ever, and in order to maintain high standards, we have given the programme a facelift.

Evaluation of our student experience as well as benchmarking with other universities has led to our developing a new induction model, where contact and interaction still remain critical for introducing and welcoming students to university life. A small team was created to review the induction process and ensure that these aspects are maintained and further developed to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse student population. A key aim is to avoid information-overload and yet raise awareness of the resources and tools available.

September 2009: what will the induction programme look like?

- 1 Registration will be our first interaction with students. Staff will be on hand to encourage and support students in logging into the network for the first time, using the information provided in their newly received registration letter.
- 2 Colleagues will then work with teaching staff to co-deliver a session that dovetails with their induction to their first module. We will provide an overview of learning services that will include video, slides and a quiz.
- 3 Drop-in sessions will follow in the second and third weeks of the semester.

- 4 The whole programme will be underpinned and supported by the learning services induction module in the Blackboard VLE.

REPOSITORY PROJECT (EROS)

The JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee)-funded EROS project is managed by learning services and will create and populate an institutional repository to improve the storage, preservation, retrieval and use of Edge Hill University's research outputs. Starting with an analysis of user needs to help identify and procure the repository solution that is the best fit for Edge Hill, the project will focus on the cultural embedding of the repository, underpinned by workflows and policies which will facilitate use of the repository in line with Edge Hill's existing practices and systems, wherever possible. The project exists within the context of previous repository start-ups and will draw significantly on the knowledge that already exists in the sector, as well as disseminating lessons learned at Edge Hill, to inform future repository projects beyond the institution. The creation of a digital repository at Edge Hill is particularly timely since the university was granted research degree awarding powers in 2008. Our experience in preparing for RDAP highlighted the current lack of effective collation of research outputs and, given the increase in research activity that will follow the award of RDAP, creating a digital repository is a priority for Edge Hill.

SOLSTICE CETL ACTIVITY

SOLSTICE is one of the 74 national centres for excellence in teaching and learning (CETLs) established in April 2005. SOLSTICE is committed to enhancing student learning and the learning environment – for part-time and full-time students studying across multiple and dispersed locations – through technology-enhanced learning. Unusually for a CETL, SOLSTICE is managed within learning services and this is reflected in many of the CETL activities, some of which are described below:

'It's all in the blend?' SOLSTICE CONFERENCE, June 2009

The fourth international SOLSTICE conference took place on 4 June 2009, welcoming over 150 delegates to Edge Hill University. The theme for the conference was 'Innovation, research and development: enhancing learning with technologies'. Delegates had a choice of 38 sessions to attend, along with two stimulating and entertaining keynote speeches.

Dr Rhona Sharpe from Oxford Brookes University presented her keynote speech on the 'Impact of learner experience research'. She assessed what has been the impact of learner experience research in the UK to date, what more could be done in light of the research findings and what we can learn from this experience about the tensions between research, innovation and development.

Professor Tara Brabazon from the University of Brighton entertained delegates with her keynote entitled 'We've spent too much money to go back now: credit crunched literacy and a future for learning'. Tara offered new models and modes of teaching and learning by aligning information literacy, media literacy theories and multiliteracy approaches.

The aim was to show, through examples and applications in university assessment, how students can move from everyday competencies and skill development and into disciplinary and trans-disciplinary scholarship. With public funding under threat, the time for 'easy' technological solutions to complicated problems in widening participation agendas requires renewed commitment to literacy, professional development and academic expertise.

The conference was a great success, building on previous conferences and establishing the SOLSTICE CETL as a key technology-enhanced learning event on the conference calendar. You can view the conference keynotes at <http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/solstice/Conference2009/Keynotes.htm> and access the presentations and full papers delivered at the conference at <http://prezi.com/83919>.

The ReFORM project – reuse and repurposing of teaching and learning content

Edge Hill's 'ReFORM' project (<http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/reformproject/index.htm>) was one of 20 funded by JISC's 'RePRODUCE' programme to test assumptions around reuse of teaching content in a real-world setting. Projects were funded to develop, teach and quality-assure technology-enhanced modules using at least 50% of learning materials drawn from outside their institution. All digital content produced by the projects would be uploaded into JORUM (<http://www.jorum.ac.uk/>) and made freely available to the higher and further education sectors. Creation and availability of high-quality open educational resources (OERs) is being heralded as a key component of sustainable and scalable higher education in the UK.

ReFORM redeveloped a dormant 15-credit professional development module, 'CPD304: Dyslexia and specific learning difficulties (SpLD) in higher education – support issues', aimed at support staff working within the higher and further education sectors.

The project has identified, reused and/or repurposed learning materials related to themes around learning support, such as writing, reading and memory, and created new multimedia objects which focus on dyslexic learners' narratives. It was a challenge because there was no critical mass of content in the field of dyslexia support for us to draw upon. A positive outcome of this project is that we have been able to produce dyslexia-'friendly' open content in this important niche area. Development of the module involved a variety of specialists, as depicted in the SOLSTICE notion of 'new academic teams', in particular project managers, subject librarians, learning technologists, module leaders, copyright and IPR specialists and staff and students with dyslexia and other SpLDs.

Effective reuse of digital content depends upon deliberate planning for reuse at the design stage. Curriculum design using digital content requires a rethinking of traditional roles and an acceptance of new approaches using non-hierarchical, multi-professional teams.

We have captured and distilled our new understandings and skills around content-creation into what we are tentatively calling 'open content literacy'. We believe its incorporation into professional development and training will support effective practice in the sharing and reuse of digital teaching content within Edge Hill.

If you would like a copy of ReFORM's final project report, contact solstice@edgehill.ac.uk.

SOLSTICE seminar: 'Creating and sharing digital content: promises and pitfalls', 16 July 2009

The hot topic of creating and sharing digital content was presented at this seminar, hosted by SOLSTICE. Alison Mackenzie, SOLSTICE CETL director and dean of learning services at Edge Hill University, opened the day by placing the seminar in the context of current research and recent publications.

Five speakers with considerable involvement in sharing digital content presented experiences from their own work. The first keynote speaker was Professor Tom Boyle from the CETL for RLO

(reusable learning objects), who demonstrated how to develop open educational resources using GLO Maker 2 (generative learning objects). Tom emphasised the importance of the pedagogical design underlying the GLOs, which provides the basis for reuse. The audience showed tremendous interest in GLO Maker 2, released on 21 August 2009.

The second keynote speaker was Melissa Highton from Oxford University, who presented the development of open educational resources through the 'Open spires' project. This project follows on from earlier projects, such as MOSAIC and Steeple.

Three presenters were from the JISC 'RePRODUCE' programme. Dr Carmel de Nahlik of Coventry University shared her work from the JISC 'ROCOCO' project on setting up a reusable common core for research-methods modules. The module is delivered online, to diverse groups, at three different academic levels and can be presented within a subject-specific 'wrapper'.

Dr Peter McKenna from Manchester Metropolitan University presented the promises and pitfalls of reusability, using his experiences from the 'Q-ROLO' project (Quality – re-aggregation of learning objects) and resources. The pitfalls include IPR (information property rights) and legal aspects, quality, issues with repositories and lack of tracking of downloads or reuse.

Peter Reed of Edge Hill University presented 'Is this a sustainable future?', sharing his experiences from the 'ReFORM' project, which involved repurposing of suitable digital objects.

The delegates' thoughts about what is working well and the next steps regarding reuse and sharing of digital content were summarised by Lindsey Martin, eLearning strategy and development manager (SOLSTICE CETL), to round off the day.

Delegate feedback indicated that the day had been a great success and that this is a hot topic for librarians as well as technologists and academic colleagues. Links to the presentations can be found at <http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/solstice/seminarseries/SharingContent.html>.

Techno-savvy students join forces to bridge the digital divide

SOLSTICE and students from Edge Hill University, the University of Central Lancashire and Riverside College in Halton joined forces for a student-focused 'Digital slam' event held in May

2009 to explore the potential power of linking up a variety of different digital technologies and tools.

Armed with mini-camcorders, digital voice recorders, ultra-small laptops, standard PCs, mobile phones and digital cameras, the students put together a lively presentation for their colleagues. The process, known as 'digital storytelling', is an emerging, interactive medium that is fast gaining popularity in such fields as the media and education.

As well as exploring the power of new technology, the students also examined the phenomenon known as the 'digital divide', referring to the knowledge gap that can develop between people who have effective access to digital and information technology and those who don't. In researching digital divides, students were introduced to the concept of information literacy and the need to think critically about information and online tools and resources. Lindsey Martin, our eLearning strategy and development manager, said:

'It was great to see the students really getting into the technology. In many cases, what they were seeing was new to them, despite the fact that we assume that all young people are up to speed with every new gizmo on the market.'

The students who attended said the day had opened up their eyes to new ways of getting a message across. Pam Hampton, a student at the University of Central Lancashire, said:

'It was a great day – very interesting and informative. I must admit I am a techno geek and I love my gadgets and the internet. I am pleasantly surprised to have learnt some useful stuff.'

The 'Digital slam' was organised by SOLSTICE in conjunction with the student learning and teaching network and guest lecturer Mark Roche from Manchester Metropolitan University.

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University of Gloucestershire

LIS (learning and information Services) staff finished the 2008–09 academic year celebrating several departmental successes.

'Support for research week' at the beginning of June 2009 was the first major initiative to be co-ordinated and promoted by the newly formed LIS marketing group, part of whose remit is to review how and why students use our learning centres. We used the tagline 'Flying high with the learning centres' and gave humorous titles to a variety of user-education sessions to reflect this upward-and-outward-looking concept, such as 'Around the world in statistical resources', 'Travels in ebooks' and 'Notes from a big database'. Over 84 sessions across all five campuses were offered, all bookable online and advertised via our university's 'staff news' pages. In addition, invitations were sent by e-mail to all research students and staff. Finally, a blog was set up which, having been 'seeded' with a welcome from Ann Mathie, head of LIS, was updated by LIS staff in a chatty and relaxed manner after every session. The week went well, with very positive responses from those attending, and we are currently in the process of collating the feedback we requested after each session had been run. We intend to use the valuable experience we gained in running the week to inform how we target our users in the future.

A more detailed report of how we implemented this initiative is available on request from Jane Nicholls (jnicholls@glos.ac.uk).

At the end of June and after the end of term, LIS ran our second staff conference. Permission was granted to close all of our local learning centres so that as many staff as possible could attend. Building on the experience gained in organising the first such event last year – on the theme of 'active learning' – this year's event focused on 'information literacy' and 'making libraries interesting and inspiring places'. The day's activities took place in our university's well-equipped CeAL (centre for Active learning) building.

Sessions included one by Sarah Kennedy, learning centre manager at our Francis Close Hall (FCH) campus, who was fresh off the plane from jointly presenting (with colleague Allison Davis) a paper at the 'Information: interactions and impact international (i3)' conference at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen. Sarah gave a

presentation on the joint research project currently being carried out by CeAL and the academic and practice unit at the University of Worcester. This is entitled 'Formal learning in an informal setting: the student learning journey' and is investigating students' information-seeking behaviour through a mixture of questionnaires and focus groups. Sarah also updated the conference on the progress of the draft UoG information literacy framework, which has been well received in our institution.

Johanna Anderson, information adviser at FCH, had us all enthralled with an account of her trip to Malawi in the autumn of 2008, where she investigated the role libraries and information literacy play in the life of a primary school in a third world country. Sobering and uplifting by turns, her analysis of how the students and staff cope with the limited resources supplied principally by another culture gave us much food for thought. Johanna is now incorporating this material into her dissertation for her MSc in information and library management at the University of the West of England.

In the afternoon, we had a change of topic and activity as Ann Mathie, head of LIS, challenged us to look at our learning centres through different eyes. Adopting the 'visual scan' methodology pioneered by Aaron Cohen Associates, presented at the CILIP executive briefing 'Library as place' in October 2008, Ann led us through the four space-quality definitions. Following this we went off into our FCH learning centre in groups to look critically at its different types of space and how they impact on the student experience. Delegates were enthusiastic about this exercise and produced lists of suggestions for consideration. The plan is for staff to visit each other's campuses and provide feedback for their colleagues.

Feedback on the day was overwhelmingly positive and, encouraged by both the head of LIS and our vice-chancellor, we are now planning to make this an annual event. SCONUL colleagues who would like an opportunity to talk to a friendly and receptive audience about topics of mutual interest are welcome to contact us!

Finally, Oxstalls learning centre staff in Gloucester were delighted to be nominated by our academic colleagues in the department of health and social care for an internal university 'excellence' award in the category of 'Enhancing the student experience'. These awards are presented annually at the university's staff conference. The citation highlighted the helpfulness of the learning centre staff:

'... they provide a service that supports students that is second to none'. Although the eventual winners from the total of 40 nominations came from another department, the Oxstalls LC team were thrilled to have their work publicly acknowledged in such a positive way.

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Imperial College London

RIBA AWARD FOR IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON - CENTRAL LIBRARY

The design of the level 1 refurbishment of the Central Library has been recognised by the Royal Institute of British Architects. A-EM Studios Ltd. received a regional award for their innovative design, creating a truly modern library space. Debby Shorley, Director of Library Services, attended the awards ceremony on 21 May.

Since the refurbished floor reopened in July last year, the library has enjoyed a significant increase in student usage. The library team has also enjoyed welcoming a large number of library colleagues (nationally and internationally) from across the sector for tours, talks and visits.

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Leeds Metropolitan University

ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Our Civic Quarter library now has a designated university's special collections room, complementary to the university archive at Headingley library. These collections include historical materials from within the university, past course materials donated by alumni and several external collections, on deposit with the university. The collections cluster primarily into art and design – including books from the Leeds School of Art and West Yorkshire Society of Architects collections – and social policy, such as items from the National Cooperative collection. Materials are now organised and stored in more appropriate conditions, making it easier to exploit their potential for teaching and research. With the appointment of Keith Rowntree as principal information assistant (archives), the priority is to provide an electronic description of the individual collections and their constituent items, to promote knowledge of their existence and encourage usage. Enquiries con-

cerning the collections or potential new additions may be directed to Keith Rowntree (k.rowntree@leedsmet.ac.uk) or Claire Williams (c.f.williams@leedsmet.ac.uk). Keith also maintains a blog at <http://archivepost.wordpress.com/> where he picks up on items of interest regarding the archive and special collections, ranging from observations about their maintenance, the content and other ideas thrown up by working with our holdings.

READING & WRITING FESTIVAL

Libraries and learning innovation co-ordinated the university's second Reading & Writing Festival (23 April – 1 May 2009). The launch took the form of a 'Living library' event (<http://living-library.org>), with Leeds Met staff and students acting as 'books' that could be 'borrowed' and sharing their personal stories such as living with OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder), growing up in care, international volunteering and working as a vicar. Library staff also enjoyed running a different sort of library with its own rules for 'borrowers' who had to:

- return the 'book' in the same mental and physical condition as when borrowed
- not damage the 'book', such as bend the spine or spill food and drink over it
- not take the 'book' away from the 'library', and under no circumstances borrow the 'book' overnight
- not lend the 'book' to anyone else
- respect copyright law and not photocopy the 'book' or plagiarise from it
- not write on the 'book', unless in pencil – and ensure any notes were erased before the 'book' was returned.



As part of the festival, staff from the library, joined by a student from the university's MSc information management course and librarians from local further education colleges, took part in a two-day creative writing workshop led by poet, playwright and parliamentary writer in residence

Rommi Smith. The intended outcome is a book on working in academic libraries. Academic librarians Catherine Parkin and Kirsty Carver also took part in the festival's finale, 'May Day conversations', discussing their favourite books and the importance of reading, which was broadcast on the city's BBC Big Screen.

STAFFING

Academic librarian Liz Lanfear has been appointed a university teacher fellow. The teacher fellow network brings together individuals from across the institution who have been identified for their excellent practice in assessment, learning and teaching. Liz is also undertaking research into information literacy and investigating the needs of researchers – she can be contacted on l.lanfear@leedsmet.ac.uk for more information.

Another of our academic librarians, Stuart Smith, is taking part in the university's 'Talents to the full' secondment scheme and is spending six months working within the Leeds business school. One of his projects is working with academic colleagues on 'resource enhanced learning' (REL) – reviewing the resources students are encouraged to use in their learning activities. The aim is to see if these traditional reading lists might be better delivered to increase their take-up and use. REL seeks to enhance the user-friendliness, attractiveness and quality of the ways in which we inform students about resources to support their studies. Stuart can be contacted on s.smith@leedsmet.ac.uk.

Meanwhile, cataloguers David Baron and Kate Bunting have been teaching on the university's masters course in information management, passing on their expertise by leading the 'Organisation and retrieval of information' module.

TWITTER

Leeds Met library is now on Twitter! – follow us at <http://www.twitter.com/LeedsMetLibrary>

Helen Loughran

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University of Liverpool

BUILDING DEVELOPMENTS

2008/9 has seen the conclusion of a number of important library building and refurbishment projects at Liverpool. We completed the final phase of the extension of the Sydney Jones library (arts and humanities) with the absorption of

the former departmental libraries in law, music, archaeology and civic design. We also completed work in the basement area of the new wing, largely to hold compact shelving. The official opening of the newly extended and refurbished library was held in 2009. The ceremony was performed by Liverpool poets Roger McGough and Brian Patten, whose archives we had recently acquired (see below). The poets drew maximum comic potential from the fact that our staff had just discovered £450 in forgotten notes in Roger's archive!

The period also saw the completion of work, funded largely by the Wolfson Foundation, on the Harold Cohen library (science and medicine). The work enabled us to refurbish the three reading rooms on the upper floor of the library and the large landing that connects them. This allowed the creation of a subject area for medicine, with adjacent subject-specialist staff offices and the development of a suitable space for informal and group learning. All three reading rooms are now visible through large glass panels from the central landing, bringing out the scale and grandeur of the space for the first time. Though most of the work was about modernisation, work on the largest reading room was concentrated on reinforcing its identity as a traditional space for quiet reading, for example by providing task lighting at each study desk (thus, fittingly, reverting to the way in which the room was lit when the building opened in 1938).

All our building improvements seem to have been favourably received by our users, as reflected in our score in the 2009 national student survey, which saw us among the top four positions in the Russell group and in the top three in the *Times Higher Education* and 'International Student Barometer' surveys.

STAFFING

Turnover of staff was greater than usual, partly owing to the introduction of an early retirement/voluntary redundancy scheme to allow us to cope with the financial pressures the university is currently experiencing and the much sharper pressures the whole sector is likely to experience after the next general election. We said goodbye to Wendy Spalton, law librarian, who had been with us in various capacities since 1978; Joyce Raynor, architecture librarian, who joined the library in 1981; and Margaret Johnson, user services librarian in the Harold Cohen library, who came to us in 1995. Among those who retired, the longest serving member of staff was Adrian Allan, university

archivist, whose career in the university spanned a total of 39 years.

New arrivals included Paul Catherall, our new e-learning support librarian, replacing Stephanie Allen, who has moved to the University of Worcester.

UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENTS

There have been very significant changes within the university, not least the departure of our vice-chancellor, Sir Drummond Bone. Sir Drummond has been a staunch supporter of the library and much of the revival of our financial fortunes has been down to him. Our new vice-chancellor, Sir Howard Newby, brings with him a strong strategic focus and library staff have been closely involved in the implementation and development of the new strategic plan. Carol Kay project-managed the work on the restructuring of the university's academic departments and has recently been seconded to become project manager for the professional services review and business process improvement within the university. Laura Dunn was seconded to project-manage the development of the 'internationalisation' dimension of the new strategy, building upon the major and continuing role she has in the development of library provision in the new Xian Jiaotong Liverpool University in China.

ELECTRONIC DEVELOPMENTS

Over the past year we have been involved in the 'ArticleReach' project, in which we work co-operatively with other research libraries around the world to meet each other's inter-library loan requirements. The project has been very successful, and suggests a model for wider future application. In the first six months of the project the overall number of inter-library loan requests we have supplied to our users has doubled, as they took advantage of the simple automatic-request process feeding from our URL linker, fast delivery or response from 'ArticleReach' and a good success rate at a cost that is comparable with other services.

We are working with Serial Solutions to beta-test a new product called 'Summon'. If it fulfils its present promise 'Summon' could be the holy grail of library searching: something that operates with Google-like rapidity but leads to good-quality library resources, and which searches our book and journal holdings at the same time. It is able to search rapidly because it pre-harvests data from major aggregators, no longer relying on searching the databases themselves in response

to each query. It thus avoids the flaw that bedevils first-generation federated search engines of returning data from library catalogues rapidly but delivering results from remote journal indexes at a slower rate than the Google generation finds acceptable.

Among our more notable electronic acquisitions this year have been the following: Guardian/Observer Archive; Goldsmiths-Kress Library of Economic Literature, 1450–1850; the Springer complete 2009 collection; the Oxford Scholarship Online – Law collection; and the complete Royal Society of Chemistry e-book collection.

PROJECTS

The library has completed a number of special projects in the period covered by this report, including successful participation in phase 1 of UK Research Reserve and the successful delivery of the ticTOCs project (<http://www.tictocs.ac.uk/>). Together with other RLUK (Research Libraries UK) partners, we completed the '19th Century British Pamphlets' online project – <http://www.britishpamphlets.org.uk/> – which concluded with a highly enjoyable launch event here at Liverpool. This incidentally provided an opportunity for our guests to see our newly refurbished special collections and archives accommodation. This was a part of the Sydney Jones project, for which supplementary funding was provided by the Wolfson Foundation, allowing us to provide a new reading room, staff area, display facilities and teaching room.

Our special collections and archives staff are in the process of cataloguing the Liverpool poets' archive. We have held the archive of Adrian Henri for a number of years, but with assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other donors we were able to add to this the archives of Brian Patten and Roger McGough. An exhibition celebrating the work of all three poets, 'The Mersey Sound', features material from the archives and is on display at the university's newly opened Victoria Galley and Museum (see <http://www.liv.ac.uk/vgm/exhibitions/the-mersey-sound.htm>).

One of the most exciting projects of the year was the generation of a set of video introductions to different dimensions of library provision for use via YouTube. A group of our library assistant staff wrote, directed and produced these under the direction of subject librarian Linda Crane. They also acted in them, animated them and even wrote and performed the music. All the videos are suitable for viewing on PDAs (Personal

Digital Assistants) and mobile phones. They show the remarkable creativity of our staff and how the exuberant and anarchic comic talent that abounds in Liverpool can be harnessed to strategic ends! If you go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5slpJMRWKA8> you will realise why we are so proud of their work.

SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS

We introduced a number of enhancements to our services this year. Self-return of books was provided to complement the existing self-issue facility. We moved from a bypass book security system, under which books have to be passed around the barrier on exit, to 'full-circulating' security in which triggers are desensitised on issue. We also introduced coin payment of fines through self-issue terminals (allowing readers to remove blocks from their records during unstaffed opening, for example). The existing 'walk-in access' to electronic journals and databases provided at our Harold Cohen library was extended to the Sydney Jones library.

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Liverpool John Moores University

LAUNCH OF NEW SERVICE – LIBRARY AND STUDENT SUPPORT

From 1 September 2009, library and student support (L&SS) will be launched, and will begin to function as a newly converged service operating from the learning resource centres (LRCs) at John Moores University.

L&SS was created by bringing together services and associated staff from learning and information services and the campus centres (previously part of student services). From January 2010 it will also include generic student-facing administrative services previously offered from the faculty offices. The new service operates from the three LRCs (Aldham Robarts, Avril Robarts, I. M. Marsh). The services provided by L&SS include:

- **library and learning resources:** includes collection management, digitisation, circulation of learning materials, purchasing, copyright support, information literacy, research support, archives, study support, liaison with academics
- **ICT support:** includes open-access PCs and peripherals, open-access copying and print services, laptop loans, IT enquiry support, IT workshops for staff

- **student administration:** includes enrolment, student records, finance, coursework submission, withdrawals, module registration
- **programme enquiries:** includes student enquiries about the administration of programmes.

In addition, the LRCs will provide space for other student services, most notably careers and employability and welfare and counselling. This approach provides all core student support services in one campus-based location.

NEW BUILDING PROJECTS

As part of our convergence we have redesigned and refurbished all three of our LRCs. This is so that we could bring together the teams of staff that will be working together, and also to give as much space as possible to the students. Therefore we have been co-ordinating three very different building projects during the course of the year. This has presented several challenges (including closing the Aldham Robarts LRC for five months in order to do some major refurbishment work), but it will all be worthwhile once the new LRCs are fully operational. In effect the new LRCs represent the old libraries and campus centres, but all under one roof and with one set of staff delivering services.

THE SERVICE MODEL

L&SS supports all members of the university and provides access and support to scholars from other universities as well as members of the public. Its collections (both print and digital), staff, space and web services support research as well as learning and teaching. This broad-based support contains a very strong focus on the student experience, placing a high priority on student satisfaction. The service model is therefore designed to place student needs at the forefront but to ensure that the broader clientele of L&SS have easy access to its staff and services. The service model is delivered in the three campus-based LRCs via:

- **student support zone:** the ground floor of each LRC concentrates on student support. A 'welcome hub' provides reception, general enquiry support, appointments and referrals, assistance with IT and circulation enquiries (all loans of print material are self-service). A transaction desk provides all student administration help, including finance. Social learning support is also provided on the ground floor, i.e. flexible space allowing people to work collaboratively, with refreshments

available. The ground floor is supported by roving staff as well as staff on the desks. The Aldham Robarts and Avril Robarts LRCs continue to be open 24x7 in semester time.

- **specialist support services:** appointments and referrals, as well as some drop-in facilities provide access to specialist support services on other floors in the LRCs. These services tend to require extended one-to-one support and are sometimes confidential in nature. Small multi-use rooms are provided for these meetings and are designed so that they can be used by students for group study when not in use by support professionals. The services provided include welfare, careers, employability, library subject support and specialist computing support.
- **study facilities:** the LRCs continue to provide a range of student facilities adjacent to print-based learning resources. Silent-study facilities are concentrated on the upper floors of the buildings. There are also bookable group rooms and seminar rooms.
- **remote services:** as many services and facilities as possible are provided via the web or via phone and e-mail help. L&SS have taken the opportunity presented through the merger to channel all remote enquiries coming into the new service to a central enquiry point. This 'call centre' type of approach to handling enquiries will allow us to provide greater response to all telephone, e-mail and web-based enquiries. We will be making use of specialist 'Help Desk' software which will enable us to log, track and appropriately refer enquiries.

We anticipate that there will be interest in this newly converged model from staff in other SCONUL libraries and we will publicise details of scheduled open days or specially arranged visits once we are ready to receive visitors.

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Nottingham Trent University

NTU LIBRARIES & LEARNING RESOURCES WINS CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD

Libraries & learning resources (LLR) at Nottingham Trent University is among the few university libraries to gain the new government award for

customer service excellence (CSE). It is the first university library to do so with no previous experience of Charter Mark, CSE's predecessor, or other external accreditation, and marks LLR's commitment to developing its quality agenda.

Preparing for assessment involved staff across the library and prompted a fresh look at all aspects of service delivery, but especially those frontline services which have immediate and daily impact on students and academic staff, and which have been the focus of recent changes following the introduction of RFID and self-service.

Winning the award has confirmed that the changes are working and appreciated, not least by our students, academics and other professional service partners, who all participated in the assessment visits, as this remark by one of the senior administrators in the University shows:

'Thank you for asking us to be part of the process. It was nice to have positive things to say and show part of the University off to an outsider.'

Benefits of undertaking this award include a framework for continuous quality review and improvement, a sense of achievement and renewed motivation amongst frontline staff and a raised profile within both the university and the sector.

The external assessors were EMQC Limited of Derby.

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University of Plymouth

LIBRARY BUILDING RE-NAMED

The University of Plymouth library will be known as the Charles Seale-Hayne library from September 2009, although the official renaming ceremony is yet to be arranged. Sir Charles Seale-Hayne was responsible for establishing Seale-Hayne College in 1911, which became part of the Polytechnic South West (now University of Plymouth) in 1989. Following the closure of the Seale-Hayne campus in 2005, it was agreed that the library would take the name in order to reflect the importance of this local benefactor, who also endowed an educational trust that exists to this day and is managed by the university.

STAFFING CHANGES

Steve Monk, head of learning environment & information services (computing), has retired after nearly 30 years' service with the university. Over that period Steve has played an important part in many of the central IT services. For the last five years he has been responsible for the open-access computing and media services. His most notable achievements in that role were the establishment of our 24x7 open-access area in the library and the introduction of print accounting across the university. Julia Paget-Woods will now take the lead in all learning environment & information services, adding the computing role to her existing library responsibilities.

Chris Watson has retired after seven years at the university, initially as library manager at the Plymouth campus and latterly as collection services manager. Following her retirement, Fiona Greig will lead a new content and development team, bringing together the functions of contract and supplier management, content lifecycle, resource description, systems and e-development. Other role changes include Nicola Tricker (now contracts & negotiation manager), Nicette Ammar (content lifecycle manager), Vicki Maguire (resource description manager) and Graham Titley (subject librarian and copyright advisor).

SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

ILS staff are actively involved in two major university projects – enterprise-wide implementation of an e-portfolio system (based on PebblePad) and development of a research information management system, including the institutional repository and publications. In both cases, ILS staff are active in technical development, advocacy and training.

We also continue to be heavily involved with the development of Talis Aspire, the new resource list system. We have been actively working with Talis for ten months now (August 2009) and have had development engagement in the student view and academic elements. We have migrated all the old online reading lists to Aspire and have signed up over 100 academics to the Aspire service. Our project team, led by the three subject librarians, has led a series of promotional activities and events to get the message of 'Free your reading lists' across the campus. We are now feeding ideas to Talis on how recommendation for purchase and the more 'library'-focused activities can be developed.

We have also had a successful transition of our off-air recording service into a university-hosted

and Plymouth-specific 'Box of Broadcasts' (BoB) system. We implemented it in November to a small select group of ILS staff and went 'live' with a soft launch in May. Again BoB has been seen at a number of university and teaching and learning events and has been embraced by the academic staff. We now have academics making exciting use of recorded materials when they were not even aware of the service before this year. Library staff are now going through a process of selecting and 'digitising' core materials from the old off-air recordings.

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University of Reading

EXTENDED OPENING HOURS SATISFY STUDENT NEEDS

Since April 2009, our customers have enjoyed the extension of the opening hours of our Main Library Whiteknights, until midnight in term and Easter vacations. After several years of working towards this, at last – following a popular pilot using library staff volunteers last session and supported by a students' union campaign – the university provided the funds for new dedicated evening teams to embed the extended hours. Additionally, during the 2009 April/May exam period another volunteer pilot project kept the main library open later at weekends to meet student needs. We hope to continue this on a more formal basis in future.

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Royal Holloway University of London

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

A new library management team has been in place since January 2009 in Royal Holloway University of London. Coral Black (associate director, planning and administration) and Tim Wales (associate director, e-strategy) have joined John Tuck (director of library services) and Matthew Brooke (associate director, academic support). Other staff changes have included the appointments of Anna Grigson as e-resources manager and Graham Seaman as systems officer and more recently, following the departure of Damyanti Patel to Birmingham City University, the appointment of Paul Johnson as head of academic liaison.

Major challenges during the year, apart from facing the inevitable retrenchment brought about

by the credit crunch, have included the embedding of the new social learning space in the Bedford library (tlc@bedford), planning for improved silent-study space and a refurbishment of Bedford library level 3 over the summer of 2009, as well as preliminary discussions on a planned merger with St George's University of London (a decision on the merger is scheduled for the autumn).

SOCIAL LEARNING SPACE

Issue 46 of *SCONUL Focus* contained a detailed article about tlc@bedford. After a full academic year of operation, it is pleasing to note that usage of the remodelled space (based on sample day headcounts) is up by 38.9%. The IT-rich environment and the group-study spaces have been welcomed by many students. Their enjoyment and engagement with the space are reflected in comments made in the film that can be seen at www.rhul.ac.uk/Information-Services/TLC/ or on YouTube (1,461 viewings at time of writing). This enthusiasm is not shared by the whole student community. At a two-hour *Question Time*-style debate – 'Your library: love it or loathe it' – held in January 2009, there was a polarisation of views around the merits of such spaces and library cafes and on the need for greater investment in information resources and silent-study space.

BEDFORD LIBRARY LEVEL 3 REFURBISHMENT

Over the summer of 2009 the top floor of the Bedford library is being refurbished to provide a comfortable, DDA (Disability Discrimination Act)-compliant silent-study space. The aims of the project, scheduled for completion in time for the 2009/10 academic session, are to replace the 16-year-old carpet, accompanying pig-pen study spaces and outdated lighting with a modern range of furniture, fittings and lighting conducive to reflective study.

RECYCLING

The management team has overseen the revision and updating of a whole range of policy statements. A particular success has been a new staff environmental policy. This work, energetically led by graduate trainee Franckie Dunckley, culminated in a publicity campaign and the provision of a multitude of recycling bins and receptacles, all of which have been met with the full support and cooperation of the student body and have added yet more colour to tlc@bedford. A joint 'Red Nose day' venture with our students led to the concerted collection of fines on that day and their subsequent gift to charities.

BoB

Not *Twin Peaks* but 'Box of broadcasts', to which we were pleased to be an early subscriber. This online TV and radio archiving service enables subscribing institution members to watch and archive – for educational purposes – programmes from a wide range of UK broadcasting channels (including BBC1, BBC2, BBC3, BBC4, ITV, Channel 4, Channel Five, BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4). Archived programmes can be viewed, clips can be made and personal or shared playlists created. The service, acquired in February 2009, is proving extremely popular at Royal Holloway. There have been 415 subscribers here so far and 1,842 broadcasts flagged up for recording and archiving.

AND FINALLY...

In our review of policies, we looked closely at past practice and decided not to reverse the following Bedford College decision of 1936 (RHUL Archives, BC AL 901/131):

Bedford College for Women

Letter: May 8th 1936

Dear Miss Paterson,

As you know, last year I published a College regulation to the effect that stockings should be worn by students in the Library, at examinations and lectures. I do not think this rule has been very well observed as I had a very widely signed petition asking that it should be rescinded. After talking the matter over with the Union Committee, I am convinced that the rule could not be enforced except at the cost of more friction than is wise. I have therefore withdrawn it...

Yours sincerely,

G. Jebb'

John Tuck

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University of Sussex

This has been an extremely productive and exciting time for the University of Sussex library as we prepare for major changes over the next 18 months.

LIBRARY REFURBISHMENT

Following the award of a HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) grant for a major refurbishment of the library at Sussex, the planning process is now in full swing. The architects, Woods Bagot, were appointed in January 2009 and are working closely with library staff, English Heritage and other stakeholders to

develop a design that is both modern in terms of functionality whilst remaining sympathetic to the vision of the original architect, Sir Basil Spence.

The key objectives of the project are to:

- provide flexible, accessible, technology-rich learning space
- implement RFID, including an automated book sorter, to facilitate all loan transactions
- zone study areas to provide social, group, individual and silent learning spaces
- provide a graduate study area
- provide open-access compact shelving
- co-locate careers within the library building
- provide an upgraded café
- redesign and refurbish existing office space
- re-organise the library collections to improve accessibility and navigation.

The physical works are due to begin in December 2009, for completion in spring 2011, so it's going to be a very busy 18 months.

RFID

Again as part of the library's refurbishment project, we went out to tender in April for a RFID self-service implementation, which will include a book sorter, using the LUPC (London Universities Purchasing Consortium) framework agreement for RFID. The contract has been awarded to Intelident. Tagging began on 10 July and we expect to have the book stock and audio visual collection tagged by the end of September 2009. Self-service equipment will be installed and tested in the autumn, ready for an expected 'go live' date of January 2010. Through implementing RFID we aim to:

- significantly increase the proportion of our self-service issue and return transactions to as near 100% as possible
- reduce the amount of staff-mediated transactions, including fines payments, and so free up staff time for more pro-active user services
- reduce shelving times by automating the sorting of returned items
- improve stock-management capabilities through utilising RFID-based technology for stock-checking and locating missing items
- improve the 'look and feel' of our services
- enhance the user experience and increase user satisfaction.

REFINING OUR COLLECTION AND PREPARING FOR THE REFURBISHMENT

Sussex will participate in the second phase of the UKRR (UK Research Reserve) project. We plan to withdraw up to 2.5 kilometres of low-use print journals over the next few years. The majority of the material will duplicate online content for which we have bought perpetual access. In addition, and to facilitate our major refurbishment, virtually all our print journals will move to a local store later in the year. They will return to the library as a single entity at the end of the project in 2011.

TALIS ASPIRE

Sussex is one of the pilot sites for the Talis Aspire project. First impressions of the new product are very positive, with academics in our focus group and their students agreeing that the look is a major improvement on the old Talis List. All our existing lists in Talis List have been converted to Aspire and are accessible from within individual course sites on the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment). Currently, academic staff have read-only access since the reporting mechanisms to alert library staff of changes made to a list have yet to be developed, but these mechanisms, we are assured by Talis, are under way.

Library staff are working extremely hard in testing the functionality of the system so far, to identify areas that are not working as expected and areas for future development, which are then reported directly to Talis for resolution/consideration.

ARCHIVAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

We have recently purchased the CALM archival management system. This will give us the facility to efficiently record, manage and cross-search all our extensive archival collections for the first time. We are confident that this will open up our special collections to more researchers (both at Sussex and beyond) and to new teaching opportunities. We hope to launch this catalogue to the public early in the autumn term of 2009.

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Swansea University

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Following a period of assessment in May 2009 library & information services was very pleased to receive the Customer Service Excellence award.

This is the UK national standard of customer service excellence for public sector organisations and is overseen by the Cabinet Office. LIS previously held the Chartermark award, from 2006.



VIRTUAL ACADEMIC LIBRARY

The three universities in south west Wales (Swansea University, Swansea Metropolitan University and Trinity University College) are collaborating under the £7.4 million South West Wales Higher Education Partnership (SWWHEP), funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW). The partnership funds a variety of projects, ranging from joint procurement to shared e-learning platforms.

One of the largest SWWHEP projects is the virtual academic library initiative, which aims at a unified approach to resources and services across the libraries of the three universities. A major deliverable of the virtual academic library is a standard, RFID-based lending system for all libraries across the partnership. This has meant tagging the entire stock of the three university libraries: 1.1 million items in total. The RFID project is due for completion in September 2009, when all the RFID self-service units in all the library branches will have gone live.

Another key component of the SWWHEP library project is developing unified discovery tools. This will be based on the joint purchase and implementation of the Metalib resource discovery platform, the VuFind portal and the Relais document delivery system.

The virtual academic library project is due for completion in autumn 2010 and will be one of the widest-ranging examples of university library partnership in the UK.

SUMMER REFURBISHMENTS

The library & information centre at Swansea University is having one of its regular summer makeovers. This is driven by the installation of new, RFID-based self-service units (see above on the virtual academic library). We are also re-designing and re-focussing our service points and associated frontline staff areas to unify a previously separate range of services for our customers. Some of the vintage nineteen-sixties lighting in our bookstacks is being upgraded to more modern, energy-effi-

cient lighting. Last, but not least, our toilet areas are also having a much-needed update.

Archives is in the process of moving its materials into a new facility which will provide more spacious, purpose-designed accommodation for readers and documents. The move of the documents is progressing well and will be followed by the construction of a new reading room and staff accommodation, due for completion in autumn 2009. As a result of the move, Archives will be closed to all readers from Monday 1 June and will re-open on Tuesday 1 September 2009.

ALOHA HAWAII!



In May 2009 medical school deputy librarian Katrina Dalziel attended the 'iFusions' American Medical Library Association conference held this year in Honolulu, Hawaii.

She was awarded a bursary by the CILIP HLG (Health Libraries Group) and EBSCO in order to attend. Katrina kept us up to date (and rather envious!) with conference news whilst she was in Honolulu via the HLG Wales blog: <http://hlg-wales.wordpress.com/>.

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