

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND LIBRARY.

REPORT OF THE JAMES FORSYTH LIBRARIAN
FOR THE YEAR 1956.

1. GENERAL

The year under review was an extremely successful one.

There was in particular a very considerable increase in the output of the central processing departments and a gratifying improvement in the service given directly to readers at the Main Library.

In part, at least, this all-round improvement was due to the approval by the Senate of two new positions on the Library Staff, but it is pleasing to record that, for instance, the increase in cataloguing output was far more than proportional to the increase in staff.

The year also saw a number of innovations in the processing and service departments which will be detailed later, all of which have contributed to an increase in overall efficiency.

The general picture is one of increasing control and development of the day to day operations of the Library. There is however, still an awe-inspiring mass of work to be done in the checking and completion of tasks initiated in the past. To take the Main Library alone, after eight years of constant stock-checking only now is it possible to say with any reasonable assurance that even the shelf-list is comprehensive and accurate, that is to say that there does exist at last a complete record of the stock as it stands on the shelves. The far more complicated task of checking this record with the catalogue to discover the extent of inaccuracies therein and omissions therefrom, such as are continually revealed in day to day operations, has yet to be essayed.

STAFF

One of the most important developments during the year was the appointment of the University's first Deputy Librarian, Mr. D.B. Scott, B.A.

As mentioned elsewhere this appointment has made possible not only a considerable improvement in reader service and reference work, but also has enabled the Librarian to undertake a number of extra commitments the completion of which previously had seemed impossible even to contemplate.

In addition, the Senate was pleased to approve the appointment of an additional Junior Library Assistant in the person of Miss C. Morrison. This enabled the Cataloguing Staff to be increased by the addition of a Junior Cataloguer, and Miss J. Doig was promoted to this position.

Consequent upon the appointment of Mr. Scott as Deputy Librarian, Mr. C. E. Roberts, M.A., was appointed Officer in charge of Orders and Accessions, Mr. S. Spearritt, B.A., was appointed Officer in charge of Periodicals and Exchange in succession to Mr. C. T. Pleak, B.A., whose resignation was noted in the report for 1955.

Of the junior staff Miss S.P. Mansfield, secretary to the Librarian, resigned to go overseas and her place was taken by Miss C. King.

A number of further changes took place among the Departmental Librarians. Miss G. Hassell resigned from the librarianship of the Dental College to be married, her place being taken by Miss M. Waugh. At the commencement of the year Miss E. Truesdale resigned her position as Thatcher Librarian to enrol as a full-time student and her place was taken by Miss J.C. Smith, B.A.

Miss V. C. Hall of the Agriculture/Botany Library and Miss M. Hooper of the Physics Library also resigned to travel overseas. Miss Hall's place was taken by Miss B. MacDougall, B.A., whose period of leave overseas had to be curtailed for personal reasons. Miss A. Hancox was appointed to the vacancy created by Miss Hooper's resignation.

As the year ended a veritable spate of resignations descended on the Library. Of the senior staff, no less than three, Miss J.S. Oakley, B.A., Miss J. MacDonnell, B.A., and Miss A. Thatcher all resigned to be married and Mrs. J. Orange, B.A., was forced to relinquish her temporary re-appointment as Librarian of the Medical School.

As the replacements for these positions were not completed during the year, they will be announced in the Annual Report for 1957, although their effect was only too clearly felt in 1956.

During the year classes were conducted at the Main Library leading to the Preliminary Examination of the Library Association of Australia and all eight candidates were successful at that examination, namely Mr. S. Spearritt, B.A., Mr. C. Roberts, M.A., Miss J.C. Smith, B.A., Misses P. Armstrong, B. Mellor, A. Wanchap and D. Thorpe and Mr. S. Rogers.

3. ORDERING AND ACCESSIONING.

The following statistics illustrate the growth in volume of the full pre-catalogue checking now given to all orders lodged with the Library with the exception of those regarded by the initiating Departments as extremely urgent. It should be noted that in the case of these last, the Library can take no responsibility for any duplication of titles with the existing stock. As regards normal ordering of course, a careful check is made to avoid this possible waste of limited funds.

Year	Items Ordered	Items Accounted for in the year.
1954	7061	5373
1955	7507	5310
1956	7967	5625

It will be noted that the percentage accounted for within the year was slightly more in 1956 than the previous year although it had not re-attained to the figure for 1954.

The figures vary enormously from Department to Department within the vote. For instance, the only Department which lodged practically all its orders later than the agreed deadline received, or had accounted for, only 12 items from a total of 184. On the other hand the Department lodging the largest number of ordered items had 513 accounted for of a total of 696. In some smaller sections the library was able to supply as many as, for instance 41 of 43 items ordered.

During the year, 1137 items came to hand additionally from orders lodged in 1955.

The Library's relations with its major agent of supply, the University Bookshop, continue to improve. By arrangement with the Manager of the Bookshop orders are now passed to the Bookshop on cards instead of on the multi-unit forms and it is hoped that this will lead at last to a practicable and efficient follow-up system being established by the Bookshop. This is long overdue and will at last relieve the Library of much undeserved odium in the matter of non-delivery or long delay in supply, as also of the present time-consuming though almost completely vain process of issuing regular reminder lists to the Bookshop.

4. CENTRAL CATALOGUING.

As noted above it was possible during 1956 to make the additional junior appointment necessary to enable the inclusion of a Junior Cataloguer in the Library Staff.

It is with great pleasure that the Librarian can report now that this appointment has more than justified itself. The figures speak for themselves.

Year	Volumes Catalogued.
1955	7180
1956	9916

Had it not been for a sudden rush of resignations at the end of the year which resulted in a very low output for the month of December, the cataloguing staff would have easily surpassed a processing total of 10,000 volumes, an astronomical figure at which the Librarian has been aiming for several years. As it was, their actual achievement was much more than double the 4738 items processed in 1952, the year in which this section of the staff was first increased to four.

It should be pointed out that these figures refer in all cases only to new cataloguing. In addition there is inevitably a continuous process of recataloguing as the errors and inconsistencies of the past are discovered and remedied. In all 933 further items were dealt with in this way.

It should be remembered also that this summary takes no account of the time spent cataloguing new periodical titles or classifying pamphlets, quite apart from those duties ancillary to cataloguing, particularly the checking, sorting and filing of 50,000 cards per year in the catalogues, as well as other non-cataloguing duties, chiefly evening supervision of the Main Library which accounts for 15 cataloguer hours per week of a possible total of less than 200.

For the first time for many years there was, for much of the year, no more than a day or two's work on hand of purchased books awaiting cataloguing. That is to say, the Main Library imposed a delay of less than a week between the receipt of items and their delivery to Department Libraries. A small enough price to pay for permanent recording and careful description. The year's work also included the cataloguing of no less than 1,500 donations, so that, at last, some progress was made in reducing the large backlog noted in the report for 1955.

The flood of books, however, is not affected in any way by the availability of staff to handle them and the loss of seventy-five percent of the cataloguing staff in a month meant the accumulation of a formidable mass of material awaiting cataloguing as the year ended; this is being dealt with.

. THE MAIN LIBRARY.

A very pleasing improvement in the service given by the Main Library has followed the appointment of the Deputy Librarian. More borrowing was done from the Library in second and third terms 1956 than in any one complete year previously. Thanks also to a closer supervision of the borrowing system and the introduction of new time-saving forms and routines the number of books on loan at the end of the year comprised but a fraction of those outstanding at any similar time in the past.

The turnover of borrowing moreover was much accelerated by the introduction of new borrowing cards.

During term, as an experiment, either the Librarian or the Deputy Librarian remained in the Library during the evening with the idea of improving the service given to evening students. The Librarian has come reluctantly to the conclusion that this extra commitment is impossible of fulfilment as a general rule without at least some compensating absence during the day and that at present it is more important that the directing staff be on hand in the daytime to cope with the infinitely more intense use per person made of the library by day students; as also in consideration of the convenience of the teaching and administrative staffs, with whom it is frequently necessary to confer.

A measurable increase in the attendance of evening students was, however, noted during the year. Reader comfort was greatly improved by the reduction in height of all the reading room tables and, to meet the convenience of students access to the reading room was initiated by way of the Cloister door in addition to the Main Entrance. Unfortunately, due to the design of the library it was impossible to achieve this and yet retain a measure of supervision, without re-arranging the central reading room to impose a rather circuitous route on all patrons of the cloister entrance.

During the year it was at last possible to produce a complete Staff Manual for use both in the Main Library and in the Departmental Libraries. This manual records the complete details of library routine as employed in the system and also the specific allocation of duties and responsibilities to members of the Library Staff. Copies are lodged at all major service points in the library system.

6. DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARIES.

The only specific Departmental library project undertaken during the year was the preparation by photocopying of a large section of the entries for the revised edition of the Thatcher Memorial Library catalogue. In addition to this, of course, the Senior Staff of the Main Library undertook the operation of Departmental libraries while their librarians were on leave and copes, as usual, with much re-cataloguing of material discovered in Departmental libraries.

Since the photocopying project comprised a new extension of central processing it may be of interest to describe briefly its application.

The compilation of the library catalogue which is

issued to External students as some compensation for their inability actually to browse in the library, involves considerable time and labour. Each book in the Thatcher Library receives an entry in the printed catalogue which is not only practically equivalent to the corresponding card in the Main Catalogue, but includes also a list of contents of the book and, where applicable, a comment on it by a member of the teaching staff. The physical difficulty of collating these items is quite considerable, since, in the first place, books and the catalogue cards for them do not normally arrive together in the Thatcher Library from the Main Library and, in the second, it is not always convenient for the lecturing staff to record their comments immediately. As a result of these and other factors, considerable extra typing of lists and slips had continually to be done in the Thatcher Library.

The installation of a photocopier in the Main Library has immensely simplified and accelerated this procedure. As part of normal processing, all Thatcher books now have a photocopy made, in one operation, of the contents page and the master copy from which the catalogue entry will be duplicated. This photocopy accompanies the book to the Thatcher Library, is itself issued as the sheet on which comments, if any, are recorded, and is filed as copy for the next edition of the catalogue.

At the same time, that this procedure was introduced for new accessions, it was decided to reduce the huge unwieldy mass of standing entries to the same medium. This file which comprised in part pasted-up extracts from previous editions of the catalogue and in part typed slips for new entries, is now being standardized either by actual photocopying of the longer entries or by typing the shorter ones onto the otherwise wasted used negative sheets produced during the photocopying process.

In addition to this new application of photomechanical aids, a further two microfilm readers were installed during the year, as presaged in the report for 1955, one at the Medical School and one at the Dental School. The Library is now well equipped in this regard.

7. THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA.

The University maintains its corporate membership of this body of which, in addition, of course, most of the library staff are personal members.

The Librarian and the Deputy Librarian as Representative Councillors for Queensland attended the General Council meeting of the Association held in Sydney in June.

During 1956, the Librarian continued to act as editor of the Australian Library Journal.

8. THE LIBRARY AND THE UNIVERSITY.

As a positive and vital unit in the teaching programme it is important that the Library should play its part in the conduct of academic life.

To this end the Librarian has been happy to serve for some years past as a member of the Faculty of Arts. In 1956 he was entrusted with the editorship of the Faculty of Arts Handbook, and for some years he has acted as the University's Senior Proctor.

The Deputy Librarian was proud to bear the mace for the first time in 1956 at the ceremony of conferring of degrees.

During 1956, the Librarian acted as Secretary of the University of Queensland Staff Association and was further honoured by being invited to deliver the John Murtagh Macrossan Memorial Lecture for 1956.

9. BINDERY.

The bindery finally commenced operations in 1956 and for some months before the end of the year delivered 80 to 100 volumes of re-binding and repairs regularly each week.

For administrative convenience, the bindery, which is housed within the printery and uses some equipment in common with it, is attached to the Printery rather than to the Library. To date, there has been no cause to complain of this arrangement, binding has been done promptly and well and the complete output of the binder has been directed to work for the Library.

By the arrangement, 50% of the repairs effected each week are done on behalf of the Departmental libraries, the libraries being treated in rotation; the remainder is directed towards reducing the huge volume of repairs needed in the Main Library.

It is pleasing to report that the unexpectedly rapid rate of repair work may make it possible to extend the Bindery's operations to cover some new binding at a much earlier date than had been anticipated.

10. ACCOMMODATION.

The problem of accommodation continues to press for attention, despite the much-appreciated relief given the Main Library by the mezzanine installation reported last year.

During 1956 the Engineering Library was able at last to expand somewhat as a result of the transfer of the Physics Department to St. Lucia. For the first time for years, this library extends to some sources of natural lighting and ventilation, although the increase in shelf space is not of any great moment.

Plans were completed during the year for a much enlarged Biological Sciences Library to be housed in the building now under construction at St. Lucia. The Library will include and effectively integrate three smaller service points at present separately maintained at George Street.

Other Department libraries are not so fortunately placed and the situation in Veterinary Science in particular can best be described by the use of that rather overworked term desperate.

To meet the increasing needs for reserve storage from these outlying collections, as also the natural and rapid multiplication of the Main Library stocks themselves, the Librarian would venture to direct attention already to further possible extensions of the Main Library Building.

In doing so it is necessary to emphasize the reduction in the gain made by the installation of the mezzanine, not only by the planned loss of space to the Printery, but also by the fact that this alteration was increased on two successive occasions after the original arrangement was made.

A project was mooted some years ago of completing the Library building within the fairly near future by the addition of the three additional floors included in the original plan. It was understood that since the Library would not require immediately the complete additions, it might be possible to use the upper two floors temporarily for the alleviation of the overcrowding

so felt in the Main Building.

There are, of course, obvious disadvantages to such a project from the Library's point of view. In any case, it appears unlikely that such an extension would be allowed any high priority on the building programme.

A further possibility exists which the Librarian would like on this occasion to put forward.

It is understood that the terms of the original Forsyth Gift to the Library involve its use "for the construction of the New Library at St. Lucia". As far as can be seen there is no intention of using the capital for this purpose. By a rough calculation, however, it would appear to amount to just about the total required to insert a mezzanine level on the lower floor of the existing building both under the bookstack and under the Central Reading Room, complete with the requisite steel shelving and lighting.

This project if found to be feasible in detail and in terms of the original gift, would provide expansion at the point most needed, namely in the reserve storage areas, and should well eliminate the need to press for further major extensions to the Building for perhaps up to ten years.

11. THE LIBRARY AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

During the year, the Library became involved in a controversy with one teaching Department on an issue which however confused it became with the effluxion of time, seemed and seems still to the Librarian to require a firm statement of two points which are surely fundamental to the role of the Library in the University.

In the first place, one, if not the major contribution, which the University Library can make to tertiary education in this time of doubt and uncertainty is to attempt to present the undergraduate student, in particular, with an integrated and comprehensive collection of books covering as far as possible the whole range of human knowledge and achievement. In doing this it may persuade some to read more widely than is required by their formal courses of study and so attain in one of the very few ways still available to them to some measure of the traditional liberalness and breadth of University education. But beyond this, merely by demonstrating the essential unity and interdependence of the fields of intellectual endeavour, may it not counter, at least in part, the accelerating trend towards over-specialization which is so frequently deplored?

To give effect to this objective it is necessary to make as comprehensive as possible the centralised core collection housed in the Main Library, and, where the operating efficiency of a laboratory Department positively demands the convenience of a Departmental Library, to insist without qualification on the right of unrestricted access to it by all persons privileged to use the University Library.

In the second place it seems established, and this view has been affirmed by the Heads of Departments of the Faculty of Arts meeting in committee on this matter, that in no field of the University's teaching is there greater need for the demonstration of this unity and inter-dependence of subject fields than in the area of knowledge covered by this faculty. To condone decentralization of Library resources in this regard is to spell the doom of effective University education in this vast and important family of studies.

12. STATISTICS.

1. Summary of expenditure on the Library Vote.

1955			1956	
£	£	<u>Payments for the year were:-</u>	£	£
10973		Books	11323	
7230		Periodicals	8540	
3877		Binding	3790	
1260		Sundries	1615	
	23360	<u>Total Payments.</u>		25268
		<u>Against which receipts were:</u>		
	22140	Library Vote		24406
		<u>Resulting in a balance of</u>		
Dr.	1220		Dr.	862

11. Accessions (includes only items fully processed during the year)

1955		<u>Books</u>	1956	
6266		Purchased	8416	
914		Donated	1500	
	7180	Total		9916
		<u>Periodicals (Bound Volumes only)</u>		
2761		Purchased	3067	
247		Donated	76	
	3484	Total		3143
10664		<u>Total (all items)</u>		13059
-		<u>Less (withdrawn)</u>		62
10664		<u>Net Increase</u>		12997

111. Total Bookstock.

31.12.55	31.12.56
134,668	147,665.

IV STAFF.

1955		1956
1	Librarian	1
-	Deputy Librarian	1
1	Assistant Librarian	1
	<u>Main Library.</u>	
	Senior Library Assistants	
4	Cataloguers	4
1	Orders and Accessions Officer	1
1	Periodicals and Exchange Officer	1
2	Library Assistants.	5
3	Junior Library Assistants	1
1	Library Attendant	1
<u>14</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>18</u>
	<u>Departmental Libraries.</u>	
3	Senior Library Assistants	3
9	Library Assistants	9
-	Junior Library Assistants	-
<u>12</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>12</u>
26	TOTAL STAFF	28

Harrison Bryan
James Forsyth Librarian.