

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND LIBRARY.  
REPORT OF THE JAMES FORSYTH LIBRARIAN  
FOR THE YEAR 1955.

1. GENERAL.

It would be pleasant to present a record of operations which surpassed statistically that of the preceding year but this the Librarian is unable to do. A year of very considerable disturbance both in relation to staffing and to accommodation resulted in an output no superior to that of 1954.

It is reasonable to say however that while no records were broken the standard of work remained satisfactorily high and despite a failure to gain approval for an extra appointment to the cataloguing staff the lag in cataloguing new publications, though it increased considerably did not assume uncontrollable proportions.

It was completely impossible unfortunately to make any real move towards reducing the Library's very sizeable commitments in relation to old stock. At the time of writing there are in the Main Library alone at least 5,000 volumes which have never been recorded in any way and which therefore constitute a real threat to the comprehensiveness of attempts to prevent unnecessary duplication of stock.

For these reasons the Librarian feels it necessary to re-emphasize his conviction that this extra appointment should not be further delayed.

2. STAFF.

Two new positions were created by the Senate during 1955 and several changes of staff took place as a consequence of this and for other reasons.

Miss B. MacDougall, B.A., was granted fifteen months leave of absence in November in order to proceed overseas and Mr. C.T. Pleak, B.A. resigned with the same purpose in view.

Miss Barbara Anderson of the Physiology Department having resigned to be married, her place was filled by Miss B. Bygott formerly of the Periodical Department of the Main Library and Miss Grace Hassell of the Orders and Accessions Department was appointed to the new position of full-time librarian at the Dental School.

To replace these two transfers from the Main Library staff, Misses E. Carroll and P. Armstrong were appointed Junior Library Assistants.

A full-time appointment having been approved for the Geology Library, Miss Carroll transferred to it and her place was taken by Miss A. Wanchap. Miss L. Weeks formerly half-time Geology and half-time Chemistry librarian now divides her time between the Chemistry Library and the Main Library.

Miss A. Thatcher was promoted temporarily to Senior Library Assistant in place of Miss MacDougall and Miss B. Mellor was appointed temporary Junior Library Assistant to replace Miss Thatcher.

2. STAFF.(continued)

During the year Miss Carroll passed the Preliminary Examination of the Library Association of Australia, thus securing her titular promotion to Library Assistant.

By arrangement with the Faculty concerned an interchange of staff was effected between the Engineering and Main Libraries, Miss N.R. Munro, B.A. formerly in charge of the Engineering Library transferring to the Central Cataloguing staff in place of Miss J. Oakeley, B.A. This experimental interchange has proved very satisfactory to all concerned and has created a precedent for possible future readjustments of staffing.

In connection with this matter it was thought advisable to clarify the relations between the University Librarian and the officers staffing Departmental Libraries and the Senate was pleased to approve the principle that all persons appointed full-time to library work within the University are members of the Library staff.

All in all, as may be gathered from the preceding paragraphs, the year was one of almost constant change as far as staff was concerned and this instability was reflected inevitably in an inability to maintain the record output of work in all Departments that was noted last year.

Movement of staff is of course quite inevitable especially in a preponderately female establishment and perhaps the worst aspect of it is that it almost precludes effective central training of officers for Departmental libraries. The close of the year under review in fact saw the Main Library virtually stripped of all the experienced Library Assistants it could afford to spare while the system as a whole was faced, at the same time, with the prospect of at least three further resignations early in the new year.

3. ORDERING AND ACCESSIONING.

The annual report for 1954 contained, for the first time, accurate statistics of the operations of this important section of the central processing scheme. It is worth recording that, in 1955, 7,507 items received full pre-catalogue checking as opposed to 7,061 in the previous year. Delivery figures were not as good, however, only 5,310 of these items being accounted for by the end of the year.

A pleasant conclusion to be drawn from the year's operation is that the average cost of books taken into the Library is still declining steadily. In 1955 it stood at £1.10.0 as opposed to £1.12.0 the previous year.

Further modifications to the ordering routine were introduced to reduce still further the chance of duplication of stock. The system is now proof against the duplication of books in process of being catalogued and this added safeguard has been secured without increasing to any measureable extent the work of either the accessioning or the cataloguing Departments.

One useful by-product, so to speak, of the revolutionary accessioning routine which has been developed in the library is that it enables the record of items on order to be checked automatically at the end of each year's operations against errors that have occurred during the year. This practice is almost certainly unique among libraries handling up to 8,000 ordered items per year.

4. CENTRAL CATALOGUING:

The cataloguing department had an interrupted year in 1955 due to staff changes and also to being involved in extensive stock checking as a result of structural alterations to the Main Library.

The output of new cataloguing fell consequently to 7,180 books, some 186 less than last year's record, but still well ahead of the 6,682 catalogued by the same sized staff in 1953. In addition, 784 old books were re-catalogued.

Unfortunately the cataloguers were unable to cope with the accessioned intake and, at the end of the year, there were at least 1,800 purchased items awaiting cataloguing. In addition, a very notable benefaction, the Jones Gift, had brought in over 1,000 more.

There is no hope of reducing this lag in the cataloguing process except either by increasing the size of the Department or by reducing the load on it of largely routine work. It will be remembered that the annual report for 1954 included a statement to this effect, but the accompanying request was deferred for a number of reasons and ultimately lapsed.

On this occasion the Librarian feels he must press again for some relief in cataloguing by the appointment of a Junior Library Assistant. As suggested in last year's report, this appointment will enable internal adjustments of staff to be made, at no extra cost in salaries, to allow some of the routine work to be taken over from the cataloguing staff.

5. THE CENTRAL COLLECTIONS.

Considerable disturbance was caused to the operation of the Main Reading Rooms by the very welcome installation of a mezzanine floor as presaged in last year's report. Every effort was made, however, to reduce to a minimum interference with readers and it was possible to carry on without any real interruption to reading or borrowing, in spite of the fact that the whole open access resources of the library had to be moved to temporary storage in the Northern Reading Room.

Relaxation of the borrowing regulations in sympathy with student difficulties at this period was appreciated by the large majority of undergraduates, but resulted inevitably in a large mass of long overdue loans which will take some time to recover.

It was found possible to complete the unloading, stacking, re-loading and re-distribution of stock without calling on any outside labour. All in all at least 100,000 books were handled over a period of a few weeks.

In view of the abnormal conditions prevailing for much of the year, no use statistics were maintained relating to the Main Library, but the Librarian feels it necessary to point again to the negligible use made of the Reading Rooms by evening students. If the only factors governing the opening of the library in the evenings were economic, the Librarian would be failing in his duty if he condoned the terrific waste of salaries, lighting and time it involves.

One concludes that the abstention of evening students from library use is due either to lack of incentive or to inadequate opportunity. If the former reason applies, the solution would appear to be related to teaching in particular subjects, and especially to examination requirements and so to be beyond the

5. THE CENTRAL COLLECTIONS.(continued)

control of the Library. It might be possible however to increase the opportunity evening students have to use the library by some rearrangement of timetables. If the lectures in any one subject were spread over the week instead of being concentrated on one particular evening, students might be prepared to spend time after lectures in the Library. At present it seems certain that they will never make a special trip to St. Lucia on a non-lecture night merely to use the library but instead, if they do anything, will use the Public Library where there is less certainty that the exact books they require will be available.

6. DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARIES.

No major project of re-cataloguing was undertaken during the year, the records of most Departmental collections having now been reconciled largely with the central catalogue and the classification of their books checked. Some time however was devoted to the seismological publications in the Geology library and the cataloguing staff as usual provided reliefs to enable Senior Departmental Librarians to proceed on leave.

During the year an "Ediswar" microfilm reader was installed in the Engineering Library and a "Kangaroo" reader at Veterinary Science. A further reader was ordered for the Medical School and it is hoped to provide one in 1956 for the Dental College. Each of the major centres will then be equipped to read microfilm and so to derive maximum benefit from the inter-library loan scheme.

7. THE MAIN LIBRARY BUILDING.

The additional shelving to which reference was made in last year's report was supplied and erected during the year, completing what is, in effect, a three-tier stack to the south of the Central Reading Room with a total capacity of approximately 90,000 volumes.

However, in order to accommodate the bindery to which reference is made later, approximately one third of the lower tier was evacuated, thus substantially reducing the space gained by the new construction.

The general opinion seems to be that apart from the much needed expansion it provides, the new installation has much enhanced the appearance and utility of the book stack. In particular, the new fluorescent lighting has been much commended.

8. BINDERY.

A very marked step forward was the approval given during 1955 for the establishment of a bindery within the Library. Unfortunately the step has not been completed, the Library remaining poised, as it were, on one foot. As a matter of convenience and economy, it was agreed to house the bindery temporarily within the University Printery, the whole being located on the lower floor of the bookstack in space vacated for the purpose.

An expensive guillotine has been delivered, but the projected move of the Printery has been held up. It is hoped that the matter will be settled during 1956.

9. THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA.

In August 1955, the second all-Australian conference of the Library Association of Australia took place at St. Lucia. The Central Reading Room of the Main Library was used as a registration point and displays were mounted therein of recent developments in library equipment and techniques.

Your Librarian as President of the Queensland Branch of the Association acted as host to the Conference, much of the success of which was due to the organizing ability and untiring effort of the Branch Secretary, Mr. D.B. Scott, B.A., Officer in charge of Orders and Accessions in the University Library. The Librarian read a paper to the University Section of the Conference entitled "The Function of the University Library in Modern Democracy." As Representative Councillor for Queensland, he participated also in the deliberations of the General Council held in conjunction with the conference. He continued also in 1955 to act as editor of The Australian Library Journal.

The University sustained its membership of the Association in the person of its corporate representative, the Chairman of the Library Committee.

Conjointly with the Conference, a meeting was convened, with your librarian as chairman, of the Principal Librarians of Australian Universities.

10. DONATIONS.

The librarian would like to direct attention to the fact that since 1953 an average of over 900 donated books a year have been catalogued, in addition to an average of over 350 bound volumes of periodicals.

Moreover, because of the shortage of cataloguing staff there has been a fairly rigorous process of selection applied so that the donations catalogued certainly represent a saving to the University of at least their purchase price, or some £2,000 per year.

1955 saw one of the largest single donations of books in the Library's history, when it was privileged to receive the books of the late Thomas Llewelyn Jones, a former member of the Senate and a well-known figure in both commercial and educational circles in Queensland.

To date only a trickle of the Jones gift has managed to find its way into the collection, but it is hoped that substantial portions of it will be catalogued in the coming year.

It is gratifying that citizens should consider the University Library worthy of housing their books and particularly noteworthy that they should, as they do, understand that the Library while anxious to receive donations must decline, at the same time, to act as an uncritical repository for unwanted ephemera.

STATISTICS.

I. Summary of expenditure on Library Vote.

1954			1955	
£	£	<u>Payments for the year were:</u>	£	£
12466		Books	10973	
7314		Periodicals	7230	
2943		Binding	3877	
1091		Sundries	1280	
		<u>Total payments</u>		<u>23360</u>
	23814			
		<u>Against which receipts were:</u>		
	<u>22105</u>	Library vote		<u>22140</u>
		<u>Resulting in a balance of:</u>		
cr.	1719		dr.	1220

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

<u>1954</u>		<u>Books</u>	<u>1955</u>
6402		Purchased	6266
964		Donated	914
	7366	<u>Total</u>	<u>7180</u>
		<u>Periodicals (Bound volumes only)</u>	
2272		Purchased	2761
78		Donated	247
	2350	<u>Total</u>	<u>3484</u>
	9716	<u>Total (all items)</u>	10664
	3227	<u>Less (withdrawn)</u>	-
	<u>6489</u>	<u>Net Increase</u>	<u>10,664</u>

III. Total Bookstock

<u>31.12.54</u>	<u>31.12.55</u>
124,004	134,668

IV. Staff

1954		1955
1	Librarian	1
1	Assistant Librarian	1
	<u>Main Library</u>	
4	Senior Library Assistants Cataloguers	4
1	Orders and Accessions Officer	1
1	Periodicals and Exchange Officer	1
5	Library Assistants	2
-	Junior Library Assistants	3
1	Junior Library Attendant	1
14	<u>Total</u>	14
	<u>Departmental Libraries</u>	
2	Senior Library Assistants	3
3	Library Assistants	9
1	Junior Library Assistant	-
6	<u>Total</u>	12
20	TOTAL STAFF	26

Note: By resolution of the Senate during 1955 all persons appointed full-time to library duties within the University are members of the staff of the University Library.

(signed) Harrison Bryan

James Forsyth Librarian.