

# FIL

*Forum for Interlending*

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# NEWSLETTER

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## ANOTHER YEAR OF CO-OPERATION IN REVIEW

### REPORT FROM THE CHAIR 1995-1996

In this eventful year FIL has felt the effects of the decision taken at the AGM in 1993. At that meeting it was the clearly expressed view of the FIL membership that no FIL member should remain on the committee for longer than 4 years at a stretch (without a 2 year break).

Thus it was that at the end of the committee year 1994/5 four experienced and committed members had to leave. A further two committee members also resigned for personal reasons. As one of only four remaining members of the old committee the chair was allocated to me, and I have done my best to fulfil the function and lead the new committee in finding its feet.

Imagine our dismay when a further three committee members (Helen McNabb, Celia Swann and Ann Wood) were forced to resign through pressure of work and changing responsibilities. This threw a lot of extra work on the remaining stalwarts. Despite these setbacks, your committee has managed an amazing amount of work in serving you, the FIL members:-

- ♦ The 1995 Conference proceedings were edited by Helen McNabb, who did a sterling job in preparing them for publication before local government reorganisation forced her to resign from the committee.
- ♦ FIL ran a successful seminar at Libtech in September 1995 where Ann Wood led a very useful session on ILL management packages before a re-shuffle at work forced her to resign from the committee.
- ♦ An *Exchange of Experience* Workshop was held in London in January, organised by Janet Moul. At this meeting Susan Richards was able to help, and subsequently agreed to be co-opted onto the committee to fill one of the vacancies. Plans have been made to hold a further workshop in Nottingham in September 1996. [see next issue -Ed]
- ♦ The FIL Newsletter has continued to keep you informed and was for most of the year edited single handedly by Janet Moul.

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Among many topics aired were copyright, Project EARL, Unity, interlending of non-book materials and the APT report.

- ♦ FIL published a report entitled *Document Supply Services and Projects*. This was edited by Elaine Dean.
- ♦ The 1996 FIL Conference was organised down to the last detail by the conference sub-committee :- Geraldine Hourican, Pennie Street, Susan Richards and myself with committed support from our co-opted member on site Angela Narburgh.
- ♦ FIL's finances have been excellently controlled by the offices of Jean Johnson as Treasurer.
- ♦ Elaine Dean has masterminded the membership changes required by the adoption last year of the FIL Constitution. The whole membership file has now been updated.
- ♦ Rose Goodier has continued her main role of organising meetings and keeping all the paperwork in order.
- ♦ With the help of Mark Perkins, an ex-committee member, and with the technical support of the LA, FIL has launched its own Webpage.
- ♦ We have represented your interests by attending and contributing to LINC, CONARLS, UNITY and VISCOUNT meetings. We have indicated to the Library and Information Commission that we would be happy to advise on practical issues concerning ILL and Document Supply. We have been grateful for the support of BLDSC and CONARLS in their attendance at our FIL committee meetings.

At the end of the year, under the 4 year rule, we must, with sadness, say good-bye to Elaine

Dean, Rose Goodier and Janet Moul. (*See below - Ed.*) They have done a wonderful job in guiding and advising the new committee members this last year and will be passing on their "roles" in good order and with carefully drawn up "how to do it" lists attached.

However, despite the difficult problems it causes, I voted for, and still support the 4 year rule which *forces* FIL to go forward with fresh ideas.

*Miriam Robbins*  
*FIL Chair 1995/6*

## FAREWELLS TO THE FIL COMMITTEE

*From Elaine Dean (Former Membership Secretary)*

What can I say about my 4 years as FIL Membership Secretary? I had a wonderful time on the whole, meeting, speaking to and e-mailing loads of new people. It made me realise what a lively lot us ILL and DS people are - not your stereotype librarians at all. I can't deny that it was very hard work; no-one on the FIL Committee gets away with doing nothing, but that in itself was useful and informative. "Good experience" as they say.

Above all I enjoyed working with the people on the FIL Committee, those at the DSC and the ILL staff who helped with the organisation of the Conferences and Exchange of Experience Workshops. Thank you also to those who bought the publications I had a hand in. I hope to maintain contact with as many of these people as possible - I don't like to miss anything!

I wish the new committee well and especially hope that the new Membership Secretary finds everything in order and can cope with the vagaries of the FIL mailing list, which were beyond me at times.

I will not be able to attend Interlend '96 but hope to see people at future workshops and conferences.

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From *Rose Goodier, (Former Secretary)*

Having been presented with an onion-pot as a farewell gift from the FIL Committee, I now find myself thinking about FIL every time I chop an onion. With tears streaming profusely down my cheeks, I often reflect upon my four years of committee membership. However, I hasten to add that I do not regard my time spent on the FIL Committee as something to weep about. Far from it. In fact, I enjoyed it very much, and will miss all the meetings and the camaraderie.

I joined the FIL Committee in 1992. Almost immediately I was given the task of organizing an Exchange of Experience workshop at the University of Salford. Armed with a copy of Jill Evans's extremely useful notes on workshop organization, and helped by supportive colleagues, I duly set about the task with not a little trepidation. To my enormous relief, the workshop was a success. The speakers were interesting, the food arrived at the correct time, and all the attendees talked to each other - the latter never being a problem where FIL members are involved! Since then, I have organized many more workshops and seminars, both for FIL and for CALIM. The trepidation never quite disappears, but the task certainly seems less daunting with experience!

For four years, I attended CONARLS meetings in the capacity of observer, reporting back to FIL on the various issues arising. CONARLS gave me a wider view of the world of interlending and, again, I shall miss meeting CONARLS people on a regular basis.

I took over from Brian Else as Secretary to FIL when Brian was elected Chair in 1993. I have learnt a lot of secretarial skills since that time, and the post gave me some invaluable grounding for my present position as Assistant Secretary to CALIM and Project Officer for LAMDA. I have gradually acquired the art of minute-taking over the years, and I must thank my committee colleagues for tolerating, especially in the early days, some often garbled minutes.

I recall, for example, recording one particular *Exchange of Experience* Workshop as a "*Change of Experience Workshop*" - a subtle alteration of meaning! It also took a while to get used to using the spellcheck. These days, I am loathe to use it at all, as librarianship is a profession with too many acronyms. (For example, when checking "FIGIT", the spellcheck helpfully suggests that one should replace it with "FAGOT". The mind boggles!)

I can recommend minute-taking as a good method of staying awake during meetings. However, I can honestly say that I never started to drift off in FIL committee meetings. This, from someone like myself, with a pitifully short attention-span, is a great accolade! One task which I will pass on to Pennie Street, my successor, with some relief, will be the sending out of AGM papers to all FIL members. Stuffing envelopes was never my forte!

So, I wish the future committee well over the next few years. It's good to see that our numbers have been replenished. It's been a privilege to serve on the FIL committee, and I am grateful to have worked with so many interesting and dynamic people during that time.

From *Janet Moulton, (Former Newsletter Editor)*

Back in 1988 I went to Coventry Polytechnic to the first meeting of what was to become the Forum for Interlending. I have been to all the FIL Conferences, run three Exchange of Experience Workshops and have now finished my 4 years on the Committee. I am a great believer in the value of contacts in the interlending world. I have made many contacts but more importantly many friends over the years. Editing the FIL Newsletter, especially this last year without any assistance has been very time consuming, but very rewarding and serving as the FIL representative on the LINC Management Committee has been a real insight into the higher echelons of management in the library world. Thank you for all your support and friendship.

# REVIEW OF FIL CONFERENCE

**JULY 11th - 13th 1996**

We had a very warm welcome to the 1996 FIL Conference. The sun was shining and the campus looked very attractive with roses in bloom everywhere. Expert help was available to get us settled into our rooms, and so the scene was set for a very interesting and enjoyable conference.

After the official welcome from Margaret Coutts, the Librarian of the University of Kent, it was the turn of Peter Beauchamp of the Department of National Heritage to give the keynote address. He gave us an excellent start outlining some recent developments and the way in which the government is approaching an IT strategy nationally. He focused more on public libraries and raised interesting questions about their future role.

The theme of the future for public libraries was picked up in the next session by Elspeth Mitcheson, Director of Leisure and Heritage for Anglesey. The background to her paper was local government re-organisation in Wales and its impact on the library service. I know from my own experience in the South West that the latest local government re-organisation is a difficult process, but the Welsh experience seems even more horrific than the tales I have heard locally. She stressed that, to have real co-operation, everyone has to give as well as to receive and this can be painful. As the economies of scale will be lost, since larger Authorities are replaced by smaller ones, so the resources available will not cover as much as before. It was good to hear someone who had a real vision of what she wanted to achieve - it is all too easy to be defeatist in the face of the problems which she outlined, yet this was definitely not her message.

After dinner there was a choice of workshops and I chose "Public libraries on the Net."

Philippa Dobson of Project EARL took us through the work of Project EARL. I had heard a little about this Project before, and this was my chance to find out more. This Project is supporting access for public libraries to the World Wide Web so we had an opportunity to see some examples of their work including various Home Pages and discuss the issues involved.

The next day the sun was still shining and I headed with the group visiting the Cathedral Library and Archives. This was a truly amazing experience - I shall not forget seeing William the Conqueror's mark on the Accord of Winchester (dated 1072) in a hurry. The staff of both the Library and the Archives put an enormous amount of effort in welcoming us and this was definitely a high spot for me. At lunch it was obvious that we had all enjoyed our various visits and found them very helpful.

Michael Long then had the difficult task of bringing us back to earth with a paper about "Northern Telematics" and the work of the Northern Informatics Applications Agency. Then came tea and two further offerings. These addressed the theme of the conference from a different perspective. Peter Craddock of Share the Vision reminded us of the difficulties that visually impaired people have in accessing information. Being able to use information is important for many reasons; one which is often overlooked is that it helps people to feel that they belong to a group, since everyone knows what others are talking about. Jonathan Chingwalu of the National Library of Malawi then spoke about Book Aid International. He had only just arrived in this country and this was his first encounter with a group of British librarians. He quoted some facts about Africa; for example, it was easier for him to discover the holdings of the British Library than those of the National Library of Tanzania and a large number of people are illiterate. This was a startling reminder of the gap between what we take for granted, however imperfect that is, and what developing countries are still struggling to achieve.

The A.G.M. followed and once these formalities were over, we were free until the Conference dinner. Wine flowed, courtesy of BLDSC for which we were very grateful, so the evening was convivial and friendly. It ended with plenty of information exchange - conversations in the bar!

Saturday brought two more papers. Nicky Whitsed spoke about designing services for Open University students. Traditionally Open University policy has been that all students should have equal access to its courses. Changing technology and the development of higher degree courses have meant that different ways of supporting students are needed. This is costly and challenging, for example ensuring that the 17,000 students who are required to have a computer to do their course can do so.

The Conference was rounded off by Ray Templeton of the Library Association. He gave us a broad overview of the role of the Association and ended by reminding us that policies needed to be put into practice in the workplace - a good note on which to end.

The theme "Information rich/Information poor: FILLing the gaps" proved to be a good launch pad for contributions covering a wide variety of topics. Some people commented on the amount we had heard about public libraries. I was glad to have the opportunity to understand more of what is currently happening and challenging the traditional way that ILL has been done. We have always valued co-operation and only by understanding each other's concerns can we preserve the best from the past to make the technology and other developments work in the way we want now. All in all I spent a very interesting two days with stimulating discussions in a friendly atmosphere. My final memory is the traditional FIL Raffle - I won the bottle of wine! So thank you all who made the 1996 Conference so enjoyable. To anyone who hasn't yet been to a FIL Conference, I would say that it's a good mixture of friendship and serious debate, so hope to see you in 1997.

*Jean Bradford, University of Bristol*

## **FIL CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS**

### **EXPENSE v. RESEARCH AND RESULTS: INSIDE AN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS LIBRARY**

Claire Watson from Pfizer Ltd, a major international pharmaceutical research and development company based at Sandwich near Canterbury gave an evening presentation on the work of their library services.

Most of the participants were from outside the commercial sector so Claire began by collecting preconceptions of what happens in libraries in this area. Suggestions included lavish funding for publications, extensive use of premium inter-lending services and high use of online services.

Everyone was also asked to rank from 1 to 3 for public, academic and commercial libraries the relative importance of features such as study space, translations, user support and inter library loans. Claire used these ideas to describe the way Pfizer's library works and to lead discussion on why things are done this way. She emphasised that although use is made of premium services and that if information is needed strenuous efforts will be made to obtain it, all spending needs to have a business justification. This financial prudence is an increasing requirement in what seem to the outside world to be well funded organisations.

All journals are purchased through a central fund and are held in the library, there is no circulation of titles and staff are expected to use their library facilities. Additional copies of any core titles, such as British Medical Journal or Nature, required by departments have to be paid for from departmental funds. Use of the library is very high with all the study spaces often in use and staff in attendance on Saturdays and Sundays to provide a service to users. Library staff are involved in specialist searching in particular areas such as chemical structure and molecular biology as well as carrying out the standard duties such as cataloguing. There are also specialist information scientists whose main tasks are searching and compiling current

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awareness bulletins from electronic and hard copy sources.

The seminar raised an enthusiastic debate on the differences and similarities between various types of libraries and gave a fascinating insight into an area of information new to most of those attending.

*Andrew Wood (Glaxo Wellcome)*

#### PROJECT EARL: PUBLIC LIBRARIES ON THE NET

Philippa Dobson of Project EARL led this informative Workshop, aided by Norman Boyd of LASER (which is the Co-ordinating Partner in the Project).

EARL (*Electronic Access to Resources in Libraries*) is a project which serves to assist public libraries to connect to the Internet by providing advice, information on software development, and a general HelpDesk in what is a growing, collaborative initiative involving 74 partners. Although the majority of these are public libraries, other bodies such as the Library Association, Business Information Network (BIN), LIPWales, Public Lending Right, UKOLN and LASER are also partners. Development is funded by the participant organisations and by BLRDD. Additionally, a Millenium Fund bid is being prepared by the LA.

Recently, a framework of work and exploration was agreed in key subject areas such as :

- *Local Authority and Community Information*
- *Business Information*
- *Open and Distance Learning*
- *Reference Enquiries*
- *Poetry/Music/and Chinese Literature*

Each subject area will be led by a 'Promoter' or 'Champion' (e.g. Westminster for *Chinese Literature*). In addition there will be two groups looking at Internet standards and protocols, especially re: periodical collections. There will be analysis and investigation into cross-authority catalogue access, and possibly co-operative

purchase of computer hardware and software. By pooling resources via a common network, it was hoped to develop a national information strategy.

Two major questions are raised in response to the exposition of EARL and its good intentions:

1. Given the great disparity between public library catalogues and the continuing spread of funding cuts in the public sector, how long will it really take to link everything and everyone together? (If we remind ourselves of the present round of local authority re-organisations in many county areas, and the effects that will have on holdings and locations, can we afford to be hopeful?). Those of us presently in the public library sector see no moves to improve matters in respect of even completing the cataloguing of current holdings (and this is a hang-over from the last re-organisation in 1974!), let alone the establishing and updating of links with others. Library networks need more than just databanks of information on what is what, and what is where; they also desperately need experienced staff able to access and exploit this information. Yet in the public domain there has been a great haemorrhaging of experienced staff over the last ten years or so. Somehow, it does not all add up, unless you look at the process as purely mechanical or clerical in scope.

2. Many of the Workshop participants were from the academic sector, and seemed to think that EARL had little relevance for them.

However, the true network of the future will not recognise such artificial boundaries. It will be of use and advantage for both academic and special libraries to know of the wide holdings of public libraries, above and beyond what BLDSC can provide. To judge by the persistent and increasing approaches made by accredited students, there is already an expressed need to know such information.

My own library authority is not listed among the EARL partners, so I am less hopeful than most that I will see the fruits of all these efforts, but I wish EARL well!

*Brian Else (Wakefield Libraries)*

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**HARNESSING NEW TECHNOLOGY:  
HELPING THE COMMUNITY TO  
COMMUNICATE.**

This workshop was held by David Wilcox of the Partnerships for Tomorrow network, which promotes community networking in the UK. The presentation was stimulating and well illustrated the conference theme of Information Rich / Information Poor. Information needs of communities, access to the Internet and the need to bridge the gap between those who have access to, and can use, information technology and those who are denied access to the information sources through disadvantage were the main aspects of the presentation.

UK Communities Online is an initiative to support community networking within communities, non-profit organisations and interest groups. It aims to provide assistance to new and existing community networking projects, exchanging technical experience and promoting the discussion of social, economic and environmental issues affecting local communities.

David Wilcox is editor for UK Communities Online, and had previously worked in journalism. This enabled him to provide insights into the culture of information and its dissemination, in relation to the traditional media and the new culture of the Internet. Can the Internet serve the citizen as well as the consumer? To understand if it can help to build the local community, the "power structure" of information has to be examined.

As a journalist, his experience was that community issues and social problems were quickly forgotten after they were raised by the press, only to reappear again later as another news story. The media tend to sensationalise and to reinforce divisions in society rather than enabling it to resolve social issues. Much of the media is controlled by elites interested in each other and other power

holders, leading to manipulation of issues and information.

Many social and community issues require consensus and confidence to work together. As a consultant, David Wilcox found that these processes were not well supported by the media and the attitude that information is power. He felt that there was much re-inventing of the wheel because experience is lost or scattered through communities.

To help involve people, community networks could provide a communications structure and a pool of common knowledge. These networks could help public bodies, community and private interests to collaborate across sectoral boundaries, offering all citizens opportunities. Using the Internet may not be the ideal way to create this; the most beguiling technology may be the wrong system. Much will depend on the organisation of information, and the ability of individuals to access it. Many community networks encourage 'readers to be writers' by creating discussion groups.

There were three issues to recognise: technology, information and connections with the real world. The needs of people and organisations must come first, without expecting the new technologies to do it all. Human networking must be enhanced by technology, not harmed - a mix of face to face, printed material and online sources is the way to build the community and to move it forward.

In discussion, the role of the library in promoting access to information through the Internet was raised, in the context of the LIC/LA Millennium proposal. There were already initiatives by some library authorities to provide Internet access and to give access to rural communities through telecottages.

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In the context of re-inventing the wheel for the information poor, a parallel was drawn with the original purpose of the free public library to provide access through reading rooms and bookstock to information which was otherwise available only to the few.

Joint provision of information about the community and its local authority services was already underway in libraries, through printed sources and community OPACs. Some library authorities produce detailed profiles of their communities for each service point, and these can be used as a basis for provision of relevant information sources for the needs of the local community. Mention was made of the role of academic libraries, particularly in America, in enabling communities to have access to information.

UK Communities Online has now created a Web site for networkers, to provide a forum for discussion of the issues affecting local communities, at :

[www.btwebworld.com/communities](http://www.btwebworld.com/communities)

Margaret Sheridan (Lancashire County Library)



### From the Editor's Desk:



We welcome contributions to the FIL Newsletter on all subjects relating to interlibrary loans and document delivery.

Please send all articles, letters and comments to Angela Fauch at the address shown on Page 24

Potential submissions should be made in hard copy and on floppy disk (most major word-processed packages are acceptable) whenever possible.

## TARGET PRACTICE AT LASER

Underlying its more recent and innovative activities LASER's foundation service remains "the daily round, the common task" of satisfying the reader at the counter with an inter-library loan. The importance of this service is evinced by the sheer volume of requests handled, making it imperative to achieve a high level of success in supplying and speed in delivering the desired items.

In view of the diverse routines implemented and the differing staffing structures existing for carrying out interlending among over forty public library authorities, a need had been felt for a framework of standards to be set up, (to include - most importantly - targets in supply time), which all could aim at and which would constitute generally the level of performance authorities could expect from each other in their interlending work. This framework would also make monitoring easier and more effective, both of the service in general and of individual requests. The *Interlending Standards Working Party* therefore came into being and held its first meeting on 9th, November 1994.

In establishing the required standards, which became operational almost a year later on 1st, November 1995, the Working Party covered not only operations carried out on VISCOUNT but also the more traditional areas of librarianship. Categorised as *Mandatory*, *Recommended* or *Optional*, the standards dealt with such topics as the minimum of bibliographical checking to be done before seeking outside help on a request, and the minimum of bibliographical data to be supplied, if possible, when sending out a request, either to other libraries or to LASER HQ. The need to make appropriate use of the MSCs/Specialist Subject Collections and the JFRs was also 'standardised', and provision was made for the training of staff to act as replacements for regular ILL staff who were temporarily absent.



The most numerous and pressing questions, however, centred around work carried out on VISCOUNT. Initially, it was not difficult to lay down standards for downloading (minimum twice a week, ideally every day), for chasing requests (to wait ten working days before chasing or moving requests on), and for the time allowed to respond to requests (80% response to be made within five days).

Yet, as the Working Party continued to meet and to study the monthly statistical sheets showing the percentage of requests supplied and the time taken to do so, attention became focused on the difficulty of measuring supply time accurately and consistently, taking into account differing practices among LASER libraries and some general factors affecting everyone. It is towards minimising discrepancies in this area that an important part of the Working Party's efforts has been directed.

Weekends, those most welcome oases in the working life (? desert), are included on VISCOUNT in the number of days taken to reply to a request, thus in many cases artificially lengthening response times, as they appear on the statistical sheets, by two non-working days. What to do? At present, it was decided, this anomaly cannot be remedied, the consolation being that all users are equally affected.

A difference in practice between libraries as to when the *SUPPL* report is entered on VISCOUNT also needed to be taken into account, some authorities entering this report as soon as they receive a positive reply from a branch while others wait until the required item reaches their point of collection by the Transport Scheme service. A questionnaire sent to each authority established individual procedures and all libraries have been flagged on VISCOUNT to denote the point at which they report *SUPPL*, so eliminating errors as far as possible when comparing authorities' supply times.

At the time of writing the Working Party is continuously monitoring the monthly statistical sheets, which include figures on the number of items supplied, both in quantity and as percentages of the total requests, the time taken and the number of unsatisfied requests.

While speed in delivery is a major consideration the Working Party also felt it equally important for LASER libraries to maintain approximately the same level of success in supplying items. A number of authorities which were found to have achieved particularly good results in response times were sent a questionnaire in June 1996 querying their method of handling routines and their staffing arrangements. All replied and the information obtained will be used in a list of procedures forming a *Code of Practice* to be sent to all LASER libraries in the near future, which will cover both electronic and manual routines.

At a later date it may be found necessary to amend some of the present standards, but firstly more monitoring of results is needed and such matters as the staff available in relation to their authority's workload must be investigated. At its next meeting on 25th, September 1996 the Working Party will be taking stock of its progress to date and deciding upon future actions. It will also be looking at the possibility of pooling such information as the location of specialist material outside LASER, addresses of unusual publishers, etc., which could eliminate much duplication of effort among interlending staff.

To be continued.....!!

*Yvonne Puttee, Client Services, LASER HQ.*



## TRUE SUPPLY TIME SURVEY - RESULTS

As explained in FIL Newsletter 22 (June 1996), LASER undertook a survey to look at the true supply time of interlibrary loans earlier this year. The results have now been analysed and some interesting points were drawn out. On receipt of the raw data from 6 authorities, it was felt that there was sufficient information on the whole ILL process to warrant discarding those requests that were returned incomplete although they contained information regarding individual stages within the process. Only completed physically transported requests were included, i.e. those that were positively fulfilled or satisfied. The varied patterns for ILL departments within authorities enabled the author to collect data with wide ranging scope. Surprisingly differences in geographical



distance did not appear to indicate varied delivery times even with the benefit of the LASER transport scheme (over 98% of all deliveries delivered next day).

As stated at the outset, LASER have very efficient statistical gathering methods on VISCOUNT and therefore the statistics collected in this survey would reflect more of what happens on either side of the VISCOUNT traffic, i.e. from reader request to the request being put on VISCOUNT, to the receipt of the item and informing the customer. The 'averages' data gleaned would give some idea of the time taken for each stage of the ILL process. To build a greater picture median, mode and ranges were scrutinised. This analysis was performed not only on the full supply time, but also on the individual stages of the supply chain, e.g 'from requester to delivery of request to central authority'.



	No. of trans	MEAN	MEDIAN	RANGE	MODE	TST incl. Customer collection
<b>LIBRARY A</b>	83	<b>17.72</b>	17	5-45	12@14 DAYS	19.55
<b>LIBRARY B</b>	747	<b>38.6</b>	28	4-352	NULL	<i>null</i>
<b>LIBRARY C</b>	354	<b>21.23</b>	19	4-70	21@15 DAYS	23.98
<b>LIBRARY D</b>	75	<b>17.81</b>	16	5-40	9@15 & 17 DAYS	20.76
<b>LIBRARY E</b>	41	<b>27.95</b>	28	14-42	4@28 DAYS	31.51
<b>LIBRARY F</b>	204	<b>19.47</b>	20	11-41	24 @21DAYS	21.18

After the elimination of incomplete, incoherent and incomprehensible data, (some requests apparently initiated in February 1996 were supplied in November 1995!) the information was assembled on a spreadsheet package.

The average complete supply time ranged from 17.72 days to 38.6 days. An average of the averages, shows **23.8 days** with the library authority which took a different approach to the data gathering included and **17.36** without them.

As this study merely recorded the transition of a request from requester to the supply of material but did not measure the efficiency of the supplier, those authorities that are effective suppliers, if supplying libraries within this study, would be disadvantaged by less efficient authorities. Secondly some authorities may have more leeway in their budgets to allow the purchase of reader requested material, as well as having a substantial bookfund to start with.

Therefore they would be seeking interlibrary loans of a particularly obscure nature, all of which would appear above. An average of three weeks to obtain anything in Britain appears to me to be a very efficient interlending system. Obviously this is dependant on co-operation continuing.

The most extreme difference between averages and medians (the middle ranging figure) occurs in Library B with a mean figure of 38.6 days compared to a median figure of 28 days. The latter being even above the average of all libraries combined supply times. This library was able to 'backtrack' its requests (i.e. include those initiated before the start date) and therefore the data it presented compared unfavourably to fellow participants. Nevertheless compared to that library's extreme of 352 days (compare Library C's 70 days) and the received wisdom of an ILL taking 60 days, everyone fared very well.

The number of occurrences of a figure indicated the most common length of time (mode) for the supply of material. When compared to the mean it can be seen that Libraries C and F had results completely different from each other, (even though they had the largest number of common figure occurrences) but also somewhat different to their own averages.

The individual stage data for each transaction showed that individual library authorities would need to investigate very thoroughly how, for instance, the time taken from the reader placing a request to that request being sent to the central ILL point could take, in one case, 63 days!

The evidence may also help persuade some authorities to by-pass the centralisation of ILL requesting in order to speed up ILLs. Naturally this is an oversimplified statement but with local government reorganisation creating smaller units there may be a lack of resources for such a central point in the process. One authority took very seriously the last figure (informing the reader that the item is awaiting collection) as the

data showed them that there was a larger gap than they would find acceptable.

With the work that David Parry is performing on 'Why requests fail?' and with the heated debate regarding the appearance of a rather, if it is possible to call it such, uni-lateral cooperation (see the mailing list lis-ill at Mailbase) the study of true supply times helps to statistically present a case for a very efficient library service. LASER will be performing this exercise again, perhaps every two years in such depth, but annually on a basic level to obviate the need to add strain to already hard pressed ILL departments.

*Norman Boyd, Client Services Manager,  
LASER*



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## POSTCARD FROM POLAND

Former FIL Chairman Brian Else has recently received a postcard from the Zakopane region of Poland sent to him by Jakobina Kowalczyk of the British Studies Centre Library at the University of Warsaw. She was the FIL overseas guest speaker at Interlend '95 at Glasgow and was writing to thank Brian for arranging for the conference proceedings to be forwarded to her. She writes that the *"publication supports my high estimate of FIL activity"* and that it was her *"ambition to organise a similar kind of co-operation among interlending librarians in Poland."*

Brian says, *"It is good to know that FIL is having this kind of impact on interlibrary circles and that all the work we do is serving as an example to others in this way. This is the true 'Internet' for me - contact and exchange of experience of ideas across the world in an 'embodied' way."*



## TWINNING BETWEEN LIBRARIES: A NEW IFLA INITIATIVE

Thanks to generous funding from the UNESCO PGI Programme, IFLA (*International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions*) has begun to establish an international database which will act as a focus for libraries seeking to find twinning partners.

The system will act as a kind of dating agency for libraries; libraries will provide brief details of their own organisation, together with an outline of what benefits they are seeking from the partnership and what benefits they can offer to the partner. The system will aim to match libraries, so that their needs are satisfied as closely as possible.

Twinning arrangements between libraries can have many different forms, which the database will take into account. One definition describes twinning as:

*"an ongoing relationship between two libraries in different countries for the purposes of improving the practice of librarianship across national boundaries. The relationship should have a mutual but not necessarily equal benefits to both libraries. Each party in the twinning relationship should be able to identify easily the benefits to its institution"* Robert P. Doyle "Library

Twinning", *IFLA Journal*, 1994, 20(4), 403-409.

Twinning is often seen as something between libraries in developed and developing countries, but there is no reason why it should be limited in this way. What is important is that intending participants should all have something to offer to the partnership, and should be able to achieve benefits from it too. Areas of professional interest on which partnerships may be based include:

- ♦ Exchange of information about libraries generally

- ♦ Improved access to published bibliographic information
- ♦ Exchange of information on management, technology and professional development
- ♦ Staff exchanges
- ♦ Exchange of library material
- ♦ Establishment of ILL and a document supply services
- ♦ Staff training and development

The IFLA Twinning Database will be established by the IFLA core programme for UAP (Universal Availability of Publications), and maintained initially by that Office. Records of libraries seeking partnerships will not be freely available to applicants; rather libraries will need to send their details to the Office, who will then aim to find a suitable partner.

Partners will be matched according to a number of criteria which will vary in importance with each application, for example:

- ♦ size of library
- ♦ library type
- ♦ library department or section seeking a partner
- ♦ geographical location
- ♦ main language of communication
- ♦ required means of communication (post, electronic mail, etc.)
- ♦ benefits sought from the partnership
- ♦ areas of professional interest
- ♦ benefits offered by the partners

Once a partner library has been identified by the IFLA UAP Office staff and initial contact made, the establishment of the twinning arrangement will be made entirely by the libraries concerned. The new initiative aims only to identify potential partners. IFLA's role will not be to bring those potential partners together nor to establish the finer details of the partnership. However, general information will be available, and excellent guidelines on twinning arrangements already exist (Robert P. Doyle & Patricia Scarry, *Guidelines on Library Twinning*, UNESCO, 1994). The decision to enter into a twinning partnership with another library should not be taken lightly, since successful arrangements require commitment and effort from both sides.

While the IFLA UAP Office will make every effort to match libraries appropriately, responsibility for the success of the arrangement will lie firmly with the participants themselves.

Several existing organisations have already done excellent work in the area of library twinning, but until now there has not been a single focal point to which all libraries can turn when seeking twinning partners. The Unesco Network of Associated Libraries (UNAL), the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (NASP), and the UK Library Association are just three organisations with whom IFLA will be working closely in this initiative. Indeed the UK Library Association has also provided some additional financial support to the project, such is its wish to support library twinning.

Libraries which wish to identify potential partners for establishing a twinning arrangement are invited to contact the IFLA Office for UAP at the address below. We will then send you a questionnaire which will ask you for full contact details, brief information about your library, and areas of co-operation in which you wish to build links. We would also like to know what you can offer to bring to the twinning partnership, as well as the benefits you hope to gain.

*Sara Gould*

*IFLA Office for UAP and International Lending*

Enquiries about the IFLA Twinning Database can be directed to:

Sara Gould  
IFLA Office for UAP and International Lending  
c/o The British Library  
Boston Spa  
Wetherby  
W. Yorks  
LS23 7BQ  
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 1937 546254  
Fax: +44 1937 546478  
Email: ifla@bl.uk



## SIGNPOSTS ON THE INTERNET

The *Lingualinc* publication '*Signposts*' which was published in 1995 to help public libraries meet the demand for materials in languages other than English is going on the Internet in the next few weeks.

The site (to be managed by WMRLS) is located at <http://www.earl.org.uk/earl/taskgroups/signposts.html>. Developments in the field will, in future be carried forward by the EARL Taskgroup on *Language and Literature* which will also be overseeing the West Midlands arts-funded project *Lit-Net*.



## ACCESS TO VOCAL SETS

A meeting is due to take place this month (October 1996) under the Chairmanship of Pam Thompson of the Music LIP.

Bringing together representatives for all the UK regions, CONARLS and IAML(UK), it will explore potential for national co-operation in vocal sets and catalogues following on from the West Midlands-led DFPLS Project '*Access to vocal sets*'. A new West Midlands catalogue is to be published (re-edited by Malcolm Jones) in November.

For more information contact  
Geoff Warren Director,  
West Midlands Regional Library System

☎ 0121 235 2673

📠 0121 235 2613 or

✉ Email: [geoff.warren@dial.pipex.com](mailto:geoff.warren@dial.pipex.com)



## REVIEW

### Sport and Recreation Information Group Directory of Periodicals in Sport and Recreation

Sport and Recreation Information Group's (SPRIG) union list of periodicals (on floppy disk) has minimal installation instructions. But as the installation performs adequately by itself this is not a problem. System requirements for running the software as stated are fairly standard:

*An IBM 386 (486/33 or higher is recommended); 6 MB of hard disk space; 4 MB RAM (8 MB or more is recommended); Windows 3.1 or later.*

The opening screen (the search menu) contains the following search options:

- ♦Search by Subject
- ♦Search by Periodical
- ♦Search by Library

with three other buttons 'About', 'SPRIG...' and 'Exit'. 'About' leads to authorship statements (which is usually accessible within the pulldown help menu) and 'SPRIG...' gives two names and addresses (no email).

Being a curious person I looked to see what was available in the pull down menu, and found the usual Windows functions - Close, Print, etc. 'Send' intrigued me, however I was told that 'no output formats installed' This was the first clue to indicate that this was not proprietary software but a creation within MS Access. In addition 'Help isn't available for this item' appears when pressing the fairly de facto standard F1 function key, as well as the drop down equivalent.

#### SUBJECT SEARCH SCREEN

The search screen displays the terms, *Scope*, *Preferred Term* and *Cross Reference Term* as search boxes. Trying to type a term in the first box does not bear fruit; the highlighted button 'List' must be pressed. This leads to a drop down pick list of terms within the thesaurus. Testing the extent of the directory I looked for the term 'Curling' and discovered that clicking on the 'List' button and then keying in a term led to the list jumping to the equivalent term.

'Curling' produced the Cross Reference Term 'Winter Sports'. The user can choose ('Use') the latter term as the preferred term, and pressing the 'Use' button places this second term into the upper search slot. Consequently this leads to a useful way of seeing associated terms and therefore broadening a search, with such terms as: *Curling, Ice Hockey, Ice Skating and Skiing*. However the switch will need to be reversed if more specific detail on curling is required, as the new term (Winter Sports) 'is not used as a periodical's keyword'. This 'thesaurus appearance' of the Directory fools the casual user and reviewer. Looking for *sports prizes, awards, contests, or competition* led to no hits or alternative suggestions! Browsing the whole keyword index didn't give me any clues either, especially galling when entries exist for such items as 'Perceptual Processes'. This latter term is not even within the related periodical's title, but has been included!

The 'Scope' field contains what appears to be scope notes, however the choice of scope notes (normally amplifying meaning or guiding) appears arbitrary: *play facilities* leads to *playgrounds* as a scope note, again peculiar as the relevant journal (British) is called *Play Times*. 'Preferred Term' gives a guide to the preferences set in the Directory, and for *playgrounds* we are guided to *play facilities*! The 'Cross Reference' window aids a widening of the search: *rambling* leads to *walking activity*, which when 'used' highlights another aspect of *walking activity; hill walking*.

#### DETAILS

Searching for 'psychology' leads to 7 hits. The detail button is then depressed leading to a short entry view of the 7 hits, the *keyword periodical information screen*. The further actions to be taken are further 'Details' which are details of the individual journal and 'Holding' a short entry view of those libraries that have holdings.

The details provided include information which for anyone who has any experience of journal name changes is a blessing, namely data on previous names. Clicking on 'Holding' leads to a short entry view of the libraries which hold a run of this particular journal and additionally the buttons change now to read 'Detail' and 'Run'. The detail now refers to the holding library and its policy regarding loans/photocopies etc. The run details include a statement as to whether the run is complete within the dates specified.

At all points holdings can be printed. Due to my not being connected to a printer at the time of the review I cannot comment on the output but one would hope that at each stage the relevant related screen type entry would be given.

The lack of a help menu leaves a lot to be desired as the only hints are on screen as labels, explaining in a minimum of words what each button means. The only place a normal help button appears is on the *Subject Search* screen, but this merely expands the descriptions of the buttons!

The other two search windows are by *Periodical* and by *Library*. The latter is very useful for indicating the subject specialisation of a particular library, e.g. Brunel University College appears to hold a wide range of sport journals with the Twickenham site specialising in journals on dance.

A search under periodical (ISSN and country) appears to allow a great flexibility of search but I couldn't understand why places like Azerbaijan are listed in the pick list when they have no journals in the database, presumably there for future expansion? A press of the search button at any stage (without entering any data) indicates the extent of the thesaurus with a hit of 892 periodicals and 94 libraries, and 195 search terms.

I would like to know how the information was obtained and the plans for updating the database, which is one of the major headaches of any union catalogue. The use of MS Access to

construct the database form is obvious, but that software's limitations in user-friendly design are reflected in the complexity of the interface.

Price: £50 to members  
£60 Non-members.  
Paper equivalents are £25,  
available from:

Lesley Gunter,  
Sprig Chair,  
Sports Library,  
Surrey Street,  
Sheffield  
S1 1XZ

Norman Boyd LASER

## AN INVITATION FROM THE BSI

An invitation has been extended to FIL members by the **British Standards Institution**. Informal visits can be arranged to the BSI Library in Chiswick, West London. The visits will include a tour of the library collection of British, foreign and international standards and technical legislation as well as the opportunity to learn about the BSI Library loan system.

For more details please contact : Mark Hurn, Senior Technical Librarian, BSI Library, 389 Chiswick High Road, London W4 4AL. Telephone 0181 996 7042 or Fax 0181 996 7005.

## INTERLENDING IN A PUBLIC LIBRARY - BIRMINGHAM LIBRARIES

Birmingham Local Authority serves about one million people. Since April 1994 there has been reorganisation within the local authority so that the libraries department now comes under the Department of Leisure and Community Services, Libraries and Learning Division.

Birmingham Libraries is quite different from many other public libraries in the UK. It consists of one large central library and 41 community libraries in 3 regions, (including the library housebound service; a mobile library service and the prison library at Winson Green). The central library is one of the largest libraries in Europe and not only serves the Birmingham people but acts as a regional library centre serving many users within the West Midlands and beyond.

The central library has 10 public departments on 7 floors. These are : *Business Information; the Centre for the Child; the Multi-media Library; Arts, Language and Literature Department; Social Sciences; Music Library; Science, Technology and Management; Local Studies and History and Archives*. Because of the size of the library and the wide variety of stock, it mirrors an academic library. It acts as a backup library to students from the 3 universities in the city and to other accessible college students. The central library also holds a number of specialist collections e.g. *the Shakespeare Library; the Cervantes Collection*; early fine printing books; war poetry; early childrens' books; patents and British Standards.

The structure of Birmingham Libraries has a direct bearing on the clientele of the library service and the requests they make. The list below gives an indication of the variety of customers and their interests.

**General Public:** fiction; non-fiction books on hobbies, health, local history, current affairs, biographies, travel.

**Ethnic Communities:** ethnic minority language books, religious texts, modern languages, black writers, community information.

**Housebound/elderly:** large print items, talking books, historical books, war books, local history.

**Students:** textbooks, journal articles, theses, subjects asked for :scientific, medical, nursing, physiotherapy, business, economics, veterinary, philosophy, religion, arts and humanities.

**Teachers:** textbooks, education and child development.

**Business:** communitymarket research, marketing, financial information.

**Council departments:** architecture and planning, city engineers, materials testing (Council laboratories).

**Local Industry:** automotive engineering, 'Quest Vitamins', - dietary, vitamin research, materials coatings, general engineering etc.

**Library Managers:** IT in libraries, library management and new developments.

### Interlending Procedures

Birmingham are currently implementing a new computerised Library Management System (LMS). This is an integrated system which replaces the BLCMP cataloguing and acquisition system and the DS MOD 4 circulation system. The new LMS chosen is the Galaxy 2000 system from DS Ltd. The changeover to Galaxy 2000 is having a great impact on Interlending and all other library procedures. A large number of reservations or requests are made by the public at service points. Many of these are satisfied internally through exchanges of material from one service point to another. In Interlending we mainly deal with requests from our users for books or journal articles not held by Birmingham. Conversely we deal with all incoming requests from other library authorities for our material.

For requests from our own readers the procedure briefly consists of stamping the day's date on all incoming requests and recording them on statistics. Book requests are checked on VISCOUNT to check bibliographic details and to trace library locations.



Once found on VISCOUNT requests are transmitted electronically to other VISCOUNT libraries or to BLDSC via ARTtel. Previously requests were checked online on BLCMP prior to sending them via VISCOUNT. This procedure changed in April 1995 when our BLCMP membership ended. We still purchase the BLCMP union microfiche catalogue for additional records and locations as well as West Midlands Regional Library System (WMRLS) union ISBN fiche.

At present most requests are sent online via VISCOUNT. Other requests are sent as postal requests e.g. to fiction reserves or to non-VISCOUNT libraries including many academic libraries.

Periodical requests are sent directly to BLDSC via their FAX-Line service or via VISCOUNT. Unlike book requests there is not much bibliographic checking involved for periodical requests. We try BLDSC first but if not successful we will check BLCMP union serials catalogue to trace alternative library locations.

Once items are received in response to our requests, all items are processed centrally by Interlending. Books have a receipt form put in them showing book details; name and address of reader; requesting service point and date of return. Books are sent to service points by the internal post and van systems. Once books are collected part of the receipt is signed by the reader and sent to Interlending as proof of collection. Any overdue letters or requests for renewal are dealt with by Interlending staff. When a book is finished with it is returned to Interlending on the internal system. Interlending

staff are responsible for returning items to their correct library locations via the inter-regional van schemes or via post.

As most of our requests are for books, dealing with loans does create a significant amount of clerical work for Interlending staff. Conversely there is little clerical work involved for photocopies. These are usually posted direct to the reader. Records are kept centrally of all inter-library loans dealt with.

With incoming requests from other library authorities we receive them in a number of different formats. These are online requests on VISCOUNT which are downloaded and printed off; postal request forms; faxes and overseas requests via BLDSC. We check to see if we have a book in stock on the DS system. We will send lending copies if available. If libraries do not specify home reading we will send out reference books if authorised by subject librarians. Photocopies are supplied from our serials and book stock contained in the central library. It is the responsibility of Interlending staff to send items to requesting libraries via the Inter-regional van schemes or by post and to recall items or send overdue when necessary.

#### **Interlending Statistics for the last 2 financial years**

Statistics are collected every financial year to highlight interlending trends. 1994-1995 saw a dramatic increase in the number of requests received in Interlending.

*Continued on Page 18*

#### **NEW COMPANY SECRETARY FOR NWRLS**

Joan Unsworth has retired from her position as NWRLS Company Secretary after 16 years. The new Company Secretary is Deborah Ryan who took over the position from 1st July 1996.

Deborah has been with NWRLS for two years, firstly as Deputy Company Secretary then as Acting Company Secretary for the last nine months. Deborah has a background covering both public and academic library services and joined NWRLS at a very crucial stage in its development of UNITY. As secretary to the Unity Design Group and serving on the Policy Group/Unity Co-operative she has helped move NWRLS and Unity forward in a positive way as we head toward the next millennium

*NWRLS Press Release*

*Tables showing Interlending Statistics for 1993-94 and 1994-5*

<b>REQUESTS FROM OUR READERS</b>	<b>1993-94</b>	<b>1994-95</b>	<b>REQUESTS FROM OTHER LIBRARIES</b>	<b>1993-94</b>	<b>1994-95</b>
<b>Total no. of requests handled</b>	<b>3,839</b>	<b>4,635</b>	<b>Total no. requests (other authorities)</b>	<b>5,413</b>	<b>6,043</b>
Book requests	2,988	3,288	Book requests	4,913	5,485
Periodical requests	851	1,347	Periodical requests	160	212
Requests from community libs.	2,293	2,572	Fiction requests	312	268
Requests from subject info. depts.	1,546	2,063	Overseas	28	80
<b>Total no. of items received</b>	<b>3,498</b>	<b>4,127</b>	<b>Total no. loans supplied</b>	<b>1,636</b>	<b>2,062</b>
Books received	2,711	2,843	Books	1,441	1,791
Photocopies received	787	1,284	Photocopies	157	186
<b>Source of materials</b>			For overseas	10	29
West Mids. public libraries	958	966	Renewals	28	56
British Library (books and photocopies)	1,593	2,155			
Other Libraries	712	779			
Fiction	235	227			

### Conclusions from the Statistics

In 1994-95, the average increase in the number of requests received and items handled was about 20%. One reason may be the cuts in library bookfunds so that fewer books are purchased and more are requested. The new LMS with the 'Viewpoint' OPAC has increased public awareness of what is available. There has also been an increase in the number of students using the service. A number of strategies are being considered by management in response to the increase in requests and the work situation in Interlending. Unfortunately an increase in staffing is not possible.

One strategy suggested is to make an additional charge for requests which are sent outside Birmingham. The current charge is a flat rate

charge for all reservations. This is 60p per item with a 30p concessionary fee for unemployed and senior citizens. People who do not live, work or study in Birmingham are charged £6.50. They are encouraged to use their local interlending service.

Interlending staff and management are to investigate the Interlending module from DS to see if this could reduce the clerical work done by staff. Student requests are also being looked at to see if changes are necessary. Other strategies are being considered but no final decision has been made by management as yet.

*Marian Leydon, Birmingham Libraries.*

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## CO-OPERATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION LINC Adopts a monitoring and guidance role

LINC have set up a Standing Committee to monitor the effects of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on libraries.

Chaired by Ian Malley, Co-ordinator of the Library and Information Plan for Leicestershire, the LINC LGR Standing Committee also includes Janet Barker, Head of Community Services, Hartlepool Borough, Peter Smith Deputy Director of LASER and Gwyn Williams, Head of Cultural Services, Denbighshire County Council and Chair of the Library and Information Services Council (Wales). Additional expertise will be co-opted where necessary.

The Committee's terms of reference are:

- to identify ways of asserting the role of co-operation in the effective delivery of library services before and after LGR
- to identify service areas in the public library provision which now demand or offer greatest prospects for co-operation between library authorities
- to make assessment of the impact of LGR on local, regional and national agreements, e.g. the Regional Library Systems
- to examine the implications of the changes in size and number of library authorities following LGR upon library co-operation
- to examine ways of ensuring that new and emerging library authorities can use LINC as a reference point for practical assistance in developing co-operation between library

authorities and other library and information services

- to work with other bodies, committees etc. working in the same area or with the same or similar objectives
- to LINC and the library and information profession aware of the developments and via LINC the Department of National Heritage
- to advise, publicise and provide information and advice where relevant.

The Committee's work programme will be directed at the short term and the longer term, e.g. the complete implementation of LGR in England in 1998. In the short term it is preparing national guidelines on co-operation for local authorities, based on the Leicestershire document *'Key issues in the delivery of library, information and advice services following LGR in Leicestershire'*, published by LIP for Leicestershire. The guidelines will also draw on experience from other areas involved in LGR.

The guidelines could provide background material for consultation workshops to be held in the late autumn in various parts of the country.

LINC Secretariat is to establish a database of information from affected local authorities which will inform the Committee's longer term monitoring programme. More details from: Ian Malley, Co-ordinator, LIP for Leicestershire, Chief Executive's Department, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester  
Tel: 0116 265 6225 Fax: 0116 265 6260

See Page 20 for details of a national workshop on **"Public Libraries, Local Government Reorganisation and Interlending"**

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## **The DNH Development Funding Project on "Public Libraries, Local Government Reorganisation and Interlending"**

A national workshop, organised by the Project Team will allow participants to raise issues of importance which will inform or add to the experiences and overall views on the future development in these areas. The workshop will examine:

- ♦ the importance of retaining and further developing interlending and resource sharing services in the period following local government reorganisation
- ♦ the problems which face newly constituted library authorities in future service provision
- ♦ views from government and the work of LINC in this area
- ♦ common issues facing public libraries and the different Regional Library Services
- ♦ experience of libraries who have or are in the process of local government reorganisation
- ♦ comparative view of the situation in Wales

### **'Local Government Reorganisation & Inter-library lending in the UK'**

#### **Workshop**

is to be held on

**Monday 11 November 1996,**

**10am - 4.30pm**

St Paul's Suite

Repertory Theatre

International Convention Centre

Broad Street

Birmingham B1 2EA

Further details from:

Robert Kirk, (County Librarian West  
Sussex)

Tel: 01243 752000

Fax: 01243 752014

or

Peter Smith, (Deputy Director, LASER)

Tel: 0171 702 2020

Fax: 0171 7022019

[peter@viscount.org.uk](mailto:peter@viscount.org.uk)

## ***Search and Deliver!:* FIL Seminar at Libtech**

Following the success of last year's seminar on ILL systems, this year we looked at the topical theme of electronic information - how do you find it, where do you get it?

Our first speaker, Eric Davies of Loughborough University, described the background and progress so far of the e-Lib project, FIDDO (Focused Investigation of Document Delivery Options). Essentially, the aim is to collect and disseminate information on commercial document delivery suppliers - their collection strengths, prices, turn-around times etc. so that librarians can make informed decisions on whether such services would meet their requirements, and if so which are the best ones to use. A preliminary report has been published and circulated and is also available on the Web via the FIDDO homepage -

<http://www.lut.ac.uk/departments/dils/research/fiddo/fiddo.html>

Eric mentioned that a FAQ is available from this page and welcomed comments and suggestions. At present the research team is analyzing data from questionnaires sent to ILL departments about their experiences of different suppliers.

Bridget Powell, from the South Western Regional Library System, was billed as the 'light relief' and in a double act with Pam Sutton-Thompson, talked about and demonstrated the Unity system. This should be familiar to avid readers of the FIL Newsletter as it has featured quite prominently in recent issues. Unity is a database of bibliographic records that also gives holdings information. I'm not sure to what extent it complements or duplicates VISCOUNT or even if they are bitter enemies but I can tell you that it comes with a multi-coloured keyboard and a gold 'return' key, and I know VISCOUNT doesn't have one of those! .

Additionally, there are an awful lot of books on yoghurt in the database, which is another strong selling point as I'm concerned. What I also found noticeable was the fact that the holdings information 'rotates' each time a record is accessed thereby preventing a library from receiving several requests for, say, 'A Concise History of Yoghurt: From the Dark Ages to Modern Times.' Recent developments to Unity include an Internet e-mail connection for library to library messaging.

If actors are warned never to act with animals or children then public speakers should try to avoid on-line demonstrations. Remarkably we had just one slight technical hitch before Eric managed to connect up Richard Roman's laptop for a demonstration of the BL's 'Inside' service. Currently based on CD-ROM, but with on-line and Web versions due to be launched at the On-line exhibition in December, Inside is a science database providing access to 13,000 scientific and medical journals, and a social science/humanities database covering 7,000 journals. Richard showed how the user is encouraged to view collecting articles as a shopping expedition - putting articles that take his fancy into a basket. It is only when he gets to the checkout and realizes the enormous bill he is racking up, and that, contrary to advertisers' advice he has left home without his credit card, that he must then discard those interesting but marginal articles and concentrate on the few essentials. For this service, the British Library is asking not £1,000, not even £800, but just £600 for Science Plus and £500 for Social Sciences and Humanities Plus (as they are known), with prices varying for the number of users.

In the discussions afterwards I asked what the user does when he receives a fax copy that he has paid for but is unsatisfied with the quality of print. Plenty of people mentioned that he would take it and complain to a member of the library staff seeking their help, which is what you get when you let readers think they are ILL librarians. I also asked both Richard and Mike McGrath, the BL's head of UK marketing, (not

that I wish to give the impression that I asked all the questions, although I'm sure a number of people probably felt that way, but as I wasn't at the time planning on writing this up I can remember a lot more of what I said rather than what others said), if they could envisage, for example, university libraries installing and managing what is in effect another ILL system. Somewhat stumped by this they replied with some sales figures and said Inside could be sold to a range of markets, although I feel it's probably better suited to special libraries of larger companies with commensurately bigger budgets.

There seemed to be little use of commercial document suppliers - Mark Perkins mentioned that his library (Overseas Development Institute) has used Uncover but said that it is often used to locate an item which is then ordered more cheaply from BLDSC. In fact, the BL is frequently acting as supplier for organizations new to document delivery, leading to a number of prices for the same article - an issue picked up in the FIDDO report, which was where we came in.

The seminar attracted around sixty people, some from as far as Denmark, the Czech Republic and Cyprus; it stimulated plenty of debate and elicited positive feedback. Our speakers were all excellent so on behalf of FIL I would like to thank them once again, thanks also to Miriam who organized the whole thing, to Geraldine and Penny Dade for help on the day, and to the chap who tried kicking in a window midway through my first introduction - cheers, mate.

*Stephen Prowse, King's College, London*



## WHY DO REQUESTS FAIL?

CONARLS, the Circle of Officers of National and Regional Library Systems, has been granted the first award from the Co-operation and Libraries Programme Area in the new British Library R&DD Research Grants and Awards Plan 1996/97. The award is for research into *Why Requests Fail* and Michael Long, Information North (IN) Manager, is Project Head. Partners in the project are the British Library Document Supply Centre (BLDSC), the Library & Information Co-operation Council (LINC) and the Forum for Interlending (FIL).

The nine-month study will identify, categorise and measure the reasons why interlibrary loan (ILL) requests are unsatisfied and abandoned. From the quantitative data and a qualitative analysis of interviews with ILL managers, guidelines will be drawn up.

This is the first time such research has been undertaken. Michael Long explains its significance in terms of the substantial costs involved in servicing failed requests, and the contribution the study's conclusions might make to the current debate on co-operative dealings.

The figures he quotes are very high:

'In a seven-year period from 1988 to 1995, 707,711 ILL requests which passed through the Regional Library System network were categorised as 'unsatisfied and abandoned' - an average of 88,500 requests a year. In 1993/94 that figure was 98,762'

The real costs of ILLs includes such factors as staff time, stationery and software programmes. Extrapolating from figures arrived at by Coopers & Lybrand in a 1989 study, he calculates that in the last seven years £4.5 million have been spent on failed requests.

The study should lead to practical and costed recommendations to reduce their number.

57 libraries have signed up, volunteering to complete a questionnaire that is quite extensive in content. At least one public library and one academic library from each region are represented and will record details of ILLs during the period 1 October to 30 November 1996

For more details contact:

David Parry (Research Consultant)

c/o Information North

Bolbec hall

Westgate Road

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE1 1SE

☎ 0191 232 0877

☎ 0191 232 0804

✉ Email: [ce24@dial.pipex.com](mailto:ce24@dial.pipex.com)



### *CONARLS' publication: The library regions in profile*

The purpose of *The Library Regions in Profile* is to promote the range of services to library and information organisations in the United Kingdom and Ireland that can be obtained from a Regional Library System or National Library. Each of the entries has been contributed by the individual Region. The contributions also reflect the current priorities facing each Region at a time of considerable change. Changes affect not only service delivery and the challenge of exploiting the electronic revolution but also fundamental structures. The immediate challenge of the latter is to understand the effect of the Local Government Reviews on public libraries and the opportunity for academic libraries through the Higher Education Funding Councils' Follett Report. The report can be downloaded (in Word 6.0 format) from the CONARLS homepage at: <http://www.zebra.co.uk/conarls/libs.htm>

Circle Of Officers of  
National and Regional Library Systems.  
*The library regions in profile, Summer  
1996.* ISBN 0 906433 24 X

## LAST LOCATIONS

It all started with:

"This morning I have received some requests sent on a rota, with a notice from *Liverpool University Library* Interlibrary Loans stating: "It is now the policy of the University of Liverpool Library only to supply items for which it is the sole location."... Hazel, ILL, UWS

Soon messages were flying through the ether, both relevant and...not so relevant!

Pennie Street the Periodicals/ILL Librarian at Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool Library clarified the position explaining that a consolidation of 2 libraries into one and the subsequent reduction in access to materials previously in demand had led to the note being sent out.

FIL is obviously very concerned and Miriam Robbins (Chair) has sent out the following letter to Peter Beauchamp, at the DNH; CONARLS; SCONUL and LINC:

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17 October 1996

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the Forum for Interlending I would like to draw your attention to a worrying precedent which has set alarm bells ringing among FIL members.

All Interlending Department staff are used to occasional messages being sent out from one institution or another stating, with apologies, that staff are temporarily unable to cope with incoming requests for material because of sickness, holidays, redecoration etc.

The development which so concerns our members is that a major UK university library has stated that, because of

staffing cuts and a change of office location, it is **permanently** unable to process incoming requests to loan, apart from those for which it is the last resort.

The **theory** of co-operation has not been rejected, but it has been made physically impossible for the staff to do the work. (Even the latest scanning techniques for the electronic supply of documents will need human beings to fetch the items from the shelves for a long time to come.)

The dangers to the continuance of interlending in the UK if this practice is copied are obvious.

One quote from the e-mail correspondence which has been raging among ILL staff sums it up :- Adrian Smith, Assistant Librarian wrote "If all libraries refuse to lend unless they are unique locations, then any books which are held in more than one library will be unavailable for ILL. Interlending will be reduced at a stroke to the lending of unique items!"

It seems it is no longer enough to assume, as Maurice Line does in the conclusions to his report on the future of co-operation "The need for remote access to documents should focus at a national level on ..... an acceptance by libraries that they have some obligation to supply materials to other libraries (this should not be difficult, since if they do not they will not be able to request any)".

Co-operation will inevitably break down if resources are **not** allocated both to borrowing and supply in participating institutions.

I quote from the APT Review, "Academic libraries may well move decisively from a "holdings" strategy to an "access" strategy before the end of this decade and in this new environment co-operation ceases to be a theoretical ideal or a desirable addition to good practice, co-operation becomes a modus vivendi."

May I suggest that this is a time to be strengthening the Interlending network rather than allowing it to crumble. The Forum for Interlending would welcome your comments and support in this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Miriam Robbins

References :-

-LINE, Maurice B  
The Future of Library and Information Co-operation in the UK and Ireland. An independent assessment. LINC June 1996  
-APT Partnership  
The APT Review: A Review of Library and Information Co-operation in the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1995  
British Library R&D Report 6212 (1 873753 06 3)

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## **BANKING ON BLDSC**

For many years the BLDSC has provided a banker function for UK libraries which request from and supply items to each other. The BLDSC request form/number has become established as a unit of currency which can be used to pay for ILL transactions. Supplying libraries can cash in used forms or numbers at the current price. The procedure is simple to operate and cost-effective as it relieves libraries of the need to raise or pay invoices.

For BLDSC, however, the system is less than efficient. Although cost neutral in that BLDSC is only paying back money which has already been collected, the Centre receives no contribution to the cost of administering the scheme. In 1995/96 over £663,000 was reimbursed and the work involved was quite substantial.

A new complication is that some libraries are moving to paying by account. To take advantage of BLDSC's banker function they have to purchase supplies of request forms/numbers specifically for this purpose. Although charges can be credited to or debited from accounts, the procedure is still largely manual.

On the assumption that most UK libraries will want us to continue to play banker, we are beginning to look at ways in which we can make the scheme more efficient and cost-effective for us to operate, using automation where possible.

One suggestion is that we develop ARTTel to allow libraries to request from other libraries using the messaging facility. Alongside this would be an accounting module which would keep track of all transactions and at regular intervals produce statements showing to what extent a library is a net lender or borrower. Net borrowers would be charged and net lenders reimbursed for the difference between their borrowing and lending activity. The idea needs considerable development but there would be many benefits both for BLDSC and our customers: simple monitoring and accounting procedures; no need for libraries to use BLDSC forms or numbers; easy for customers with accounts to apply to locations and backups; no need for supplying libraries to raise or chase up payments either for invoices or BLDSC forms; no need for libraries to claim reimbursement from BLDSC; considerable reduction in administration.

We would be interested in your views, both on the present system and possible ways in which it might be improved. Please send your comments, ideas or suggestions to Trevor Palmer, Customer Services, at the usual address, fax 01937 546333, or e-mail [trevor.palmer@bl.uk](mailto:trevor.palmer@bl.uk).

## WHAT IS FIL ?

The *Forum for Interlending* is an organisation designed to enable those library staff involved in interlending and document supply to exchange ideas and views and to express new ideas. FIL is run by an elected committee of members who are themselves involved in interlending.

### Activities include:

- ♦ Annual conference
- ♦ Exchange of experience workshops
- ♦ Liaison with regional and national organisations involved in interlending
- ♦ Membership of/representation on national bodies (eg LINC, CONARLS)
- ♦ Newsletter, reports and publications covering matters of importance to ILL staff
- ♦ Expression of views on national issue

### Recent areas of interest to FIL include:

- ♦ Charges between libraries
- ♦ Impact of CD-ROM
- ♦ Local government reorganisation
- ♦ National Library Commission
- ♦ Copyright
- ♦ ILL computer systems and user groups
- ♦ International interlending
- ♦ Internet Access
- ♦ FIL Webpage

## MEMBERSHIP

**Susan Richards (FIL Membership Secretary),  
Queen Mary and Westfield College Library,  
Mile End Road, London E1 4NS**

If you are interested in joining FIL please complete the form below and return to:

Both institutional and individual members are welcome. Subscription for both categories is £20.00 per annum.

- ♦ Please register me as a personal/institutional\* member of *Forum for Interlending*
- ♦ I enclose a cheque for £20.00 made payable to FORUM FOR INTERLENDING/  
Please invoice my institution.\*

\* Delete as appropriate.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## FIL MEMBERSHIP

FIL membership continues to grow and as FIL gets a higher profile in the profession we get more opportunities to express the opinions of members at national level. The courses we run help recruit members, many of whom have not heard of FIL previously.

There sometimes seems to be a problem getting information, and particularly the FIL Newsletter, to interlibrary loans people. Very often it seems to come to a stop at the periodicals section or the Director/Chief Librarian.

We try to ensure that the FIL Newsletter reaches the right person, but inevitably we sometimes fail. If the FIL Newsletter is not making its way to you directly, and you want it to, please fill in the form below and send it back to me.

Please also use this form to keep FIL up to date with any altered or new information about yourself or your organisation.

Contact name \_\_\_\_\_

Job title \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you

Please return to:

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Mile End Road, London E1 4NS**