

# BRANCH LIBRARY PRACTICE

BY

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With an introduction

by

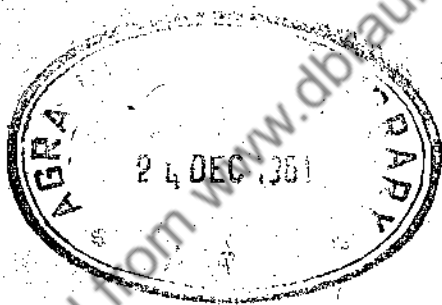
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Chief Librarian of Swansea.

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To  
My Mother and Father

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## PREFACE

No professional text-book is the sole work of its author.

The experience gained in his work and the contacts made over the years must constitute largely the bases upon which an author prepares to publish his findings. Consequently, colleagues, past and present, may often feel that that which is written now really emanated from them, and that if there is to be any praise to be given upon publication, then that acclamation should be addressed to the proper quarter. Naturally, on the other hand, condemnation is neither welcomed nor sought.

Whatever the merits then, of this book, they are not claimed by the author, but should be regarded as a tribute to those with whom it has been my fortune to have been associated, professionally and socially, over a period of several years. Any demerits are my responsibility alone.

It may be thought that here is just another text-book, but as I have written elsewhere, the accumulation of such literature mirrors not only the growth of the profession but also its vitality.

Therefore, no apology for publication is made.

It may be thought also that the subject of branch libraries has already been dealt with adequately by Mr. Henry A. Sharp in his book *Branch Libraries*, and I hasten to add that I am fully aware of the excellence of that publication, yet there have been developments in branch library work during the last twelve years. Therefore, I have attempted not to cover too much of the same ground tilled by Mr. Sharp, but rather to add to his work.

I have been fortunate in serving under four chief librarians of large systems, each of whom regarded the work of branch libraries to be of great importance. Firstly, Mr. W. A. Briscoe, whose untimely death in 1934, robbed librarianship of both scholar and respected figure; secondly, Mr. Duncan Gray, under whom many lessons were learned; thirdly, Mr. Leslie M. Rees, the sort of chief who inspires loyalty and constant effort; and lastly, my present chief Mr. A. W. McClellan, whom I have the honour of serving as deputy.

Then, too, I have been fortunate to have worked with and have

had under my control staff to whom *service* in public librarianship really meant service, and I pay especial tribute to all the willing help I received from the branch staff at Swansea whilst I was their Supervisor. It was not enough for us there to have an idea, but that idea had to be thought about, discussed, put into operation and amended where necessary until it became accepted procedure and thereby became beneficial to the public whom we never forgot we were trying to serve.

So, with both chiefs and staffs, public librarianship for me has been intensely pleasurable, and if I can give to others but a fraction of the help so willingly extended to me, I shall feel that I have repaid in some small measure some of the debts I owe.

Branch librarianship is an adventure principally because of the intimacy of contact with the public. It is not to be inferred that branch library staffs are not as busy at times as their central library colleagues—far from it—but it does infer that there is a much closer relationship, professional and social, between the staff and the reader. Therefore, the reputation of a public library system operating branch libraries finds its heights or depths according to the standard of service maintained at its outposts.

This book is an attempt to secure the integrity of branch libraries generally, but it does not claim to have investigated all problems. I have deliberately refrained from commenting upon salaries for branch library staffs and upon professional qualifications required. Whilst agreeing that both should be high, uniformity in both is impossible in present circumstances and it is a very open question whether desirable.

What is important however, is to realise that branch library staffs should consist of the very élite of any public library system's staff.

Perhaps, branch libraries as known today will give way to an even greater personal service—direct delivery of books to the homes of readers—since the travelling van library offers a close approach to the idea. Even today several authorities deliver requested books to the homes of the sick and infirm; books are sent direct by post to readers through the regional library bureaux system; and in hospitals books are brought to the bedside of patients. The writing is on the wall for all to see and is no more astonishing than the original idea of open-access.

In the preparation of a text-book, the author becomes indebted to many persons. In the following, should there be omissions of acknowledgment, such omissions are unintentional and deeply regretted. I owe thanks to Miss F. E. Cook, M.A., F.L.A. (County Librarian of Lancashire); Mr. F. M. Gardner, F.L.A. (Borough Librarian of Luton); Mr. F. J. Cooper, A.L.A., F.R.S.A. (Director of Libraries and Museum, Lincoln); and Mr. James Ross, M.A., F.L.A. (City Librarian of Bristol) for their kindness in loaning blocks or photographs to illustrate this book.

I am grateful to the Editor of *The Librarian and Book World* for permission to quote from an article of mine published in that journal in September, 1948. I am indebted to the following for courtesies so readily extended to me on my visits to their library systems, Messrs. E. Sydney, M.C., F.L.A., J. Swift, F.L.A., F. Sinclair, A.L.A., F.R.S.A., Henry A. Sharp, F.L.A., and L. R. McColvin, F.L.A.

My especial thanks are due to Mrs. M. D. Reddy for her kindness in typing the MS; to Mr. W. K. Preston; to my present chief for his great help in so many details; and finally to Mr. Leslie M. Rees, F.L.A. (Chief Librarian of Swansea) for his *Introduction* which only increases my debts to him.

Throughout this book the opinions expressed are my own unless specifically attributed to a named person.

A. G. S. ENSER.

Tottenham,

London, N.17.

February, 1950.

## INTRODUCTION

That so few books have previously appeared on the subject of branch libraries, is probably an indication of the very attitude which in this book the author has endeavoured to correct. That a branch library is a hideout voluntarily chosen by the lazy assistant, or a place of punishment reserved for stupid or recalcitrant members of a staff are, however, views frequently based not upon misconceptions, but on deductions supported by easily discernible evidence.

All too often, when assistants show any signs of professional promise, they are attracted by the glamour of the Central Library, or alternately are transferred there against their own inclination by chiefs who wish to concentrate at the headquarters all those members of the staff who might be calculated to enhance the reputation of the most publicised of the Library's departments. The consequence of both tendencies in many towns is, firstly, that branch libraries are denuded of competent staff, and secondly, that the feeling of frustration and despondency thus engendered in those members of the staff who remain, results in a lack of effort with a concomitant loss of efficiency and a tendency for branches to "grow away" from the Central administration.

The only means of counteracting this disastrous state of affairs is completely to reform the attitude of both chief librarians and staffs to the functions and duties of branch libraries and branch assistants. This is more urgently needed than the academic disputes as to whether branch libraries should be small or large, or whether they should be distributing stations or district centres. Such arguments, however solved, and important though the results may be, will not in one whit solve the problems of the incorrect approach.

Every town must solve its own problems of branch location and size, but the questions of instilling a new inspiration for advancement and providing education for efficiency and service to workers in branch libraries must, of necessity, affect the whole profession.

The first step towards the achievement of this object is the setting out in a clear manner the purposes of branch libraries and the

duties and obligations of those associated with them in a clear and precise manner. Mr. Enser has set himself this task and, as I am sure you will agree when you have read the book, he has progressed a considerable way towards the achievement of his object.

Knowing Mr. Enser as I do, I had very little doubt that his enthusiasm for branch libraries and his intense interest in their working would one day be crystallised into the form of a book.

When he was appointed Branch Supervisor of Swansea a few years ago we were faced with the problem of completely re-organising our system. During the war years, about 80 per cent. of our staff had been called up for service and from 1939 the libraries had been administered very largely by untrained temporary assistants. Whilst these workers succeeded in maintaining a reasonable service, obviously no form of development was possible. At the end of the war so much work had to be carried out in the Central Library in order to bring our service up-to-date that we decided to give our branch organiser considerable latitude in the work of co-ordinating the whole system of the satellite libraries. This was an opportunity which Mr. Enser grasped with enthusiasm and undertook with vigour, and many of the suggestions which he puts forward in this volume are based on his practical experience in our service. One of his most interesting experiments was the one which he carried out in co-operation with our Deputy Librarian and which he describes in the work; that is, the quite novel scheme of staff-training. In addition, what might be termed a working part of branch librarians and the senior officials concerned met periodically to assess the work already done and to plan further improvements.

Perhaps these two schemes alone, apart from the obvious improvements in lighting, furnishing and book selection are those which most appeal to me, as it was by these means that we attempted to inculcate in the minds of the young members of the staff the serious social significance of their work in branch libraries.

Swansea was in many respects an ideal field for experiment. In area it is the fifth largest borough in Britain and is in fact a collection of population groups which were formerly isolated from the busy town centre. Each of these areas has an almost separate identity, and the occupational interests of the people who reside



in them vary from agriculture to seaside and seaside to industrial so that the problems involved for the book selector are a sound test of his capabilities. In addition the branch librarian in each area must learn to adapt himself to the particular economic and social nature of the locality, and by directing assistants to spend varying periods of time in each district they are enabled to gain a very valuable acquaintanceship with varying conditions.

In such circumstances a Branch Supervisor was placed on his mettle and as he experimented with new methods and adaptations of old systems he realised something of the immense problems which each day faced the assistant who administered these libraries in the outer districts of a town.

We had long realised the importance of convincing branch librarians that on their taking over the organising of a branch library, rather than being exiled to the provinces they had in fact been appointed as tribunes. We have cited the background of experiment which acted as a prelude to the development of this work solely to emphasise that the ideas and theories propounded here are based on actual experience.

Whilst to some extent the purpose of an overture is to introduce the hearers to the themes which are to follow, I do not consider it is the work of a writer of an introduction to discuss the points of view of methods of administration put forward by the author, with some of which perhaps he might find himself in disagreement. I will content myself with saying that in my opinion this is an essential book for students who contemplate a study of branch library work and a book highly to be recommended to all those in our profession who have perhaps forgotten that the speed of a convoy can be considerably reduced by the tardiness of the slowest ship.

The reputation of our public libraries can be made or marred by the service provided in the outskirts of our towns, and if this book in any measure helps to develop and improve the branch library service the object of the author will have been achieved.

LESLIE M. REES.

*Swansea,*

*January, 1950.*

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## CHAPTER I

### ORGANIZATION

The history of the development of branch libraries is not complex or difficult to understand since as the public library movement grew, branch libraries, a part of that movement, grew also. Of course, some areas were in the van, others followed later and the rest are being compelled to maintain a communal service, as necessary as are schools, clinics or fire-stations for common benefit. Long before the Public Library Act of 1919, many cities and towns had branch libraries, usually serving more densely populated areas than is common today and built, decorated, furnished and administered according to the characteristic trend of the pre-1914-1918 era, *solidity and conservatism*.

A permanent building was intended to be *permanent* in those days, whereas in this atomic age permanence is both limited and progressive.

However, the modern development of branch libraries, municipal and county, is usually connected with the passing of the Act of 1919, since the rate limitation of 1d. was then removed in England and Wales and the county library system born. But, it was not for almost another ten years, that the growth of branch libraries became noticeable nationally.

In such a conservative nation as Great Britain, after the tremendous social and economic upheaval of World War I, it could hardly have been expected that the building and development of public libraries would claim priority over housing, re-establishment of trade or the efforts to 'get back to normal'. The time was not opportune, neither was the degree of public recognition of libraries far enough advanced. Far too many of the so-called public-minded citizens still thought that *free libraries* were or should be really free, in that their upkeep should not be chargeable to the public, either directly or indirectly. The appellation *free* has much to answer for in the retarded growth of an essential public service.

It was not until after the publication of the 1927 Report on

Public Libraries and the mass re-housing of populations in new housing sites, usually situated at considerable distances from the city and town centres, that the development of branch libraries in municipal systems really began. But, between the years 1930 and 1939, the growth was marked, originality of design internally and externally patent, and it was felt that at last the endeavours and hopes of the hardy pioneers had neither been in vain nor unrewarded.

So too, branch libraries in the county library systems did not arise automatically after the passing of the Act of 1919. There were the barren years here as in the municipal sphere, and in many respects, even a harder ground to till before the seed could grow, much less blossom. Antipathy, jealousy, snobbery and lack of finance, were factors which contributed to making these the worst possible conditions in which to found a great social service. But, whatever has still to be accomplished, however far short of its ideals county librarianship remains, yet, the strides it has made are neither negligible nor unworthy, but are a tribute to those whose faith in the movement is being justified.

It may be thought that the history of branch library provision shows too evident that the supply of reading matter for the populace at large has never been scientifically planned; that the siting of buildings has been haphazard; and that the conjoint pooling of resources has been rarely thought of, but having regard to the permissive character of the main Library Acts, is it to be wondered that there exists such an obvious lack of overall central direction in the creation of not merely an adequate, but a worthy, public reading service?

It is human nature to be chary about providing money for any thing having a latent return value, particularly a return of non-cash value, and the concrete evidence of buildings containing shelves of more or less attractive and worthwhile books, is rarely sufficient to assuage public representatives' doubts upon the efficacy or necessity of a public library service.

The history of branch libraries shows only too clearly the errors of permissive legislation since local political expediency has had a happy playground, and made the most of the gift, in which to develop or retard—as the case may be—reading facilities for all. Where progressive thought has dominated the

local council, advances have been made, but too often the doubting Thomases have ruled the purse-strings. In the published survey of public library service, undertaken by the Library Association in 1934, there was little to enthuse over, but a very great deal to shock considering that 84 years had gone by since the passing of the first Public Library Act in Great Britain.

As had been stated in the first paragraph of this chapter, many cities and towns did provide branch libraries, as and when possible, yet how often they were reading rooms principally, with the loaning of books for home-reading a secondary consideration. How often too, the stock provided was totally inadequate to commence with, allowed to become nauseating to handle, insufficiently revised and replenished and the service staffed with the 'misfits' exiled from the central library, so that inevitably, the aims and worth of branch libraries, judged by appearance and performance, commanded little respect and even less financial support.

Surely, no other public service has had to struggle for so long, on so little, to achieve so much and still be *persona non grata* in the hierarchy of so many local councils, *especially at budget time*.

It is suggested that World War II, with its devastating effect on the social structure of society as a whole, had its effect too upon branch libraries, not only that it halted practically all building, except in exceptional circumstances, but because it brought to an end the fruition of extensive plans of even greater extent than those achieved between 1930 and 1939.

What then can be stated as the major historical developments of branch libraries? Firstly, that their establishment and growth, whilst retarded by the permissive legislation of the main Public Library Acts, was in ratio to the progressive local political opinion; secondly, that they were sited and built too often without regard to eventual or possible mass movement of population; thirdly, that the use made of Carnegie grants (because of the second point made above) left much to criticize; fourthly, that the removal of the rate limitation by the Public Library Act of 1919, enabled library authorities in England and Wales *theoretically* to spend more on the library service generally, as well as initiating the county library system; fifthly, that the occasional example of the relinquishment of powers

pointed the way to an adequate library service for the whole country ; and lastly, between 1930 and 1939, saw more growth of branch libraries in general, than in all previous years combined since 1850.

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## CHAPTER II

### DEVELOPMENTS

As branch library development progressed, certain ideas of growth began to take shape and provided the grounds for arguments and discussions which are current still today.

If all areas were equal in size and development, possessed the same geographical features and had adequate financial resources, it would be reasonable to assume that similar characteristics in buildings, public services and progress would be exhibited, at least, there should not be evidenced dynamic divergences from the pattern.

Using this premise in the examination of branch library provision, it is seen at once that far from all areas being equal in size and development, the greatest disparities are evident, due to economic, political and a hundred other reasons, and the sundering of many areas by county and municipal schisms. The same geographical features are not present in any two areas to any marked degree as, apart from natural features such as hills and valleys, rivers and sea, man has contributed such artificial barriers as railways and canals to differentiate one area from another. And, as for adequate financial resources being common to all areas, not only have local economic and political factors prevented uniformity but central governmental direction has been conspicuous by its absence. At last, with the setting up of equalized rating there is now a chance for impoverished areas to be able to afford some of the social amenities so long denied, or for so long, inadequately provided.

Having this background in view, branch library development is associated therefore with the social, economic, political and geographical peculiarities of individual areas, and the results are there clearly to be seen.

At first, it was the policy to set up *large* branch libraries to serve densely populated, clearly defined, areas adjacent to the central library, without regard to any possible future mass population movement caused by slum clearance or town planning schemes. The result is seen today in many of the larger cities,



where once densely populated areas now contain but a fraction of their former inhabitants because new housing estates have been provided for previously overcrowded areas, and in other cases, commerce has taken possession of any type of building suitable for offices. Consequently, some large branch libraries are to be found, now uneconomical and serving but a small percentage of the former population in the area. This has led to a belief that branch libraries should be small and many, as against the former view of large and few, but it should be stated that several large redundant branches are being utilized now as pool stock depots for the storage of books too valuable to be discarded but too little used to occupy current shelf space. As many of these large branches are within comparably short distance of the main central library, it does seem that their utilization, in part or in whole, as reserve stock depositories is to be commended.

The argument concerning the provision of a few large branches or many small ones in any given area depends entirely upon the geographic features and the grouping of population. No hard and fast rule can be laid down, but provided that a branch library is established according to the *known*, and bearing in mind the *probable* population it is intended to serve, its size can be determined on these factors. No branch library is ever intended to carry or compete with the *stock* of a central library, but the *service* given can be equalized if staff are efficient, and telephone communication and van delivery facilities are available. Whatever the size or arrangement of branch libraries, co-ordination of stock, staff and service is the all-important key, not to a problem, but to adequate public library facilities.

With the advent of World War II, further developments have taken place, such as regionalisation, shop libraries, pre-fabricated libraries and travelling van libraries.

*Regionalisation* is found in both municipal and county library organization. Whereas in the past, each branch library looked upon the central library as its parent body, present developments are to make a large branch library act as the central depot to a series of small branches or delivery stations within the immediate neighbourhood. Particularly is this observed in several county library systems, e.g., Derbyshire, where the widespread dispersal of knots of population, whilst large enough to

warrant a small branch library, would mean that such small centres, being so far removed from central headquarters, would tend to become isolated, forgotten and difficult to staff. With a large branch library—much nearer geographically than the central library—taking over the normal responsibilities in organization and administration usually operated from the central point, small branches can be staffed, stocked and worked from the large branch library, thus ensuring continuity of service and conformity in practice.

*Shop libraries* though not strictly due to the curtailment of library building since 1939, because several were in existence before that date, are a marked development recently. Any library authority wishing to establish a branch library service in a permanent or semi-permanent building must employ either a pre-fabricated erection or convert existing premises. In the latter case, it is more usual to find upon conversion, a shop-library, that is the employment of premises formerly used for shops as branch libraries. As shops are normally centrally sited, the conversion of shops into libraries is advantageous from the standpoint of *accessibility*, whilst the usual large window space creates many opportunities for display purposes, but interior space is frequently insufficient for the normal arrangement of stacks. Also, though rent charges are lower than capital costs for a new building or annual loan charges in connection with permanent structures, there remains the question of tenure of lease, so that there is a danger of establishing a branch library service which may cease at some future date because the lease of the converted premises has expired and no suitable alternative accommodation in close proximity may exist. However, shop-library frontages have at least disturbed the prosaic ideas of both internal and external displays of a library's stock and created in the minds of many librarians a more business-like approach to the outward appearance of library buildings.

The most outstanding example of shop-libraries is perhaps the Archway Branch Library (Islington Public Libraries) situated at Highgate Archway, London. In this instance, two shops, most centrally sited, have been converted into a branch library, containing about 20,000 books, with a normal issue on Saturdays, from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. exceeding 1,600 volumes.

The large frontage windows are used for display purposes of books and posters and similar illustrative material, changed at frequent intervals, and in attractiveness vieing with the display of goods in any normal shop window. Passers-by can see the inner working of the library, note with what assurance readers step into the shop for books, just as they would purchase goods in any ordinary shop, and feel that there is no incongruity in their branch library being cheek by jowl with the grocer or haberdasher. The psychology of a shop-library, with its close relationship to normal shopping in the minds of the public, is a subject worthy of investigation because it is felt that the undoubted success of shop-libraries generally, apart from questions of sufficiency of stock, is due to the adage 'seeing is believing'.

*Pre-fabricated buildings* along with pre-fabricated houses and bungalows of this modern age are what their name suggests, temporary erections engendered by building conditions following World War II. As it is impossible, at present, to obtain sanction for the erection of permanent branch buildings, resort has to be made to simple structures, standardized in size, shape and construction. Minor alterations and modifications are permitted but it cannot be gainsaid that such buildings are anything but utilitarian in the extreme, yet rather than nothing, or an indeterminate period of waiting for permission to erect permanent buildings, pre-fabricated branch libraries are worth while, particularly if it is desired to provide library facilities on a new pre-fabricated housing estate or for areas as yet without a service.

The Bracebridge Branch Library at Lincoln was the forerunner of this type of structure and details are as follows:—

Overall size—54 ft. × 18 ft. 6 in., plus brick annexe.

Shelving capacity—5,000 volumes.

A more recent example of this type of temporary make-do is the Stopsley Branch Library at Luton, where in addition to the main building, an entrance hall has been added. Interior decoration is austere, for example no plastering is permitted, but ingenuity in the use of shelving and furnishings has created an atmosphere, if not of luxury, at least as comfortable and pleasing as is humanly possible in the circumstances.

*Travelling van libraries* are mobile units in which the interior is fitted with shelves to accommodate the books.

Van libraries are used to provide library facilities to people living in remote localities or at considerable distances from the nearest branch library. These mobile libraries are of particular value in county library systems, e.g., Lancashire and Derbyshire, where widely separated hamlets, not large enough to justify the setting up of even a small branch building, can now be serviced and the inhabitants enjoy the same reading amenities provided for the more populous areas.

There are several municipal systems also using travelling van libraries, and at Tottenham it is intended to service all schools in the borough by means of two mobile vans, thereby superseding the present system of small and often inadequate individual collections in each school. Also, by this method, trained librarians will operate the service instead of teachers as heretofore, so that schoolchildren will become familiar with public library facilities in childhood and adolescence.

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## CHAPTER III

### MUNICIPAL

There are two systems of public library service in this country, municipal and county, and whilst their main function is the same, there are cardinal differences in organization. In this chapter, it is the municipal system that is under review.

The control of the public library service in municipal spheres is vested in the local authority for the particular area concerned. The local authority in turn usually appoints a library committee to administer its public libraries, except that the local authority, in all cases, reserves to itself the right to levy a rate and to raise a loan. Therefore, where a municipal system also operates branch libraries, these too are part of the library service for that area as a whole, and are governed by the Library Committee on behalf of the local authority.

Should there be many branch libraries in a particular system it may be necessary for a sub-committee of the library committee to be formed, to be responsible for the administration of the branches. The municipal systems possessing but few branches would find this sub-committee unnecessary, but whether there be many or few branches it is likely that the main library committee will have sub-committees responsible for staff, book purchasing and buildings.

The chief librarian is answerable to the local authority through the library committee for the organization and administration of the library service as a whole, and he in turn looks to his chief lieutenants, the deputy librarian, branch supervisor, heads of departments and branch librarians, to see that the library service at all points is speedy, efficient, courteous and co-ordinated. The duties of branch library staffs are discussed more fully in Chapter XIII, but it must be stated here that the merest junior assistant in any sized branch library is just as important to the prestige of the service as the chief librarian himself. Why? Because at a branch library contact with the public is far more intimate and personal than that experienced at any busy central library. Therefore, the public service

rendered is more closely criticized, reported upon and remembered, than is the case normally found at the parent centre.

Once the system of central library plus branches has been established, it is essential that a uniform policy concerning staff regulations, service conditions, new additions, stock revision and withdrawals, be adhered to and in no circumstances should any branch or branches be left without some central supervision, of a more or less degree in accordance with the dictate of the reigning chief librarian.

Again, branch libraries in the same system should be co-operative as well as co-ordinated in organization and administration. Borrowers should be able to use their tickets at any branch library, or the central library, within the system to which they belong. Stock, rather than being permanently accessioned to one branch thereby becoming static, should be centrally accessioned and be mobile. Staff, apart from the branch librarians, should be flexible, particularly in the case of young junior assistants since it is advantageous to their training that they should experience differing types of readers, buildings, and staff, in the early part of their careers.

The policy of appointing branch librarians permanently to any branch has advantages and disadvantages according both to service conditions and to the temperament of the actual branch librarian. Briefly, the advantages are, firstly, a more acute knowledge of readers is acquired; secondly, a more accurate assessment made of individual reading tastes; thirdly, a more highly developed sense of the area's collective need in stock additions; and lastly, the establishment of a tradition according to the personality of the branch librarian. The disadvantages are, firstly, enthusiasm in time may diminish; secondly, familiarity may breed contempt for the attitude which regards the branch library as a continuous challenge to one's sense of freshness and appeal; thirdly, there may develop a tendency to assume the role of 'king of the castle' and thus become averse to conforming to central policy; and lastly, too long a stay in any one branch tends to dull initiative.

Given full co-operation within the complete system, it is then but a minor step to extend that internal co-operation to an external field, so that readers may use the libraries of an entirely different authority, e.g., a registered borrower living in Dagen-

ham but working in Holborn, should be able to borrow books from either system upon production of his membership ticket of *either* library, and automatically be permitted access to all the facilities offered by either library.

It should be possible for the staff of one authority to be interchangeable for a period with another, in order to gain a much wider professional knowledge. The limitations of the smaller systems should not debar any professional assistant from experience, and particularly bibliographical experience, in the greater systems throughout the country. Stocks should be scientifically planned so that the fullest use is made of available funds, not merely of one library authority but adjacent authorities as well, and especially should withdrawals and stock revision be co-operative so that within a defined region, at least, one copy of a redundant work is retained. In this respect, mention should be made of the Metropolitan Borough's Scheme whereby each constituent member is responsible for the storing of withdrawals throughout the metropolitan area according to alphabetical progression of authors' names.

Standardized tickets are on the way as well as uniform loan periods and fines in the metropolitan area, and if it is possible for all these separate library authorities, many possessing branch systems, to agree on common policy in such matters as already stated, then it should be achieved similarly in other parts of the country, given good-will, foresight and common striving to make public librarianship truly *public*. The framework within the regional library bureaux system exists already; is it too much to ask or expect that within each region uniformity of stationery used, registration and loan period be fact instead of fiction?

## CHAPTER IV

### COUNTY

The second system of public library service in this country is the county library, a system initiated generally after the passing of the Public Library Act, 1919.

In county libraries is seen branch library service developed in certain counties to a higher degree of efficiency than in any municipal system, particularly the mobile and regional aspects.

Of course, certain counties, because of financial difficulties and lack of vision, are still operating a public library service in which the operative word *service* would be comic, were it not really tragic.

The chief difficulty a county library system has to face is that of spread of population over a wide area, unevenly distributed and often presenting problems of access.

With the passing of the Public Library Act, 1919, the county education committee assumed responsibility for administering a county library service and perhaps because of the manifold difficulties to be faced before an adequate library service could be organized, for example, the permissive nature of the adoption of public library Acts; the uneven distribution of wealth; the multitude of hamlets, villages and towns in every county; the overcoming of local prides and jealousies; and last, but not least, the fact that county library work was but an attachment to the work of county education committees, is it to be wondered at that a decade was to pass before there was tangible evidence of any real county library service? And, one must pay tribute here to the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, acting on W. S. G. Adam's famous report of 1915, for their faith in county libraries. Had it not been for their financial assistance, so readily given and made available over so many years, there can be little doubt that the progress made in the initial stages of development would have been so very much less than even it was.

Perhaps of all progress in public librarianship, the development of county branch systems is the most remarkable. From practically nothing there has been established a service, which, if



still not satisfying in the least the ideals of such county librarians as those of Lancashire, Derbyshire and Middlesex, to mention but a few, yet is an achievement of the highest order. Even the sometimes forgotten counties of Wales, such as Cardiganshire and Denbighshire, led by energetic librarians provide a county library service bearing every comparison with those already lauded.

Fully equipped travelling van libraries have taken the place of the infrequently delivered, often ill-assorted boxes of books, regionalisation has given administrative efficiency to many areas and county library headquarters buildings are rapidly approaching the importance and dignity of the municipal central libraries.

Differential rating is now practically unknown, yet however to be criticized, it can be said to have paved the way for a general highering of library service over a given area in time. The psychological effect of envy and competition being aroused because one town was receiving much more efficient or better facilities than its neighbour, proved a valuable stimulant to those pressing for improvements.

Also, relinquishment of powers, in some cases, a result of differential rating, but more often attributable to common-sense, since in combination lay advantages to the benefit of all concerned, is now much less common than formerly, yet differential rating and relinquishment of powers form part of the historical development of county library systems. Moreover, the relinquishment of powers in the near future may be obligatory in order to enforce a higher standard of library service, not merely within counties, but over regions, and finally, nationally.

Co-operation within county branch libraries depends upon the good-will and acumen of the particular hierarchies. Of course, there are many examples of co-operation as regards inter-availability of tickets, extension activities and the loaning of books, both through private arrangements and through the regional bureau scheme, but more noteworthy are the several examples of inter-change of staffs, not only within this country but also from abroad, particularly between Great Britain and the United States of America and Canada.

Such exchanges must inevitably be of benefit to the persons concerned, the systems in which they work and in the end, to

the profession since the widening of contacts, the gaining of experience and the all-over accumulative effect in the broadening of the mind are beyond measure in the mental and physical essentials required of a librarian and of librarianship.

The necessity for co-operation in county branch libraries is more marked geographically because a hamlet situated near the boundary of a county may be difficult to service, yet in the adjacent county, there may be a county branch library not only close enough to service easily the 'foreign' hamlet, but which for plainly economic and social reasons is the obvious choice for this purpose. Yet, there are many such cases as this where co-operation is banned because the two county authorities have not so far, or are actually unwilling to, come to mutual agreement.

In county libraries, the arbitrary boundaries of the counties emphasize the need for planned regionalization as envisaged in the McColvin Report. Until such time as areas are arranged in accordance with geographical features and all regions financed centrally, the county library system, no matter how highly developed their branches become, will have weaknesses so obviously remediable by national planning.

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## CHAPTER V

### PLANNING

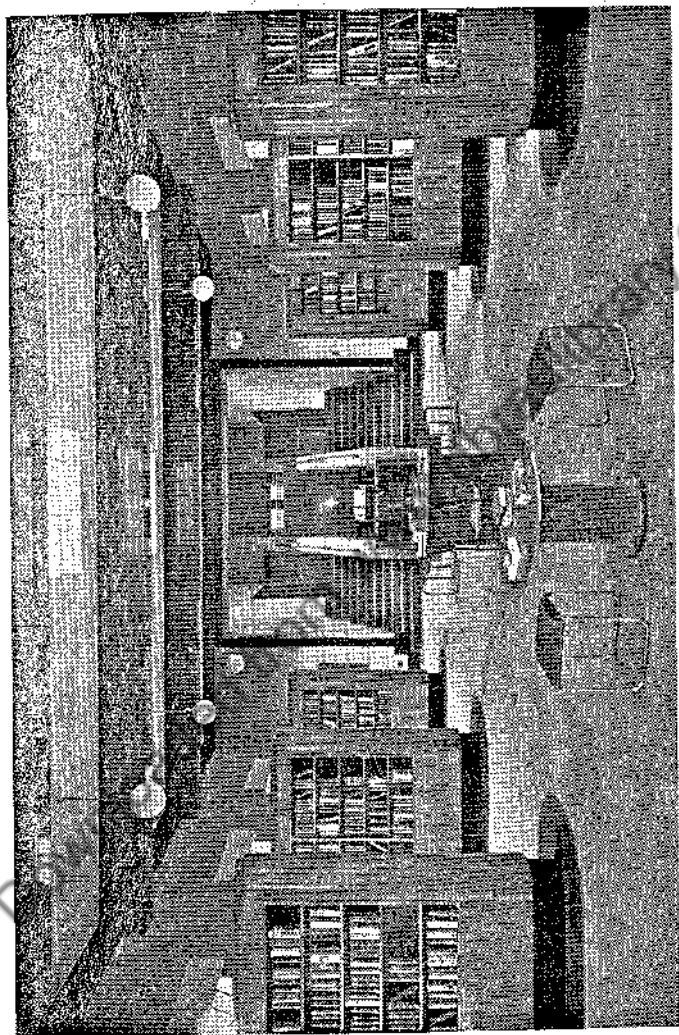
Before any branch library is established there must have been many hours spent in preliminary work and in this and the following three chapters the examination of the necessary preparations will be reviewed.

Long before any foundation stone is laid, the site will have been discussed, compared and finally agreed. Discussion will have taken into account the limit of cost to be sanctioned ; the area to be served considered geographically, statistically and its probable development assessed ; the size in relationship to costing limits and probable population use ; internal features ; external characteristics ; and whether the branch is to be a permanent or temporary erection. In fact, the librarian and the architect will have lived with the planning details so long that the actual building might even be a disappointment.

Comparisons will have endeavoured to secure that position approximating most to the criteria of good siting, taking into account the available spaces in the particular area in which the branch library is to be established.

Agreement will have been reached, after consultation with perhaps other committees or interested bodies, about where the branch library is to be built and more than one librarian has subsequently been sorry that the agreement on the site eventually chosen should have been forced upon him or has been a compromise agreement, *in order even to get a branch library at all*. Too often the librarian has had to be satisfied, not with the position he would have chosen for the branch library, but with the site offered. Therefore, the criteria of good siting should be set out as a guide and it is suggested that, if a librarian in order to obtain a site for a proposed branch library is likely to be compelled to forgo much of the following criteria, then he should stand firm and refuse to make do with a site likely to serve but a minor portion of the population for which it is intended that the branch library shall provide reading facilities.

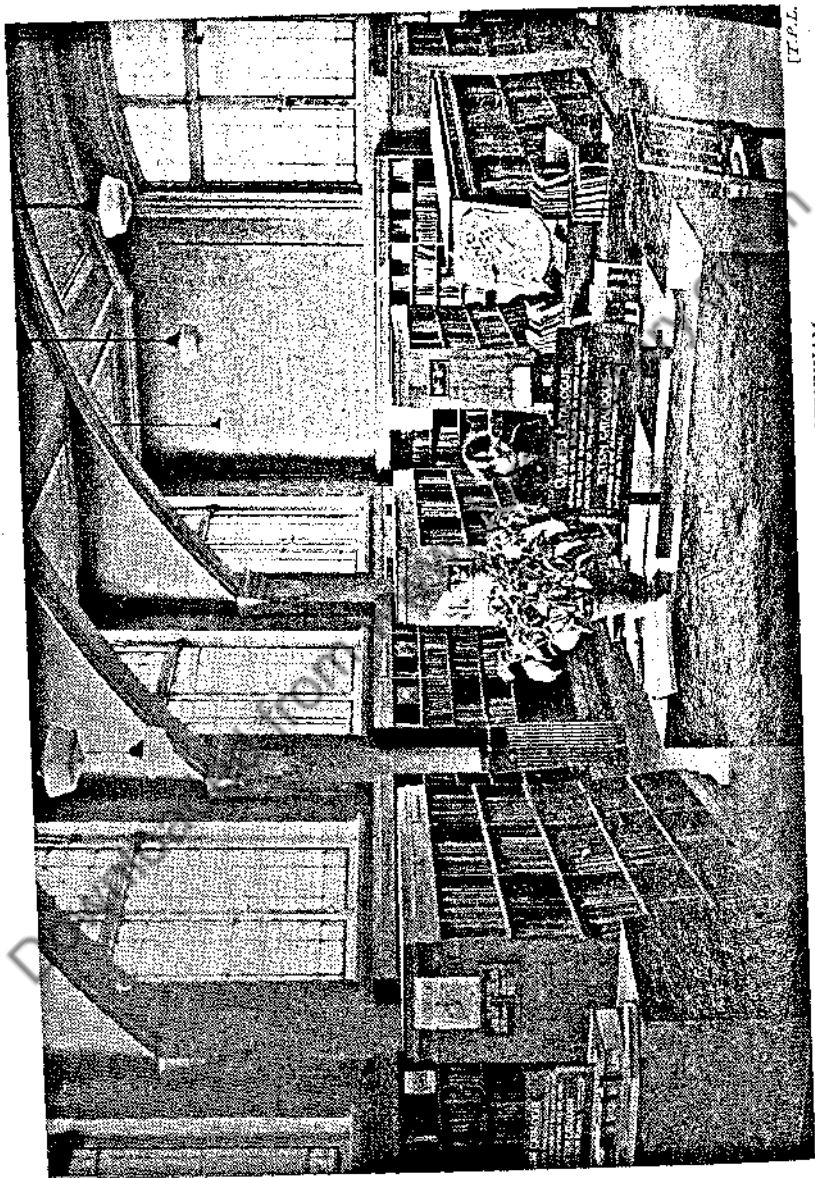
The criteria of good siting for a branch library are then :—



DROYLSDEN BRANCH LIBRARY, LANCES. C.C.

County Librarian, Lancs. C.C.

org.in



[T.P.L.]

DEVONSHIRE HILL BRANCH LIBRARY, TOTTENHAM

- (a) It must be central in relationship to the population it is to serve, thereby ensuring possible maximum use.
- (b) It must have ease of access.
- (c) It should be set back from the road, thereby having a surround.
- (d) It must occupy an adequate area so that the building is neither too wide nor too narrow.
- (e) Space must be allowed for deliveries and despatch.
- (f) It should command the maximum amount of natural light.
- (g) There should be no fire danger.
- (h) The distance between the central and the branch library, and also between branch and outwardly succeeding branch libraries should be not more than two miles in distance unless there are peculiar geographical features which necessitate deviation from this observance.\*
- (i) The greater the hinterland between the branch library and the boundary of the district the better, since experience proves that people will travel *inwards to a natural centre* but are loath to travel *outwards to an artificial centre*, and particularly is this so if the outward journey is also *up-hill*.

The importance of siting cannot be overstressed and the time spent in personal observance, investigation and thought will be amply repaid once the branch library begins to function. Considering that business firms are willing to expend very large sums of money in order to obtain *natural sites* for both the selling and advertising of their products wherever the mass gravitational centre is found, surely then, it is both ill-economy and absurd to build a branch library on a site which is not part of the communal shopping life it is supposed to serve.

It is obvious that certain items in the criteria quoted above would not be applicable in all cases, e.g., in a shop-library it is improbable that such a library would be set back from the road, space for deliveries and despatch may be limited to the

\* In the recent Readers Survey undertaken by Mass Observation for the Tottenham Public Libraries, it is shown that the percentage of readers using library facilities situate beyond a distance of half a mile, even in a built-up-area, rapidly falls in comparison to the percentage of such users living less than a quarter of a mile, or between a quarter and half a mile away from library facilities. This may be peculiar to the London area, but nevertheless, it is a staggering revelation.

Distance from Library.

Less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile.

Between  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile.

Over  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile.

% of group belonging to Library.

28

25

11

(Reading in Tottenham, p. 18.)

size of the normal shop door and the fire danger may be increased by the type of business carried on in adjoining premises. Again, in the case of a branch library operating over shop or business premises, ease of access may not be all that could be desired, surrounds might be lacking and difficulties in deliveries and despatches (might be) experienced.

But, the nearer the foundation of the proposed branch library approaches the criteria of good siting the less disadvantages will be made manifest.

Together with the siting are two other most important considerations, namely, eventual external and internal appearances.

The unorthodox may maintain that the external appearance of a branch library is immaterial since it is the service from within the building which matters. The purist may insist, alternatively, that the external appearance should leave no doubt in the mind of the public that the proposed building *is a public library*.

Both contentions are open to question; the former on the grounds that by dismissing the external appearance as being of no consequence, one exhibits a lack of the quality of being able to appreciate publicity value since the public, observing something which attracts by its external appearance, will be enticed to discover what goes on internally; the latter on the grounds that by following a set idea, frequently based on out-of-date modes, they are not receptive to architecturally sound advances in design conjoint with efficiency. Therefore, there are also criteria for external planning and these are:—

- (a) Suitability of purpose, so that the building should not only look like a library, but incorporate the most recently proved architectural advances in design. It can be stated also, that as well as looking like a library, the building should be capable of being used as such.
- (b) It should be suitable to its surroundings. This means that to use facings foreign to the area is likely to make the external appearance of the building incongruous, e.g., to use Welsh poll stone as exterior walls for a branch library in the normal red brick area of Nottinghamshire would be questionable, to say the least.
- (c) The entrance and exits must be adequate to the estimated use, bearing in mind, present and/or future population to be served.

The internal planning is largely a question for the librarian to decide since the architect is not expected to know what departments to provide for until informed by the librarian. However, it can be stated that the closer the co-operation is between the librarian and architect in planning the branch library, the more satisfactory the result normally will be in providing a building which will be sited to the best advantage, externally pleasing and internally appropriate for the service intended to be carried out. Should either the librarian or the architect predominate in the planning, the more likely it is that the result will show defects, either from the library service or from the architectural point of view, and thereby militate against complete efficiency.

The planning of a branch library must also take into consideration the question of the permanent or temporary nature of the building.

Considering that it is impossible today to build a permanent branch library, similar to the many fine examples erected between 1935 and 1939, perhaps it may be thought that it is wasting time even to think about the planning of comparable permanent branch libraries, but the time will come when the present difficulties are over. Then, experience gained from the erection and working of pre-fabricated branch libraries, such as Lincoln's *Bracebridge* and Luton's *Stopsley*, may have very important repercussions and effects in branch library planning.

The external appearance of shop-fronts frequently change to conform with advances made in modern publicity, and it may be that future planning of branch libraries will incorporate the feature of facings easily renovated to accord with the times. Certainly many older branch libraries could have their present external Victorian appearances changed to advantage, and at comparatively low cost.

A temporary library building does permit a service to be given to a rapidly expanding district, so that later, a permanent building can be erected in conformity with the full needs of a completed community, and it seems more advantageous economically and from the library service point of view, to provide library facilities from a temporary building in any area still developing, and at a later date from a permanent erection when the extent of development is known.



## CHAPTER VI

### FURNITURE

There are many things which collectively make an attractive and efficiently run branch library and not the least of these is the furniture used for shelving, display, counters, tables, chairs and screens. Taking once more the example of commercial concerns, if reputable firms are prepared to spend both time and money in procuring well designed and modern furniture for their premises, particularly those used by the public, it can be assumed that such firms consider the expenditure of this money well worth while, not only from the aesthetic point of view but mainly because of the *impression* created in the public mind.

That which looks in good taste goes a long way in securing good-will, and so far as branch libraries are concerned, because of the very fact that contact with the public therein is so very much more intimate than is usually found in central libraries, *good-will* is not only a possession to be cherished, but is to be nurtured with all the care and attention possible. Of course, the book stock and the service given by the staff are of vital importance, but the furnishing of a branch library demands due care and regard also. Once inside the building the public see first of all the decorating and the furnishing. If the appearance is inviting, then created in the mind of the user is a favourable impression and his attitude towards the deficiencies of the stock correspondingly tempered, but should repulsion be planted first, then no matter how good both stock and service may be, the percentage of regular users will not only decrease but the impression gained by readers will be circulated in gossip amongst their friends (also potential users) and thereby will be lost not only a high degree of public regard but also a high proportion of public regard which will in turn deter a large section of that public which the library was intended to serve, from attending the branch.

Bearing this in mind then, the choice of furniture for a branch library is not to be considered as unimportant. Shelving should

tone with the decoration, the size of the issue desk should be in proportion to the size of the floor space, and chairs and tables appropriate in design.

In a branch library the choice of shelving is vastly important. Gone are the days when the higher the stack the more it commended itself in the librarian's eyes and the more it exasperated the reader who could not see what he wanted, especially on a shelf unreachable unless he indulged in strenuous gymnastics, or conversely, gone too are the days of shelving books at floor level, so that the reader had to adopt all sorts of unbecoming attitudes in order to read the titles of books so shelved. Such shelving is suitable in non-public stack-rooms where shelving space is more important than appearance and reachability, but is totally unsuitable for open shelves. Therefore, the shelving in a branch library should commence at a distance of not less than 1 foot 6 inches from the floor (this bottom shelf being tilted upwards), and extend to a maximum height of 6 feet 3 inches (the top shelf being at a height of not more than 5 feet 6 inches).

In the past, it was considered good planning to utilize floor space with stacks set in radial formation so that, to some degree, a measure of observation could be effected from the issue desk, but modern planning calls for as much space as possible in the centre of the library to be free and shelving is usually confined to the walls and occasional island stacks standing no higher than 5 feet. The theorists will say that by reducing shelving, one reduces the amount of books that may be shelved. Admitted, but how true it is, especially in a branch library, to find that where floor space is monopolised by stacks, stock revision becomes forgotten and books are allowed to remain on the open shelves long after they have lost current value or interest, or have been superseded by later works and editions.

Once more taking an example from a commercial firm. No large retail concern clutters up the floor space showing everything it has to sell and thereby limiting free movement of the prospective customers. As many selective examples as possible, consistent with ease of public inspection, are shown, but adequate store rooms are provided for replica and secondary stock and no store manager allows out-of-date goods to be on public view *except at sale time*.

The public are not favourably impressed when faced with

serried shelves of books, difficult both to reach and consult, only to find, all too often, publications which are out-of-date. Shelving, therefore, in a branch library should be so arranged as to permit ease of browsing and so limited in extent that all stock on open shelves is *current*.

As to whether the shelving should be of wood or metal, there are advantages and disadvantages in either case. Wood tones better with the colour scheme, but metal shelves can be painted in any desired shade and they do not warp. But with modern developments in plastics and glass, consideration should be given to their possible use for stacks, particularly tinted unbreakable glass, which would have the added advantages of being easy to keep clean whilst at the same time adding to the overall luminosity of lighting, both natural and artificial.

The maximum use of space for public service within a branch library is of cardinal importance and to separate adult, children's and quick reference departments by brick walls is a waste of space which could be obviated by the use of movable glass screens. Their use facilitates ease of observation, cleaning, more lighting and gives an air of increased space besides allowing for internal alterations with the minimum inconvenience both to the public using the building as well as effecting a considerable saving in cost.

Issue desks have been rather taken for granted and in many cases are far too large, thereby taking up valuable space. It is also a fallacy to assume that the size of an issue desk increases or decreases according to the size of a branch library. Only to a limited extent is this premise true because for the normal size branch library the turn-table type of issue desk is quite sufficient unless, of course, the mistake is being made of using the issue desk as the fulcrum point of public service. The branch librarian who is tied to an issue desk is just as handicapped in giving personal assistance to readers as the one is useless who hides himself in his office away from the public.

If it is true to say that justice to be believed must be seen, then just as true is it to say, that the librarian who will be most acceptable to the public and efficient in his job is the one who is available completely. Personal attention which has to be given whilst beset with charging and discharging books, answering the telephone and so on, is a travesty of public service.

The issue desk, whilst conforming to the general decorative scheme, should not be the general office, littered with paste-pots, ink wells or battered books so that it gives an immediate impression of inefficiency. Since it is the first point of public contact, branch librarians should be wise enough to see that at all times the issue desk is tidy.

Let the entrance thereto be spacious and not fettered with that anachronism of the closed-library era, the wicket-gates. Any purposes they are supposed to serve are out-weighed by inconvenience both to public and staff alike. Future planners of branch libraries should be foresighted enough to relegate the incidentals of an issue desk to an annexe, thereby permitting the library itself to be a self-contained unit, devoted entirely to the display of books and assistance to readers, as for example, at Westminster Central Library.

It is more probable that new issue and charging methods will completely revolutionize the present conception of issue desks. Also, there is no reason why branch libraries should not be provided with receptacles similar to the night safe deposits used by banks, so that readers not able to attend in library hours, for some reason or another, might leave their books instead of being obliged to carry them home again should they have been unfortunate enough to have arrived at the branch library to find it closed.

As for tables and chairs, let them be in keeping with the rest of the furniture in the decorative scheme, and see that the chairs are comfortable, the seats being covered in warm coloured hide or rexine. Also, it is amazing how different a branch library will look with a vase of flowers on a table. The cost of supplying flowers need not be excessive, especially where the particular council also have a Parks Department, since amicable arrangements can normally be made with the Parks Superintendent to supply cut or potted flowers in season weekly, at a very low cost.

Some branch librarians may say, "This is all very well, but I am not responsible for the existing shelving, issue desk, chairs and tables and so on"; but that does not invalidate the necessity for their efforts to achieve the maximum degree of interior attractiveness, and no branch librarian worth his salt will omit to inspect his branch library daily, and ask himself the question,

"*Is this library attractive?*" If the answer is "NO", then there is work to be done, and done NOW, not tomorrow, or just put off or dismissed with the shrug of accustomed shoulders in a 'why bother' attitude.

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## CHAPTER VII

### FLOORS AND DECORATION

Having considered the furniture of a branch library some words must be said about the floors, walls and interior decoration.

The old saying, "Don't spoil the ship for a ha'p'orth of tar", contains a great deal of truth, and not the least when applied to the structural interiors of libraries. The question of finance is too readily advanced as an excuse to save wherever possible, but surely it is a shortsighted policy, economically, practically and architecturally to skimp the total cost by the use of poor quality floors, ill-designed walls and the too frequently observed pathetic use of standard colours for decoration.

The flooring of any branch library is not just a matter of some sort of foundation upon which to walk or to erect book-stacks, nor is it merely a question of choice between materials such as wood blocks, composition, rubber, cork or terrazzo, to name a few of the normal floorings. Before any selection is made several pertinent questions should have been satisfactorily settled, principally by the librarian, and after, if necessary, consultation with the architect and flooring specialists.

The number and size of the departments to be provided at the branch library must be taken into consideration. The flooring of a small one-roomed type of branch library will be of one of the usual materials throughout, but for a large branch library, having, for example, separate lending and children's departments, reading room and lecture hall, different materials for the floors in the various rooms may be used.

The peculiar features of the locality in which the branch library is to be established may affect the choice of floorings.

In a heavy industrial area, heavy footwear can be expected and under such conditions, a composition floor, besides echoing the tread of feet, may also be inclined to chip. In a region with a damp atmosphere, certain materials used for floorings have a tendency to 'sweat' so that the floor appears to have been swilled. *And, no floor should be slippery.*

Such questions are not unimportant, particularly as they affect not only the general fabric wearing qualities of the building, but also public safety and the possibility of frequent additional costs in repairing rapidly deteriorating floors.

Whether the flooring to be chosen is wood, cork, rubber and so on, each has its own advantages and disadvantages, especially in relation to the previous paragraphs, but for certain portions of a branch library some materials are to be chosen in preference to others. The entrance, particularly if extensive, calls for a hard wearing and easily cleaned flooring, this suggests terrazzo. Public rooms such as lending and children's rooms require floorings in keeping with the general decorative scheme as well as limiting noise as much as possible, therefore, materials such as rubber or cork should be considered. Lecture halls, which may serve the purpose of the local community centre, and frequently be available for dances and other social functions, will require a wood block flooring. Basement floorings will suggest concrete, composition or asphalt as material choice, but whatever flooring is chosen in any part of the branch library, it is essential that the cleaners know how to *clean* the various types of floors so that, compatible with cleanliness, safety at all times is maintained. The highly polished wooden block floor, for example, may be delightful to the eye, but a series of heavy compensation claims for falls are not welcomed by any local authority.

In the previous chapter, reference was made to the use of glazed screens in place of walls for the purpose of dividing a branch library into separate rooms, but there still have to be some walls and, of course, ceilings. In his *Modern Public Libraries*, E. H. Ashburner lays down the following requirements concerning walls and partitions:—

- (a) A hard reflecting surface on the outside of the wall.
- (b) A non-homogeneous structure containing inert air cells.
- (c) An air gap to prevent continuity.
- (d) The insertion of a layer of insulating material.
- (e) A sound-absorbent surface to the inner wall faces of the room.
- (f) Massive and rigid construction.
- (g) Foundation at such a level as to be free from the effect of impact noises.

Walls and partitions complying with the above quoted conditions should be sufficient for all normal branch library purposes, but should there be a lecture hall (used for cinematograph projection) then it is advisable that the walls enclosing the hall be lined with asbestos.

The facing treatment of walls and ceilings are too often found to be unimaginative and colour schemes used (if there is any colour scheme) the same year after year. Naturally, much wall space in the lending and children's departments of a branch library will be covered by shelving, but there will still be that space from the top of the racks to the ceiling and the ceiling itself to be decorated.

Again, choice will depend upon the internal planning of the branch library. A single-roomed branch library may normally be expected to have an overall colour scheme, but the larger branch library having several separate departments can have each room treated differently.

Light colours should predominate in lending and children's rooms, but in lecture halls deeper shades are more appropriate.

Recent developments in wall finishes suggest that efforts be made to break away from the traditional standards found in council premises. Particularly, special attention should be paid to the decoration of the children's room where one is provided separately. Let the colours chosen for the walls be gay and in keeping with the high spirits of children, and the use of illustrative friezes is to be commended. For other departments experiment with stipple and stucco finishes, and use a gloss paint wherever the public are likely to lean against a wall.

And, although the renovation costs in the annual estimates may be high, ensure that financial provision is made for re-painting and re-decoration, so that this necessary operation is not left year after year, with the branch library becoming steadily dingier, paint peeling here and walls flaking there. Intervals between re-painting and re-decorating may vary according to the peculiarities of each area, but, for example, in any industrial belt, renovation of branch libraries is required after two years. Drab surroundings breed inertia and despair, a heavy penalty to pay for the cost of a coat of paint.



## CHAPTER VIII

### HEATING AND LIGHTING

Allied to interior and exterior decorations and furniture are the questions of heating, ventilation and lighting, and though power-cuts and economies of both fuel and light are the present order-of-the-day, yet it is to be expected that at some future date these restrictions will no longer apply. Consequently, in this chapter, it will be assumed that normal conditions prevail so that adequate standards of illumination, ventilation and heating are not only permissible, but obligatory.

The problem of the heating of a branch library must be considered in relation to the staff employed, the planning of the building, and the type of heating system adopted. In the one-roomed type of branch library the heating of that one room is no major problem, though the *method* of heating it may be. On the other hand in the large branch library, with separate rooms, some of which are used all day, others only at specified hours during the day, and the rest at intervals of a day or days, the problem of heating is more likely to be a major one whereas the method might be fairly simple.

In the one-roomed branch library the staff employed is usually small and probably at times reduced to a single assistant, with no permanent janitor on duty, therefore, any heating system that involves more personal attention at such times than the mere pressing of a switch, e.g., the necessity of periodically feeding a boiler, creates difficulties immediately. In any case, no library assistant should be a pseudo-boiler attendant as well. Thus, the method to be adopted of heating such branch libraries should be either by gas or electricity, thermostatically controlled. Any system of heating which involves the burning of fuel also necessitates the provision of delivery and storage space for the fuel and the services of an attendant.

In the large branch library, with separate rooms to be heated at different times, there is more likely to be a janitor available to look after boilers, but the use of electricity or gas thermostatically controlled has many advantages, particularly as the

heating control of each room is so simple. There is no need for the installation of those so-well-remembered water-pipes nor those unsightly radiators since heat can be radiated from ceilings, upper walls or from the floor.

Ventilation of the small branch library will be effected adequately by windows in the majority of cases, but for the large branch library, it may be necessary to install some type of mechanical ventilation. Consideration, in the latter type of branch library, should be given to the system whereby warmed air is introduced into the building. In this country, the realization of the importance of air conditioning in branch libraries has not reached the same degree as, for example, it has in the U.S.A., but there can be no doubt that conditions, both for staff and public, are improved considerably where air conditioning is introduced.

Lighting for branch libraries does not present difficulties unless the siting and construction of the building fails to conform to the criteria of good planning. Converted premises however may need re-wiring completely and the position of the lights altered before it is possible for the premises to be used as a branch library. But, in all cases, let there be adequate lights, especially in entrances containing steps.

For interior lighting fluorescent tubes have largely superseded pendant lights and, after high installation costs, are economical in use besides giving greatly increased standards of luminosity per candle foot. Recent improvements in fittings and construction, as well as variety in colour shadings and size of the actual tubes, makes the installation of fluorescent lighting highly desirable in lending libraries where good illumination is essential.

In branch libraries where provision is made for small study rooms containing separate desks, individual table lamps are recommended and strip lighting for display cases.

Branch libraries too often ignore the comfort of the staff, yet there are many cases where assistants, because of travelling difficulties or because of distance from home, are compelled to have meals or rest periods on the premises. Therefore, comfortable accommodation should be provided in a staff room offering reasonable facilities for rest, cooking and ablutions, not forgetting that it is obligatory to provide separate toilets where

mixed staff are employed. Having been on duty for some hours and handled many books and tickets, in varying stages of cleanliness, staff are entitled to expect washing facilities with hot water available and a warm and comfortable staff room.

Comfort for the public is regarded as a necessity, surely, anything less for the staff is both unfair and hardly likely to engender keenness in carrying out the task of giving efficient service.

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## CHAPTER IX

### STAFF

Staffing branch libraries is easy or difficult according to the viewpoint of the chief librarian of the particular system concerned. If it is held that the functions of branch libraries are, really unimportant; that they are suffered merely because a section of the area being serviced has clamoured for a library; that they offer an ideal solution for hiding assistants of little worth; and that branch libraries are not only costly to maintain but a constant source of trouble, then their staffing is just a question of banishing the 'undesirables' from the immediate vicinity of that holy of holies, the central library, to the wilderness.

If it held that the functions of a branch library are that of supplementing the library service for the greater benefit of the most people; that of providing a more intimate as well as efficient service within a well-defined part of the whole area; that of ensuring the high importance of branch libraries in the communal sphere; that of so co-ordinating the resources for co-operation of the whole system so that they are available within a very short time at whatever particular point required; and that of insisting that the service provided shall be alive, progressive and in the van, then the staffing involves much thought, comparison and personal investigation before the chief librarian can be even reasonably satisfied that the facilities provided for a library service will be administered in accordance with efficiency.

Too often in the past has there been rank prejudice between the headquarters of the library service and the branch libraries, and the centralization of book selection, cataloguing, classification and administrative work in general has, in many cases, merely aggravated the position. The feelings of isolation and forgottenness are not imaginative creations, but once sown, are very difficult to eradicate, especially the effects they produce so rapidly, frustration, indecisiveness and lack of enthusiasm.

Let it be reiterated, *a branch library is an integral part of the*

*library system as a whole* and therefore, staffing is inter-related whether the branch posts are wholly permanent appointments, some permanent and others not, or wholly temporary.

The size, both of the system and the branch library, has to be taken into account before staff are appointed. If it is a new branch library, it will have to be decided whether suitable members of the staff are already available to administer this development of the service, or if it is necessary to advertise and obtain wholly or partly new assistants. If it is a question of filling a vacancy caused by retirement, promotion or removal for some reason or another, it still has to be decided who shall succeed the late occupant of the post, *and why*.

Whatever the size of the branch library, someone will have to be in charge of it, even if it is only open a few hours per week, and the service given must be co-related to the system as a whole. Too often it is forgotten that the good name and reputation of a library service is made or broken in the small branch library. Let it always be remembered that because the branch librarian is in closer contact with the public, the more is demanded of his professional knowledge, therefore, to leave the administration of even the smallest branch library to an untrained, indifferent junior assistant is a cardinal mistake, for which there is no excuse. By all means use young training assistants, but ensure that they work under supervision and that they are not left on their own without professional guidance.

In an earlier paragraph it was stated that the size of the branch library will affect the number of staff appointed. Size is used in the sense of work done as well as the overall space occupied at the branch library. Some branch libraries in large systems are equal in size (staff, issues, departments and space) to central libraries of small systems, so that there must be some accepted norm upon which to base estimated number of staff required at any type of branch library. Either population to be served or recorded issues provide the answer and where population is the norm, then one assistant per 5,000 inhabitants is usual. Where recorded issues are used as the base of estimation, then one assistant per 1,000 weekly issues is normally adequate. In the case of a new branch library, initial staffing will be based on the population of the area to be served, but thereafter the recorded issues will determine the size of staff required.



*Borough Librarian, Luton.*

STOPSLEY BRANCH LIBRARY, LUTON



Of course, there are exceptions to the practical applications of these norms and it is desirable that where possible, a branch library, however small, open for several hours daily, should have a minimum staff of two. There is also the vexed question of length of tenure of office at a particular branch library. There are advantages and disadvantages in the long occupancy of a post at the same branch library. Permanency of post does give the occupant time to become acquainted with the peculiarities of that area; to become identified with the communal life; to have an intimate and always growing knowledge of the reading tastes of the readers; and to establish a tradition (favourable or not according to the individual concerned). The disadvantages of permanency of post are, that familiarity does breed contempt; that too long an association with one area may in time limit professional knowledge because difference of taste and habit in other regions are not actually experienced; and that enthusiasm may, because of daily sameness, wither until the attitude becomes one of complacency. However, the too frequent movement of staff at branch libraries must be guarded against and experience has shown that in the case of librarians, movement should be strictly limited to essentials, but that young assistants under training should be transferred to other branches within one to three months, so that they may gain as much experience as possible of the varying conditions of stock, staff, buildings and public within the whole library system.

In any large library system having branch libraries, the question of supervision must arise, unless it is intended that they shall be autonomous. As this condition is now rarely met and bearing in mind the spread of centralization, some supervision, to a more or less degree according to the policy of the chief librarian concerned, is necessary. Where there are only a few branch libraries such supervision will rest in the hands of the chief librarian and his deputy, but where there are many branch libraries within the same orbit of service, the appointment of an official specifically responsible for their supervision is justified.

Whatever the title of the officer, Inspector, Superintendent, Supervisor, Regional or otherwise, of Branch Libraries, despite Dr. Savage's recent condemnation,\* the work he does and

\* Savage, E. A. *Manual of Book Classification and Display.*



the responsibility he holds is vital to a well co-ordinated service and especially is this true of county branch library systems.

In the early days of branch libraries and during the difficult staffing period of World War II, many branch libraries were staffed by non-professional and often part-time assistants. Admittedly, much good work was done by the majority of such willing helpers but as conditions change and the vitally important responsibilities of branch library service not only become realized but increase, it is felt that all branch library staffs should be professional in whatever position they occupy. The debt to the part-timers is acknowledged with grateful thanks, but it is time now that the public library service, municipal and county was staffed by those who intend making librarianship their career.

Obviously, all premises have to be cleaned and so branch libraries need cleaners and in some cases, attendants too. Such non-professional staff are essential to the pleasing appearance of a branch library, but there should be no conflict about duties or relationships. Cleaners and attendants have an important duty to perform, but it must be made evident that they are not professional library staff and in no circumstances should there ever be any evidence to the contrary. No branch librarian or assistant is expected to clean the library, nor should any cleaner or attendant be expected or allowed to serve the readers. Each have their own duties and it should not be forgotten that the branch librarian is the officer-in-charge of all staff employed at a particular branch library.

Given an understanding, enthusiastic and qualified staff, any branch library can overcome, to a great extent, such difficulties as poor buildings or inadequate stock; *but the converse is not true.* Time spent on the selection of staff repays itself a thousand-fold, especially if the overall direction is sympathetic, fair, alert and generous.

## CHAPTER X

### FINANCE

*(a) Expenditure :*

The administration of branch libraries involves financial provision being made under the headings of expenditure and income. Whilst the former may be considerable, it is very unlikely that the latter will amount to very much.

There are some library systems in which the whole of the financial side of administration is dealt with centrally, and others where certain items are dealt with at the particular branch libraries concerned, e.g., book buying, binding and petty purchases.

Whichever method is adopted strictly accurate financial records must be maintained, otherwise, the internal auditors of the Borough Treasurer's department will quickly be investigating.

It is not likely that branch personnel will be directly concerned with library department estimates but they should know the major headings of expenditure and approximately how much it costs to operate their particular branch library.

Assuming that individual amounts of money are apportioned to a branch library for book buying, binding and petty cash, it will be necessary for the branch librarian to keep a record of how much he has spent and has still to spend all through the financial year under each item of expenditure. In the case of book-buying it may be required of the branch librarian to indicate also how much has been spent on fiction and subject books separately, both for adult and young readers, so that the following example of a record would be satisfactory:—

#### BOOK BUYING

..... Branch Library

DATE	VENDOR	Nett Amt.	Estim. Left	ADULT		JUNIOR	
				Fict.	Subj.	Fict.	Subj.
3 4 49	A.B.C	25 8 0	624 12 0	12 0 0	4 0 0	6 8 0	3 0 0
11 4 49	X.Y.Z.	44 2 6	580 9 6	25 0 0	8 17 6	6 0 0	4 5 0

Book ordering will emanate from the central administration office, but if parcels are delivered direct to branches, the books therein will need checking against invoices and a verification stamp used thereon. Similar records can be kept for newspapers and periodicals, and binding. It is apposite to mention here that bills for the supply of newspapers and periodicals should be certified as correct by the branch librarian receiving them. This again will involve a register being kept so that immediate steps can be taken should the newsagent or direct supplier fail to deliver a particular newspaper or periodical. As no branch library is likely to take very many newspapers and periodicals, the record to be kept can be simple, e.g. :—

Month .....  
 ..... Branch Library

Newsp. or Period.	Vendor	Period	Price	Week	Week	Week	Week	Week	Week
				Ending	Ending	Ending	Ending	Ending	Ending
DAILIES				1.1.49	8.1.49	15.1.49	22.1.49	29.1.49	31.1.49
Daily Express	A.B.C.	D	id						
Daily Herald	A.B.C.	D	id						

Grouped together following the dailies would be the weeklies, followed by fortnightlies, monthlies and quarterlies.

NOTE:—As this is a monthly record, the columns for the week endings will mean also, in the last column to be used, 'period ending' where the last day of the month is other than a Saturday.

Also it is necessary to provide six columns to cover the 31-day month commencing on a Saturday.

Petty cash involves an imprest account so that each branch librarian has a small sum of money available for urgent minor purchases, e.g., a ball of string, or a packet of drawing pins, should the central requisition depository be unable to supply or that method not operate. Once more, an accurate record must be maintained, and for each purchase, no matter how small, a receipt must be obtained to support the expenditure.

Another item necessitating a record being kept is a postage account, and this again is quite simple. The details required to be recorded are :—

- (i) date and amount of stamps supplied, and  
 (ii) date and purpose for which stamps have been used, i.e. overdue notices, reservations and letters.

Therefore, a monthly record sheet is advocated as follows :—

POSTAGE ACCOUNT ..... Branch Library  
 Month .....

Date	Received Amt.	Iss. by	Rec. by	Date	Purpose	Ints.	Amt.
	Balance						
					Balance		
	Total				Total		
					Certified by : .....		
					Branch Libr.		

As all branch libraries should be on the telephone, here is another item of expenditure that requires control, otherwise, telephone bills will tend to be excessive. Naturally, a telephone is not intended to be an ornament, but neither is it intended to be haphazardly used for purposes having little connection with the library service, *and free too!* By all means allow the telephone to be used *reasonably* for private purposes, but only if paid for. In order, therefore, to ensure the limiting of the costs of the telephone amenity and also to provide a check upon the telephone account when rendered by the G.P.O., it is suggested that a record be kept on the following lines :—

TELEPHONE ACCOUNT ..... Branch Library  
 Month .....

Date	No. Called	Business or Private	Caller's Name	Amt. Paid if pte.

Accounts for such items as electricity, gas, water and rates may be delivered to the branch library direct, but normally

no other action is taken by the branch librarian other than passing such accounts immediately to the central administrative section to be dealt with. It can be advantageous to take a note of the amounts for future comparison and for the purpose of a warning should the consumption of heat, light and fuel reveal increases that may have to be explained.

(b) *Income.*

Items of income, so far as branch libraries are concerned are neither many nor of appreciable value, yet for the purposes of audit and also to reduce the amount required from the rates to maintain the public library service, strict accountability must be enforced.

The usual headings under which income is noted are :—

- (i) Fines.
- (ii) Reservations.
- (iii) Damage to or lost books.
- (iv) Subscriptions.
- (v) Sale of waste paper.
- (vi) Sale of old magazines.
- (vii) Bulletins.
- (viii) Donations.
- (ix) Legacies.
- (x) Hire of rooms.

Of all these headings, the largest item of income will probably be that of fines levied against readers for not returning books within the stipulated time allowed for their reading.

There are several methods of accounting for such fines, e.g., initialled receipts and automatic tickets, but these and similar methods involve a daily check being made and records kept, and experience recalls the many times when the result has shown over or under balancing with devious ways used to rectify the position.

It is suggested that a scheme already in operation successfully in Tottenham supplies the answer to the disadvantages inherent in any ticket system of fines receipts, and as it has the blessing of a very able and respected Borough Treasurer, it is felt that it is worthwhile describing.

On the entrance side of the issue desk is affixed a box having an opening on the top side sufficient to allow coins to be placed therein (the box is removed after closing each day and placed

in the office safe). One of the sides is fitted with hinges and a lock to permit emptying and the key thereto is held solely by the Treasurer's staff who empty the box each week.

When fines are payable, the reader himself inserts the necessary coins into the box, under the supervision of the assistant on duty.

Similarly with the charge for reservations. Thus, no individual tickets for fines are required; it is not necessary for a balance to be struck each day, therefore, mistakes of over- or under-balancing are obviated; no records have to be entered up; no requisitions for tickets have to be made; and the scheme benefits all concerned. Of course, a small fixed imprest account for change is held, renewable each time the box is emptied. Of the other headings under which income materializes, separate receipts are advocated, a special receipt book with carbon-copy being used. Where a book has been damaged or lost, the charge may be as much as £1, similarly with the sale of waste-paper, so that a receipt is a business necessity. In the case of legacies or donations in cash, these are unlikely to be handled by the branch librarian, but either by the chief librarian or the town clerk, but they would appear in the estimates under income.

Where it is possible for the public to hire the use of rooms or halls at branch libraries and fixed scales of charges are laid down for certain hours or periods, an official duplicate application form is required. Information, such as name and address of the applicant, date and time of letting required, purpose of hire, number of people expected, and a signature that the applicant agrees to be bound by all the rules and regulations governing such lettings by the local authority, would have to be filled in by the applicant. As the form is in duplicate, one copy would be kept by the library for the purpose of control of lettings, and the other copy handed to the hirer. Fees for the hiring would need an official receipt and the carbon-copy held for record and audit. It is usual to allow readers not resident in a particular library authority's area to use that authority's library service on payment of a subscription, possibly at an annual charge of 10/-, and such payments demand an official duplicate receipt.

If the box method for the receiving of fines, as described in

a previous paragraph is used, money received in respect of damaged or lost books, sale of waste paper, sale of periodicals or magazines, subscriptions, bulletins and the hire of rooms or halls, is placed immediately in the box and the duplicate receipt book examined each week by the audit staff of the Treasurer who, in turn, give an official receipt in detail of the money collected from the issue desk box. Thus is obviated a weekly paying-in, the maintenance of individual financial records and money errors.

In those systems operating the paying-in method, together with the issue of fine receipts, a daily record is necessary together with an official summary of all monies paid in by the branch librarian to the central administration section. An example of such a summary can be seen on page 105 of *Public Library Finance*, by Duncan Gray.

It is a charge often levelled at librarians that they are not business-like or that they lack a due regard for the necessity of a strict accountancy in financial matters. Whatever the truth of this assertion, in general, as applied to librarians, it cannot be over-emphasized that all branch library staffs, especially the branch librarian, must be methodical where public money is concerned. To be so is a part of his duties and it is not a valid excuse to plead inability to cope with the correct recording and adding-up of the daily takings. Public librarianship really means *public*, which in turn demands business acumen. The very fact that a public library system is a charge upon the rates, warrants meticulous accuracy where income is concerned. Normal expenditure having already been agreed, the branch librarian knows the limits to which he can go in spending, but income is only estimated on previous years results and here it is that, by the daily exercise of method and businesslike approach, the branch staff can often increase the anticipated annual amount to be offset against expenditure.

## CHAPTER XI

### BOOKS

The supply and availability of books is the *raison d'être* of a branch library service, and although no branch library is to be expected to be able to satisfy any and every request immediately from readers, yet by careful selection, wise withdrawals, a co-ordinate system of inter-loan within the particular service, and the use made of the regional library bureaux system, not only will the majority of readers' needs be met, but the shelved stock will be up-to-date and generally attractive.

The selection of stock for branch libraries should conform to a logical pattern. Given a basic stock, dependent in extent upon the size of the branch library, chosen probably from W. A. Munford's *3,000 Books for a Public Library*, revised where necessary, the selection of current and future additions, whether it is the duty of the particular branch librarian or of a book selector for the whole system, demands co-ordination, bearing in mind the funds available for book purchase, the merits of each newly printed book, the likely demand for it, the need for it in any particular branch library in relationship to the strength or weakness of the present stock in subject books, how many copies required and where they are to be apportioned. It is frequently stated that a branch librarian knows best both the strength and weakness of his own stock and the needs of his readers and therefore, that the selection of books should be left entirely in his hands. To a great extent this should be true, but with limited funds and the overall need of the service as a whole, compromise may necessitate the purchase of fewer copies of a particular book than will satisfy the requirements of all the branch libraries for that certain book.

Another problem is how to ensure that copies of all publications are actually seen and handled by branch librarians since the mere reading of reviews does not cover the entire field of one week's output by publishing firms. If it can be arranged for a local bookseller to supply, on approval, a copy of all books published each week, it is suggested that these books could then



be displayed at the central library, there to be examined personally by each branch librarian at an agreed time. Inside each book would be placed a 5 inch by 3 inch card bearing the author's name, title of book, publisher, price and space for remarks. On the back of this card would be ruled divided oblongs, bearing in one division a symbol to represent individual branch libraries in the system, e.g. :—

AUTHOR	
TITLE	
PUBLISHER	PRICE
REMARKS :	

On the reverse :—

A	F	L	Q	V
B	G	M	R	W
C	H	N	S	X
D	J	O	T	Y
E	K	P	U	Z

After a branch librarian had examined the book, if he wanted a copy he would insert a mark in the square against the symbol representing his branch library. Thus, after the branch librarians had seen all the week's new publications and marked the cards where a copy of the book was requested, the cards would be gathered together and the selections co-ordinated, probably by the branch supervisor, according to the funds available and

in any particular branch library for various reasons, e.g., especial subject interest, to strengthen stock or obvious demand. Where a co-ordinator rejects a request, the reason why and the location of a copy already in stock should be given to the branch librarian whose request has been turned down. Notice should be given also where the co-ordinator orders a book not having been previously selected by the branch librarian from the books on current display.

By such a system as this, each branch librarian is brought into the field of book selection, actually handling all current publications and therefore will feel the sense of satisfaction in building up the stock of his own branch library. Similar action can be taken with regard to second-hand lists, the particular branch library symbol being entered against the item desired for purchase.

With regard to the purchase of fiction, it is advisable that percentages of the total amount of money available for the buying of books should be fixed approximately between fiction and subject purchases. Thereafter, the selection of fiction may be left to the individual branch librarians unless the card-marking method described above is thought more efficacious.

There is too, the question of providing in the branch library a small quick-reference section. Such a collection of books is invaluable in answering the many questions likely to be asked, but the quick-reference section must be kept up-to-date. Naturally, the size of the collection will depend upon the population to be served, but it is suggested that all branch library quick-reference sections should contain such works as the current edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, Whitaker's Almanac, standard dictionaries of English, French and German, standard atlas and gazetteer, large-scale map of the neighbourhood, telephone directory, local directory, local elector's register, Everyman's Own Lawyer, a medical dictionary and a copy of the Council Minutes.

The claims for inclusion of many other standard quick-reference books, e.g., Who's Who, the year books of the various religious denominations, societies and institutions and so on, must be judged upon the area to be served and the amount of money so to be spent. In the case of such costly books as Who's Who, and Debrett, where there are several branch libraries to

cater for in this respect, the policy of renewing such books bi-annually can be justified, but if the quick-reference section is to fulfil its functions, then such books as are provided must be as currently up-to-date as possible. There is little point in stocking such a section with out-of-date material or neglecting to provide funds for the replacement of superseded editions.

The selection of books for the children's libraries within branch libraries is the work of a specialist and should be the responsibility of the person in charge of work with children throughout the whole system. This is not to belittle the capabilities of branch staffs in the selection of reading matter for children, but the common assumption that any junior book will do for the children's library is disastrous and entirely incorrect. To be able to select appropriate books for the various age groups between seven and fifteen years of age demands the services of a specialist in this field, just as all work with children demands the exceptional and not the ordinary so far as librarianship is concerned.

Withdrawal of stock in branch libraries presents as many problems as the selection of books. As withdrawals must be linked with catalogues, in some library systems stock cards and in others accession registers, the mere withdrawal of any book from the stock is not a single action. Just as there are several processes through which a book passes before it is publicly shelved, so the reverse action involves a similar number of administrative details.

In order to have a uniform policy throughout the system there must be rules governing the withdrawal of stock, subsequent action and overall decisions. Withdrawal should take place because :—

- (a) The book is worn out, i.e., dirty or dog-eared.
- (b) The book is out-of-date, i.e., superseded.
- (c) The book is never used, i.e., lacking in current interest.
- (d) Of any extraordinary reason, i.e., censored or placed on closed shelves.

Once the book has been withdrawn, it has to be decided :—

- (i) Is the book to be destroyed ?
- (ii) Is the book to be placed in reserve stock ?
- (iii) Is the book to be replaced ?

Whilst many branch librarians could be expected to give the

correct decision in a high percentage of withdrawal cases affecting just *their own branch library*, yet a particular withdrawal when considered in relationship to the complete book stock of all the constituent libraries, may present conditions of which an individual branch librarian would be unaware, e.g., it may be found upon reference to the union catalogue that the book desired to be withdrawn is the only copy in the service, or upon checking with the regional library bureau union catalogue, the only copy in the regional area. Therefore, as a safeguard, before subject books are completely withdrawn from any branch library, the cataloguing department should be notified, so that the final decision, whether the book can be withdrawn and destroyed, or can be withdrawn but shelved in the reserve stock, rests with that department.

If a book is withdrawn and destroyed, the catalogues must also be amended, as well as the regional library bureau informed; stock cards and accession registers corrected; further, for statistical purposes a record of all withdrawals must be kept. If a book is withdrawn but placed in reserve stock, the new location must be inserted on the catalogue cards and statistical records kept where such a book is despatched to a central reserve book depot.

Replacement of stock withdrawn from branch libraries does not present so many difficulties of decision as does replacement in some other departments, e.g., reference libraries, because unless the books are basic stock, replacement is rarely necessary. If there is proved demand for a book withdrawn because it has been worn out, then replacement should be effected, but this will apply mainly to the fiction stock.

The rebinding of books also requires supervision, otherwise funds allocated under this heading in the estimates are likely to be used uneconomically from the worth of stock point-of-view. *The rebinding of subject books must be related to demand for that book.* It does not mean that because the book needs rebinding, then *ipso facto* the book must be rebound. Shelf wear and tear can have almost as much effect upon a book's condition physically as home-reading use. Again, the price of the book when new may not warrant the expense incurred by rebinding, or maybe the book is incapable of being rebound, e.g., spirex binding or insufficient margins. Therefore, it is suggested

that before a book is rebound, answers to the following questions, particularly in the case of subject books, must decide the verdict :—

- (a) Is it not cheaper to buy a new copy of the book?
- (b) Is it possible to rebind the book?
- (c) When rebound will the book fulfil a demand for its use?

Books on politics, religion, technology, science and especially children's books, should be rebound only after stringent individual examination of each book's current and possible future worth, otherwise the shelves will become depositories of dead stock, the book rebinding funds rapidly exhausted, and found to be totally inadequate to cover all the books needing rebinding. The wear and tear on children's books is infinitely greater than that of adult books, and too, there is a far greater percentage of 'outsizes' in children's books. There is little to be gained in rebinding a book whose pages are soiled and the rebinding of children's outsize books, often cheap when bought new, is a costly business.

Conjoint with selection, withdrawals, replacements and binding is the question of stocktaking. Ignoring the conditions in public libraries during World War II, when so much had to be left undone, stocktaking is a necessity, if only to have a comparatively true record of the holdings of a library, so that catalogues too can be more approximately correct. Recently reported examples of the incidence of petty pilfering in those public libraries which have undertaken stocktaking show, only too plainly, how urgent is the need for such an examination of the whole stocks. Stocktaking therefore, should be an essential part of library work and undertaken annually.

The last part of this chapter is devoted to accessioning though logically it should have been dealt with in conjunction with the selection of books. However, it is felt that accessioning can involve considerations of major importance to the whole question of the stocking of branch libraries. Usually, the method of accessioning stock for branch libraries is for separate accession registers to be kept for each branch library, or if a running accession number throughout the system is used, the date issue label overstamped with the name of the particular branch library to which the book has been allotted is the means of identifying a branch library's stock.

In such methods of accessioning, the stock of any branch library becomes static and reserved to that branch library alone, so that should it become necessary or desirable to move stock from one branch library to any other department in the same system, there is involved considerable work, e.g., correction of records, re-labelling and re-accessioning.

There have been claims advanced calling attention to the advantages to be gained in stock freshness of making stock at any branch library completely interchangeable with that of another branch library in the same system. This can be achieved simply by block apportionment of numbers to individual branch libraries for determined periods. Thus, a system having four branch libraries could apportion to each branch library for the period of a year, a block of accession numbers, e.g. :—

Branch Library 'A'	..	10,000 to 19,999
" " 'B'	..	20,000 ,, 29,999
" " 'C'	..	30,000 ,, 39,999
" " 'D'	..	40,000 ,, 49,999

At the end of that year Branch Library 'A' would be allotted the accession numbers 50,000 to 59,999 and so on for branch libraries 'B', 'C' and 'D', but it would also mean that 'A's' stock numbered 10,000 to 19,999 could be interchanged en bloc with 'B', 'B' with 'C' and so on, or in any other choice of order by overprinting the name of the new branch library over the old one on the date issue label.

There can be no doubt that such an interchange of stock would to some extent stimulate the appearance of shelved stock and provide readers with greater choice. Administratively the difficulties involved in interchange of stock, in such proportions, would not be so difficult in practice as they may appear in theory, particularly if the branch libraries concerned in the interchange were closed for a few days, and at the same time as closure, stocktaking undertaken as well. The periodic delivery of fresh boxes of books to isolated communities as in county library systems is the principle of the scheme, its application on a very much larger scale to stocks in branch libraries is only an extension of the idea.

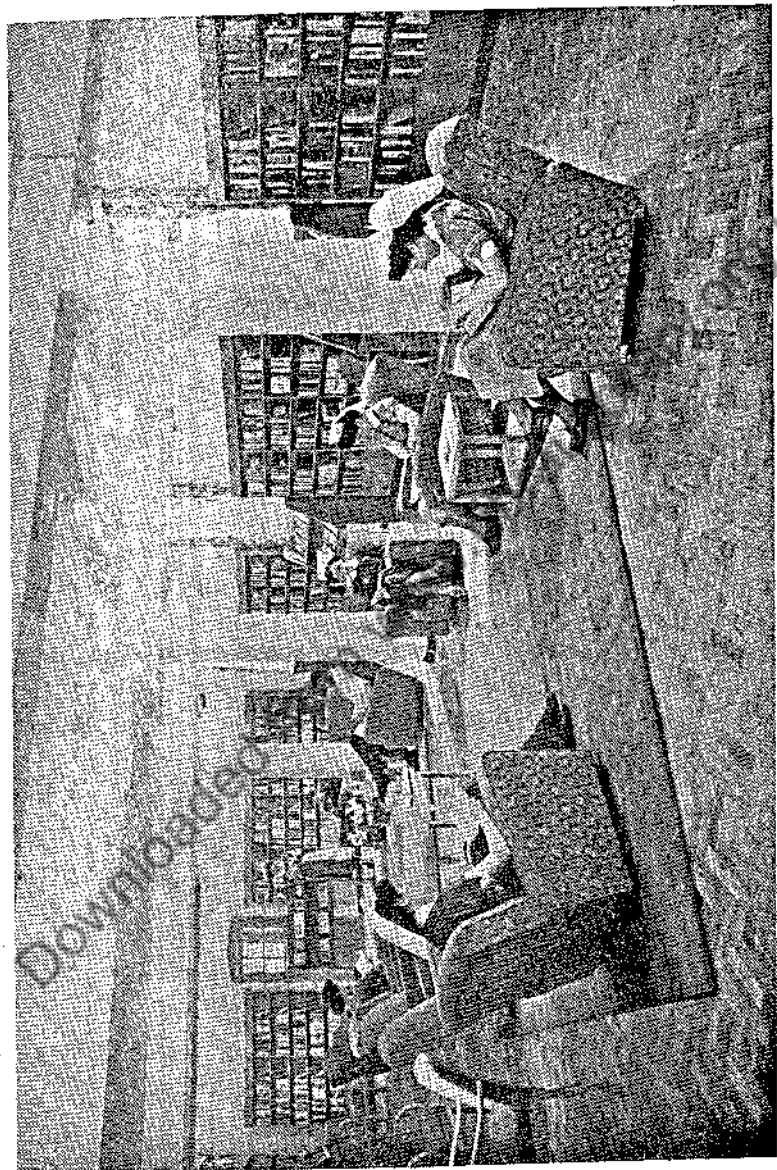
## CHAPTER XII

### DEPARTMENTALISM

In the administration of branch libraries there is an hierarchy and also inter-dependence with other departments within the system, to a more or less degree according to the extent of the centralization of administrative detail. Obviously, no matter what the size of the particular system, the chief librarian is the *chief* official, responsible to the library committee and through it, to the local council, for everything concerned with the provision of a library service. Consequently, the chief librarian, like any other chief executive, is paid primarily for the responsibility he holds and not for the amount of work he does.

In order therefore, that the work to be done shall be executed efficiently, the chief librarian has such aides as a deputy, supervisor of branch libraries and heads of the various departments within the library service, not only to do work, but to see that the work is done and *to be assured of loyalty*. Of all such aides, the deputy and where one is appointed, the supervisor of branch libraries, are the most important *administratively*. The deputy chief librarian is the number 2 in the hierarchy since he automatically assumes the responsibilities of the chief librarian in that official's absence, but apart from that, a deputy is something infinitely more in his relationship to his chief. Firstly, he must *respect* his chief, and show this respect openly in public so that the whole tone of the staff approach to the chief is similarly evident. Secondly, he must be *loyal* to his chief, ready to defend his chief against any criticism from any quarter. Thirdly, he must be a *trusted confidante* not only of his chief but of the staff generally and competent to say "NO" to either. Lastly, he should be endowed with the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job and the gift of second sight.

In systems having but a few branch libraries their supervision usually will be the responsibility of the deputy chief librarian, so that branch librarians will come into contact with him direct and through him, with the chief librarian except when the latter directs otherwise or pays a personal visit to the branch



HOSPITAL LIBRARY, SOUTLIMEAD, BRISTOL

[City Librarian, Bristol.]





[City Librarian, Bristol.

BOOK TROLLEY, HOSPITAL LIBRARY SERVICE, SOUTHMEAD, BRISTOL.

libraries. According to the size of the branch library, the branch librarian will have staff under him, numbering from one to six or more, so that the branch librarian is responsible for the administration of his branch library, for all queries, staff difficulties and so on, and he in turn is under the guidance and direction of the deputy chief librarian who, in his turn, is answerable to the chief librarian.

In systems having many branch libraries it is usual for a supervisor of branch libraries to be appointed, who is number 3 in the hierarchy, responsible for the supervision and co-ordination of all the branch libraries with the service as a whole. Consequently, such an officer must possess the same qualities enumerated earlier as required of a deputy chief librarian, particularly those of wisdom, patience and second sight. Though in the hierarchy below the deputy chief librarian, the supervisor of branch libraries is in almost the same close relationship as the deputy to the chief librarian. In systems having such an officer, the supervisor of branch libraries looks after all matters concerning branch libraries, whilst the deputy chief librarian is more concerned with the administration of the various departments as a complete service, especially those at the central library. This means that the steps in administrative progression are branch staffs to branch librarian, branch librarian to supervisor of branches and supervisor of branches to chief librarian, though in all cases the closest of relationships must exist between the deputy chief librarian and the supervisor of branch libraries. Each can help the other infinitely, especially in the co-ordination between branch libraries and the other departments, and should the deputy chief librarian have to assume the chief's responsibilities, the supervisor of branch libraries must be prepared to undertake the major part of the deputy's duties as well as his own.

Earlier, it has been stated that a supervisor of branch libraries is responsible for the supervision of all the branch libraries of a particular system. This means that he must ensure that time-tables are strictly adhered to and where difficulties arise in staffing, owing to illness or other reasons, be able to surmount them so that the service goes on uninterrupted so far as the public are concerned. He must also ensure that all the branch libraries conform to a common policy regarding rules and

regulations ; the satisfying of desiderata ; the all-round efficiency of all the branch libraries ; and he must also inculcate a team spirit among the branch staff. Other responsibilities are to ensure that extension work, such as reading or discussion groups, film lectures and gramophone recitals, function properly, and that whilst being held to account for so much, he does not become overwhelmed by a mass of mere detail, but remains a director and not a general factotum.

It has also been stated earlier that a supervisor of branch libraries is responsible for the co-ordination of all the branch libraries in the service as a whole. This means the co-ordination of book selection and buying so that the budget is kept balanced ; the ordering and distribution of copies of the same work are commensurate with price and estimated use ; the additions to stock, both in general and particular subjects are catholic, thereby forming with the basic stock a progressive foundation ; the withdrawal of stock to be destroyed or placed in reserve ; and the selection of books to be rebound. It is for him to ensure that all the branch libraries form a cohesive pattern and to act as the link between both the chief librarian and the heads of the other departments of the entire system for the end in view—a better and more efficient library service to the public.

The relationship between a supervisor of branch libraries and branch librarians is a delicate one since the former must be respected both for his professional knowledge and conduct. He is there to advise, enthuse, praise, and only rarely to condemn, and in his relationship to the other staff at branch libraries, to observe the promise or otherwise of the young training assistants and, if necessary to act as arbiter in disputes.

Another officer having much to do with branch libraries is the senior children's librarian who is responsible for the co-ordination of all children's activities throughout the system. Her efficiency (since normally the occupant of this post is a female) is dependent upon her own personality since what she may want done in a branch library in connection with children's work has often to be *requested* and, therefore, so often her success or failure is according to the degree of personal and professional regard with which she is held by the supervisor of branch libraries and the branch librarians. With her own specialized knowledge she has so much to give to make children's work in

branch libraries something vital, therefore complete liaison with the supervisor of branch libraries should be her first consideration, then with the branch librarians and finally with the assistants at each branch library primarily concerned with children's work. The senior children's librarian is there to advise on all children's activities undertaken at the branch libraries, to direct the selection of children's books, and to determine their distribution to children's libraries throughout the system.

The great danger of all systems having many branch libraries is the lack of opportunity for branch staffs to get to know each other, experience the differences found in each separate locality and to appreciate the work done in other departments of the service. Unless steps are taken to eradicate this tendency, in time a sense of isolation and a feeling of insularity quickly becomes evident and the individual branch staffs begin to forget their counterparts, incline to separate identities and even become resentful of central direction however mild.

An answer to this state of affairs is for the supervisor of branch libraries to organize monthly meetings of branch librarians, at each of the branch libraries in turn, together with the other heads of departments. The librarian at whose branch the meeting is to be held acts as host to the other librarians and the agenda can be as follows :—

### MONTHLY MEETING OF BRANCH LIBRARIANS

St. Ann's Branch Library, 3rd February, 1949, at 9.0 a.m.

#### Agenda :

1. Short introduction by the supervisor of branch libraries of the host branch librarian.
2. Short talk by the host branch librarian on, for example, peculiar problems at his branch library.
3. Discussion thereon.
4. The three 'G's', i.e., graces, grouses and groans. Graces being compliments for good work. Grouses and groans being an opportunity to air such and if possible to find ways and means of settling them.

(NOTE.—No personal grievances are allowed to be discussed.)

5. Remarks or information by the senior children's librarian and the heads of departments in turn.

6. Information given by the supervisor of branch libraries, e.g., changes in policy; arrangements for holidays, date, time and place of next meeting; and so on.
7. Any other business.

The whole meeting is as informal as possible, and later a resumé is forwarded to each participant so that they in turn can acquaint their staffs of any information to be passed on. The meetings at each branch library in turn also gives an impetus or challenge to the whole staff at that branch library, and it does mean that each branch librarian and the various heads of departments get together at least once every month and are kept fully informed of all developments throughout the service.

Centralization is another great danger to branch library staffs unless carefully watched and fully explained. The usual items of centralization, cataloguing, classification, book selection and ordering, processing and so on, can leave branch library staffs with the impression that they are merely the distributors of reading matter. The advantages of centralization are too well known to be enumerated, but in order that branch library staffs, particularly the young training assistants, should not be confined indefinitely to branch library work, it is essential that they be moved at intervals and given the opportunity of experience in those departments centralized. It must be emphasized that centralization enables branch library staffs to give an immeasurably increased personal service to readers.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SUPERVISION AND DUTIES

In the previous chapter the duties and responsibilities of a supervisor of branch libraries were examined, yet it has to be admitted that the branch librarian must, of necessity, be of vital importance in the supervision and training of the staff placed under him. So often has he, as part of his staff, both the assistant already semi-qualified and the young training assistant, the former having received initial training and now able to appreciate to some extent the manifold requirements of a true public librarian; the latter on the threshold of a career, impressionable, gauche, and needing all the guidance it is possible to give.

However conscientious the higher hierarchy may be, there must be many hours spent by the assistant staff under the direction and supervision of the branch librarian. If that direction and supervision is lax, inadequate or negligible, the effects upon the assistant staff will not only be rapidly apparent but may permanently affect them by killing initiative, inculcating passivity and making a mockery of a worthwhile career. If that direction and supervision is keen, fair, progressive and backed by personal example of the highest integrity in conduct and professional attainment, the assistant staff should receive then the training in public librarianship that will prove a sure foundation upon which to build a successful career.

Can it be over-emphasized then, that branch librarians have tremendous responsibilities to the future success or failure of the staff placed under their charge, and can it be denied also, that branch librarians should be chosen with the greatest of care, particularly if they should have several young training assistants on their staff.

No matter how many assistants a branch librarian may have under him, by the very compactness and daily inter-relationship inherent in the administration of branch libraries, familiarity has to be guarded against. That is not to say that rigid discipline must be enforced, far from it, but there must be a sense

of respect evident, and shown at all times in the public view.

Each assistant should be fully aware of his own duties and timetable and it is the direct responsibility of the branch librarian to ensure that those duties are carried out efficiently and that the timetable is adhered to. Dependent upon the amount of centralization carried out in the system concerned, the apportionment of duties should be in relationship to the qualification of the assistants and where the assistants are of equal professional standing the periodic interchange of their duties is to be recommended. Also, each subordinate should be encouraged to learn the duties of his immediate superior so that should the occasion arise, he will be able to take over such duties without serious disruption of the service in general.

Within reason, branch librarians should be permitted to relax the timetables at their own discretion, but let it be remembered that where such facilities are readily given for reasonable requests, the public have a right to expect the staff to give a full day's work in return. Constant lateness in arriving or in relieving other members of the staff is an unwarrantable breach of contract and should be dealt with accordingly. If the hour of commencement of work is 9.00 a.m., then staff should be *prepared for work* at 9.00 a.m., not merely arriving at that time and eventually being ready to commence work twenty or so minutes later. Similarly too, with the time of departure. If it is 5.00 p.m., there should be no preparations to leave twenty minutes before time without permission. This habit of starting late and finishing early is pernicious, and is in effect, *stealing*—conduct unbecoming a public servant. Therefore, branch librarians should set an example in this respect and not permit facile deviation by the staff under their charge from the timetables. Where it is necessary to call upon the staff to stay beyond the stated, or to change their, times, through unusual circumstances, of course such times should be made up by mutual arrangement of time-off in lieu, and if a member of the staff is unable to report for duty, it is only common courtesy for such a member to acquaint the branch librarian of the fact as soon as possible so that any necessary change of duties and timetable to cover the absent member can be effected.

Allied with the above are other matters to which branch librarians should set a personal example and they are, smart

appearance, courtesy both to the public and others of the staff, and good speech. A public librarian is neither a bohemian nor a myopic intellectual, therefore, eccentricities of dress or appearance of any member of the staff should be barred. Suede shoes, corduroys of any colour, fancy waistcoats, polo-neck pull-overs, or loud jackets on male assistants may be suitable for their other pursuits but certainly not as public librarians. Similarly, in the case of female assistants, accentuated fashions, whether in dress or make-up are neither suitable nor desirable when on duty.

Courtesy costs nothing is an old saying, and how true. What a difference, in atmosphere; a cheery countenance and a polite "Good morning" or "Good evening" make in welcoming or speeding readers; after all the service being provided is supposed to be *public* and at the same time *personal*. And, whilst dealing with courtesy, let it not be forgotten that the library staff keep their tempers and manners under all circumstances and provocations. The more irate the reader the calmer the librarian must be to ensure control of both action and words. The reader has a right to be annoyed and to express that annoyance if he believes a careless mistake has been made or if he feels slighted in any way, but the librarian, on the contrary, if he is confronted with the mistakes of readers must exercise restraint in action and word, and, it is a psychological fact that one calm person can control by his air of calmness others who have lost control of themselves.

Good speech is a necessity for a public servant, so it is essential that library staffs should be well spoken. It is not thereby inferred that a particular accent is required but rather that the control of the voice and the annunciation of words is pleasing to other ears. Few people in this country have taken the trouble to have their voice recorded and played back to them. Great would be the surprise of the majority if they did so and steps would rapidly be taken to eradicate the speech shortcomings so vividly revealed.

The work of branch library staffs involves considerable use of the voice; how absurd then not to ensure that one's voice is attractive and not repellent. So few librarians are good public speakers, merely because they have omitted to make themselves proficient in this respect, yet it is an art that can be



acquired by diligent study whilst the rewards are out of all proportion to the efforts expended.

Lessons in elocution, therefore, should be regarded as essential in the training of all library staffs.

The practical training of all library staffs in administration appears to be haphazard and very largely a matter of chance. Very little is found in any of our professional textbooks dealing with such training as a separate subject and especially the relationship of the assistant to the public, yet this aspect of daily work is just as important as the learning of the intricacies of cataloguing, classification, accessioning and other studies regarded as the *sine qua non* of public librarianship. So many problems can arise each and every day in any public library, central or branch, whilst dealing with readers, the solution of which are not to be found in any library textbook and yet the treatment of which, correct or otherwise, is so vitally important to both the prestige and efficiency of the service.

Too often is it assumed that the assistant *will know instinctively* how to deal with the event, and then surprise is occasioned if the eventual result is incorrect and the repercussions are hostile criticisms. The possession of abundant commonsense is not to be regarded as a natural human characteristic and, neither should it be assumed that all library assistants know *all* the answers to each and every occurrence in the daily administration of a public service, without prior instruction covering the widest range of possible happenings.

Once readers are within the confines of a branch library, the branch staff are responsible for their safety and wellbeing.

Should a reader faint, be taken ill, fall and injure himself, or become involved in an altercation with other readers, become abusive and so on, each member of the branch library staff should know how to handle the situation, yet how often are such instructions regarded as a part of normal training? Before a policeman is allowed to walk his beat, he must have satisfied his superiors that he is capable of dealing with most emergencies coolly and efficiently, and that he has a thorough knowledge of first-aid. Considering then the relationship of public library staffs to the public whom they serve, is there any less reason that all branch library staffs should have some training how to act should coolness of mind and promptitude of action be required

whilst about their daily work? Also, the staff should be aware of the provisions of such Acts, as for example, The Malicious Damages Act of 1861, the Library Offences Act of 1908, and, of course, the bye-laws of their particular library authority.

The author together with a former colleague, Mr. G. W. Davies, Deputy Chief Librarian of Swansea, undertook what we considered the preliminary instructions of the branch library staff in Swansea in this respect and, from our observations, it was only too evident that there is an incontrovertible case for such training to be regarded as an essential part of the whole curriculum of professional instruction, and as we felt that our experiment and the results thereof were worthy of notice by the whole profession, an article thereon was written and published in the Library Association Record, September 1948.

Public contact demands complete professional knowledge of the subject served to the public, but no less important is the ability to deal with the public; to be approachable; to be at ease; to inspire confidence, never to be nonplussed and at all times to be the master of whatever situation presents itself. Such ability, like professional knowledge, is not easily gained and whilst the latter may be learned largely from books, the former is learned to a greater degree from example; it is essentially practical and not theoretical and therefore places upon the branch librarian a responsibility of infinite importance in training his staff in the only correct way of public approach. If his method of dealing with the public is wrong, then his assistants copying that method will be wrong and the future progress of their careers likely to be seriously imperilled because the basic principle of public librarianship is public service.

The greater the efficiency in all respects of a public librarian's service to the public, the greater the heights, publicly and professionally he will attain, and on the contrary, the less the efficiency in all respects of a public librarian's service to the public, the less chance he has of making his career a success.

## CHAPTER XIV

### CATALOGUING AND CLASSIFICATION

The cataloguing and classification of stock in branch libraries is still a bone of contention that rages hot and cold at periodical intervals and would appear unlikely of solution until such time as there has been established in this country a commercial agency for the sale of catalogue entries, complete with the classification symbols of one or two chosen systems. Until some such agency is in being the pros and cons of the centralization of cataloguing and classification will be argued and no firm decision reached. Recently, this question has been treated in the professional press again\* and once more the conclusion is reached, after examination of the arguments put forward, that the answer to the problem lies outside the profession.

For the sake of record, it is apposite to quote the advantages and disadvantages of centralized cataloguing and classification, viz. :—

#### *Advantages.*

- (1) Saves time, money and material since the initial expenditure of time taken in making decisions as to method of entry, added entries, classification and cross-references has not to be repeated in every individual library of the same system cataloguing and classifying the identical book.
- (2) Ensures uniformity of cataloguing procedure and added entries.
- (3) Ensures uniformity of chosen place in the classification system used.
- (4) Saves money in the expenditure of funds for cataloguing and classification aids since their provision is only required in one instance and not for each department in the particular system ; also, enables money so saved to be used to provide a more fully bibliographically equipped cataloguing and classification department.

\* R. H. Hill and Duncan Gray. *Central Cataloguing*. L.A.R. September '46.

- (5) Ensures a closer liaison between the cataloguing and classification department and the relevant regional library bureau.
- (6) Makes easier the provision and the keeping up-to-date of a union catalogue for the whole system.

*Disadvantages.*

- (1) The rate of inflow of new books is often so great as to make it impossible for the cataloguing and classification processes to be completed at the same speed, so that either there is a hold-up in distribution, or the books are received in the various departments to which they have been allocated and placed in circulation long before the catalogue cards arrive, so that the catalogues are always seriously deficient as true records of stock held.
- (2) Cataloguing and classification is placed in the hands of very few staff, and therefore, the remainder of the staff have no opportunity of using their theoretical knowledge practically.
- (3) The non-cataloguing and classifying of the new stock by the various branch library staffs means that first-hand contact with such books is lost and, that thereby, their knowledge of both stock and its extent is imperilled.
- (4) That a high percentage of cataloguing and classification is so straightforward that it does not need a specialized staff to deal with this work.
- (5) So much time will have to be spent in checking previous entries when new books are received in case previous copies have been dealt with.

When the advantages and disadvantages of centralized cataloguing and classification in public libraries are compared, it does seem that for any system in which more than one department receive the same book, that it would be more economical for the initial work involved in cataloguing and classifying to be done by only one section and its decisions thereon to apply to every identical copy subsequently purchased, unless exceptions are made for specific reasons, e.g., a local collection.

Of course, it will be admitted that centralized cataloguing and classification does limit the number of staff engaged on that work, but by periodic movement of staff, training in cataloguing and classification can be arranged.

It is the disadvantage listed as number one that is the most cogent and which calls for the commercial agency idea to be adopted.

The projected commercial agency scheme of Messrs. Harrods appears to be the answer and the solution sought for so long in this country, since if such catalogue entries together with classification symbols could be purchased, each department of a library system could prepare its own added entries and cross-references. Such a scheme now operated by the Library of Congress in the U.S.A. is well established, though it still suffers from the disadvantage number one listed above, whereas Messrs. Harrods propose that catalogue entries of individual books shall be available for sale on the day of publication of each new book.

It should be noted here that several firms in this country, e.g., Messrs. Cape and Messrs. Harrap, now show the Dewey Decimal Classification symbol for their respective books on the back of the title page, so that if this practice becomes general in the publishing world, the work of the classifiers in public libraries will be substantially reduced.

Recent developments in mechanization as applied to public libraries have resulted in the application of the punched card system to catalogue entries and it would appear that this method will apply generally in all public libraries within the near future because, by the use of punched cards through a sorting machine, information and statistics can be made available within a few hours, whereas it would take weeks and perhaps months to produce such requirements manually.

The cataloguing and classifying of fiction so far as it concerns branch libraries may be examined in two parts. Is it worth while to catalogue fiction in branch libraries at all since so much of such stock is ephemeral, and if it is not catalogued, how then are the assistants to know what a particular branch library possesses in way of stock? If it is agreed that fiction should not be catalogued, then a fiction stock register, compiled in alphabetical order of author's name is essential, in order that accession numbers may be found as required for reservations, and the price of a book be available should it be needed in the case of penalties to be imposed for loss or damage. As it is usual for a stock register to be compiled in any case, the question whether it is necessary to provide a fiction catalogue

as well should be seriously examined. Experiments at Swansea with the abolition of fiction catalogues in Branch libraries inferred that the readers were not unduly inconvenienced and that the advice of the assistants on duty was increased as a result.

The classification of fiction is a problem the answer to which lies in the conception of *public service* by public librarians. It is quite easy for librarians merely to shelve fiction in alphabetical order of authors' names, apart from such difficulties as double-barrelled names and names with prefixes, but it is providing the utmost of public service of which the public librarian is capable.

Again, it is comparatively easy, in a high percentage of cases, to divide the fiction stock into four groups, namely, *Romance, Western, Mystery* and *Miscellaneous*, and such an arrangement does seem to satisfy many readers' requirements, even if we think it also canalizes their choice and produces over-proportional demand on the three principal divisions. But, if classification of fiction is to be attempted seriously, then it is obvious that such classification must be more extensive than the four main group arrangement, and that the identity symbols used to indicate the respective classes must be capable of quick recognition by the branch library staff in order to facilitate sorting after discharge for re-shelving.

What then can be suggested as suitable broad classes for the classification of fiction, apart from *Romance, Mystery* and *Western*? As a guide perhaps the following :—

- Historical (May be further divided by centuries or areas if so required).
- Industrial.
- Psychological.
- The Sea.
- The Air.
- Scientific.
- Short Stories.
- Humour.
- Sociological.
- Sport.
- Classical.

Of course, there will be cross classification, but if the general rule governing choice of placing is predominant subject interest, this defect will be minimised.

Certainly the classification of fiction under such headings as indicated would aid the reader and also the branch library staff, besides enabling the display of each heading to be more easily achieved. The argument that the classification of fiction provokes a situation whereby demand for certain groups, e.g., Romance and Western, will be so great that only empty shelves are left, is true in practice but this condition may be alleviated if more groupings as suggested above are used.

Where such a system is operated, it is necessary to have some quick identification symbol of the various groups shown on the spine of the book, otherwise the sorting into their respective groups will become chaotic as well as wasting the ill-spared time of the assistants. Therefore, either letters or a colour band should be placed on the spine of each fiction book to represent its relevant heading, e.g., if letters are chosen, then ROM=Romance; MYS=Mystery; HIS=Historical and so on; if the colour band is used, then BLUE=Romance, BLACK=Mystery; RED=Historical. Should the colour band already correspond with the binding of the book, then the colour band imposed on a larger white band will suffice.

The colour scheme as applied to classification is already used by some publishers in this country, for example Messrs. Collins' publications have outer cases in *black* for Mystery novels, in *yellow* for Western novels and in *blue* for Romance Novels. The inference, therefore, from the commercial world is clear.

## CHAPTER XV

### PERIODIC WORK

Branch library administrative work involves periodic divisions of daily, weekly, monthly and yearly routine and in order that all the necessary duties are scheduled and the responsibility fixed for their having been accomplished, the use of a report sheet is advocated. Unless there is a printed schedule of all the various tasks to be done, with space for the initials of the assistant responsible for such tasks, it is more than likely that some essential duty will be overlooked. A high percentage of routine work will be common to all branch libraries and however irksome the performance of such work may be to the assistants, branch librarians must ensure that the tasks allotted to the various members of his staff are being carried out and moreover carried out efficiently. He has to remember always that he is responsible to the supervisor of branch libraries and to the chief librarian in carrying out his own duties, without fear or favour, and that a method which permits pin-pointing responsibility for any and every task concerned in the administration of a branch library is much to be preferred to any other.

In order to examine more closely the periodic division of administrative detail in branch libraries, a scrutiny of what are the normal tasks, daily, weekly, monthly and yearly will be undertaken under each heading.

#### *DAILY WORK.*

At the commencement of each day, the previous day's issue will need counting and recording; newspapers and periodicals checked; shelves tidied; and new and renewed tickets recorded. During the day such tasks as book repairing, the recording and checking of reservations, the checking of overdues and the sending of appropriate notices and the setting aside of books for binding or withdrawal, will be necessary, therefore, it is apposite to list the tasks required to be done.



*Periodicals.*

- (a) Checked.
- (b) Stamped.
- (c) Displayed.
- (d) Filed.

*Tickets.*

- (a) New Vouchers.
- (b) Previous day's renewals.
- (c) Checked.
- (d) Cancellations.
- (e) Duplicate tickets.
- (f) Statistics.
- (g) Old tickets destroyed.

*Tidying.*

- (a) Date stamp altered.
- (b) Counter.
- (c) Tables.
- (d) Displays.
- (e) Notices.

*Books.*

- (a) Re-shelving.
- (b) Section tidying.
- (c) Repairs.
- (d) Withdrawals.

*Reserves.*

- (a) Checked.
- (b) Notification.

*Issues.*

- (a) Sorting.
- (b) Statistics.
- (c) Queries.

*Fines and Receipts.* (Where necessary).

- (a) Balancing.
- (b) Recording.



[T.P.L.]

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR



CHILDREN'S STAMP CLUB

*Overdues.*

- (a) Check with queries.
- (b) Check with shelves.
- (c) Notification.

*Withdrawals.*

- (a) Charging cards removed.
- (b) Withdrawal of catalogue and stock register cards.
- (c) Accession register.
- (d) Statistics.

*Binding.*

- (a) Charging cards removed.
- (b) Enter and prepare for despatch.
- (c) Receipt and prepare for circulation.

*New Books.* (Tasks dependent upon degree of centralization).

- (a) Accessioning.
- (b) Cataloguing and Classifying.
- (c) Labelling.
- (d) Stamping.
- (e) Numbering.
- (f) Charging cards.
- (g) Spine identification.
- (h) Catalogues amended.

*Miscellaneous.*

- (a) Electric lights.
- (b) Heating.
- (c) Ventilation.
- (d) General cleanliness and appearance, inside and outside, of the building.

**WEEKLY WORK.**

In all branch libraries there are duties to be done weekly, mainly of a statistical character and below appears a table :—

(1) Issues	Statistical return.
(2) Binding	"    "
(3) Withdrawals	"    "

- (4) Reserve stock. Statistical return.
- (5) Tickets.
- (6) Fines and Receipts, Statistical return and paying in where necessary.
- (7) Requisitions. (i) Outstanding. (ii) New.
- (8) Staff (i) Attendance. (ii) Absence.

### *MONTHLY WORK.*

Again, under this heading, the duties are largely concerned with statistical return. The schedule below shows monthly total in each case :—

- (1) Issues.
- (2) Stock return. (i) Binding. (ii) Withdrawals. (iii) New. (iv) Reserve stock.
- (3) Tickets.
- (4) Fines and Receipts.
- (5) State of buildings. (i) Internal. (ii) External.
- (6) Arrears of work (if any).

### *YEARLY WORK.*

This heading is completely statistical.

- (1) Issues.
- (2) Withdrawals.
- (3) Additions.
- (4) Stock figures.
- (5) Tickets.
- (6) Fines and Receipts.

It will be seen therefore, that the periodic work in any branch library is extensive and that a printed schedule, as for example that shown in Appendix I, will obviate the overlooking of set duties, and so ensure that all normal tasks are carried out. If the objection is made that such a schedule is too meticulous, the answer has to be that all successful concerns have to be minutely planned and that the direct responsibility upon an assistant for any particular task is infinitely to be preferred to the leaving of such duties to chance.

## CHAPTER XVI

### READERS

For record purposes alone it is necessary that readers using any branch library for home-reading of stock must be registered and so issued with tickets, renewable at the end of one, two or three years, the number of such tickets permissible to be held by each reader varying according to the particular system, though extra tickets for special purposes, such as study, are usually granted upon application.

A reader wishing to avail himself of the home-reading facilities offered by branch libraries applies for a joining card which requires the name and address of the reader to be inserted thereon and also his personal signature, in agreement to be bound by the rules and regulations appertaining to the use of a particular authority's home-reading department.

In most public library systems, a reader's tickets are available for use in any other branch library or department of the local authority concerned, and therefore, a central registry of readers should be kept in order to ensure :—

- (a) A complete record of readers.
- (b) Prevention of a reader holding more tickets than he is entitled to, through joining more than one branch library or department.
- (c) Prevention of readers blacklisted for not abiding by the rules and regulations from rejoining, until such time as authorised.

For such readers wishing to use the home-reading service of an authority in whose area they do not reside, an annual subscription is usually demanded together with a deposit, returnable to the reader on his stating that he no longer wishes to use the home-reading department.

Registration to use the public library service of a particular authority is open to ratepayers and residents of that area quite freely, though it is normal in the case of residents under the age of twenty-one years to demand the counter-signature of a guarantor (e.g., a ratepayer, or school teacher in the case of a

young reader) who assumes responsibility for the reader he has guaranteed in the observation of the rules and regulations governing the use of an authority's public library service.

In all rate-supported public libraries, it is illegal to charge for either application forms or readers' tickets, though a charge may be made for the replacement of lost tickets. There is no example in this country of public libraries operating the duplicate pay system, whereby readers may obtain new books for home-reading on the payment of an annual fee, the proceeds of which are used to buy new books in addition to those purchased from the book fund provided in the library rate, though such a system is found in some areas in the United States of America.

Recent developments in mechanization as applied to public libraries have resulted in the punched card system being applied to reader's application forms. In such a punched card application form, holes are punched on the card to represent information thought likely to be of value to the public library system at any time in the future, either statistically or for pure informatory purposes, e.g., date of joining, age, sex, education, occupation, reading interests, other interests, and so on. Thus, should it be required to be known how many readers' tickets will expire next year (assuming more than one year of currency) certain stops are fixed on the sorting machine, to correspond with the punched holes representing the information required, and all the readers' application forms are put through the machine which automatically sorts out the cards required, according to the setting of the stops, and also records the exact number of such sorted cards. An example of a punched card application form is given in Appendix II. It will have been noted that in previous chapters reference has been made to the application of the punched card system to stock and catalogues, and there is no doubt that this method of mechanization could be applied to other aspects of public library administration, especially in very large systems, in order to deal statistically with, for example, staff returns, binding and materials records.

As the readers' tickets are current from one to three years, the question of renewing such tickets involves a little more than the mere substitution of new tickets. It is the normal practice to require a reader to fill in a new application form because his circumstances may have changed since he first applied for tickets,

e.g., he may no longer need the signature of a guarantor, or he may now be old enough to use the adult home-reading department; his address may have changed (although according to the rules and regulations he should have notified such change immediately it occurred); he may now require extra tickets, not previously desired, or vice-versa, not now require the extra tickets for which he had previously applied.

It should be obvious that the provision of a small table, at which a reader may fill in an application form, whether initial or renewal, is a necessity in any branch library, and care should be taken to see that supplies of such stationery used, pen and ink and also clean blotting paper are renewed as and when required.

In certain branch libraries, magazines and current pamphlets are suitable for home-reading and it is usual for such ephemera to be issued upon the production of a special loan ticket bearing the name and address of the reader, such ticket being held in addition to the normal entitlement. It should also be noted that several public library systems make provision for the supply of reading material to infirm residents, upon request, from the nearest branch library, particularly where transport is available. Such cases should be the responsibility of a senior member of the staff at the branch library concerned whose duty it will be to see that these afflicted residents have their supply of reading material changed at frequent intervals, and that their reading requirements are being satisfied. Transport costs of such service are not likely to be heavy, but the goodwill engendered is beyond computation and as these residents are incapacitated, through circumstances beyond their control and therefore unable to come to the public library, then it is right that the service of home-reading facilities should be taken direct to the reader.



## CHAPTER XVII

### PUBLICITY

In the commercial world enormous sums of money are spent annually on publicity and even branded goods, known as household words, are continually advertised, so that the public, even though it may use the commodities every day, is never allowed to forget the particular products, nor is the belief held that once established, it is no longer necessary to spend money in advertising that product.

Publicity may take many forms, e.g., newspaper advertising, magazine presentation and short film projections, but such avenues are expensive and normally beyond the comparatively frail resources of public library finances. Commercial concerns are prepared to pay for publicity because such expenditure is regained by the sale of their products advertised, whereas public libraries would be paying for publicity, the expenditure upon which shows no return in hard cash, and, which would, in all probability, require even more money to be made available for providing stock and reading facilities to meet a growing demand. Treasurers and local authorities generally, therefore, are reluctant to listen with sympathetic ears to pleas for increased financial provision for publicity purposes for a service which cannot show a commensurate increase in real income.

Publicity then, for public libraries, has largely to be obtained without being paid for in cash, or where payment is demanded, then at the cheapest rate. However, the press can be, and usually is very helpful, especially if the establishment of cordial relations has been based upon acquainting the local editor with all news items possible to be revealed at the earliest opportunity. We are all aware of the irritation caused by reading some garbled version of what has either supposed to have happened, or is going to happen, but so much of this annoyance and the remedying thereof lies in the hands of public libraries themselves where they so suffer. Confidence placed in the press is honoured as a rule and the cultivation of amiable feelings between public librarianship and the press is not to be despised.

Publicity can also often be achieved when there is a Public

Relations Officer employed by the local authority. Once again, the amount of publicity and the type, depends upon the astuteness, the sense of news value and the cultivation of co-operative feelings by the librarian concerned, between himself and the Public Relations Officer. The latter will obviously have the ear of the press. Why then antagonize or keep him uninformed?

If complaints appear in the press, in letters addressed to the editor, even if anonymous, ensure that a courteous and satisfactory reply is sent to the editor, together with a personal note requesting publication of your answer. Should a signed complaint be received, then see that priority action is taken to deal with it, and *ensure that the complainant is informed of the action taken.*

Good publicity is that which tries to satisfy reasonable demand; bad publicity is that which ignores the human element, especially if related to a supposedly public service.

Many public libraries publish bulletins listing their new additions to stock throughout the system, activities and information about their public library service. Such publications are used for publicity purposes. They are costly, though in order to defray the expense incurred in their publication, the expediency of selling advertising space therein is often resorted to, with unhappy results generally, since advertising the local service of undertakers with appropriate illustration, opposite to a page of latest additions, either subject or fiction, in the public library, does not tend to a high standard of publishing, but must create in the minds of readers using the bulletin the feeling that such a publication ranks only with the parish magazine.

Bulletins are issued to publicize the public library service favourably, but if the production standard is low, the publicity will be in like ratio, and unfavourable too. Having had the opportunity of studying practically all the bulletins issued throughout this country by public libraries over many months, the words written by Mr. W. S. Hudson, in a letter published in *The Library Association Record*, in August 1948, are more than endorsed by me. He wrote "*Instead of giving a lead to the publishing world and showing the public examples of the best work that can be done in printing and in booklet production, they give their names, and those of their authorities, to productions which the majority of commercial concerns would be ashamed to issue.*"

If any public library is desirous of publicizing its service by the issue of bulletins, then it is essential that sufficient money is available to ensure that the finished production is of the highest standard, in lay-out; type used; paper chosen; and content matter. If the publication is likely to fail in any of these respects, the librarian should hesitate before revealing a travesty of the printer's art, and which is also self-condemnatory of the service he is administering.

Every moment of the day the public library is open publicity is taking place, and efficient and courteous service is the keynote to whether that publicity is good, bad or indifferent. Every person using any department of the public library, in person, in writing or by telephone, is a publicity agent whose treatment will evoke praise or condemnation. In branch libraries, reiterating the more close contact experienced there with the public, the branch library staff have a greater degree of responsibility therefore, of ensuring that the publicity emanating from their particular branch library is never allowed to be a reflection, not only upon the service given by them, but on the public library service generally. *More damage, to the reputation of the whole library system, can be done at a branch library in a few seconds than in the same number of years of first-rate service, by the exhibition of unsympathetic approach, off-handedness or sheer forgetfulness.*

An aggrieved reader broadcasts his condemnation wide and far, but the satisfied reader is normally reticent. The former magnifies his grievance out of all proportion, the latter is silent, assuming, and rightly so, that a public service should not seek praise; if it is efficient, it is only doing its duty.

Publicity, favourable or otherwise, even for branch libraries is perpetual and all-embracing from the way in which a parcel is packed, labelled and addressed, through method and tone used in answering the telephone, down to the expression or lack of it, in welcoming or speeding readers throughout the day. And, one further remark about telephones. Ensure that the first words spoken upon answering a call are: "XYZ Branch Library, can we help you", not "Hello".

Since publicity then, cannot be escaped, where is the logic in making it unfavourable and inimical to the progress of public librarianship?

## CHAPTER XVIII

### GENERAL DISPLAY WORK.

What constitutes display work and is such work necessary in branch libraries? The answer to the first part of the question is lay-out, and this means books, together with background effects such as posters and material connected with the subject displayed. The answer to the second part of the question is a decided affirmative, especially so far as branch libraries are concerned, because of the following reasons:—

- (a) Books unknown on the shelves are brought to the more immediate notice of readers.
- (b) The holdings within any particular subject and its aspects are made known not only to the readers, but to the staff.
- (c) An attractively arranged display brightens the interior.
- (d) The interest of readers is aroused and *maintained*.

No matter how well stocked a branch library may be, if books remain static on the shelves for long periods without being used, one might say legitimately:—

- (1) The present stock is not fulfilling the needs of readers.
- (2) The purchase of such stock has been a waste of public money since the prime purpose of a branch library is to provide books for home reading—*not to form a collection never disturbed*.
- (3) The use made of books provided is the determining factor in justification of any purchase.

Agreeing with the premise that display work in branch libraries is essential, can any assistant plan and arrange an attractive display of books? The answer, at present, is in the negative and must remain so until, included in the professional training of all public assistants is both the theoretical study and practical application of knowledge of books combined with the art of display.

Some assistants may acquire rapidly a knowledge of books and yet have little, or no idea of artistry in *book display*. Other

assistants may be possessed of the art of display and find it difficult to obtain a knowledge of books, but whether the deficiency lies in knowledge of books or how to display them, or in both, the public library assistant of the future should be trained to be proficient in both cases.

It is easy merely to shelve books, to provide adequate guides, to add to the stock and to believe that the rest lies with the reader, but is this really librarianship as a public service? Unless a reading list is issued at intervals, how are readers to be expected to know what has been added to their particular branch library, and since dust jackets, as well as the new books themselves can be displayed so easily, surely no public library assistant worth his salt will ignore the need to study the art of display?

It may be argued that no branch library possess enough stock to arrange a comprehensive subject display, and this argument is answered in Chapter XX. But, no logical reason can be advanced against displaying, or bringing to the notice of readers, the new additions and also arranging displays of books concerned with seasonal activities or events, such as Summer Sports, Winter Sports, Gardening, Holidays and so on.

In the case of new additions, every branch library is likely to have appreciable amounts of new stock every month and here, the dust jackets provide a ready means of informing the readers of new acquisitions. The placing of the dust jackets should show artistic appreciation so that they make an obvious appeal to the reader's eye. Consequently, notice boards placed in advantageous positions offer an ideal medium for the display of book jackets, as also do the unused top shelves of stacks. Imitation or withdrawn books can be enveloped in dust jackets removed from the new additions already placed in circulation, and artistically arranged in display cases where these are available.

In the case of seasonal activities or events, as mentioned above, the subject books themselves will be displayed together with background illustrations, such as dust jackets, a well-designed poster and objects concerned with the subject displayed, e.g., Winter Sports—photographs, sport gear, fixture lists, and so on.

With such displays it is essential to have a well-designed poster as the centre-piece of the display and, of course, not every library assistant is an artist, therefore, unless a member of the staff has definite talent in this respect, the poster should be professionally

executed. Dr. Ernest Savage in a recent book, *Manual of Book Classification and Display*, has made an eloquent and justifiable plea that the staff of a public library system should contain a displayer, so that all display work in a particular system should be both artistically designed and pleasing. That such a staff member would benefit public librarianship can hardly be refuted.

It is thought appropriate here to refer to the occasional notices which have to be displayed in all branch libraries of any system, such as details concerning closure for public holidays and any special activities. Where such notices have to be left to the most artistic member of each individual branch library, the results may, or may not, be adequate, but at least, one notice artistically good may be photo-statted to give the number of copies required and this is a cheaper method than having to pay printing costs or having to be content with the efforts of the very amateur artist member of the staff however good his intention may have been.

## CHAPTER XIX

### SPECIFIC DISPLAY WORK

In all branch libraries specific display work can be undertaken by means of enterprise, common-sense and a little ingenuity. As any public library is of this world and not apart from it ; is directly concerned through printed matter with things past, present and future ; and is the natural centre of information, the books it contains should be made to work through the medium of display.

Whatever the purists may think, of at all costs maintaining strict classified order in shelved stock, the practical application of home-reading facilities of public librarianship, particularly in respect to branch libraries, merely emphasizes what many enthusiastic and keen branch librarians have discovered, namely, *that too strict an adherence to classified order in a home-reading department of a public library adversely affects the use made of such books ; is inimical to public service, and creates rigidity of mind in the staff.*

Display work is, of course, broken order, but broken order with a commendable purpose, namely, to *show* books to readers ; to stimulate interest both in readers and staff ; and to enliven stock and the general internal appearance of the room wherein the books are housed.

What then is specific display work in any branch library ? It is keeping abreast of the times by bringing to the fore books concerned with items of current public interest, and where possible anticipating undoubted public interest in events which are to come. All worthwhile displays take time to prepare, therefore branch library staffs must be alive to opportunities which present themselves by announcements, local and national, of coming events. For example, broadcasting plays a very important part in our lives, and will continue to do so on a vastly increased scale as television is made more widely available, yet it is possible to know well beforehand in many cases what is to be broadcast or televised. The enterprising branch librarian will find out such programmes and can easily arrange a weekly feature of display items concerned with any particular week's

broadcasting, e.g., plays, serial stories, music, poetry, and so on.

Announcements in the local press, such as musical festivals, exhibitions, flower-shows and lectures, all provide subjects upon which to arrange a display of relevant book material. A monthly feature, such as a book display dealing with the anniversaries of famous people is not beyond the stock resources of a normal branch library to effect.

In children's departments at branch libraries, the seasons present ideal opportunities for display work involving books and general decorations. A little ingenuity, a little money and lots of enthusiasm can transform a children's library from an austere room into a veritable fairyland for the young readers, especially at Christmas time, Springtime and in the Autumn. And what fun it is too, to decorate a Christmas tree, to make an imitation pillar-box of cardboard, in which the youngsters can post their letters to Santa Claus, or to make a maypole from cartridge paper and festoon it with coloured strips of paper. A branch library offers so many chances for the imaginative assistant to make his library a workshop of books and not a stagnant depository.

Bearing in mind the general limitation of branch library stocks, what subjects can be suggested then as likely to offer scope for relevant book displays? Realising that the size of branch libraries differ and bearing in mind the proviso that all the following subjects may be impossible for book displays to be arranged thereon, here are a few suggestions :—

Africa.

Asia.

Australasia.

Best books of, *say 1945 and then in yearly sequence.*

Careers.

Europe.

For profit and pleasure (Hobbies).

Gardening.

Great plays.

Holidays.

Home and hearth.

Modern adventure.

Modern poetry.



Music.

North America.

Recent filmed books.

South America.

Summer Sports.

Winter Sports.

Of course, there are many more subjects, or combinations of those given, but the major point is to make the books work by presenting them attractively to the readers; by bringing them to the forefront at opportune times; and by the constant application of forethought. *Variety is the spice of life, display work is its simile in public librarianship, at branch libraries in particular.*

Downloaded from www.dbraulib.org

## CHAPTER XX

### CO-ORDINATED DISPLAY WORK

As stated in Chapter XVIII, the argument that no branch library possesses enough stock to arrange a comprehensive subject display would be answered in this chapter. Whilst admitting that the argument bears much truth, there is a method by which this stock deficiency at branch libraries may be overcome so that all may have adequate book displays on well-chosen subjects. The method is known as co-ordinated stock display work and where tried out has been outstandingly successful in overcoming the major difficulty of providing an adequate selection of books on a chosen subject.

Where the normal methods of arranging a subject display in a branch library is undertaken, that is relying upon the stock wholly maintained at that particular branch library, initially a brave show is made, but without a reserve the display inevitably disintegrates until all that is left are a very few books on the display stand plus the pictorial background.

The overcoming of this usual occurrence lies in the utilization of books throughout the system concerned regardless of any idea that may be possessed by a head of a department that *his stock is his and his alone*. Also, it has to be understood that the policy of co-ordination must be centrally directed.

If the implications of the above paragraph are agreed, it is possible to formulate within the system a cycle of displays, currently operative at several or at all the branch libraries, moving round after stipulated periods, until all participating branch libraries have displayed the separate subjects comprising the cycle. Then will follow a new series which will have been in course of preparation whilst the previous cycle was being circulated.

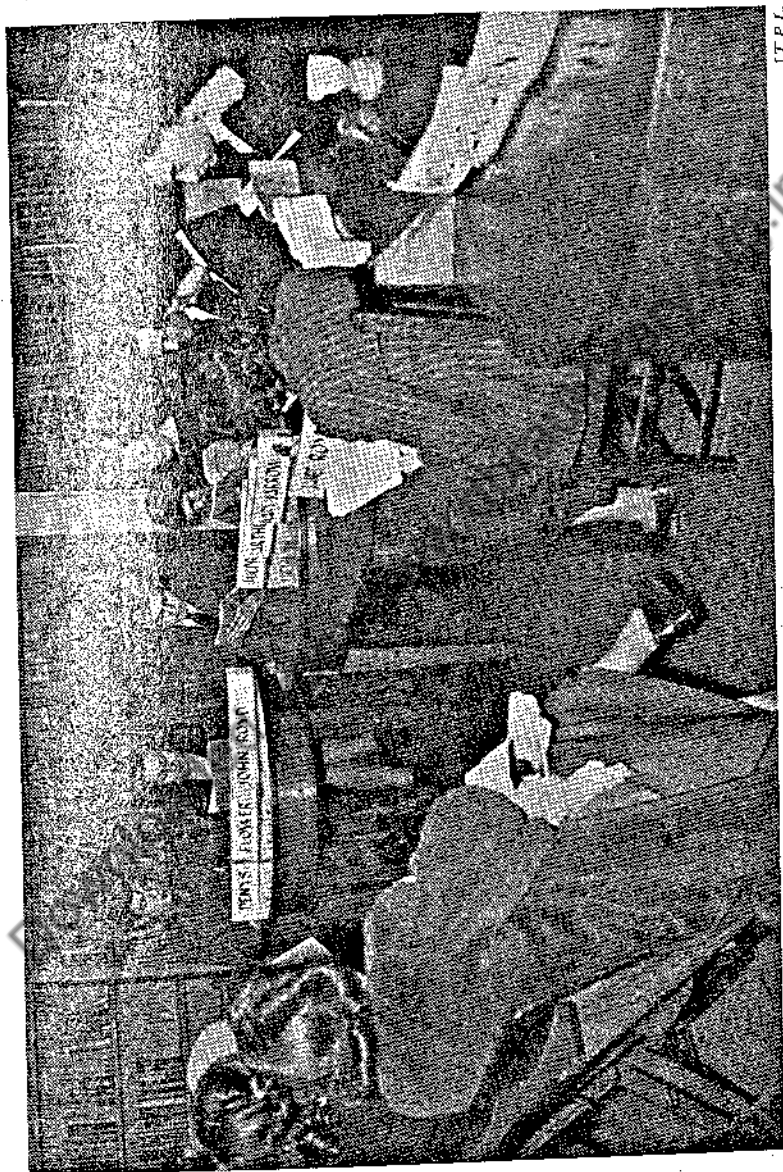
Whereas the choice of subject will be limited in those cases of subject displays consisting of material stocked only at the branch library undertaking the display, the choice of subjects for any cycle of co-ordinated stock display will present no difficulties, but such choice must bear in mind the following points :—

- (a) The selection of subjects for book displays must be catholic.
- (b) The trend must be neither too academic nor too popular.
- (c) Political or religious bias should be avoided.

Having decided what subjects shall constitute the cycle of co-ordinated stock display, the next operation is to gather the necessary materials, stock, subject headings and illustrative backgrounds. Although the planning of such a scheme requires central direction and over-all authority, each branch librarian has a vital part to play in forming and making any such cycle an established fact. Whoever is in charge of co-ordinated stock display work will seek the advice and suggestions of each branch librarian and the other heads of departments concerning stock available on the subjects chosen held at each branch library or by other departments; the lay-out of the displays; illustrative background material; and general administrative detail, so as to ensure the smooth and successful working of the whole scheme.

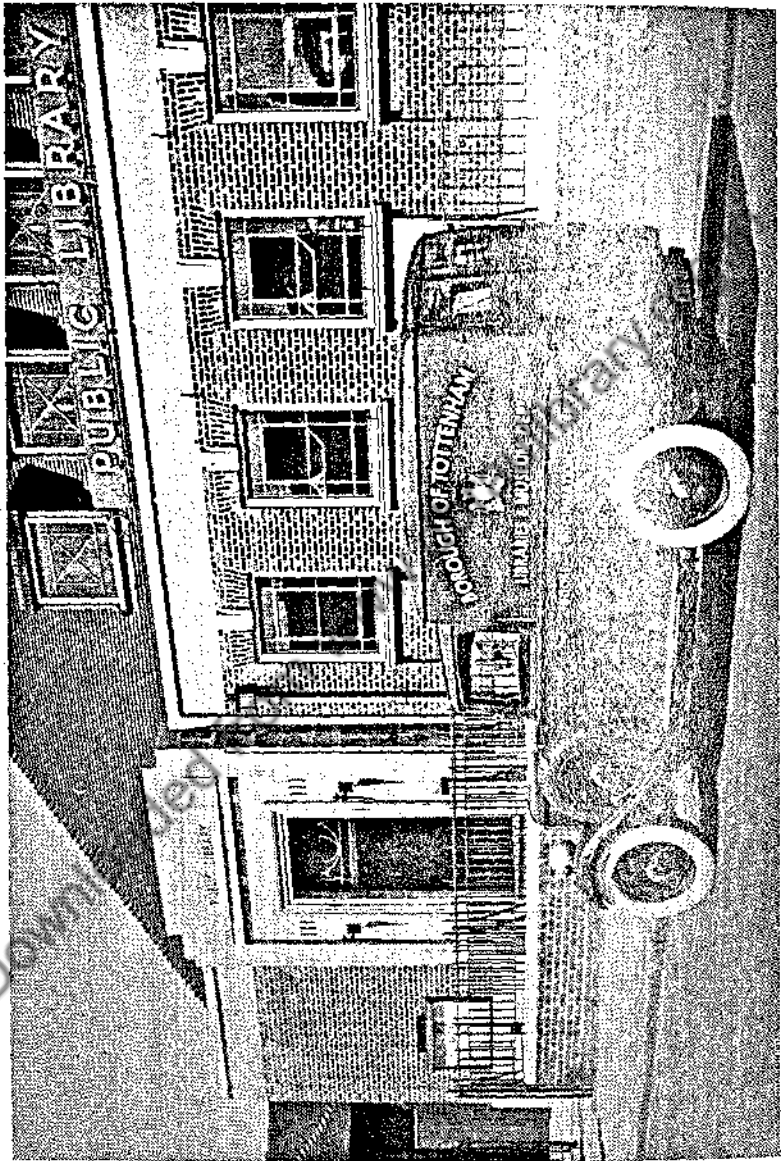
Should any particular system possess a union stock catalogue, it may be suggested that this be referred to concerning details of stock available on the subjects forming the proposed cycle of co-ordinated stock display, rather than placing the responsibility upon the branch librarian or head of department, but it has to be remembered that these officers *should know* what is available from their own particular stocks since for various reasons some books, which would be selected automatically from a perusal of the union stock catalogue, might be awaiting re-binding, or withdrawal, or might even have been stolen. By all means the union stock catalogue, where in existence, should be consulted, but only *after* the branch librarians and heads of departments have submitted their list should any omissions be noted, or why's and wherefore's asked.

In any public library system, there is likely to be a staff member intensely interested in any subject chosen for co-ordinated stock display who may be of considerable assistance in providing background illustrative material, e.g., photography, philately, and so on, and their co-operation should be sought since they may be prepared to lend exhibits (suitably guarded) which will add to the general interest of the whole cycle of displays. Also, publishers and booksellers are usually co-



[T.P.C.]

ADULT PLAY-READING GROUP



DAILY DELIVERY VAN SERVICE

operative in loaning illustrative material such as photographs of authors, autographs and even original manuscripts and, too, local societies and commercial concerns may be willing to help similarly. All such avenues should be explored as having once (or finally) solved the problem of sufficiency of stock for subject displays in branch libraries, adequate and really interesting background effects can make the whole display first-class.

Obviously, the centre-piece of the pictorial background of any subject display of books must be the placard announcing the subject displayed and since few public library systems will be fortunate enough to have a member of their staff who is up to professional standard in designing such placards, it is much to be preferred that these placards be professionally executed since their cost is inexpensive, usually between 5/- and 10/- per design, and for that sum of money is obtained an arresting centre-piece.

The required books having been gathered together from the various branch libraries and other departments, it will be necessary to re-accession them, thus giving them a distinctive block of numbers to each separate subject, for ease of identification upon issue and return, and ensuring that at the end of the cycle, stock is returned to the branch library or department from which originally secured, so that all books are accounted for and with the consequence that the compiling of supplementary reading lists will be infinitely easier. An example of such a special accession sheet is as follows :—

## SPECIAL ACCESSION SHEET

Subject :—HUMOUR					
Display Acc. No.	Author	Title	From Branch	Acc. No.	Ret'd
SD.001	AYE, J.	Humour in the Army	North	334	
SD.002	AYE, J.	Humour in the Navy	South	826	

Each book will require a new issue label and thereon the special display accession number, as well as a *distinctly coloured book ticket* prepared, so that assistants can see immediately

upon return of the book that it is a special display item, and therefore, to be replaced upon the display shelves as soon as possible, unless, of course, that particular subject display has been superseded.

When planning such co-ordinated stock displays there are several points which require to be settled before the display is made available to readers. Firstly, it must be determined how long each display is to remain at each branch library, and experience has shown that six weeks is a minimum period to satisfy readers generally. At the end of each period it will be necessary to retain the displays at each branch library, before they pass on to the succeeding branch library, for a further period of one week (away from public use) in order that books out on loan may be returned in time to accompany the rest of the particular display books and material. Any special display books returned after the relevant subject display has been sent to another branch library will have to be forwarded with the least possible delay, but where daily delivery by the library van or other means is the practice, this difficulty is easily resolved.

Secondly, the filing of special display issues; either at the front or back of each day's issue. Thirdly, the reservation of special display items (better to prohibit this practice otherwise the balance of books comprising the subject display may be seriously disturbed).

Lastly, the statistical returns; each week, at the end of the cycle, and a synopsis of the whole cycle.

Once these subject displays have started, it is the responsibility of the branch librarian and the co-ordinator to keep a close watch on the display shelves, so that they are always reasonably filled. The co-ordinated stock system ensures that at the commencement of a display, there are usually more books available than can be accommodated on the display shelves, so that as items are taken out by readers, the shelves can be replenished from the reserve. Newly published works should be closely reviewed so that possible additions to the various subject displays are not missed, and books returned from re-binding may also prove a continuous source of the continuous strengthening process.

The advantages of co-ordinated stock displays as applied to branch libraries are :—

- (a) The overcoming of the normal insufficiency of stock of any particular branch library to form and *maintain* an adequate representation of books on all but broad subject headings.
- (b) The readers at each branch library in turn are enabled to be serviced on subjects for which the stock resources of the whole system have been combed.
- (c) The changing of the co-ordinated stock displays at established intervals considerably brightens the inner appearance of branch libraries generally, and stimulates public interest.
- (d) Books are made to work.
- (e) It is a bibliographical aid of inestimable value to the staff since they become familiar with many more books on specific subjects than they would if they had to depend upon the stock housed at their particular branch libraries.
- (f) It is a continuous process because as soon as the cycle commences, preparation for the succeeding cycle must begin.
- (g) A team-spirit of public service is engendered among the staff through suggestions for the subjects to be chosen for stock display thereon; the gathering together of the relevant books; the ideas for pictorial and illustrative background; and the operation of the scheme generally.

The disadvantages of co-ordinated stock display are few, namely, the work involved in preparing a cycle of displays is not a matter of a few hours or days; books on subjects forming the cycle, belonging to any particular branch library are not available for general reading at that branch library for many weeks (though if demand is constant, additional copies of the work should be bought) and that fluidity inherent in such a system destroys strict classified order.

But, having worked co-ordinated stock displays, conviction is enforced that they are beneficial to staff and reader alike, and are the solution to maintaining reader interest at branch libraries through the obtaining of the full stock resources of a public library system as a subject at each branch library in turn.



## CHAPTER XXI

### EXTENSION WORK (I)

There are various schools of thought in the ranks of professional public librarians concerning the provision of such extra activities known as extension work. Some abhor any extension work whatsoever, believing that the selection, shelving and issue of books is the full extent of their normal duties. Others believe that extension activities should and can be legitimately undertaken in addition to the provision of books, whilst others believe that any extension work that can be related to subject books is not only part, but a most vital part of a public librarian's duties, since only by identifying the public library in the fullest way with ordinary life is he satisfying *his personal conception of public service*.

The adherents of the varying schools of thought wage constant word battles, but it has to be admitted that more and more public librarians are extending their activities beyond the mere provision of books, and it seems that the die-hards are in the rapidly diminishing minority, in numbers if not vociferousness.

What then constitutes extension work as applied to public libraries? The following are given as the normal examples:—

- (a) Lectures and film lectures.
- (b) Discussion groups.
- (c) Play reading groups.
- (d) Gramophone circles and recitals.
- (e) Study groups, e.g., on music, language, and so on.
- (f) Story hours for children.
- (g) Exhibitions.

Such activities as enumerated above are also in the province of many branch libraries since if a branch library is to be the cultural centre of a community, it must concern itself with cultural communal life. Consequently, the staff of a branch library undertaking extension activities must be trained for such work. The building too, should lend itself to such pursuits by the

provision of suitable accommodation, fittings such as a screen for film lectures, electric power points for operating equipment, a wireless set for discussion and study groups, a turntable and speakers for use with a gramophone, and in the future, surely a television set.

Of course, extension activities bring in their train problems such as compliance with safety regulations regarding exits, fire precautions and seating arrangements, the attendance of staff beyond the normal hours of library work *and suitable recompense*, and the increased costs of maintaining the whole service.

Therefore, branch library staffs should be acquainted generally with the various types of extension work.

#### *Lectures and film lectures.*

The ability to operate a sound or silent ciné projector in the case of film lectures is a necessity, unless the manipulation is undertaken by a person not on the library staff, and for illustrated lectures, an assistant should be conversant with the working of an epidiascope or magic lantern. In either case, safety precautions must be fully understood and complied with, so that there can be no possibility of panic should anything untoward occur, especially is this important where the attendance of children is contemplated.

Neither the operation of a ciné projector nor an epidiascope is difficult so long as common-sense and self-control are exercised.

Film reels will be hired normally and before return will need re-winding for subsequent use, and as hiring fees can be expensive, it is imperative to return the film reel immediately after use.

#### *Discussion Groups.*

These will be centred around the discussions organized by the B.B.C., in which case, the installation of a wireless set or rediffusion will be needed. The discussion group leader may or may not be a member of the branch library staff, but it will be the responsibility of the branch librarian to ensure that the necessary accommodation and requirements are ready at the specified time.

#### *Play-Reading Groups.*

An increasing extension activity which requires suitable accommodation and the provision of sets of plays, therefore,

affiliation to the British Drama League is advocated. It is advisable for a member of the branch library staff to be actively connected with the operation of the group, as a close liaison between the public library service, represented by a staff member, and the group itself, will facilitate the smooth working of this activity immeasurably in such ways as the provision of the required sets of plays, and continuity narration, and the use of stationery for publicity.

#### *Gramophone Circles and Recitals.*

Essentially to be undertaken by a staff member where the equipment used is owned by the local library authority. A sound knowledge of music is required in order to arrange balanced programmes and to compose programme notes. Technical ability to operate the volume controls, as well as experience in the various types of turntables, e.g., twin, automatic coupling and hand change, is desirable plus an appreciation of gramophone needle characteristics, and a knowledge of the timing and care of gramophone records.

Should a gramophone circle be formed at a branch library, limited in performance to members only, registration of the circle will be necessary, but should public recitals be given, licences, issued by the Performing Right Society and the Phonographic Performance Limited will be needed, their cost being based upon frequency, and the number of people attending the recitals. Comfortable chairs will be a prime need, and for relaxed listening to music a deck-chair is almost ideal. The temperature of the room or hall used, for either the circle or recital, must be reasonable and the acoustics satisfactory.

#### *Study Groups.*

Probably will be led by an outside expert, but it still remains the responsibility of the branch librarian to ensure suitable arrangements and accommodation for the meeting, e.g., in the Welsh language classes broadcast by the B.B.C., two branches as well as the Central Library were used as centres in Swansea, at which readers and others interested gathered. The leaders of the groups were not branch library staff, but the latter were responsible for ensuring that the rooms used were ready in all respects at the appointed times (*very important with broadcasts*) and that the wireless set was working.

*Story hours for Children.*

If a separate children's room is available at a branch library, then story hours will almost certainly be given by members of the staff, either of the particular branch library or of the central children's department. Some branch libraries have separate children's rooms with specially designed features for the holding of story hours, such as a wide fireplace with seats arranged in a semi-circle; others possessing a suitable surround, have story hours in the open air when favourable weather rules, e.g., at St. Pancras.

Work with children is highly specialized, and it is not every library assistant who can handle children effectively. As these young readers are highly impressionable and are the future adult users of the public library service, whatever work is undertaken on their behalf must be of first-rate quality—even story hours. Should they have reason to suspect the sincerity of either the staff or any aspect of the service they receive, irreparable harm may be done to their appreciation of what the public library service can offer them throughout their lives.

*Exhibitions.*

These will normally be dealt with only at branch libraries having suitable halls, though separate children's rooms may accommodate such activities as special book weeks and children's competitions organized by the branch library staff. In branch libraries possessing halls there may be exhibitions concerned with the various arts. An increasing number of government sponsored exhibitions are also suitable and staffs of branch libraries having halls must be prepared to organize such exhibitions, including the lay-out. As expenses incurred probably will have to be kept to a minimum, a branch librarian should make himself aware of societies, government departments and the Arts Council of Great Britain, who are often willing to loan exhibition material free of charge.

In all the foregoing examples of extension activities likely to be carried on at branch libraries, there are other considerations applicable in each case. Firstly, it will be obvious that branch library staffs must be able to speak in public, naturally and with confidence, therefore, training in elocution and public speaking is highly desirable. Secondly, facilities for light refreshments

at branch libraries, in connection with such extension activities as discussion groups, play-reading groups and gramophone circles, can make a great deal of difference to the success or otherwise of the ventures since a cup of coffee and a biscuit, served half-way through the proceedings can give a social atmosphere to an otherwise purely formal affair. Thirdly, the alliance of books to each activity is the responsibility of the branch library staff and offers ideal scope for displaying stock in many attractive ways. Also, in the case of gramophone circles or recitals, the provision of scores from stock, particularly those of the miniature kind of the works to be played should not be overlooked. And lastly, any extension work at a branch library involves the branch librarian in added responsibility.

Branch library extension work has the tendency to develop into the 'club' atmosphere, but if one agrees that a branch library should be the cultural communal centre, this is to be welcomed and not deprecated, since the more the public can appreciate the services given and obtainable from a branch library, the more that branch library becomes an essential part of communal life, and the more the staff of that branch library are so associated.

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## CHAPTER XXII

### EXTENSION WORK (II)

Apart from extension activities, branch libraries may be the centre from which library facilities are given to other institutions and societies, or these latter may be operated as separate branch libraries, e.g., hospital, school, prison and youth centre libraries. Therefore, it is apposite here to give some basic details of each. More explicit information can be gained if reference is made to the bibliography at the end of this book.

#### *Hospital Libraries.*

Where operated as a part of the public library service through a branch library, stock will be provided by the libraries department with perhaps the assistance of the British Red Cross society.\* A separate room in the hospital will house the books and the majority of patients will be provided with reading matter from book trolleys.

The hospital staff and those patients able to get to the library room will select books themselves. The provision and selection of stock for a hospital library, serviced from a branch library, will present several problems because, advanced and technical reading may be required by the hospital staff and very light reading by patients recovering from a serious illness. The provision of magazines and periodicals will be greater than at a branch library, and the service is to a much higher degree personal, in which a sympathetic approach, neither too intense nor lacking therein is essential. It should be obvious that certain types of reading will not be recommended nor made available for patients.

The recording of issues will follow normal public library practice, and it is usual not to limit the number of books a patient may have at any time. Requests for special books would receive every attention.

\* Regional Hospital Boards intend developing hospital libraries in conjunction with local library authorities, e.g., the new hospital library at Southmead, Bristol.

*School Libraries.*

Some library authorities are responsible for the maintenance of school libraries and administer them from the nearest branch library. Stock is normally bought from funds supplied by the local education committee and all the routine work is in accordance with branch library practice. The closest liaison between the school teachers and branch library staff is essential for the smooth working of the school libraries, and a system whereby regular instruction is given to each class in the school, on what a public library is, how it works, and what can be gained therefrom, is becoming a part of the normal lessons, being supplemented by visits to the branch library itself where the staff give additional instruction with the greater resources at their disposal.

At Tottenham, all school libraries in the borough are to be serviced by the public library department by means of mobile vans, so that children will not only have greatly increased book stocks from which to choose, but will be advised and guided by trained librarians. The service will be operated similarly to a branch library, but supervised by a specialist in children's library work, with the full co-operation of the Borough Education Officer's department, and includes the formation of a small committee composed of school teachers and the library staff, for the selection of suitable books.

*Prison Libraries.*

An increasing number of public library systems are providing branch library facilities in H.M. Prisons, e.g., Islington, at Pentonville ; Cardiff, at Cardiff gaol ; and Swansea, at Swansea gaol.

In the light of the more advanced treatment of prisoners, it is realised that reading can do much both to alleviate the prisoner's lot and to help his mind, during the enforced hours in which he is confined to his cell. H.M. Prison Commission now require the setting up of a library in each prison, granting so much per capita of prison population for the provision of books, and certain Governors immediately requested the aid and services of the local library authority. Again, such a service is treated as a branch library development and apart from the gaol atmosphere, is no different from the working of a normal branch library. There is now practically no restriction on the type of book made

available for reading by the prisoners—detective stories are much in demand and supplied!—and the only ban concerns the obviously unsuitable books.

A separate room in the prison is set aside for the library, stock is shelved in the normal way, catalogues are provided and special requests are given every attention, normally being supplied from stock elsewhere in the public library system or from the regional library bureau. The prisoners are divided into six groups, one group each week-day coming to the prison library, changing and selecting their own books. Each prisoner is allowed four books per week, one book at least being a subject book. Their issue is recorded in a register by means of the accession number and signed for by the prisoner. Upon return, and in good condition, the date of return is entered in the register, so that should any book be maltreated, it is possible to pin-point the responsibility to a far greater degree than is the case with public issues. Such clerical work as is involved is usually done by a selected good-conduct prisoner.

The selection of stock, its arrangement, the cataloguing and general administration is done by the branch library staff, and thus provides another instance of the flexibility that may be demanded of such staff.

#### *Youth Centre Libraries.*

It is common to find in the locality around a branch library various youth clubs, each having some pretence of a library for their members, yet sadly lacking professional interest and direction, e.g., local Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Boys' Brigade, A.T.C., Church Clubs and so on. Once again, the staff of a branch library may be requested to co-ordinate the library facilities attempted to be given by each separate organization, and so, by close co-operation, be advantageous to each and all. As each club may allocate a small sum of money to provide books for its own library, the good offices of the branch library staff may be successful in combining the allocations, thereby being able to set up a youth centre library in a separate room at the branch library, available only to bona-fide members of the associated and contributing organizations, thus providing a far wider range and better selection than would be possible for any of the individual youth clubs. And, at the same time, thereby



forming an adolescent library for the youth of the district.

Also, additional financial assistance for youth centre libraries can often be secured from the local education committee where such libraries are centrally housed, and what more natural centre is there than the Branch Library?

It will be seen therefore, that branch libraries may not be concerned with providing home-reading facilities only, but that they may be involved in various types of extension work, and associated very closely with institutions and societies, thereby requiring a branch librarian and his staff to be resourceful, self-reliant and not afraid of public contact. Indeed, he and they should be better known in their own locality than anyone else.

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## CHAPTER XXIII

### FUTURE

What has been written in the previous chapters concerns the past and present, but what of the future for branch libraries?

Are there developments to come for which there exist reason and logic? The answer must surely be in the affirmative, especially if we believe in public librarianship. Great progress in branch libraries was made between 1932 and 1939, and it is a fallacy to think that the years spanned by World War II, saw no developments whatever. Admittedly, those years and those shortly succeeding have seen practically no new building of libraries, yet the very strictures upon normal building have led the imaginative professional librarians to explore possibilities not dreamed of before, so that the barren years have been by no means wasted. Rather have they given an opportunity for plans to be modified in the light of new conditions, social and economic, which have altered completely many of the previously accepted bases.

No longer is the provision of a branch library an afterthought in the planning of new areas' amenities, but now is accepted as a necessity, cheek by jowl with the church, the public-house, the post-office and the shopping centre. No longer is it thought that a branch library must conform in appearance to a Victorian monstrosity, but that it shall be architecturally satisfying, administratively efficiently planned and culturally the communal centre. No longer are the staff at a branch library to be regarded as beyond the pale, bann'd to the nether regions because of a variety of reasons, but that they should be constituted of the very best of assistants since their importance, both to the community and to the public library service, is of a greater prestige value here than in any other department of the service.

No longer is it sufficient to dump unwanted stocks at branch libraries, or to stock with remainders after other departments have had their choice, but now stocks must form a cohesive whole of the entire system, fluid and for the purposes of subject display, co-ordinative.

But what of the future? Branch libraries in the future must develop with the times and the following suggestions as to their probable development are offered :—

- (a) Stocks at branch libraries will tend to become less static, the basic stock figures reduced to a minimum, and by use of special messengers, urgent requests quickly answered from the central library or the reserve stock depot.
- (b) Staff at branch libraries will become more mobile with greatly increased facilities for interchange with other authorities' public library systems.
- (c) When the 1944 Education Act is fully implemented, branch libraries may become the centres from which all library provision for schools in the immediate locality emanates, so that professional library service is obtained throughout all schools, and also, organized visits to branch libraries for instructional purposes, become a normal part of the educational curriculum in civics.
- (d) Architecturally, branch libraries will tend to use more glass, and less interior permanent walls. Stock, as far as possible, will be shelved round the walls, leaving space in the centre of the room. The issue desk will appear outside the library proper.
- (e) The readers' adviser will become even more an integral part of branch library service to readers than he is at present.

If nationalization of public libraries is effected, then it can be expected that branch libraries would become infinitely more standardized in every respect, especially if their administration became regionalized. Therefore, readers' tickets would become usable over wider areas, and ultimately, membership of the public library service would enable a reader to use his tickets in any public library throughout the kingdom. Labels, stamping, book pockets, readers' application forms, and so on, would follow the same designs in essentials; cataloguing and classification, probably, would be done by a central agency; and the present cleavage between county and municipal systems ended. The interchange of library staffs would become a reality, so that all professional assistants could have experience in all and every type

of public library, small and large, technical and general, and thereby gain a thorough grounding. Their training would include courses of study devoted to display technique, public psychology and public speaking.

Branch library experience offers more opportunities for promotion to the highest positions in the profession than does experience in any other departments. Every moment of every day presents new chances of aiding readers by the use of initiative, by the cultivation of enthusiasm and by the striving to reach the ultimate ideal of making the branch library a living, vibrant centre of communal activity, essential, respected and ever improving its public service.

Branch libraries are not havens for the misfits, bases for the outcasts, nor retreats for the senile, but they are centres demanding the best staff within the profession, energetic and gifted with the vision that here are the training grounds for the future leaders of the profession; here where the experiments can be made and mistakes ironed out; and here, where above all else, the ability to get on with the public is either proved and developed, or shown to be a non-existent quality, the latter being fatal to any measurable progress in public librarianship.

BRANCH.....

**DAILY REPORT SHEET**

WEEK ENDING.....

DAILY ITEMS	MON.		TUES.		WED.		THURS.		FRI.		SAT.		DAILY ITEMS	MON.		TUES.		WED.		THURS.		FRI.		SAT.		
	M	A	E	M	A	E	M	A	E	M	A	E		M	A	E	M	A	E	M	A	E	M	A	E	M
<b>PERIODICALS</b>													<b>OVERDUES</b>													
1. CHECKING													1. CHECK WITH QUERIES FILE													
2. STAMPING													2. CHECK WITH SHELVES													
3. PUTTING OUT													3. NOTICES													
4. FILING													4. PRE-RENEWALS DUE FOR RETURN													
<b>TICKETS</b>													<b>ELECTRIC LIGHT</b>													
1. NEW VOUCHERS													10. 11. 12. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8													
2. PREVIOUS DAY'S ISSUE RENEWALS													10. 11. 12. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8													
3. CHECK WITH FILE													10. 11. 12. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8													
4. DUPLICATE TICKETS																										
5. TICKET STATISTICS													<b>SPECIAL WORK NOT NECESSARILY</b>													
6. DISPOSAL OF OLD TICKETS													<b>CARRIED OUT DAILY.</b>													
<b>TIDYING</b>													<b>NEW BOOKS</b>													
1. CLEANING STAMP PAD													1. ACCESSIONING													
2. COUNTER													2. LABELLING													
3. DISPLAYS													3. STAMPING													
4. NOTICES													4. NUMBERING													
5. RENEWING WORN C. CARDS													5. CHARGING CARDS													
<b>BOOKS</b>													6. TYPE CATALOGUE CARDS													
1. SECTION TIDYING													7. FILE CATALOGUE CARDS													
2. RE-SHELVING													8. FILE M.S. CARDS													
3. REPAIRS													<b>WITHDRAWN BOOKS</b>													
4. WITHDRAWALS													1. DESPATCH OF CHARGING CARDS													
<b>RESERVES</b>													2. WITHDRAWAL OF CATALOGUE CARDS													
1. CHECKING													3. WITHDRAWAL M.S. AND UNION CARDS													
2. NOTIFICATION													<b>BINDING</b>													
<b>PRE-RENEWALS</b>													1. ENTER AND PREPARE FOR DESPATCH													
1. DAILY ISSUE RENEWALS													2. RECEIPT AND PREPARE FOR CIRCULATION													
<b>ISSUES</b>													<b>OTHER WORK</b>													
1. SORTING													1. CHECKING CATALOGUES													
2. STATISTICS													2. STATISTICAL REPORTS													
3. QUERIES																										
(a) LOST CARD FILE																										
(b) LOST TICKET FILE																										
(c) ISSUE																										
(d) BINDING FILE																										
(e) WITHDRAWALS																										
<b>POST</b>																										
<b>LOSS OF WORKING TIME RETURN</b>																										

NOTE: THE ASSISTANT RESPONSIBLE IS TO INITIAL AGAINST ITEMS IN THE APPROPRIATE COLUMN. EACH SHIFT THE ASSISTANT-IN-CHARGE WILL CHECK WORK AND COUNTERSIGN.

ASSISTANT-IN-CHARGE





# MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

WEEK COMMENCING.....

BRANCH.....

REQUISITIONS—WEEKLY REPORT	
OUTSTANDING RECORD SERIAL NUMBERS OF REQUISITIONS NOT YET COMPLETED.	COMPLETED RECORD SERIAL NUMBERS OF REQUISITIONS COMPLETED DURING PAST WEEK.

ARREARS OF WORK
RECORD HERE ANY WORK OF EITHER ROUTINE OR SPECIAL NATURE WHICH HAS FALLEN INTO ARREARS.

BINDING REPORT		
THE FOLLOWING CONSIGNMENT OF BINDING WAS DESPATCHED TO .....		
CLASS	No. OF VOLS.	APPROX. COST
FICTION		
NON-FICTION		
JUVENILE		
MUSIC (SCORES)		
TOTAL		

## FICTION BOOKS ON SHELVES

NUMBER OF FICTION BOOKS ACTUALLY ON SHELVES ON THE LAST DAY OF—  .....194.....	
--	--

## SPECIAL REPORTS

(Record any item of a special nature)

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BRANCH.....

TIME INTO

BINDING REPORT		
THE FOLLOWING CONSIGNMENT OF BINDING WAS DESPATCHED TO .....		
CLASS	No. OF VOLS.	APPROX. COST
FICTION		
NON-FICTION		
JUVENILE		
MUSIC (SCORES)		
TOTAL		

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## APPENDIX II

### HOLLERITH SYSTEM OF PUNCHED CARDS

The following notes are designed to explain very briefly the broad principles of the Hollerith system of punched cards adapted for readers and stock records.

The cards may be either of 38 columns, the size of the specimens shown in the illustrations on the following pages, or of 80 columns. The larger card enables more information to be punched on to the card, but otherwise there is no difference whatever in use.

Any information which it is desired to punch on to the cards must first be coded with a numerical code, unless it is information already of a numerical nature, in which case it may be punched direct. The code must allow for all possible variations of the same kind of information to be punched. Take for example the borrower's number on the specimens. Assuming a maximum of 50,000 borrowers it is necessary to allow 5 columns on the card for punching of this piece of information, i.e. 1 column for the ten thousand figure, 1 for the thousand figure and so on. If the number is less than a five-figure one, it must, when being punched, be preceded by noughts to complete the five figures. Thus, borrower's number 78 would be punched as 00078. This is necessary in order that the cards may be sorted accurately. It will be obvious that, if noughts were not punched, the figure would in effect become 78,000.

In other detail the card is almost self-explanatory. There are ten positions, 0-9, for each of the 38 columns and two additional positions at the top of each card which can if necessary be used for punching a key symbol or numbers ten and eleven. This is useful when the complete coding of a piece of information takes only 12 numbers as it enables one column to be saved.

The following is an illustration of coding broad categories of occupations :—

<i>Occupations</i>	<i>Code No.</i>
Housewife	1
Shop and Retail	2

<i>Occupations.</i>	<i>Code No.</i>
Skilled . . . . .	3
Unskilled . . . . .	4
Clerical . . . . .	5
Supervisory and Administrative	6
Retired . . . . .	7
School, Student . . . . .	8
Forces . . . . .	9
Not shown . . . . .	0

It will be seen that this particular code is designed to take only one column of the card. Each of the columns is marked along the bottom edge with abbreviated details of what it represents and the columns are arranged in the same order as the coded material for ease of punching. In the examples shown the coded information appears on the same card on the left-hand side. This again is for the convenience of the punch operator, but, if it is desired to use the full extent of the card for punched information, then it is a simple matter to punch from a separate coded record. Indeed, this is the more usual method.

Finally these notes do no more than attempt to set out in a few words something of the mechanics of punched cards. No attempt is made either to justify their use for the purposes of library records or to explain their application to such records. In any case the value of punched cards is that they enable one to obtain in a convenient way information which it would be impracticable to obtain by manual methods.

The need for such information, however, must first be established. To start by attempting to discover possible applications of punched cards is clearly putting the cart before the horse.

## CODING KEY—BORROWERS' VOUCHERS

GROUPS	CODE	SPECIAL SUBJECTS	CODE
7-13 . . . . .	1	(a) <i>Non-Fiction</i>	
14-20 . . . . .	2	Punch Dewey subject number	
21-40 . . . . .	3		
41 over . . . . .	4		
Not shown . . . . .	0	(b) <i>Fiction</i>	
		Mystery and Detective . . . . .	0
		Adventure, western, sea . . . . .	1
		Love . . . . .	2
		Humorous . . . . .	3
		Supernatural and uncanny . . . . .	4
		Social and problem . . . . .	5
		Character and psychological . . . . .	6
		General . . . . .	7
		Historical . . . . .	8
		Short Stories . . . . .	9
<b>SCHOOL</b>			
Elem/Prim. . . . .	1		
Sec/Mod. . . . .	2		
Univ. . . . .	3		
Not shown . . . . .	0		
<b>OCCUPATION</b>			
Housewife . . . . .	1		
Shop and retail . . . . .	2		
Skilled . . . . .	3		
Unskilled . . . . .	4		
Clerical . . . . .	5		
Sup. and Admin. . . . .	6		
Retired . . . . .	7		
School, student, etc. . . . .	8		
Forces . . . . .	9		
Not shown . . . . .	0		
		<b>DATE</b>	
		January, 1947 . . . . .	0147
		February, 1947 . . . . .	0247
		March, 1947 . . . . .	0347
		January, 1948 . . . . .	0148
		February, 1948 . . . . .	0248
		March . . . . .	0348
		and so on	
<b>LIBRARY</b>			
Central . . . . .	1		
West Green . . . . .	2		
Coombes Croft . . . . .	3		
St. Ann's . . . . .	4		
Devonshire Hill . . . . .	5		
Not shown . . . . .	0		
		<b>BORROWER'S NUMBER</b>	
		Punch as shown	
		<b>LOCATION CODE</b>	
		Punch as shown.	
<b>SEX</b>			
Male . . . . .	1		
Female Occupied . . . . .	2		
Female Unoccupied . . . . .	3		
Not shown . . . . .	0		

## STOCK CARD

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CLASS	VENDOR								
COST	DATE OF PUBLICATION								
VENDOR	DATE OF ACCESSION								
D.P. D.A.	CLASS								
R.V. C.V.	STOCK NO.								
9	COST								
10	V								
11	D.P.								
12	D.A.								
13	R.V.								
14	C.V.								
15	1								
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95	81								
96	82								
97	83								
98	84								
99	85								
100	86								

"HOLLERITH" 4-55B-03 PRINTED IN ENGLAND

*Note.*—On both stock card and borrower's voucher, the printing is so arranged that none is obliterated when holes are punched in the card.

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# BORROWER'S VOUCHER

## TOTTENHAM PUBLIC LIBRARIES

DATE

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 BLOCK LETTERS, CHRISTIAN NAMES IN FULL AND STATE IF MR, MRS, OR MISS.  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

MARK "X" IN APPROPRIATE PLACE

1. THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY APPLY FOR TICKETS ENTITLING ME TO BORROW BOOKS FROM THE TOTTENHAM PUBLIC LIBRARIES. I UNDERTAKE TO COMPLY WITH RULES AND REGULATIONS.

AGE GROUP	0
1-7-3	1
10-20	2
21-40	3
40 +	4

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

2. APPLICANTS UNDER 21 YEARS OF AGE NON RATE PAYING RESIDENTS AND NON RESIDENT EMPLOYEES OF TOTTENHAM MUST OBTAIN THE GUARANTEE OF A RATE PAYER OF TOTTENHAM

3. THE UNDERSIGNED BEING A RATEPAYER OF THE BOROUGH OF TOTTENHAM UNDERTAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLIANCE BY THE ABOVE APPLICANT WITH THE RULES AND REGULATIONS.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

TWO TICKETS ARE ISSUED, ONE FOR GENERAL AND ONE FOR NON-FICTION ONLY, IF A THIRD IS REQUIRED FOR MUSIC, PLEASE INDICATE BELOW.

MUSIC TICKET REQUIRED YES/NO

FOR GENERAL USE ONLY \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

FOR MUSIC USE ONLY \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_

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SEE LIST OF SUBJECTS ON REVERSE

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NO. \_\_\_\_\_

ISSUED \_\_\_\_\_

RECEIVED \_\_\_\_\_

BY \_\_\_\_\_

AT \_\_\_\_\_

ON \_\_\_\_\_

FOR \_\_\_\_\_

AT \_\_\_\_\_

ON \_\_\_\_\_

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 BIOLOGY  
 BOTANY  
 ZOOLOGY  
 MEDICINE  
 ENGINEERING  
 ELECTRICAL  
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 SHORT STORIES

IF NOT SHOWN WRITE SUBJECT HERE \_\_\_\_\_

IT WOULD ASSIST THE LIBRARIES CONSIDERABLY IF YOU WOULD MARK WITH A "X" THE SUBJECTS LISTED ABOVE IN WHICH YOU ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED.

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VENDOR 26		DATE OF ACCESSION December 1949	
D.P. - D.A. 49 49		STOCK NO. CLASS COST V I O P D A K I C.V. 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39	
R.V. C.V.		"HOLLERITH" 4-558-03 PRINTED IN ENGLAND	

Branch (1)

Stock Number  
(00706).Classification  
(811)

Cost (150)

Vendor (26)

Date of publi-  
cation (49)Date of acces-  
sion (49)Index Number  
(8)

## BORROWER'S VOUCHER (Completed, coded and punched)

THE BRITISH TABULATING MACHINE CO. LTD., VICTORIA HOUSE, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, W.C.1.

**TOTTENHAM PUBLIC LIBRARIES**      DATE **JAN 1950**

NAME **READER, MRS. ANNE**

BLOCK LETTERS, CHRISTIAN NAMES IN FULL AND STATE IF MR, MRS. OR MISS.

ADDRESS: **27, HIGH STREET, TOTTENHAM, N 15**

Borrower's Number (19345)

Location (0212)

Age Group (3)

Sex (2)

Education (2)

Occupation (8)

Date (0150)

1. THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY APPLY FOR TICKETS ENTITLING ME TO BORROW BOOKS FROM THE TOTTENHAM PUBLIC LIBRARIES. I UNDERTAKE TO COMPLY WITH THE LIBRARY REGULATIONS.

2. I, **A Reader**, SIGNATURE.

3. APPLICANTS UNDER 21 YEARS OF AGE NON RATE PAYING RESIDENTS AND NON RESIDENT EMPLOYEES OF TOTTENHAM MUST OBTAIN THE CONSENT OF A RATEPAYER OF TOTTENHAM.

4. THE UNDERSIGNED BEING A RATEPAYER OF THE BOROUGH OF TOTTENHAM UNDERTAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLIANCE BY THE ABOVE APPLICANT WITH THE RULES AND REGULATIONS.      SIGNATURE

5. TWO TICKETS ARE ISSUED, ONE FOR GENERAL AND ONE FOR NON-FICTION ONLY, IF A THIRD IS REQUIRED FOR MUSIC, PLEASE INDICATE BELOW.

MUSIC TICKET REQUIRED YES/NO

COPIES OF RULES AND REGULATIONS MAY BE SEEN ON APPLICATION  
SEE LIST OF SUBJECTS ON REVERSE

AGE GROUP	NO.	DATE	S.S.
7-13			
14-20			
21-40	3		
40+	2		

SCHOOL	
EMPLOYER	
SEC. ADDR.	
UNIV.	

OCCUPATION **Housewife**

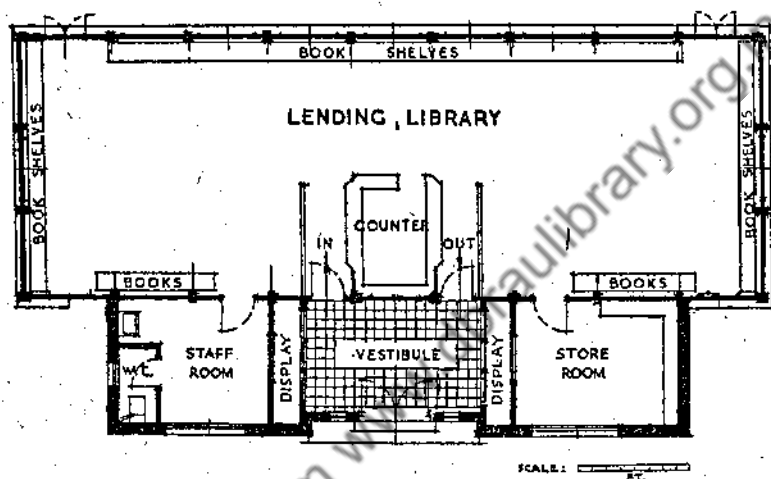
FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY	NO.
	12345
	0212
	3 2
	2 8
S.S.	

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38

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### APPENDIX III



#### LINCOLN. BRACEBRIDGE BRANCH.

Plan of the original pre-fabricated Branch Library.

Overall size 54 ft.  $\times$  18 ft. 6 ins. plus brick annexe.

Shelving capacity—5,000 volumes.

See p. 24.

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The latest information concerning branch libraries can be found in the professional library journals. The following periodicals also occasionally contain information and should be referred to consistently :—

*The Architect*  
*The Builder*  
*The Local Government Chronicle*  
*The Municipal Journal*  
*The Municipal Review*.

The *Year's Work in Librarianship* and the *Municipal Year Book* are also sources of much information.

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