

JAMAICA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

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Editorial

The publishing by a professional association of its own periodical is generally an indication that the members display and maintain a wide and active interest in matters touching their profession, both at home and abroad. This belief, then, outlines the principle on which our editorial policy should be based; the island's library resources should be regularly reported, the Jamaican opinion, praise or criticism, fully ventilated; this local side being maintained in true perspective by the inclusion of news from the greater Caribbean area, and from the still wider English-speaking world.

Not all facets of the "gem" pictured above can be presented in each edition, but regular rotation of contributions should draw fuller attention to each in turn. To this end, contributions, in the form of reports from libraries themselves, and articles or letters from individual members, are earnestly invited; an excess of "copy" in the early life of our Bulletin appears to the very new editor an attractive state of affairs over which to preside.

A specially welcome contribution in the very near future would be appropriate design for a cover, in a

style suitable for block printing, and all those interested are invited to submit designs to the Editor, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$, Brentford Road, Kingston, as early as conveniently possible, or to bring them to the Country Meeting at Mandeville. It is hoped that this meeting will be well attended, including as it does the postponed presidential address of the Association's first President, Mr. A. S. A. Bryant, F.L.A., Director of the Jamaica Library Service. Mr. Bryant will shortly be leaving for a holiday in England, during which time he will be Jamaica's delegate to the English Library Association's Annual Conference to be held in this, the centenary year of English public libraries.

In this issue we publish the report of the Institute of Jamaica, and in successive issues we hope to give the reports of other library services in Jamaica.

Although this edition of the Bulletin is numbered as the first issue, it is more in the nature of a preliminary issue, to "test the market"; it is hoped that the response it may evoke will be clearly voiced at the Mandeville meeting on May 18th.

A few observations on a visit to the United States.

A visit which I made to the United States in August and September, 1949, under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation of New York was intended to be a final coaching in methods of library administration and organisation before I finally determined what routines should be followed in the Library of the University of the West Indies. I had, shortly after my appointment, visited many English libraries and some continental ones, and had found, as in America, that methods employed were bewilderingly varied. There are, of course, strong reasons for this: historical growth and inheritances from the past, financial position, and staff available, which are powerful factors in controlling routine organisation. One could discern, however, particularly in America, a tendency to adopt more uniform methods, and it was disquieting to note an occasional library which in its post-war reorganisation preferred, usually under pressure from non-librarians, to ignore this tendency, and, for example, to embark on a home-made classification scheme rather than adopt a standard scheme. In recent years the most important movements affecting the library world have been co-operative, and many have been inspired by

scientists and bibliographers who cannot afford to be parochial; for example, the development of the Universal Decimal Classification and its application to scientific indexing; the formulation of standard abbreviations for periodicals; centralised cataloguing and indexing services; and most recently the decision of the British National Bibliography to classify its entries by the Dewey Decimal Classification. It seemed to me therefore that any new library should adhere to widely accepted schemes, at least in its more important functions of classifying, cataloguing and indexing; and it seemed a pity that more uniform methods have not been agreed to for the minor aspects of library work. I decided that, so far as funds and staff would permit, the Library of the University College should adhere to one accepted practice. The choice fell upon the Library of Congress classification scheme, Library of Congress catalogue rules and subject headings, and Library of Congress printed catalogue cards. These are considered suitable for the Library of Congress's collection of some million volumes, and are likely to meet the requirements of the University College for as far as one can reasonably see ahead. I resisted the persuasions to start on very

simple lines suited to a small library (which is what the University College Library will be for some years to come) in order to get things going quickly, preferring to organise more slowly and, as I thought, for the future, when the Library should be a large research centre with upwards of a quarter of a million volumes. Having adopted an American system, I was very anxious to see it in practice.

My itinerary began in Washington, at the Library of Congress, the American national library, and of primary interest to me was the cataloguing and bibliographical service offered by it to other libraries. Catalogue cards are printed and distributed to subscribing libraries complete with cataloguing entry according to the rules of the American Library Association and the Library of Congress, with subject headings, and with Library of Congress classification number, and in many cases with the Dewey Decimal Classification number. There are in addition to main entry cards analytic cards for important series. The subscribing library is thereby saved much of the very time-consuming labour of cataloguing and classifying; and there is besides something aesthetically satisfying in seeing printed

cards in the catalogues. The cataloguing rules, the classification scheme and the subject headings are kept up to date by current additions and emendations. The Library of Congress printed Author Catalog and supplements, and now, from 1950, the Subject Catalog, list the works for which cards have been made and reproduce photographically the cards themselves, providing the key to the indexing of older works. The importance of printed catalogues of national libraries cannot be overestimated; they are mines of bibliographical information; and it is one of the duties of a librarian to trace the existence, and perhaps local material which his own library does not have. The problem of selecting stock in a library which is in an isolated location becomes largely a bibliographical one, and the purchase of bibliographical and book selection aids is one of the librarian's first tasks. Bibliographies alone, however, are not entirely satisfactory, and the opportunity to browse in the reference and bibliography collections of American libraries was one of the most rewarding features of the visit.

The National Archives in Washington were principally interesting for their method of treating documents

against decay and pests. They impregnate them, or 'lamine' them with cellulose acetate film, by pressure and heat, rendering them waterproof and proof against all normal hazards. So far as I know the English have so far hesitated to follow this method, although I believe the Archives in Havana are doing so. The Department of Agriculture Library, Washington, is probably known overseas chiefly for its bibliographical activity, represented by the weekly 'Bibliography of Agriculture'. As far as libraries go its routines are highly mechanised to speed up its already vast bibliographical service to agricultural officers and libraries throughout the United States. Sorting machines are being devised to deal with bibliographical references; photography has been introduced into many routines, for instance overdue notices sent to borrowers are photostat copies of their loan slips, reminders of orders to booksellers are photographic copies of order slips. The Bureau of Standards Library afforded me the opportunity to examine a good collection of American and foreign scientific and technical dictionaries and handbooks. The Army Medical Library, Washington, offers two important services, among others, to foreign libraries: a

bibliographical one in the form of the 'Index Catalog of the Library of the Surgeon-General's Office' and the current weekly supplement to it, entitled 'Current list of medical literature'; and the other a microfilm loan service, whereby microfilms of articles and works possessed by the Library may be loaned for a period of ninety days with no financial obligation on the borrower's part other than the payment of return postage. The references are, of course, restricted to medicine and related sciences, such being the nature of the library's collection.

I visited art galleries, the National Art Gallery and the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and others, to check their publications and reproductions, for these are among one's principal sources for a picture collection. The enormous picture and illustrations collection of the New York Public Library was more than justifying its existence. I saw there many art students, artists, designers, teachers, borrowing material for their particular purposes from the files arranged in 'subject', 'geographic' and 'personalities' sequences; and among them a tie design-

er whose extravaganzas originated in designs in this collection.

Public libraries, like the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, the New York Public Library, Newark Public Library, and the Montclair Free Library, New Jersey, represented pretty well all the services which a public library could devise, and were of course fruitful sources for the examination of routines and equipment: extensive reference collections, including (often as special departments) maps, government publications, prints and drawings, illustrations; local collections; children's libraries with story-hours and special advisers; book-mobiles for extra-mural work; publicity departments; binding and repair departments; photographic departments; music, including gramophone record collections with listening apparatus; special collections; informations desks; readers' advisers; administrative sections devoted to library personnel management. There were offset duplicators, electric typewriters, dictaphones, tape adding machines, electric calculating machines, and other paraphernalia of the modern office.

Very evident was the spirit of co-operation which

seems to pervade the very enthusiastic American library profession. It has borne fruit in 'exchange' centres, like the U.S. Book Exchange and the Medical Library Association Book Exchange, established to facilitate the exchange and proper distribution of duplicates; deposit libraries under joint ownership of a number of co-operating libraries within a region where little-used books are stored and available to all, designed to obviate unnecessary duplication of such works and to relieve storage pressure within each library; the development of union catalogues of books and periodicals and directories of resources; the transfer, in some places, of entire sections of stock (e.g. law, medicine) from one library to other and more appropriate libraries; co-operative cataloguing ventures like that of the Library of Congress to which other libraries freely contribute; and the self-critical attitude which prompted the American Library Association to ask the U.S. Social Science Research Council in 1946 to undertake 'a thorough and comprehensive study of the American free public library', and which has resulted in the Report of the Public Library Inquiry, edited by Professor Robert D. Leigh (a political scientist, not a librarian) and now being published.

There were opportunities, too, to see the most modern university and special library buildings, in particular the Princeton University Library, the Lamont Library of Harvard College, and the Library of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. They illustrate very well the current approach to library service. The maximum flexibility is attained by the substitution of internal pillars for internal walls and by giving the floors equal strength throughout, so that reading areas or 'rooms' and stacks can be made and unmade as occasion demands. Very little is fixed. Libraries are learning from the business world that surroundings are important, and great attention is being paid to the readers' comfort: pastel-shade walls, careful lighting, informal chairs in attractive designs and upholstery, screen walls, and display which rivals that of the better shops. The application of business methods to library work is particularly evident in publicity, which is being taken away from the library assistant with a bent for drawing and given to professional artists and publicity experts, as at the Epoch Pratt Library and Montclair Free Library. The resulting letter-heads, postcards, booklists, exhibition leaflets and notices have all the dash and

efficiency of the business world.

My itinerary began at Washington, the seat of the national and the government department libraries, through Baltimore (Enoch Pratt and Johns Hopkins University), New York (Public Library, Columbia University, United Nations, etc.), New Haven (Yale), Cambridge (Harvard), Boston (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Ann Arbor (Michigan University) to Chicago (American Library Association, Chicago and Northwestern Universities, and special libraries like the Newberry Library) and back to New York and Washington. My questions were mainly routine: how do you treat pamphlets, maps, microfilms? do you accession books? how do you repair books? who are the suppliers of this equipment and that? I tried to collect dealers' catalogues and routine forms used by libraries, for they are of the utmost use not only in organising a library but also in teaching library work, giving as they do a conspectus which is difficult to get even in textbooks. It is not easy to state clearly what the practical results of such a visit are. They show in a modification of this or that routine, the adoption of another, new decisions about library plans

or equipment, orders for books which were noted in reference libraries, in continued personal relations with American librarians, and in a better understanding of what really happens in the library world of the United States.

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NOTES & NEWS

Members are reminded of the proximity of the Association's first Country Meeting to be held at Mandeville on Thursday, May 18th, by kind invitation of the Committee of the Manchester Parish Library. An interesting programme has been arranged, as outlined below, and it is hoped that all members and others interested in membership of the Association will make an effort to attend.

Programme:

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| 3.00 - 3.30 p.m. | Meet at the Manchester Parish Library. |
| 3.30 p.m. | Visit the West India Training College. |
| 4.30 p.m. | Tea (at the Country Club) |
| 5.15 p.m. | Address by the President. |

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The Library Staff Training Course.

Through the instrumentality of the Island Library Board a two weeks course of training for librarians was held in January, by courtesy of its Principal, at the University College of the West Indies. This was the first library staff training course to be held in Jamaica and most of us who attended had been wishing for an opportunity like this. There were twentyfive of us, members of the staffs of the Parish Libraries, Jamaica Library Service Headquarters, the Institute of Jamaica, the Social Welfare Commission, the Jamaica Agricultural Society, the Forest Department, the Department of Agriculture, and Mr. Bradley from British Honduras.

The course consisted of lectures, discussions, and film shows covering most phases of library work, and visits to libraries and printeries. Our lecturers all treated their subjects as if we knew nothing at all about them and this approach was appreciated, for, although most of us had been working in libraries for years, we knew little about some of the subjects and even when we thought we knew a good deal we were to find out how much more there was for us to know. We learnt new:

methods and were able to compare them with others.

Mr. Bryant, Director of Library Service, who was untiring in his efforts to make the course the success it was, was with us most of the time taking a keen interest in our progress. He lectured to us on "Libraries in Jamaica" and "Organization and Method." Mr. Holdsworth and Miss Carpenter of the University College Library dealt with reference work and cataloguing respectively. Mr. Ingram of the West India Reference Library also lectured on reference work. Miss Mandy of the Jamaica Library Service undertook classification and Mr. Ramsay of the Bindery at the University College Library showed us how to bind and repair books. Miss Marson of the Library of the Department of Agriculture spoke on that Library; Mr. Verity on his work with children at the Junior Centre; Mr. Chape of the Jamaica Library Service on Rural Libraries in England, and Mr. Houghton, Director of Education, on "Co-operation with Schools".

Our visits to the different libraries and printer-ies were a most interesting feature of the course. As was to be expected the University College Library was the most highly organized and had the most up-to-date equipment. The Institute Library served as an example

of a public library, the St. Ann and Brown's Town libraries as examples of Parish libraries, the West India Reference Library and the Department of Agriculture Library as examples of specialist libraries and the Junior Centre as an example of a children's library. In this way we got a chance to see what was being done in libraries in Jamaica. The visits to Printers Ltd., the Government Printing Office and the Bindery at the University College Library provided us with necessary background knowledge in printing and book binding.

The course, apart from its value in training librarians brought together people interested in libraries from all over the Island most of whom did not know that so many other libraries existed. The camaraderie which arose from living together for two weeks and enjoying parties and outings together made most of us friendly and this should mean more co-operation between libraries in the future.

To the Island Library Board, the British Council who stipulated that some of their grant to the Island Library Board must be used for training, the University College of the West Indies and our lecturers who gave their time so generously we must express our thanks.

Report of the Institute of Jamaica.

General Library and Junior Centres:

Our stock of books in the General Library is now approximately 27,420, after discarding 327; in the Junior Centre, East Street, 7,037, and at the Half Way Tree Centre, 3,512. There are always numerous requests for the discards, which are made use of by Institutions and Associations.

Full use is made of the Junior Centres by the members and an increasing number of children use the library in connection with their class work and other school activities. There is an overwhelming demand for membership, and there is always a waiting list on file.

The Centres work in co-operation with teachers, parents and associations such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. A large section of the under-privileged have access to the facilities which the Centres offer.

Sets of 30 books each were sent to schools and Teachers' Associations in the country from the Junior Centre Library Service.

The General Library issued 76,631 books and periodicals to Kingston members and 41,560 to country members -

a total of 118,191. The Junior Centre (East Street) issued 39,504, and Half Way Tree 24,421.

Our country service posted to members 21,405 parcels. Added to this, 13 associations had sets of books sent to them.

Three Social and Literary Clubs have taken advantage of a subscription of £2. per annum which entitles them to sets of 25 books of their own choice.

Membership:

The membership of all libraries to the 28th February was 8,929 - the General Library 4,587, including Sustaining Members, who contribute £1.1. per annum.

The two Junior Centres combined have a membership of 4,342, i.e. East Street, Kingston 3,255 and Half Way Tree, 1,087.

BROWN, J.D. Manual of library economy; 6th edition by W.C.Berwick Sayers. London, Grafton, 1949. xxii, 603 pp.

Extracts from a review by F.M.Gardner, Chief Librarian, Luton Public Libraries.

Of the original Brown practically nothing remains but the original plan and the principle behind it. The plan is still a good one; there is room within it for a complete account of the theory and practice of librarianship. But the maintenance of the principle that only one man could produce such a book and retain some cohesion and style, becomes more and more difficult. Mr. Berwick Sayers makes a brave attempt. New methods and new theories are neatly fitted in with the slightest of surgical scars. The book is readable as few textbooks are, --- I read it through in two sittings with no strain and considerable enjoyment. In view of the length of time this new edition has been in the press, it is reasonably up-to-date, even including a note on The British National Bibliography.

The manual has two objects, the first to serve as a textbook for students, the second to act as a compendium of information for the practising librarian. More and more the second object is sacrificed to the first, just enough being said to assist a student through an

examination, but not enough to be of value to the librarian.

As a textbook for students, this new edition of Brown is adequate..... Gifts registers, suggestions registers, and accession registers are going into limbo. If the contents of the stationery cupboard are thought worth detailing, the cupboard should be cleared of rubber printing sets, and these aids to junior assistantship, cellulose tape and electric pen, included. It is true these are minor points, but a book that aims at completeness must be judged by that standard, and in most (but not all) the chapters one could suggest material equal in value to students to that included.

The practising librarian, however, is not so easily satisfied, and those who look to Brown for detailed analysis of some of our problems will be disappointed. Practical book selection, for instance, is covered in little more than a paragraph, and on the organisation of purchase, more and more a problem in smaller libraries with inflated book funds, there is almost nothing at all.

In the chapter on charging methods, the space still devoted to the indicator could well have been given to a discussion of the devices used to minimise the delays

caused by the Browne system of charging, -- matching book cards and pockets in different colours, delayed discharge, filing in single sequence, splitting of the charge, etc. There is almost nothing on mobile libraries, and not even an illustration. There is only a mention of gramophone libraries, and nothing on their organisation.

It would be unfair to suggest that these omissions and elisions are major defects in a comprehensive work. In the 600 pages there is a great deal not covered in any other book, and even more not brought together anywhere else. It is possible even that some of the subjects mentioned were deliberately sacrificed for the sake of compactness.

It may well be that the abandonment of the principle of a single editor would result in a more complete work. It would certainly result in a much longer one. Whether its completeness would compensate for its inevitable verbosity one might reasonably doubt. One can at any rate always understand what the present editor is talking about, and one can rely on him not to flog a subject to death. Mr. Berwick Sayers in the hand is probably worth two incomprehensible masterpieces on the shelf.