



DARWIN COLLEGE

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Library Committee, originally scheduled for 28 January, was held in the Entertaining Room on 18 February 2009.

There were present: Margaret Cone (Fellow Librarian), Espen Koht (Computer Officer), Alice Hall (Student Librarian), Deirdre Serjeantson (Munby Fellow), Michael Scott (Finley Fellow), Jenny Symonds (DCSA Welfare Officer), Calder Walton and Elisabeth Leedham-Green.

Apologies had been received from Christopher Cullen.

1. The minutes of the previous meeting, which had been circulated, were approved.
2. Under matters arising, EL-G agreed to circulate the disaster plan so that it could be updated as required.
3. Donations: it was reported that there had been a donation of books from Sir Geoffrey Lloyd, which had been acknowledged with gratitude, and that the friends of the late Conn Murphy were collecting funds which they would like to have spent on books on his speciality, Mediterranean archaeology. When the sum was known, expert advice would be sought as to suitable books and bookplates attached. It was suggested that asking Penny Price Larkum to enter the details on the standard bookplate for donations, might prove acceptable.
4. Jan Bay-Petersen, an alumna now working at an Oxfam bookshop in the town, had drawn the committee's attention to a collection of Charles Darwin-related books that had recently been acquired and asked whether the college would wish to purchase any of these. One book, by Charles Darwin, would probably fetch a high price and was being offered on E-Bay. The whole list had been shown to Dr Giselle Walker, who had recommended six of the books as worthwhile accessions. Of these four were already in the library. The remaining two had been purchased.
5. The Vesalius and Spigelius had been removed from the showcase and transferred temporarily to the University Library for the use of Profesor D. Willliams of Purdue University. In the course of this exercise it had been discovered that the Vesalius was a defective copy with missing pages and with some missing plates now represented by photocopies, probably inserted by the donor. It was recommended that, when the books returned, the Vesalius should be left open at each turning of the pages, at pages of the

original printing. The transfer to the University Library was signed for as to July 2009, but there was a possibility that the books might return before then.

6. A discussion as to the proportion of shelf-space devoted to current fiction led to a broader discussion as to the perceived function of the library within the college. It was clear that there could be no reasonable aspiration to meet the specialist needs of some six hundred research students, and that this had never been intended. Obviously there was a need to provide a combination of standard reference works (dictionaries, etc.) and recreational reading (the most borrowed books related to one Harry Potter). The student librarian endeavoured to respond to all but the most unreasonable requests for acquisitions from students, and the CUP fund was seldom taken up in full. In order to further this discussion the student librarian was asked to provide, for the next meeting, a list of books purchased in the interim.

7. The DCSA had conducted a survey of college facilities, and the replies relating to the Library were tabled. From this it appeared that

- a. some students did expect the college library to meet their academic needs;
- b. others were bothered by
 - noise from within and without the Study Centre/Library;
 - colonisation of work spaces;
 - the cleanliness of the lavatory (which was cleaned once daily);
 - the level of lighting.
- c. approximately 59% of respondents used the Study Centre/Library for 'study' as against c. 25% who read or borrowed books.

EK reported that the Computer Committee had benefited from the convening of a 'focus group' to discuss computer-related issues, and JS agreed to co-operate in setting up such a group for the Library Committee.

It was agreed that, in any case, it should be explained to new students, that the library was intended for general interest and not for specialist needs.

With reference to the colonisation of work-spaces it was suggested that reservation slips, similar to those in use in the University Library, might be introduced so that spaces could be cleared as required (viz. if not used for some fixed period of time).

8. After discussion it was agreed that William Pryor's offer of an 'elector' site be not entertained. MC would inform him of this decision.

9. The Student Librarian tabled her report, with apologies for its being a little out of date owing to the change of date of the meeting.

The Study Centre/Library had been well used since the start of the academic year and all other matters had proceeded well as usual.

A student from Sidney Sussex College who had been using the Study Centre, contrary to the rule that the Centre was for the use of Darwin members only, had requested an entry card. The committee strongly supported her response that this request be denied.

Arising from this issue, and a more general complaint arising from the DSCA survey, the committee discussed ways in which the use of the Centre by non-members might be further prevented. A step toward this might be the substitution of the University Card for the anonymous swipe card now in use. This would discourage the possible practice of passing on Study Centre cards to others not otherwise entitled to them

EK reported that this, along with other potential internal uses of the University Card, had been discussed elsewhere, and the committee expressed wish to be involved in any further discussions on this topic.

Anne Dye, from the Department of Architecture was undertaking a survey of light in Cambridge libraries. EK expressed willingness to engage in her survey.

10. Under any other business a note was received from Belinda Crerar that the Film Society, which had had its budget reduced, was interested in exploring the possibility of sharing the library's budget for DVDs: the Society would have first viewing and the DVDs then be added to the library collection. The committee approved this suggestion, which would be further explored by the student librarian and that the Library's DVD budget be divided between purchases for the Film Society and other DVDs.

JS reported that there was another collection of DVDs in a locked cabinet in the Television Room and that it had been suggested that the Library collection be added to these. Given some uncertainty as to how the Television Room scheme operated, and the permanence of the arrangement, the committee deferred a decision pending further information.

The next meeting would be held at 1 p.m. on 17 June 2009.