Welcome

Where to start? The Diamond, opening in 2015, in which we’re partners with CiCS and the Faculty of Engineering, and where we’ll have 1,000 state of the art study places? The 20th anniversary of our National Fairground Archive, celebrated in the Marvelosa exhibition at Western Bank Library? Continued investment in our content budget by the University, enabling us to grow both our digital and print collections? The THE Leadership & Management Award for outstanding library team? Perhaps that’s the best place, not because of the glitzy award, made out of finest glass and metallized plastic, but because of the word “team”. All 172 members of the University Library team have contributed to this successful year, and all 172 of them are passionate about the work they do with our researchers and our students. It’s been a pleasure to be their colleague, and to know that they’ll keep the momentum going under the leadership of my successor Anne Horn, who’ll become the ninth Librarian of the University when she joins us in March 2015 from Deakin University.

Martin Lewis,
Director of Library Services & University Librarian

The University Library won the “Outstanding Library Team” award at the 2014 Times Higher Education Leadership & Management Awards (the “THELMAs”) in June 2014. The award recognised the work we’ve done to deliver sustained improvement in student satisfaction, and the commitment to innovation in customer services, in particular the success of the Information Commons and our introduction of demand-based loan periods. The development of the National Fairground Archive to become the leading resource of its type, and its knowledge transfer partnership with Blackpool Council, also featured in the award.

IC in The Diamond

From September 2015 the Library, in partnership with CiCS, will deliver services in The Diamond, a 21,000m² academic development at the heart of the campus. The Diamond represents, at £81m, the largest single investment ever made by the University in teaching and learning. IC in The Diamond will deliver nearly 1,000 new study spaces in this interdisciplinary facility, serving students and staff from all faculties and designed for 24/7 operation. Drawing on our experiences with the award-winning Information Commons, we’re developing services and spaces that reflect the dynamic needs of 21st century learning and will bring a unique integrated learning environment to The Diamond.

Internal view of study pods and our independent study spaces in the atrium of the new building.

Library staff at the THELMA Awards evening.
Left to right; Martin Lewis, Alison Little, George Perkins, Tracey Clarke, Rene Mejaj, Angela Greenwood, Amanda Bernstein, Keith Dean, Helen Bingham, Emily Stock, Andy Bussey.

Internal view of study pods and our independent study spaces in the atrium of the new building.
In February 2014 we were delighted to announce the appointment of Alison Little (right) as Assistant Director for Customer Relations following national advertisement. Alison joined the Library in 1988 as a Library Assistant in the Health Sciences Library, acquiring undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications through part-time study during her career with us. Her portfolio as a member of the Library’s Executive includes all site-based customer services, marketing and communications, and external relations.

**Focus on Marketing and Communications**

This year we’ve brought together a new team, the Marketing and Communications Team, to take responsibility for promoting and communicating all services provided by the Library to ensure positive engagement and to enhance the customer experience. The team leads the identification of key communication messages and priorities in support of research, learning and teaching as well as coordinating the Library’s involvement in events and outreach activities.

**News and social media**

Our use of social media channels continues to grow and offers fast and direct opportunities to deliver important messages, share stories and engage in conversation with our customers. Over the year, we reached over 3,000 followers via Twitter from @UniSheffieldLib and almost 4,000 followers from @sheflinfocollections, the Information Commons account which we operate in partnership with our colleagues in CiCS. Our popularity on Facebook (University of Sheffield Library) has risen too, enabling us to reach thousands with up to date information about the availability of additional study space during the Summer exam period, for example. Our overall news channel, and access to subject specific blogs and newsletters can be found at www.shef.ac.uk/library/libnews/libblog

**Events for prospective students**

Over the course of the year, we’ve welcomed prospective students and their parents and showcased our world-class Library facilities by contributing to the Experience Sheffield exhibitions and undergraduate and postgraduate open days. In addition to our attendance at events, we’ve worked with our student ambassadors to offer guided visits to all Library sites, including the award-winning Information Commons, an initiative that has generated excellent interest and feedback.

**Events for new and existing students**

With lots to celebrate, we made “reasons to smile” our theme at the Freshers’ Fair this year. Set against a visual backdrop showing library staff selfies and captions to highlight our key offers, we introduced the Library’s services and facilities to thousands of new students. Our aims were to interact in a fun and light hearted way at this key point in the student journey and to open up communication channels so that we can keep students up to date with the Library throughout their studies. The uptake was great, with many of our visitors joining in the selfie competition, the winners of which were announced through our Facebook channel soon afterwards.

We’re not stopping at the Freshers’ Fair either. We’re committed to engaging with students at every opportunity throughout their journey and joining events such as the Ultimate Fair, to which we contributed for the first time this year.

Juliet Pickard, Sue Ellin, Jane Hall and Kate Statham providing a warm welcome to our new students at this year’s Freshers’ Fair.
Developments in Lending Services

The implementation of our next-generation library management system has provided new opportunities to develop our lending services. Coupled with the increased investment in our content budget, which has enabled us to provide more copies of high-demand items, this gives us powerful new approaches to tackling issues around book availability. We’re also buying e-books in preference to multiple copies of print books where we’re satisfied they’re available, affordable and easy-to-use. Over the last year, we’ve worked hard to reduce complexity in our lending policies, and to drive down the level of fines.

Firstly, we introduced new loans policies which are responsive to the level of demand and, during 2013-14, we operated a pilot scheme to renew automatically any loans on items that are not currently requested by another customer. With the use of regular weekly borrowing statements, we’re able to keep everyone informed of the status of their loans and ensure that requested items now due for return were highlighted. Through feedback collected throughout the year and close monitoring of the efficiency of the requests system, the scheme proved to be a great success. It has now been formally adopted and included in Library policy.

The next step will be to discontinue fines. Of course, we have to ensure that adequate incentives are in place to return requested items, but at the same time ensure that penalties are fair and transparent and balance the experience of the two customers – the requester and the current borrower. A new pilot scheme to implement a freeze on borrowing instead of fines, coupled with a campaign NoMoreFines www.sheffield.ac.uk/nomorefines has launched and is already generating positive feedback. We’ll monitor the impact of the scheme over the coming months and report regularly on our findings.

Supporting our researchers

As well as improving resources for students, increased investment in our content budget has boosted the strength of our digital and print collections of research material. We now subscribe to the Nature Publishing Group Platinum Collection of e-journals, and we’ve added more digitised journal backfiles. We’ve also purchased licences for key part of the State Papers Online collection, a key resource for researchers in history.

Helping to manage our researchers’ outputs is an increasingly important part of what we do, reflecting research funders’ growing interest in this area. In the first full year of the RCUK open access policy, we paid for article processing charges (APCs) for 252 papers at a cost of nearly £400K. We estimate that some 47% of papers resulting from RCUK-funded research were made open access during this period. A new Open Access Advisory Group has been established to oversee implementation of both RCUK and HEFCE (REF 2020) policies on open access, and to promote Green open access using our shared White Rose Research Online repository.

Following last year’s appointment of Laurian Williamson to the role of Research Data Management (RDM) coordinator, we’ve made good progress with colleagues in Research & Innovation Services and CiCS in scoping services in this emerging area. RDM now features in the sessions we provide for the Doctoral Development Programme, and we’ve helped researchers to compile the data management plans that many research funders now require. Work is continuing to develop storage, curation, search/discovery and long-term preservation solutions for our researchers’ data.
In 2013, the Library received a generous donation of around 200 early Bibles given in memory of a graduate of the University, the Reverend Dr. Oliver A. Beckerlegge (M.A. 1935, PhD 1939), by his daughter Dr. Honor J. Aldred. The collection includes a number of very rare Bibles from the 16th and 17th centuries, and at least one that is believed to be the only copy still in existence. The collection has been fully catalogued and conservation work is in progress.

In November 2013, Special Collections teamed up with the School of English and Bank Street Arts to present a weekend symposium highlighting and celebrating the newly-formed Private Presses Collection. The symposium – Opening Up the Book: the Art of Books and Book Arts – was part of a nine week festival centering around the Sheffield International Artist’s Book Prize, run by Bank Street Arts. The symposium weekend was awarded Arts Enterprise funding and with the award, we were able to bring four internationally-renowned artists to Sheffield for the first time. The artists, Tom Phillips, Sam Winston, Ian Tyson and Ron King were chosen because their work features prominently in the Private Presses Collection. The collection itself consists of fine editions produced by private presses from William Morris’s Kelmscott Press to our latest hand-printed acquisition from Otago University’s Otakou Press.

The Special Collections Department now has Online Exhibition web pages at www.shef.ac.uk/library/special/onlineexhibitions. The current exhibition displays examples from the Beet Collection of Early Lantern Slides, which was catalogued and conserved by two M.A. work placement students from the School of English. The students – Kirsten Ehinger and Sam Longhurst – selected the images for the exhibition, researched and wrote the text, and created the slide shows with accompanying narration. The Beet Collection consists of almost 2,500 lantern slides dating from the late 19th and early 20th century; all have now been digitised. The Online Exhibition pages will enable us to highlight more of our unique and distinctive collections, and to provide a virtual accompaniment to physical exhibitions displayed in the cabinets on Level 4 of Western Bank Library.

National Fairground Archive

The National Fairground Archive celebrates the 20th anniversary of its inauguration in 2014. The year has been marked by a series of celebrations incorporating our world class collections, celebrating the heritage of performance culture and greater dissemination of our holdings. Highlights have included a weekend of circus at Weston Park, commemorative publications including a box set of treasures from the Archive and a series of talks, events, exhibitions and partnerships locally national and internationally.

Our work with MOOCs*

The University delivered the first of several MOOCs on the FutureLearn platform in March 2014. Library staff have been working with colleagues from the University MOOCs Development Group to advise on rights clearance issues and open access information resources, as well as providing digitised materials from the Library collections to include in MOOCs.

The Library is also represented on the FutureLearn Partner Libraries Group, which has been exploring areas of common interest such as information and digital literacy for MOOC learners. The Group is currently collaborating with JISC Collections on a project to support HE Libraries advising MOOC developers on rights clearance and other intellectual property issues.

* massive open on-line courses
Erasmus exchange visits

We continue to welcome visitors from across Europe to Sheffield as part of the Erasmus Staff Mobility Programme. During May we hosted Günes Çetinkaya Serik, Music Librarian from the Istanbul Teknik Universität Conservatoire. Clare Scott, from our Learning and Research Services Team, ensured that Günes spent an informative and enjoyable week learning about our services and exchanging experiences with our staff. Günes was particularly interested to talk to our Metadata team about cataloguing music scores. In addition, she was able to spend some time with academic colleagues and meet students from the Department of Music, hosted by Dr. Simon Keegan-Phipps.

In September 2014 Lynn Sykes, Head of Customer Services, hosted a visit from Kai Sprenger, (right) Head of Circulation Control at the Johannes Gutenberg Universität, in Mainz. Kai spent two weeks learning about many of the Library’s processes across all areas of our business, gaining ideas to take back to his workplace. In return, he provided our staff with an interesting insight into the operation of Library services at Mainz and at German university libraries more generally.

Facts and figures

The University Library has 172 staff (125 fte), based at five sites with a total of 2,560 study spaces. Its budget for 2013/14 was £8.457 million. The Library is a member of Research Libraries UK (RLUK), which includes libraries of the largest research-led universities in the UK and Ireland. In 2013-14 our total number of user visits across all sites of the Library increased by 5.5% to over 2.43 million.

Contacting the University Library

If you have any comments or questions on the issues covered in this year’s Annual Report, please contact the Office of the Director:

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Front cover image: External view of The Diamond

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