



Queen's University Belfast: New Member of RLUK

This summer Queen's University Belfast joined RLUK, bringing the total number of members to 30. RLUK now represents all of the Russell Group of research-intensive UK universities, together with a number of other excellent research libraries in the UK and Ireland. Queen's is a broadly based, research-driven university with a dynamic world-class research and education portfolio and strong international connections. The University's priority is to achieve nationally and internationally recognized research excellence in all of its many and varied disciplines, with world-class research in distinctive niches and thematic areas. An emphasis is placed on the expansion of inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary activities.

In summer 2009 Queen's opened its new £50million McClay Library, providing 2,000 reader places and accommodation for 1.5 million volumes. The Library brings together wide-ranging library, computing and media services in a single location. In addition, it hosts Queen's special collections providing access to the Library's rare and early printed book, map, and manuscript collections, as well as to the unique collection of more modern material relating to Ireland and Ulster in particular. "In these challenging times for libraries when mutual support and co-operation is more important than ever before,

Queen's is delighted to have joined RLUK and we are looking forward to a very fruitful partnership in the years ahead," said Elizabeth Traynor, Assistant Director (Library Services & Research Support). It is becoming increasingly important that the sector can work together and speak with a united voice. With increased financial pressures on our members and the push to do more with less it is vital that the sector comes together to cooperate and collaborate on the widest range of issues. From resisting excessive journal price rises to redefining the research library, the range of challenges facing us are great, as are the opportunities offered by new technology and innovative ways of working. RLUK is delighted to welcome Queen's to the membership and we look forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship.

News from the community

Review of Intellectual Property in the UK

In May, the UK Government published *Digital Opportunity: A Review of Intellectual Property and Growth* by Professor Ian Hargreaves of Cardiff University. Professor Hargreaves had been tasked with investigating how the intellectual property system can best drive growth and innovation. In our submission to the review, RLUK identified a number of areas of concern to the academic community. We were extremely pleased to see these issues addressed in the Review through a series of measured and balanced recommendations, including: exceptions at national level for format shifting (vital for preservation), non-commercial research, and library archiving, and EU exceptions to support text and data mining. Pragmatic proposals were also put forward on orphan works so as to allow the digitization of older material while still respecting rights holders. Helpfully, Hargreaves concluded that legislation should ensure that these and other exceptions cannot be over-ridden by contract. We are cautiously optimistic that the Government's response will be positive and that this will start a process by which at least some of the recommendations will become law. RLUK will monitor progress of the Review carefully and intervene where appropriate.

The Big Society leaves all at once? Academics resign from AHRC Peer Review College over its Delivery Plan

At the end of June 42 researchers quit the Arts and Humanities Research Council in response to the inclusion in its Delivery Plan of the Government's 'Big Society' agenda. In removing themselves from the Peer Review College, the academics in question called for mass resignations, in the wake of petitions and public statements directed at the AHRC signed by thousands of their colleagues as well as some 30 learned societies. Their collective complaint is at the presence of the 'Big Society' initiative, and in particular how it has been related to helping to deliver the AHRC's Connected Communities programme. Despite the call to remove references to the Coalition Government's strategy, it has been reported that the AHRC will continue with the Delivery Plan. In light of the resignations, the AHRC has said it would look to recruit further members of research staff outside the College to review applications.

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN: A ROYAL VISIT

Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip visited the Library at Trinity College Dublin as part of their state visit to Ireland in May. Given the historic and sensitive nature of the occasion, the preparations were exhaustive and required re-arrangement of the examination timetable and closure of the Old Library for three days. The whole event was broadcast live giving international coverage to Trinity and the Library.



Robin Adams (TCD Librarian), Prince Philip, Mary Robinson (Chancellor of TCD), HM, Ruairi Quinn (Minister of Education), John Hegarty (Provost of TCD)

The visit included a viewing of the Book of Kells, in facsimile for the photographs, and the manuscript itself in the seclusion of the Treasury. The Royal visitors also saw the work of the conservation department on early printed material and conservation science investigation of pigments in medieval manuscripts. The College's Elizabethan links were illustrated by the display of a portrait of its Founder, specially hung for the day, and by a copy of an alphabet and catechism, *Abidil Gaoidheilge agus Caiticiosma*, the earliest book printed in Irish which was commissioned by Elizabeth I in 1571. The Queen's interest was possibly even more sparked by a copy of a racing calendar from 1795, given that she was spending the next day at the National Stud and Coolmore training stables.

The Queen and Prince Philip met over a hundred academics from Irish universities in the Long Room, graciously shaking each hand, while the Librarian fretted about the timing. The Queen and Prince Philip admired the College charter, stimulating an arcane discussion on the production of traditional wax seals and their modern counterpart, prior to departing to a cheering crowd of College staff and students.

Project spotlight

RE-SKILLING FOR RESEARCH

It is clear that as the nature of research within our institutions changes, so too must the role of the library in supporting research. Research now demands greater collaboration (across discipline, institutional, and national boundaries), generates greater quantities of data, and works across a greater range of media. In addition, funders are placing increased emphasis on the demonstration of the impact of research outputs and encouraging wider dissemination. As research activities evolve, research support must evolve with it. There has been much debate within libraries as to what form this evolution will take - but little consensus in terms of the part to be played by the library in general, or the role of library staff members. Most focus has been placed on support and liaison librarians as the natural constituency to fulfill the new research requirements.

RLUK has been keen to establish what the new requirements of researchers are, and how best they can be met within the library. We want to place these needs in the context of the library's current offering, and look at what changes are required to fulfill these needs. To aid with this process, we commissioned Mary Auckland to undertake an investigation into the role and skills of subject and liaison librarians in relation to the evolving information needs of researchers.

Mary's report looks in detail at researchers' information needs and begins to outline the skills and knowledge that are required to meet those needs. It offers a comparison of different models of library support for researchers, with valuable comparisons of current job descriptions. We hope that these comparisons will prove particularly useful to libraries as they seek to redefine the services they provide to researchers. Finally, the report looks at training and the issues around ensuring that library staff have the correct skill-sets to meet the expanding demands of researchers. Interesting, one conclusion is that the training provided at library schools should be reviewed to ensure that relevant skills are embedded at the start of librarians' careers.

A report such as this does not provide a definite set of answers, but starts a process that RLUK is keen to pursue. The RLUK Board, having studied the report, has agreed a number of strands of work to take the process forward. We know that some of our members are already using the report in their internal discussion on how best to serve the researchers in their institutions. We hope that this will continue and that we will be able to offer a framework for subject librarians so they can provide mutual support across institutions as they develop their new roles.

Information on the Subject Librarians: Skills Set Investigation can be found at: www.rluk.ac.uk/node/657

Voyage of Discovery

On 26th May a new programme was launched, *Discovery: a metadata ecology for UK education and research* supported by JISC, RLUK and national partners in libraries, archives and museums. The Discovery work has grown out of the work of the RLUK and JISC Resource Discovery Taskforce to define the requirements for a shared UK resource discovery infrastructure supporting research and learning, to which libraries, archives, museums and other collection holders and content providers can contribute open metadata for access and reuse. The Discovery programme is now working to realize the vision of the original Taskforce by advocating open data, reducing technical and licensing barriers and enabling the creation of value-added services.

The launch event at the Wellcome Collection included the announcement of Discovery's Open Metadata Principles for institutions and agencies in the libraries, archives and museums sectors to adopt, to enhance the impact of the UK's knowledge resources for the furtherance of scholarship and innovation. RLUK felt it was important that the Discovery programme actively provided a lead to the community on this issue, as well as furnish it with advice and information. Subsequently, following RLUK's call for 'a call to arms' to be appended to the open metadata principles, a number of its members who have been closely involved in the work of the Resource Discovery Taskforce have signed up to them alongside RLUK itself, including:

- Paul Ayris, University College London
- Sandra Bracegirdle, John Rylands University Library
- Mark Brown, University of Southampton
- Andrew Green, National Library of Wales
- Malcolm Raggett, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London
- Bill Stocking, British Library
- Neil Wilson, British Library
- Martyn Wade, National Library of Scotland

The first phase of the Discovery work has been focusing on laying the groundwork in terms of data that can be reused in the next phase of activity and definitions of approaches for issues like metadata, technical architecture and sustainability. A series of eight JISC-funded RDTF projects has been working to make metadata about library, museum and archive collections openly available using standards and licensing that will allow that data to be reused, among which are ones being lead by RLUK members. **Cambridge University Library** is leading the COMET (Cambridge Open METadata) project which aims to release over 2.2 million catalogue records in linked data form under an Open Data Commons License. **Oxford University Libraries** are leading the 'Discovering Babel' project to enhance access to the digital literary and linguistic resources in the Oxford Text Archive and in the British National Corpus.

Meanwhile, **John Rylands University Library** is providing over ten years of aggregated and anonymised circulation data for the JISC-funded Activity Data project SALT (Surfacing the Academic Long Tail) which is looking at how library circulation activity data can be used to enhance humanities research by surfacing underused 'long tail' library materials through search.

Working in partnership with others, RLUK also has firm plans of its own eventually to make available some 16 million bibliographic descriptions open to re-use.

From September, the Discovery programme moves into the next phase focused on aggregation and service building. Plans are well developed and members can expect to see a number of JISC-funded calls coming out soon. There will be an opportunity to meet representatives of the Discovery team at the RLUK members meeting in November when there will be an option for participating in filmed interviews.

DISCOVERY UPDATES

To keep up to date with the work of Discovery, visit the website at <http://discovery.ac.uk>, follow the hashtag #ukdiscovery and sign up for the newsletter on the website.

Current projects

RLUK- OCLC SURVEY

In October 2010 OCLC published *Taking Our Pulse*, a survey of special collections and archives in 275 institutions in US and Canada. The aim was to determine norms across the community and provide empirical data to support decision making and priority setting. Amongst other findings, the Survey discovered that: far too many rare and unique materials remain "hidden"; the size of collections is growing rapidly; most institutions report increased numbers of onsite users; staffing generally remains stable; and digitization and born-digital archival records emerged as two of the three most challenging issues.

RLUK has over the past years looked at some similar issues, engaging with the Hidden Collections survey and encouraging greater cataloguing activity through the COPAC Challenge Fund. It is therefore a natural fit for OCLC and RLUK to work in partnership to repeat the *Taking Our Pulse* survey in the UK and Ireland. Over the summer, OCLC has worked with a small taskforce appointed by RLUK to review the survey instrument, adapting it for use in the UK and Ireland - ensure that local terminology is used throughout and adapting questions to reflect conditions this side of the Atlantic.

Wherever possible, questions have been retained so as to allow meaningful comparisons between North American collections and those in the UK and Ireland. With this work almost complete, the revised survey will shortly be sent to the RLUK membership as well as to selected additional institutions that hold special collections. It is hoped that the resulting report will be published in time for the Autumn RLUK Members' meeting in November. The report will then be used to feed into the Unique and Distinctive Collections strand of the new RLUK strategic plan, so giving guidance on priorities and next steps.

The North American report can be found at <http://www.oclc.org/research/news/2010-10-27.htm>

Profile

Phil Sykes

Chair, RLUK



Phil is chair of RLUK and a well-known figure in the profession. A member of the RLUK Board for over five years, he says "I'm very lucky, in RLUK, to have a group of likeable, talented and enthusiastic colleagues. That, combined with the small-scale of RLUK makes it relatively easy for us to work together, and we've achieved some great things."

Phil came into librarianship through an unusual route. He originally applied for a job dusting books in the Brotherton library at Leeds University, after falling out spectacularly with the senior partner in the law firm he worked for: "It was only meant to see me through a couple of months until I got a 'proper' job. But I immediately fell in love with the Brotherton and have been addicted to libraries ever since."

Phil has had a varied career which has included stints as a subject librarian, systems librarian and, at Huddersfield University, managing a converged computing and library service. "I feel very fortunate to have been a librarian at the time I have" he says. "Bringing in electronic information over the last couple of decades has given a momentum to the job it might otherwise have lacked; and we have fascinating challenges to face with journal publishing and Open Access."

In his spare time, Phil is a keen amateur musician. He is currently looking forward to singing Mahler's 8th symphony with the Liverpool Phil ("so kind of them to name it after me") and he is the accompanist for a choir based at the local Rugby Club!

Current project snapshots

Unique and Distinctive Collections

As part of our Strategic Plan, 2011-2014, there a major strand on Unique and Distinctive Collections (UDCs) – traditionally termed 'special collections'. The aim of this strand is to maximise UDCs in all formats held by RLUK members which are central to the institutional mission of individual RLUK institutions. Such collections have always been a common and prominent feature of large research libraries. Arguably, as non-unique and common research material becomes more accessible online, often without the need for library mediation (eg Google Books), the salience of UDCs grows stronger still. They can attract researchers and research funding, and enhance the institution's extramural reputation.

UDCs are therefore a valuable asset. They can also be a liability to the holding institution: they take up space, they require specialist care and servicing, their use may be slight (or by externals only). This project therefore aims to assist RLUK members in their efforts to maximise the value of UDCs, and to minimise their liabilities. There has been no general mapping of the UDC landscape in the UK for many years. New technologies, and especially digitisation, have made UDCs much more visible and accessible, and have opened them up to new methods of exploration by researchers.

In the initial implementation, we will be looking at the following areas: Connection with research programmes and institutional missions, Fundraising, External engagement, Documentation, digitisation and promotion, Staff support, Digital experimentation and exploitation and Collaborative effort by RLUK. The OCLC Research/RLUK Survey of Special Collections is a further aspect of this activity, and in both cases, RLUK's aim is not only to create business intelligence for its own members but also to involve other research collection holders to gain precise understanding of where special collections should ideally lie, now and into the future. To help RLUK undertake this work, we are seeking to commission for 12 months a part-time UDC Project Manager post – <http://www.rluk.ac.uk/content/rluk-seeks-fill-unique-and-distinctive-collections-project-manager-post>.

Affordable Subscriptions to Periodicals Initiative (ASPI)

RLUK's campaign to achieve better terms and conditions in new big deals with Elsevier and Wiley continues throughout the summer. In addition to media coverage in the Economist and the Chronicle of Higher Education, RLUK has obtained strong support for our actions within the Russell Group, with the issue being discussed amongst VCs, Pro-VCs (Research), and Registrars. The conclusion is the same - now is the time for the sector to stand together to enable JISC Collections to negotiate better deals. The NUS has also shown its support for the campaign - with students understanding that an ever increasing proportion of library budgets going towards journal packages is bad news for textbook spending and the library services that student value.

New Posts at RLUK Member Libraries

RLUK would like to congratulate all those that have taken up new posts in RLUK Libraries including:

Caroline Williams: who took up position of Director of Research & Learning Resources at Nottingham University in May 2011.

Maja Maricevic: The new Head of Higher Education at the British Library.

Where we'll be...

5th - 7th September 2011
Durham CILIP's Rare Books
and Special Collections
Group Conference
Mike Mertens

5th - 7th October 2011
3rd LIBER-EBLIDA Workshop
on Digitisation
The Hague, Mike Mertens

8th October 2011
Librarycamp Unconference
Birmingham, Mike Mertens

24th – 25th November 2011
RLUK Members Meeting
Imperial College London,
RLUK Secretariat