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NEWS AND NOTES

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THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS

THE COLLEGE LIBRARY

The College library is at present on ice, or, to be more precise, in numbered crates in a repository awaiting the decision of stress engineers as to which is the most suitable room in 17 Belgrave Square for it to be housed. This is by no means the only problem facing the library. Before the resignation of Dr Denis Leigh as Hon. Librarian a meeting of the then Library Committee was held at which in particular, the future function and shape of the library was discussed. Drs Bernard Heine and Tom Bewley generously undertook to write up the discussions in the form of a memorandum, and this is printed below.

During this interim period, however, there are two positive steps which can be taken. First, the Library Committee is firmly of the opinion that immediate efforts should be made to gather a retrospective and prospective collection of papers and books published by the membership of the College. Contributions of both are welcome. Secondly, that an attempt should also be made to build up our archives. To this end it is earnestly hoped that members of the College will offer to the library historical material stored in the libraries or elsewhere in psychiatric hospitals which are unwanted or are in danger of destruction.

HENRY R. ROLLIN
Hon. Librarian

Memorandum on the Future of the Library

Introduction

Useful reviews of library facilities and possible plans for the College library have been made by Dr Denis Leigh and Miss Helen Marshall (*News and Notes*, March 1973). Both emphasized the valuable historical collection and implicitly the need for this to continue. Other points they noted were the mixed and uneven collection of books, and the runs of

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journals, albeit of a somewhat narrow range. They considered that the appointment of a professional librarian was essential to organize the current library and to develop its services.

While most would agree that the present situation is unsatisfactory, views as to the future role of the library appear to be of two kinds. One is to retain and to develop the historical collection only; the other to develop the library to provide in addition current bibliographical and other services. There are already several libraries in London containing a wide range of psychiatric material but as a rule they serve the needs of their own members only. If a professional librarian were appointed, however, this would bring the College library into the existing national library network, which allows ready borrowing from many other libraries as well as from the lending division of the British Library at Boston Spa. A professional librarian could also provide an invaluable service to the more scattered members of the College. To our mind, the most appropriate development for a College such as ours would include the appointment of a professional librarian and the provision of bibliographic services. Clearly its function would need to be determined and matched with economic resources. In this light, we make the following recommendations, appreciating they are of an interim and tentative kind.

A related point is that the provision of a lecture theatre in the new College if used effectively requires a lively and interesting library nearby and would ensure its active use.

Recommendations

A. Stock:

1. *Books:* (a) The historical collection to be maintained and added to; this is essential, as only our College is in a position to do this effectively; (b) all other existing books to be assessed and out-of-date and irrelevant works to be removed; currently, there is much 'dead wood' in the library. Those of potential historical value to be kept in closed access stacks; (c) a small number of current works to be maintained and added to as appropriate.

In principle, books would be for reference only, and be lent only at the discretion of the librarian.

2. *Journals:* Some ninety journals are taken currently, two-thirds by exchange with the *British Journal of Psychiatry* (and thus cost the production value of the latter); some are of no great value or interest. These journals should be reviewed and the number probably reduced. The choice will depend upon the quality of the journal, its availability elsewhere and value in providing bibliographic material. Less valued journals could be disposed of regularly to the National Lending Library, Boston Spa, Yorks.

Only a small number of journals would be bound, depending on their importance for historical reasons or for the availability of a complete set (e.g. *British Journal of Psychiatry, Psychological Medicine*).

As a photocopying service would be provided at cost, journals would not be lent and the complete range of journals would always be available for references.

3. *Specialized Bibliographic Services:* The College already takes *Excerpta Medica (Psychiatry)*, and this should continue. To begin with, the monthly *Index Medicus* and the *Cumulative Index Medicus* should be taken forthwith (approximate price £200 per year).

When funds are available, the following should be acquired:

Index Catalogue of the Library of the Surgeon General Office, U.S.A. Army
- (a) 1880–95
- (b) 1896–1916
- (c) 1918–32

Quarterly Cumulative Index Medicus (1927–56)
Current list of Medical Literature (1957–9)
Cumulative Index Medicus (1960–74)

Some of the above might be obtained by donation from psychiatric hospitals. These sources give access to a very wide range of published books and journals which are mostly available within the national network.

B. Services:

Effective use of a library depends on the skills and expertise of a professional librarian. Specific services could be expected to include the following:

1. *Bibliographic Services:* This could range from a few references to a comprehensive bibliography; e.g. the R.C.O.G. Library provides about 120 detailed reference lists a year, the B.M.A. 1,200, the R.C.G.P. 390.

2. *Library Bulletins:* Regular bulletins could be invaluable to inform members of the library's activities and facilities. Other possibilities include special bibliographies devoted to specific topics on either a regular or an occasional basis.

3. *College Archives:* College publications, reports and memoranda should be collected and indexed. An attempt should be made to collect systematically all such material produced over the past decades and to build up a College archives. Further, senior members of the College may, either in writing or on tape give accounts of historical developments and these should be preserved.

4. *Educational needs:* The library can provide back-up support in meeting the educational needs of College members, particularly the Clinical Tutors.

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Possibilities include the collection of photostats of the College's recommended reading lists and collection of audio-visual aids, such as video-tapes, tape-slides and films or at least collection of information about all audio-visual aids.

5. *Research:* In addition to providing a reference service to research workers, the library could maintain a list of current research projects and of research workers.

6. *Photocopying:* As the library is a reference one, photocopying is essential.

7. *General:* The librarian's expertise would be available to advise readers on alternative sources of information, and on such matters as forming personal files, and constructing bibliographies.

C. Staffing:

The appointment of a full-time professional librarian is essential if the library is to develop into the viable and useful unit we envisage. The appointment is of high priority to deal with the backlog of work (cataloguing of books, their assessment and that of journals) and to develop new facilities. In addition, a full-time secretary would be required. Initially a further helper would be useful to deal with the setting up of the library in its new quarters, perhaps for a period of 6 to 12 months. But a basic staff of one professional librarian and a secretary would be able to provide many of the services we have listed.

D. Current costs (30 per cent inflation rate):

1. *Annual Expenditure:* Salaries: £5,000 a year (for librarian and secretary). Journals: £1,000 a year. Binding: £200 a year. Books: £500 to £1,000 a year depending on addition of historical volumes. Sundries: £300 a year. Thus annual running costs would be in the region of £8,000 to £10,000 a year and would have to come from College income.

2. *Capital Outlay:* A sum of £6,000 would be needed to provide library facilities and to purchase back volumes needed for bibliographic work. For this, block grants might be available from the Nuffield Trust, the Wellcome Trust or from drug companies.

E. Alternatives:

Finally, we feel that if it is not possible to develop the library along some such lines, it might as well be disbanded, apart from the historical section (which should be kept alive and expanded as described above) and the College archives, and given to the lending library of the British Library where it will be nationally available or to some such institution which would be prepared to look after it, and, at a cost, make it available to members of the College.

In conclusion we would express our thanks to the librarians of other libraries in London with whom we have had useful discussions and in particular are grateful to Miss Helen Marshall of the Institute of Psychiatry, and Miss Fiona Mckey Picken of St. George's Hospital Medical School, London, S.W.1.

THOMAS BEWLEY, BERNARD HEINE.

PSYCHOTHERAPY SPECIALIST SECTION

The Psychotherapy Section is holding an Open Meeting on Wednesday, 8 October, at 8.15 p.m. in the West Hall, Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, London, W.1, at which Dr. J. Kahn will speak on: 'Job's Cure: An Experience of Group Psychotherapy.'

A CORRECTION

It is regretted that in the list of new Fellows published in the September issue (p. 4), the initials of Dr. M. S. Perinpanayagam were wrongly spelt.

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