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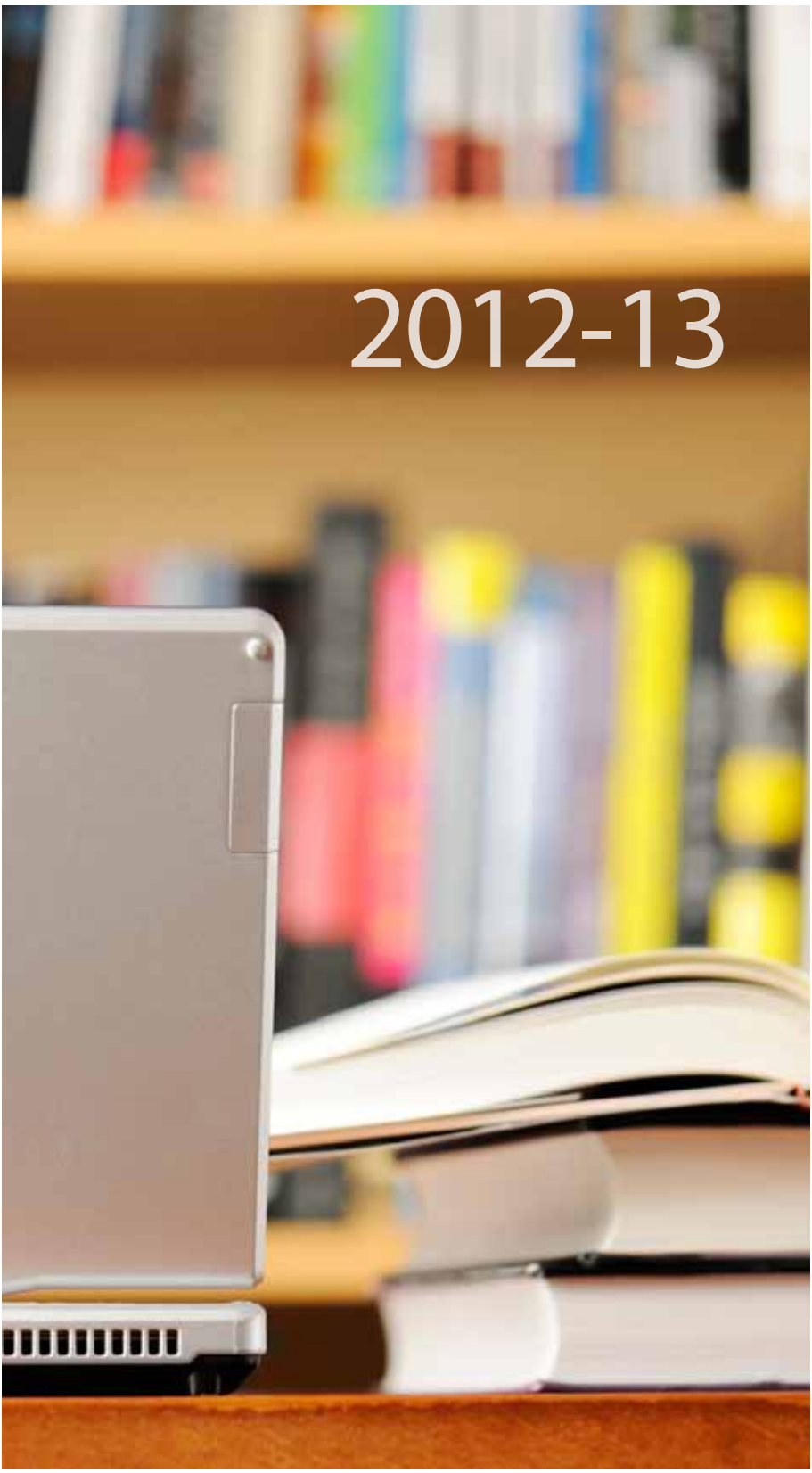
Barrington Library Annual Report



Sally Wilkinson
Head of
Barrington Library

Introduction

Welcome to the Barrington Library Annual Report for 2012-13 and we hope you will find this a useful summary of our work during the last academic year. The year brought with it another period of change, which Barrington Library handled with professional expertise to ensure it continues to deliver the best possible service for its customers.

The Library has a commitment to providing high quality customer service and prides itself on listening to its customers' views and involving them every step of the way. This ensures that the Library provides services and resources that are pertinent to the research, teaching and learning needs of all our customers. We were, therefore, delighted to receive the accolade of two Student Led Teaching Awards from the CDS Cranfield Students' Association for the second successive year, namely for Best Campus Support Department and Best Campus Support Staff Member.

Improving the Management Structure

Barrington Library now forms part of the University's Library and Information Services Department. This will ensure that best practice is shared by libraries on both the Shrivenham and Cranfield campuses, and gives all Library staff an opportunity to benefit from a combined professional skills and knowledge base. The new structure also facilitates the acquisition and management of resources, and ensures the most efficient use of the Library's budget.

New Library Strategy

A new Library Strategy for 2013-2015 has been written by Library staff in consultation with Senior Officers of the University. The Strategy covers six themes:

- research, business and community support
- learning, teaching and development support
- content and collections
- customer experience – physical environment
- leadership and quality assurance
- staff development

Working in Partnership

Throughout the year the Barrington Library has been working in partnership with our academic colleagues and fellow information professionals alike. In August 2012 the Library hosted a week-long mentoring programme for two library staff members from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Accra, Ghana. Mary Arkorful, Head Librarian, and Sam Aaron Amoako, Systems Administrator/Webmaster spent an intensive week learning about many products, functions and facilities of the Library. The programme generated lots of ideas for Mary and Sam, many of which they intend to follow up upon their return to the KAIPTC Library in Ghana. Their enthusiasm to learn was plain to see and all Library staff involved were highly praised for their hospitality and professionalism.

To support the marketing of Cranfield Defence and Security (CDS) the Barrington Library provided a stand at the Forensic Student Open Day, supported by two staff members. The stand showcased the unique information resources the Library has to offer prospective students, along with the range of training and support services provided. The information provided by the Library was well received by the attendees.

The Barrington Library was delighted to be able to support the Annual Academic Conference held at the Cranfield campus in July of this year. In partnership with University Library colleagues the staff contributed three separate posters to the showcase session, highlighting the solutions offered by the Library to common academic challenges.

Supporting our Students

One of the common academic challenges faced by students is referencing correctly; the Library is regularly asked for help and support. In response, the Library has created a detailed guide to Harvard referencing, available to all staff and students via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Following positive feedback on the guide the Library is now creating an additional guide to referencing for those following the numeric format, based on the principles from the National Library of Medicine.

Following feedback from academic staff and students the Library became aware of a need to increase support for students during their dissertation phase of study. To support this requirement the Library offered drop-in clinics for dissertation help throughout the period. Students could meet with an Information Specialist to discuss any difficulties they may be having with regards to information and referencing for their dissertation. Following the success of the drop-in sessions the Library is now offering help clinics during the induction phase for all new students.

For those students studying overseas and unable to attend library training in person the Barrington Library provides support via digital means. The Information Specialists arranged library inductions for students studying the Explosives Ordnance Engineering Global in Australia utilising the Global

Classroom video conferencing facility. With the majority of information resources available electronically from anywhere in the world the Library is able to support distance learning students wherever they are located.

In response to studying on the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP), Barrington Library's Information Specialists have been working on improving virtual library support provision. Students can now access supplement training sessions and advice when off campus via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The intention is that as well as providing information, there is also a learner centred constructivist approach. This has been achieved through the provision of activities and discussion boards to facilitate active learning, collaboration and communication between peers which will move students toward creating online communities of practice.

For students with specific needs Jessica Goff, Information Specialist for Maths and Information Systems has taken on the additional role of Learning Support Officer (LSO) for CDS. The LSO acts as a point of contact and signposts students to the range of learning support services and facilities available throughout the University.

Research Networking Event

In May of this year the Barrington Library hosted its annual Research Networking Event, which provided a forum for academics and researchers to engage with some of the key issues concerning academic research today. The event was opened by Mark Richardson, Director of Research at CDS, and Sally Wilkinson, Head of Barrington Library. The event provided an opportunity for the Associate Dean of Learning &Teaching, Annie Maddison Warren, to discuss the Doctoral Training Centre following its expansion from a virtual to a physical Centre. Alongside this, the implications of the Finch Report and making publications Open Access was discussed and a number of stands were presented by Library staff from across the University on topics which included assessing research impact, research data management, keeping up-to-date, referencing and reference management databases, and the Research Infokit – Cranfield Libraries online support for researchers. All of the feedback received at the event was positive and the Library will be looking to host similar events in the future.

Alumni Membership

To support the University strategic priority of supporting our Alumni community, the Barrington Library has been actively advocating the free Alumni Library Online service. Following successful promotion throughout the year and at the graduation day in July the membership of the service increased by 77%. The range of library resources available to Alumni has also increased following successful negotiations with our information provider ProQuest to make their Udini database available to Cranfield Alumni.

Introducing Koha

As the information environment evolves and becomes ever more complex, the management systems used by Libraries must also develop. In order to meet future needs of information storage and access, the Barrington Library conducted a thorough review of its Library Management System (LMS). Customers may know the LMS as the catalogue, listing all of the print items available from the Library. For Library Staff this system also manages all of our customer accounts, purchasing and ordering of stock, and many more business processes. Following a robust procurement process the Barrington Library changed LMS to an open source platform known as Koha. Open source systems allow the Library a greater degree of control and flexibility when it comes to system developments and at a lower cost to the University compared to vendor-purchased systems. Above all it provides a number of benefits to the end-users compared with the previous system, improving the student experience.

Wireless Internet Access

Meeting customer needs is always a top priority for the Barrington Library. For a number of years the need for wireless access to the internet has been a priority for both Library staff and customers alike. The Library has been proactively working with all of the various service departments at the Defence Academy to try to reach a successful compromise between security and wireless internet access. In July of this year free wireless internet access was made available within the Barrington Library for staff and students alike, allowing customers to access electronic library resources and databases via their personal web-enabled devices.

Cranfield Student Association Awards

Awarded by the Cranfield Students Association, the Student Led Teaching Awards provide recognition to staff that go above and beyond their job to support students. Providing a positive student experience is a key priority for the Barrington Library, so it was with delight that the Library received the Best Campus Support Department award for the second year in a row. The Library was equally delighted when Mandy Smith, Information Specialist for Engineering was named Best Campus Support Staff, narrowly beating Iain McKay, Library Information Advisor and the previous award winner.

Changing the Learning Landscape (CLL)

In June 2013, Barrington Library took the opportunity to be involved in the Higher Education Academy CLL Consultancy at CDS. This assisted the Academic Liaison Team to learn more about best practice for online and blended learning – both from a pedagogical and technical viewpoint. Through this, further areas for improvement and approaches to increase student engagement with VLE tools have been identified and incorporated.

Enhancing the Research Profile

Throughout the year staff at the Barrington Library have been enhancing the research profile of Cranfield University and contributing to the profession by conducting and presenting research at conferences. In November Rachel Daniels, Deputy Head of Barrington Library, and Lauren Vizor, Senior Information Specialist, delivered a presentation on the Barrington Liaison Tool (BLT) at the Internet Librarian International conference in London. As reported in the last annual report, the BLT system records detailed information about academic research and teaching information needs from a Library perspective. There has been significant interest in the BLT from the library profession and following the presentation at Internet Librarian International the staff were invited to a seminar at the University of York Library to discuss the system further.

Within the research field of Library Assessment Selena Killick, Library Quality Officer at Barrington Library, has become an international expert. In September she was invited to speak at the University of Lund in Sweden on assessment of Library Strategy. The Association of Research Libraries sponsored her attendance at the Library Assessment Conference in Charlottesville, Virginia, where she delivered a paper on the performance measurement techniques used at Cranfield Libraries to ensure electronic journals meet the academic community's needs. In July she delivered two further papers at the International Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries, promoting the research capabilities of Cranfield University Libraries.

JISC Collection Consortia eBooks Pilot

Between October 2012 and July 2013, the Barrington Library and Cranfield Campus Libraries joined five other institutions to participate in the JISC Collections Consortia eBooks Pilot, a project exploring an effective model for the collaborative purchase of eBooks for libraries in higher education. With a focus on engineering titles, each member purchased a selection of eBooks from Dawson Books. A fee negotiated with publishers and paid by JISC during the pilot allowed all member libraries of the consortium to have access to eBooks ordered by individual libraries in the consortium.

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