

## A VERY SUITABLE JOB FOR A LADY

With many more students than 20 years ago, the University of Portsmouth had long since outgrown its old library building. The new extension, which was opened at the end of January by crime writer P.D. James (Baroness James of Holland Park), was universally welcomed by staff and students alike.



Universities, like their students, grow, and with this growth comes the need for new space. The then Portsmouth Polytechnic built the Frewen Library to amalgamate a large number of Faculty, School and Departmental libraries, naming the building after Admiral Frewen, whose wife officially opened it in 1980. At that time the Polytechnic had around 7,000 students, but with that number growing all the time, an extension was added in 1988, as part of the phased growth of a building that was initially planned to house much more than just the Polytechnic Library. Unfortunately the original development plans – which included a new Students' Union – were never completed, but by the beginning of the new millennium student numbers clearly dictated that a further expansion of the Frewen Library was necessary. This expansion fits into the ongoing programme of development by the University, development that has recently included the School of Professionals Complementary to Dentistry, the James Watson Hall and now includes the University Library extension, a splendid addition to the University's estate.

### History

The main library building was opened in 1977 in Ravelin Park. Designed by the architectural partnership Ahrends, Burton & Koralek (also responsible for another local building, St. Mary's Hospital, in Newport on the Isle of Wight). In 1988 an extension was added as Phase 2 and four years later the Polytechnic was awarded University status.

### Phase 3

The design of Phase 3 was put out to a Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) design competition and eventually the firm of Peynore and Prasad, an architectural practice based in London, were selected from a short list of five. The brief was to design a building which would fit in with the distinctive architecture of Phase 1 and Phase 2 expanding the building in a coherent way so that:

- the three-floor subject approach – something very much valued at Portsmouth – could continue in the enlarged building
- the zoning of activities would control noise
- it provided for an enlarged entrance area with improved reception and security areas
- the library could continue to operate with minimal disruption while the work was carried out

The extension was also designed to form an attractive façade on the approach roads to the University Library, such as the view along Burnaby Road. From the park side, 'battered' walls and a zig-zagged shape reminiscent of a ravelin, recall the Napoleonic fortifications that once stood on the eponymous park.

The extension was designed to achieve a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating of 'very good', by minimising energy use and the building's environmental impact. Ways of achieving these laudable aims included using materials that will help to maintain stable internal temperatures without the need for air conditioning, collecting rainwater to flush the toilets and ensuring that the design maximises the opportunities for using daylight whilst minimising solar gain. User comfort was paramount in the design to ensure that the building is a healthy place to study and work, with none of the 'stuffiness' so often associated with libraries.

Despite everyone's best efforts, construction delays meant the original plan to open at the beginning of the academic year 2006/07 wasn't achieved. Finally, just before Christmas the building was handed over and the New Year saw the tremendous labour of moving large quantities of stock into the extension, with students being able to use the new extension from the beginning of 2007. The £11 million cost was met entirely from the University's budget.

One change that perhaps hadn't been expected was the decision the University took to rename the library building. No longer the Frewen Library, the building would now be called simply the University Library. Formerly there had been a number of departmental libraries which required differentiation, but with the amalgamation of all but one such branch it was felt that it is more useful and more important to – in the words of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor John Craven – 'brand the University as a centre of learning and having a distinctive University Library visible to the city would be a major part of that'.

## Description

The extension has various features of note from the spacious atrium linking through to the older parts of the library, the double height second floor, the sedum roof on the single story pooled teaching space, and 'The Street' – a corridor running right through the building, with glass on both sides. With the completion of the extension, the University Library is now just under 10,000m<sup>2</sup>, providing a wide range of accommodation and facilities that will meet the needs of students and staff in the twenty-first century.

Entering the building from Cambridge Road plaza, the foyer leads to toilets, the library, a café, the computer suite and The Street. The computer suite houses some 180 computers and has help desk support for much of the day. This has been hugely popular with the students who had been feeling the lack of on-site computing facilities for much of the building process. The computer suite is about three times the size of the one previously offered by the library, its generous facilities being augmented by 62 computers elsewhere in the building: 29 machines offering database search facilities, 30 machines accessing the library's online catalogue and three assistive technology computers.

The Street leads through the building to Ravelin Park on the other side of the main entrance. Towards the end there is access to Foundation Direct and the pooled teaching space. Foundation Direct is one of the University's Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (funded by HEFCE) supporting students on Foundation degrees. It has a drop-in centre, office space and well-appointed seminar rooms. The pooled teaching space consists of eight classrooms of varying size kitted out with the standard University installation of projectors, PC, DVD players and visualisers.

Back in the foyer and going through into the library area itself, takes you past the reception desk, security gates and past the loans/returns desk and into the full height atrium giving a view of the library's different operational zones and making use of the natural light (with corresponding measures to protect against heat and glare). The atrium provides access to the photocopy room and short loan collection, the older part of the library and a lift and stairs to all floors of the new extension.

The first floor of the extension has been used to house the special collections formerly on the first floor (the European Documentation Centre, the Law Reference Collection, the Parliamentary Papers and the Statistics Collection).

The second floor is double the height of the first floor and gives the space a light and airy feel and has taken on the overflow of the second floor by housing the literature and history book stock. Both floors have study space around the outside edges and group work rooms overlooking the atrium. Initially, the plan was to make these freely available, but their popularity has proved so great that a booking scheme had to be introduced almost immediately to manage the demand.



## Opening

The official opening took place on 31 January 2007. P.D. James<sup>1</sup> – who holds an honorary doctorate from the University – was invited to do the honours and she made a speech that would warm the cockles of any librarian's heart. She particularly praised the heritage of the printed word and admitted... 'for me the library is at the heart of any institution of learning and particularly a university. Here we have assembled the wisdom of the past, the achievements of the present and our aspirations for the future'. Her speech was a robust defence of traditional library virtues.



In conjunction with the new building the library website [www.port.ac.uk/library](http://www.port.ac.uk/library) is undergoing a makeover to better complement the improved building. This will make accessing the growing range of electronic resources in our virtual library feel as welcoming as the library's spacious and airy new physical entrance. Cramped and overly-busy web pages are being replaced with more space and less densely packed text and listings. The new library has also been promoted internally to staff and students with tours being offered, a brochure on the design of the extension, a history of the library and its collections and services produced by two members of library staff in conjunction with the marketing department, presentations in various faculty venues as well as write-ups in other University publications and newsletters.

## Future

Will there ever be a Phase 4? It's difficult to say at this stage, not least because the current pooled teaching spaces have been designed so that they can easily be adapted for library use. Also, with the continuing growth in electronic resources, it is debatable just how much need there is for further physical space. But, although it seems certain that the trend towards electronic books and journals will slow down the rate of academic libraries' growth, many writers are convinced that academic libraries will remain collections of printed volumes for many years to come. Baroness James will no doubt be very pleased about that.

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<sup>1</sup> Phyllis Dorothy James – Baroness James of Holland Park – was born on 3 August 1920, publishing her first novel, *Cover Her Face* (featuring her creation Inspector Adam Dalgleish) in 1962. Baroness James is the author of more than 20 books, a number of which have been adapted for television or film, most recently the 2006 feature film, *Children of Men*, starring Clive Owen and Sir Michael Caine. In 2000 she celebrated her eightieth birthday and published her autobiography, *Time to Be in Earnest*. Baroness James has been a magistrate, a governor of the British Broadcasting Corporation (1988–1993) and Chair of the Literary Advisory Panels of both the Arts Council (1988–1992) and the British Council (1988–1993). She was awarded an OBE in 1983 and created a life peer in 1991. Baroness James' website can be found at [www.randomhouse.com/features/pdames/index.html](http://www.randomhouse.com/features/pdames/index.html)



# INSTITUTIONAL ARCHIVES

**In August 2004 the library put forward a proposal to the IT Committee to set up a pilot project to establish an institutional archive of the University's published papers using the GNU eprints software developed by Southampton University. These archives or Open Access Repositories hold full-text digital copies of peer-reviewed research articles and eprints in the form of post-prints or pre-prints, enabling them to be searched and viewed for free from anywhere in the world via the internet.**

Such open access would benefit academics by enabling the rapid worldwide dissemination of research papers so they could be more widely read and used and improve the academics' visibility and professional standing. The research process would also be aided by giving more people access to research more quickly and easily than before.

For institutions, these archives could act as a management information tool providing a central depository of its academic research output. This in turn would allow it to raise the profile of its researchers and the research of the institution as a whole.

Institutional archives could also be used as a Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) management tool, as once publications have been collected in it there is no need for any additional RAE gathering exercise and the repository could be searched directly, and any copies needing to be provided could be easily accessed.

From the University of Portsmouth's point of view, once the IT Committee had given the go ahead for the pilot, letters were sent out to a number of academics selected from the R&D database as having papers suitable for loading into the archive. They were asked to supply pre-prints or reprints of their published work in an electronic format so that these could then be converted to PDF format and made available through web pages that allow searching by author/keyword and browsing by University Department and/or year. A second harvest was then carried out. Currently take up has been slow and there are at present only 28 articles in the archive.

The archive can be viewed at <http://eprints.libr.port.ac.uk/>

Anyone wishing to take part in the project should contact Paul Egan at [paul.egan@port.ac.uk](mailto:paul.egan@port.ac.uk)

## LIAISON MEETING WITH NHS LIBRARIANS

**Many of our students on health-related courses go out to NHS hospitals for placements. These placements cover quite a wide geographical area – from Bath to Worthing to Haywards Heath as well as our local hospitals in Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight.**

Although we have a lot of electronic resources available for students nowadays, it is helpful for them to have access to libraries whilst on placement – either to get access to computers, to have somewhere to study or to use books and journals. In order to help support our colleagues working in NHS libraries we held a liaison day in Purple Door in May. All placements were contacted and a number of them sent a member of staff to the event. In addition, the librarian from the Social Care Library in Winchester attended to find out about supporting social work students on placement.

The day aimed to show NHS colleagues what is available to students from our website and via services such as the Distance Learners Service (which services distance learning students, part-time students and those students who are on placements of ten weeks or more).

Mark Cassidy from the Centre for Radiography demonstrated the website that his department has created for placements and everyone agreed that it was a model of good practice which could be extended to other courses with hospital placements.

We also had short taster sessions from Foundation Direct and ASK as well as a demonstration of a new referencing website on which a team from the library (and beyond) are currently working. We finished with a discussion of common concerns and a number of suggestions were made which we can hopefully carry forward.

If you would like any information about placement support for students please contact either Andy Barrow (ext. 3236) or Roisin Gwyer (ext. 3221).

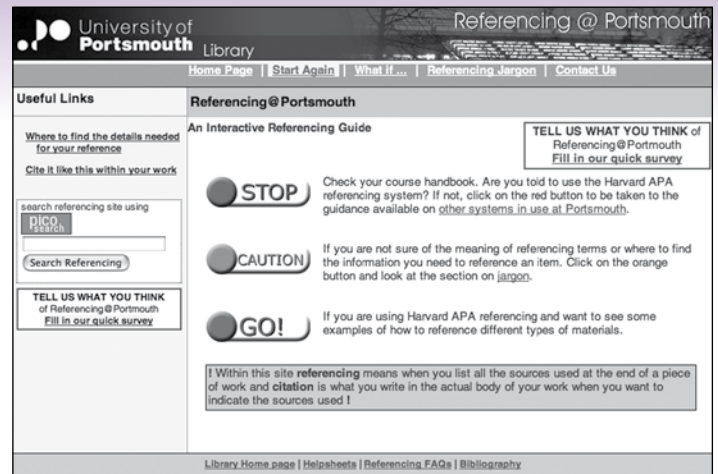
(Editor's note: Sue Stevenson, then an NHS Librarian at Winchester and visible in the middle of the right-hand side of the picture, is now the Assistant Faculty Librarian for the Science Faculty. For more details of the new Academic Liaison arrangement, please see the separate insert which accompanies this issue of Harvest.)



# REFERENCING WEBSITE

Correct referencing of cited materials is increasingly a source of anxiety for students at all levels, so during the summer of 2006 library staff developed an interactive website to help students reference all manner of materials (books, book chapters, journal articles, websites etc.) correctly.

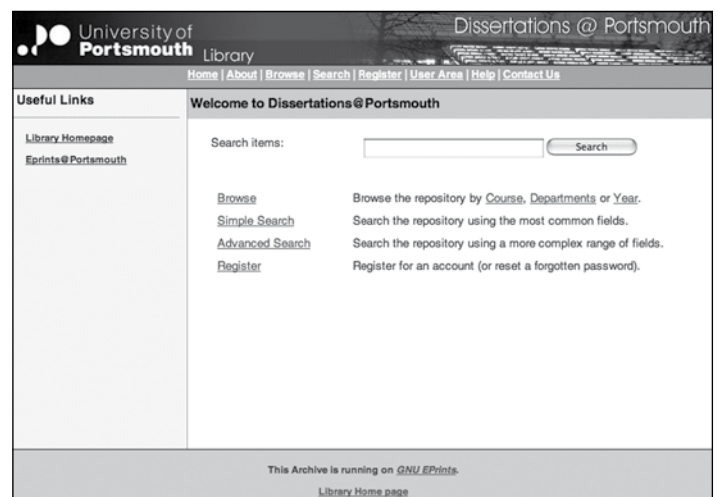
The website's URL is [www.referencing.port.ac.uk](http://www.referencing.port.ac.uk). Have a look at the website and encourage your students to use it. At the moment the website only covers one of the two University-approved referencing formats, Harvard format – APA style, but we hope shortly to add Vancouver format – beloved of biomedical scientists, pharmacists and the like – to the website.



# DISSERTATIONS ONLINE

In addition to establishing an institutional repository, the University Library has been developing a database for storing dissertations online – <http://dissertations.port.ac.uk>. As you can see from the screenshot, a functional interface is provided to this repository, with the ability to browse the collection or use a simple search or advanced search as appropriate. If you would like to put some good examples of your Department or School's dissertations into this repository, please contact Paul Egan (ext. 3248 or [paul.egan@port.ac.uk](mailto:paul.egan@port.ac.uk)) in the first instance. Dissertations that you would like put into the repository must be provided in electronic form, either as a Word document or an Adobe Acrobat PDF file.

The dissertation repository is maintained using the GNU Reprints open repository software, a freely distributable repository system available from [www.eprints.org/software](http://www.eprints.org/software). This software is also used to power the institutional repository.



# A VISIT TO NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

I recently visited my son, who works for the New York Red Bulls (allegedly the Manchester United of US soccer teams) and whilst in Manhattan took the opportunity of visiting one of the world's great libraries, the New York Public Library (NYPL), riding there for the only time I've ever done so, in a New York Yellow Cab. Another of life's ambitions ticked off. Now, any number of films contain sequences shot inside libraries, but the NYPL features on celluloid more than most: Ivan Reitman's *Ghostbusters* (1984) features a ghost in the library's Cataloguing Section, Terry Gilliam's dystopian *Twelve Monkeys* (1995) briefly features the building's distinctive façade with its two stone lion guardians, and a substantial amount of Roland Emmerich's recent climate change disaster movie *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004) is shot in and around the NYPL, the beleaguered protagonists burning books to keep warm, though thoughtfully sparing the library's 42 line Gutenberg Bible.

The NYPL – which only serves three of New York's five boroughs (Queens and Brooklyn have their own public library systems) – has an interesting history. In the late nineteenth century, New York City had two public reference libraries: the Astor Library, founded by a bequest of John Astor (1763–1848), which had opened in 1849, and the Lenox Library, founded by James Lenox (1800–1880).

Then, in 1886, Samuel Tilden (1814–1886) made a bequest of \$2.4 million to establish a public library in New York City. This bequest enabled the Astor and Lenox libraries (both cash poor) to be amalgamated to form the NYPL, which came into being as a private foundation on May 23, 1895.

NYPL is well worth visiting, and if you are ever in New York I can commend it to you as a place to visit.

**Andy Barrow, Faculty Librarian – Science**



Picture by Wally Gobetz