

YOUR OTHER LIBRARY SERVICE – PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL LIBRARY SERVICE



Do you need a break from your studies or preparing that series of lectures? Do you want to read the latest best-seller, watch a DVD or listen to some music? Do you need to check some information on the web or do some photocopying? Do you want to give your children something fun to do during school holidays? If you answered 'yes!' to any of the above, then Portsmouth City Libraries have something to offer you.

There are libraries all over the city, from Paulsgrove to Southsea, not forgetting Central Library, close to many University halls of residence. It is free to join; all we ask is for you to fill in a membership form and provide proof of address and signature and you can start borrowing straight away. Books, including talking books on CD and tape, are free to borrow and you may take up to 12 items for four weeks at a time. Don't forget to return them by the due date (or renew them) as we do charge for all items returned late.

All libraries have a range of novels from the latest Dan Brown and other suspense stories, chick lit, sci-fi, as well as the classics and books on tape or CD. For those whose first language isn't English, we also have books in many other languages including Arabic,

Bengali, Chinese, Farsi, Kurdish, Vietnamese as well as European languages. We also have a large range of non-fiction covering most fields of interest, to support your studies or a hobby.

If you like to share your interest in reading we run a number of reading groups, which hold lively debates on the 'book of the month'. You may also get the chance to meet your favourite author – look out for posters in the libraries and on the library website.

If you like to relax with music or a film, a visit to your local library is recommended. Music CDs can be borrowed for four weeks for as little as £1 and you can borrow from our wide collection of DVDs and videos for a charge of £1-£3 (one week loan). You can check the availability of books, music and videos by viewing the library catalogue at www.portsmouth.gov.uk and then click on 'book it' on the home page.

The Central Library has a large reference and information service and our major specialisms include the local area, naval history, genealogy, patents, law, business and careers information. An increasing number of electronic or online resources are becoming available, such as the Oxford University Press premium reference collection of over 100 reference books, which will be available to you on your own computer though the library website.

The friendly, well-trained staff will be happy to help you find the books and information you require. The Central Library has areas designated for quiet study, including half a dozen individual carrels, ideal for exam revision.

All Portsmouth libraries have computers with internet access which can be booked for half-hour sessions that can often be extended at quieter times. Bookable computer classes and a drop-in session for visually impaired library users are offered. Internet access is free with a small charge for black and white and colour printing.

Libraries have something to offer children from babies to teenagers. For babies there are board and picture books and for older children there are novels to stimulate their imagination. Children under 16 don't pay fines on books and can reserve them for free. The library service also runs a number of children's activities, including 'bounce and rhyme' sessions for babies, story times for toddlers, and reading and craft activities during school holidays.

Come along and visit us or check our website for more information www.portsmouth.gov.uk – click on 'learning' and then on 'libraries'.

**Jackie Painting Central Library Manager
Portsmouth City Libraries**

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University of
Portsmouth

Harvest

UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY
NEWSLETTER

UP SHE GOES

Since June 2005 contractors have been building a new extension to the Frewen Library.

When complete the extended building will have nearly 1,000 seats, an enlarged IT suite, ten new seminar rooms for general teaching, accommodation for Foundation Direct and the top two floors will have reader spaces including six group study rooms and book stacks.

From early February 2006, about one-third of the ground floor became part of the building site, so that the entrance/foyer/coffee shop/issue desk/toilet block can be remodelled. This is perhaps going to be the most difficult part of the project for the library staff to manage. Issue Desk staff and operations will be relocated to various points within the building, a new temporary entrance will be created and a temporary arrangement made for toilets. Inevitably there will be some seating and a few computers that are no longer available, but overall library staff aim to maintain all services, including all opening hours and to ensure that all stock remains accessible. Students are being alerted to additional study spaces around the campus, in Portland and in the student's centre, in case the noise becomes too disruptive to their work.

The project remains on schedule for completion in October 2006. Library staff continue to work with the contractor, with the University estates department and with the architect to complete designs on details such as furniture, desks and counters. The enlarged IT area is also subject to discussion with IS staff on final detail, much of which



raises fundamental issues about the nature of student computing provision in the future.

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(Go to the Frewen Library's homepage – www.port.ac.uk/library – and there you will find a link to a webcam pointing at the fevered activity in Ravelin Park.)

GOOD INVESTMENTS

The review of the University's Investors in People award last year seemed a good time to ask ourselves how we are investing in this most valuable asset, our library staff.

As well as being trained for their individual jobs, all library staff are encouraged to undertake wider development to enhance their role as part of a university support service. Each new member of staff is given an induction pack that covers aspects of customer care and health and safety, as well as general employment and library information. It also includes the Staff Development Policy – a paper on Staff Development and Training (SDT) provision covering internal and external, pre and post-professional opportunities – and a Professional Development Diary (PDD).

The PDD is a personal, reflective record of SDT events attended, which also acts as an application form for permission to attend and input data for our recently created staff development database. All staff are in the University annual appraisal scheme and these records are intended to assist individuals and their appraisers in recalling the development undertaken during the past year.



After induction there is a post-induction programme on offer each year, which is arranged by the Staff Development Group (SDG). This group is representative of all library staff and meets three times a year. They organise workshops on customer care topics such as enquiry handling, cultural awareness and managing behaviour, IT training, and other events such as the annual development day in the summer vacation. In 2005 we examined the implications of the new extension to be opened this October.

During term-time, short informal 'coffee morning' or 'afternoon tea' sessions are held each week where staff can cascade down from conferences and introduce new databases or changes in procedure. Often other University staff come to explain their work and the role of their department.

At a more strategic level, the University Librarian arranges 'awaydays' every two or three years to give all staff the opportunity to discuss future plans and service improvements set in the context of national HE developments.

Of course, not all SDT can take place internally and professional staff are expected to attend and contribute to relevant events held nationally (and internationally). Pre-professional staff are encouraged to improve their career prospects by taking external qualifications and last summer, with the support of the Faculty of Technology, library staff had the opportunity to gain the European Computer Driving Licence, in line with public library staff.

Our staff training is a heavy ongoing investment, but one which we feel pays dividends and is worth continual review and development to ensure delivery of the library service that the University deserves.

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SOME THOUGHTS ON GOOGLE SCHOLAR™

Ask anyone who searches the World Wide Web which search engine they use and the chances are that they will reply, 'I use Google, don't you?' And indeed I do. Google is wonderful for answering quick questions. While watching the television with my son's laptop on my knee (the price he pays for leaving it lying around) and riding my neighbour's wireless broadband (the price he pays for not securing his network) I can quickly answer those irritating little questions that arise during an evening's viewing. But, because of the anarchic nature of the web, Google is limited for academic work. Or rather it was.

In November 2004 Google launched a 'scholarly' version of their popular search engine, differentiating it by calling it Google Scholar. This search engine can be found at <http://scholar.google.com> (no, this is not a misprint, there's no www in Google Scholar's URL).

In Google's own words, 'Google Scholar provides a simple way to broadly search for scholarly literature. From one place, you can search across many disciplines and sources: peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, abstracts and articles, from academic publishers, professional societies, preprint repositories, universities and other scholarly organisations'.

Google Scholar is still only a beta test version, which means that the final version of Google Scholar (when it appears) may be very different from the version we see today. Scholar has been a long time in beta testing – have Google possibly lost interest in their scholarly child?

Should you or your students use Google Scholar? Of course you should, but at the right time. And here I must confess my preference, which

would always be to use a bibliographic database such as PSYCHINFO or MEDLINE initially. As a Yorkshireman in a well-resourced institution like ours, I would rather see the aforementioned bibliographic databases used first and Google Scholar used as a supplementary tool.

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FROM OUT OF THE ARCHIVES

Higher education in Portsmouth had its beginnings in the *Portsmouth and Gosport School of Science and Art*, a largely privately funded institution that began life in 1870. Gosport dropped out in 1877 and in 1894 the science and technology courses were municipalised into the *Borough of Portsmouth Municipal Technical Institute*. This became *Portsmouth Municipal College* in 1908, then *Portsmouth College of Technology* in 1953, *Portsmouth Polytechnic* in 1969 and *University of Portsmouth* in 1992.

The University library has no brief to be an official archive, but a fair amount of interesting material dating back to the earliest times of our three constituent parts has found its way here. Our earliest records are two minute books of the *Portsmouth and Gosport School of Science and Art*, covering the period 24 Nov 1870 to 1907, almost the entire period of its existence. Almost – for although the second of the two books is beautifully embossed 'Minute Book 2' on its front cover, at the beginning of the earlier book there is, in manuscript, 'Minute Book 2' – and the earliest minute therein refers to previous ones. These can only have taken up a page or two, but where they are, or were, is yet to be established.

There is an almost complete run of prospectuses from 1913/14 to date – interesting to compare the earliest ones which just presented basic information in a very dull way with those of today, aimed at selling the institution for all its worth. There is also a good range of student

magazines and newspapers from 1911, the very first complaining in its editorial of student apathy.

The managers of the institution have, since the end of the College of Technology era, issued a variety of magazines and newsletters to improve communication. The earliest of these, *Pharos*, (late 1960s/early 1970s) is fun because it published mug-shots of new members of staff, a few of whom are still around or who were in recent memory.

In terms of original documents, the archive of the College of Education is the richest. Most valuable of all is the original logbook, which confirms that the Day Training College (its name in the beginning) began operations in 1907. Its original premises appear to have been a corrugated iron hut in the grounds of Francis Avenue School! The earliest of its student magazines dates from 1910 and there is a large collection of photographs, the earliest dating from 1909, including pictures of the entire college personnel (staff and students) for most years from 1928 to 1959. Nine large folio volumes contain details of students from the 1909 to the 1935 entrants, wherein yours truly found details of his very first infant school teacher.

Lists exist of all the material in the archive and anyone is welcome to make what use they can of it.

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JOHN POWELL AN APPRECIATION

The Frewen Library recently received a bequest of books from the family of John Powell, Principal of Portsmouth College of Art from 1967 to 1974, who died in October 2003. He was born in Nottingham in 1911. After a six-year apprenticeship to a lithographer, he entered Nottingham School of Art in 1932 and in his first year was awarded a prize for 'Landscape Water Colour'. He married Freda, another prize-winning graduate of the college. From 1935 to 1939, Powell attended the Royal College of Art, where he was taught by Gilbert Spencer (brother of Stanley).

During the war he was an army instructor, after which he took up his first teaching post at Sutton and Cheam School of Art. Between 1951 and 1958, he taught at Manchester Regional College of Art, becoming Head of Intermediate Studies in 1955. His pupils included the artists Leonard McComb and Garth Evans, the art educator Rod Taylor, blues musician John Mayall and Cephas Howard (later of the Temperance Seven). In 1958 he returned to Nottingham School of Art, as Head of Fine Art until 1967.

John Powell exhibited his work with a number of groups including the Royal Academy and the Society of Marine Artists. After retiring, he had one-man shows in Farnham, Bosham and Chichester. He depicted landscapes, figures and still lifes, in oils, watercolours, pastels and etching. His post-impressionistic handling of colour is reminiscent of Bonnard. Besides his trademark beret and bicycle, he is remembered as an inspiring art educator.

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MOVING FROM FE TO HE – SOME REFLECTIONS

Many of our UK students now come to us from sixth form colleges and general FE colleges, rather than from sixth forms attached to schools. Their experience of academic libraries will influence their approach to us. The differences are summarised here:

Their library probably won't have been called a library – learning resources centre or (early) learning centre (some cynics can't resist the bracketed addition, though it's not official) – being favoured names. Perhaps they will become discovery centres like the public libraries in Hampshire: www.hants.gov.uk/rh/discoverycentres

The library is unlikely to have been a separate building. It may not have been purpose-built, but adapted from something else (a hall, for example, or a suite of classrooms). Depending on the size of the college and the principal's attitude, library staff could range from a one-person band, through to a significant team of librarians and para-professionals in the larger FE colleges, some of which even have multiple sites. As FE and especially sixth form colleges go dead in the summer, more of the posts will be term-time only and there may be formal closed periods over the summer vacation.

FE students are in a transitional period. They have only just left school and can still exhibit those challenging tendencies they learnt at school, in the perennial battle with authority. Some students may lack motivation or ability, which may lead to confrontation with library staff, therefore maintaining order is an essential part of their job.

There is another category of FE student, namely the Access student. These are adults returning to education, who did not obtain HE-entry qualifications after school. They can be of variable ability, but some of them are admirable in the way they fit study, income-generating work and caring for a family into their timetables.

Budgets are rarely adequate and sometimes poor. Because of the smaller student body, even if the per capita funding is average or above for the sector, there are no funds to purchase expensive electronic subscription services and those that are funded have to be of wide interest. Books and to a much lesser extent (cheaper) journals, make up the core, with CD-ROM in decline, though some teachers still cherish old favourites. Your FE student will never have seen so many books in one place on one subject as they will when they get to university.

Teachers delivering an A level programme are under a lot of pressure (recruitment, retention and achievement are their watchwords), while cramming a large syllabus into five terms. There is not a lot of time to



fit in library-oriented work, even though some teachers recognise the benefits of wide reading. Vocational courses at FE level probably provide more scope for library-centred work, but achieve less progression onto HE level.

This may be a slightly subjective view; an earlier edition of this piece was more cynical. Our FE brethren actually deserve our sympathy and any support we can give them. Is there an outreach role there for someone?

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MY BRILLIANT CAREER...



I was interviewed and after managing to put a trolley of books in Dewey order, I got the job. My job at the Frewen was perfect, the working hours were flexible, meaning I could fit work around my timetable, the staff were friendly and the pay was very attractive. I would have the holidays off and go back to the same floor at term-time.

When I graduated in Summer 2004 I started to apply for my library traineeship. After temping for a month back in Hastings I was offered a place at the National Art Library (NAL) at the Victoria and Albert museum so I upped sticks and moved to London. Working at the NAL was an amazing experience. To be able to wander around the museum in my lunch hour discovering its rich and diverse collections was a unique experience. The NAL also had some incredible special collection items including some of Da Vinci's notebooks, Dickens' manuscripts, artist's books, many first editions and other rare and unique books.

The traineeship was for a year and when that was up I started job-hunting again. I found the perfect job at King's College, London, at their

Foyle Special Collections Library. I had already worked with special collections at the NAL so the job of information assistant seemed well suited. I have been there for three months now and am enjoying being one of a team of five, meaning I have a very diverse role. At the moment I am cataloguing a collection of books of which many have inscriptions from the author, including TS Eliot, Iris Murdoch, Marc Chagall and Somerset Maugham to name a few.

I have now decided to pursue a career in archives, realising that my interests mainly lie in the preservation of documents and collections of historical importance. It seems I have come full circle in my career choice as my first work experience was at an archives in 1996. At the moment I am concentrating on my application to study for an MA in English Literature, so it's all quite a long-term plan!

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