November 2011
Issue 37

The Swimming Pool

Newsletter for the SWIMS Network

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Swimming Pool: the second wave

It is now 6 months since we introduced some changes to Swimming Pool newsletter, in response to the results of a survey of SWIMS network members, and we are keen to know what you think about it now, and whether you have any further ideas for improvement.

Please take a couple of minutes to complete the survey at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/secondwave by Friday 11 November.

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By Rebecca Dorsett (Senior Library Assistant, RUH Bath)

The British Library Document Supply Service (BLDSS) has undergone radical improvement over the past two years. They admitted that the service itself has gone largely unchanged in the library’s 50 years and that the service needed to change to suit new user expectations. This roadshow event was organised for free by the BL to present the new service and to explain how this will affect library procedures. There was a lot of interesting information from the BL including a demonstration of the new ordering process and future ideas and plans for the service. I have summarised some of the key changes that will mainly affect the NHS library services below but plenty more can be found online, a link to which I have included at the end.

They firstly discussed some of the issues that have been affecting document supply this year, including the asbestos problems and copyright restrictions placed on the service. The new storage facility at Boston Spa will now combat the asbestos issues and has created a new space for easier location of documents.

All aspects of the service have and will continue to change until February 2012 from operational procedures to the end user ordering interface. On the operations side of things the BL have had to cope with staff budget cuts and losses and so have improved communications and ordering systems with this in mind as there will be less staff available for customer service enquiries. There has also been a lot of investment in new technologies to improve quality and speed of the service.

**New Benefits**

- Standard delivery times will be reduced from 5 days to 4.
- More material will now be available to download immediately
- Copies will now be digitally stored (not poorer quality scanned images)
- Copies will now be available in colour as standard.
- ARTemail codes have now been reduced from 125 to 25!
- Plain English e-mails will now also be sent out as well as ARTemail notifications.

*Above:* One of the new scanners at the BL producing high quality copies, up to 2400 pages per hour and also turning pages itself!

**Interface**

The new interface will be fully operational and available to use by Library Staff by February 2012. The new interface and system will be a separate part of the BL website so as to distinguish it as a separate service, not as part of the integrated catalogue. The new system has been compared to other online shopping experiences and is extremely similar in design. It is a 4 step ordering process that allows the user to view item availability, choose format, quality, delivery information and speed and more.
Users will get more control over their BL account online, again similar to an online shopping account. You will be able to view order status, personalise account options such as e-mail notifications and check if ordered articles have been downloaded. Users will need to sign up for this new service, but it will be a quick and simple online process, and the service is free to sign up to.

**Library procedures**

The BL did stress the fact that if they wish, library services do not need to change their current procedures if they did not wish. Whilst this new online ordering process is available, libraries do not have to order this way if they do not want to. Some services use other systems such as TALIS or send them by e-mail through WinCHILL. This can still be carried out, but these library services would have the option of being able to sign up to the service and viewing their order information online, instead of solely relying on notifications. Again however this is an extra option, if library services did not want to change their current system they could carry on as normal and simply benefit from the other changes.

The planned implementation period for these changes is outlined below:

**Nov/Dec 2011**

- 4 day standard delivery period begins
- colour documents become standard
- Plain English emails begin
- Reduced ARTemail codes begin

**Dec 2011**

- Full functionality of the administrative tools become available online

**February 2012**

- Full deployment of the BLDSS and launch of the new interface.

More information can be found on the BLDSS website below. It includes a particularly interesting blog of the changes being made, which also addresses some of the questions I’m sure many library staff will ask. There is also an online demonstration facility which is expected to go live in November.

http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/atyourdesk/docsupply/help/bldss/index.html

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**SWIMS Network inter-library loan and document supply standards: call for volunteers**

Would you like to contribute to the review of the SWIMS Network Standards for Inter-Library Document Supply?

These standards (at www.swimsnetwork.nhs.uk/policies) were last reviewed in April 2009, and we need to check whether they adequately cover ILL operations in 2011!

The work won’t be onerous or time consuming – a read through the standards document, a couple of conference calls to discuss suggestions and consultation feedback – but your input will be invaluable, whether you are a library assistant or librarian, involved or interested in ILLs.

The work will be complete within about 6 weeks, so this is just a short term commitment.

If you are willing to help, please e-mail helen.bingham@nesc.nhs.uk by 11 November.
How the team evolved.

Musgrove Park Hospital (TAU) has had a library service since 1967 when the Medical Director, Dr Webb and the local Nuffield Foundation provided money to buy a few books and journals held in an office next to the consultants’ dining room. In 1970, following the publication of HM(70)23 (1), Dr Webb acquired financial backing from Somerset Health Authority, the Beecham Pharmaceutical Company and the Nuffield Foundation to build a small Postgraduate Centre, which included library accommodation and a .4 WTE librarian. The Nuffield Library in the Somerset Postgraduate Centre may have been born in the swinging 60’s but it successfully ignored the ethos of the decade and restricted its membership to medical staff only. It wasn’t until 1978 that a library for nurses was created using educational funding from the English National Board – this library was separately housed, stocked and staffed on the opposite side of the hospital site in the School of Nursing. The Medical Librarian role was a part-time, one person post for over 20 years and there were many similar posts in hospitals all over the country. To combat professional isolation, the one man band librarians began to form regional support groups and in 1979 an intrepid group from Devon and Cornwall (one of whom is still with us today) formed the South West England Health Service Libraries in Co-operation (SWEHSlinC). The Musgrove Park librarian joined this group in the early 80’s along with the Bristol, Gloucestershire and Bath librarians. SWEHSlinC joined forces with the WRLIN libraries from the Wessex region in 1996 and became the SWRLIN that we know and love today.

In the early 1990s medical student numbers were increasing and medical audit teams and research and development departments were being introduced into UK hospitals. As a result library usage at Musgrove Park increased; the part-time librarian post became full time. In 1994 the Calman Report (2) reorganised and increased specialist medical training and the extra funding accompanying it, financed both the medical library extension and a .4 WTE library assistant post. Library apartheid between doctors and nurses still existed - this continued until 1997 when nurse education completed its move out of the NHS and into higher education, taking the nurses’ library with it. In the same year HSG (97)47 (3) was published and stated all NHS Trusts and hospitals should have a library strategy which included provision for all professional groups. This finally persuaded the Musgrove Park executive board to invest a little of its own money in the ‘Medical Library’ to enable it to go multidisciplinary. More allied health and nurse-friendly stock was purchased and the staffing level was increased to 1.8 WTE.

1999-2000 saw many regional changes for libraries: Education Purchasing Consortiums took control of the educational funding streams and the ‘Access to the Knowledge Base’ (4) reviews introduced a new funding distribution model based on a ‘hub-and-spoke’ principle, with acute trusts as ‘hubs’, (receiving the lion’s share of the funding), and mental health and primary care trusts as ‘spokes’. In 2003 there was an opportunity to further cement this model when the Musgrove Park library and the local mental health library (SPT) united under a single manager and began to share skills and services across both organisations. The staffing level increased to 4.5 WTE.

In 2004, as a response to the national need for more doctors, the academy training model was adopted by Bristol University. Musgrove Park received
funding from them for another library extension and an extra WTE post to be phased in over 3 years.

By 2006 we had become a team of 5.5 WTE and we are still all together now in 2011, serving all NHS staff and students on placement in our part of Somerset.

We are:

Annette Giles, Library and Knowledge Services Manager (TAU and SPT) - I started my career in NHS libraries in 1984 and have been in my current post since 2003. I have always loved the diverse aspects of my job and the challenges that it brings and I think south west library staff are a wonderful group of people who selflessly provided support for each other and their users and remain altruistic despite the sometimes hostile climate of the NHS.

Carol-Anne Regan (TAU), Clinical Librarian and Trainer – I gained my degree in library and information studies from Queen’s University, Belfast in 1981 and chartered in 1983 while working in public libraries. I worked in academic and school libraries before joining Musgrove Park in 1999. The NHS has been an exciting and challenging environment to work in and I am especially enjoying my current clinical librarian role and its direct input into patient care.

Wendy Cull (SPT) Senior Library Assistant – I started work at the SPT library in 1998 having been a Primary School teacher for over 20 years. I thoroughly enjoy working for a NHS Mental Health Trust and in particular the day to day responsibility and variety offered to me in my role at the Somerset Partnership library.

David Chambers (TAU and SPT), Senior Library Assistant – I started my job at the Musgrove Park library in 2004. My previous life was as a biology technician in secondary education which surprisingly had many similarities with my current job. Both involve a high level of support for my user population and ultimately this is the part of the job that I find the most interesting and rewarding.

Denise Manning (SPT), Library Assistant – I started work at the SPT library in 2003. I have also worked as a receptionist and administrative assistant for a busy community mental health team where I had some contact with clients and their problems. This experience has enabled me to bring a different perspective to the library team.

Jess Pawley (TAU), Library Assistant – I started work at the Musgrove Park library in 2006. After finishing my ‘A’ levels in 2004 I decided to support myself through an OU degree rather than take the traditional university route and student loan. I have just completed my final exam (Oct. 2011) and will be considering my options for a library qualification once I have my degree.

References:


Acquisitions and Cataloguing essentials...

Good news!

No doubt you all cheered when you saw that Jenny has managed to get the Date-Sort field to populate automatically… well the cataloguing group did anyway! This will ensure that managers taking off reports of old or new stock will get a correct listing now… try it with a list of old stock to withdraw perhaps?...

Pitfalls

Have you ever wondered why WebView does not return the hits you expect? There are many pitfalls when searching the catalogue, and some are dug by those inputting the records – particularly:

- incorrect entry of forenames/initials for authors – making author searching distinctly haphazard
- reprints going on as new editions, creating extra records
- ‘skeleton’ order records not later fully checked and completed
- the ‘close copy’ facility being used without fully checking the revised record (have you noticed some fields do revert..?) and the Related Items and Control Data tabs (these may carry forward links and e-journal admin information)

Please can everyone who inputs new records (when ordering or when cataloguing) be aware that the annoyingly fussy ‘rules’ are there to make end user searching work - and it is unlikely that certain fields (e.g. authors) will be checked once in.

Updates

- Quite a few e-books come with the Proquest e-journal subscriptions. If you wish to catalogue any onto SWIMS feel free – we are not adding them all automatically. For the list see [Link]http://workforce.southwest.nhs.uk/libraries/electronicresources/sweresources
  (NB the Proquest subscriptions are reviewed annually, and the collection is not static)
- There is a little known classmark of PZ which is really more appropriate for fiction collections (currently mostly at PE)
- The rise in e-journals subscriptions means the Cataloguing Group are having to rethink how the access links are most clearly shown on SWIMS – please read the 'rules' and look out for updates – and also a brief webex training session - coming soon…!
- We are currently paying for tidying the author authority file, but it is slow work (and won’t get finished). Unfortunately we can’t make the system for entry or checking for duplicates any simpler….. Please ask if unsure what to do!
- Some new subject headings are being added, a few classification queries debated, then final updates will be made to the Subject Index, and a new Readers Index will be out soon too! Watch this space…

Anne Lancey, Cataloguing Group Chair
Healthcare Library Week – Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust

During the week of 17th–21st October we held a Healthcare Library Week in Salisbury. The object of the week was to increase awareness of what the library can offer, and to improve take-up of library membership, Athens registration, use of electronic resources, booking on training courses, and take-up of the Clinical Librarian and Subject Bulletins service.

We spent a few weeks planning the event and producing publicity; this included posters, flyers, information on the website, broadcast emails, post-it notices, email signatures, articles in the Trust weekly newsletter, and an item in Cascade Brief, the official monthly Trust briefing paper. We were also on the Trust’s screensaver, and we had displays in two eateries and the main hospital foyer.

During the week itself we offered drop-in help sessions with Athens, ebooks, ejournals, and database searching (it didn’t help that it co-incided with the go-slow on HDAS); we ran two quizzes, one really a self-training session on ebooks with a small prize for every entry, and one a find-your-way-round the library website, with a prize draw of a £25 book token.

We also offered free tea, coffee and biscuits, but owing to a Trust ban on hospitality, we were not able to advertise this fact. Captive audiences, such as medical students on induction, certainly ate the cakes!

We also offered free promotional items, some which we obtained from the Cochrane library (pens and notepads) and some which we had specially made to promote ourselves; these were pens, notepads, post-its, and a localised version of the famous jute bag – see photo.

We were fortunate to have some money to invest in this, courtesy of the BNI sale, but nevertheless we only bought things that people would otherwise use Trust resources to buy anyway (apart from the bags).

What was the outcome of all our efforts? It has to be said that take-up, in terms of extra people coming to the library, was extremely low, and it could possibly said that it made almost no difference to the number of visitors and enquiries. Only six people ‘signed in’ for various reasons; so far 11 people have entered the website quiz, and only three the ebook quiz; they are still open.
Creating crosswords at PPH

We held our Healthcare Library Open Day at Prospect Park Hospital on 19 October, and to promote our ATHENS e-resources, I designed this crossword. The idea originally came from Shropshire County PCT where I used to work. There, we offered an e-journals and e-books training, and a crossword (designed by my colleague Claire Charnley) was used as an alternative to a quiz, to test and embed people’s knowledge of retrieving information on e-journals and e-books.

The programme I used to create this crossword is Eclipse Crossword (www.eclipsecrossword.com) which is free and found easily on Google! We can’t download it to our Trust PCs without IT permission so the work was done at home originally.

It’s easy to use – find some articles or e-book titles you want to use, enter a word from them and type the rest of the sentence in as a clue. The programme then produces a crossword at the size the user defines, one blank version and one with the answers in, and produces several forms of file for the crossword. It is possible to choose Word format for the clues. I found only one of the crossword file types would operate on my work computer but saved the crossword as a JPEG which we then put into Word with the clues.

We don’t yet know whether anyone has done the crossword so can’t say how successful it’s been so far, but we are planning to continue to use it for training sessions. If I was doing it again I might have fewer clues, as it is quite a big crossword!

Why not have a go? Answers will appear in the December issue of Swimming Pool!

Genny Franklin
Librarian
Prospect Park Hospital (PPH)
Down
2. Who wrote the e-book 'Assertive Outreach: a strengths approach to policy and practice' published in 2005 by Elsevier?
6. British Journal of ..............................
7. Sociology and ....................... therapy? E-book written by Jones, D; Blair, SE; Hartery, T; Jones, RK; 1998; Elsevier
8. ADHD in adolescents with which personality disorder? (BMC Psychiatry Sept 2011)
10. Understanding the mental health effects of indirect exposure to mass trauma through ...? (JAMA 2011 306/12
14. Do you know your .... BMJ 315: 1655 20 December 1997
18. 'Occupational therapy and ............course development'? (Found on library catalogue, available at PPH)

Across
1. E-book written by Spiegel, R; Aebi, HJ; 2004; Wiley (first word)
3. The ... of chocolate (Editorial, Mackenbach, JP, BMJ 20 Sept 2011)
11. ... prevention in military organisations. Int. review of psychiatry Vol 23/2
15. '... and psychology:mapping the terrain' (E-book, Parsons, WB & Jonte-Pace, D; 2000)
17. Melatonin for the prevention of ...? (The Cochrane library)
19. What review type would you find in the Cochrane library?
20. Another word for 'paying attention' in Mental Health. (E-book, Mace, C; 2007, Taylor & Francis)
Reports from the CILIP Umbrella Conference

We have two reports from the recent CILIP Umbrella Conference from Jo Hooper and Nicola Healey who both attended.

Report from the CILIP Umbrella Conference
I was thrilled to receive funding from the Health Libraries Group so that I could attend CILIP Umbrella 2011. Library services across all sectors are going through “interesting times” and one reason for attending this event was better my overall view across the library community, it’s easy to get blinkered to your own particular circumstances.

Gerald Leitner’s plenary speech galvanised that sense of community as he outlined the threat that European Libraries faced if the Library Community did not sit up and start lobbying the European Parliament. Copyright law for e-publications is a world apart from books and policy is led by publishers with a tight grip on our wallets. Does the current economic crisis make this a bad time to talk about a European library policy? If not now, when? Librarians must be proactive, politicians are unaware of the situation that we face. He left us with a sense of foreboding but also rallied our spirits; as a community, right across Europe, we were joined in an equal struggle. He ended his talk, unnervingly with a reference to Stephane Hessle’s controversial “Time for Outrage”, a call for non-violent action and peaceful uprising against the powers of finance capitalism.

Big Society Big opportunity
Graham Monk - information must be freely available, particularly for those who struggle with computer literacy. The DWP work closely with the citizen’s advice bureau to ensure that the message got through, whilst avoiding “knowledge overload”. John Quinn - Sharing training resources across sectors through Cloud -Sharing would cut costs. David Smith- a debate weighing up the statutory obligation to deliver knowledge alongside problems associated with volunteer workers. Who is going to pay for this and how?

Kim Profession: Opportunities for Librarians to embrace changes.
“The librarian must be the librarian militant before he can be the librarian triumphant.” Melville Dewey
Sharon Jones – does qualification and experience count? Can we supply what people want? We are fighting for survival; we need to have our survivals bags packed, à la Beer Grylls.
“If libraries were created tomorrow people would flock to them”
Ned Potter - we need to go beyond the walls of Librarian talking to Librarian and escape the Echo Chamber, focusing on reaching those outside the profession so that they can understand how relevant we really are. Lauren Smith reminds us that we must align policy with what library users require and don’t waste time promoting services that people don’t want.
I would recommend you all pop over to the Wikimans’s web page or find this presentation on Prezi.com

New Lis Roles Supporting Dissemination of Research
Joanna Ball - the role of the Librarian is to support researchers as consumers and producers, we can play a vital role in each stage of the Research Lifecycle. Changes to access and the publishing world mean that we must become more outward facing.
Almuth Gastinger - We have the knowledge, services & skills but do researchers know this? We must align ourselves to researchers work flow and specific user needs.
Nicolas Robinson Garcia - The Embedded Librarian is solely focused on the researcher and is essential for each stage of research from helping with funding applications to gaining visibility through Social media. There was a gasp across the auditorium when he stated that he took the final decision as to which journal the research should be published in!
IT for the Lis Professional
Alan Poulter - All library staff must be competent in the basic IT but can we clear the cache and delete temporary files? Do we know where and how to store computer files? We must have a regular back up and scanning regime. It was suggested that we learn IT technical jargon so we can be clearer when discussing what we need.

Imagination and LIS Research
"The true sign of Intelligence is not knowledge but imagination" Einstein
Paul Sturges- we must have a more open approach to LIS Research, a lot of terrible research is bound by convention. When approaching a piece of research ask - Is this a question that I want to answer? Do I care? If there is no interest this will become transparent in your output. David Streatfield,-why the best research is personal, why does it matter in a politicised world? I was so wrapped in this presentation that I stopped taking notes but I would recommend that you visit the Information Management Associates site  http://www.informat.org/index.html

Dinner at Sopwell House
Bonnie Greer held the room in the palm of her hand whilst she delivered her superb after dinner speech. Her passion for libraries and her high regard for those of us that work in them was genuinely profound and was a fitting end to the day. A reflection of Gerald Leitner’s call for action both urging us to pull ourselves up by our boot straps, hold our chins high and be proud of what we can offer our local and international communities. When she completed her speech with a reading of Langston Hughes ‘The Negro Speaks of Rivers’ there was hardly a dry eye in the house.

Jo Hooper
Library Assistant
University Hospitals Bristol (BRI)
Umbrella 2011: new structures, new technologies, new challenges – how can we adapt to an age of austerity?

Umbrella is CILIP’s cross-sectoral conference; sessions are put on by the 13 special interest groups of CILIP.

**Plenary Session**

Gerald Leitner, President and Secretary of the Austrian Library Association talked about developing a European library policy. He spoke with passion about the public library service and how there was never a right time to try to create this type of policy. He argued that the changing technological and economic climate will play an important part in the way libraries move forward and adapt to new media, such as e-books, web 2.0/3.0 innovations. He discussed copyright problems and the uphill battle to try to improve things. He ended on a serious note: we are letting our public libraries slip away from us without too much of a fight. We really should be rallying behind them and supporting them due to the great benefit which they bring to everyone’s lives.

**Key points from sessions attended:**

**Skills and professionalism**

Sue Hill and Susie Kay discussed the changing role of the workplace today and our need to “adapt or die”. As information professionals we need to ensure that we are not putting ourselves down; we should be blowing our own trumpet about our success. We also need to see beyond the library world to see how skills can be used in other professions. We need to be “career chameleons” and not be afraid of projects outside our comfort zone.

**From Melvil Dewey to Bear Grylls: the heat is on!**

Sharon Jones began with the need for Librarians to be more survivalist like ex SAS man Bear Grylls! She compared his essential kit and what as professionals we should have in ours:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bear Grylls</th>
<th>Librarians</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waterproof cell phone</td>
<td>Importance of staying in touch, but also “wet technology is useless technology”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backpack</td>
<td>Be wary of our baggage - A positive mindset is probably the most powerful survival skill we could have.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nectar</td>
<td>the need to stay nourished</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deodorant</td>
<td>Stay fresh!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra socks</td>
<td>Don’t be afraid to get your feet wet!</td>
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<tr>
<td>A family photo</td>
<td>Be Human!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash bags</td>
<td>Everything has a shelf-life!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bible</td>
<td>Keep your faith!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ultimate knife</td>
<td>Cut through the!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barefoot shoes</td>
<td>Enjoy the sensation!</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Escaping the echo chamber**

Speakers Ned Potter and Laura Woods, both new professionals, explained that it was important for us to try and make ourselves heard outside the “echo chamber”. Librarians are keen *to moan or praise our profession, just to ourselves*; we should be using varied media avenues to help spread the word about what we do so that we get more people behind us. For more information see: [http://prezi.com/if9wccvvunup/escaping-the-echo-chamber/](http://prezi.com/if9wccvvunup/escaping-the-echo-chamber/)

**The Global Librarian**

The last session which I attended on day one, was centred on the global librarian and featured a number of speakers talking about their personal experience. I found out that you can find work exchanges, although it can be difficult to arrange with your workplace and you may need to have a good command of another language. By undertaking research you may be able to attend conferences abroad to speak. There are a number of grants which will allow you to travel to other parts of the world to examine new ways of working, or evaluate how a similar library service is operated.

**Gala Dinner**

The gala dinner guest speaker was playwright and author, Bonnie Greer¹, who spoke with a passion about just how important public libraries for all different types of people. Maybe we have become too complacent about our libraries: we do take them for granted and it is important that we do not as they can be a lifeline in so many different ways.

**Day Two**

**Future of Libraries**

The first session of the second day involved me chairing a “very packed” debate on the future of libraries. Questions came about the future of public libraries and the role of CILIP. I was very nervous at chairing this session, especially as over 100 people attended, but I did my best David Dimbleby impression. From the feedback I got, people found it very interesting and informative.

**Imagination and LIS Research**

The last session was about research and the importance of having an imagination when it comes to developing research. Professor Paul Sturges (Loughborough University) agued that research has become bound by convention and should move away from its traditional approach. This can be done by looking outside the profession, by looking at how information has affected wars and use of twitter during the uprisings in the Middle East.

**CILIP Libraries Change Lives Award ceremony**

This showcased what four libraries had been doing to make an impact with the local communities. Kent libraries won with the work which they had been doing with a local disability group¹. Although this is very much centred on the role of the public libraries, it did show the importance of having libraries in society and the many benefits which they bring.

**Nicki Healey**

E-Resources Co-ordinator
Weston General Hospital (WSM)
Beware of the Library Assistant

Mimosa frowned when a nursing student approached Lucy's desk, speaking in a whisper. The readers at the Healthscare Library didn’t usually whisper, so what was the matter?

"I think Hector’s taken out a reference book", the girl explained. “In fact I’m sure he has. We heard him say so at the weekend, and the book isn’t there now. But mind you don’t tell him I told you!"

Lucy stifled a sigh and got up. Yes, Dora was right: their only copy, a reference copy, of Principles of theoretical nursing practice had disappeared. Lucy searched the nearby shelves, but the book simply wasn’t there. She reported this to Mimosa.

“All right, we’ll make it Missing on the catalogue, but I’m not going to buy a replacement copy in a hurry if it’s true that Hector has taken the book for a walk. It’s very expensive. We’d better wait and see,” she reflected. In the meantime, she advised the aggrieved student to access the book on My Little e-Library – sorry, Eeksperience (as the NHS electronic library was now called) – and sent an email to Hector.

“Told you I was fed up with students,” Lucy moaned in the staff room. “They’re all over the place, they don’t always even know whether they’re seconded or on placement, they steal our books…”

Simon admonished her gently. “It’s not as bad as all that, you know. That’s only two-three students we’re talking about. Of course Hector denies he’s taken out a reference copy – who wouldn’t? I’m sure it will come back after he’s finished this module.”

The Library Manager returned to his office and found a student sitting in his chair, just about to log out of Simon’s account. “This was the only free computer,” the lad explained, ducking slightly under Simon’s murderous glance. Lucy had been battling valiantly to provide a good service not only to the swarming students, but to dozens of other users as well. She and Mimosa had just completed a stock take, which had shown several items to be missing, including multiple copies of nursing textbooks and junior doctors’ exam fodder. No wonder Lucy looked ready to flounder – or to take action...

She waited till Simon was away for a few days and then approached Vladimir.

“Vlad, I’ve got an urgent announcement to put on the Trust intranet. Please can you do it for me?” she asked with glowing cheeks, squeezing a memory stick in her hand.

“All right, let’s see it then,” the IT Librarian said. The announcement read as follows:

To all Trust staff and students: A reference copy of a nursing textbook has been accidentally removed from the Healthscare Library. As it is contaminated and therefore poses a severe health risk, please return it to the library ASAP.

“You’ll never get away with this, Lu,” her fiancé said seriously. “Simon will flay you, and Infection Control will investigate the matter. Anyway, you’ve not even said what the contamination is.” But deep down, Vlad was pleased that Lucy had shown such determination, so he placed the announcement on the intranet. Then they sat back and waited for results.

On the following morning, Hector was seen skulking around the book returns trolley with a scarf tied round his nose and mouth. When Lucy went to check, there was the missing Principles, wrapped in a yellow plastic bag. The Library Assistant carried it in triumphantly.

“Well done, Lucy,” Mimosa said. “I wouldn’t have believed it of you!”

Lucy smiled and piled four other books on her desk, all of which had been lost in the last year and had now turned up in the returns trolley. In the afternoon, three more books plus a couple of journals were returned equally mysteriously. Evidently people didn’t want to take any risks with accidentally removed library materials. Infection Control was dealt with by Vlad, but he refused to tell Lucy and Mimosa how he had managed it. When Simon came back, he was pleased to see that Lucy had calmed down. He had been right, he thought – no need to make a fuss about a couple of students.

But Hector went down with measles.

Outi Pickering
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