

# GLINT

## GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

Number two May 1988



*One of Helen Lahert's line drawings in the Directory, based on a statue above Government Buildings*

### Directory of Government Libraries in the Republic of Ireland

The Directory was successfully launched on 10 December 1987 at a reception in the National Botanic Gardens. A copy of the Directory has been sent to all contributing libraries and also to the Secretaries of all Departments. A large number has also been distributed to libraries throughout the country.

You will also have received a copy of the speech to have been made by Mr Kevin Murphy, Secretary (Public Service Management and Development) and read on his behalf by Mr Eric Embleton, Director of the Information Management Advisory Service. Mr Embleton, who kindly stood in for Mr Murphy at very short notice, also made some very encouraging remarks on his own behalf, especially in relation to cooperation and training, which we hope will bear fruit in the future.

### NEWS AND EVENTS

#### Your new committee:

**Chairperson:** Aisling Judge, State Laboratory  
**Secretary:** Valerie Ingram, Dept of Agriculture and Food  
**Treasurer:** Clare Hannon, Dept of Energy  
**PRO:** Mary Doyle, Dept of Agriculture and Food

#### Members:

Lisa Shields, Meteorological Service  
Margaret Rooney, Geological Survey  
Mary Moore, Dept of the Marine  
Veronica Scanlon, Dept of Social Welfare  
Leo Collins, Dept of Labour  
Gavin Freeman, Dept of the Environment  
Noreen O'Sullivan, Dept of Health

#### Training

The following libraries have agreed to accept untrained staff from government libraries who would like to spend a few days working in a well-run library in order to gain experience:

Dept of Agriculture and Food  
Dept of the Marine  
Meteorological Service  
State Laboratory  
Dept of Education

Contacts and addresses can be found in the Directory of Government Libraries

### The Association of EDC Librarians and the Government Libraries Group of the LA (UK)

will be in Dublin on a study tour from 1-5 July 1988. We hope to arrange a meeting with them during their visit.



## STATIONERY OFFICE LIAISON GROUP

At a recent meeting between the above Group and the Stationery Office, the following items of particular interest to government libraries were discussed.

### Government Supplies Agency

The Stationery Office and OPW have now amalgamated as the Government Supplies Agency. Each will retain its separate identity within the new Agency.

The Stationery Office move to Bishop Street was expected to be completed by the end of February. Although staff has been affected by cutbacks, the organisation of the new stores will be streamlined, making access easier and operations more efficient.

Urgent orders may be phoned direct to Bishop Street and you will be notified as soon as they are ready for collection. You are asked not to send orders for collection as you wait. You are also asked not to abuse the urgent order service.

### Government Publications Catalogue

In the light of the forthcoming computerization of the Stationery Office there was a discussion on the Government Publications Catalogue and changes that might be effected by automation, e.g. since ISBNs will be used, whether catalogue numbers

currently in use could be dispensed with.

The consensus of the Librarians is that the catalogue numbers (which identify the issuing Department and by which most libraries organise official publications) should be retained in addition to ISBNs. If catalogue numbers were dropped, the catalogues might be organised by subject or under Department (as HMSO). Note: Catalogue numbers are not printed on publications because they are not allocated until after printing.

Non-listed material, e.g. Sectoral Development Committee reports and other material published by Departments and sold through the Stationery Office will in future be listed in the weekly lists. The Stationery Office would not be able to monitor publications issued by Departments unless they are issued through the Stationery Office. The Government Libraries Group has been asked if it could organise the monitoring of such publications.

### Indexes to Parliamentary Publications

Indexes to Dail Debates (last year published: 1956) and Seanad Debates (last year: 1948) are the responsibility of the Oireachtas. The Statute Law Reform Office is responsible for indexing the Statutory Instruments (last period: 1980-86). Butterworths are soon to publish a consolidated index to the Statutory Instruments.

## Results of Election to the Executive Board of the Library Association

**President:** Noel Hughes

**Vice-President:** Deirdre Ellis-King  
(2nd Vice-President still to be elected)

**Secretary:** Liam Smith

**Treasurer:** Donal O'Gorman

### Board members

Brela Baum  
Nodlaig Hardiman  
Noel Hughes  
Kathleen Browne  
Pat Lonergan  
Christopher Cox  
Margaret McElhill  
Clara Cullen  
Pat McMahon  
John Dean

Agnes Neligan  
Beatrice Doran  
Sean Ó Súilleabháin  
Deirdre Ellis-King  
Hanna O'Sullivan  
Ruth Flanagan  
Marie Reddan  
Sheila Flanagan  
Liam Ronayne  
James Fogarty  
John Graham

Congratulations to all successful candidates. Commiserations to the unsuccessful, especially our own candidate Mary Moore. Mary has since been nominated to the Committee on Library Cooperation by the University and Special Libraries Section.

**Thanks to all members who voted.**



## RE-INVENTING THE WHEEL? WHY WE DECIDED ON DO-IT-YOURSELF COMPUTERIZATION

*By Lisa Shields, Librarian, Meteorological Service*

I would probably recommend anyone contemplating the computerization of a small library to settle for a package like INMAGIC, which is flexible, intelligent, allows a lot of freedom in the way it can be set up, and doesn't cost the earth. However, that isn't what we did ourselves, and indeed I don't think INMAGIC was available when we first thought about computerizing our library.

Until the end of 1982 I had no great urge to introduce computerization at all. I was proud of the manual system I had built up over the previous five years, and I didn't welcome the idea of the upheaval and re-organization computerization would inevitably entail. On the whole too, I was hostile to computers.

What really brought me round to the idea was a visit I paid to two small specialized libraries which had produced their own cataloguing and on-line retrieval systems—the libraries of the mathematics departments in TCD and Maynooth. Although neither of these systems was very elaborate, what I saw was enough to convince me that on-line retrieval was not only desirable, but possible without a large financial outlay.

The Met. Service is generally computer orientated. It needs a powerful computer in order to cope with the weather-forecast model which is run twice daily. At present this computer is a DEC 20-50 mainframe, and has 52 terminals linked to it. Most staff members in all sections use computers daily and many of them, without being computer specialists, have become competent FORTRAN programmers in the course of their work. Little did I think at the outset that I would eventually count myself among their number.

Most of the programs used in the Service are

produced in-house, and any commercial library systems I was aware of at the time seemed unduly expensive. I would have had difficulty in getting sanction to spend a large sum of money in buying a package, whereas I found it fairly easy to present a convincing case for a 'do-it-yourself' system. As well, I had a strong desire to have control over the system, and to be able to include all the features and refinements I wanted whenever I wanted them, and to make changes when necessary.

A systems analyst found time to work out a basic system to my specifications, and this original version was made public in 1984. Any member of staff with a terminal linked to the mainframe (including staff at stations outside Dublin) could now consult the catalogue on line, retrieve records through a combination of authors' names, general keywords and UDC numbers, and create files of records retrieved.

Since then the system has undergone radical changes, and new programs have been written—for the automation of loans, for example, and the maintenance of files giving details of runs of journals. It would be very hard to cost in terms of labour. Against the time and effort spent has to be considered the valuable experience gained in working out an efficient and pleasing scheme.

One result of the exercise is the fact that the Librarian has learned to write programs in FORTRAN 77 in the process, and now has the satisfaction of using a set of programs which pleases her and which, in its present form, she has mostly designed and written herself. Looking back on it all I am glad we made the choice we did. A more detailed description of our system and what it does and does not do will follow in a future issue of this newsletter.

### New journal

The Information Management Advisory Service of the Dept of Finance has just published the first issue of what promises to be a very interesting newsletter on information technology in the Civil Service. Entitled INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY NEWS it aims to publish features on all aspects of IT—new developments, training courses, industry trends, descriptions of applications and of the central and departmental organisations. Copies of IT NEWS are available from Patricia Lawlor, IMAS, Dept of Finance, 36-42 Kildare Street, Dublin 2 (Tel: 779601).

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