



The
Geological
Society

serving science & profession

LIBRARY STRATEGY 2015-2019

CONTENTS	Page
Introduction	2
Background	2-3
Purpose and values of the Library	3-4
Recent achievements	4
Strategic objectives <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Improving the Library experience2. Developing user services3. Preserving, developing and promoting special collections & archives4. Engaging with members of the public and external partners5. Supporting Library staff's professional development	4-6
SWOT analysis	7

Introduction

The library environment and resources have dramatically changed in recent years and it is essential for the Geological Society Library to respond and adapt to the evolving needs of the Society's Fellows.

The Library Strategy seeks to shape the future of the Library by outlining its key objectives for the next five years:

1. Improving the Library experience
2. Developing user services
3. Preserving, developing and promoting special collections & archives
4. Engaging with members of the public and external partners
5. Supporting Library staff's professional development

Building on the strengths of existing activities, the Library will aim to deliver as a priority improved electronic and remote services whilst continuing to control costs and develop revenue.

Background

'Le projet de la Société Géologique de Londres, la première qui ait été établie sous ce titre, est de travailler à l'acquisition des connaissances propres à établir la théorie de la Terre.'

[The project of the Geological Society of London, the first to have been established under that name, is to work towards acquiring sound knowledge to establish a theory of the Earth].

Extract from 'Mémoire' (1808) by Jacques-Louis, Comte de Bournon, founding member of the Geological Society.

The Museum and Library of the Geological Society were created in 1809, two years after the foundation of the Society, to collect practical knowledge of geological information.

In 1911, as a consequence of the Fellowship's growing interest for printed and up-to-date research, the Museum closed to give more room to what had become the largest collection of geological literature in the world.

With over 300,000 volumes of books and serials and 40,000 maps, the Geological Society Library is still today one of the finest Earth Science libraries in the world. The information needs of the Society's 10,000 Fellows however have changed and so have the library environment and resources. The necessity for the Library to adapt and evolve to meet the needs of its users is at the heart of this strategy.

In 2010, the Library Review Group was formed to specifically explore the changing needs of the Fellowship, relationships with other libraries, space issues, acquisitions, affordability of the Library and exchange arrangements. Recommendations were made in the following areas:

1. Reduce net operating costs
2. Review Library access and services
3. Collect Library usage data
4. Rationalise the management of the journal collection
5. Adapt to the changing needs of the Fellowship
6. Review partnerships with others
7. Preserve and promote the map collection
8. Preserve and promote the Society's archive collection

9. Bring closer together the management of the Society's publishing and Library activities
10. Support staff development
11. Maximise the use of Library space

In January 2012, Neal Marriott became Director of Publishing, Library and Information Services managing all aspects of the Publishing House and the Library. The merger resulted in a change in Committee structure. The Library Users Group (which reports to the Publications and Information Committee) was created in October 2013 to act as a user group; to support the development of Library services and public engagement activities; to encourage the conservation and preservation of the archive, map and historical collections.

By the end of 2013, the Library had put in place robust usage data gathering mechanisms. Council agreed it had met the three-year net operating cost reduction requirements for the 2014 budget – if it is achieved the Library will have reduced its net operating costs by ~ £99K - and that enough had been done to provide a sound financial basis for the future of the Library.

In 2007, Council approved the Geological Society Strategy:

1. To be the respected public voice of geosciences in the UK
2. To provide lifelong professional support to geoscientists
3. To recognise and foster innovation in the geosciences
4. To show leadership in the geosciences community nationally and internationally
5. To promote geoscience education
6. To communicate geoscience research and practice
7. To assure high professional standards for the benefit of society

The Library Strategy incorporates the recommendations from the 2010 Library Review and the Geological Society's strategic objectives focusing on aims 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7.

Purpose and values of the Library

The Geological Society Library is a research library which offers its Fellows the best of both worlds: rich historical and archive collections as well as the most up-to-date information resources in print and electronic formats.

Its primary role is to support Fellows with their continuing professional development, research and practice needs. It also provides services to employees of the Society's Corporate Affiliates and, as part of a charitable organisation, has a commitment to public engagement.

A library of hard-to-find and unique material

As the first Geological Society in the world, the Society has acquired over the last 207 years a large number of unique and rare items. For Fellows the Library is principally one of first or second resort but it is also a back-up library for the British Library and a key resource for many UK and overseas libraries.

High customer care standards

The Library provides a first class customised service to its Fellows, Corporate Affiliates and visitors and prides itself in having enthusiastic and committed staff with expert knowledge in the subject area and the collections.

A prestigious location for research and study

The Library offers an exclusive and peaceful environment for research and study in an elegant 19th c. grade II* listed building in W1, Piccadilly.

Recent achievements

- November 2012 – developed a Collection Development Policy (approval pending)
- April 2013 - opened the Library Bookshop
- June 2013 – digitised and archived all Membership and Fellowship records from 1990-July 2012
- August 2013 – acquired Dan McKenzie’s archive
- September 2013 - digitised the William Smith County Atlas maps
- October 2013 - acquired permissions, digitised and created metadata for the 120 Malawi maps held in our collections
- February 2014 – collated and catalogued all the Society’s Committee papers

Strategic objectives

1. Improving the Library experience

Objective	Action
Use Library space more effectively	We will review the use, content, layout and signage of Library space to adapt to changing users’ needs and expectations. We will continue to identify suitable material for off-site storage and disposal to create room for growth and ensure that the most used and valuable items remain accessible on-site.
Improve remote access to Library resources	We will write an Electronic Resource Acquisition Policy and look to increase our e-resources offering by consolidating the number of e-journals available remotely, developing an e-book collection and making available digitised material from our collections. We will plan for the replacement of C2 and investigate a new Library Management System to enhance content findability and provide standard user functionalities.
Develop, maintain and promote the Library’s collections	We will seek to improve the visibility of our collections by converting our cataloguing records to MARC to enable our participation in union catalogues e.g. COPAC, SUNCAT and WorldCat. We will address the cataloguing backlog by carefully evaluating donations and adding to stock items of lasting value. We will write a Disaster Management Plan in partnership with other Courtyard libraries providing emergency procedures and guidance to Library and Society staff to minimise damage to the collections and building.

2. Developing user services

Objective	Action
<p>Enhance user services</p>	<p>We will continue to support and adapt to the information needs of Fellows and Corporate Affiliates through free, at-a-cost and revenue generating services such as document delivery, literature searching, Geofacets, books & map prints sales, Library tours and enquiries.</p> <p>We will engage further with Corporate Affiliates to develop customised products and prices.</p> <p>We will investigate the delivery of an information skills programme online and/or face-to-face to Fellows, Corporate Affiliates and non-members.</p> <p>We will carefully select and digitise material from our archive and special collections to widen the range of images and prints available for purchase.</p>
<p>Improve communication and marketing of value-added services</p>	<p>We will continue to use social media, the Society's website, newsletters and Geoscientist to raise awareness and promote Library services and collections.</p> <p>We will commission professionally produced literature to market our services to Corporate Affiliates and offer Library inductions to their employees.</p>

3. Preserving, developing and promoting special collections & archives

Objective	Action
<p>Preserve and conserve the Library's special collections and archives</p>	<p>We will seek to improve the environmental conditions in which the Library's rare books, historical maps and archives are kept.</p> <p>We will raise awareness amongst staff and Fellows through fundraising campaigns and conservation training and events.</p> <p>We will identify material suitable for digitisation and promote these on the Society's website, via social networks and on professionally produced printed literature e.g. bookmarks and postcards.</p>
<p>Enhance and promote the Library's special collections and archives</p>	<p>We will develop the Library's collections by attracting bequests of significant importance to the history of Earth sciences.</p> <p>We will create a Plate Tectonics archive (incorporating, with commentaries, the papers of Dan McKenzie and other participants of the drift controversy and birth of plate tectonics) and make it freely available online to all.</p>

4. Engaging with members of the public and external partners

Objective	Action
Engage with a wider audience	We will fulfil our commitment to public engagement through a variety of events and services aimed at members of the public e.g. exhibitions, talks, bookshop, Open House and map & image prints.
Work in partnerships	We will continue working with external partners on specific projects (e.g. Geofacets, GeoRef and library consortia) and maintain our relationships with London library groups, the British Library and our international network of inter-library loan and geosciences libraries.

5. Supporting Library staff's professional development

Objective	Action
Support current awareness and encourage best practice	We will continue to support Library staff's professional development by encouraging relevant course & conference attendance, current awareness activities and networking with other library professionals.
Ensure effective succession planning	We will have in place written procedures, support and training to ensure effective knowledge sharing within the Library team.

SWOT analysis

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Library collections of international importance• Library staff's expertise and customer care skills consistently valued by Fellows• Staff's ambition and positive attitude to change• A currently small but growing collection of e-resources• Library collections all on one site. 67% of its titles on open access• Prestigious London location• Effective working partnerships	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited IT, financial and staff resources• Outdated Library Management System with no user functionality• Lack of visibility and basic functionality of the online Library catalogue• Under-developed/under-promoted remote Library services• Space constraints in Burlington House• Lack of experience in certain areas e.g. digitisation, conservation and preservation
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Close working relationship between the Publishing House and the Library• Commercialisation of the Library• Partnerships with Elsevier (Geofacets) and the Natural History Museum (library consortia)• Potential savings from the development of Open Access publishing• Greater exposure, use and revenue generation from the digitisation of maps and archive material• Ambitious Fellowship growth plans	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ambitious plans need to be supported by adequate financial and IT resources• Outdated and unsupported Library Management System• Increased expectations from Fellows (75% of our Fellowship lives and works outside London)• Increasing costs of journal subscriptions• Deterioration of materials through inadequate storage• Limited staff resources in the face of ambitious Fellowship growth plans

Fabienne Michaud
27 February 2014