

LIBRARIES



Broad Street, Hereford

FROM
THIS



The Hive, Worcester

TO
THIS

INTRODUCTION

Libraries have been in existence for two millennia; from clay tablets in Mesopotamia, to papyrus rolls at Alexandria, the rise of the printed book in the middle ages, the working men's and circulating libraries of the nineteenth century leading to public libraries.

Public libraries have been part of the civic scene for around 150 years. Built in parallel with the growth in the number of schools and the expansion of education they formed part of the recognition by late Victorian city fathers and philanthropists (such as Carnegie) for the need to "improve" the life, learning, reading and standards of living by providing reading matter for the use of the general public.

Now in the 21st century, the scope of services, facilities and uses of libraries have undergone radical change and are still doing so. No longer just a source of reference and reading matter they are now providing a wide range of community and educational services, particularly where there are now modern purpose built or updated buildings which has led to a growing number of people using them.

Here in Hereford we have in Broad Street a library gifted to the city and built in 1872-74 and designed by FR Kempson in "Anglicized Venetian Gothic" style. Even with the considerable efforts of the staff, it is very far from supplying those up-to-date services that Hereford needs and of which so many people are unaware.

HOW LIBRARIES HAVE DEVELOPED



Work Area, Aberdeen University

Many of us have been brought up to see a library as, at times, a somewhat forbidding place; a great source of reading matter and information but never particularly user friendly. Everyone spoke in whispers, finding the book you wanted was not

that easy, the staff were likely to be rather severe and the building itself a bit overpowering. Because of this atmosphere many did not choose to enter the library at all.

Recent thinking on the purpose of a library, the facilities it should provide and their overall architectural design has changed completely so that we now have around the country some buildings providing many services other than the library itself and which are welcoming, attractive to visit and form a real social centre. Much of this change is comparatively recent and has been driven by advances in technology, communication and information handling.

Libraries are no longer buildings full of books; for example CDs and DVDs have been in libraries for some time but the modern library now has to offer virtual and face to face services shared with many other local agencies and services, all concentrating on serving the

needs of the local community. In many places they are not even called libraries eg. The Hive in Worcester, The Forum in Norwich, The Discovery Centres in Gosport and Winchester.

Every library, whether new or old now has its range of computer terminals

linking their users to the vast amount of information that is available on the web. Most modern libraries now have completely automated RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) book issue and return systems with the resulting savings in staff allowing librarians to concentrate on providing advice and help to users. It also allows staff to be spread over longer opening hours; many libraries are now open from 8.30 am to 10.00pm, seven days a week.

Stock control has been simplified with more books actually on the shelves rather than hidden away in a store room and with better access to archives and records brought together under one roof – not the situation in Hereford. Children and teen-agers have been given their own specifically designed areas, comfortable seating has been installed to allow browsing; a café and toilets are now an essential feature.



Self-service book issue and return

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Blackburn Library crèche

centre, meeting rooms, display areas, a book shop, a family history centre etc.

The combination of the library with other services to the local community provides a "one stop shop". Most modern libraries now include the main local council access point; in others you will find health centres, a Citizens Advice Bureau, a business

These shared facilities then bring more people into the library itself; every library that has opened recently has reported increased usage with all the accompanying benefits to education, leisure and knowledge. At The Hive in Worcester In the third quarter of 2011 "a few hundred" joined the library, in the same quarter for 2012 the figure was 8,500.



Children's area, Cardiff

THE RANGE OF SERVICES A MODERN LIBRARY CAN PROVIDE



Winchester Discovery Centre



Carlisle Library

The integration of a range of services and facilities into one building obviously brings considerable benefits to the public but it does require major modifications to existing library buildings or a complete rebuild. Modification is often impossible, as is the case here in Hereford, and is only successful where there is space for expansion combined with ingenious architectural and structural design as at the Winchester Discovery Centre where a fine early 19th century building was cleverly adapted..

Starting with the library itself the services and facilities needed for a modern library are so much more than just book shelves and a desk to deal with loans and returns. The Department of Work and Pensions in 2009 in "Building a Society for all Ages" said "Libraries are popular among today's older generations. What will ensure they will serve upcoming generations who will have different life experiences and needs?"

So, as a minimum they will need to provide:-

- An up to date and well laid out book stock, continually refreshed, housed in well designed and easily accessed shelving so as to encourage users to experiment and explore with their choices guided by clear signing and graphics.
- Areas for sitting and browsing with comfortable seating.
- A range of computers offering on-line access to nationally and locally held data including access to archives and family history material.
- A reference and research centre
- A children's library with play area and crèche with easy access but located where it does not disturb other users.
- A teen-age area and meeting place.
- A café and toilets.
- Exhibition space and meeting rooms
- Availability of ebooks, CDs, DVDs, on-line learning.
- Adequate and adjacent car parking

Add to this the community services which when integrated with the library to form a single information and resource centre providing:-

- The main local authority information centre providing day to contact with the council for payment of rents and council tax, planning, housing etc.; the equivalent of Herefordshire Council's office at Franklin House.
- A Tourist Information Centre.
- An outlet for the Citizens Advice Bureau
- An office for local radio and other media.
- A NHS Health Centre
- An arts and crafts centre.
- A business centre. With access to UK and EU documentation.
- Jobs and career advice with special emphasis on the young.

Bringing together all these community aspects creates a cultural focus with considerable benefits to both the local population and visitors. It enhances economic development and regeneration and attracts incoming businesses by making the area a better place to work and live. When all these features are combined into a modern attractive building usage increases, civic pride blossoms, tourists are attracted, the whole profile of the area is raised and citizens feel valued. The Library Commissioner for Chicago has said "Construction of a library sends a strong message; if the city cares enough to build a library, they must care about me".



Vancouver



Bournemouth

Some cities have combined their new library with other features. Vancouver and Bournemouth include a shopping centre, Worcester has combined the public and university libraries into one vibrant whole – hence its name, The Hive.

Careful design and planning into an interrelated and integrated whole is the key to success.. That success depends on the eventual

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users and operators producing a clear and detailed project brief together with some original and innovative architecture.

Nicky Parker, the Head of Library and Information Services at Manchester summed this up; "How far will we go to relocate, co-locate and integrate? Here lies the answer to creating a new public

library and it's not just a question of shoving random services under the same roof. We need to interweave the golden thread that links co-located services and helps make them integrated, gives them a make-over and turns them into something new"

SOME TYPICAL MODERN LIBRARIES

The following photographs and brief descriptions show some recently opened libraries both large and small. The architect and date of opening is given where known.

Brighton Jubilee Library

Bennett Associates with Lomax, Cassidy and Edwards. 2005



Built under a PFI scheme the library is part of the new Jubilee Square development with shops, cafes and restaurants at street level and residential/offices above. It is one of the most energy efficient buildings in the country and won a Prime Minister's Better Public Building award.

Peckham Library Southwark

Alsop and Stormer. 2000.



This building's bold, colourful, eye-catching design enhances a particularly unremarkable suburb of south London. It was designed to be striking, to make people curious about what lies inside, and to challenge the traditional view of libraries as staid and serious environments. It won a Stirling Prize and with nearly half a million visitors a year, it is the busiest of Southwark's lending libraries and issued over 245,000 items in 2010/11.

Canada Wharf, Southwark

Piers Gough, EZWG. 2011.



Another major library built in Southwark, it is part of a new town centre for Rotherhithe. The inverted pyramid provides an efficient single large library floor on a smaller footprint site with other facilities underneath. "The library is an indoor public space open to everyone, where you find wonderful things you weren't necessarily looking for."

Idea Store, Whitechapel, Tower Hamlets

Adjaye Associates, 2005.



The Whitechapel Idea Store is one of seven "library" buildings in Tower Hamlets that create a more accessible and popular alternative to the traditional library. Very much a community building, it houses a nursery school, dance studio, seminar spaces, internet facilities and physiotherapy training classrooms as well as more conventional library facilities.

The Forum, Norwich

Michael Hopkins and Partners, 2001.



This lovely building was built as a millennium project with some lottery funding. Built on the site of the previous Norwich Library which burnt down in 1994, the Forum is visited by more than 2.5 million people every year. As such it is the most visited library in the UK, Home not only to the library but a shop, a café, the local Tourist Information Centre, and the BBC East offices and studios. It has direct computer links to Norfolk archives.

Pollok Civic Realm, Glasgow

Archial Architects. 2009.



Pollok Civic Realm is Glasgow's first facility with truly integrated health and social work and leisure facilities. Forming part of the overall Pollok Town Centre regeneration, it houses a café, library, museum, child-care facilities and other specialist social and healthcare related services. "The design sought to create the type of building that members of the public would be familiar with and feel comfortable within to encourage them to spend time frequenting the various aspects of the hub..."

Aberdeen University

Schmidt,Hammer and Lassen. (Denmark) 2011



The superb new University of Aberdeen Library, is designed to provide a 21st century learning and research environment for students, university staff, visitors and, as at Worcester, the public. Conceived as a cube "evoking the ice and light of the north", there are eight levels, around an asymmetrical atrium. With a collection of over one million books it also provides an advanced learning environment by means of a series of flexible spaces offering various opportunities for individual study, group-working, seminars and meetings.

Cardiff Central Library

BDP, 2009.



This 6-storey library, with shops and restaurants on the ground floor forms part of the St David's re-development scheme and is next to John Lewis. It is claimed to be the most energy efficient building in the city. Facilities include toilets on every floor, a grand piano that anyone can play and access to the archive collections.

TU Delft Library, The Netherlands

Mecanoo. 1997.



Delft Technical University Library is probably the most advanced library in the world. It is of flexible design to allow for future changes and contains 42km of storage space and 15,000 ebooks.

Library at Spijknise, Rotterdam

MVRDV Rotterdam. 2012.



Close to Rotterdam docks is the Book Mountain, a public library in Spijknise's market square. It features a 480 m. route, lined with bookshelves, that wraps around a stacked, pyramidal form which can be seen through the library's glass structure. The "Mountain of Books" illuminates from within and serves as both an advertisement and an invitation to reading. The books are stored in an enormous bookcase, which stretches from the ground floor to the ceiling of the fourth floor.

Newcastle City Library

Ryder Architects 2009.



The transparent design reveals the building's internal activities and allows people to see into the marble floored atrium space, encouraging them to enter the library and explore further. An observation deck on the top floor, gives visitors spectacular views out over the city. A fine, if somewhat expensive, building but Newcastle Council is looking to cut £7m from its library budget with most of the city's 18 libraries being at risk of being shut down or passed to volunteers.

Winchester Discovery Centre

Hampshire County Architects. 2007.



Winchester Discovery Centre is the flagship project for Hampshire County Council's library rejuvenation scheme now stopped after a change of political control. The project restored and extended the Grade II* Corn Exchange to provide a library, gallery, performance hall and café. The Discovery Centre is now used by a much more diverse cross-section of the local population and has become a new public place for Winchester. The originator of the idea, Yinnon Ezra, has now been invited to advise the DCMS on the future of libraries.

A "HEREFORDSHIRE CENTRE"



Central Atrium The Hive

Hereford Library Users' Group has, in the past few years been researching and developing its ideas and proposals for a new Herefordshire Centre that would incorporate a new central library for the city and county.

With the Old Cattle Market (ESG) project

there has been much talk of regenerating the city but experience elsewhere shows that a key factor in any successful redevelopment is a "landmark" centre. In the original concept of ESG a civic quarter was proposed which could have included such a building bringing together a whole range of activities. It would have become a focus for both the county and visitors and its contribution to economic regeneration would be enormous. Unfortunately we are now in a situation where political and commercial considerations have resulted in this opportunity being missed. Nevertheless HLUG continues to develop its ideas and regularly puts these to Herefordshire Council in an effort to obtain both a new library and public centre that would do so much to enhance life in Herefordshire.

The nearest example of what can be achieved is The Hive at Worcester which includes the County Library, the University library, the "Worcestershire Hub" as the main information and contact point with the Council, and historical archives and records. It has 10,000 sq.m of floor space and houses a quarter of a million books, 800 study stations and 26,000 historical records all contained in a very striking and award winning building with many innovative and environmentally friendly features. Its gold roofs have already become an iconic sight in the city. Well worth a visit to see what Hereford is missing.

How did it get financed and built? Anna Hannaford (Director of Information and Learning Services at University of Worcester explained. "It has taken eight years and £60m to reach this point. The project began in 2004 when the University of Worcester was planning a city centre campus and Worcestershire County Council was looking for more space for its public library. We discovered then that both shared a commitment to high quality education, social inclusion and cultural values, as well as to

excellent customer service and information".

"While university and public libraries may go about things in different ways, their visions and missions are quite similar. Public libraries started originally as a force for education and social good, as well as for community and social inclusion, while the earliest universities were groups of scholars congregating around libraries.



Lending Library, The Hive

The idea of the university and local authority joining forces caught the imagination of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), which offered £5m in strategic development funding, and another £5m as an interest free repayable loan. The rest came from a joint private finance initiative bid between the council and university. An additional £7m came from the regional development agency, because the development was on a brownfield site and promised to deliver jobs and business support."

Worcester was lucky in its timing of raising the necessary finance from a range of funders and the close cooperation between county and university. While a 'Hive' could not be achieved in Hereford as it has no university, Worcester's success does show what innovative thinking and the real commitment of all the various bodies involved can achieve.

How can such a facility, even if not so expensive or on such a scale, be brought to Herefordshire. It needs vision from the Council and recognition of what such a building would bring to the city and county. It requires the production of a proper project brief after detailed consultation with all the possible future users and the public, together with the application of experience from elsewhere, innovative design, an exploration of all the possible sources of funding that might be available and above all determination and commitment.

This Society can add its views, weight and persuasive efforts to try and persuade Herefordshire Council of the real need for such a building and the benefits it can bring to the city and county.

A "HEREFORDSHIRE CENTRE"

The future of the library has never looked more bleak. At a time of severely straitened times for local government finances can budgets still include for the provision of free lending out of public buildings staffed by public servants as well as coping with the 'demographic time bomb'? Is the concept of book borrowing now out of date, with cheap books in local supermarkets (lined with rows of *Fifty Shades of ...*)? Is the alternative cheap electronic replacements or, if in the public domain, free e-books? Don't people use Wikipedia instead of reference books?

Cash strapped local authorities are slashing their arts and culture funding. Newcastle is said to be considering either closing or privatising to volunteers all its branch libraries, leaving only its expensive, PFI funded city library as some sort of iconic outpost. All this is being fought against by local groups of library users, vividly described by our Communities minister as just a bunch of middle class 'luvvies'.

The many of us, who actually use libraries, would cry 'nonsense'. A really good library, responding to present trends in reading and information access, would point to the still resilient figures of book reading. Of

course e-books change the landscape but isn't it amazing that the latest research shows that the use of the electronic version of the printed word has resulted in an **increase** in the printed version?

Books continue to entertain and to inform and offer a vital dimension to our lives. Children blossom on learning to read, students and researchers can use print alongside screen. The elderly find solace in the printed page.

The best defence of the library is to see the places up and down the country that provide a really exciting centre for their community some of which we have described above. Here people can read or borrow books, use computers to research local and national archives, come face to face with information and advice centres and most importantly take their children to encounter the wonderful world of children's books .

Don't believe us? Then go to Worcester and visit The Hive, where you can see the future of libraries in action - please Herefordshire, can we have one?

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This supplement has been compiled by John Faulkner and John Hitchin using information that HLUG members have collected from visits to modern libraries and a wide variety of sources for which we are grateful but cannot all be attributed due to lack of space