

LibCast issue 3, September 2007

Introduction by Wendy Pirie, Acting Librarian

Hello, I'm Wendy Pirie, Acting Librarian, and I would like to welcome you to the third edition of LibCast, our Library podcast magazine. This issue is specifically targeted at new students and staff to the University of Aberdeen. It features all the important things you need to know about library services and support, from induction tours to vodcasts and podcasts, opening times to specialised subject help – and much more. We hope this brief overview is useful, but please do ask a member of staff for help when you need it.

Background (Wendy Pirie)

Our University has been in existence for over 500 years and we are proud of its rich and varied library collections acquired over that time. During the course of your studies you will be interested in gaining access to books and other items included on reading lists and by your final years you will be accessing primary literature and the most up-to-date and current research in your subject area. In the coming academic year we will spend approximately £2 million on library resources including books, journals and databases.

We have four libraries, 3 of which are on the Old Aberdeen campus. Queen Mother Library (known as QML) is the main library for those studying all subject areas except law and medicine. Our Taylor Law Library is located on campus just a few minutes walk from the Queen Mother Library. Also on the Old Aberdeen campus is our Special Libraries & Archives which houses our valuable older printed and manuscript material.

Our fourth library is the specialised Medical Library. This is located at the Medical School, and is an invigorating 30 minute walk from the main Old Aberdeen campus.

Stock and services (Julia Mitchell)

Hello. While our libraries hold over 1 million books we also have access to thousands of books and millions of journal articles in electronic format on the web. One collection, for example, has over 30,000 recently published items from top quality academic publishers. These resources can be accessed both on and off campus so you can study at your convenience anytime, anywhere.

Also, the libraries have study spaces and PCs so you can use print and electronic resources together. The “wireless cloud” or campus wide hotspot will allow you to use your own laptop and, through the university network, connect to our electronic books and databases.

However, not everything is available on the web so I'm sure you will need to come in and use our libraries at some point!

Specialised subject assistance is available in libraries until 5 pm from Monday to Friday however there are always Library staff on hand to help whenever the library is open, including evenings and weekends.

The libraries here at Aberdeen University provide all the services you would expect of an academic library – you can borrow books, read newspapers, use PCs access our virtual electronic library and even study!

Information for students (Claire Molloy)

Possibly in the first few years of your course you are likely to use our heavy demand collection at the library. This contains all the important books which lecturers expect you to read. From here you can borrow 2 items overnight which might seem like a very short time to read a book. However, it's much better than the few hours permitted by other university libraries.

Undergraduates can borrow up to 15 items, taught postgraduates 20 items and research postgraduates 30 items, from our general collections. In our main library – the Queen Mother Library – we have self-service issue and return machines which make borrowing very simple and quick. An AudioPOD (podcast) is available (<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/audiopods.shtml#facilities>) which shows you exactly how to issue and return your library books. If you don't have time to look at the recording, you can read the instructions in the text of the podcast instead!

There is always so much course work to do - so to help you find relevant reading material we have produced a series of screencast demonstrations which we call VodCasts. They are video-style demonstrations of how to plan searches, and use the library catalogue to find paper and electronic books and journal articles. We have also recorded a demonstration of Scopus – a massive electronic database which is very popular with staff and students, particularly across the Sciences and Social Sciences. They can be played on any computer with Internet access – though Broadband is recommended – so you can watch them any time, anywhere to suit.

Term-time opening hours (Pauline Van der Laan)

Our libraries are open 7 days a week and during term time we are open until 10 pm most evenings. On a Friday we close at 8 pm – students seem to have other things to do on a Friday evening and don't come in to study!

We extend opening hours over exam periods so that you can stay longer in our libraries to revise - check online at www.abdn.ac.uk/library/hours.shtml for up to date information.

Induction tours for students (Elaine Shallcross)

During the 1st three weeks of term we will run induction tours of Queen Mother Library for new students. All you need to do is turn up at either 10.00am or 2.00pm, any day, Monday to Friday, and we'll take you around all the places relevant to the courses you are doing. It should take about half an hour depending on how many turn up. Please remember to bring along your student ID card – you'll need it to get into Queen Mother Library and also borrow books – you may spot some good reads on the shelves as you walk round your subject floor!

New students in the Law School will get tours of the Taylor Library and European Documentation Centre as part of induction for your courses. Postgraduates in Medical Sciences and some Medicine courses will have talks, practical sessions and tours arranged through your departments. These will take place at the beginning of the academic session. First year undergraduates in Medicine will have talks and library tours in November as part of course work.

With so much going on elsewhere on campus you may be tempted to give the library tours a miss and do something else – but we encourage you to come along and meet library staff who will be on hand to help you with enquiries in your subject area. You will have time

to ask questions and pick up a few free library information guides to help you get started with your academic studies.

Please do come into your library any time and ask for help in finding information for your projects and assignments. We will be pleased to help.

Help and support (Susan McCourt)

Hello, I'm Susan McCourt, Principal Information Consultant, and I'd like to tell you a little bit more about the help and support available to you from the library.

Library instructional sessions are often included as part of your programme throughout your degree course.

We also offer lots of practical workshops that you can come along to. Find out how to obtain reliable information for assignments using paper and electronic books and journals. We'll even demonstrate how to Google better!

All of our information lectures and workshops are presented by professional library staff who will prepare you for the information and research work that is essential to your degree studies here at Aberdeen. With good information skills you can make more effective use of your study and learning time and free up time to develop the social skills that University students are so famous for!

We produce an extensive range of paper and electronic library guides, user guides and web pages in support of our services and resources. We are also exploring new ways of presenting information – so look out for our LibCast AudioPOD magazine or use our AudioPOD tours of the Queen Mother Library.

And remember, if you have technical difficulties with PCs and laptops our Help Desk staff, staffed by specialist IT Officers, will be able to help you with IT related problems.

Universities can appear big and confusing places. Academic libraries may seem intimidating and scary – so many books, so much to learn! – but there is always someone to help you. Just ask for help if you need it.

Support for new members of staff (Elaine Shallcross)

Our team of Information Consultants would be pleased to talk to you about library support and information skills training for students on your courses. For all subjects except Law and Medicine the team can be contacted at Queen Mother Library on the Old Aberdeen campus, the Law Librarian is based at Taylor Library, and the Information Consultant for Medicine and Medical Sciences at Medical Library on the Foresterhill Campus. Contact details are available via the Library web page at www.abdn.ac.uk/library/contact.

Information Consultants also run workshops for staff and research postgraduates to refresh your information literacy skills and bring you up to date on our major electronic databases. Most workshops last two hours and are held at various times throughout the academic year in Taylor Building, Room A1. You can book courses, which are free of charge, via the Course Booking Web page at www.abdn.ac.uk/library/training.shtml.

You may be interested in ordering books and journals for teaching and research. This is done through your library representative who is a member of staff in your department or

School. More information can be obtained from our library web page at www.abdn.ac.uk/library/ordering.

If you have any questions about library services and resources or would like a tour of your library please do not hesitate to contact us and we would be happy to help.

Listen out for Doric (Wendy Pirie)

The University attracts thousands of students from the UK and overseas – 120 nationalities are represented and many languages can be heard across campus. Listen out for our local north east *Doric* dialect, more often heard in country areas, but not uncommon in the city itself

Yi mith hear folk spikking lik iss, in winner fit thr on about.

(You might hear people speaking like this and wonder what they mean)

If somebody sez tae yi, fit like min? Yi cood say, nae bad, foos yersel?.

(If someone says to you how are you? You could say quite well, how are you?)

On the ithar haan, if spiert far yi gaan, the answer mith be ben the hoos, or awa ti the libray.

(Alternatively, if asked where you are going, you might answer next door, or away to the library)

Many of the Doric words and phrases are a corruption of ordinary English, but some are unique - **michty, its caaal in at haar, ah'm fair jeelt.**

(Gosh it is cold in the mist, I am frozen)

Fit yi deein iv noo?

(What are you about to do?)

Ach am scunnert,

(Gosh I am bored)

or gwan bile yer heid,

(A dismissive expression, best translated as I would prefer if you leave me alone now, thank you)

but mostly you will hear locals welcoming you with a **Come awa in, its afa fine ti see yi.**

(Do come in, it is so nice to meet you)....

Goodbye for now

We hope this AudioPOD has been of interest.

If you would like to know more about Aberdeen University Library you can visit our web pages at www.abdn.ac.uk/library or download our AudioPOD tour of QML (from www.abdn.ac.uk/library/audiopods.shtml#qmltours).

Thank you for listening.