Aslib: a *de facto* national library/information organization

David Bawden
Centre for Information Science
City University London

Abstract
The history of Aslib, an independent library/information membership organisation in the United Kingdom between 1924 and 2014, is outlined, with emphasis in the ways in Aslib acted as a *de facto* national centre for special librarianship and information work, for documentation, and for technical and commercial information. Its activities in this respect included publishing, training and professional development, research and consultancy, and the maintenance of national collections and indexes. Aslib was also an official national centre for several purposes, generally associated with information retrieval and dissemination.

Keywords

Introduction
This article outlines the history of Aslib, a library/information organisation in the United Kingdom, initiated in 1924 and today a part of Emerald Group Publishing. It focuses on a period of Aslib's activity when it was a *de facto* UK national institution, particularly in respect of special librarianship, documentation, bibliography, techniques for the organisation of information, technical translation, and technical and commercial information management.

For much of its lifetime, Aslib had an unusual, if not unique, situation. An independent non-profit membership organization, with both individual and organizational members, it was supported by substantial government funding, and took a national role in several respects; sometimes with official sanction, but usually informally and *de facto.* So unusual was its situation that its director wrote in the annual report for 1977 that "Strange though it may seem after so many years of Aslib's existence, different people have clung to different ideas about the nature of Aslib, ranging from a professional society, through a research and development institute, to a trade association – mostly perhaps because of the mixture of personal and corporate members of which Aslib has consisted since it was formed in 1949 from an amalgamation of the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux and the British Society for International Bibliography". This tangled history, as it relates to Aslib's national role, will be outlined below.

The name of the organization has also been mutable: it has been known at various times as: The Association for Special Libraries and Information Bureaux; Aslib; the

Association for Information Management; and ASLIB. It will be referred to as 'Aslib' throughout this article, reflecting its name at its period of greatest national significance.

The history of Aslib will first be outlined, briefly and with a concentration on those aspects of relevance to its activities of national scope. Then the article will examine of the specific activities carried out by Aslib as a national centre, whether officially nominated or *de facto.*

History

The story of Aslib has been described in detail by several writers (Bawden and Robinson 2016, Muddiman 2005, Muddiman, 2007, Pearce 1967, Ditmas 1961, Hutton 1945, Wilson 1976), and will only outlined here, with a focus on its national role.

The idea of the organisation having been first mooted in 1924, Aslib was founded in 1926, as the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux, to represent and support the numerous small libraries, intelligence centres, and technical information sections, which had been set up in Britain in the previous few years. These were located in private companies, in universities, in larger public libraries, and particularly in government-supported research associations for specific areas of science-based industry. They were a response to the needs of the newer 'information intensive' industries, based on developments in chemistry, materials science, metallurgy, electricity, and precision engineering. Information provision in these contexts had to go beyond that provided in traditionally-organised libraries, and to use to technical and intellectual tools developed by the documentation movement of Otlet and LaFontaine (Rayward 2008, Wright 2014).

In order to try to support the activities of these, typically small and isolated specialised information centres, and to spread good practice, a conference was held in September 1924, at Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire, "open to all men and women who need to utilize information systematically, or who are interested in the conduct of information bureaux, intelligence services and special libraries". It may be noted that, from this earliest stage, Aslib was open to information users, and those with an interest in information matters, as well as to information providers; this was one of the factors that made the organisation unique among British information institutions. A second conference was held in 1925, and at a meeting in London on 29 March 1926 the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux was created, as an independent voluntary association, with the objective "To facilitate the co-ordination and systematic use of sources of knowledge and information in all public affairs and in industry and commerce and in all the arts and sciences …". Its members were organisations rather than individuals, membership rising to 400 by 1932; funding came from membership fees, with limited support from the philanthropic Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. This organisational membership, together with its interests in the organization, management and use of information, rather than in libraries *per se*, made it very distinct from other library/information

institutions; repeated explorations over the years of possible amalgamation with bodies such as the Library Association and the Institute of Information Scientists came to nothing, for these reasons.

The new association operated for the next 20 years from a series of small premises in the Bloomsbury area of London, with a staff of just a secretary and a small office staff. The secretary throughout this period was Edith Ditmas, a highly competent woman, whom a national newspaper described as the "Woman Oracle of Russell Square" (Muddiman 2005). She herself contrasted Aslib's position at "the centre of a spider's web of contacts, each with a vast range of sources of information" with its situation as "an organisation whose only visible assets were one small room on the top floor of a tall Bloomsbury house, some ill-assorted office equipment which so filled the room that the wall-cupboards could only be opened when some of the furniture was moved to the landing, two typewriters and a typist"(Ditmas 1961, p. 269). Although Aslib's office remained London-based, branches in the UK regions were formed in the 1930s, and remained an active feature of Aslib throughout its existence.

Internationally Aslib became closely tied into the pan-European efforts to develop the documentation movement into what became in 1937 the Federation International de Documentation (FID). There were also links with the USA: Hutton (1945) notes that that a representative from the US National Research Council was present at the Hoddesdon conference, and thereafter there were few Aslib meetings without an American representative or contribution. Aslib was therefore, from its earliest days, a *de facto* British national node in the documentation network.

Aslib's main activities throughout the period from its formation to the outbreak of the 1939-45 conflict were aimed at fostering co-operation within the special library sector, enabling interaction and exchange of experience between those working in the area, acting as a clearinghouse for specialized information, to promoting the wider dissemination and better use of published information. It established an annual national conference, began publishing a range of directories and reference works, and provided a telephone enquiry service on sources of specialised information. A register of specialist translators was established in 1931, an indicator of an area in which Aslib was to be heavily involved for several decades.

The outbreak of war in 1939 initially caused predicable problems for Aslib, as its regular activities and membership decreased due to wartime conditions. However in the longer term, its contributions to the war effort greatly increased its profile, and established it on its post-war path. Most notably, Aslib established a service to obtain materials of all kinds whose acquisition was hampered by wartime conditions, and distribute them through the new medium of microfilm. This highly important activity was Aslib's first genuinely national role.

 Other wartime activities included a series of 'War Time Guides to Specialized Sources of Information' in important technical and industrial areas, and an expanded enquiry service. A series of short training courses in special librarianship were also

run from 1943 onwards, and proved very popular; Aslib's first textbook, a manual of special library technique, was published to supplement these courses. This was the origins of activities which were to become central to Aslib in subsequent decades.

 The value to the nation of these activities was recognised by the British government which, in 1944, made a substantial grant to Aslib over a five year period, via the Department of Scientifc and Industrial Research (DSIR). This was the start of a 40-year period in which Aslib received substantial government support, largely as direct grants proportional to the membership, with some additional fees for undertaking specific tasks; initially from DSIR and latterly from the Office for Scientific and Technical Information and lastly from the British Library. In this way, although remaining an independent organisation, Aslib was financially tied in to the national information infrastructure, as a co-ordinator and facilitator of the national system of special libraries and technical information centres. Its high status as a result of its wartime contributions saw ASLIB participating in numerous committees and official bodies relating to information and documentation, and it took a significant role in the influential Scientific Information Conference organized by the Royal Society in 1948. With a membership of over 1,000 and a staff of 16, Aslib expanded its activities of enquiry service (with over 3,000 telephone enquiries and over 30,000 written enquiries per year by the end of the 1940s); conferences and education, including an ambitious programme of short courses, which are discussed below as one of Aslib's national roles; international activities; promotion of, and lobbying for, the importance of special libraries and technical information; and publications, now including academic journals and conference proceedings. It transformed itself into a new organization with a new corporate structure, and a new name, by combining with the British Society for International Bibliography, with which it had long had close links. The new association was simply titled 'Aslib'. The joining of the two organizations, one with a largely institutional membership, and one with exclusively individual members, gave a unique flavour to the organization.

Muddiman (2005) sums up the situation at the end of this phase of Aslib's life by agreeing with its claim that it was generally recognised as the main British clearing-house for specialised information, and had scope for expanding this role in several ways in an increasingly information conscious environment. As a partly state-supported independent entity, it was a typical part of the developing social democratic state.

The period from 1950 to 1980 saw Aslib's most significant contribution as a nationally-significant organisation, as it became a major force on the national and international information scene. Operating from larger premises in West London, the organisation increased its staff to a maximum of 70, serving a membership of 3,000 at its peak; at least 20% of the membership was from outside the UK throughout the period, with over 70 countries generally represented. In addition to the regional branches, Aslib established special interest groups, representing industry sectors, such as aerospace, engineering, textiles, food and agriculture, chemicals, social sciences, electronics, and fuel and power, and processes and techniques, such as technical translation, mechanization (later computer applications) and co-ordinate

indexing (later informatics). Some of the larger groups, with memberships of several hundred, had activities and reach equivalent to that of professional bodies in their own right, and some undertook original research; for example, the Informatics group's study of the indexing process (Jones 1983). Aslib was the only organisation in the UK providing support for these specialist aspects of information work; another claim to national status. The branches and groups contributed greatly to Aslib's activity, with extensive programmes of events and publications complementing the central provision (Wilson 1960).

Conferences and meetings were a major preoccupation. The Aslib annual conference became one of the major events of the year for the information professions, and the central one of special libraries and technical information, and a great variety of both regular and ad hoc conferences and meetings were organized, both centrally and by groups and branches As the British representative of FID, Aslib organised the influential Dorking conference on classification in information retrieval.

Training programmes for special library and information work were developed further, This was another contribution to the national information scene, to be discussed below. There were typically at least 10 Aslib events, including training courses, per month throughout this period, rising at times to 20. Courses were complemented by demonstrations and exhibitions of equipment and procedures, such as photocopying, journal binding, and computer applications.

Aslib took a lead in the development of formal training for those engaged in special librarianship and technical information work, joining in discussions with the UK Institute of Information Scientists on, and endorsing the syllabus of the two year evening course at Northampton College of Advanced Technology (later City University London), which later became the MSc Information Science (Robinson and Bawden 2010). Aslib produced a leaflet on 'Information work as a career', aimed at school leavers and college students, which was effective for many years in bringing publicity to what had been a little known profession.

The publications programme expanded, to encompass journals and other periodicals, directories, bibliographies and guides to information sources in specific subjects, a series of Aslib manuals, providing detailed and practical advice on special library topics, and textbooks and monographs on a variety of information-related topics. Aslib thereby became one of the few major British publishers on library/information subjects, with a unique focus on publications relevant to special libraries, technical information and documentation. The contents list for the third edition of the influential 'Aslib Handbook' (Ashworth 1967) gives a good indication of what Aslib considered to be its central interests at the height of its influence: the special library and information service; administration; selection and acquisition; classification; information retrieval; filing and storing; technical report literature; library planning; service routine; subject enquiries and literature searching; abstracting; publications of the information department; mechanical aids in library work; organizations in the special library field.

Within the Aslib publications programme, the provision of indexes and registers of theses, translations, translators and indexers had a particular national significance.

The enquiry service, renamed later as the information service, continued its work of providing answers and referral to technical queries. It was complemented by a new in-house Aslib library, with a collection of journals, books and pamphlets, and facilities for document reproduction. This dealt with queries on a variety of specialised library/information issues, and became a national centre for information organisation tools.

A 'staff employment register' was established by the membership department. This later developed into a full recruitment agency activity, the Aslib Professional Appointments Register, one of very few dealing primarily with library/information jobs, and the only one focusing on employment in the special library sector.

Lobbying and promotion activities involved a continual process of direct contacts with government ministries and agencies, and with international organizations, on many information related topics. Aslib were also represented on numerous national and international committees and working groups of many organisations, and were the official, or de facto, British representative on several international bodies, as noted below. Towards the end of this period, as online searching became a topic of importance, Aslib became both a national and a European centre of expertise in this area.

A major research and consultancy activity was established from the mid-1950s, with very close links between the two activities; rigorous research with clear practical application became the hallmark of Aslib's research, and the consultancy work benefitted directly from research results. It was by far the largest provider of library/information consultancy in the UK, with much work also carried out internationally, and became accepted as the *de facto* national centre for research in information science and documentation.

From about 1980, Aslib's fortunes started to wane, for a variety of reasons, which affected many other information-related organisations in similar ways. Crucially, the British government ceased to offer direct financial support, not only to Aslib, but also to the research associations and similar bodies which made up a significant part of the membership. The decline of British science-based industry over the period had a direct effect on Aslib's membership, as did changes in the information environment, which led to the merging, downsizing or closure of many special libraries and information centres.

The result was a gradual reduction in Aslib's activities over the next three decades, accompanied by a series of moves to increasingly smaller premises, as the organisation sought to operate on a fully commercial basis. The research and consultancy activities were run down from 1985, and to many observers this marked the beginning of the end of Aslib's unique national role. Aslib's new vision was for a leadership role in the development of information management in the UK, with a

focus on membership services, publications and professional development; at the same time, the by-line 'The Association for Information Management' was added to the Aslib name.

The publications and training programmes both expanded through the 1980s and 1990s, with a particular emphasis on technology, online searching and latterly the Internet. However, in 2002, a further major downsizing took place, as ASLIB abandoned their publication activity, selling their books business to Taylor and Francis, and their journals to Emerald Group Publishing. Shortly thereafter, the library and information service was closed, and its stock, including its unique collections, was dispersed. By this time, membership had fallen to under 800, and staff numbers to 10, and any claims to a continuing national role rested on the unique portfolio of training courses still being offered. In 2010, unable to continue as an independent organisation, Aslib became a part of Emerald Group Publishing. Initially continuing as a membership organisation, Aslib was converted at the start of 2015 into a professional development arm of Emerald.

Having set out the overall history of the organisation, we now consider in more detail these aspects of Aslib's activities over the years in which it could reasonably be said that Aslib was the national centre. They are organised for convenience, neither in order of importance or in chronological order, in five groups:
- designated national centre or representative
- national collections and indexes
- publications
- training and professional development
- research and consultancy

National centre and representative
In certain cases, Aslib acted a nominated national information centre, or national representative to an international organisation.

The first of these was during the 1939-45 conflict, when Aslib acted as a national agent for acquiring and distributing scientific and technical literature which was no longer available through the normal channels; mainly that originating in the countries of the Axis powers, or those under Axis occupation. For full details, see Moholny (1946), Colyer (1983) and Richards (1989). This role stemmed from the need to keep up, and increase, the flow of information for industrial and military purposes, in face of the disruption to the normal publication and communication channels, due to shortages of materials and personnel, and the cessation of communication with continental Europe, as well as potential and actual destruction of collections through bombing. In 1941 Aslib was funded by the Royal Society and the Rockefeller Foundation to research the problems and propose solutions.

This study led to Aslib designing and managing a service to obtain difficult-to-obtain materials of all kinds, generally obtained through neutral nations, particularly Sweden, Turkey and Portugal. These were reproduced via the relatively new

technology of microfilm, and distributed to Allied scientific, industrial and military recipients worldwide. Funded by the UK and US governments, the microfilming operations were carried out first at the Science Museum in London, and subsequently at the Victoria and Albert Museum, for lack of space at Aslib's offices. The service, kept secret throughout the period of its operation, made a considerable contribution to the war effort, and was maintained after the war's end, management of the service being passed on to the Royal Society of Medicine, though still under the overall auspices of Aslib. The Aslib microfilm service continued in this way until 1978.

In the 1970s, Aslib became the UK centre for promotion of the new technology of online searching. In 1976, the organisation was nominated a EUSIREF (European Association of Science Information Referral Centres) centre for the EEC, working to increase effective use of online information, by demonstrations and training courses, training materials and lists of databases etc., and coordinating user feedback. Then, from 1979, Aslib became the UK national online information centre sponsored and funded for 5 years by the British Library and Government Department of Trade and Industry. This involved offering an advice and enquiry service to any UK users and potential users of online information systems, and the publication and dissemination of *Online Notes*, a monthly printed newsletter on online developments worldwide. A database on UK online users was maintained, with a referral service, by which users could be put in touch with experts in particular subjects or databases (Dibb 1980). Aslib were able to back up this provision by carrying out research into online use, and offering consultancy on introducing online effectively. A series of publications on online issues, including reference works, monographs and practical 'how to' guides', and new training courses, aimed at both novice and experienced online users, emphasised Aslib's position as the national focus for this area.

Aslib also served as British national representative on a variety of international organisations, and their committees, including the International Federation for Documentation, the International Standards Organisation, EUSIDIC (the European Association of Information Services), UNESCO, UNISIST and IFLA.

Finally, Aslib formed a good working relationship with the British Library (BL), especially on training matters. Special sessions of Aslib's mechanisation courses were run for BL staff, and courses were delivered jointly by Aslib and BL trainers on patents information, and on interlibrary loan.

National collections and indexes
Aslib undertook several initiatives to provide what were effectively national collections or bibliographic tools for materials in its primary areas of interest: technical information and documentation.

During the 1960s, the Aslib information service took on the role of systematically collecting thesauri, subject heading lists and special classification schemes, storing them in printed form in the Aslib library, classified by Universal Decimal

Classification, regularly issuing list of their holdings, and giving access to interested parties. In 1979, this arrangement was formalised when the British Standards Institute nominated Aslib as the official clearinghouse for thesauri created in Britain, including those planned or in preparation. This last arrangement was intended to give notice to anyone considering creating a thesaurus of any similar work being undertaken. In conjunction with this activity, Aslib conducted research on information organisation and retrieval - including the oversight of the Cranfield retrieval experiments on behalf of the funders, the US National Science Foundation - undertook consultancy including the creation of classifications and thesauri, conducted training courses in thesaurus construction and related topics, and published numerous monographs and guides, including the classic texts of the subject (Aitchison and Gilchrist 1972, Gilchrist 1971, Vickery 1960). There was also, for a time, a register of specialist indexers, though this did not achieve the long-lasting success of the equivalent register of translators, perhaps because of the existence of an equivalent register at the Society of Indexers. These activities continued for over three decades. Unfortunately, no attempt was made to digitise the collection, or to collect digital vocabularies, and the collection was dispersed when the Aslib library was closed in 2003. Publication and training in the area continued to the present day, and Aslib was undoubtedly the UK national centre for this aspect of information science and documentation for most of its history.

Aslib produced several national indexes and registers appropriate to their interests in scientific and technical information. Aslib's long-standing in the translation of specialist information resulted in the production of the *Aslib Index to Unpublished Translations* from 1951, later renamed the *Commonwealth Index to Unpublished Translations*. As with the listing of thesauri, this included translations in preparation. By 1979 the index included half a million records. This was complemented by a register of subject-specialist translators, indexed by language competence and subject specialism, which in 1950 included 126 names. There was also an index to bilingual dictionaries suitable for translation purposes. This set of resources made Aslib the *de facto* national centre for technical translation for many years (Glover 1979). They were supported by extensive research into language barrier issues, by training courses and conferences dealing with translation issues, including from 1978 the highly-influential *Translating and the Computer* conference series, which continued for over three decades and by the activities of Aslib's technical translation group.

An 'Index to Theses' from British universities was produced annually by Aslib from 1953, while from 1969 to 1980 Aslib partnered with the Library Association in producing the Library and Information Science Abstracts secondary service, the only service of its kind ever produced in Britain (Gilchrist and Presanis 1971).

Publications
For many years, Aslib was a leading publisher library and information science materials, and the most significant British publisher of material on documentation,

special librarianship, technical and commercial information, information management, new technology , and technical translation. The publications programme encompassed academic and practitioner journals, newsletters and current awareness bulletins, monographs and textbooks, conference proceedings, handbooks and short practical guides, research reports, reviews and state-of-the-art reports, reprinted compilations, reference works, directories, guides to sources, and bibliographies. No other British publisher had anything like this range or diversity of material, and this is another aspect of Aslib's national role.

In respect of national issues, it may be noted here that Aslib's publications activity included materials relating to national libraries, includes three volumes of an Aslib Reader on National Libraries, edited by Maurice Line, which reprinted seminal papers with commentary. Also, from the 1990s, Aslib's *Managing Information* newsletter gave extensive coverage to news from national libraries, particularly the national libraries of the United Kingdom, and the Library of Congress.

Training and professional development
As noted above, Aslib's training activities began during the 1939-45 conflict, providing basic orientation and instruction to those entering special library work at a time of disruption of the normal systems for learning on the job. This was continued after the war, with provision of training courses, typically lasting a week, for new entrants to special library and information work; separate courses were provided for junior and senior staff. These were highly successful, and ran for many years, at a time when neither universities nor other professional associations nor commercial training organisations provided training for this area; another example of Aslib taking a *de facto* national role.

Subsequently, the training programme expanded to become, and remain, one of Aslib most prominent activities. This involved short courses - initially typically 3-5 days in duration. which over time came to be typically one-day or even half-day - but also meetings on specific topics which had a training component; from 2006, some courses were offered by distance learning. The training programme covered the whole gamut of Aslib's interests, across special librarianship, technical and commercial information, technology applications, information and knowledge management, and information retrieval. Naturally, provision changed with the times: 'technology applications' initially meaning reprographics, microforms, and mechanised documentation tools, came to cover computerisation and networking. The training programme adapted to specific needs rapidly, and at various times was focused strongly on topics of the moment. For example, in 1985 more half of the 50 courses on offer dealt with some aspect of online searching; 10 years later, the same was true for Internet applications. As in other aspects, Aslib was able to combine its activities, so that the training programmes were supported by publications on the topics covered, and by research into training needs and methods.

There was always a significant international element to Aslib's training programmes; not only did many individual participants from overseas attend courses in the UK,

but the training programmes were provided at a variety of overseas venues. There were a number of specific overseas training initiatives, most notable a project for the Open Society Institute which led to the establishment of a network of library/information training centres in countries of Easten Europe and Central Asia (Robinson and Glosiene 2007).

This level of diverse activity meant that Aslib was, for much of its active life, the most important provider of training for the UK library and information workforce; many of its trainees came from beyond the special library sector, coming from public, academic and national libraries. The 1981 Aslib annual report stated that "Aslib maintained its position as the major UK provider of short courses in the library and information field", and this was true for many years before and after.

Research

As noted above, between the 1950s and the 1980s, Aslib undertook a wide variety of research. At the early part of this period there was no research activity in this area in universities, nor any commercial consultancy provision. Aslib was therefore recognised for much of this period as the *de facto* national centre for research in documentation and information science. Meadows (2008, p.11) notes that "for three decades from 1955 onwards, the Aslib Research and Consultancy department was a major contributor to the development of research in the subject both nationally and internationally. Its main interests lay in the evaluation of operations, user studies and automation, and a number of the research projects carried out were of long-term interest ... The final closure of the department by Aslib was therefore a blow of UK research".

With a staff of over 20 at its largest, Aslib's research department produced a remarkably wide variety of results, with a focus on the general areas of library and information management, technology applications, and use and users of information (Taylor 1978, Vickers 1981, Gilchrist, Martyn and Vickers 1999). Again there was a synergy with other aspects of Aslib's work, the research providing a basis for consultancy and advice services to the membership, and its results being published in Aslib's journals and research reports.

Aslib's research was always of an applied or practical nature, and indeed one of the strengths of the organisation throughout its history was its integration of research with practice. It might be noticed however, that the Aslib research department was a kind of training ground in itself, giving a foundation to the careers of several individuals who went on to become national and international leaders of the library/information discipline. Among these, we might particularly mention Brian Vickery (later Professor of Librarianship, and Director of the School of Library, Archive and Information Studies at University College London), Blaise Cronin (later Professor of Information Science at Strathclyde University, and Dean of the iSchool at the University of Indiana), Steve Robertson (later Professor of Information Science at City University London) and F. Wilfred Lancaster (later Professor of Library

Science, and Head of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign).

Conclusions

As noted above, for most of its existence as an independent organisation, Aslib had an unusual structure and position in the British and international information science scene. This resulted in its occupying a unique situation, as a membership organisation taking on a *de facto* national role, in addition to its nomination as an official national centre or representative in several contexts. It was also unusual in being the national, and to a considerable extent international, centre for special, technical and commercial libraries and information centres, and a seed for the growth of the British documentation movement and its growth into the discipline of information science. It gave a national focus and impetus to the introduction into libraries and information centres, and in particular into smaller units, of documentation methods, of quantitative techniques of management, of systematic user surveys, and of computer applications, library management software, text retrieval systems, online searching and Internet use.

While Aslib was at the peak of its activity, between about 1955 and 1985, it was able to coordinate several forms of activity around one topic, such as information organisation and online searching; these could include research, consultancy, meetings and conferences, training courses, publications, and enquiry and advisory services. Few, if any, other national information organisations have been able to match such a pattern of activity.

In the immediate aftermath of the 1939-45 war, with the enthusiasm of that time for science and technology, for central planning and for state sponsorship, if not control, of significant national activities, there was a serious proposal to set up an all-embracing 'British Information Institute' (Muddiman 2005). This proposal came to nothing, but it may be said that, in many ways, Aslib fulfilled this role. Its influence throughout its life was great, and can still be felt today.

References

Aitchison, J. and Gilchrist, A. (1972) *Thesaurus construction: a practical manual*. London: Aslib.

Ashworth, W. (ed.) (1967) *Handbook of special librarianship and information work*. London: Aslib.

Bawden, D. and Robinson, L. (2016) ASLIB. In *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science (3rd edn.)*. New York: Taylor and Francis. *In press.*

Colyer, M.A. (1983) Aslib microfilm service. *Aslib Proceedings*, 35(6), 297-302.

Dibb, L.C. (1980) The databank of UK online users. *Aslib Proceedings*, 32(7), 328-334.

Ditmas, E.M.R. (1961) Looking back on ASLIB. *Library Review*, 18(4), 268-274.

Gilbert, V. (1979), A list of thesauri and subject headings held in the Aslib library. *Aslib Proceedings*, 31(6), 264-274.

Gilchrist, A. (1971) *The thesaurus in retrieval*. London: Aslib.

Gilchrist, A. Martyn, J. and Vickers, P. (1999) Jumping through skylights: recollections of the Aslib Research and Consultancy Department. *Managing Information*, 6 (November 1999), 31.

Gilchrist, A. and Presanis, A. (1971) Library and Information Science Abstracts: the first two years. *Aslib Proceedings*, 23(5), 251-256.

Glover, W. (1979) Services provided by Aslib relating to translations. *Aslib Proceedings*, 31(11), 525-529.

Hutton, R.S. (1945) The origins and history of ASLIB. *Journal of Documentation*, 1(1), 6-20.

Jones, K.P. (1983) How do we index? A report of some ASLIB informatics group activity. *Journal of Documentation*, 39(1), 1-23.

Meadows, J. (2008) Fifty years of UK research in information science. *Journal of Information Science*, 34(4), 1-16.

Moholy, L. (1946) The ASLIB microfilm service: the story of its wartime activities. *Journal of Documentation*, 2(3), 147-173.

Muddiman, D. (2005) A new history of ASLIB, 1924-1950. *Journal of Documentation*, 61(3), 402-428.

Muddiman, D. (2007) The history and development of ASLIB, 1924-1960. In Black, A., Muddiman, D. and Plant, H. (eds.), *The early information society: information management in Britain before the computer*, Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 79-102.

Pearce, J.G. (1967) The origin of ASLIB. *Aslib Proceedings*, 19(2), 64-65.

Rayward, W.B. (ed.) (2008) *European modernism and the information society: informing the present, understanding the past*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Richards, P.S. (1989) Aslib at war: the brief but intrepid career of a library organization as a hub of allied scientific intelligence 1942-1945. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science,* 29(4), 279-296.

Robinson, L. and Bawden, D. (2010) Information (and library) science at City University London: fifty years of educational development, *Journal of Information Science*, 36(5), 618-630.

Robinson, L. and Glosiene, A. (2007) Continuing professional development for library and information science: case study of a network of training centres. *Aslib Proceedings*, 59(4/5), 462-474.

Taylor, P.J. (1978) Research at ASLIB 1959-1977. *Aslib Proceedings*, 30(3), 104-114.

Vickers, P.H. (1981) The work of the Aslib Research Department. *Aslib Proceedings*, 33(9), 368-371.

Vickery, B.C. (1960) *Faceted classification: a guide to the construction and use of special schemes*. London: Aslib.

Walkley, J. and Hay, B. (1971) Annotated list of thesauri held in the Aslib library, *Aslib Proceedings*, 23(6), 292-300.

Wilson. L. (1960) Group activity in Aslib. *Aslib Proceedings*, 12(7), 264-268.

Wilson, L. (1976). Aslib and the development of information management. In Saunders, W.L. (ed.), *British librarianship today*, London: Library Association, pp.15-29.

Wright, A. (2014) *Cataloging the world: Paul Otlet and the birth of the information age*. New York NY: Oxford University Press.