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# Library News

[www.library.uwa.edu.au](http://www.library.uwa.edu.au)



John Arfield and Jill Benn on the Science Library stairs.  
Photo: Lindy Brophy

## Science Library: opening the doors to knowledge

After many years of planning, research, and design, Stage 1 of the new Science Library opened on July 20th. As soon as the doors opened, students were ready to explore. Some were immediately drawn to the collaborative areas on the ground floor and started writing with white board markers on the specially designed glass-topped tables. Others headed through the light, open atrium and up the stairs to find a quiet place to study amongst the book stacks.

"The Library is designed primarily for students," John Arfield, University Librarian and Director (Information Management), said. "Students want to come to libraries to work and, increasingly, they are working together, either informally or on group projects, and there are few places on campus where they can do this."

The role of libraries in a successful campus culture cannot be

underestimated, as Mr Arfield explained: "Libraries are an important part of the student experience and this will be a library for the present, with a sense of the past, looking forward to the future. The building is not just a storehouse for books. There are a variety of different workspaces."

The Science Library has been designed so that all styles of learning and working can be accommodated in different zones.

"The ground floor has open spaces for collaborative work," Mr Arfield said. "Students can move the furniture around to suit themselves, talk, even use their phones. There are spaces designed for small groups to work around tables with laptops, and there are plenty of computers provided."

Jill Benn, acting Manager of the Science Library, explained how the study environment becomes quieter as you move up the stairs.

"The first and second floors are quieter study areas and contain the book collections," Ms Benn said. "There are sound-proof group study rooms, and a parents' room for those with young children."

There is also a special needs room for people with disabilities that will be staffed by UniAccess. "This room has desks that can be adjusted to suit the height of wheelchairs," said Ms Benn, "but there are also six of these desks on the main floor if people in wheelchairs prefer to use them there."

For those who have ventured upstairs but need to use their mobile phone there is a sound-proof CellZone booth provided to minimise disruption to others.

The top floor is designed as a silent study zone. The fittings and furniture have a different style, with a more traditional scholarly atmosphere, and a room for the dedicated use of staff and postgraduate students.

"This is where you can really get your head down and study in silence without distraction," Mr Arfield said.

Work continues on Stage 2, integrating the spaces in the renovated Biological Sciences Library building into the Science Library. This is due to be completed by the end of the year. This area will contain an access grid classroom that will allow classes to be shared with other teachers and students in remote sites over high speed networks. The plans also include a café, which Mr Arfield believes will become an important social nexus.

"The Friday afternoon Science Communication seminars will take place in the café. We hope to bring staff and students out of the labs and corridors to share ideas and build a real community of science centred around the Science Library."

Mr Arfield explained that this \$30 million project is an "investment in the future" specifically designed to "take advantage of the ever increasing opportunities of collaborative learning."

"We wanted this library to embody a connection to the past, showing the stories and the ideas and, in some cases, the struggles of those who have gone before. But at the same time it is thoroughly contemporary, equipped with the spaces and technology needed for today's study and research."



One of three fully grown Magnolia trees planted outside the ground floor. Photo: Lindy Brophy

## Science Library: vital statistics

For the first time in the history of the UWA Library the full range of scientific material is housed in one place. The collections of books and journals for all Science faculties are now integrated into a single sequence that runs to an approximate length of 10,620 metres.

As well as all the material from the Biological Sciences Library, the Mathematics and Physical Sciences Library and the Undergraduate Physical Sciences Library, the collection now includes some items from Store, and the geology and psychology material previously housed in the Humanities and Social Sciences Library.

The Science Library has a total area of 7991 square metres.

Stage 1 of the Science Library is now open. Facilities available in the first stage include:

- A range of collaborative, quiet and silent study areas
- 240 purpose built reader places with easy access to power and data
- 120 new computers and a display system to indicate the number of computers that are free
- 6 sound proof group study rooms
- Spaces designed specifically for postgraduate students and parents studying at UWA
- A Student Internet Support Desk to provide assistance in a range of IT issues

Stage 2 of the Science Library is expected to be completed in December 2009. Facilities provided in this stage include:

- 100 additional computers
- 7 additional group study rooms
- 4 new multimedia suites with high performance computers and a range of specialist software
- Access Grid classroom
- Cafeteria with seating for 150 people



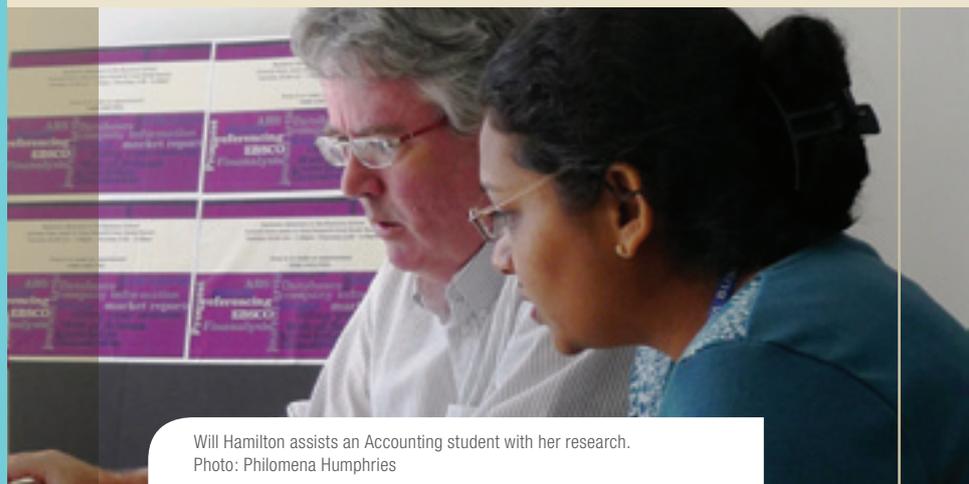
L to R: Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein and Marie Curie in the words of scientists. C.Y. O'Connor as depicted on the end of one of the book shelves. Photos: Kael Driscoll

## Promoting the scientific arts

Walking into the Science Library you first see a large print at the end of the foyer, showing the shadowy images of some of the great scientists of the past: Darwin, Einstein, Newton, Marie Curie, and Brunel. As you come closer to the print, words start to emerge as the faces fade into the background, and you can see that the entire image is actually comprised of quotations from eminent scientists.

"This is a very visual place, rather than just textual," explained the University Librarian, John Arfield. "We see it as being the real focus for science at UWA – getting it out of the labs and corridors and into the public arena."

It was always a focus to make this building distinctively a science library by adorning the walls with relevant images, many of which have been derived from the work of the science community at UWA. "We also hope that students' posters can be displayed here alongside the work of academics and artists," Mr Arfield said.



Will Hamilton assists an Accounting student with her research. Photo: Philomena Humphries

## Getting down to business

Armed with their expertise and a laptop, Librarians Will Hamilton and Michelle Mahoney are now providing a regular information service to staff and students in the new Business School.



Library staff L to R: Julianne Filardi, Jodi Neindorf, Felicity Renner, and Gina Sjepceovich were responsible for putting the Darwin exhibition together. Photo: Kael Driscoll

## Darwin's view of the South West

Marking the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, the Science Library is hosting its first exhibition, **Evolution in Action: Charles Darwin and Western Australia's Biodiversity Hotspot.**

Professor Lyn Beazley, Chief Scientist of WA and UWA staff member, officially opened the exhibition on the 27th of July, with around 80 people attending. Professor Beazley shared a personal story of how she was first inspired to study biology after a visit to Darwin's Down House in Kent, England.

As it was the first official function to be held in the Science Library, University Librarian, John Arfield presented the vision behind incorporating exhibitions into a library space.

"This Library is a place of engagement and of communicating science," Mr Arfield said. "Even in the few hours that the exhibition has been up it is clear that our students are interested. This is a place where visitors to the University can come to see science, and to learn about it."

Once the idea of the exhibition was mooted, Science Library staff started collaborating with scientists at UWA, the WA Museum, and the Botanic Gardens.

"They were delighted to find that so many of them were keen to contribute and provide material," Mr Arfield said. "We were keen that the exhibition should not just be a matter of historical interest but should connect with the present to show how the work being done at UWA now builds on the work of the past to create new knowledge."

On display there are Australian Ringneck parrots (also known as "28s"), coral specimens, beetles, stromatolites, banksia cone casts, and DVD footage of honey possums, wasps and orchids. Charles Darwin's books and written work are also incorporated into the displays.

This exhibition closes on the 4th of September but there are exhibitions of marine science, astronomy, and motorsport engineering planned for the rest of the year.

Professor Lyn Beazley at the opening of the exhibition. Photo: Kael Driscoll



While it is important to showcase current work, Mr Arfield is adamant that libraries also need to provide a very strong connection with the past.

"Newton famously said that 'if I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.' We have tried to articulate that by the use of images of pioneering scientists, made from the stories of their lives, on the end panels of the book shelves."

The shelf ends were also a collaborative effort between the architects and Library staff, using a similar technique to the artwork displayed in the foyer.

"It could be considered a contemporary version of the marble busts found in college libraries in Cambridge," said Mr Arfield. "By using modern technology we can combine words into images, depicting the faces of the giants of the past, and even a few from the present."

The wide range of past giants includes Galileo, Gerty Theresa Corti, Hippocrates, and C.Y. O'Connor, alongside contemporary scientists such as Professor Barry Marshall, Linda Buck, and Sir Gustav Nossal.

Since June, Will and Michelle have been available to assist staff and students in a convenient and casual setting next to the Tony Howarth Case Study Room. The initiative has been warmly received and the Librarians have been kept busy with a range of queries about conducting research, Library services and accessing our collections. It has proved particularly successful with students who combine full time work with study as they can meet with a Librarian before attending evening classes.

And it seems that the change is not just a success with the staff and students; both Will and Michelle are enjoying the more casual setting for contact with their clients.

"Being in their environment, not behind a desk, means they are seeing us as 'their librarians' and as a part of their School," Michelle said. "And thanks to the staff and students who offer us coffee!"

The Librarians are in the Business School on Tuesdays 10.00–1.00pm and Thursdays 3.00–6.00pm if you want to drop by.

If you wish to make an appointment then please contact them via email or phone. Email: [bus-ref@library.uwa.edu.au](mailto:bus-ref@library.uwa.edu.au) Phone: 6488 1777.



Jake Milroy amongst the rare books of the Scholars' Centre.  
Photo: Susana Melo de Howard

## Sharing stories with Black Words

**Jake Milroy, a UWA Arts graduate, is currently working in the UWA Library on Black Words, which is a subset of AustLit dedicated to indigenous works. Jake started at the Library in March and will be working full time until the end of the year.**

"I'm working on the WA, Northern Territory and Torres Strait Islander indigenous authors," Jake explained. "I track them down, different storytellers, and we include where they are from, their language, who they might be related to, background information and history. It's a pretty good job – I get to read a lot of interesting stuff!"

Black Words includes published and unpublished works and oral histories in various formats.

"I've found oral histories to be the most interesting to work on," Jake said. "Some of them are in the original language, and they have English translations as well, and they just have amazing stories of incredible people, providing the bigger picture of Australia's actual history and what happened. Some people have lived until they were like 130 and just seen so much. The other week I added a CD by Noel Nannup who is an elder of the Nyoongar community, and he's got Yindjibarndi heritage as well, so he knows a lot of stories. His CD is called *When the Sea Level Rose* and it talks about the Nyoongar relationship to the land around the metropolitan area prior to Rottnest Island (Wadjemup)

being separated from the mainland. I thought it was important and should be included on AustLit and the rest of the Black Words team agreed."

As Black Words is primarily a catalogue of the details of works, the actual audio of the CD isn't included. Wherever possible, Jake provides a link to an electronic source.

"We work closely with the National Library and Libraries Australia so that people can find who holds the items," Jake said. "Some of the works are really old and you need permission to see them anyway, but it helps members of the public know what's out there."

Jake was born and raised in Perth but his people are Palyku from the eastern Pilbara region. His father, David Milroy, wrote the play *Windmill Baby*, so from an early age Jake has been aware of the importance of Aboriginal writers and their place in Australian literary history. He considers it an honour to be involved in the Black Words project.

"I enjoy being part of developments that encourage the incorporation of our history into a national system of record and believe that having Aboriginal writing readily available on the internet will assist in the creation of more great works."

Much of the material Jake is working on comes from the Battye Library but he has also recently completed indexing all the records of the AIATSIS (Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) materials that were donated to Shenton House. Being based in the UWA Library has allowed Jake to draw on the expertise of Dr Toby Burrows and Charles McLaughlin in the Scholars' Centre.

"Toby and Charles have a lot of AustLit experience and they are very supportive and give me help whenever I need it. It's great working in the Library, it's a good environment and I really enjoy it. It can get a bit isolated working by yourself, so I try to get out and see other people in the Library and look at the different collections."

Jake is hoping to continue his work in 2010.

"AustLit relies on funding from subscribers and donors so my role really depends on that," Jake said. "I could be here again next year but maybe not full time."

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