Boole Library and Lecture Theatre Complex
Leabharlann Boole agus Seomraí Léachta
The Library is named after George Boole (1815-1864) the first Professor of Mathematics in the College. Boole’s “Mathematical Analysis of Logic” (1847) and his “Laws of Thought” (1854) and similar works formed the basis of modern computer logic. Professor Boole was also the first Chairman of the College Library Committee.
"The Library building...is totally inadequate, even for the comparatively small number of books at present placed there. The presses are inconveniently full and new books have to be placed on the floor". So spoke the President of the College in 1897/98 when referring to the Library facilities at that time. For many years afterwards the Library still had to work under difficult conditions with an old and inadequate Main Library, an array of small branch libraries and a large part of the bookstock held in a somewhat distant store.

With the advent of the Boole Library I am pleased to see the end of that era. We now have library facilities which I believe are second to none. The Boole Library will, in time, hold six hundred thousand volumes and nineteen hundred reader places, for a future population of seven thousand students. In these times, students need access to a wide range of books, periodicals and other media, and academic staff need a comprehensive and efficient library to support their teaching and research. The new Boole Library is the only major research library in Munster and is quite distant from other research libraries in Ireland. For that reason, it is our intention to enhance the arrangements whereby the resources of the Library will be available to industries/firms which need information, as well as to scholars and serious researchers from outside the College. There are already some five hundred registered external readers, who have reference and/or borrowing facilities. We hope to increase this number, so that the Library will serve not only the College, but also all those in the region who can benefit from its resources.

The Lecture Theatre Complex in the new Building enjoys independent external access and incorporates four adjacent lecture theatres, ranging in size from two hundred and thirty six to three hundred and ninety two seats with a total capacity of twelve hundred places. The theatres have been fitted out to a high standard and incorporate the latest facilities and, while they have been primarily provided to meet deficiencies in our teaching accommodation, they do, nevertheless, provide a significant resource in the Munster region, the use of which we would seek to encourage as a major conference centre during vacation periods.

The Library is the heart of a University. Thanks to the Government, through its Department of Education and its successive Ministers, and especially to the Higher Education Authority, University College, Cork, is now in very good heart; and we look forward to our Library’s development in the years ahead not only as the heart of our College but also as a vital resource in the whole Munster region.

Táimid thar a bhéith bhuíoch don Rialtas, do Roinn an Oideachais agus don Údarás um Ard-Oideachas as ucht na h-áiseanna nua sin a chur ar fáil duinn, agus glacaimid go fonn mhara leis na dualgasí a ghabhann leo. Táimid munineach de go n-éireoidh linn na dualgasí sin a chomhionadh ar son an Choláiste agus ar son phobal na Mumhan i gcotinne.

Tadhg Ó Ciardha, President
University College Cork was one of three Queen’s Colleges established in 1849; the other two were located in Galway and Belfast. The original College buildings in Cork were designed by one of the most successful architects of the day, Sir Thomas Deane. Using Cork white limestone facing, the Quadrangle buildings were built in Gothic style and in the manner of a typical Oxford College. A quarry lay behind the fourth open side of the original Quadrangle and from this quarry came the white limestone which was used for the buildings. When subsequently purchased by the College, towards the end of the nineteenth century, this area became a playing field for many generations of U.C.C. students.

The old Library was located in the northern wing of the Quadrangle and dates from the foundation of the College. Until the completion of the Boole Library, the old Library (with an intermediate floor inserted) continued to provide service. As the Library holdings grew, improvised branch libraries of various kinds and sizes were established throughout the Campus, e.g. a Medical Library, a Commerce Library, a Dairy Science Library, a Science Library, and an Official Documents Collection. In the end, however, the saviour of the books was the large store in the Lee Maltings area (a disused mal-house, about a mile from the Campus, purchased in 1970) which eventually held about 70% of the books and, later, provided another branch library for students.

Between 1960 and 1970, the student population grew from fifteen hundred students to four thousand students. The student population is now in excess of five thousand five hundred and all indications point to further growth. A Development Plan for the College was published in 1972. This identified as a high priority the need for a new comprehensive
The Brief

A Library Planning Committee was formed by the then President of the College, Dr. M. D. McCarthy, which agreed on the quarry site recommended by the Consultants. Members of the Planning Committee visited nine libraries in Ireland and Britain and eight libraries in Canada and the United States of America. Based on an evaluation of the study tour, a preliminary brief for the Architect was prepared and went through three drafts before being finalised. The Brief, in addition to setting out the new Library areas, citing measurements for each, also stated the following broad requirements:

- Compactness, for ease of access and ease of movement of readers, staff and books;
- Interior flexibility of layout to allow for changing requirements;
- Maximum association between readers and books, and variation in types of reader places;
- A constant environment for preservation of Library materials and comfort for readers to promote efficiency of use, by such means as air conditioning, humidity control and effective illumination;
- Effective security control;
- Capability of extension.

The Site

The chosen site had many virtues. From the point of view of access, it was in the central core of the College. Secondly, a very large building could be located there with one floor below the level of the Quadrangle so that the height of the building would be aligned with the other buildings. Thirdly, the new Library would form the fourth side of the Quadrangle.

The new Building occupies the former quarry site and was designed and constructed to cater for a student population of seven thousand, as projected in the Development Plan and a bookstock capacity of six hundred thousand volumes. It was, however, accepted that all the accommodation would not be allocated to the Library in the initial years of occupancy and approximately 20% of the total area is devoted to transitional uses to meet other essential teaching and functional demands in the College.
The Library is a deep-plan, compact structure on five levels. Four levels, as seen from the main Quadrangle, produce an inverted ziggurat form. The fifth level lies within the depths of the former quarry. A continuous colonnade encircles the building at Quadrangle level (Q) allowing the introduction of natural light through the large windows constructed of solar-shield glass, which is used throughout the building. The overhanging upper floors give shade to the windows on the upper levels; the floor in the quarry obtains some natural light via a number of glazed light wells. On the northern and eastern sides of the top level (Q+3), the architect has provided a large sloping window which reflects the roof-line of the Quadrangle buildings and drops natural light into two sides of Q+2 level via an extended light well.

The building is of reinforced concrete construction, clad with precast concrete panels of Wicklow granite aggregate, up to five tons in weight. The structural grid for the columns is 6.9m x 5.9m. The internal organisation of the Library is straightforward, with the usable areas arranged around a central ‘core’ in which the main staircase, lifts, toilets and main services are located. Two subsidiary ‘cores’ at opposite corners of the floors contain emergency stairs and subsidiary service ducts.

The general reading floors are lit using specially designed and manufactured luminaires run in continuous parallel lines around the central core. Wiring has been provided throughout the building for telecommunications and computer facilities. A large number of computer visual display units (VDUs) is currently concentrated on Q floor to serve Acquisitions Cataloguing and Circulation control, in particular. Carpet is used extensively on the floors and the walls and columns are clad with strong white vinyl fabric. The shelving, seven shelves high, is located around the central ‘core’ on the reading floors, with seating located on the perimeter. There is a choice of seating: six-seaters, four-seaters, two-seaters, single seats and carrels (some lockable). There are one thousand, three hundred and eighty four seats currently available in the Library, together with a bookstock of three hundred and seventy thousand volumes.

Lecture Theatres are located in the depths of the old quarry. The roofs are adjacent to the adjoining ground level and have been terraced, paved and landscaped to form a major new external space in the heart of the College.
Membership of Library Planning Committee
1972-1975

Dr. M. D. McCarthy, President (Chairman)
Professor T. O Ciardha, Registrar
Professor E. C. Dillon
Professor E. F. Fahy
Professor S. Lucy
Professor C. S. O’Connell
Professor S. O Tuama
Professor P. M. Quinlan
Dr. D. I. F. Lucey
Dr. D. P. J. O’Mahony
Mr. J. F. O’Connor, LLM, B.L
Mr. P. J. Quigg, Librarian
Mr. A. Murphy, General Secretary, Students’ Union
Mr. E. McCarthy, College Engineer & Planning Officer (Committee Secretary)
**Q – 1 Level**

**Basement Area**

Q – 1 Level is at present occupied by:
- a microcomputer applications centre;
- student common room and other recreational areas;
- a College bookshop which is operated commercially on a concession basis;
- student travel office and stationery shop;
- two banks operated by the major banking groups on a concession basis.

The remainder of this floor is occupied by the Library where there are audio-visual facilities and the Current Periodicals collection. The Library’s Historical reference collections, the Rare Books Collection and the Cathedral Library of St. Finbarr are in the process of reorganization in this area. It is intended that the Library will eventually occupy the transitional space on Q – 1 as future demand indicates.

The basement area also includes extensive formal lecture theatre facilities of approximately twelve hundred seats, which have been equipped with the latest audio visual and other teaching aids. There are four lecture theatres: two holding two hundred and thirty-six seats, one with three hundred and thirty-six seats and one with three hundred and ninety-two seats, with egress onto a wide concourse and pedestrian mall. There is independent access both to the main Quadrangle level and to the paved open-air concourse in the floor of the former quarry on the southern side of the Library Building.

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**Q Level**

**Quadrangle Level**

The entrance/exit for users is located on the northern side of the Library. On entering the Library, the user finds the Short Loan Collection on the left and the Bibliographies and quick Reference Books on the right. The Main Issue Desk is straight ahead, set well back from the entrance, producing a concourse area which is used for exhibitions.

The principal points for information on the Library’s holdings are located close to the Bibliography and Reference area. These are the card catalogues, the microfiche catalogues, and the IBM DOBIS-LIBIS based online public access visual display units. This IBM online integrated library system, operational in University College Cork since 1983, can also support the Library’s routines in acquisitions, cataloguing and circulation. This system is in operation in over seventy other libraries in Europe, America, Canada, South Africa and the Middle East. It is also being adopted by libraries in Australia, the Far East and other locations.

A loading bay is located on the eastern side of the Library. Next to this, in the following sequence, are a Binding Room, an Unpacking Room, an open-plan room for Acquisitions and Cataloguing (which is located directly behind the Issue Desk) and an Inter-Library Loans Office with telex and a terminal for accessing international computer data bases. On the eastern wall there are Offices for the Librarian, Deputy Librarian,
Library Administration and a Library Staff Common Room.

All areas of the Library have been designed on a flexible basis. The Issue Desk has modular units for all partitions and demountable and modular furniture units allow for ease of future adaptation.

A book detection system is situated at the Control Desk manned by an Attendant at the entrance to the Library.

**Q + 1 Level**

This floor holds the span of books denoted in the Dewey Decimal Classification from 000-400, which includes Philosophy, Psychology, Theology, Sociology, Politics, Economics, Law, Administration, Education, Folklore and Language. There is an old classification on many of the books (which are being re-classified and re-catalogued). Shelves containing books in the new classification are faced and/or followed by books on the same subject with the old pressmarks.

Official Publications and Documents from Governments and the European Economic Community are held on this floor in a glassed caged area.

**Q + 2 Level**

This floor holds the span of books denoted in the Dewey Decimal Classification from 500-600 which includes Pure Sciences, Mathematics, Chemistry, Geology, Life Sciences, Botany, Zoology, and Applied Sciences, Medicine, Engineering, Dairy Science, Agriculture and Food Technology.

**Q + 3 Level**

This floor holds the span of books denoted in the Dewey Decimal Classification from 700-900 which includes Fine Arts, Music, Literature, and History. There is a glassed caged area holding several Special Collections.

Location of Holdings and Library Services

Q is Quadrangle level and floors above and below are shown as follows:

Q + 1 is one floor above Quadrangle level.
Library Staff:


Librarians

Ark, B.A., Dip. Libr (Wales)


Lynn, A.L.A.

Kirkman, B.A., T.C.D., A.L.A.


Laffey, B.A., (QUB A.L.A.)
Summary of Key Data

Accommodation:
Library - 600,000 volumes
- 1,900 Reader Places
Lecture Theatres - 1,200 seats
(in four theatres)

Floor Area:
Library - 11,585 m²
Lecture Theatres - 2,224 m²

Planning Grid: 6.9 m x 6.9 m

Completion: April 1983

Type of Tender: Selected

Cost:
Construction £8.7 m
Furniture, Shelving & Equipment £1 m

Design Team:
Architects:
Murray & Murray Pettit & Partners, Cork

Structural Engineers:
De Leuw Chadwick O'hEocha, Cork

Mechanical & Electrical Engineers:
MacArdie McSweeney O'Malley, Dublin

Quantity Surveyors:
S. McD Murphy & Partners, Cork

Main Contractor:
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in association with
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(Mechanical Services)
M. F. Kent & Co. Ltd., Clonmel
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