

Union List of Current Serials Held In Edinburgh University Library (EUL)

And Some Other Research Libraries in Edinburgh

Liz Stevenson

In its present form the Union List first appeared in 1978, but there was an earlier local co-operative venture which resulted in the *Union List of Current Periodicals in Edinburgh Libraries*, published by the Edinburgh Committee for Library Co-operation. The first edition listed the current holdings of eighteen libraries, including the National Library of Scotland and the then Heriot-Watt College, and was published in 1953. By the time the second edition was published in 1955 the number of participating libraries had risen to thirty six. Local libraries were invited to submit a list of their current holdings and to share, on a *pro rata* basis, in the production costs of £45! Thus EUL with c2000 titles contributed £10 while a library with c100 titles paid only 10 shillings and any smaller libraries 'could probably find the money from petty cash!' The editorial work was done by the Serials Librarian at EUL who maintained a master file which was updated manually in beautiful copperplate handwriting. No further editions appeared, perhaps because of the publication of *BUCOP*, but EUL continued to produce its own inhouse current periodicals list until 1971. A supplement appeared later but by then the work involved in maintaining the list satisfactorily had become too much and an alternative had to be found.

In 1977 the Manpower Services Commission approved a Job Creation Project to assist in the compilation of an Edinburgh Union List, initially of scientific periodicals in EUL and other local research institute libraries but the scope was extended to include all the holdings of EUL and the *Union List* is no longer restricted to scientific periodicals. The database is stored on the University's mainframe computer and the software package used was loaned to us by St. Andrews University Library. Over the years the record format has been modified to suit our needs and the process of adding and amending records has been simplified. The first *Union List*

included the holdings of 65 libraries (48 of these sectional and departmental libraries within EUL) and this has now increased to 81, including Heriot-Watt University Library, Moray House College of Education Library (excluding the Cramond site) and all Scottish Office Libraries. At present there are 27115 records in the database, 22136 of which are current holdings. The National Library of Scotland is not included but does produce a twice-yearly microfiche listing of its own current periodical holdings. The first edition of the *Union List* was published in printed form in 1978 and for the first few years updates on COMfiche appeared twice-yearly. These are available free to participating libraries and on subscription to others.

The editorial work is undertaken by the serials librarian at EUL - new participants send in copies of their current periodicals lists and thereafter notify us of amendments and new entries using preprinted postcards. Each library is allocated a three or four letter code e.g. EUML Edinburgh University Main Library; SHSC Scottish Health Service Centre Library and a key to the library codes is distributed with the microfiche. The *Union List* is updated regularly but now the microfiche is produced only once a year. (Present subscribers will realise that nothing appeared in 1988 and I hope that by the time you read this a 1988 update will be out and that 1989 will appear on time. I am afraid that the delay was due to 'circumstances beyond our control'). However, a copy of the most up to date version can be viewed online by EMAS (Edinburgh Multi-Access System) users and via JANET (Call J.0000 1500 1003) - the user name is LIBRARY and instead of a password, press the return key. This takes you into the Edinburgh University Library Online Information System (EULOLIS).

Option 4 on the menu is *Serials Taken in Edinburgh* and differs from the microfiche list in two respects. Firstly, it includes all the dead titles in the database but is not a complete record of any library's serials holdings as it only includes cessations from 1977 onwards. Secondly, the file includes, on a trial basis only, a list of current

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periodicals taken in the National Library of Scotland but is not a complete or an up to date list of their current holdings. Option 3 on the menu is called *Libraries* which is a key to the library codes used in the *Union List* and is a directory of the participating libraries, including information regarding opening hours and access.

The benefits of the *Union List* inhouse have been invaluable. Inter Library Loans can track down material locally with greater ease and most libraries are willing to admit external users for consultation only provided they telephone first. Readers are impressed when we can locate titles for them quickly, and if any of our issues are missing or volumes are at binding we can usually suggest other libraries they could try. Also, at a

time when we are in the midst of automation, readers can check current titles in the serials list instead of jumping between two catalogues.

New participants and subscribers are welcome and anyone who is interested should contact Liz Stevenson, Serials Librarian, Edinburgh University Library, George Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9LJ. (031-667-1011 Ext. 6626). I should say that we no longer ask participants to contribute to the production costs! Subscribers pay a one-off charge of £6.90 and updates are sent automatically each year. The National Library of Scotland Current Periodicals List on microfiche is available on subscription from the Publications Department, National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, EH1 1EW.
