

Profile – Ros Doig

Ros is a relative newcomer to the world of serials. For the past three and a half years she has been the Serials Librarian at the Derbyshire College of Higher Education and enjoys the work enormously. Soon after being appointed she attended the UKSG conference in Birmingham and was inspired by the people she met, what she heard and the aims of the organisation! After the York conference she wanted to be more involved and it was suggested that she put her name forward for the committee – which she did – and was duly elected at this year's AGM in Edinburgh.

For Ros, having only been back at work professionally for four years after a break of some fifteen years as a housewife and mother, her re-entry into libraries is a fascinating story.

She left the College of Librarianship Wales in 1968 and worked in Halifax as a branch librarian for nine months, before moving south to get married and taking up the post of children's librarian at Burton upon Trent Public Library. She spent a very happy and fulfilling four years there before leaving to have her first child.

Ros, whilst bringing up her family, soon became involved in a wide variety of voluntary work ranging from adult literacy to producing the church magazine, along with a fair amount of committee and other organizational work for the various groups she has belonged to over the years.

In 1988 she made the decision to return to work. Ros applied for a relief professional post at Derby Central Library. She was called for interview but didn't get the job. However, what did happen next was to have a profound effect on her future prospects.

Out of the blue, she had a phone call from a senior librarian at the County Library Headquarters in Matlock who offered her a temporary post, working for the Local Government Information Service for two months. As someone was urgently needed, he had picked up the applications

for the relief post, scanned them and then started approaching the candidates. Ros was so stunned and in interview terms she presented herself in a very poor light! However, she was invited to go and meet the people she would be working with and make a decision then. She could hardly believe what had just taken place. Suffice to say she took the job although it needed a little juggling of domestic routine as Matlock hadn't been on her list of locations – being some 25 miles from home!

The work was everything she could have wished for. Everyone was so friendly and helpful and most of all extremely encouraging which was important in building up confidence. During the two months she was there, she answered queries, researched projects and did abstracting work for various library bulletins. The whole experience is one she will never forget and she is grateful to the staff of the County Library for giving her so much.

As Ros' time at Matlock came to an end an advertisement appeared for a maternity cover post at the then Derby College of Further Education, Wilmorton, Derby. She applied and after an interview was offered the post. She started work there before the Autumn term began but the quiet was soon shattered once term started with students wanting to utilise the scope of the library facilities. She soon became familiar with the book stock and renewed her acquaintance with Dewey!

Her work covered all aspects of library housekeeping and administration. One area in particular made a deep impression and that was the number of serial subscriptions the library had – not only that she was amazed at the wide variety of topics they covered. This was her introduction to the world of serials and very important it turned out to be.

Soon she was job-hunting again, needing to have something lined up after her

temporary contract ended. Again to her surprise, a part-time post as Serials and Interlending Librarian was advertised at the Derbyshire College of Higher Education. It also represented a promotion as the salary scale was higher. This time the competition was stiff and included a full day interview – something she was not used to. She was thrilled to be offered the post and is now deep in the world of serials with a secondary responsibility for inter-library loans.

On the morning of the interview Ros remembers thinking about how her career might progress and indeed she was asked about this at the interview. Having made the decision to return to work, she has ambitions to take her career as far as it will go.

Having been back at work for four years and in an academic environment in particular, what are the impressions of the profession she re-joined after an absence of fifteen years?

The most obvious difference has to be in the field of information technology. This area was in its infancy when Ros was at library school. She can vividly remember a talk by the librarian at IBM and sitting riveted by the automation they had in their library. Then it was all on mainframes and the newest issue systems were mechanical.

Now she works in the heady world of PCs, on-line searching and computerised library systems. Whatever happened to the good old card catalogues? The archetypal librarian (at least as depicted by the media), bespectacled, shy and retiring has given way to an army of information scientists and technologists. The printed word is increasingly appearing in media other than hard copy. Libraries have more audio-visual material than ever before. However, books and serials are still in heavy demand! *Plus ça change . . .*

Acronyms/initials have always been popular but they have proliferated since Ros was last working in libraries. IT, VDU, CD-ROM, OPAC, PC, BLS, EBSCO, UKSG, MARC, MASS even journal titles are catching on with JMBA, DR, THE

FASHION BUSINESS, GQ etc.

And what of serials themselves? Funny thing is, Ros can't remember anyone at library school ever talking about serial collections (periodicals or probably journals in those days . . .). Her recollections restrict themselves to searching Library Science Abstracts and the related articles. As for pursuing a career as a serials librarian . . . well, that was unheard of! (Incidentally, Ros has noticed that very few adverts for serial librarians appear in the vacancy lists. They must all be happy in their posts and, as at the MCC, the only way of joining the ranks must be to wait for dead men's shoes!)

Today, however, serials have a much higher profile especially with the advent of sophisticated information systems. The activities of organizations such as UKSG have helped enormously in bringing current thinking to the fore. Ros is hoping to make a positive contribution to work of the UKSG – the areas that particularly interest her are education and marketing/recruitment – she would like to encourage public libraries to join the UKSG. She also wants to make contact with individuals and organizations in France who have an interest in serials.

Although she is actively pursuing career opportunities, Ros finds plenty to challenge her in her work at college. She is currently involved in transferring serial records to BLS and has much to keep her occupied in this area! The library is also looking at the ILLs module of BLS which involves Ros in her role as inter-lending librarian.

Ros's leisure interests tend to be energetic! She enjoys dancing and attends a weekly ballet and contemporary dance class as well as working out at a gym two or three times a week. Her commitments as an active member of a local church take up much of her time. Over the last few years, the family have holidayed in France with Ros arranging economical accommodation and crossings direct with people abroad.

Ros is optimistic about her future and thinks that the next year or two could prove quite interesting!