News – the new BBS library

The BBS library – new location and arrangements

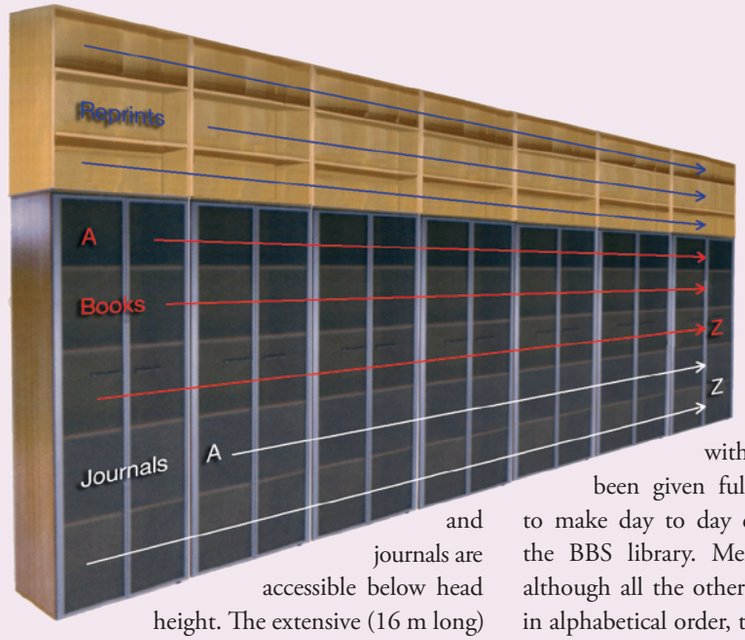
BBS Librarian **Ken Adams** explains the new procedures in place now that the library has been transferred to its new permanent home at Preston Montford.

During my 35 years as BBS Librarian, the BBS library has been accommodated in my house, during which time it has expanded enormously by the acquisition of books, sets of journals and reprints, as gifts from authors, as bequests and by direct purchase. The library is still owned by the BBS, but has now been moved to a more accessible location at the Preston Montford Field Centre, Montford Bridge, Shrewsbury, Shropshire. SY4 1DX – and it now resides in the personal office of the Head of Centre, Sue Townsend.

The main change in the arrangements for BBS members is that BBS library items will no longer be available for loan. The BBS is extremely fortunate in securing the agreement of Sue Townsend to accommodate the library in her office, and members must respect the fact that visiting can only take place when she is not using the office, and must be arranged well in advance and by mutual agreement as to date and time. The advantages for BBS members include the opportunity to visit and browse the collection of around 1,000 bryological books and larger separates, runs of bryological journals, and many thousands of reprints; to make photocopies using the photocopier outside the office (10p per copy); and again by prior arrangement/mutual agreement, and well in advance, to extend their stay at the centre, at the appropriate charge, and make use of lab or bed, breakfast and packed lunch facilities to help in their bryological studies.

Apart from the logistics, the decline in the reliability of Royal Mail, the extensive damage that is nowadays inflicted on postal items, and the frequent losses that occur, have made it impossible to maintain a loans service, and the BBS has therefore decided that BBS Library items will no longer be available for loan. Furthermore, to retain the integrity of the library collection, items must not be removed from Sue Townsend's office, other than for photocopying on the photocopier just outside. Members must also be aware that many of the items are very old and fragile and will not withstand extensive handling or photocopying. The more susceptible items are kept in a separate locked cupboard and will only be available for examination under supervision by arrangement with Sue Townsend.

The arrangement of the open-shelf collection is shown in the accompanying figure. Please note that the glass doors are of toughened safety glass – this does not mean they are unbreakable, it just means that they will explode into thousands of 'safe' fragments like a car windscreen if impacted. All the books, larger separates and journals are accessible below head height. The extensive (16 m long) collection of boxed reprints, however, is only accessible with a step ladder, and for health and safety reasons two people must be present when accessing the reprint box files, as we have already succeeded in exploding one glass door by dropping a box file! Copies of a booklet on how to find and handle the books is available for everyone visiting the library, and a continuously updated list is provided on each shelf for items stacked on that shelf.



◁ Arrangement of the BBS library at Preston Montford. *Ken Adams*

Some 20 m of books and larger separates are arranged in A–Z order of their first authors, the same order as given in the main catalogue. Where sections on bryophytes occur in books such as county floras, these are double-entered in the catalogue under the main and section authors.

A small batch of books is listed separately and labelled to the effect that these can be used in one of the Preston Montford laboratories during courses on an agreed list. Items from the batch must be signed out and back in by the course tutor, by arrangement with Sue Townsend, who has been given full discretion by the BBS to make day to day decisions with respect to the BBS library. Members should note that although all the other items have been shelved in alphabetical order, the reprints have yet to be sorted and integrated.

As noted under *BBS Sales and Service 2008* (see inside back cover) Ken Adams and Martin Godfrey are willing to offer a non-urgent photocopying service for members when one or the other of them is present at PM. A continuously updated catalogue of the BBS library books and larger separates plus journal runs is available by e-mail or on disc (£1.00) from the librarian.

Members wishing to visit the BBS Library and enquire about bed and breakfast and/or lab space should make contact with Sue, or the Office Team at Preston Montford (t 01743 852040; e enquiries.pm@field-studies-council.org).

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