

The

# Bliss

## CLASSIFICATION BULLETIN

ISSN 0520-2795

No. 50, 2008

### CONTENTS

Editorial	Page 1
AGM of the Bliss Classification Association 2007	Page 3
Progress of BC2 in 2007 : Editor's report to the AGM	Page 5
The Bliss Classification Association : Officers & Committee 2008	Page 7
Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2007	Page 8
Classification in Art Libraries ( <i>Clare Hills-Nova</i> )	Page 10
Another reduction at Queens' : Class W ( <i>Liz Russell</i> )	Page 16
Bliss merry-go-round at Cambridge	Page 17
In the beginning... Vol. I, No. 1 ( <i>H.E.B.</i> )	Page 18
Looking ahead : Language & Literature ( <i>Antonio</i> )	Page 19
Amendments & corrections to BC2	Page 22



### EDITORIAL : 30 – 50 – 90

**30** YOUR EDITOR regrettably overlooked an important anniversary last year. The first volumes of BC2 – *Introduction and Auxiliary Schedules*, Class J, *Education* and Class P, *Religion, The Occult, Morals and Ethics* – were published in 1977. The fourth volume, Class I, *Psychology and Psychiatry*, followed close on their heels the following year.

If we had maintained that impetus, at the same level of analysis and vocabulary, we would have completed BC2 long ago, keeping our existing library users happy and

also winning more converts. It could also have provided the source for a single-volume version for schools and a sound basis for further revision and expansion.

The depth of analysis and range and detail of vocabulary have, of course, developed profoundly in the last thirty years, but the price of these achievements has been corresponding increases in complexity and the time required to prepare, check and publish each new schedule. Class C, Chemistry, especially, has for too long presented a seemingly insurmountable hurdle, higher every year. Once that is cleared, the classes dependent upon Chemistry ought to fall fairly readily and swiftly into place.

The classification must be completed soon, if necessary at a rather lower level of detail than that used for the most recent volumes, for the sake of our existing users. In addition, we must work to realise the potential of the scheme as a tool for information management in the digital age. The research currently being conducted into BC2-based thesauri is one pointer in the right direction; we hope to have an account of that in the next issue. We must also move ahead quickly to revise those rather dated earlier volumes and bring the whole to a full, *consistent* standard.

**50** *This is issue No. 50 of the Bulletin.* H. E. Bliss himself began the *Bulletin*, 54 years ago. Some of his original introduction is reprinted in these pages. Although the Classification itself has changed and developed in ways that H. E. Bliss could hardly have imagined, his original concept of the *Bulletin* as a vehicle for conveying additions and corrections, advice and information, and news of applications has not been abandoned.

The early issues were full of reports from British and Commonwealth users of the scheme – BC1 in those days, of course – with comments and suggestions based on their experience. Having said that, today’s Hon. Editor (whose contact details, *with new e-mail address*, appear below) would like to receive far more contributions from readers and users of BC2. Suggestions for additions and corrections to the vocabulary of the published classes are also badly needed. It would be especially pleasing to hear from those “hidden” users of BC2 who are not currently members of the Association.

**90** *AND LAST, but certainly not least, we salute Jack Mills, now in his 90th year. Although not quite as exhaustingly energetic as he used to be, he is nevertheless ignoring any infirmities to tackle the daunting problem of clearing house prior to moving after fifty or more years. (Any offers for lots of ancient BC2 drafts in his inimitable script? It’s too late, they have gone for recycling). Once resettled, he is looking forward to completing those important Bliss tasks he has in hand as soon as possible. We wish him good health and the apartment of his dreams.*

---

*The Bliss Classification Bulletin*

Hon. Editor: Mr A. G. Curwen, Bodnant, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, SY23 3SE

Phone: +44 (0)1970 611861

E-mail: [tony.curwen@zen.co.uk](mailto:tony.curwen@zen.co.uk)

August 2008

***BLISS CLASSIFICATION ASSOCIATION***

**Annual General Meeting 2007**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Bliss Classification Association held at 2.15 p.m. on Friday 23 November 2007 in the Palaeography Seminar Room, Senate House Library, University of London, Malet Street, London.

*Present:* Jack Mills (Chair);  
Jean Aitchison (Personal member)  
Vanda Broughton (University College London)  
Tony Curwen (Personal member)  
Angela Haselton (Tavistock & Portman NHS Trust Library)  
Clare Hills-Nova (Ruskin Library, Oxford)  
Jeremy Larkin (NCH)  
Marion MacLeod (Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge)  
Julie Robinson (Personal member)  
Elizabeth Russell (Personal member)  
Leonard Will (Willpower Information)

1. **Apologies** were received from were received from Steve Burgess (W. Yorks. Probation Service); Clare Castle (Balfour Library, Cambridge); Eric Coates; David Johnston; Chris Preddle; Angela Upton.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes were approved and signed as a correct record.

3. **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

4. **Progress of BC2: Editor's report**

4.1 The Editor spoke to a formal report circulated to those present. [*Reproduced in this Bulletin*]

4.2 Chemistry: new programs built for the generation of the A/Z index had indicated a number of errors in the schedule which had had to be corrected, causing time to be spent on continuing revision.

4.3 The arts: JM spoke of the range and compass of the arts. He reported the publication of Class W, which excluded Music; the latter was being developed as a separate classification and thesaurus.

4.4 Development of BC2 in general: a proposal for funding had been prepared in the hope that substantial resources could be attracted in order to finish the scheme. The Getty Foundation in particular was being approached because of the debt the *Art and architecture thesaurus* owed to the BC2 terminologies.

4.5 The Editor, on behalf of the BCA, thanked the Committee for their work. He particularly thanked two members who had retired during the year, Frank Emott and Richard Crabtree.

## **5. Physical production of the schedules**

- 5.1 The current programs were now working well for the physical layout and the alphabetical index.
- 5.2 Mention was made of the new programs designed by Paul Coates for the generation of the thesaurus format.

## **6. Finance and membership**

- 6.1 Ms. Haselton tabled a written report.
- 6.2 The accounts were looking healthier than they had for several years. This year had seen a substantial increase in the royalties, from the publication of Class W.
- 6.3 The BCA had gratefully received another anonymous donation, and payment had been received for a training course delivered by Tony Curwen to the General Teaching Council for England.
- 6.4 Acceptance of the accounts was proposed (Tony Curwen, seconded Vanda Broughton) and they were unanimously approved.

## **7. BC Bulletin**

- 7.1 The Chair invited Mr. Curwen to speak about the Bulletin, and thanked him for his work in producing such an excellent publication.
- 7.2 Mr. Curwen reported that the original printer had ceased trading, but the Aberystwyth Students' Union had stepped admirably into the breach.

## **8. Auditor's election**

Mr. Mills thanked Ken Best for his work and expressed the BCA's gratitude to him.. He had expressed his willingness to continue, and his re-election was proposed (Angela Haselton, seconded Vanda Broughton), and approved *nem con*.

## **9. Committee elections**

- 9.1 Only David Johnson was due for re-election. In his absence he was proposed (Vanda Broughton, seconded Angela Haselton) and re-elected *nem con*.
- 9.2 Elizabeth Russell was proposed as a co-opted member (Vanda Broughton, seconded Angela Haselton) and accepted.

\* After the meeting had ended Jeremy Larkin approached the Chair and offered to serve on the Committee. He was co-opted for the year 2008.

## **10. AOB**

As there was no other business, the meeting closed at 3.10 p.m.

## **PROGRESS OF BC2 IN 2007: EDITOR'S REPORT TO AGM**

### ***Design and Compilation of the Schedules***

#### **CLASS C: CHEMISTRY**

The sad saga of this class (the most difficult ever tackled by BC2 in the vastness of its vocabulary and the intricacy of its relationships) continued. Although, as reported at last year's AGM, the serious weaknesses revealed by the new A/Z index and its close inspection by the eagle eyes of Eric Coates have been largely resolved, their implications for changes in the structure and order and status of some classes resulted in a great deal of time-consuming amendment.

Then, because of the completely synthetic nature of BC2 notation, the changes in notation for a given class often reverberated, resulting in a need to amend not only the notations but also the instructions for class-mark building.

This work has proved laborious as well as time-consuming. Combined with the need to amend the A/Z index entries, it has occupied us for most of the year. But it is now nearing completion; the two appendices (How to subdivide a class, and Radicals & functional groups) have to be amended accordingly and the job will be done.

#### **CLASS VW DOMESTIC ARTS & CRAFTS and CLASS VX RECREATIVE ARTS**

These two classes, for both of which detailed drafts have been made, are now regarded as being part of the full Arts component in BC2. The second (Class VX) is closely related to Class W (Applied art & design and Fine arts); the first is seen to be a mixed class, embracing elements from Class U/V Technology (previously known as Useful arts) as well as Class VX Recreative arts and Class W Applied arts & fine arts. As such it serves as a logical bridge between Technology (which ends the major sequence of classes in BC2 whose order is determined by integrative level theory) and the other disciplinary classes. The above analysis has also allowed BC2 to seek funding for the completion and publication of classes VW/VX as integral parts (along with Class WQ/WS Music) of the Arts component in BC2.

#### **CLASS W THE ARTS**

This class, after a long gestation, was finally published in early 2007 by K.G. Saur Verlag, München. Our hearty thanks are extended to Colin Ball for his excellent and invaluable work as joint-author of this large class (the BC2 volume is nearly 300 pages long). Class W covers Applied arts & design, and Fine arts; it excludes Music, however, which is being published separately. It is disappointing that no reviews have yet appeared, but one at least is on its way.

#### **CLASS WQ/WS MUSIC**

The small working-group on the finalizing of this class and the development of a thesaurus to supplement the schedules (reported at the 2006 AGM) continued its work. Financial support is being sought for its completion in the next two years, together with the other Arts components noted above.

***A/Z Index***

Work continued on this, as reported under Class C above. BCA would like to express its deep thanks for the work Eric Coates and Leonard Will are doing on this.

***Development of BC2 in general***

Members will be pleased to hear that the urgent problem of BC2 finances and the need to seek funding to help the completion of the system is now being tackled. A detailed application is being prepared to assist specifically the completion in the next two years of the classes in the Arts component, as described above.

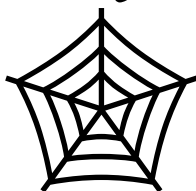
***BCA Committee***

All members of BCA will join us in giving thanks to the Committee for its sterling work in keeping the Association going. Special thanks are due to the officers: to our Secretary, Vanda Broughton, our Treasurer Angela Haselton (and her ever-reliable auditor, Ken Best) and our Bulletin editor Tony Curwen.

We also wish to thank two long-serving and much valued Committee members who left us last year: Frank Emmott of Barnardo's and Richard Crabtree of the University Library at Senate House (who was also the Committee's host at its meetings there). We wish both of them a very happy retirement.



***Change of address! We have moved:***



***Our website is now at***

**[www.blissclassification.org.uk](http://www.blissclassification.org.uk)**



**The Bliss Classification Association**

**an association to develop and promote the  
Bliss Bibliographic Classification**  
(Registered Charity no. 270580)

**Officers and Members of the Committee 2008**

Mr Jack Mills, *Chair, and Editor of BC2*

Mrs Vanda Broughton, *Hon. Secretary (University College London; UDC Observer)*

School of Library, Archives and Information Studies

University College London

Gower Street

*Tel:* 020 7679 2291

London

WC1E 6BT

*E-mail:* v.broughton@ucl.ac.uk

Ms Angela Haselton, *Hon. Treasurer and Membership Officer*

Tavistock Library

Tavistock Centre

120 Belsize Lane

*Tel:* 020 8938 2224

London

*Fax:* 020 7447 3734

NW3 5BA

*E-mail:* AHaselton@tavi-port.org

Mr Tony Curwen, *Hon. Editor, Bliss Classification Bulletin (Personal member)*

Bodnant

Primrose Hill

Llanbadarn Fawr

*Tel:* 01970 611861

Aberystwyth

SY23 3SE

*E-mail:* tony.curwen@zen.co.uk

Mrs Jean Aitchison (*Personal member*)

Dr David Johnson (*St Peter's College, Oxford*)

Mr Jeremy Larkin (*NCH, the children's charity*)

Miss Marion MacLeod (*Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge*)

Ms Julie Robinson (*Personal member*)

Mrs Elizabeth Russell (*Personal member*)

Dr Leonard Will (*Willpower Information*)

. . . . .

*\* Please address all enquiries about subscriptions, missing copies of the Bulletin, etc., to the Hon Treasurer and Membership Officer.*

## BLISS CLASSIFICATION ASSOCIATION

### Consolidated Receipts and Payments for the Year Ending 31st July 2007

#### RECEIPTS

<u>2006</u>		<u>2007</u>
	<i>Balances brought forward at 1st August</i>	
5806.57	Deposit account	6333.30
219.36	Current account	208.65
387.69	Reserve account	394.03
	<i>Subscriptions</i>	
70.00	Personal	190.00
0.00	Institutional	465.00
16.49	Royalties on 2nd edition (K. G. Saur, now Walter de Gruyter) <sup>(1)</sup>	333.34
38.64	Distribution from M & G (Charibond)	64.40
128.75	Alliance & Leicester share dividend	135.25
300.00	Anonymous gifts	1400.00
0.00	Payment for provision of training course <sup>(2)</sup>	250.00
	<i>Interest payments</i>	
97.98	Deposit (Nationwide) a/c	125.28
<u>6.34</u>	Reserve a/c	<u>7.90</u>
<u><b>7071.82</b></u>		<u><b>9907.15</b></u>

Notes: 1: Bulk of the royalties payments are for the newly published (Jan. 2007) Class W Arts  
2: BCA provided a one-day training session for the General Teaching Council

#### Current Assets at 31st July

<u>2006</u>		<u>2007</u>
842.75	Charibond (at cost)	795.97
301.53	Cash in Current account	679.03
395.69	Cash in Reserve account	404.49
<u>7133.30</u>	Cash in Deposit (Nationwide) account	<u>7533.47</u>
<u><b>8673.27</b></u>		<u><b>9412.96</b></u>



**PAYMENTS**

<b><u>2006</u></b>		<b><u>2007</u></b>
31.41	Committee expenses	1124.29
7.85	AGM expenses	199.38
96.58	Bulletin expenses	165.37
<b>Balance in hand at 31st July</b>		
6333.30	General deposit account (Nationwide)	7488.90
208.65	General current account	679.03
<u>394.03</u>	Reserve account	<u>401.93</u>
<u>6935.03</u>		<u>8569.86</u>
<b><u>7071.82</u></b>		10058.90
	Less cheques not presented <sup>(3)</sup>	<u>151.75</u>
		<b><u>9907.15</u></b>

Note:(3) 2006/2007 –Two cheques issued towards the year end but not cashed. To be noted for the following year 2007/2008.

**Angela Haselton**  
*Honorary Treasurer*  
40c Morpeth Road  
LONDON  
E9 7LD

22 November 2007

**Auditor's Report**

I have examined the books, bank statements and other relevant papers of the Bliss Classification Association and find the above statement of accounts to be correct.

**Ken Best**  
*Honorary Auditor*  
30 Cissbury Close  
HORSHAM  
West Sussex  
RH12 5JT

17 November 2007

## Classification in Art Libraries:

Some thoughts prompted by the publication of Class W in BC2

*A talk given at the AGM of the Association, 23 November 2007*

Clare Hills-Nova

History of Art Librarian, Sackler Library, University of Oxford

Thank you to the Association for inviting me to speak; and to David Johnson, St. Peter's College, Oxford, for meeting with me to discuss the Bliss scheme in general. This is a first impressions review, not an in-depth examination of the complexities of the schedule. I am speaking also on behalf of Michael Hughes, my former colleague at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University (otherwise known as the IFA). He and I will be co-authoring any eventual more formal review.

Perhaps I should start by explaining why I was so particularly pleased to have been invited here today.

First, geography: Henry Evelyn Bliss worked in New York, where I was living until last January. In preparing for this talk, moreover, I realised that Bliss's *A bibliographic classification* (1940-1953) was published by The H.W. Wilson Company, where I briefly edited *Art Index*.<sup>1</sup> (Incidentally, the verso of Class W's title page indicates that all four volumes were published in 1953, whereas publication began in 1940, concluding only in 1953.)

But if there was ever a reason to speak at this AGM, it was as a survivor of the 2000 and 2004 U.S. presidential elections, at which New York City resolutely voted against George W. Bush (otherwise known as "W"). You may imagine, therefore, how startled I was by Tony Curwen's opening remark in his editorial for the 2007 *Bliss classification bulletin*: "W is with us after years of waiting, but we think the result was well worth it." To paraphrase Oscar Wilde, English truly is the language that divides the Americans from the British.

It would seem, too, that Bliss himself has divided the Americans from the British in that while the Bliss classification scheme appears to be in a state of limbo in the U.S., in the U.K. its reception has always been much more favourable.

I should also explain how Michael Hughes and I have approached this "first impressions" review. I myself am not now and never have been a library cataloguer

---

<sup>1</sup> Although now known for its bibliographic and indexing services, in its early years The H.W. Wilson Company was something of a publishing power house. During the years that the Bliss volumes appeared, the company published such titles as *Victory: how women won it: a centennial symposium, 1840-1940* (1940), and *Should the Communist Party be outlawed?* (1949). H.W. Wilson also published a profile of Bliss: Eugene Garfield. "The 'other' immortal: a memorable day with Henry E. Bliss" *Wilson library bulletin* 49/4 (1974) pp 288-292. Repr.: *Current comments* 15 (1975) 250-253.

(or classifier) – despite having studied with Michael Gorman at U.C. Berkeley. Unexpectedly, however, at Oxford I have been drawn into the cataloguing and classification debate. Michael, meanwhile, has made a reverse transition. Having started at the IFA in cataloguing and technical services, he has now moved more into the public services arena. (He still knows infinitely more about cataloguing and classification than I do.) But, most importantly, we are both in the business of helping people find the research materials they need, whether this be through accurate cataloguing, expert retrieval systems, or through research consultations. As we thought more about questions of organization, retrieval and access systems, we realized that the huge collections of New York and Oxford illustrate the multiple ways of efficiently accessing research materials. Much of this paper, therefore, will discuss the practicalities of classification decision-making.

### *Art libraries in New York ...*

New York has what is probably the most outstanding collection of resources anywhere on the planet (better even than London) for the art and art-related researcher. Its five world-class art research libraries are the Avery Library, Columbia University; the Frick Art Reference Library; the Metropolitan Museum of Art library system, comprising one enormous and 15 smaller libraries; MoMA's library; and the New York Public Library, whose Art Division's collections are extremely deep. Looking at the way they organize their collections, they all started out with in-house systems.<sup>2</sup> Two have made the switch to the Library of Congress juggernaut: Avery and the Met.'s libraries; one of these (Avery) is completely open-stack, and it is interesting to note that, while Columbia University as a whole uses standard LC, Avery has adopted a truncated form. Most of the mid-tier art research libraries (e.g. Cooper Union, FIT (Fashion Institute of Technology), the IFA and Parsons School of

---

#### <sup>2</sup> Avery Library, Columbia Univ

Initially	In-house system, now closed
Subsequently	Truncated form of LC (The rest of the univ library system uses standard LC)
Stacks	Open stacks

#### Frick Art Reference Library

Initially	In-house system, ongoing
Stacks	Closed

#### Metropolitan Museum of Art Libraries

(16 libraries)

Initially	A variety of in-house systems, now mostly closed
Subsequently	LC (implemented ca. 2000)
Stacks	Watson Library : Closed Departmental libraries : Open

#### MoMA Library

Initially	LC, ongoing
Stacks	Closed

#### New York Public Library

Initially	In-house system, ongoing
Stacks	Closed

Art) are open-stack, and they also use LC. At CUNY (City University of New York), meanwhile, where Bliss himself introduced his own scheme in 1908, LC pretty much rules. It's clear, therefore, that in the U.S., most college and university students learn to navigate libraries through the medium of the LC system. The obvious advantage of this is that they can transfer their open-stack retrieval skills from one library to another.

### ***... and libraries in Oxford***

When I arrived at Oxford last January, I was presented with a quite complex scenario. As you doubtless know, most Oxford libraries developed classification systems of the home-grown variety: not only the colleges, but also many of the collections based in departments, faculties or within the Bodleian and OULS (Oxford University Library Services) umbrella. At the Sackler, an open-stack library, I was astonished to find nine separate or semi-separate classification systems.<sup>3</sup> These schemes originated with the different collections or sub-collections that were merged into the Sackler in 2001. The attitude of at least some of the users of specific collections within the Sackler seems to have been that "their" classification system was absolutely essential to the field of study in question, and therefore had to be retained.

### ***The move to the Library of Congress Classification***

Although my predecessor at the Sackler, Eunice Martin, regarded classification as part of her role as academic librarian, with my arrival the situation changed. By the time I arrived the university libraries' move towards LC was well underway – albeit, as some of you may know, with a much debated Oxford variant. The Social Sciences Library had already been reclassified to LC; and current planning for a new Humanities Library envisages the merger of most of the smaller humanities collections into one building, with full conversion to LC. Interestingly, while the amalgamation of so many collections will doubtless aid the increasingly important trend towards cross-disciplinary research, this is an area in which LC, with its rigid hierarchies and subject demarcations, does not excel.

While there are no plans to incorporate the Sackler collections into this new library, Sackler transition to LC was strongly indicated, both in terms of staffing – and, not least, from the financial perspective. (For the moment, we see no possibility of doing a retrospective conversion at the Sackler, and anyway, to date, LC has not been imposed on all the component collections that make up the library.) Although I was somewhat concerned over the introduction of yet another classification system into the Sackler mix, library users appear to have been pretty unfazed by it. Perhaps the whole issue became a non-issue when, as one user remarked, "What difference would yet another system make?" And from one of our more assiduous (and very

---

<sup>3</sup> These systems derive from each collection's location prior to transfer to the Sackler Library in 2001 : (1) Classics Dept.; (2) Classical Archaeology (Ashmolean Museum); (3) History of Art Dept.; (4) Western Art (Ashmolean); (5) Eastern Art (Ashmolean and Bodleian Oriental); (6) the Haskell Collection (History of Art Dept.); (7) the Wind Collection (History of Art Dept.); (8) "Main" Library (Ashmolean); (9) Egyptological and Ancient Near East (Griffith Institute)

demanding) library users: “Well, can’t we just look it up in the online catalogue?” (As I reflected afterwards, that was supposed to be *my* line.)

My conclusion from this Sackler experience might be considered rather radical by BCA members. So, who cares which classification system we have as long as we can find the books we need? Although I am not sure that Michael Hughes would agree with me in this, both of us did experience a massive transfer of the IFA’s collections to New York University’s offsite facility. With a significant proportion of the collection out of the building, open-stack browsability became increasingly irrelevant. While librarians habitually browse collections online, using call numbers, our users rarely do. (In any case, at Oxford, with so many call number systems in operation, call number browsing online is completely unfeasible.) We do know, however, that users find the offsite books they need, as the offsite requests at the IFA are many, many.

### ***Cons and pros of using LC***

LC, however is unsatisfactory in a number of ways, most notably in its inflexible system of hierarchies; and also in its assumption that N. America, followed closely by Western Europe, is and always will be the central point of reference and therefore is allocated more “space” in the schedules. Bliss, it seems, can accommodate a shifting world perspective much more niftily.

On the other hand, certain features of LC are quite useful:

For example, publications transferred from one library to another do not need to be reclassified. The Sackler is particularly suffering from this issue. Since 2006, we have been able to request publications for transfer from the (closed stack) Bodleian to the Sackler’s open stacks. As our collections profile has expanded dramatically in the past year or so, we have transferred an enormous number of titles. For each title, we have had to classify it. We have an in-house version of this problem at the Sackler itself, where we are looking at transferring part of the Wind Collection (Edgar Wind’s Library), currently located in a locked room, to the open stacks. This collection was originally classified using a unique, vaguely Warburg-related scheme, but titles, when incorporated into the open stacks, need to be *re*-classified using LC. We are hoping that, by the time the transfers begin, other Oxford libraries will already have created LC records for at least some of these titles, so that it will be merely a question of adding our holdings information to the bibliographic record.

### ***So how does BC2 compare, in theory and practice?***

I should note that it is quite rare that we cannot find an LC record in OCLC for a book we acquire, and I do not think we would be so fortunate were we to use Bliss. This, in an era of a £3 million deficit at Oxford University Libraries, is a significant consideration. “Copy cataloguing” can be done by support staff and thus, it is argued, is less expensive. Michael and I have wondered about how copy cataloguing works in a faceted cataloguing environment. Our sense is Bliss’s very flexibility makes classification especially adaptable to the specific library collection in which the book is held. We wondered, therefore, whether a book on (say) the history of the fashion industry at (say) New York’s Fashion Institute of Technology would receive a much more in-depth faceted cataloguing than if it were classified at (say) Columbia’s Avery

Library. Would Avery, whose focus is very different, be interested, therefore, in copy cataloguing the FIT record?

Anyway, as cataloguers and classifiers always hasten to point out, no system is perfect. We thought we'd end by listing a few things we liked about Bliss, and a few other aspects we weren't quite so sure about:

***What we like ...***

- ✓ We really like the cross-disciplinary potential of Bliss faceting. As I mentioned already, this would be ideal for a humanities library such as the one proposed for Oxford University, or even for an art library where we are increasingly purchasing titles of an inter-disciplinary nature.
- ✓ We also like the inclusion of Film and Photography in the W schedule. LC puts Film in Literature (P), while Photography is in Technology (TR). As these areas of the art world move ever closer together, it's great to see them intellectually linked. This would make dealing with publications on Andy Warhol, for example, more straightforward.
- ✓ As a former textile conservator, I was particularly pleased to see considerable attention paid to the decorative arts.
- ✓ We were also impressed that such "new methodology" topics as "the gaze" (W3J UGA) and "world art studies" are catered for, as LC is less good at providing for concepts. And it seemed to us that, while not actually listed in the index, other such areas as "neuro-art history" and "art and agency" (a term coming from anthropologist Alfred Gell's eponymous book) could be addressed quite easily.<sup>4</sup>

***... and some features we weren't quite so happy about***

- We were surprised to find Bliss using the abbreviations BC and AD, rather than BCE and CE.
- Although we recognise that Bliss is far less North America- and Western Europe-centric than LC and Dewey, it was particularly disappointing to find African art, Asian art and Islamic art defined – i.e., listed in the schedules – as negatives of Western art. Craig Clunas, formerly at SOAS and now at Oxford, is one of a growing number of art historians who object to the term "non-Western art", which Bliss uses as the main heading below which they are located. It would have been helpful to try to get away from this kind of world view.
- It's also my impression that coverage of these subject areas is not as thorough as (for example) AAT's.<sup>5</sup>
- Like LC, Bliss uses medium as the principal level of demarcation. While we don't see this as a major issue, some library users really object to this way of classifying the publications they use. The criticisms come especially in the case of artists working in a variety of media – e.g. Michelangelo, whom LC divides among: N (art), NA (architecture), NB (sculpture), NC (drawing), ND (painting),

---

<sup>4</sup> Alfred Gell. *Art and agency: an anthropological theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Toni Peterson. *Art & architecture thesaurus* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 5 vols. (Oxford: OUP, 1994).

NE (prints and engravings after his work), NK (decorative arts based on his work), and even P (since he wrote poetry).

- The question of artists who move around a lot, absorbing different “national” artistic traditions is also a tricky one. The more obvious examples are Picasso (Spanish or French?) and Van Gogh (Dutch or French?), but the global framework within which artists today live, train and work presents more complex questions: How does one treat (say) an artist born and raised in French-speaking Tunisia, now based in New York, and working in traditional Japanese book art techniques?<sup>6</sup> LC doesn’t have an answer to this. One might hope that a faceted classification system could address such questions more easily.
- We – and our shelveers! – had a real problem with the length of some Bliss call numbers. An example is the Dutch landscape paintings exhibition given on page xxxiii of the Introduction: WKB G91 UJ22 9W9 I2Y JDU. One of the Sackler shelveers commented that she wouldn’t want to have to shelve a book with a call number like that. Library users weren’t so thrilled either.
- We found an inconsistency among the comparative examples on p xiii :  
    Painting – Water colour (*singular*) – Landscapes (*plural*) – Indian –  
    19<sup>th</sup> century – Kalighat  
    Painting – Water colours (*plural*) – Landscape (*singular*) – Indian –  
    19<sup>th</sup> cent – Kalighat

We weren’t able to figure out whether the discrepancies in singulars and plurals had any significance or not.

### ***In conclusion***

While it’s never good to end a talk on a negative note, I hope we have shown that, in fact, there are many features of Class W that we like a lot. As a former indexer, I particularly enjoyed exploring the index and then flipping back to the schedules. We think it’s a very flexible system, and are eager to learn more – if only to exercise our brain cells! For, we fear, the chances of re-introducing Bliss to New York, or of implementing it at Oxford, are slim indeed.<sup>7</sup>

Eugene Garfield remarked that had Bliss, who was so much more brilliant than Dewey, had Dewey’s drive, the Bliss classification system might have been adopted by the Library of Congress.<sup>8</sup> – And then look where we might have been!

---

<sup>6</sup> See Venetia Porter. *Word into art : artists of the modern Middle East* (London: British Museum Press, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Except for at St. Peter’s College, where BCA member David Johnson, has embarked upon a Bliss reclassification project.

<sup>8</sup> Eugene Garfield. “The ‘other’ immortal” (see note 1).

## **Another Adaptation at Queens' College, Cambridge : Class W reduced for a small art history collection in an undergraduate library**

Liz Russell  
Classification Assistant

This subject area of Queens' Library was originally classified by the draft schedule used at King's College which had an art history approach, applied to this collection when my Senior Assistant became Librarian here. But the new Class W was too tempting for us to allow it to sit gathering dust on the Bliss schedules shelf, so we decided to implement it as soon as possible as art and architecture form one of the smaller subject sections in the library.

However, while admiring the depth of the schedule and the many wanted terms to be found in the index, we still felt it needed some cutting down for our needs. We also needed to consider, in the best tradition of the Bibliographic Classification, which of the possible citation orders would suit our requirements.

The preferred citation order in Class W emphasises kinds of art forms and media, subordinating places, periods, styles and artists. This may work very well for art school libraries, where the practical applied side of art is of great importance, but for a small Cambridge college art history collection, with very little material on the practice of art, this is not satisfactory. We therefore chose to make place and period the first two cited facets, subordinating topic – especially medium – to them.

Queens' did not care to repeat the old draft schedule's use of numbers to introduce media, if they could be avoided, so we have decided not to use '6' as Appendix 3, Alternatives, suggests (WU, p.177). Our main innovation has been to use 'A' as an intercalator to add the medium to the country or to the period within the country : -

UCE AK      Art : English : (A) : Painting  
UCE BAK     Art : English : Medieval : (A) : Painting  
UCE LAK     Art : English : 19th century : (A) : Painting

Within the subdivisions of the major periods, we are able to dispense with the intercalator, as there should be no clash with the further period subdivisions : -

e.g. UCD EN      Art : European : 15th century  
      UCD ENK     Art : European : 15th century : Painting

If we need to indicate a period earlier than Medieval, we are using AX, e.g. for Ancient Europe and early Medieval.

Having only a small section on Ancient Art, we decided to replace the '7' in the class-marks with 'C', giving for example : -

UCC N      Egyptian art      *instead of* UC7 N  
UCC Q      Classical art      *instead of* UC7 Q  
UCC R      Greek art          *instead of* UC7 R  
UCC V      Roman art          *instead of* UC7 V  
UCC WP     Byzantine art      *instead of* UC7 WP



We have changed the Western art number from UCC to UCC Z, where we have a very small number of books. With our small collection we could see no point in confusing our users with countries' classmarks containing the number '7', and so far we have not come across any difficulties.

For individual artists, we are collecting under their periods and using 'X' to introduce the first 3 letters of their names. Further subdivision is as in the draft Literature schedule: 95 for letters, 96 for biography, A for criticism, X for collected works, Y for selected works, Z for individual works, and yes, this is a bit long-winded but is what the students are used to seeing on the labels. For them it introduces consistency between the classes.

In Italian art for example : -

UCI F XLEO A	Critical work on Leonardo da Vinci
UCI H XMIC 96	Biography of Michelangelo Buonarroti
UCI H XRAP ZSC	Critical work on Raphael's <i>School of Athens</i>

We also divide the classmarks into 'semantic blocks' rather than arbitrary groups of three characters: UCI F XLEO A, not UCI FXL EOA.

(By this stage you will have noticed that we are using 'U' for Art: this is to avoid a major clash with our existing large Language and Literature section, starting at Class W. This may look even more strange: why not 'V', and whatever happened to the displaced Technology classes, Bliss's old 'Useful Arts'?)

At Queens' the latter have been collocated with their parent sciences, Engineering with Physics, and so on. This suits the needs of the tripos and makes sense to both staff and students. The notation 'VV', formerly used for Music, was easily confused with 'W' on the shelves and in the catalogue, so music now occupies Class V).

Generally we have found Class W pleasant and helpful to use. With our art history approach we have of course made very good use of the national chronologies, but have sometimes found it laborious, as we have to move between the lists looking for the correct period or style. We do wonder if it might have been more helpful to provide one general list, particularly for centuries, and their 25 year subdivisions, as well as for terms which can be applied to two or more countries, e.g. Medieval, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque. Under each country it would then only be necessary to list terms which were specific to it, e.g. Elizabethan or Georgian under English art; Deutscher Werkbund or Bauhaus Movement under German art. We do realise that this would not be such an irritation to us if we followed the preferred order of the schedule, and did not take a different route to the order we wanted on our shelves!



### ***Bliss merry-go-round at Cambridge***

*Following the loss of our excellent Secretary, Heather Lane, to the icy world (and UDC) of the Scott Polar Research Institute, Chris RobertsLewis succeeded her as librarian at Sidney Sussex College in January 2005. At the end of May this year, Marion MacLeod retired as librarian of Fitzwilliam College and has been replaced by Chris RobertsLewis. Her successor at Sidney Sussex is Stewart Tiley from St John's College, to whom we extend a warm welcome.*

*And we wish Marion a long and happy retirement – keeping in touch with us, please!*

***In the beginning – Vol. I, No.1***

“**LAST YEAR** a group of British librarians, who are especially interested in the continuous development and increasing use of our Classification, met informally with Dr. D.J. Campbell... and Mr C.B. Freeman... The purpose was to propose a committee to coöperate with the author and the publisher of the Classification to continue its development ... a meeting was held at Chaucer House, London, the 26th of April 1954...

“Meanwhile the author had gathered from several sources about a hundred additional items and corrections ... Besides these a few paragraphs of advice and information would be of interest. ...

“To the users of the Classification it is important that new, emergent, and additional subjects and terms should not merely be provided for in the schedules but should be inserted and actualized therein, and in the Index. ... This service can be rendered most economically by coöperation in finding, communicating, and compiling them, and by publishing them in successive pamphlets, or bulletins, such as the present one. ... When, after several years, a sufficient accumulation is on hand, a new complete edition, we hope, may be convenient and economical. ...

“Special expansions for specialized libraries may be of interest to other libraries in the same or closely related fields, and sometimes room for them could be found in our Bulletin, if they would fill only a page or two; or outlines of them, or descriptions, could be so published. Our second Bulletin will probably contain such matters transmitted from the British Committee.

“More extensive revisions and fundamental changes in the system are, however, beyond the scope of this Bulletin, except in a suggestive way for consideration. But they might, if valid, be incorporated in a subsequent edition of the complete Classification.”

H. E. B.

August 1954

With these words (and more) H. E. Bliss himself introduced Vol. I, No. 1 of the *Bliss Classification Bulletin*. He edited the first three issues, ever appreciative of comments and suggestions which he happily discussed at length. He didn't always agree with them, and would defend his position stoutly, but if convinced, would gratefully and graciously accept them. The three numbers included 32 pages of amendments approved by him, and also news of BC users and their practice. After his death in 1955 the responsibility for editing passed to the British committee.

## **Looking ahead : Language & Literature**

We are all agreed that it is high time we published more classes to complete the Classification as soon as possible. The groundwork was done for a large number of them in drafts from the 1970s. These can hardly be used exactly as they stand now, but some revision, some updating of the vocabulary here and there, and perhaps adjustment to fit the notational changes made in recent years – what more is needed?

Let's start, for example, with Philology as Bliss used the term, '*the comprehensive name for the study of language and literature, the linguistics, and the criticism*'. These were his Classes W/Y in BC1. The anonymous (guess who?) author of the revision draft dated February 1973 wrote 'This has been quite the most difficult class of BC to revise so far'. How often have we heard those words in different contexts in the ensuing years! Nonsense! – *everyone* knows what the facets are and how they fall into place: Language, Period, Form, Author, Texts, Criticism. Linguistics is fairly clear-cut too. It's so easy, we could do it on the back of this envelope, couldn't we?

### **Bliss's simple solution?**

Bliss, the great advocate of 'the educational and scientific consensus', soon found that no such single consensus existed for the Literature classes. Those who have used, or had to study, BC1 will recall that Bliss therefore made use of another of his guiding principles, that of providing alternatives. The result was an extraordinarily complex schedule with no less than four different 'Modes' for classifying literature, with Mode IV being subdivided further into three variants, IVa, IVb and IVc.

Mode I, for example, starts with historical and critical studies of a literature, divided as required by forms and periods. These are separated from texts (except that that collections illustrating a particular period are collocated with the critical studies of that period). The texts start with general collections and selections of no particular form or period, followed by the works of individual authors, A/Z, irrespective of form or period, and finally collections and selections of works in particular forms.

Mode II collocates texts with the critical works about them, authors being arranged A/Z under the various forms and periods. Mode III, interestingly, collocates the texts of *earlier periods* with the historical and critical studies; for the middle and later periods authors are arranged A/Z as in Mode I. Mode IVa starts with history and criticism like Mode I, but where the latter has the works of all authors, A/Z, Mode IVa has only their collected writings in several forms, with their individual writings A/Z by author under each form. Mode IVb introduces further refinements, while Mode IVc groups the texts of earlier periods with the historical and critical studies, the writings of authors of the middle period A/Z under each form *at the end*, and the writings of modern authors A/Z, irrespective of form, in between.

There, I said it was quite simple and easy, didn't I? There are several more mini-alternatives built into these four (or six?) Modes which have not been mentioned. I *think* I've got it right. Bring me more envelopes – bigger ones this time, please!

All this and more was discussed fully in the draft for Classes W/Y. The seven pages of explanatory notes and arguments make most interesting reading, still very pertinent today. Undoubtedly they need to be reviewed in the light of developments both in BC2 itself and in the field of linguistic studies in the past thirty years, but the groundwork has been done.

### **Citation orders and literary warrant**

Plainly, two of the questions which must be addressed are (a) is there a preferred order, reflecting as nearly as possible BC2's standard citation order, and (b) just how many alternatives are required and can be justified today?

The draft argued for a standard citation order as far as possible. We may look for analogies in the new arts Class W, The Arts : Literature is also an arts class, one in which the creative artist is using the medium of language. There are forms, periods, styles; processes and operations in writing; special categories of persons as writers, and also as readers; and so on. This may well prove a helpful approach.

The number of alternative citation orders found in BC1 and sketchily described above may seem laughably complicated. In fact, they are well worth studying seriously. Bliss did not include them in his scheme lightly: they demonstrate his observation of the use of various types of documents and also patterns of publication – 'literary warrant'. For example, a characteristic of many editions of early texts is that the volumes often combine scholarly apparatus and the actual text of the work under consideration; they are physically inseparable. There is, therefore, a good case for classifying all early texts, even if some of them contain little or no additional material, with all the rest of the works on the history and criticism of the period, whatever method is used for arranging texts of later periods.

Similarly, Bliss observed that teachers and students of particular periods of a literature found that collections (especially anthologies) of those periods complemented the historical and critical material very conveniently, and therefore collocated them, even in those Modes which otherwise placed the individual published works of authors elsewhere.

### **Alternatives**

The 1973 draft contemplated retaining Bliss's lavish provision of alternatives, tidying them up and possibly adding another. The new, non-recommended, alternative is the location of General Literature after all linguistic studies and before the specific literatures. This is the normal, logical general-before-special location; exceptionally, Bliss's preference was for one *following* the texts and studies of the individual literatures on the grounds that the linguistic and literary studies of each language are so intimately bound up in practice that they should not be separated by a mass of works about literature in general. Bliss's unorthodox solution is still recommended.

But are so many complex alternatives needed now? If one counts all possible combinations, they may amount to far more than the total number of libraries using BC1 and BC2 today. Simplification may well be called for. The essentials will be the preferred order clearly set out in the main schedules plus *exceedingly* clear tables in the appendixes, showing absolutely unambiguously how the individual languages and literatures are to be subdivided and selected alternatives applied. This will be no small task, calling for first-class typography no less than classificatory logic.

### **Notation**

Bliss's Philology classes stretched over three main class letters, W/Y. Class W encompassed General and comparative philology, Linguistics, and Languages and literatures other than Indo-European. Class X dealt with Indo-European languages and literatures, apart from English, while Class Y was devoted to English (or any

other preferred language) and finally General Literature. The 1973 draft assumed that the BC1 distribution of main class letters would be retained. With the expansion of Technology proposed for BC2, that luxury disappeared.

<b>BC1</b>	<b>BC2</b>
<b>U</b> Arts (general), Useful Arts	<b>U }</b> Technology & useful arts
<b>V</b> Arts, Fine Arts	<b>V }</b>
	Household arts
	Recreative arts
<b>W</b> Philology	<b>W</b> The Arts. Applied & Fine Arts
Linguistics	Performing arts... Music
Individual languages & literatures	Theatre... Radio...
Artificial... African ... Asian...	
<b>X</b> Indo-European	<b>X }</b> Philology... Linguistics
<b>Y</b> English (or preferred)	<b>Y )</b> Literature
Literature in general	
Criticism, composition	
Journalism	
Forms: poetry, drama...	
<b>Z</b> Bibliology, Documentation,	<b>Z</b> Religion...Occult
Libraries (alternative to 2)	(alternative to P)

Somehow Bliss's over-generous notational provision has to be condensed into two thirds of the space. The draft followed the BC1 notations for the various languages quite closely. However, although BC2's Auxiliary Schedule 3, Language, states

- (7) The order of classes is the same as in the Language and literature class W/Y; but the notation is different in order to allow addition of letters from this Schedule to a single letter.
- (8) This schedule consists of a substantial selection from the very detailed schedules of Class W/Y. Further details may be obtained from W/Y should the need arise.

it is apparent that quite a lot had changed between 1973 and 1977. The draft certainly has a much more detailed listing of languages, but the Auxiliary schedule has a different classification of the non-Indo-European languages, based on newer authorities.

First thoughts might suggest that a fully faceted classification ought to be able to import the languages wholesale from Auxiliary Schedule 3, complete with their notations, but how? The schedule as it stands might be grafted onto X, with XA/XD used for Linguistics. Y could then be used for a preferred language (English?), ending with the general literary studies.

A moment's reflection shows that this would result in inordinately long classmarks for many languages and their literatures, apart from a favoured few (Chinese, Russian, Latin, Italian, Spanish, French, German, and the preferred language in Class Y). Perhaps it would be better to keep the *order* of Auxiliary Schedule 3 but list the languages afresh, spread evenly across most of X/Y, maybe omitting the highly selective enumeration of dialects and stages of development under some languages. These should be achieved by tables of standard subdivisions applicable throughout.

There's so much more that needs to be considered and it's all *extremely* complicated. This been quite the most difficult class of BC to revise so far... I must go and tackle something easier, like nanotechnology.

Bring me a dozen A4 notepads.

*Antonio*

## Amendments & Corrections to BC2

### Class W : The Arts – Index

1. The filing rule for the Index is ‘something-before-nothing’ not ‘all-through’, so *Arte Povera* files before *Artefacts*, not after it.

However, some index entries which might be thought to be missing have in fact been filed by the computer program in unexpected places if the terms contain punctuation marks. For example, an apostrophe files before the letter a, so *Ch'in* and *Ch'ing* appear before *Chad*, not with *China*; similarly *Art's sake*, *Art for* appears between *Art schools* and *Arte Povera*, not between *Arts centres* and *Artworks*.

2. In the course of her work at Queens' College, Cambridge, Liz Russell noticed that *Tapestry* does not appear in the Index, and suspected that more terms may be missing between *Tablets* and *Techniques*. She was right! A rough trawl by the Editor of the *Bulletin* produced the list printed below. There may well be other candidates for it.

Please help by sending your contributions for this (or any other) class!

*Tab - Tec : insert the following in the Index to Class W*

Tableware : decorative art	WGC IT
Taboos : subjects in art	WEP YNB
Tachisme : French painting	WK9 FNP T
Tagar : barbarian tribal art	WC7 WRN ST
Tai Chi : techniques : dancing	WTO D38 T
Tailoring : costume design	WHB 3J
Take-off : body movements : dancing	WTO D3L SH
Talavera ware : ceramics	WGK JT
Talkies : films	WTT HK
Talks : broadcasts	WTU KE
Tall buildings : architecture	WHT VR
Tall structures :civil engineering design	WHR EQ
Tambour embroidery	WGT MHH
Tano : North American indigenous art	WDY NTA
Tanzania : African visual arts	WDV TB
Tap dancing : dance theatre	WTP T
Tapestry : pictorial art	WKW TP
Tapestry : textile arts	WGT P
Taps : bathroom equipment : interior decoration	WHM TTB LY
Tarsia : wood marquetry	WGM NP
Tartans (patterns) : interior decoration	WHL 3KN T
Tassels : needlework	WGT LTT
Tatting : lace work	WGT SRW
Tattooing : personal adornment	WHG P
Tayacuan : Palaeolithic art	WC7 P78 KT
Teaching methods	W26 AJ
Technical rehearsals : theatre	WT3 8BK T