

The Bliss Classification Bulletin

c/o Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London, W.8

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F O R E W O R D

Since the last issue of the Bulletin in December 1969 work has proceeded steadily on the preparation of a new edition of the BC. It is not at all easy to predict with any great accuracy just how long particular classes will take to overhaul and so it is difficult to say whether the work is, or is not quite, keeping up with the timetable set. It depends to some extent on whether the disposition of the judge tends to be sanguine or not. It must suffice to say that the timetable announced at the beginning of the work (in mid-1969) still holds, and this reckoned on publication some time in 1972 to be a reasonable goal.

Like the last Bulletin, this one contains no new schedules. It was thought then that since the whole scheme was in process of revision there was little point in finalising schedules for isolated subjects before the full picture had emerged of what an integrated and comprehensive revision entailed. This view has been reinforced by the experience of the past year in detailed schedule making. A particular reason is the problem raised by synthesis. As the revision of particular discrete (or relatively discrete) classes proceeds, the repetitiveness of concepts and facets (e.g., of materials, equipment, business activities, etc. in various technologies) points clearly to the desirability of providing these economically and mnemonically in one comprehensive schedule, to be drawn on as required. This is, of course, what Bliss has already done quite frequently; but the new edition is likely to go beyond him in it. These and other problems are considered more fully in the account of the detailed work given later in this issue.

It seems appropriate to repeat here the appeal to users of BC to assist in the work which was made in the last issue. We ask, therefore, all users of BC who have attempted revision or maintenance of particular subjects, whether it is a large or small one, to write to Miss Valerie Lang at the NWP and inform her, and if possible provide her with a copy of any schedules which may have been produced as a result of such work.

We have heard with considerable pleasure that the Bibliotheque Centrale du Hainaut, in Belgium, has adopted the BC. Monsieur A. Canonne, the librarian whose

enthusiasm for BC has led to this, is to be congratulated not only for being the first library 'd'expression francaise' to adopt BC, but for recognizing the marked advantages which a modern organization of knowledge offers to a general public library, where a great deal of retrieval, depends on the effectiveness with which the classification assists the reader to find what he wants.

J. Mills
Hon. Editor

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BLISS CLASSIFICATION ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held on 4th December, 1970 at the
Commonwealth Institute

Present: Mr. J. Mills (Chairman/Editor)
Mr. A. Maltby (Treasurer)
Mr. A. Horne (Secretary)

and 10 other members.

Apologies for absence had been received from Miss Bunch, Miss Dean and Messrs. Freeman, Green, Weston and Wright.

1. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 31st October 1969 were approved and signed.

2. Matters arising

All matters arising were dealt with under the following items in the agenda.

3. Chairman's Report

- a) Progress with new edition

The Chairman reported that progress had not been spectacular. A major factor had been his own commitment to other pieces of research and to the general work of the School which had prevented him devoting as much time as he would have wished on the revision. However, the situation was now altering and in the coming year a substantially greater effort would be possible and progress should be rapid. In the circumstances he thought progress during the past year had been reasonable.

The different classes of BC were briefly reviewed for the meeting and the current position summarized. A considerable number of special classifications and expansions had been received from various users of BC and from others, and these would contribute valuable preliminary analysis (and sometimes more) to those areas concerned.

Main classes which had had a great deal of work done on them and were in an advanced stage were Q Social Welfare, S Law, U Technology, VV/x Music. Much valuable checking and amplification of the Period facet of classes M and N (European and American history) had been done and many individual Fine art classes had had substantial work done on them, as had R Political Science. Extensive analysis and scheduling in the Health Sciences had resulted from other work being done at the North-Western Polytechnic and the fruits of this were being made available to BC (Class II).

b) Problems of publication

Negotiations were proceeding with Butterworth and detailed estimates of size and style of the new schedules submitted. It was thought that high-class typewriting using a good electric typewriter, with careful indentation and exploitation of the limited typographical variety available would allow high-quality photoreproduction whilst providing considerable advantages in the matter of supervising production, proof-reading, etc., and in cost of production. It was hoped to keep the new edition down to two large volumes.

c) Future maintenance of BC

The Chairman reported correspondence with a number of libraries on this important problem. He pointed out that one of the main reasons for the policy of radical revision was that the problem of maintenance was made that much easier by bringing thoroughly up-to-date both the content and structure of the BC.

Also, the clear articulation of the system, which was a central advantage of faceted classification, should assist maintenance by indicating clearly the content and definition of existing facets and subfacets.

The Chairman thought that the Bulletin could, in these circumstances, continue to provide regular updating and revision comparable in scope with that available to other general classifications. At the same time the undeniable stability of the general structure of BC reinforced by the thorough restructuring in detail which the new edition would give, made the necessity for complete new editions at frequent intervals decidedly less urgent than it was for other systems.

These factors tended to make more feasible, as a solution to the problem, the present situation of an Hon. Editor having main responsibility for the production of the Bulletin. There was still considerable interest in BC amongst teachers of classification and indexing and the Chairman did not think this likely to diminish with the appearance of a 'new model' BC - rather the reverse. In these circumstances he thought to be not unsatisfactory the situation whereby the maintenance of the scheme rested in a School of Librarianship, with a skilled classificationist as Hon. Editor receiving a formal acknowledgment of his work as 'research and development' and thereby an allocation of several hours a week in which to carry out his duties in the matter.

This took no account of the fact that sales of the Bulletin, combined perhaps with a regular fee from libraries using its services, could gradually build up a healthy fund to meet the expenses of such maintenance and perhaps to extend it.

d) BC and centralized cataloguing

There are two main reasons why admittedly defective classification systems are perpetuated with relatively little attempt to remedy their fundamental defects; these are the inertia of large collections, with their attendant subject catalogues, and the provision of centralized indexing services which provide the class-number ready made for a significant proportion of a library's input.

On the first point, it could be claimed that the new edition, benefiting as it will from the considerable advances made in library classification design since Bliss developed the internal detail of his system, will suffer far fewer defects than other general schemes. On the second point, it would undoubtedly be a very great advantage if BC users could look forward to the provision of BC numbers by a currently produced centralized cataloguing service. Readers of the Bulletin will be aware of the very rapid developments in centralized indexing of English and American bookform literature; a significant landmark will be the use of MARC by the British National Bibliography beginning in January 1971. Whilst formidable problems still remain in the full use of MARC by individual library systems, the principle of a machine-readable record providing numerous fields of data in it which can be selectively printed out is a fundamental advance.

The Chairman had already made informal approaches to the BNB on the question of getting new BC class-numbers into the MARC record; there seemed to be no reason in principle why this should not come about eventually although serious problems of implementation would demand solution. In particular, a sufficient demand by users of BC would have to be demonstrated and financial provision made for the indexing effort involved in assigning BC numbers to current input. This might involve the development of a 'switching language' whereby the subject analysis and description implicit in the production of PRECIS index entries (which will replace the chain index in the alphabetical section of BNB in January 1971) could be translated quickly and economically into BC numbers. Although intriguing technical problems would be posed by such a procedure, the structure of the new BC should, on the face of it at least, be reasonably receptive to such processing.

4. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented the accounts for the year (which appears later in this Bulletin) which showed a generally satisfactory situation. However, the meeting agreed that those libraries and individuals who had contracted to pay a sum each year for three years towards the production of a new edition should be asked to contribute a final fourth payment in 1971/2. A rise in the annual subscription to the B.C.A. would be deferred until after the publication of the edition.

5. Election of Committee for 1970/71

Mr. E. R. Stone indicated a willingness to stand down; the other existing Committee members and Dr. D. J. Campbell (an ex-Hon. Editor of the Bulletin) were elected unanimously.

6. Other Business

The meeting approved Mr. Mills' proposal that he formally approach the B.W.B. on the question of getting the Bliss classification number on the Marc tape.

A number of questions arising from the work of revision and the policies governing this (of radical revision and greater detail) were discussed. A letter from Miss Barbara Dean, Librarian of Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln, expressing some concern at the implications of such radical revision, was considered. The general opinion was that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages.

The physical format of the new edition was discussed and a loose leaf format advocated. But it was thought the latter would add considerably to the cost.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 4.25 p.m.

NOTE FROM THE TREASURERFinancial statement for year ended 31 July 1970

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
<u>INCOME</u>						
Membership subscriptions						
Personal	14	1	11			
Primary/Secondary Schools	5	0	0			
Other Institutions	205	0	7			
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TOTAL SUBSCRIPTIONS				224	2	6
Sales of Bliss Classification Bulletin				15	0	0
Donations to revision fund				541	0	0
Interest on current account at bank				1	17	5
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TOTAL INCOME				£781	19	11
				<hr/>		
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>						
Payments to North Western Polytechnic towards revision work on Bliss Classification				1,000	0	0
Bliss Classification Bulletin - materials, printing, distribution				29	7	5
Committee				24	15	0
Stationery				1	18	8
Postages				5	15	8
Bank charges				18	2	
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TOTAL EXPENDITURE				£1,062	14	11
(Debit) Working Balance 1969/70				280	15	0
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Cash in bank at 31.7.70				£912	11	8
				<hr/>		

November 1970

A. Maltby
Honorary Treasurer

Revision of the BC - problems and methods

In considering problems and methods in the last Bulletin, it was pointed out that a homogeneous subject, for the handling of which a modern library has reasonably well established principles, can be at any level of the classification, from a large main class to a relatively precise subject like the Clothing industry at UVC/G.

To demonstrate clearly how the pattern of a modern faceted system was being observed, the last named class was described in detail, as to its literary warrant, facet analysis, citation order, filing order and notation. Here, we will take a more difficult example, on a larger scale, and see what are the implications of observing the pattern when the scale changes and the homogeneity is less reliable. This will be done by first examining the problems of revising Class Q, which Bliss treated almost as a main class, although it does not rank, in the theory of consensus, with established fields like Political science, Economics, Sociology, Physics or Chemistry.

Secondly, an evolving main class, in which a number of so far disparate subjects are undoubtedly integrating into one relatively homogeneous field - Communication - will be considered.

Revising Class Q Social Welfare and Social movements

- 1 Class Q is rather atypical in BC and the difficulty Bliss found in naming it is probably a reflection of the doubts he felt as to its homogeneity. It is almost alone amongst classes of equal notational status in BC in not reflecting a well-established 'main' class.
 - 1.1 In the 1935 Outline, Bliss called it 'Applied social and ethical science'. It should be remembered that in BC, Sociology at K introduces the special social sciences (History, Religion, Political science ...) and his reason for clustering and locating at Q the constituent classes which make up the subject was that they overlap all these special social sciences and reach back to class H Anthropology, Medicine and Psychology where, according to the theory of gradation, all the human studies begin. In this view, Bliss claimed that this class, dealing essentially with Welfare and Amelioration, was not 'separated' from Class K (or H/K) but was simply one of a number of equal and coordinate sub-classes of these, along with other special social sciences which flank it.
- 2 The central principle of facet analysis as a method of sorting out such problems is a rigorous examination of the relations involved in the light of such fundamental relations as Thing-Kind, Recipient of action-Action-Agent of action, and so on. Facet analysis of the class at a relatively broad level soon disclosed that the lack of homogeneity resulted essentially from the presence of two sets of classes, differing in their relationship to the general field of the social sciences.
 - 2.1 The first and major set of classes consists of classes dealing with Welfare in one of its broad and popular senses - that of social action directed at categories of persons in some sort of need which calls forth a degree of special attention from society. These classes form easily the main part of Class Q (QB/QS, QV/W) and were found to display, somewhat surprisingly, a high degree of homogeneity.

- 2.2 The second set are a mixture. Socialism, etc. (QX) represents a broad social-political-economic movement, with implications much wider than the rather narrowly ameliorative actions in the rest of the class. Understandably, it is not subordinated to any one of the traditional social sciences. To a much lesser degree, Internatiolism (QY) reflects a similar complex situation; but its very name implies its essentially political nature and indeed, Bliss provides an alternative for it at RI International relations. Societies and Clubs (QT) are related to the welfare agencies which are an integral part of the first group; but functionally, they are wider in scope and are doubtfully located here. Class KCM seriously overlaps QT and would appear to give a better relational context. Recreation (QU) seems to have little in common with the rest of Q.
- 3 Following this analysis, Class K was examined closely to consider whether Bliss was justified in the distinctions he drew between Sociology and this 'application' of it. It may be noted here that one BC user - the University of Lancaster - has already taken the step of disbanding Class Q. The underlying phenomenon characterizing QB/QW is that of persons in some kind of need - whether for assistance, regulation, or discursion. The reasons for the need vary and the roots of some of them at least are explicit in K; e.g., KCCN Deviation (under KCC Social processes). The response of society to the need (to assist, mediate, control, punish, etc.) again features in K, particularly in KCP Social control.
- 3.1 However, the generalized treatment implicit in classes located in Sociology (which Bliss interpreted, by and large, as the abstracting and generalizing science in the social sciences, as distinct from the 'special' social sciences which consider particular forms of social action - religious, political, economic, etc. means that Class K cannot easily accommodate much of the literature in Class Q which considers the problems concretely and descriptively, and it was considered that Q could justifiably remain a distinct and homogeneous 'special' social science, and one which appears to be developing its own structure of information-gathering, training, ethic, etc. - the marks of a distinct 'main class' as Bliss envisaged one.
- 4 The decision was therefore made to keep Class Q as a unified class covering Social Welfare. The related but distinct class, Social Movements (at present at QW) was thought to be reasonably well collocated with it, and the present draft revision which, it is hoped, will prove to be an almost final one, reflects this decision.
- 5 A faceted structure for Class Q was now sought and detailed analysis of the existing terms disclosed four major facets:
- Organizing welfare services
 - Agents of this organizing (Personnel, Organizations, Buildings and Equipment and Supplies)
 - Kinds of action by society - aid, what is 'given'
 - Recipients of this aid or action
 - Causes, conditions underlying the need for aid or action

- 6 Applying the 'standard' citation order (which is being applied as consistently as possible throughout the revision) would give the following order of application of characteristics of division:

Recipients of welfare action = The needy
Cause or reason for the need (which might be a
natural disaster or an addiction)
Aid, action in response
Organizing the action
Agents of the action

- 7 A number of theoretical and practical problems now called for solutions.

7.1 The primary fact (Persons in need) is often characterized by the need (the secondary facet); the causative action (e.g., addiction) gives rise to a kind of person in need (the addict). This reflects a problem in classification which is now increasingly recognized - that of a non-generic relation (action, part, property, etc.) functioning as a specifier (= species-maker) to give a generic (thing-kind) relation. The problem it poses in schedule-making and retrieval is whether to recognize the distinction explicitly and risk a sometimes forced separation of what in the literature may amount to the same thing; or, to ignore it and risk a lack of precision in retrieval. Generally speaking, the policy of revision is to recognize the distinction and allow the classifier the facility of specific description. But see (7.4) below.

7.2 A number of important classes are dependent - i.e., imply the prior citing of another class; e.g., Police belongs to the agent facet, but is dependent on the action of law enforcement; Penology is a form of response action by society, but implies a legal offender.

7.3 The placing of Children and of Women, both given prominent and separate allocation of notation in the existing edition, as classes in the 'Recipient of welfare action' facet would seem to restrict unduly the connotation of at least the second class. Bliss shares with all the other general classifications (except the now moribund Subject Classification of James Duff Brown) an inability to provide consistent and predictable classes for 'concretes' or entities; his use of QW as the general number for Women is clearly inconsistent with the narrower relationship implied in a location in Class Q, and this is made very obvious in the new structure with its explicit definition of scope ("recipient of welfare action"). The plans for the revision of the anterior numeral classes 1/9 offer a solution to this problem and they are discussed later in this issue of the Bulletin.

7.4 The most serious problem, however, is that the 'standard' citation based on 'ends-before-means' appears to give a collocation which clashes with literary warrant and 'consensus'. The latter would seem to favour the Cause or reason for need as the primary facet; a work on drug addiction in young persons is much more likely to be regarded as belonging to the class Drug addiction than to

Welfare of young persons. Certainly, this is the assumption implicit in the existing structure of Class Q. In a case like this, the new edition respects the practical requirements and does not seek to change the existing treatment. However, the situation is not quite so simple. In some cases, the distinction between the Cause for need and the person affected is very clear; e.g., Earthquake and Child - there is no literature on Earthquake-stricken children per se. But in many other cases the causal relation changes to the specifier (see Section 7.1) and the subject of Addiction (cause) generates the subject of Addicts; Crime generates Criminals, and so on.

The solution proposed is to treat the two facets together. Those causes (Emergency, Earthquakes, Overpopulation, etc.) which generate little or no literature on persons affected as a type or species characterized by that cause are separated, but those which generate a dual literature (Addiction and Addicts, Crime and Criminals) are run together. There is still a distinction effectively drawn and any given Cause can be compounded with any given person. So in the outline of the new draft edition of Class Q which is given on page [2] it will be seen that Cause or reason for need is the primary facet.

- 7.5 A number of the facets are obviously far greater in range of application than Social Welfare; e.g., the Organizing and administration of welfare will be paralleled in the organizing and administration of many other services, from those in Medicine and in Education to those in Fine Arts and in Public administration. The same is true of Personnel, of Buildings and Equipment, of Organizations, and so on.

The obvious solution from the point of view of consistency of analysis, of mnemonic treatment, of economy in scheduling, of clarity in display, etc. is to provide them in some detail in a special auxiliary facet and draw on it as required. Bliss, of course, was well aware of this and already provides a number of such auxiliaries. A price may be exacted for this in the form of lengthened notation; since the terms are not tailor-made to each local situation, there is inevitably redundancy of terms and notation for many applications. Also, the terminology will vary and particular classes require particular expansion; e.g., all buildings have functional areas (a part of their Parts facet) but not all of them have wards (which is a term required in Welfare class).

The policy followed in the revision is to watch for and record these situations and not to finalize a class until a sufficiently stable and comprehensive common facet has been established from which to draw.

- 8 Analogous to the need to postpone the finalizing of classes at this stage is the need to decide where the dangers of ambiguity and cross-classification (in the pejorative sense of duplicating classes carelessly or unconsciously) demand the cancelling of one or more previously separate classes. One example of this has already been given in the case of Internationalism and International relations. Another is that of Police service; this features in

