1972 was proclaimed by the General Conference of UNESCO as International Book Year (IBY), the year’s slogan being “Books for All”. As a symbol of Canada’s participation in IBY, a new 8-cent stamp was issued, with a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II, and a view of the House of Commons Parliamentary Library in the background.

The Douglas participated in IBY by putting UNESCO Book Year boxes in various places in the library. With the proceeds from these, plus a large donation from UNESCO, a press was purchased for the Mazenod Printing Works, in Lesotho, South Africa.

In 1972, Queen’s was a nondenominational, coeducational university comprising 5 faculties: the Faculty of Arts and Science (1842), the Faculty of Medicine (1854), the Faculty of Applied Science (1893), the Faculty of Law (1957), and the Faculty of Education (1968). There were also 7 schools: School of Nursing (1942), School of Physical and Health Education (1947), School of Business (1963), School of Graduate Studies (1963), School of Rehabilitation Therapy (1968), School of Urban and Regional Planning (1970) and School of Public Administration (1970). The Queen’s Theological College, which prepared students for the United Church ministry, was an affiliated institution.

The student population had tripled since 1962, and stood at over 8,000 students, with an expectation of over 10,000 by 1975. The library budget was $2,240,000 for the 1972/73 fiscal year. In this IBY, Queen’s University had, in terms of books per student, Canada’s largest university library. Its ranking declined somewhat over the years, however, and in a report presented to the Queen’s Senate in 1999, the Senate Library Committee stated that the most recent survey of North American university libraries, conducted in 1996-97, had Queen’s ranked 101st. (Queen’s Journal, Thursday, April 1, 1999, page 1).

The Queen’s University library system in 1972 included Douglas Library, the central unit serving the social sciences and humanities, as well as containing special collections, archives, documents, technical processing departments and administrative offices; plus three major faculty libraries: Law (Macdonald Hall), Education (McArthur Hall) and the Health Sciences Library (Theological Hall); and eighteen smaller branch libraries, chiefly in the sciences and applied sciences. These were: Art (Agnes Etherington Art Centre), Biology (Earl Hall), Chemistry (Frost Wing of Gordon Hall), Chemical Engineering, Computing, Metallurgy and Mining (Dupuis Hall), Civil Engineering (Ellis Hall), Electrical Engineering (Fleming Hall), Economics and Business (Dunning Hall), Engineering Drawing (Jackson Hall), Geography (Ontario Hall), Geological Sciences (Miller Hall), Local Government (51 Queen’s Crescent), Mathematics (Jeffery Hall), Mechanical Engineering (McLaughlin Hall), Modern
Languages Reading Room (Kingston Hall), Music (Staging Building, Stuart Street), Physics (Stirling Hall), Psychology (Humphrey Hall), and Theology (Theological Hall).

After much discussion, a reorganization of the library system was announced in 1972. It was hoped that this reorganization would streamline the work load of the library, and it was stressed that this involved a “team” approach to division administration.

Instead of five divisions in the central library, as previously, there would now be only two: the Division of Information Services and Collections, headed by Miss Diana Blake, Administrative Officer in the library since 1967, and the Bibliographic Operations Division, which would include the searching, ordering, cataloguing and serials operations of the library. The latter would be headed by Mrs. Lin Good (formerly Elliott), who had been a member of the Queen’s University staff since 1949, and Head of the former Acquisitions Division in the Douglas Library since 1959.

The Chief Librarian thought that he would be able to act more effectively when fewer people reported to his position. The senior administrative staff (Chief and Associate Librarian, Administrative and Research Officers, Branch Library Supervisors, and the Division Heads) would be one staff group. Staff meetings would be smaller, but more frequent. It was thought that meetings of small groups, working regularly together, would enable everyone to have a chance to put in ideas, ask questions, and take part in projects that would make a more smoothly operating, more effective library.

The new Divisions would each be comprised of several “Units” (the old name of “Departments” was dropped, after some discussion as to whether, since “unit” meant “one”, it could actually have a plural form). Each Unit would have a Unit Head, and the Division and Unit Heads would comprise another staff group. The third staff group, the Units, would also meet on a weekly basis, at a regularly scheduled time.

Staff turnover, although not as frequent as 2 or 3 years previously, still continued at a pace that amazes us almost three decades later. Some of the new staff included Faye Drew (Faye Alarie), who started as an LT1 in Documents in May. In June, Heather Lees (now Heather Wolsey and working in Archives) joined Serials as an LT1, and Susan Hogan (now Susan Burnette) began work as an LT1 in Cataloguing.

In September, Jim Webster (now of Special Collections) came as an LT2 in the Mail Room, and Peter Girard, formerly the Order Librarian, was promoted to be Head of Central Information/Resource Services. In October, Margaret Clark was promoted to Administrative Assistant in Administration, and Cecelia (Ce) Brooks started work as an LT1 in Central Collection Services in December.

At least since the early 1960s and probably also before this time, the undergraduate loan period had been 7 days. In February 1972, for an experimental period of one month, the undergraduate loan period from Douglas Library (but not the branches) was increased to 11 days from 7 days. The same month, the Geology Library announced that a new geological database, GEO-REF, was being made available by the Geology
Survey library in Ottawa. For $111 a year, the user would receive a monthly printout from GEO-REF of the articles published on the data appropriate to each individual profile, about 3 weeks ahead of the printed version published monthly in the Bibliography and Index of Geology.

The Cataloguing Division had two announcements in February. The first was that it had catalogued 2731 titles that month. It seemed that the stage had finally been reached where the cataloguing was on a current basis, and it was hoped that the arrearage would start a slow decrease. Also, Cataloguing’s two Magnetic Tape/Selectric Typewriters had arrived in the Card Processing Unit on 2S. The MT/ST was an IBM Selectric Typewriter attached to a console unit which recorded information on two magnetic tapes. The operator would record instructions for printing out the card set on the left tape (called the program or instruction tape), and the text to be printed on the catalogue cards on the right tape. From a single input record, a completed set of cards could be typed out with red (subject) or black (added entry) headings in filing position, at a speed of about 150 words per minute.

PLAQ (the Professional Librarians’ Association of Queen’s), which had been founded in 1965 by W.F.E. (Bill) Morley and Barbara Aitken, met in April of 1972. The President, Mrs. Phyllis Bray, and the Chairman of the Academic Committee, Mr. Kirby, noted that librarians had to earn by their activity and by their display of interest in the academic matters of the university the points that were granted to them by the Harrower report. Progress in granting academic status to librarians seemed to be moving at a glacially slow rate.

From May 12th to the 14th, the Ontario Library Association met on the Queen’s University Campus, with the theme of “Intellectual Freedom and Censorship”. The Saturday activities included a panel of specialists who discussed Intellectual Freedom from the point of view of the lawyer, the library trustee and the librarian. In the afternoon, other sessions were held on such pertinent topics as methods of selection and acquisition of books, and the Wright Commission (the 1972 report on the state of post-secondary education in Ontario).

On May 30th, two librarians and two systems analysts from Carleton University came to Kingston for the day to take a look at the Douglas Library automated circulation system. The agenda had to be altered somewhat, as this, of course, was the day that the system chose to break down completely for about six hours! The group was first brought to the Computing Centre, where Wilma Bernabei presented a briefing on the design of the system, the orientation of library staff, the coordination with other groups on campus, and such matters. The original proposal for an automated circulation system, the progress reports, and other related documents were also shown to the group. Later in the afternoon, when the C-Dek system went back into operation, the group finally had a chance to watch the circulation staff operating the C-Dek terminals.

The big news for the latter part of 1972 was the oft-rumoured and as often postponed unification of the Cataloguing Unit. From the time of the completion of the
north addition to Douglas in 1965 until 1972, the Cataloguing Division had shared space with Acquisitions in the south part of the main floor (now the first floor level of Douglas). It had also spread to other areas, including the seminar room on 4S, which was used for book processing, and 2S where the Card Processing Unit was located. The area originally destined for Cataloguing (the area on the ground floor of the north wing, now the entrance level of the Douglas), had been occupied by the Industrial Relations Centre, who finally vacated it in 1972. In mid-September the move of the Cataloguing Unit from its many nooks and crannies to the ground floor took place over a period of three days. The new space was greatly welcomed by Cataloguing staff members, and the ones who had been located in the stacks were reportedly amazed that there actually was daylight on Monday to Friday from 9 to 5!

However, all was not completely cheery in Cataloguing. The lowered morale did not so much involve Cataloguing’s demotion from a Division to a Unit in the library reorganization, but had more to do with personnel issues. For the past several years, the Cataloguing staff had remained at around 50 people, but new staff positions had been virtually eliminated, and rumours were afloat by the end of the year that the unit stood to lose about 13-21 members, with the Shelf List Conversion completed, and the number of new acquisitions decreasing for the first time in Douglas Library history. The library would get fewer books in 1972/73, as it had been announced that book funds would be held at the 1971/72 level. Since prices were rising, especially for serials, the number of titles and volumes would go down.

This was the very first of the “cutbacks” which were to be a feature of the library for the next while, even continuing up to the present year. Until then, the library had grown steadily every year, increasing dramatically in the late 1960s when the first of the Baby Boomers had started university.

In spite of this gloomy note, Cataloguing was overtaken by the spell of Christmas, and held a gala party at the International Centre in late December. The delicacies were provided as usual by the staff, and staff members reported that although it took a little effort this year for them to get into the spirit of the season, once out and free from nagging library problems, a joyous few hours were a welcome relief. “Mrs. Bray played the piano, carols were sung, even Stuart MacKinnon’s singing was music to our ears, and a good time was had by one and all” (Factotum, December, 1972).

And so 1972 drew to a close. A few months later, a grateful letter from Mazenod, Lesotho, South Africa, informed the Chief Librarian that “what was last year a mere dream is now a reality”. Enclosed was a four-colour Christmas card just printed by the new printing press which had been made possible in part by Douglas Library contributions from the donation boxes marking International Book Year of 1972.