

Obituary

In Memoriam: Geoffrey Arthur LLOYD

Geoffrey Arthur Lloyd, who died at his home in Maarssen, Netherlands, on 3 March 1991, at the age of 80, will perhaps be most widely remembered for his central role, as Head of the FID Classification Department, in the refurbishing of the UDC, during the period 1963 to 1976. As such, he worthily upheld the tradition that bibliographical classification schemes often owe their extended lives to the largely singlehanded labours of individuals. In this respect he amply rose to the challenge offered by the achievement of his predecessor as carrier of the UDC torch, F. Donker Duyvis.

After graduating BA (Natural Sciences) at Cambridge University, Geoffrey studied librarianship at London University and entered library practice, later gaining the Fellowship of the Library Association. In 1948 he joined the British Standards Institution (Documentation Section) where he was responsible for overseeing all documentation standards work, including the editing and publishing of all English editions of the UDC. He personally edited the three editions of the abridged English UDC (1948, 1957, and 1961), which were BSI bestsellers. From 1948, Geoffrey also played an important part in international work, both in ISO/TC 46 and the then FID International UDC Committee. In 1963 he left BSI for the post with FID in The Hague.

As central co-ordinator of UDC maintenance and development, he had as his essential task the harmonization of diverse inputs and their integration into the wider UDC structure. Such a task demanded a combination of technical skill in classification making, persuasiveness, and the highest ability in negotiating in situations from which strong emotions and even passions were not always absent. Geoffrey had, in fact, a brother, who rose in the British diplomatic service to ambassadorial rank, and without doubt Geoffrey himself was well endowed with many of the qualities which would have embellished a diplomatic career. He combined gentleness, sensitivity, and shrewdness, together with the ability to disagree firmly, without making enemies.

After his retirement, and until his final illness, Geoffrey continued to work assiduously for the UDC, both by serving on FID's Central Classification Committee and UDC Proposals Committee, and by himself preparing revision proposals.

He was a man of wide vision, and his dedication to UDC, extending over a span of forty-three years, by no means blinded him to the problems associated with it. For a moment in the early 1970s it looked as though a hypothetical Standard Reference Code, as envisaged in the UNISIST Study Report, might be employed as a "superstructure" capable of being coupled to UDC,

thereby affording UDC a new lease of life. However, Geoffrey soon became convinced that there could be no radical re-juvenation by this route. Thereafter he began to re-direct part of his endeavours to the creation of a new classification system, drawing initially on the embryo SRC. In due course he became rapporteur of the FID/SRC Working Group, and retained his rapporteurship when FID/SRC was transformed into the FID/BSO Panel. In this role he became, in effect, leader of the Broad System of Ordering project, between 1973 and 1978. It was in this period that I twice found myself on the receiving end of his formidable persuasive powers. In the first instance, in 1973 he succeeded in cajoling me into accepting co-opted membership of the FID/SRC Working Group. On the second occasion, in 1978, he persuaded me to change places with him, whereby he remained a member of the BSO Panel while I took up the rapporteurship.

It is impossible to exaggerate the key importance of Geoffrey to the BSO project. He alone provided both the momentum to push on, and the steadfastness needed in face of a series of difficulties which threatened to snuff out the whole enterprise. That we other members of the Panel did not fall by the wayside was entirely due to Geoffrey's presence. We stayed largely because we could not think of letting him down.

Some years ago Geoffrey showed the first signs of Parkinsonism, and as the affliction progressed he adapted to the limitations it imposed upon him with cheerful ingenuity. He managed to continue to use a typewriter and was in correspondence with me about BSO up till a few weeks before his death. With the immensely courageous support of his wife Lucie, to whom our sympathy in her great loss now goes out, he contemplated the approaching end of his days with that equanimity which had served him so well in the ups and downs of his active life.

All who knew him feel the loss of a staunch and generous friend, a shoulder to weep upon, a cosmopolitan in the best sense of the word, with a catholicity of outlook and interests which straddled the sciences and the arts. He was quietly proud to be the father of Jonathan Lloyd the composer. His many-sided personality was rounded out by a touch of the *enfant terrible*, which often fuelled a wry and quizzical sense of humour and will be remembered with particular affection. In seeking an appropriate word of homage to one who was, above all, true to himself, Ben Jonson's epitaph comes to mind: O rare Geoffrey Lloyd!

E.J. Coates

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