BUY, BORROW OR BEG? AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW FICTION READERS GET THEIR BOOKS.

A study submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Librarianship

At

The University of Sheffield

By

Fiona Bolam

September 2000
Abstract.

This report aims to discover where fiction readers are obtaining their fiction from at a time when library issues are falling. Libraries have undergone financial hardships in recent years so it was decided to look at whether people's borrowing and buying habits have changed because of this. As well as this it examines the differences between library and bookshop users and tries to discover why people do as they do with regard to their buying and borrowing habits.

In order to find this out, 100 semi-structured questionnaires were distributed, 50 outside bookshops and 50 outside libraries. Semi-structured interviews with Librarians, Bookshop managers and other relevant stakeholders were also carried out.

It was discovered that most people buy and borrow the books they read with a smaller percentage of people who either only borrow or only buy. Bookshop users were more likely to buy all the books they read and were lighter readers than library users who mainly buy and borrow. There were some people however, who were heavy readers and book buyers who never use libraries.

It was found that age, occupation and gender affect buying and borrowing habits. Working people find it difficult to get to libraries and people tend to use libraries more as they get older. More time was a popular reason for an increase in borrowing.

At present, libraries do not seem to be under threat from bookshops. Most people borrow and buy and many people chose libraries as their first choice for obtaining fiction. Librarians and bookshop managers were interviewed to see if the organisations see themselves as in competition with each other. On the whole it seemed as though they did not and many people surveyed noted the dual nature of libraries and bookshops, using them to try
out books and authors new to them. Various forms of bookshops were examined and their advantages and disadvantages analysed.

The types of books people read was investigated in order to find out whether peoples preferences effected where people get their reading material from. It seems that people want a balanced service containing both literary and popular fiction. Literary fiction is being bought in smaller quantities in Sheffield at the moment and some people commented on this. It seemed that people used bookshops for literary fiction and libraries for more popular works.

Promotion in libraries was examined and while it was noted that this areas seemed to be improving many of the people surveyed still had rather negative impressions of the library service.

Finally, various aspects of finance were considered. It was concluded that the financial cuts faced by Sheffield libraries have had an effect on borrower habits. It was also concluded that it is possible that libraries with high bookspend maintain high issues.

This study finally concludes that at present, most people buy and borrow but that this may change in the future if libraries continue to suffer financial problems. It would seem that the factors affecting borrowing are mostly to do with age or occupation but that it is possible that these things would not affect use so much if libraries were more accessible.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Richard Proctor for all the help he has given me throughout the year. I am immensely grateful to all those people who gave up their time and agreed to be interviewed for this project. I would like to thank Chris for giving me the idea in the first place, my family, my friends near and far and Joe without whose help and support I could not have completed this work.
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Chapter 1. Introduction

The concept of this study came about when someone mentioned that they love to read but never use public libraries, preferring to buy books instead. This is an interesting statement in light of the fact that library issues have been steadily declining for a number of years. England and Sumsion (1995) point out that loans of adult fiction fell 10% in the U.K. between 1983/84 and 1993/94. It was decided that this report would concentrate on adult fiction, an area which seems to be booming although not perhaps from the library service’s point of view. There seems to be little argument in the literature that people are currently reading and buying books. Gibbons (1999) writing in the Guardian commented that a recent national survey had revealed that 75% of young adults loved to read. The ASLIB report (1995) revealed that the publishers association had recently recorded a growth in reading. New “Super Bookshops” such as Borders are springing up all over the country and Internet sales are on the increase.

This report aims to discover where people are obtaining their fiction when library issues are falling. Perhaps more importantly it also aims to find out why people do as they do and whether this has changed in recent years. From this information it is hoped to be able to conclude whether public libraries are suffering from the potential competition presented by bookshops, supermarkets, Internet companies, petrol stations and the new “Super Bookshops”. Tim Waterstone (1999) writing in the Guardian believes that libraries have had their day and that it is time for bookstores to take over. Previous research however, (England 1992, England and Sumsion 1995, Reading Partnership 2000) has suggested that libraries are not under threat from bookshops and that people who buy books borrow them and vice versa. These report aims discover to what extent this is true.

Work has already been carried out in this area but there are a number of gaps and this study will add to the previous research for the following reasons:

- The previous evidence is conflicting, England and Sumsion (1995) claim that people who borrow books also buy them and vice versa. However,
the Sheffield Strike Research (Proctor, Usherwood and Sobczyk 1996) showed that some people only considered buying when the library was not available and even then some were not able to afford books. This suggests that there are some people who never buy books.

- On the other hand England (1992) did mention a small group of people who never use public libraries but often buy books. He did not consider these people very important, claiming that they were a minority. The situation has changed greatly since then with books available from many more places and at lower prices. This study aims to examine whether this new situation has caused things to change since 1992.

- Linked to the previous point is the fact that much of the research in this area is not current. The 1995 report from England and Sumsion contains statistics mostly dealing with the early 1990’s.

- There are more recent studies for example Bohme’s (1999) “Perspectives of public library use two” and the report from Book Marketing Ltd and the Reading Partnership “Reading the Situation” (2000). These reports look into the area of fiction acquisition in detail. However, they are on a national scale whereas this dissertation will concentrate on a local area. The area to be studied is Sheffield, an area whose library service has faced severe financial difficulties. Financial restraints on library services as a determining factor in fiction acquisition have been looked at in previous research on a national scale. This study will look at the area in more detail by taking a case study of one area which has suffered financial hardship.

- Much of the evidence concerning where people obtain fiction is quantitative. This study will contain both quantitative and qualitative data.

- There is also conflicting evidence concerning book issues. England and Sumsion (1995) claim that book issues are going down (p.27). However, the report “Public Libraries and their bookfunds” (1997) states that libraries with a high expenditure on books maintain high book issues (P.7). This could be evidence to suggest that in some areas libraries are
losing out on borrowers due to low bookspend and that people are being forced to look elsewhere for books because of poor choice.

Bearing all of these points in mind, this dissertation aims to clarify the issues surrounding this area of study and to investigate where people obtain their reading material from and the reasons for their choice. It has long been assumed that buying and borrowing are complimentary activities, this study aims to see if this is true in the current climate of library cuts and closures and a growing book industry.

Objectives.

The objectives of this dissertation are:

- To examine and compare the borrowing and buying habits of library and bookshop users and to see if they have changed.
- Examine the potential competitors libraries have including bookstores, on-line booksellers, supermarkets, second hand shops and charity shops (a popular venue for buying books according to the literature on the Sheffield Strike Research, Proctor et. al 1996).
- To determine to reasons for people’s buying and borrowing habits and what the relative benefits of each method are.
- Interview both Bookshop managers and Librarians in order to ascertain whether they consider each other as competitors.
- Try to determine whether the type of books people read determines where they obtain them.
- Examine the people who never use libraries but are heavy book buyers and try to understand their motives.

This dissertation will begin by looking at the borrowing and buying habits of library and bookshop users and will discuss reasons for these trends in the following chapters.
Chapter Two: Methodology

2.1 Initial Approach.

The research approach adopted for this study is Grounded Theory. When using the grounded approach researchers don’t begin with a hypothesis or preconceived ideas, they look at the primary data and base conclusions on that information. Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe grounded theory in the following way, “Researchers begin with an area of study and allow the theory to emerge from the data”. It was decided to use Grounded Theory because the evidence surrounding the issues in this study are too varied and conflicting to produce a clear hypothesis to test. As mentioned above, most research on people’s buying and borrowing habits suggests that people who read usually do both (England and Sumsion 1995, Reading Partnership 2000). However, there is also evidence to dispute this (Proctor et. al. 1996, Lee 1996). These studies show that there are some people who never buy. England (1992) also mentioned a small number of people who only buy and never borrow books. This study is interested in this latter group.

As previously mentioned information on book issues is also conflicting. There is much evidence in the literature to suggest that book issues are falling (England and Sumsion 1995, MacDougall and Pearson 1991) most blaming it on lack of funds to buy new books. However there is also evidence to suggest that libraries who maintain high book spend maintain high issues (Book Trust 1997). On top of this there is also plenty of evidence that people are still enjoying reading as mentioned in the previous chapter. This coupled with the perceived fall in library issues and the seemingly endless expansion of bookshop outlets and online selling paints a rather confusing picture. Thus in an attempt to clarify these issues grounded theory was employed. It was decided to use the data on falling book issues as a starting point and work from there. From that point issue statistics were examined, people’s attitudes to libraries and bookshops and what influences their choices, the different places fiction is attainable from, aspects of publicity and choice of fiction. This report concentrates mainly on the Sheffield area and it was hoped that a small-scale study could be compared and contrasted to some of the similar national surveys that have been carried out in this area of research.
This report concentrates on fiction as a discussion on non-fiction would involve an in-depth look at people’s information seeking habits on the Internet which would have been too large a topic for this study.

2.1.1 Quantitative or Qualitative Research?

This project employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative methods utilise statistical information derived from questionnaires containing closed questions or “forced choice questions” (Foddy 1993 p.12). Using this method enabled me to discover where people obtain their reading material from, how popular the various places were, some reasons behind this and what type of people used which type of outlet. It allowed me to generalise and to compare my results to previous studies conducted in this area. However, as well as finding out where people obtain their reading material from I also wanted to find out the reasons for their choice. In order to discover qualitative methods were used in addition to quantitative. Qualitative researchers;

“Favour the use of data collecting procedures that are...based on prolonged intimate immersion in the social interaction in question or the use of non-directive open questions that respondents answer in their own words rather in terms of pre-set response categories” (Foddy 1993 p.14).

It was thought that using both qualitative and quantitative methods would bring depth to the study. Qualitative data would be used to explain the trends observed in the quantitative information. Combining methods in this way is referred to as triangulation (Blaxter et.al. 1996 p.77). In combining semi-structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods was achieved.
2.2 Research Methods Used.

2.2.1 Literature Review

A literature review “is a critical summary and assessment of the range of existing materials dealing with knowledge and understanding in a given field” (Blaxter 1996 p.110). Before conducting any fieldwork an extensive literature search of existing studies in this area was carried out in order to get a firm grasp of the ideas and issues behind this study. Issue statistics (both national and local) were studied as was data regarding where people get their reading material. Other issues included potential competitors to libraries, promotional issues, choice in libraries and finance. The main studies examined were England and Sumsion’s (1995) study “Perspectives on public library use” and the follow up edited by Bohme (1999) “Perspectives of Public Library use 2: a compendium of survey information.” These two studies contained a wealth of information on public library use as did the Book Marketing report “Reading the situation” (2000) which also concentrated on book buying habits. These reports helped give both statistical evidence for people’s borrowing and buying habits and also put forward reasons for them. The literature helped with the formulation and evaluation of the questionnaires. The literature review also helped to place the results of this study in the context of what research had already been performed and allowed comparisons to be made.

The scope of the study was limited to information on Great Britain but some papers from the U.S.A. were also examined. Most of the literature studied was written in the last 10 years but there was also some information written in the 1980s which proved useful. In order to find the relevant literature, searches were carried out using the library catalogue, LISA, BIDS (now Web of Science) and the Internet. Online newspapers such as the Guardian were searched and the BBC news web page proved extremely useful in providing up to date news on the library world and also the book trade.

2.2.2 Semi-Structured Questionnaires.

These questionnaires (see appendix 1.) were designed to obtain mostly quantitative data from the general public. Respondents were given a list of options to choose from concerning their buying and borrowing habits. However, open-ended
questions were also used and respondents were invited to qualify their answers to certain questions in order to ascertain their opinions on the subject. Open-ended questions have a number of advantages, they indicate what is salient in the respondents minds and indicate the strength of their feelings on the matter (Foddy 1993, p.128). Combining this type of question with closed questions helped to understand the respondents behaviour and brought up ideas not previously considered as was hoped when this method was chosen.

The questionnaires were administrated by the author at a number of different sites, of which more will be discussed later. Face-to face surveys can give a better response rate than postal questionnaires (Blaxter et. al. 1996 p.160) and they also offer the opportunity for the administrator to qualify any confusion respondents may have which was why this method was chosen. The main disadvantage with face-to face questionnaire is that they are extremely time consuming to conduct. However, it was felt that the high likelihood of gaining responses outweighed these difficulties.

2.2.3 Location of Study

It was decided to base this study mainly in Sheffield. The aim of this dissertation is to examine whether people are turning away from libraries (for a variety of reasons), a fact which seems to be backed up by the falling issue figures in Britain. Sheffield is a good place to conduct a study of this nature because the library service here has suffered a great deal of hardship. Due to ongoing financial difficulties there was no adult fiction budget in 1998 and the service has faced many financial cutbacks. Because of this it was felt that Sheffield was an ideal place to conduct this research. It was hoped that by looking at a library service that has faced hardships it would become evident if people had been moving away from the service. Sheffield is also unique in the fact that it has libraries of quite varying quality. It was suggested by the Book Trust (1997) that libraries that spent more money on stock manage to maintain high issues. It was hoped that by conducting questionnaires outside new and old libraries this suggestion could be verified.
This study uses the non-probability method of “Quota Sampling”. Probability sampling involves knowing the number of people in your sample frame (for example the exact number of people working in an organisation) and a mathematically random selection of these people is made (May 1997). Because the author did not have a sample frame and did not know how many people exactly were going to be surveyed Quota Sampling was used. May describes Quota Sampling in the following way:

“A form of sampling often employed in market research is that of quota sampling. Here, the general characteristics of a population is known from data obtained from, for instance the census. The proportion of people in particular age groups, social class etc. is known before hand and the sample will consist of a proportionate quota of people with these characteristics” (p. 87).

This method was used for this study. Data about the population of the areas containing the libraries was gained from the census and also from speaking to the library staff. From the literature review it was known the general age, sex distribution of library and bookshop users nationally so the surveys from this report were able to be applied to those. Because this study was only concerned with people who read fiction it was decided to survey people as they left either bookshops or libraries. This method is representative if carried out properly and has the advantage of reaching the group of people you are interested in. However, as May remarks it can suffer from sample bias in so far as those who are easier to interview are selected or those that more obviously display the desired characteristics.

Questionnaires were administrated at 5 locations, Firth Park, Central and Broomhill Libraries in Sheffield, Waterstones Bookshop in Sheffield and Borders Bookstore in Leeds. A variety of libraries and bookshops were chosen in the hope of ensuring that a diverse range of people would be interviewed.
Firth Park Library, a district library reopened in October 1999 after moving from its original 1930’s building in a park to its new location at the heart of Firth Park Shopping Centre. The library was relocated as part of the government’s “Capital Challenge” project to regenerate the Firth Park area. The old library was in an inaccessible location and as a result did not get many users. Since the new library opened both members of the library and issues have increased. This must partly be because of the amount of new stock the library holds compared with other libraries in Sheffield. Sheffield Library service has not been buying any fiction for a year and a half but Firth Park reopened with completely new stock. This library was chosen so the author could investigate whether a library with new stock will manage to keep it’s issues high compared to a library with low levels of new books. According to management data checkouts in Firth Park library rose from 24403 in 1998 to 52281 in 1999 after the new library was opened. In 1998 they had 244 new members joining, in 1999 after the opening of the new library they had 2463.

The library was also chosen for its position in Sheffield. Firth Park is a poor area with above average unemployment compared to some other parts of Sheffield. (The 1991 census stated that Firth Park had 1,396 people unemployed compared with Broomhill, 491). Two of the Secondary Schools in the area have had “Special Measures” introduced in order to improve them and according to the OFSTED reports educational achievement is low. The author of this report wanted to investigate whether living in a less affluent area had any effect on library use. The regular users of Firth Park tend to be the white working class population of Firth Park although they do have a cross section of ethnic minorities as well. The age range is quite large with people from their 20s-50s using the library as well as a large number of pensioners and young children. The library is open 3 late nights a week, until 7pm and on Saturdays until 4pm without closing for lunch.
• **Broomhill Library** is a community library in the North Group. It is situated in one of the most affluent areas of Sheffield, home to many of the cities professionals and the area contains a number of Grant Maintained schools. Unemployment is low in the Broomhill area and according to the staff the library is used in the majority by professional people although university students also make up a large proportion of the users. The library is situated not only near to the University but also to Halls of Residence. Elderly people are also users of the library but the staff thought that they do not dominate as much as in some other areas of the city. This library was chosen for it’s position in an affluent area to see whether affluence affected library use, especially in light of the fact that the suspension of the fiction budget has had an effect on the stock here. The library is open on a Saturday but closes for lunch in the middle of the day. It is open one late night a week. According to issue statistics generated by the library service’s computer system there was a 6.1% fall in the number of checkouts between December 1998 and 1999.

• **Central Library.** The central library in Sheffield attracts people from all over the city, especially the west of the city. People who used Eccleshall Library before it closed often now use the central library. It is often used by people who do not live in Sheffield but use the library whilst at work in the city. The questionnaires administrated during the course of this study revealed that many working people use the Central Library rather than their local libraries in Sheffield as it is more convenient to them to do so. Because of its size and importance the Central Library has a wider variety of stock than smaller libraries and a larger range of fiction. According to management statistics issues fell by 11.5% between December 1998 and 1999.

• **Waterstones Bookshop.** Waterstones is part of a conventional bookshop chain, which have become the norm in city centres across Britain during the last 10 years. It is situated in the centre of Sheffield and is the only large bookstore of its type in the city centre. Other bookstores in Sheffield include WH Smiths, a few independents and remainder stores and the various small branches of Blackwells which stock mostly non-fiction and are situated away from the city.
centre nearer the university. Thus, Waterstones does not have to face up to the competition of another big store and would seem to be the obvious choice for a person in Sheffield to buy new books. The shop was chosen for this reason. The chain stores which have sprung up to the detriment of independent bookshops are large and offer a huge variety of new books. Recently they have begun to promote their stock in ways libraries have done in the past such as hosting reading groups and holding children’s storey time sessions. It was decided to investigate their potential rivalry to libraries and Sheffield was chosen because of the difficult financial situation the cities libraries are in.

- **Borders Bookshop.** Questionnaires were administrated outside Borders Bookshop in Leeds. Borders is a new type of bookshop rather like Waterstones but on a slightly larger scale and, it would seem, a different ethos. Borders began in America in 1971 as a second hand shop which gradually moved over to selling new books. The big expansion began in 1985 and there are now hundreds of stores all over America. There are currently 8 stores in Britain with another 3 opening this year and more planned for the future. What sets Borders apart from other bookstores is partly their size. These new “Super Bookstores” are often huge, on a number of floors and contain coffee shops. They also differ from other bookshops it their attitude towards customers. They are extremely customer centred and encourage users to browse their shelves as if it were a library providing comfortable armchairs, sofa’s and tables (something some libraries do not!) They have a comfortable atmosphere unlike most other shops which are often more interested in getting people to buy something. They are also extremely into community involvement and organise a large number of community events. Because of their similarity to libraries (apart from their sometimes larger and newer range of stock) it was decided to investigate their potential competition. Unfortunately there is no Borders in Sheffield which is why Leeds was chosen. The differences in the two cities will be noted in analysing the results. By surveying people outside of bookshops in this way it was hoped to discover whether libraries are under threat from any other organisations.
2.2.4 Respondents

The survey was to include 100 people, 50 public library users and 50 users of bookshops. Originally it was decided to spend a maximum of 2 hours at any one place and see how many respondents were available. After the first two sessions it became obvious that face-to-face questionnaires were time consuming and for this reason the 100 questionnaires would be a manageable amount to collect. While this is not a large number it is large enough to be significant for a small scale study. The results from the 100 questionnaires were broken down into 25 at Waterstones, 25 at Borders, 15 at Firth Park, 17 at Broomhill and 18 at the Central Library. The original plan of staying a maximum of 2 hours had to be abandoned because some places were extremely quiet and had to be revisited.

2.3 Semi-structured Interviews.

As well as conducting questionnaires on the general public the author wished to interview relevant stakeholders such as librarians and bookshops managers in more detail. For this purpose semi-structured interviews were used. Bell (1995) describes semi-structured interviews in the following way:

“No questionnaire or checklist is used but a framework is established by selecting topics around which the interview is guided. The respondent is allowed a considerable degree of latitude within the framework to talk about the topic and give their views on their own time” (p.94).

Semi-structured interviews allow more information to be obtained from the respondents than structured interviews where the questions are standardised and asked in the same way to every respondent. They allow the interviewees to reply in their own words and therefore reveal what is salient in their minds whilst at the same time allowing for more comparability than unstructured interviews (May 1997 p.111). It was hoped that using a semi-structured approach would enable those being interviewed to discuss topics previously not thought of by the author. This method was chosen in order to provide a clear picture at the issues involved.
It was decided to tape record the interviews in order to prevent the frenzied scribbling of notes that can sometimes accompany interviews. It was felt that it would be better to make eye contact with the interviewees whilst at the same time being certain of gaining clear and accurate results from the interview. There are some disadvantages though as Blaxter et al. (1996) note:

“Tape recording may however make respondents anxious and less likely to reveal confidential information. Tapes also take a long time to transcribe and analyse” (p.154).

It is true that transcribing is time consuming but it was felt that it would be worth the effort to have an accurate record of the interview. Only one of the interviewees requested that no tape recording be made of the interview. The manager of Borders Bookshop made this request but did not reveal any reason for doing so and did not divulge any particularly sensitive information. One can only assume that the use of a tape recorder made him nervous or uncomfortable. However, the other interviewees were all willing to be taped and did not seem to suffer any discomfort whatsoever. Indeed, many seemed quite at ease with the interview process, a fact that is not surprising as many had helped other students in the past. Occasionally more sensitive material was divulged when the tape was switched off but on the whole the information volunteered was extremely satisfactory.

2.3.1 Interviews with Stakeholders.

A number of semi-structured interviews were carried out with relevant stakeholders. The stakeholders were chosen using the strategy of theoretical sampling put forward by Glausner and Strauss (quoted in Taylor and Bogdon 1984). In theoretical sampling the actual number of cases studied is not important. What is important is the 'potential for each “case”’ to aid the researcher in developing theoretical insights in to the area of social life being studied” (Taylor and Bogdon 1984 p.83). Bearing this in mind a number of people were chosen whose knowledge of issues would help to provide insights into the various themes of my study. The
The following interviewees were chosen with the aid of my supervisor. The following people were interviewed.

- The Librarian at Walkley Library. The librarian at Walkley is on the Fiction buying Team for Sheffield and is also Librarian at Walkley library. She was chosen for her knowledge of the Sheffield Library Services as a whole and also her knowledge of Walkley a library which has suffered greatly from the financial troubles of the library service.

- The Librarian, Firth Park Library. This interviewee was chosen in order to give an insight into borrowing habits at a new well-stocked library.

- Employee of the Reading Partnership. The Reading Partnership recently worked on a report entitled “Reading the Situation” along with Book Marketing Ltd. The report contained information relevant to this dissertation but on a larger more national level. This respondent was chosen for her opinions on people’s buying and borrowing habits in the light of the report she had contributed to.

- Employee of Cypher Library supplies. The employee interviewed deals with libraries and knows what kind of stock they buy and how much. The author wished to understand libraries buying habits in order to investigate whether they were buying less, or whether the types of books they were buying could affect library issues.

- Librarian, Kirklees. The Librarian for Kirklees works in publicising libraries and reading promotion in the Kirklees area. The author wished to interview her to find out what libraries are already doing to increase their popularity and promote reading. This is important in light of the perceived fall in issues that has occurred and the fact that book shops are extremely good at promotion.

- Manager, Waterstones, Sheffield. This manager of Waterstones was chosen for interview in order to give her opinion on people’s buying habits, bookshops relations to libraries and the perceived image of libraries by the book trade. It was important to speak to someone in Sheffield since the majority of this study is based there. The interview provided some useful information relating specifically to Sheffield as well as more general information.
Manager, Borders York. An interview was conducted with one of the managers at the York branch of Borders. This interview was arranged in the hope of gaining and insight into the new “Super bookshops” and their relation to libraries and other bookshops.

2.4 Dates and Times of Study.

The interviews with the stakeholders were mostly carried out before the questionnaires in the hope that they might reveal information that could be used in the questionnaires. The interviews took between 30-45 minutes. They were undertaken on 9th June with the manager of Waterstones, 12th June with the employee of the Reading Partnership, 14th June with the employee of Cypher, 16th June at Firth Park, 19th June at Borders, York 21st June with the Librarian at Walkley, and 26th June with Catherine Morris in Huddersfield. The questionnaires were carried out mostly after these dates with the exception of Firth Park which was occurred on the 15th June.

In order to get as balanced a picture as possible of library users the questionnaires were administered on different days and at different times. The questionnaires at Firth Park were carried out on a Friday morning, Broomhill on a Saturday morning and the Central library a Wednesday evening from 5pm until 7pm. It was hoped that by doing this a wide range of users would be surveyed, for example, surveying people on a Wednesday afternoon/evening allowed the author to catch people on their way back from work.

The questionnaires administered at Waterstones were carried out on a Friday and Saturday afternoon in order to catch both people at work and people spending a Saturday shopping. This was also done in order to catch a wide variety of people. The Borders questionnaires were conducted at Leeds on a Thursday afternoon and Friday morning. The semi-structured questionnaire took approximately 5 minutes to administer depending on how much the respondent had to say.
2.5 Limitations of Methodology.

Ideally, more than 100 questionnaires would have been administered in order to gain a more accurate picture. However, the large amount of time taken to carry out the face-to-face questionnaires prevented this.

It is possible that the questionnaires may have suffered some sample bias of the sort described above by May (1997). The reason for this is that it is often difficult to get people to answer questionnaires especially when conducting them on the street. Most library users were extremely happy to help and some had interesting opinions to express, quite a few people embellished their answers with opinions of the library service. Trying to survey people outside bookshops proved to be more difficult. People are less likely to want to stop in the street due to the large amount of researchers that can be found in any major town. Often people are busy in cities especially on weekdays where they may be shopping or on breaks from work. This lead to the researcher spending considerably more time surveying people on the street than in libraries. It also led to a slight sample bias as often people, especially middle-aged men, would refuse to co-operate or did not read fiction. This could have lead to there being a slight under representation of this group.
Chapter 3: Buy, Borrow or Both?

3.1 Patterns of library and bookshop use.

Before any issues, such as why people choose to use libraries or not are addressed, the pattern of library and bookshop use must be established. Therefore the aim of this chapter is to establish people’s reading habits, library and bookshop use. Throughout the course of this chapter I shall endeavour to find out where fiction readers obtain their reading material.

There is an abundance of evidence in the literature to show that people in Great Britain still enjoy reading as a hobby. This seems to have remained constant over the past decade. Mann (1991) noted that the 1988 Euromonitor survey revealed that 45% of all respondents were currently reading a book (p.9). As noted in the introduction, the ASLIB review of 1995 noted there has been an increase in reading in recent years and Gibbons (1999) noted it’s continuing popularity amongst young people. The Book Marketing Ltd.(BML) report “Reading the Situation” (2000) recorded that 70% of the population read books once a week (p.7). With so many people reading it would perhaps seem an obvious conclusion that people are using libraries, yet evidence suggests a fall in issues. At the same time however, the literature on library use suggests that people do still use libraries. England (1992) recorded that a third of the population had library tickets they used regularly and a quarter had tickets they used occasionally (p.4). The “House Hold Library Use” survey conducted by BML in 1998 discovered that 63% of British adults had visited public libraries in the twelve months prior to the interview. BML (2000) in “Reading the Situation” found that 60% of all households borrow books.

From this evidence it would seem that despite falling issues, people are still using libraries. It could be that people are now borrowing fewer books per visit, an issue which will be discussed in Chapter 8. However it could also be that people buy books as well as borrow them. This is an idea widely supported in the literature, most researchers believe that buying and borrowing are not mutually exclusive and that people do both. England and Sumsion (1995) describe the situation in the following way:
“Books and the consumer” has consistently shown that such an assumption [people who buy books don’t borrow them and vice versa] is difficult to sustain in almost all respects those who use libraries are more likely to be book buyers than those who do not” (p.16).

Proof that the “Books and the consumer” survey has shown this previously can be found in England’s 1994 study for this survey. In this study England states; “The position is as clear now as 3 years ago, that the library user is a regular frequenter of bookshops” (p.12). This may well be the case but what about frequenters of bookshops? Do they use libraries as well? Are they the same people? England’s study seems to concentrate on library users with only a small consideration of people who buy books but do not use libraries. The 1994 study proposes the idea that those who borrow the most buy the most. This idea can also be found in the study “Heavy book borrowers” (1996) carried out by BML:

“Heavy and medium book borrowers are also very likely to be heavy book buyers of new and second hand books, both in hardback and paperback. Nearly 2 in 5 of those who are heavy borrowers are also categorised as heavy book buyers. They will not necessarily buy if they can borrow but are so interested in books and reading that they are happy to buy where necessary” (p.6)

The previous study classifies a heavy buyer as someone who buys 16+ books a year. This dissertation also uses this classification. “Heavy Book Borrowers” would seem to prove that people who borrow books also buy them. It seems to be inferring that people who read a lot of books will buy and borrow frequently whereas those who do less will do less of both activities. This study seems to be coming from a library perspective, unlike England’s (1994) study it does not take into account non-library users. This leads to a rather bias argument. It shows that heavy library users often buy books and makes the assumption that people who borrow also buy books without considering non-library users who read fiction.
Despite this bias there is an abundance of literature to show that people who borrow books also buy them including Goodall (1989), Kinnell (1991), England and Sumsion (1995), Van Riel (1992), and Book Marketing Ltd. (2000). These last two studies share two things in common, they agree that people buy and borrow but they also claim that slightly more people buy books than borrow them. In “Reading the future” edited. By Van Riel (1992), Hutchinson claimed that:

“Whereas in 1981 more people had obtained the book they were reading from a library than had bought it, the figures in 1990 were exactly reversed so that in 1990 38% of books being read were bought and almost 32% were borrowed.” (p.9)

Ten years later BML and the Reading Partnership (2000) claimed that “Slightly more (75%) buy than borrow (60%)” (p.14). Comparing this to the earlier report by Hutchinson implies that perhaps things have changed in recent years and that people are in fact moving away from libraries and using bookshops more. The BML report goes on to say:

“Among individuals, those who borrow from public libraries are more likely to buy the books they read than those who don’t borrow (62% compared to 55%). Even the heaviest borrowers from libraries (those taking out 6 or more books for themselves in an average month) are more likely to buy as well as borrowing rather than borrow only (56% compared to 44%) (p.14).

So far the literature seems to be suggesting that more people, buy than borrow yet most people do both. If this is true then there must be a group of people who never borrow but buy all the books they need. After looking at this group in detail the results of this dissertation will be examined in order to discover whether people really do buy as well as borrow and whether this is increasing.
3.2 Heavy Book Buyers and non-library users.

In 1992, England identified a small number of people who were heavy book buyers but who never used libraries. He believed they accounted for about one fifth of all those without library tickets (p.34). He identified them as being aged between 20-35 and probably dwelling in the South. England believed that this small group were probably commuters buying to read on the train (p.35). He stressed that they were not an unimportant group but a small one. Part of this dissertation’s aims are to identify whether cuts in the library service have caused this group to increase. England’s 1994 study would seem to prove that it has. Returning to the same subject, England found that 2 in 3 heavy book buyers (16+ a year) held library tickets but that 1 in 3 did not. However he found that very little had changed in the numbers on this group since 1990. He did however acknowledge that an apparent rejection of the close relationship between buying and borrowing could be deduced from that statistic (Lee, 1996 p.32). He also found that heavy buyers without library tickets read for less time in a week than those with them and were likely to have fewer books in the home. Reasons behind this will be considered further on in this work.

Despite conflicting evidence, the literature seems to suggest that heavy readers are more likely to buy and borrow and that light readers are more likely to simply buy. Evidence to refute this can be found in a study by Lee (1996). Lee's study of female reading habits involved investigating a female reading group, cultural group, a retired ladies circle and some female 6th form students. Lee found that:

“In all the group discussions regular borrowers of fiction from libraries were in the minority even though all of the participants displayed an obvious affection for reading and books” (p.37)
This is only a small scale study and Lee does not mention whether the respondents were heavy or light readers, this perhaps shows that there are a significant number of people who like to read but don’t use libraries. It perhaps also refutes the common assumption that men are more likely to be buyers of books whereas women will use libraries (BML 2000).

3.3 Non-buyers

As well as people who don’t use libraries and always buy books there are also, according to the literature a small number of people who never buy and only borrow books. The research carries out by Proctor, Usherwood and Sobczyk (1996) on the Sheffield Libraries strike found that 20% of those affected replaced the library by buying books and 29% said they had bought more books than they would normally (p.17). The interesting point about this is that in an affluent area 52% bought more books than usual whereas in a poor area the number was only 12%. This shows that there are some people who choose not to buy books for economic reasons, which suggests that there are people will only ever borrow.

The literature seems to agree that most people buy and borrow books with a smaller percentage either buying or borrowing only. The research seems to suggest that because of this, libraries are not under threat from bookshops. However, there does seem to be some evidence to suggest that people are buying more books. England (1994) noted that from 1989 to 1994 the proportion of people buying books for themselves rose from 59% to 79% (p.43). Does this mean people are borrowing less and buying more? Evidence such as the BML (2000) report seems to suggest that this is true.

One aim of this dissertation was to compare library users with bookshop users to see if there was any difference in their attitudes and reading habits and buying and borrowing habits. The previous literature tends to assume that because most people buy and borrow, people who use bookshops and libraries are the same people but this may not necessarily be true. As we have seen the previous studies believe that most people buy and borrow this dissertation would appear to prove this.
3.4 Results and discussion

3.4.1 Buying and Borrowing habits.

The following graph shows us the buying and borrowing habits of the total sample which was 100 people.

**Figure 1.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Buy and Borrow</th>
<th>Buy Only</th>
<th>Borrow Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survey</strong></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This total excludes borrowing from friends and classes borrowing as borrowing from a library. This table compares to the results of England and Sumson (1995) and also BML (2000) who found that most people buy and borrow with a smaller percentage doing one or the other. Figure 1 shows that the total percentage of people obtaining their books from libraries is 73%. This is a slightly higher figure than that given by the House Hold Users Survey in 1998 which stated that 63% of adults had visited a library in the 12 months previous to their survey (BML p.7). The ASLIB (1995) review suggested that three fifths of the English and Welsh population visit public libraries. This is 60%, again lower than the 73% found in this study. From this evidence it would appear that public libraries are still a popular place to obtain books. However, the surveys were administrated outside libraries so perhaps this biases the results slightly.

It would appear that the results of this study back up the results of previous studies, that people who buy also borrow. However, as we can see from Figure 1, 27% of the total survey do not use libraries. This is in accordance with findings from the BML (2000) report “Reading the Situation” which found that 30% of
people only buy the books they read. The results of this dissertation become interesting when they are broken down into those people surveyed outside libraries and those outside bookshops. The following pie charts show the results.

Figure 2.

![Pie chart showing buying and borrowing habits of library users.]

- 90% Buy and Borrow
- 8% Borrow only
- 2% Buy only

Figure 3.

![Pie chart showing buying and borrowing habits of bookshop users.]

- 46% Buy and Borrow
- 52% Borrow only
- 2% Buy only
It would appear that bookshop users replace borrowing from the library with borrowing from friends. When borrowing from friends is included in the definition of borrowing the results look like this:

### Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bookshop Sample (%)</th>
<th>Bookshop Sample Total</th>
<th>Library Sample (%)</th>
<th>Library Sample Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buy and Borrow</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy Only</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrow Only</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data from library users does not change but there is a significant change for the bookshop users. The percentage only buying books decreases from 52% to 28% and it would seem that they replace borrowing from a library with borrowing from friends or family.

### 3.4.2 Amount of reading: bookshop and library users.

From Table 1 and Figures 2 and 3, we can see that library users are far more likely to buy and borrow from libraries whilst bookshop users are more likely to only buy the books they read and not use libraries. Even taking into account books borrowed from friends or family the bookshop sample are less likely to borrow books. Could this be, as previous research suggests, because people who only buy tend to be lighter readers and therefore require fewer books? The BML (2000) report believes this to be the case claiming that the more a person reads, the more likely they are to both buy and borrow the books they read (p.15). From this research it would appear that this is the case. In the sample of library users 24% of people read more than 6 books a month whilst in the bookshop sample it was only 14%. The percentage of people reading 3-5 books a month was the same for both groups at 40% but the percentage reading only 1-2 books a month was different.
46% of bookshop users read only 1-2 books a month while only 35% of library users did so. Considering that the bookshop sample were more likely to buy all the books they read and the library sample were more likely to buy and borrow it would appear that heavy readers are more likely to buy and borrow the books they read. Further evidence for this can be found when you consider that of the 27 people from the whole survey who only buy books and don’t use libraries only 6 read more than 6 books a month. However, these 6 people, or 23% are still a significant number as is the 27% of people in the whole survey who never borrow from libraries. Clearly the reasons for this must be investigated and will be in later chapters.

The following table shows us that as well as reading less books, the bookshop sample also visit the library less which is further evidence to support this theory.

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visits to the library</th>
<th>Library Sample (%)</th>
<th>Bookshop Sample (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than once a week</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a fortnight</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a month</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When examining the numbers of books people buy in one year it is interesting to note that the people surveyed outside bookshops were heavier buyers than those surveyed outside libraries. The following table illustrates this.
Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Books bought in one year</th>
<th>Library Sample (%)</th>
<th>Library Sample Total</th>
<th>Bookshop Sample (%)</th>
<th>Bookshop Sample Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16+ a year</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-15 a year</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 a year</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows us that bookshop users buy more books than they borrow. We have already established that they are generally lighter readers so it would seem to support the idea advanced by BML (2000) that the people who buy all of their books read less.

So far it has been established that people who buy but do not borrow read less than those who buy and borrow. However, what about the people who buy books and are still heavy readers? We have already seen that England (1994) found that one third of people who were heavy book buyers but did not use libraries. This study has found that 23% of heavy readers don’t borrow books. When investigating heavy buyers this study found that out of the 95 respondents who bought books 29 were heavy buyers. The total number of heavy buyers who do not use libraries is 10. This works out as 34%. This finding is extremely similar to the findings of England (1994) who found that one third or 33% of people were heavy buyers who did not have library tickets.

From the data presented thus far we can conclude that the bookshop sample buy and borrow to a lesser extent than the library survey. The bookshop sample is more likely to only buy books, it is also more likely to read less and visit libraries less than the library sample. The fact that 27% of the total survey do not borrow from libraries and of that group, 22% (6) are heavy readers is significant.
Before moving on it is worth noting the qualitative data collected on this section. Most of the stakeholders interviewed agreed that libraries and bookshops were separate organisations and that most people bought and borrowed. The librarian at Walkley stated:

“\textit{When it comes to the average person who can afford to buy books I think they do both. I think they use the library and I think they buy books as well. In many cases if you’re interested in books it breeds more books, you want to have them}”.

A similar view was expressed by the manager of Waterstones bookshop who stated:

“\textit{I think they are a separate service, people who buy books tend to borrow them as well. I think the more books a library has ignites people’s interest for “real” books in shops so they can co-exist}”.

These views are similar to those held by Goodall (1989) who believes that people will often buy books after they have read them in the library (p.90).

The following chapters will explain the results presented in this chapter by looking at the reasons behind them. Each chapter will take a different theme, explore it and attempt to explain why people do as they do.

\textit{3.5 Brief Conclusions.}

This chapter has shown that most people buy and borrow books. However, considering that 50\% of the questionnaires were conducted in libraries this is perhaps not surprising, a more random sample of the population might have come up with some different results. These results do seem to back up the findings of previous studies, most people buy and borrow. This study also found that library users are more likely to both buy and borrow the books they read and are likely to be heavier readers than those who do not. It found that there are a substantial number of people who only buy books and that while some are light readers some read and buy a large amount of books.
Chapter 4: The effect of Age, Gender and Occupation on reading buying and borrowing.

This chapter aims to discover whether gender, age and occupation effect buying and borrowing habits. Other issues considered in this chapter will include distance from libraries and bookshops, mobility and access as these subjects tie in with age, sex and occupation.

4.1 Gender

It has long been supposed that women are heavier library users than men. Evidence to support this statement can be found in England’s (1992) study which found that 57% of women use libraries compared to 43% of men even though women only marginally out number men in the population (p.20). England also found that women are likely to borrow more books at a time than men. England’s later (1994) study found the same patterns. The BML (2000) report “Reading the Situation” found that young women aged 17-34 are “3 times as likely as men in the same age group to borrow from a public library (54% compared to 18%)” (p.14). The report also found that 77% of women read fiction compared to only 44% of men. England and Sumson (1995) also made this discovery, (p.22). This information tells us that women are more likely to read fiction and borrow from libraries than men. But what about men who do read fiction, does this mean they are more likely to buy what they read? It would appear so, England, (1994) found that heavy book buyers were more likely to be men than women a discovery also made by Mann in 1991. Mann stated that “buying (40%) was higher than amongst women (35%)” (p.12 in Kinnell 1991).

There could be many different reasons why women use libraries more than men, it could be that as women live longer they have more time to read in retirement than men. It could be that they visit the library with their children although the Household User Survey conducted by BML (1998) stated that significant numbers of young women with children did not have time to visit public libraries (p.12). One possible explanation for the disparity has been advanced by the BML (2000) report which suggests that men follow the pattern developed in childhood and are less likely to read than women because they enjoy other pursuits (p.56).
4.2 Age.

4.2.1 The Elderly

It has also been suggested that age affects buying and borrowing habits. The common image of a library is of a place often frequented by middle age women or elderly people. At first glance the literature seems to prove this stereotype. England (1992) states that the elderly are an important group and found that they made up 58% of all weekly library users

England’s (1994) study claims that elderly people are over represented among library users but he does not believe they monopolise the service. This may be true but there does seem to be strong evidence to suggest that the elderly use libraries to a large extent. Does this mean they buy less books than younger people do? England’s (1994) study would appear to prove that they do:

“Among the over 60s who use libraries, the average numbers of books bought is no more than half bought by other regular users” (p.22).

This would seem an obvious statement. After all the over 60s are more likely to be retired and therefore have less disposable income and more time to read. However, England and Sumson (1995) do not believe that elderly people switch from buying to borrowing stating that: “Subsequent analysis showed that buying and borrowing books were closely linked to all ages and in all classes” (p.44). However, Goodall (1989) claimed that studies by Spenceley and Harrison had proven that older people did stop buying books. One of this dissertation’s aims was to try to uncover the real picture.

4.2.2 Young People.

Most of the statistics in the literature seem to suggest that younger people use libraries less often than older people. For example 32% of people over 55 possessed a library ticket in 1993 compared to 20% of those aged 15-24 (England 1994 p.11). BML (1996) state that:
While the ‘all borrowers’ group have an age profile similar to that of the population as a whole, heavy/medium borrowers show a far lower proportion of those aged between 25 and 64 (encompassing most of those with children) and show almost double the proportion of over 65’s."

It has been shown that the BML (2000) study puts this down to patterns of low reading levels in boys during childhood. The ASLIB review suggested that low use among young people in general stems from an image problem. The report states that heavy, occasional and non-users when asked, all thought that: “the library is not a good place for younger or working class people”(p.144).

4.3 Occupation/Status.

We have already seen that the common perception of a library user is someone who is middle aged or retired and the literature above seems to support this. Further evidence to support the theory occurs when occupation and status are considered. Proctor et. al (1998) carried out an investigation into how library closures and reductions in opening hours effected library users in Sheffield. While their quantitative data did not show any major decline in library use their qualitative data showed that certain groups were effected, a major one being those in full time employment. Another group which found library use difficult after the cuts were those with children and young people:

“The findings suggest that those most disenfranchised by the reductions are those who are waged or otherwise unavailable during the day time and children and young people who rely on the library spontaneously for homework purposes” (p.46).

The above quotation would help explain why older people use libraries and why younger people do not. Perhaps it is wrong to presume that young and employed people are not interested in libraries, perhaps library use among these groups is low because they simply do not have access to them.
This leads on to the question of access. It was decided to include a question in this study about distance from libraries and bookshops. It soon became clear that distance from these organisations was often irrelevant as many working people visited libraries or bought books in the town where they worked and not necessarily where they lived. This point will be discussed further in the latter half of this chapter.

One final important point to make about library demographics is that it is dangerous to assume that just because it appears for example, that more elderly people or females use libraries than this is the case. Book Marketing (1996) sum this point up in the following way:

“The mainstay of the libraries—the heavy and medium borrowers are far closer to a cross-section of the population than might have been expected: the service is not used by (and therefore should not be aimed at), a minority market. Rather it is used heavily by men and women, young and old and a mixture of social grade” (p. 9).

If librarians assume this then not only will the users be dissatisfied with what is provided for them but the myth that libraries are only for middle-aged women or the old will be perpetuated and turn potential users away.

4.4 Results and discussion
4.4.1 Gender

From the results collected it would appear that borrowing and buying differ between men and women and also perhaps amounts of reading. The total number of women surveyed was 66 compared to only 34 men. This could partly be because of some men’s reluctance to be interviewed and also because many of the men who were stopped as they left libraries or bookshops claimed not to read fiction. This supports Book Marketing’s (2000) findings that 77% of women read fiction compared to 43% of men. However, another reason that men were underrepresented in this survey was that there were simply less of them both in libraries and bookshops. The difference was especially marked in libraries were 36 women were surveyed and only 14 men. These figures support England (1992) who claimed that
more women use libraries than men and England (1994) who found that heavy book buyers were more likely to be men. The reasons why there are these differences are hard to define. When asked why they used libraries as well as/instead of libraries, men and women answered in the following way.

**Table 4.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for library use as well as/instead of buying</th>
<th>Men (%)</th>
<th>Women (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like to try out new authors in libraries first</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good selection in libraries</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have always used libraries</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries have out of print books</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in a library</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries have nice atmosphere/staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage space</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty to libraries</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here we can see the reasons men and women prefer using libraries but we do not know why they differ, at this point we can merely speculate. It seems as though finance is less important to men than women. This could be because there were a higher proportion of retired women surveyed than men, it could also be because often, men still earn more than women and are more likely to work full time. A number of the men (20%) were in full time employment which could explain this. It could also explain why less men found using libraries convenient than women. Women live longer than men, which is probably why there were more retired women than men in the survey. An interesting finding of this research is that 55% of women claim to use libraries because they have always done so, while only 27% of the men do this. This supports England’s studies which state that women use libraries more
and the BML (2000) study which claims that low patterns of reading in boys leads on into adulthood (p.56).

Because of the size of the survey the amount of women and men buying books is very similar (96% and 94% respectively). However when buying and borrowing habits were investigated the result is that 35% of men and only 22% of women only buy books and never borrow. This supports the findings of both Mann (1991) and England (1994).

Again, it is hard to explain why men don’t use libraries as much as women. That they read less could be one explanation but what about those who do read? A possible explanation is that libraries are not attractive to men. Are they perceived as organisations suited mainly to women and have they been geared that way in the past? The Kirklees librarian who was interviewed for this study believes this may have been the case:

“I think we have pandered to that section of society. I think they have been in the majority so we’ve tended to think ‘Oh well, we’ve got to try and give them what they want’ and not try and attract those who maybe don’t use it at the moment, or all the people who have been using it have come in and gone, ‘Oh there’s nothing in here for me.'”

The librarian went on to make the important point that even if one group are in the majority, it is important not to assume that they will all want the same thing:

“Middle aged women certainly are a large proportion of our users, again surveys have proved it…but it’s been a bit presumptuous of libraries to assume that all middle aged women want to read Catherine Cookson”.

The librarian said that libraries are trying to change their ways and broaden their stock whilst still keeping their core client groups happy. This could be a slightly bias statement coming from a librarian although evidence that libraries are perhaps changing in this respect came from one of the respondents at Firth Park library:
“The old library seemed to be mostly for women, it definitely felt like a women’s library, this new one is much better” (male respondent Firth Park library).

The librarian at Walkley library agreed that women use the library more but put it down to the fact that men don’t read as much fiction:

“A lot of men don’t read fiction, they read non-fiction...I think men read a lot, newspapers and magazines but not fiction. We have men here who come in and take a lot of books at a time but we don’t have the quantity of them”.

All in all it seems that men are less likely to use libraries than women. Men are more likely to say they would never think of using libraries (20%) than women (13%). They are more likely to not use libraries due to the pressure of returning books (59% compared to 34% respectively) although less likely to complain about opening hours.

4.4.2 Age.

Figure 4.

[Image of a pie chart showing the distribution of age for the Bookshop Sample. The percentages are as follows: 56% for 36-50, 22% for 51-64, 18% for 18-35, 4% for 18-25, and 0% for 65+. Each age group is represented by a different color and a corresponding legend: □ U18 □ 18-35 □ 36-50 □ 51-64 □ 65+]
Figure 5

From these Pie charts we can see that the age distribution among the two samples is quite different. In the library sample only 15% of people were aged between 18 and 35. This is despite carrying out some of the questionnaires on a Saturday morning and a Wednesday evening. It would appear that England (1994) was correct in stating that less young people use libraries than older people. However, despite the relatively small number of younger people, the age distribution among the rest of the groups is quite evenly spread. It would seem that library use increases once people reach 35. A theory to explain this has been advanced by England (1992). England states that people grow into library use after establishing their purchasing habits first (p.30). Considering that 56% of people surveyed in the bookshop sample were aged 18-35 and that all the other groups in that sample were smaller, then this theory could be a possible explanation. One of the librarians interviewed believes that people do grow into library use as they get older:

“Theres a big population out there [of young people] reading and do librarians have to make them come in? Does it matter as long as they’re reading?... when I ask you students, ‘would you use this library?’ theres probably nothing in here for you or you haven’t got time or get things easier at university or a paper back you buy...Later it becomes a family place to come to unless you’ve done it all your life”.

There are three important points in this quotation. Firstly there is the admission that young people don’t use libraries but that they return to them in later life perhaps when bringing their children. Secondly there is the rather worrying admission that libraries perhaps don’t contain anything for young people. Lee’s
(1996) study found that the 6th form girls interviewed felt the same thing. The third important point in this quotation is the final point, “Then it becomes a family thing unless you’ve done it all your life”. This suggests that library use is a habit that people grow into unless they have always done it. If young people don’t use libraries as children then perhaps they won’t as adults.

The librarian interviewed believed that because people return to libraries it doesn’t matter if they don’t use them while young. This may well be the case but this attitude could be seen by some as complacent. In Lee’s study most of the people interviewed of varying ages did not use libraries. In this study 27% claimed never to use libraries. There is always the possibility that people who feel the library has nothing to offer them when they’re young will not return when they are older when they are busy with families and full time jobs.

The proportion of elderly people in the library sample was not as high as expected although the total over 51 years of age did reach 48, which will include many retired people. The percentage of over 65s in the bookshop sample was very small, only 4%. This perhaps refutes the idea advanced by England and Sumson (1995) that elderly people do not replace borrowing with buying.

4.4.3 Occupation and Status: results.

Figure 6
Explanations for the distribution of ages tie in with occupation. Of the 35 people aged 18-35 surveyed, 15 said the number of books bought had increased and 8 said this had occurred because they had more money. Many had recently been students and were now enjoying having more money to spend on books. It is interesting to note that no one was seeking work in the bookshop sample. In the library sample there were more part time workers, retired people and those seeking work. This highlights the important role libraries play in providing those on a limited income with books. It also shows that money plays an important part in deciding to buy or borrow.

Of retired people, of which there were 23 in the total survey, 11 said they borrowed more because they have more time due to retirement. It would seem that having time is an important factor in borrowing books.

So far it would seem that young people buy more books while older people borrow more. However, apart from the 65+ category age was evenly spread throughout the bookshop sample. Proctor et. al (1998) stated that employed people find it difficult to get to libraries. A librarian interviewed commented that this was often the case:

“Funnily enough, a lot of my friends read but don’t use a library and I think they buy their books because it suits their lifestyle better, they don’t have to think about getting them back to the library on time”.

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This quotation shows that libraries don’t fit into the lifestyle of busy working people. The fact that many retired people use libraries perhaps supports England’s (1992) idea that people grow into library use. However, if employed people are not using libraries due to shorter opening hours then perhaps there is cause for concern. This issue will be examined in chapter 8.

Occupation effects library use in another way. It was hoped to investigate library and bookshop use in relation to availability but it soon became apparent that to many people this question was irrelevant. While interviewing outside bookshops and in the Central Library, it was discovered that many people use facilities near to their work. In the central library 8 people out of the 17 surveyed said they used the Central Library because they work in town and it is easier for them. This perhaps shows that if people are keen library users they will try to fit it into their schedule. Of the bookshop sample, fewer people use libraries. The majority of the sample were employed full time (26 compared to 17 in the library sample). More research would need to be carried out but it could be concluded that because the library users generally read more as we have already established, they are more likely to buy and borrow and therefore make more of an effort to fit library use into their routine. Of the bookshop users who are employed full time, only 11 use libraries.

There were slightly fewer retired people in the library sample than full time workers this backs up the point made BML (1996) that libraries do not just attract the minority markets and should not be aimed at them.

4.5 Changes in reading, buying and borrowing habits.

It was hoped that this study would discover whether people’s reading, buying and borrowing habits had changed over the past couple of years. It would seem that a person’s status in life, (for example if you are a young student, a full time worker or retired) has an effect on your library and or buying habits and how they change. For the last two years Sheffield libraries have had no adult fiction budget (although they have recently been allocated one) and this study aims to discover whether this has had an effect on peoples buying and borrowing habits. While it was found that this did effect people’s actions, (see Chapter 8), whether people buy or borrow seems to
be mostly effected by a person's status. This study will show the changes in people's reading habits and then discuss why they occur in relation to age, gender and occupation. The following table applies to people's reading habits only.

**Table 5. Changes in reading habits.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Library Sample</th>
<th>Bookshop Sample</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read more</td>
<td>13 (26%)</td>
<td>21 (42%)</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read less</td>
<td>12 (24%)</td>
<td>6 (12%)</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read about the same</td>
<td>25 (50%)</td>
<td>23 (46%)</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This shows us that people surveyed in libraries are more likely to think they are reading less than bookshop user who think they reading more. Could this be because people are turning away from libraries? When people were asked whether they thought their borrowing habits had changed in the past 2 years, the results were as follows. It is important to remember that only 27 people use libraries in the bookshop sample.

**Figure 8.**

This chart shows us that most library users think they are borrowing more books than they did 2 years ago, in fact a much larger amount than think they are reading more. This would suggest that people are turning towards libraries rather than away from them. It also refutes BML (2000) claim that “more adults think they
are borrowing less from public libraries now than think they are borrowing more” (p. 14). This seems to be showing us that in Sheffield, a city where the library has faced many financial cuts people are borrowing more books and not less. Despite this apparently good news for libraries there is still a high proportion of people who believe they are borrowing less.

The fact that this research appears to show that people are not turning away from libraries substantiates the claims made by authors such as England and Sumption (1995) and Book Marketing (2000) that most people still buy and borrow. However, before making any firm conclusions we must take a look at changes in buying habits over the past two years. The results can be seen in the following chart. In the library sample, 45 people buy books whilst in the bookshop sample the total is 49

**Graph to show changes in buying habits of library and bookshop users**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Bookshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart shows us that 30 people now buy more books than they did 2 years ago. When you compare this with the amount of people who said they borrowed more books then it would seem that the increase is very small in comparison. Also, the main increase in book buying has come from the bookshop users and not the library users. This seems strange in light of the fact that library issues are falling all over the country and does not indicate that people are using libraries less and buying more books, in fact quite the opposite. Clearly the reasons behind changes in people’s buying and borrowing habits must be studied in greater detail.
In future chapters reasons for buying and borrowing to do with the organisations themselves will be discussed. For now, reasons for change are going to be discussed in relation to a person’s status, below is a table showing the results of this question, many of the answers given relate to a person’s situation in life. For example many of the people who buy more books do so because they have more money, they have gone back to work, or they have retired and have more time.

**Table 6.** Table to show increases in reading habits over the past 2 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for increase in reading</th>
<th>Total (100)</th>
<th>Bookshop (50)</th>
<th>Library (50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More time</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More exposure to books</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in other interests</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection in libraries</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rediscovery of reading</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/no reason</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total people who read more</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for decrease in reading</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Bookshop</th>
<th>Library</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less Time</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other interests increased</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total people who read less</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can see from these tables that a greater number of people are reading more than reading less. This ties in with ASLIB’s findings that there has been a big increase in reading in recent years. The tables also show us that many of the increases and decreases in reading are often associated with age or occupation. The
Library sample showed that 11 people claimed to have more time to read due to retirement, 2 people claimed to read more for physical reasons which were having new glasses and being less energetic in old age. One person read less due to poorer eyesight. Two people were students and had less time for leisure reading. In the bookshop sample 4 of the people who read less due to having less time specifically said this was because of work, another 4 did not specify this but were in full time employment. These people were mostly aged between 18-35, the group renowned for not using libraries. It would appear that as people move into the world of work they have less time for reading, as we have seen from the results of this dissertation they (18-35 year olds) were in the minority in the library sample but the majority in the bookshop sample. It would appear that time is a factor in visiting libraries.

**Figure 10.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Bookshops</th>
<th>Libraries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use libraries with children</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in leisure patterns</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection is better</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read more</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re/discovery of reading</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 6 people in the bookshop sample have increased their borrowing so these percentages may seem quite misleading at first glance. This graph shows us that most of these reasons are to do with lifestyle, people borrow more because they have more time, or they have less money or they visit the library with their children. The reasons why people use libraries less are very similar. In the library sample of 11 who borrowed less, 5 people did so because they had less time and one person had a physical reason. The rest of the reasons mentioned were to do with the quality of libraries themselves and will be mentioned in Chapter 8. The same patterns follow when reasons people buy more or less are discussed:
Table 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons people buy more</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Bookshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Borrow less</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of books</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection in libraries</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in leisure interests</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance from library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked in bookshop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total buying more</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be from this table that again many of the reasons people buy more are to do with lifestyle. However, we can also see that some of the reasons given are to do with libraries themselves. The relative benefits of libraries and their potential competitors will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.6 A brief conclusion.

Whilst it is impossible to make any firm conclusions at this stage it would seem reasonable to suggest that people’s age, gender and occupation determines their buying and borrowing habits. Men use libraries less than women (65% as oppose to 77%) and young people seem to borrow less than older people. It seems as though library use does not fit into the busy lives of young working people. Therefore it is of benefit to them to buy books as they can afford them and probably have greater access to bookshops than libraries. On the other hand, the elderly borrow more. It would seem with more time available, borrowing is the sensible option. A high proportion of elderly were heavy readers and this would appear to explain their heavy library use. A common answer when asked why do you use libraries was finance, often followed by the phrase, “I couldn’t possible afford to buy all the books I read”.

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Chapter 5: Potential competitors, their benefits and reasons for buying or borrowing.

The idea that people grow into library use and use libraries at different times in their lives seems to be backed up by previous chapters. However, this idea could be interpreted as rather complacent. The idea advanced in the previous chapter was that young people don’t use libraries because of their busy lifestyle but that doesn’t matter as they will return to them in later life generates some questions. For example, could it not be true that people would use libraries if they were open for longer hours, had better stock and advertised themselves more? As libraries are open for fewer hours and have less money could their potential competitors replace them?

It would seem that libraries and bookshops aren’t in competition with each other as most people buy and borrow, however this could always change. 27% of people in this survey were identified as never borrowing. Evidence would seem to suggest that people return to borrowing but this may change in the future. Libraries should not be complacent that this situation will remain the same. What is the current situation? Do libraries and bookshops compete? Are libraries under threat? This chapter will address these issues, examine libraries potential competitors and assess the relative benefits of each organisation and the reasons for people’s buying and borrowing habits.

5.1 Are libraries under threat?

The evidence concerning libraries’ relation to bookshops is conflicting. Previous chapters have shown that because most people buy and borrow they are not in competition with each other. BML (2000) believe that most people see libraries and bookshops as complementary organisations:

“People see libraries and bookshops as serving very different roles, so that for many they act as complementary rather than conflicting sources of books to read” (p.15).
Goodall (1989) also reported similar findings nearly 10 years previously. Goodall suggested that there was a certain interdependence involved with library and bookshop use and that:

“Library use and readers motivation for book buying are often tied up with what the library can and cannot do” (p.90).

By this Goodall meant that people would often buy what the library didn’t have or would buy what they had borrowed from the library and wished to read again. It would seem that buying and borrowing serve multiple purposes and compliment each other.

Despite the knowledge that most people buy and borrow, there is still evidence in the literature that libraries may be under threat from bookshops. England and Sumsion (1995) noted a rise in the proportion of people buying books for themselves. They recorded that the rise in proportion had risen from 59% in 1989 to 71% in 1995. This is quite a considerable increase and at a time when issues are falling would seem quite disturbing for libraries. However, despite this England and Sumsion still believe that buying and borrowing is more of a “symbiotic than a competitive relationship, both sides able to help the other” (p.44). On the other hand Tim Waterstone (1999) believes that libraries can no longer compliment bookshops as too much damage has been done to them over the years. Before examining the results of this survey to see where people do in fact get most of their books from libraries potential competitors will be examined and the relative benefits of using them will be discussed.

5.2 Potential competitors.

5.2.1 Chain Stores.

During the 1980s, chain stores such as Waterstones, Dillons and Blackwells began springing up in Britain’s towns and cities. The increase in book sales at the end of the 1980s could have had something to do with this (Hannabus 1991). According to Comedia (1993) these chains have posed a new threat to public libraries as they are expensively and tastefully fitted out, have enthusiastic staff and
have “espoused the cause of modern literary fiction with a vengeance” (p.44). According to the Comedia report, these things have made libraries seem very out of date. From this information it would seem that the benefits of using chain stores are that they have a nice atmosphere, have enthusiastic staff and that they will have up to date stock. However as Comedia have pointed out, these bookshops do not have the back catalogue that libraries have. Therefore it would seem that libraries and bookshops can complement each other. There is also the important point that libraries provide books for those who can’t afford to buy them. Moggach (1999) summed this up in her debate with Tim Waterstone:

“Of course we want to buy books, but not all of use can afford to do so. And sometimes we don’t want to risk buying them. The point of borrowing from libraries is that we’re free to dip, browse and make a wrong choice and give up half way through”. (http://www.guardian.co.uk)

It would seem then, that buying and borrowing do complement each other or at least they can do in theory. Lee’s (1996) study found that the women interviewed agreed that the library provided a “safety net” for testing out books but in practice they did not use libraries much claiming waiting lists were too long for new books and stock was unsatisfactory. Lee concluded that:

“What is ideal in theory may not always be practical due to a whole host of personal and other reasons” (p.44).

5.2.2 “Super bookstores”:

In America so called “super” bookstores such as Borders and Barnes and Noble have been around since the 1970s. In Great Britain, they have really only begun to take off in the past few years when the first Borders store was opened. These shops are rather like the chain stores mentioned above expect that they are even bigger. They usually have many floors full of books and, to a lesser extent music and videos. As well as this they include café’s, where you are welcome to read their stock and they heavily encourage browsing by providing comfortable
armchairs and sofa’s. They are open late and aim to provide a high level of customer service. A section of the mission statement for Borders is shown below:

“To be the best loved provider of books, music and other entertainment, education and information products and services. To be the world leader in selection, service, innovation, ambience, community involvement and shareholder value. We recognise people to be the cornerstone of the Borders experience by building internal and external relationships one person at a time.”

These shops seem to be branching out into areas that were traditionally libraries’ domain. They now hold storey times, reading groups and writer events. A report in the *Bookseller* recorded that Ottakers in Chelmsford have set themselves up as a forum for serious political debate (Smith 1999). The article goes on to say:

“The last bastion of social space, the library...is frequently becoming a victim of spending cuts and is often under resourced and under used...in this situation, the bookshop can fill a gap” (p.31)

It would seem that this kind of organisation is the libraries biggest competitor. Not only are they setting themselves up to look and feel like libraries (except with newer stock), but they are hosting similar events and seeming to take over the libraries role in society. This will be investigated further in the latter half of this chapter. More and more of these shops are springing up in Britain. An article by Keen (1999) in the *Bookseller* stated:

“Many in the trade believe a realistic figure to be between 10-20, so it comes as a shock to find that Mr. Joseph (of Borders U.K.) thinks the U.K. could take up to 70 superstores”. (p.23)

The benefits for using this type of shop seem almost too good to be true, except for the fact that you have to pay for the books. However, in a society where information is becoming extremely inexpensive, people may be tempted to use this type of bookshop.
5.2.3 Supermarkets.

According to the *Bookseller* (29.9.99 p.24) supermarkets began taking a more serious interest in books following the abandonment of the Net Book Agreement. The NBA was abandoned in 1997. This lead to shops being able to discount books and selling them for cheaper than they had before. Currently, it is not uncommon to see supermarkets selling books, Bohme (1999) stated that in 1997 19% of the books bought came from supermarkets or bargain bookstores (p.284). An article in the *Bookseller* by Stone (24.9.99 p.5) revealed that books are taking a key role in wars between supermarkets with Tesco planning to use books to help double the share of the non food market to fight off competition from ASDA. Clearly books are becoming important to supermarkets. However, there is evidence that supermarkets have been a popular place to get books for a number of years. In 1989 Goodall claimed that Spiller’s study had found that supermarkets or newsagents attracted One Third of book buyers. The main advantage of buying books from supermarkets is price. Supermarkets do not have a large range but they often have the newest best sellers. Supermarkets also have the added advantage that most people visit them as part of their routine. This makes them ideal places for people to obtain books from who may work full time. Supermarkets are open late and at weekends, something many libraries are not.

5.2.4 Bargain/Remainder stores.

Bargain bookstores or remainder shops sell heavily discounted books that have usually come to the end of their print run although occasionally new best sellers are also available. They can be found in most high streets or shopping centres. The range they carry is usually fairly small especially of fiction but the prices are very low.

5.2.5 Book Clubs.

5.2.6 Second Hand Bookshops.

Second hand bookshops have long been a popular venue to obtain books (Goodall 1989). In this dissertation the term “second hand” included traditional second hand shops and charity shops. Proctor et al. noted that charity shops and also jumble sales were used as popular alternatives to libraries when the Sheffield Libraries were on strike.

5.2.7 Internet.

Book selling on the Internet has greatly increased in the past 2 years. Companies such as Amazon dominate the market but most books shops have on line selling facilities as well as their bricks and mortar shops. Often, the books for sale Online are heavily discounted. It is difficult to say how much of a threat Online selling will be to libraries or other bookshops. An article published in the Bookseller (14.1.00) claimed that the Internet took a 3.5% share in the market before Christmas of that year. However, the report goes on to say that:

“According to Booktrack, consumers still chose to buy for a greater proportion of popular fiction from the high street, while internet purchasers bought more academic, professional and back list titles… the top 5% best selling titles sold through the high street accounted for 68% of ‘bricks and mortar’ sales and only 35% of sales through the various internet booksellers”. (p.13).

It would appear at present that the Internet is mainly being used for the purchase of academic texts but this may not always be the case. A further advance in technology has come in the guise of “E-books”. An article by Stone (14.1.00) in the Bookseller claims that Bol.com have signed a deal to make e-books available in the U.K. for the first time which will be available through their web site (p. 6). New technology is rapidly moving forward and while at present may not prove a huge threat to libraries or bookshops may do so in the future.
5.3 Results and discussion

5.3.1 Do libraries and bookshops compete?

The literature above suggests that most people see libraries and bookshops as complementary organisations rather than competing with each other. With this in mind librarians and bookshop managers were asked what they thought of the situation. The relationship between the two organisations was also explored. The general perception among the librarians interviewed is that libraries and bookshops are two separate services that are not in competition with each other. When asked if libraries and bookshops are complementary one librarian replied:

“Yes because there are books I’ll buy and some I’ll only want to borrow and they [libraries and bookshops] should both have the same welcoming image where you can find what you want or can get it very quickly.” Librarian, Firth Park Library.

This quote highlights the dual relationship that has been suggested people have with the two organisations, people buying some books and borrowing others. Other librarians agreed that the organisations work in parallel and since most people buy and borrow they co-exist together. The bookshop managers interviewed gave slightly different answers. They seemed to agree that libraries and bookshops could coexist but they gave the impression that libraries should be an information service and leave books to them:

“I think libraries need to look at what they offer...I think libraries need to offer a lot more technological things, books are not the only things they need to concentrate on. Money is tight so you think perhaps they shouldn’t spend all their money on books, perhaps they should get a computer instead”.
(Manager of bookshop 1).

A different bookshop manager was more inclined to think that libraries and bookshops served different markets. Even though they claimed that the two were not in competition with each other they seemed to imply it:
“[The bookshop] does not set out to compete with anyone simply to serve the customer the best we can. Libraries will continue in the future to serve different markets and we will go on doing what we are doing... The events we put on do bring in more customers...we don’t set out to deliberately compete with libraries but libraries are not open late and we are”. (Manager no 2.)

Both these quotes seem to be implying a superiority when it comes to what they do. The first quote implies that libraries should stick to information and the second, whilst saying that they do not compete seems to be inferring that they almost don’t need to because they have more resources than libraries.

An employee of the reading partnership who was interviewed believes that the problem stems from a lack of understanding between the two organisations. When asked what she thought of the implication that libraries should stick to information provision and leave fiction to the experts, she replied that she disagreed with that opinion and went on to say:

“The problem is that they don’t understand each other. Bookshops don’t have the knowledge of what libraries do and what common ground they share.” (Book Marketing Employee)

One important point that came across from these interviews was that the librarians seemed more enthusiastic about working with bookshops giving answers such as, “In theory I think that there should be a library in every bookshop”. However, the librarians and one bookshop manager did all mention publicity schemes where they had or could work together. There is evidence that this aspect is improving and this will be discussed in Chapter 7.

It would appear from this information that from a librarians point of view, the two organisations are non-competitive. However, this is not quite the case for bookshops who seem to concentrate on their own markets and not really consider libraries very much. There also seems to be some confusion about whether they serve the same markets or not. The interviewees believed that most people buy and borrow so they do serve the same markets but the bookshop managers did not seem
so sure on this. The overall impression was that the organisations serve the same
people but for different purposes. This would seem to fit in with the literature which
suggested that library use is more symbiotic than competitive (England and Sumsion
1995).

5.4 Where people obtain their fiction.

We have seen that librarians and bookshop managers do not believe that they
are in competition with each other. The fact that this and so many other studies have
found that most people buy and borrow would appear to prove this. However there
is still a possibility that people may not use bookshops and libraries equally. This
dissertation aimed to discover which methods of obtaining fiction people used the
most. After analysing where people get their books from, the reasons why people do
as they do will be discussed and the benefits of each method considered.

For this dissertation respondents were asked to choose in order their top 3
fiction sources. They could rank organisations equally if they desired. If a
respondent did not choose library from the list they were asked if they ever used one.
All but one person who did not chose libraries said they never used them. It was
hoped that this method would show which organisations were the most popular. The
results are shown below in Figure 13
This chart shows that the number of people placing library as their first choice outnumbers the amount of people placing bookshop. For this question the term "Bookshop" was deemed to mean any shop which sold new books, either a traditional chain, a "super" bookshop, a stationary store such as WH Smiths or a Bargain bookshop. This chart shows us that libraries are still a popular first choice to obtain books which would imply that they are not under threat from bookshops and that libraries could be used to compliment other organisations.

An interesting result emerged from this study and can be seen in the table below where library and bookshop respondents are separated.

**Table 9.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of people placing venue top of their list.</th>
<th>Bookshop Sample</th>
<th>Library Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bookshop (new)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrow from friends</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd hand bookshops</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book clubs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supermarket</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumble Sale</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NB. People could rank 2 choices equally if they wished.*

From this table it can be seen that the people interviewed in libraries were extremely likely to say that libraries were their first choice and the same goes for bookshops. This perhaps shows that there are people who are library users and will almost always use a library. This table highlights the fact that library users and some bookshop users are different people, they appear not to buy and borrow in equal amount. Bookshop users did use libraries but not necessarily as their first choice.
Figure 13 shows that 43% of people in the survey identified libraries as their main source of fiction which again shows their continuing popularity.

5.5 *Reasons why people buy or borrow.*

The respondents were asked why they used libraries as well as/instead of bookshops. They were allowed to choose more than one reason and the results were as follows.

**Table 10: Why do you use a library as well as/instead of borrowing books?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Library Sample</th>
<th>Bookshop Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always used Libraries</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good selection in Libraries</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like to try out new authors in libraries</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library near work place</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice atmosphere/staff</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have out of print books</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage space</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty to library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table includes answers from everyone from the library sample and the 24 people in the bookshop sample who use libraries. The people in the bookshop sample were less concerned about finance than those in the library sample. Within the library sample finance was more important leading to more people saying they would test a book out in a library before buying it compared to the bookshop sample. Many people in the library sample said they bought books but quite a lot of them bought second hand or borrowed from friends. The fact that not so many bookshop users said they were concerned about price could be because books are much cheaper...
now. One librarian and one bookshop manager mentioned that the end of the Net
Book Agreement has probably led to many more people buying books now as they
are so cheap. The bookshop users seem less satisfied with public libraries than the
library sample. They are not as convinced there is a good choice and don’t comment
on the atmosphere or staff.

The library sample were more likely to say that using a library was
convenient, this could be because of the larger number of retired people in the library
sample than in the bookshop sample. This chart proves that some library and
bookshop users are from a separate group. As you can see, more people in the
library survey use libraries because they have done so all their life. This backs up
claims made by a librarian who stated that “there are definitely people who are
library users and those who use bookshops” (as well as those who use both). So far
we have seen that people use libraries at different times of their lives. This is
probably true but it is probably also true that there are some people who will never
use libraries. Library use is often a habit and people who don’t develop this habit as
children will probably never use libraries as adults.
Table 11: Why people buy books as well as/instead of borrowing them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Library Sample</th>
<th>Bookshop Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like to own books</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like to re read books</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good selection in bookshops</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure of time</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor choice in libraries</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenient opening hours of libraries</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never think of using a library</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting list too long for new books</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy books to take on holiday</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy books to support a charity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work near a bookshop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like to have own/new copy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here we can see that those in the bookshop sample are more enthusiastic about owning books. A librarian commented:

"I think also that as a society we like to own things and I think the idea of borrowing things is quite an old fashioned idea to some people".
The librarian went on to say that as people have more money they prefer to buy books. It would appear that this is the case, some people do prefer to buy books, note the 8 people who never think of using a library. However, the results of this survey shows that not all people share these views. This table backs up the findings of the BML (2000) report which stated:

"People tend to buy instead of borrowing where they want to keep books for reference, where they might want to reread books or simply because they take pleasure in owning books. This helps explain why there are around 17m people in Britain who get the books that they need by buying them on some occasions and by borrowing them on others" (p.15).

Table 11 highlights this as it shows the main reason people buy is to own books or reread them. Other reasons given include "pressure of time involved in borrowing " not surprisingly mentioned in the majority by bookshop a sample that contained less retired and part time workers than the library sample. The BML (2000) report stated that lack of time was one of the main reasons people did not use libraries (p.70).

Comments about libraries such as poor opening hours and poor selection were given almost equally by library and bookshop users. This shows that as well as reasons pertaining to age, occupation and lifestyle, people often buy books to make up for libraries shortcomings. Lee (1996) also found this;

"Many of the women spoke of their increasing reliance on bookshops rather than libraries to fulfil their reading needs, stock and inconvenient opening hours were given as reasons" (p.64).

These issues will be investigated Chapter 8.
5.6 Buying and borrowing: a complimentary relationship?

It has been suggested (Moggach 1999) that a popular reason people use libraries is to try out books or authors new to them without the pressure of actually buying them. This dissertation attempted to ascertain this by asking the following two questions,

1. Have you ever decided not to buy a book because you weren’t sure if you’d like it? And
2. If so have you even thought of trying out such a book in a library?

When the respondents were asked if they had ever decided not to buy a book because they weren't sure if they'd like it, 35 said yes, 14 said no from the bookshop. From the library sample 35 said yes and 11 said no. Everyone who said they bought books answered this question although not everyone answered the question correctly, saying they would try out books in libraries when they had claimed not to use them for example. Those who answered no did so because either they liked experimenting and didn't mind risking money on books or they usually bought specific books which they had planned before hand to buy and knew they would like. The people who answered no could not answer the second part of this question.

This question was designed to find out if people used libraries to compliment bookshops in this way. The bookshop sample result was that 21 people said yes they would try it in a library and 14 said no. In the library sample 32 people said yes and 5 people said no. The respondents were asked to explain their answers the results are shown below.
The first two answers on this table amount to the same thing, that people prefer to test out books or new authors in libraries before buying them. This backs up the claims made by Moggach (1999) and BML (2000) that people use libraries and bookshops in this way. Some of the answers in the above table have to be looked at with caution because some people in the bookshop sample said they would try out new things in libraries yet they claimed not to use them. However, one respondent did comment:

"Your questionnaire suggests a sensible course of action and one I had not thought of previously".

In line with most other findings of this report the bookshop users were less enthusiastic about using libraries for this purpose. This perhaps shows that library users are loyal to the institution they use whereas bookshop users are more sceptical. The following table shows the reasons people would not use libraries.
Table 13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Library (Total: 5)</th>
<th>Bookshop (Total:14)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would not use a library to try out new</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>things because</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't try new things</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only buy/try specific things I know I'll</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library books are not current</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No time to use libraries</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't use libraries/never think of using</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>libraries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book buying is impulsive, don't think about</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows more answers for the library sample than answered the question. This is because there was some confusion concerning this question when some people answered the first part they gave reasons which were interesting for the second half and these are included. Some answers given by bookshop users show a disappointment with library facilities or hours but most simply said they never think of using libraries. This shows that there are a lot of people who never consider using libraries.

5.7 Heavy readers who do not buy.

As noted earlier, there were a small number of people in this survey who were heavy buyers, who read a lot but did not use libraries. Nine people were heavy buyers and 6 of those were heavy readers as well. The respondents who fell into this category did not fit into England’s (1994) description of males aged 20-35. There were only two men in this category, one was aged between 18-35 with a full time job but the other was aged between 51-64. This gentleman did not use libraries as he was a member of the Merchant Navy and it was completely impractical for him to do so. The other people in this category were all women. This was quite surprising as women tend to borrow more than men who seem to prefer to buy. Three of the
women were aged 18-35 and in full time employment. For them, time was the major reason they did not use libraries. They all liked to own books and reread them and all complained that libraries were difficult to get to, had inconvenient opening hours and a poor selection. One stated:

“ I would like to use a library but the local ones don’t stock what I want to read and are out of my way, there not on my usual shopping route or my way to work”.

This quote highlights the difficulty working people have in using libraries. It also shows that for employed people who can afford to, buying books is often the easiest option. One women in this section was a housewife who claimed to have lots of time to read but said her library was too far away to use. Two other ladies were retired. One stated that she had recently retired and may go back to using the library now she has more time. This shows that for some people at least, libraries are something you use at different stages of your life. Of the remaining two women one other was a housewife who did not use libraries because she felt the selection was poor and the final lady, retired and over 65 specialised in reading science fiction. Because of this she explained that she had to buy all the books she read as the library selection was too narrow. However, she said that she did not expect libraries to be able to cater for someone who specialised so much and she appeared to think they were generally a good service.

The reasons for non-library use given by heavy book buyers were varied although many had to do with libraries shortcomings. Many of the comments were about opening hours, which often do not suit working people. It is clear something must be done about this. It is too complacent to ignore this problem on the premise that these people will return when they are older, they may not.
5.8 A Brief Conclusion.

From the information in this chapter it is possible to conclude that at present, libraries seem to be holding their own against bookshops. Many people placed them at the top of their list for places to obtain books. However, since 50% of the questionnaires were administered at libraries this is perhaps not surprising. There is evidence to suggest that bookshops are becoming more popular but there is also evidence that people still use both. The number of people who said they use libraries proves this. This chapter presented evidence to show that there is indeed a partnership between buying and borrowing and that many people will try out books in the library before borrowing them.

This leads on to the question of competition and whether libraries serve different markets to bookshops. From the evidence presented it seems that for the most part, libraries serve the same people but for different needs. This means that some of the time people will borrow and sometimes they will buy. Goodall's (1989) explanation that this is often linked to what the library can and can't do is probably one explanation for this. However, there is also evidence to suggest that bookshops perhaps provide for people who never borrow. In this sense they are providing for a different market. One bookshop manager suggested that libraries and bookshops provide for different markets. The evidence suggests that this is not entirely true, most people buy and borrow and use libraries and bookshops for different purposes with a small percentage who only buy.

It would appear that because of this libraries are not in competition with bookshops, and the two institutions do not seem to see themselves as rival organisations. Librarians seemed more likely to see themselves working side by side bookshops while bookshops seemed in some ways not to take libraries very seriously. Clearly greater co-operation is needed between the two to maintain the complimentary relationship.

There was evidence that people were rather dissatisfied with libraries and hints that the complimentary relationship did not always work.
Chapter 6: Stock.

This chapter aims to discover whether the type of books you read effects where you obtain them. Two issues will be examined. Firstly, the types of books must be considered. Genre and literary fiction will be examined and their availability and popularity determined. The second issue is simply the amount of stock. It a time when libraries are facing cuts people's satisfaction or otherwise with the amount of stock available must be examined.

6.1 Libraries and Genre Fiction.

Genre fiction is the characterisation of a novels narrative features into a genre, rather than simple popularity of mass production. (O'Rourke 1993). It usually has stylised language, a certain amount of thematic predictability and heavily plot lead narratives. Libraries have often been accused of stocking mainly this type of fiction. A look at some of the literature would seem to prove this. Worpole (1992) stated that statistics revealed that there were no literary authors in the top 100 books borrowed (p.6). Bohme (1999) found that the most borrowed authors in 1997-98 were all popular including Catherine Cookson, Danielle Steel and Jack Higgins (p.35). This piece of information could mean two things. Either people are borrowing so much genre fiction because they like it, or they are borrowing it because the library has nothing else to offer. Ton's (1997) study investigating the currency of fiction found that literary novels were few and far between in the libraries she looked at:

"It was surprising and quite sobering to see that although the libraries did fortunately have important literary novels, most had only one copy available to the reading public. There were some cases of two or more copies available bit this was generally not the situation (p.13)."
6.2 Literary fiction.

One argument suggests that because libraries stock mainly genre fiction that people are turning towards bookshops who stock literary novels in large numbers. This is the case according to Comedia (1993). Comedia believe that the chain stores that began to appear in the 1980s are a threat to libraries because of their tendency to promote literary fiction. These shops along with the new "Super" bookshops certainly seem to give a lot of floor space over to modern literary fiction. Mann, (1991) states that because of the publicity associated with the Booker prize and others, the readership of literary fiction has increased in recent years (p.15). Phelan (1993) noted that there is evidence from PLR ratings that traditional genre borrowing is falling and literature and general fiction is holding it's own or increasing (p.10). If this is true and libraries do not stock much literary fiction then it is possible that people are turning towards bookshops. Worpole (1993) also believes this to be the case where traditional novels are considered:

"There are more readers today of George Eliot or Virginia Wolfe for example that ever before... In most if not all towns and cities in Britain one can still walk into the town centre and buy the novels of Defoe, or Dickens, new or second hand within an hour” (p.6).

Worpole believes that as there is no policy for libraries to permanently hold the "great literary novels" then people who want them are better off using bookshops.

6.3 Popular fiction and the book trade.

There is, in the literature no firm evidence to suggest that literary fiction is becoming immensely popular. Most of the evidence shows that the vast majority of books bought are popular fiction. O'Rourke (1993) found that popular or genre fiction dominates public library borrowing but that it also has a huge share of the book buying market (p.3). This can be seen when examining any list of best sellers. The Bookseller (16.6.2000) printed a list of the top selling 15 original fiction titles. The list did not show any evidence that people are flocking to buy literary novels, it
contained popular authors such as Katie Fforde, Danielle Steel, Bernard Cornwell and John Grisham.

So, it would seem that genre and popular books are the books people want to read the most. If this is really the case then it is unlikely that the library is losing users who wish to read it. Phelan (1993) states that there has been an 18% decline in borrowing in the past 10 years at the same time that:

"the genre library books beloved by the habitual reader, such as romances or saga's are now cheaply available in supermarkets, convenience stores or charity shops" (p.9).

This quotation suggests that as people want to read popular fiction and as they can buy it extremely cheaply they are turning away from libraries not because they want to buy literary fiction but because they want genre fiction. Is this really the case? Surely the Chain stores wouldn't promote literary fiction so much if no one wanted it? In the results section of this chapter this will be investigated. It could of course be the case that people only read genre fiction because the libraries stock that in the majority and they have never had the chance to try anything else. This will be investigated in this and the following chapter. This study has established that most people buy and borrow and so at present libraries are not under threat from bookshops. However, we know that some people never borrow and others don't borrow much. The following section of this chapter will investigate whether people's preferences effect where they obtain their books.

Another reason that issues are declining could be because there is simply not enough stock. In Sheffield no adult fiction has been bought for over a year. It could be that people are turning to bookshops because they have read everything they want to read in their local library.
6.4 Results and discussion

6.4.1. Libraries, the home of genre fiction?

As noted above, a common perception is that libraries stock mainly genre fiction. In order to establish whether this is true Librarians and a Library Supplier were interviewed. Bearing in mind the cuts that libraries have had to face recently the interviewees were asked about the kind of fiction they stocked and whether this had changed in recent years. The library supplier revealed that the types of novels that are popular at the moment are Crime novels and sagas. Crime has always been popular and the supplier stated that even new novels by unknown authors sell well if they are in the crime genre. When asked about contemporary or literary fiction the supplier answered in the following way:

"...the majority specify that they want to see good general literary fiction so they will buy a lot of popular stuff like Catherine Cookson, James Francis, Wilbur Smith, all those. Those sell in multiple copies whereas the main general literary fiction might sell in one's or two's.... You've got your Julian Barnes, Ben Okri, they won't sell in huge multiples but will sell in multiples, you know 2s, 5s, 10s whereas Catherine Cooksons are 20s, 30s, 40.s. So they do feel there is a need for general literary fiction as well”.

The library supplier supplies books to libraries all over the North of England and actually selects books for some libraries. This quotation shows that libraries do stock literary fiction but not in the quantities of popular fiction, from this information it is easy to see why people who read literary fiction perceive libraries as stocking mainly popular fiction. It does seem rather unbalanced to stock 30 copies of one book and 2 of another. It could be argued that popular fiction is bought in large numbers because it is just that, popular. However, it could also be argued that people only read genre fiction because they are not exposed to anything else. This was the argument behind the Well Worth Reading promotion scheme which tried to introduce library readers to other types of fiction.
The library supplier did not think the proportion of literary novels taken by libraries had changed dramatically over the years. However, he did mention that some libraries were being influenced by the literature prizes such as the Orange or the Booker. Perhaps libraries are correct to stock mainly popular fiction, perhaps literary novels would not issue as well. However, that argument does not seem to stand up when you compare the floor space in large bookstores that is dedicated to literary fiction. It would seem that there is a large audience out there who wants to read it. If this is true surely they must be put off from using libraries?

6.4.2 Literary fiction in an environment of cutbacks.

It was decided to focus on Sheffield because the library authority has had very little money for a number of years. At the time of research they were waiting for their first books fund for over a year for adult fiction. Because of this it was decided to test whether literary fiction had suffered under these conditions. If it is true that audiences for this type of fiction are increasing then it would be detrimental for libraries to ignore this.

The librarian at Firth Park, which is in the East Group of Sheffield, stated that up until 2 years ago they had had their own book fund and made an effort to buy first time authors and new fiction at the expense of buying re-prints of books. Since then however, Sheffield has had no money for fiction and so all the stock has suffered not just literary fiction. Even if the policy on contemporary fiction was good in the past it needs to remain good for people to keep coming back to libraries. The librarian at Walkley made it clear that contemporary fiction had been declining over a number of years due to dwindling book funds:

"Well, I would have said, when I came into libraries many years ago, you couldn't have said they [the books] were popular or heavy, there was a very good spread of everything because you had the money to buy everything. Once you start looking at your book fund and deciding best ways to spend it you could go many different ways... Staff would probably be anxious to make sure their issues were good and if the majority of their readers read popular fiction the they might recommend that popular fiction would facilitate higher
loans. But that's not an equal service as there are people with different needs."

The librarian went on to qualify this by relating specifically to Sheffield's problems:

"We have a problem here in Sheffield because of the book fund....You were talking about the percentage of literary novels. They are there and they are bought. They are not bought in the quantities they would have been in the past but we may circulate them so that most people at some stage would have a chance to see them."

This shows us that literary fiction, already in the minority in libraries has decreased even more in recent years due to financial cutbacks. It would seem then that libraries do stock literary fiction but not in the same large amounts that they stock popular material. This could mean that people who want to read literary fiction obtain it from bookshops. However, there is evidence that this could be changing. The Well Worth Reading Campaign has sparked off libraries interest in contemporary fiction. The librarian at Kirklees stated that they were involved in campaigns to raise the profile of contemporary fiction and have a policy of buying fewer copies of a wider range of copies rather than multiples of traditional genres such as family sagas. This does show a change in attitude but whether they will be able to convince the non-library user that they don't just stock romances or family saga's remains to be seen.

6.4.3 Fiction Choices.

The evidence above is conflicting. There is evidence to show that people enjoy reading literary fiction, yet the most borrowed and bought fiction is generally popular. This dissertation endeavoured to discover which types of fiction were the most popular. If literary fiction is becoming more popular then libraries will have to think seriously about their stocking policies. The following chart shows the most popular types of fiction. The respondents were asked to choose from a list and were allowed to choose more than one type of fiction.
Many of the preferences on this chart are quite close together showing that in some ways library and bookshop users have similar tastes in reading. There are some noticeable differences though. Family Saga’s or historical novels and romances were far more popular with users of libraries. We have seen that these are the types of books bought in multiple copies by libraries. From this perspective it looks as though readers of these types of novels will tend to be library users.

This graph shows us that contemporary fiction and classics are immensely popular but this should be viewed with caution. People are often afraid to reveal their reading habits for fear of being judged. It is possible that some people stated they read contemporary fiction or classics in order to save face. However, this graph does show that contemporary fiction is extremely popular. It also shows that more people who claimed to read it were in the bookshop sample. Of the 26 people who never use libraries, 17 read contemporary fiction. However, these and most other people in the sample read a wide variety of fiction, fewer people read only contemporary fiction or classics. It is possible though that people may buy contemporary fiction from bookshops and get other more popular fiction from libraries. More people in the bookshop sample had negative opinions of library stock than in the library sample. This could be because the library selection doesn’t suit their tastes or because they believe it doesn’t. The quotations below show a number of different reasons people from the bookshop sample do not like library...
stock. Some of the quotations show people who wish libraries had more literary fiction while others complain at the lack of popular, new books. This highlights the need for a balanced service.

Box A.

“Most popular fiction can necessitate joining a queue”. (Respondent, Waterstones Sheffield).

“I buy books if I want new ones as libraries don’t have them”. (Respondent, Waterstones, Sheffield).

“I never use libraries, I haven’t for ages, they never had anything current” (Respondent, Borders, Leeds).

Box B.

“I would like to join a library but local ones don’t stock what I want to read” (Respondent, Borders, Leeds. A reader of contemporary fiction and crime).

“I don’t borrow from libraries very often because they don’t prioritise the kind of books I like to read” (Respondent, Waterstones, Sheffield. A reader of contemporary fiction and classics only).

“Libraries probably wouldn’t have what I want” (Respondent, Waterstones, Sheffield, a reader of contemp. fiction, classics and crime).

Box A contains people who read a mixture of contemporary and genre fiction. Their main concern was that libraries did not have enough new books of either type although the concern seemed to be mainly for popular novels. Libraries are never going to have as many copies of books as bookshops. Some people may be happy with substituting other books instead of the new best sellers but others clearly are not. In an ideal world libraries would have enough money for multiple
copies but they do not. If people are prepared and able to buy and borrow then they
could probably have access to all the books they want.

Box B includes people who read mainly contemporary fiction and find
libraries unsatisfactory for this purpose. It is clear that in order to create a balanced
service libraries must do more to cater for these people. The last quotation in box B
is interesting because it is by a non-library user who assumes the library will not
have what they want. This is interesting as it suggests libraries need to change their
image and show people that they do stock a wider range of fiction (if they do).
Steps are being made in that direction and will be discussed in the next chapter.

Of the remaining people who made comments about the stock, one person
said they liked to use libraries because they had out of print materials. The other
person commented specifically on Sheffield’s difficulties:

“I buy more books now as libraries are a lot worse than they used to be.
They haven’t had any money in Sheffield for ages and the choice is really
poor”.

This gentleman read only contemporary fiction and classics, this perhaps is
evidence that as libraries have less money, the number of literary titles available
decreases. When this gentleman was told that Sheffield was soon to have a fiction
fund again he did not seem very impressed or convinced that this would improve
things. This shows how easy users can become disillusioned with a service and that
they might not always return to it when this happens.
The people from the library sample mostly made comments specific to Sheffield’s plight. Some of the comments can be seen below.

**Box C: Firth Park Library**

“I borrow more now because there is a better selection, other libraries are probably not as good as this” (Respondent, Firth Park Library).

“The choice is not good in here, the central library is better. If I want to read all the books by my favourite authors then I find that this library has only got one book by that person” (Respondent, Firth Park Library).

The vast majority of people were satisfied with the stock in the new library especially since there have been few new books anywhere in Sheffield. Some people were not so happy. The librarian explained that this could be because, when they tried to buy traditional books such as family sagas there were not as many new titles available. The second quote in the box is not surprising. Since Firth Park is a new library it has not had time to develop a substantial back catalogue.

**Box D. Broomhill Library**

“If it’s a new book, you have to wait ages for it in a library”

“The selection of books is fairly good although it has got worse”.

“The selection here in the library is rubbish, it’s not their fault, they’re lovely people, but the selection is rubbish”.

“I buy more because there is less selection in libraries now. They’ve had a time with no money and I read all the one’s I wanted to”.

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Broomhill, unlike Firth Park library has not had any new stock for a long time therefore it is not surprising people are feeling dissatisfied. One person, like the gentleman in the bookshop sample above admitted, to buying more because the libraries have become so bad. During the Sheffield Library Strike people bought more (Proctor et.al 1996). The manager of Waterstones interviewed for this dissertation said that although she had no exact figures she wouldn’t be surprised if it is happening again. If libraries do not improve their stock they may loose customers forever. These issues will be discussed in Chapter 8.

Box E. Central Library.

“I use the Central Library because the local ones don’t have the kind of books I want”. (Reader of contemporary fiction and classics only)”

“I use the Central Library because my local library is rubbish”

“The selection has gone down and the choice is not as it was. I feel guilty for not using them [libraries] as much as I should and do try to but the choice is not what it was”.

Most people seemed to agree that the Central Library was better especially for Contemporary or Literary fiction. Indeed, it is Sheffield’s policy to provide the Central Library with more esoteric fiction. However, perhaps the books should be circulated more to satisfy readers in local libraries. It can be seen that even the Central Library was not beyond criticism, it seems as though Sheffield’s money problems are affecting readers. If people are currently still borrowing less and buying more to make up for poor choice in the library then this could explain why issues, are falling.
These quotations show that some people are not happy with Sheffield libraries at the moment. When asked if libraries and bookshops were complimentary a librarian interviewed answered that the were but when asked if this relationship has probably been damaged by the cancelling of the book fund answered in the following way:

“Yes because they [people] will have just come in and seen no new stock and bad stock and go to a bookshop. I know my self people who have said “Oh I’ll go out and buy it when it comes out”. (Librarian, Firth Park).

6.5 A Brief Conclusion.

There would seem to be no doubt that in Sheffield at least, less literary fiction is being bought than in the past. Literary fiction has always been bought in less numbers than popular authors so this cannot be a good thing. A small number of people read only contemporary fiction or classics. These people are not going to be satisfied with libraries at present. However, a huge shift towards literary fiction is not the answer. Most people seemed to read a wide variety of fiction and wanted better access to both. At present, we know that most people buy and borrow for different purposes. It could be that people use the library for their popular fiction and bookshops for their literary fiction, as libraries obtain less literary fiction it is possible that people could start using libraries even less. A wide variety of stock is needed and a healthy balance between popular and literary novels.
Chapter 7. Promotion, image and perception.

7.1 Image and perception

The last chapter showed us that many non-library users have a negative image of libraries, this was shown in the way some people assumed the library would not have the kind of books they wanted or they simply did not consider using a library. An interesting finding of this study is that people who never use libraries did not really comment on them much, they simply did not consider them. Library users could either be very supportive or critical. The critical people tended to be those who had either used libraries in the past or user them rarely. These findings are roughly in line with the ASLIB (1995) review:

"Occasional users...are less confident about the quality of public libraries services offered for council tax...Non users suspect that public library users are mainly middle class and that the library has an unchanging image" (p.144).

This study revealed that publicity was needed to increase the libraries profile and to win back some of the confidence it appears to have lost in recent years.

7.2 Publicity.

The previous chapters have shown that there is a need for libraries to promote themselves better. Dixon (1986) noted that it is difficult for libraries to promote themselves in the same way as bookshops because they cannot rely on displays of new materials. Libraries can't do this because they do not have multiple copies and there are usually long waiting lists for new titles. Kinnell and Shepherd (1998) highlighted that a lack of staff time and a specific budget or person responsible for publicity hindered libraries efforts at publicity. However, there has been an effort to promote libraries resources in recent years, usually taking the form of reading promotion. The Well Worth Reading Scheme was set up in the early 1990's to promote literary fiction. Its aims were to:
"Demonstrate to libraries the power of marketing, stimulate issues and increase ordering of contemporary fiction and encourage relationships with local booksellers" (Phelan 1993 p. 4).

The schemes involved displaying and grouping novels under various headings, providing recommended reading lists, author visits and encouraging readers to use the catalogue (McKearney and Baverstock 1990 pp.6-7). Phelan stated that the schemes were a big success:

"The campaigns of recent years have demonstrated that when libraries adopt fundamental promotional techniques, they achieve a two or three fold increase in issues" (p.6).

These schemes show that efforts are being made to promote stock especially literary fiction. However, many respondents in this study seemed unaware of what libraries could do or seemed sceptical of what they provide. Lack of staff time and resources probably have much to do with this especially in Sheffield. Kinnell and Shepherd's (1998) study of publicity announced that while there was evidence of a range of initiatives in progress:

"Libraries are not exploiting their book stocks sufficiently through more effective shelving arrangements and the use of creative merchandising techniques".

From some of the comments in the last two chapters it would seem that this is the case.

7.3 Results: Libraries and publicity

The last two chapters have shown that many people have negative images of libraries and some do not ever consider using them. Bearing this in mind, this dissertation set out to find out what publicity was being carried out in Sheffield and surrounding areas. An employee of the reading partnership was interviewed in order to gain a national perspective.
The librarian at Kirklees is heavily involved in publicity. She believes it is vital, as most people don't know what they want to read when they come into a library and need help. She also believes in changing the way libraries are seen by non-users:

"These days there's an added edge, that libraries have that they should say to people 'We're not the fuddy-duddy image that you think we've got, we do actually stock other things as well'".

The librarian admits that in the past people may have left because of what the library stocked and said they are trying to address that through publicity. One such scheme involves receiving and promoting certain books on the day of publication and book of the month promotion. She stated that publicity has increased in recent years, partly because of the agenda's the government have set for them. When asked about bookshops the librarian answered that they do liaise with the local bookshops to put on events. It would seem, from this evidence that publicity is increasing.

The Reading Partnership employee also highlighted the need for libraries to change their image to appeal to younger readers. She hinted that libraries are rather stuck in their ways when it comes to promotion, especially of stock. She suggested that libraries desperately need to do more in the way of outreach in order to tell non-library users what they are doing. This seems to be a big problem especially when so many people in this survey never considered using libraries. One respondent surveyed outside Waterstones commented:

"I used to use the library when I lived at home but I have no idea where my local one is now. I suppose I might use it if I knew where it was"

(Respondent, Waterstones, Sheffield).

This quotation highlights the problem of the "invisible library". Cook (1992) highlighted this problem when she stated:
"While my local sports centre wants me to take up Tai Kwando or various other martial arts, my local library has never invited me in at all and when my library card ran out in 1991, it did not invite me to renew it again” (p.79).

Clearly there is a need for libraries to become more proactive and becoming more familiar with marketing techniques. The promotion schemes seem to be a start but more needs to be done.

7.4 A Brief Conclusion.

It would seem that while libraries are becoming aware of the need for more publicity they are not yet going far enough. More needs to be done especially in the way of out reach. In Sheffield where money is tight publicity needs to be excellent in order to persuade people not to abandon the service.
Chapter 8: Finance.

This chapter aims to examine how finance affects library use. It will look firstly at the financial troubles libraries have faced in Britain and how this has affected borrowing focusing on Sheffield. It will then examine the claim made by the Book Trust (1997) who believe that issues remain high if book spending is high. To do this, Firth Park library in Sheffield, which has all new stock, will be compared with older libraries. Broomhill is a wealthy area while Firth Park is not. The two libraries will be compared to see if affluence affects buying and borrowing habits.

8.1 Libraries and financial hardship.

In recent years, library services all over the country have been faced with cuts in funding. Proctor, et al (1998) date the decline back to 1973 when measures were introduced to restrict the spending of local councils. Since then there has been a steady decline in services. Proctor et al state that the number of service points open more than 60 hours per week has fallen from 50 in 1991-92 to 40 in 1996-7. Of the remaining service points open for that length of time 33 are in Scotland (p.3). The study also found that the most frequent cuts in hours occurred at the weekend or evenings and that overall 79.4% of responding authorities had reduced opening hours. Proctor et al believe that the decline in opening hours has had a negative effect on library use. They quote the Cheshire study of lapsed users which found that 25% of the lapsed borrowers complained the opening hours were unsuitable and that 47% of the lapsed borrowers were in full time employment (p.26). Their own study (of Sheffield Libraries) did not find any statistical evidence to prove that issues were affected by opening hours. However, their qualitative data showed that people were having to reschedule their library visits at some inconvenience. There was also evidence to show that the reduction of opening hours was causing expense, as people were having difficulties bringing books back on time. They concluded that library use became less spontaneous, which could be one reason issues were falling.
It is clear to see from the research presented above that opening hours were causing inconvenience to library users. Proctor et al found that most people still tried to use the library but 65% visited it less. It is quite possible that the longer the inconvenience goes on, more people will become dissatisfied and library use will decrease even more. Proctor et al’s research shows that lack of money is severely hindering library use and it is quite possible that these cuts have lead to the decline in issues. It can be seen that most people buy and borrow at the moment, if the trend in falling opening hours continues people could end up borrowing less and less.

8.2 High Bookspend equals high issues?

Another area where libraries have suffered through lack of money is stock. Lee (1996) found that one of the main deterrents of library use was that the stock was unsatisfactory, Chapter 6 in this dissertation also revealed that many people in Sheffield are dissatisfied with stock. If stock is unsatisfactory then it seems obvious that people will stop using libraries so much. Bohme (1999) revealed:

“In general, the changing patterns of issues and materials on loan are in line with those for expenditure, stock levels and additions to stock…expenditure, additions to stock and issues of books have each fallen by around 20% overall between 1986-87 and 1996-97” (p.20)

Bohme goes on to say that the decline in issues actually exceeds the decrease in stock and the additions to stock. However, it does seem likely that a decrease in spending and a decrease in issues are linked, Chapter 6 of this dissertation again provides evidence to back this up as some people commented that they buy more now because of the poorer selection in libraries. These people had not exclusively switched to buying but were borrowing less.

A report by the Book Trust (1997) which studied library expenditure in Britain made claims similar to that of Bohme:
“There is strong evidence that where libraries spend adequately on book provision, book loans are maintained at a high level and are largely exempt from the pattern of decline that characterises low-spending authorities” (p.3).

The report claims that demand for the public library service has not declined as only adult fiction is declining, while children’s books and non-fiction have remained the same. The reports main findings are that library authorities who spend a large amount of money on books retain higher issues than those who do not. One of the aims of this dissertation was to discover whether this was true.

8.3 Results and discussion
8.3.1 The effect of financial cuts on library use in Sheffield.

The statistics department at the Central Library provided the following statistics.

Table 14.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of books in stock in authority</th>
<th>Percentage of all issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>3,755,644</td>
<td>88.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>2,839,719</td>
<td>87.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>2,875,699</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Table shows that even though there has been a slight increase in stock for 1999-2000, the amount of stock available has fallen considerably since 1997-98. The authority has had no budget for adult fiction for over a year so this is not surprising. Further evidence of falling issues can be observed by the following Table. The figures in this Table were also supplied by Sheffield Library Services.

Table 15: Percentage of stock on loan in Sheffield Library Authority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of stock on loan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>38.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>35.66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15 also shows that issues are going down. It would seem that lack of money on the libraries part is altering people’s borrowing habits. The results of this dissertation are that 22% said they were now borrowing less than they were 2 years ago. A lot of people were borrowing more, mostly because they had retired or had more time. Of the people who were borrowing less, most said it was because they had less time, however, it could be argued that if libraries were open longer then this problem would not arise. Only 4% actually mention that they borrowed less because of library stock although another 4% said they now get their books from other sources which may not have occurred if the libraries had had a fiction budget. The results of this dissertation do not show any dramatic statistical evidence that people are using the library less because of the financial difficulties although a few people did comment specifically on this as can be seen from the Box’s D and E in Chapter 6. Some people even said they were buying more books because of poor library selection. One respondent was especially concerned about the state of the libraries in Sheffield:

“You will notice I haven’t put libraries in my top 3. I do use them but not as much as the others. They [libraries] used to be top, but over the years the selection has gone down and the choice is not what it was. I feel guilty for not using them as much and do try to but the choice is not as it was” (respondent Central Library).

The librarian interviewed at Walkley, when asked if she thought borrowing habits had changed in recent years replied:

“I don’t think they would have changed if we had had the stock...I think 5 years ago, well probably a bit longer than that, people could find 10 books but as the years have gone on they’ve not been able to find that many. Maybe they could have found 8 and then 5 and now maybe it’s 3...People are very loyal to us and they come more often probably in the hope that they will find something to borrow”.
This is evidence to suggest that even if people are visiting the library more, they are possibly borrowing less. The issue figures for Sheffield would certainly seem to back this up. The librarian also stated that if libraries were open longer hours then perhaps more people would borrow.

An interesting fact emerged from the bookshop sample. The questionnaires conducted outside Borders in Leeds revealed that far less people bought books because there was a poor choice in the libraries. More research would need to be done in this area but it is possible that the library service is better in Leeds. No one in the Leeds sample reported to be borrowing less books than two years ago while in Sheffield 5 people mentioned this outside of Waterstones. More people reported to using libraries in Sheffield, this could have something to do with the fact that Leeds is a more affluent area.

8.3.2 Rich and Poor libraries.

It was decided to test the claims made by the Book Trust that libraries with a high book spend retained high issue figures. In order to do this Firth Park Library was compared to Broomhill and, to a lesser extent the Central Library. Firth Park library reopened in 1999 with brand new stock whereas the other two libraries have had no new stock for over a year. These comparisons will only be able to draw tentative conclusions because of the small numbers of respondents at each library. At Firth Park, 15 people took part in the questionnaire, at Broomhill 16 and 17 at Central.

The first difference between the three libraries is that the Firth Park users were heavier readers, 7 said they read more than 6 books a month compared to 4 in Broomhill and 1 in Central. This could be because the stock is better but it could also be because of the large number of retired people surveyed at Firth Park. When asked if they read more, less or the same amount of books as they did two years ago Firth Park and Broomhill users answered equally that they read more (8 people answered this way). However, considering that they could have obtained their books from different sources this does not really give any clues as to the libraries quality.
Firth Park users visited the library slightly less frequently than other library users (27% visit once a week at Firth Park while the figure is 37% at Broomhill). The librarian at Walkley library suggested that people visit libraries more frequently now because they can find fewer books to borrow each visit. Firth Park has new stock so perhaps people are forced to visit it less. When asked why the respondents used the library 13 people at Firth Park answered because there is a good selection in the library. At Broomhill, only 6 people answered this way and at Central only 5. It would seem that Firth Park users are more impressed with their library than the other users which is backed up by the issue figures. The Librarian stated that the new library is issuing 1000 items a day while the old library would issue a third of that. The old library had old stock which is further evidence that libraries with a high book spend maintain high book issues. Some management statistics for Broomhill revealed there had been a 6.1% decrease in issues between 1998 and 1999. This is further evidence that libraries with a low book spend cannot maintain issues.

However, when asked whether they were borrowing more now than 2 years ago, more people from Broomhill thought they were borrowing more than did at Firth Park. This was a surprising result considering that 3 people at Firth Park specifically said they were reading more because of the choice in the new library. All the other evidence seems to point to a greater satisfaction except for this. It could simply be that users from the other library had more personal reasons for borrowing more, the Firth Park sample was also smaller than at Broomhill.

An interesting finding from these results was that 1 person in Broomhill and 1 user of Central stated that they borrowed more because there was better choice now. One person had heard mistakenly that the libraries were buying books again and the other assumed that they were because stock seemed to be better. The mere fact that this had been suggested seemed to be enough to give some people confidence in the library system. This perhaps shows that the damage done by having no fiction budget is perhaps not irreparable.
The evidence on buying books is conflicting. At Firth Park, more people buy 16+ books a year than in other libraries. This could be because there are more heavy readers at Firth Park and as we have seen in previous chapters, the more a person reads the more they are likely to buy and borrow (BML 2000). Further evidence to show that their book buying does not result from lack of satisfaction is found when you look at the answers to the question “why do you buy as well as/instead of borrowing?” From Firth Park, only one person said they bought because of unsatisfactory stock and nobody said it was because of poor opening hours. These answers were quite frequently given for the other two libraries.

8.5 Rich and Poor areas.

Firth Park library was also chosen to be studied because it lies in a poor area of Sheffield and can be compared to Broomhill, a wealthy area. In reality comparisons between the two areas was difficult. The fact that Firth Park has a new library complicated matters. If Firth Park and Broomhill had libraries that were of the same standard they could have been compared and examined to see if affluence effected library use. Because of the differing quality of the libraries and the small samples involved this was difficult and only tentative conclusions can be made.

From the Firth Park sample 11 people said they used libraries for reasons of finance but only 8 people mentioned this in the Broomhill sample so it could be that libraries are used more by people in less well off areas. Three of the four library users who never buy books came from Firth Park which is further evidence for this. However, the heaviest book buyers actually came from the Firth Park sample and not Broomhill. A possible explanation for this could be that the Firth Park sample were heavier readers. Firth Park readers were less likely to say they bought books from a conventional chain.

More questionnaires would need to be carried out in order to gain any conclusive answers.
8.5 A brief conclusion.

Overall, it appears that the financial cuts faced by Sheffield libraries have done damage to the service. At the moment people seem to be being loyal but there is already evidence that people are starting to buy more books or borrow less because of the libraries shortcomings. If this continues then the damage done may be even greater, new members may not be attracted and people may leave and not come back.

There is evidence for and against the idea that libraries with high book spends retain high issues. The statistical evidence from the Library authority and the evidence from the interview with the Firth Park librarian does show that Firth Park has extremely high issues compared to the old library or Broomhill where issues are falling. The evidence from the surveys is conflicting as it would appear obvious that people in Firth Park should be borrowing more if the stock is good. However, there are problems with the stock in that library. The librarian stated that the range of stock available for them to buy was less now than it had been in the past and because they are a new library perhaps they do not have a good back catalogue yet. On the whole it did seem as if the users of Firth Park were more satisfied with their library than other library users. Less people at Firth Park made specific, unflattering comments about the stock than they did in other libraries.

The number of respondents in each library was very low. In order to get a clearer picture of the situation more people would need to be surveyed in all three libraries. There is also the fact that Firth Park is a new library in a poor area while Broomhill is an old library but in a wealthy area. It is possible that these factors would have affected some of the answers. In order to get a clear picture it may have been better to choose two old libraries and two new libraries and make sure one of each was in a poor area and a wealthy area. Taking these factors into consideration the conclusions drawn from this chapter can only be tentative but it does seem apparent that libraries with new books stand a better chance of maintaining high issues than those with no new stock additions.
Chapter 9: Final Conclusions.

9.1 Buying and Borrowing Habits.

This report concludes that at present most people buy and borrow the fiction books they read. There are a significant number of people who do not use libraries (27%) yet still read. These people should not be ignored and their reasons for non-library use should be investigated. The heavier reader a person is will influence where they get their fiction from. Light readers tend to buy all their books while heavy readers will buy and borrow. However, there are some people who buy and read heavily but do not use libraries.

It was found that people in the bookshop sample were likely to be lighter readers and visit the library less frequently than the library sample. This is further evidence to support the idea that heavier readers will buy and borrow. The librarians interviewed agreed that most people buy and borrow which backs up findings of previous studies such as England and Sumsion (1995) or BML (2000).

9.2 Reasons for buying and borrowing habits.

9.2.1 Gender

This study found that age, gender and occupation all effect buying and borrowing. It was found that women borrow more than men and that women use libraries because they have always done so to a greater extent than men. The BML (2000) report believes this has something to do with low reading levels in boys extending into adult hood. However, men do buy books so perhaps they are put off library use for other reasons. Evidence was presented to show that libraries have often been thought of as places for women containing books of interest to them. This perhaps explains why men don’t use them as much. It could also be that if boys use them less then they will fail to keep the habit when they are grown up. Another reason men do not use libraries as much as women could be that they have to worry about money less. Many of the women in the survey were retired or worked part time and used libraries, the men on the other hand mostly worked full time. Because of this they will be more likely to be able to afford all the books they
want. Because they work full time as well they will have less time to visit libraries, get the books back on time and so on. This coupled with the perception of libraries as a place for women will probably have an effect on men’s library use. It has often been suggested that men read less than women (England 1992). This dissertation has backed up previous reports by showing that the more you read the more likely you are to buy and borrow. Considering that men read less it is perhaps not surprising they do not use libraries.

9.2.1 Age

This dissertation found that while a wide range of ages use libraries young people ages 18-35 are more likely to buy the books they want. This is probably to do with the fact that libraries are not seen as fashionable places and are often perceived as being out of date. Efforts are being made to redress that through publicity as the Librarian at Kirklees revealed but at the moment it seems as though young people do not consider libraries much. A major problem is access, many of the young people surveyed stated that time was a problem in using libraries.

There were a lot of elderly and retired people in the library survey but age was pretty evenly spread out. The lack of elderly people in the bookshop sample would appear to dispute England and Sumson’s (1995) claims that older people do not switch to borrowing. However, most people in the library sample claimed to buy and borrow including the elderly. More research would be needed to answer this question.

9.2.3 Occupation

Occupation and status effects library use in a variety of ways. Obviously people with more money will be able to afford to buy books so it was perhaps not surprising that most of the people in the bookshop sample worked full time. Working full time seems to be a great hindrance to library use and many full time workers mentioned not having time to visit libraries.
It is true that age, gender and occupation effect library use but it is possible that they would not so much if libraries were open longer hours or had a better image. If they were open for longer people at work could visit them more. Proctor et al (1998) found that employed people were disenfranchised from the library and this dissertation also found this to be true. It is too complacent to sit back and think that people will return to libraries in later life when they are less busy. If libraries continue to cut hours then this may not happen. The same can be said about young people. It is possible that if younger people see no attraction to libraries in their youth they will not return when they are older. The evidence at the moment suggests that they do return but it is not guaranteed that this situation will last forever and libraries must guard against complacency.

9.4 Changes in buying and borrowing patterns

This study found that more people think they are borrowing more books than they were two years ago than thought they were borrowing less. The reasons given for this were mostly to do with age, many people in the library sample had retired and were reading more. This does perhaps show that library use is a habit you grow into as you get older. However, if people have never used libraries either as children or young adults then it is possible that they will never get into the habit later.

People appeared to be buying more books, mostly in the bookshop sample, this again was to do with occupation or status but some people did comment that it was because libraries are becoming worse.

9.5 Potential competitors

Libraries potential competitors have many advantages. The chain stores or “Super” bookstores have a large amount of up to date stock and the super bookstores encourage browsing. Outlets such as Supermarkets or Bargain bookstores provide new best sellers at extremely low prices. However, at the moment it would seem that many people view libraries and bookshops as complimentary organisations. Librarians and bookshop managers saw them as complimentary although one bookshop manager seemed to see the two organisations as completely separate entities.
The majority of people placed libraries as their first choice for obtaining fiction and most people recognised the complementary role of libraries and bookshops by saying that they would try out books in libraries before borrowing them. This is not always practical because of the financial crisis libraries are facing at the moment so this could change in the future.

It seems that at present most people buy and borrow so that they are not in competition with each other. However, there is evidence that people are buying more books so the situation could change in the future. As most people buy and borrow it would appear that libraries and bookshops cater for the same market but that they are used for different things. People will often buy what they cannot borrow and vice versa. The people who buy but never borrow are probably a separate market.

This study found that heavy buyers who do not borrow did not fit into England’s (1994) description. However, their reasons for not using libraries were mostly because they were too busy, libraries were not convenient for their busy lives and they complained about the quality of the stock.

9.6 Stock

This study concludes that people wish to see a wide variety of stock in libraries. Most people seem to read a variety of different books and would like to see libraries stocking both contemporary fiction and popular or genre novels. There seems to be a general dissatisfaction at the amount of literary novels in libraries. It seems as though people are using libraries for popular novels and bookshops for literary novels. This backs up the idea that people use libraries and bookshops for different purposes.
9.7 Publicity

The evidence suggests that publicity is increasing especially with reference to literary fiction. However, the answers given by some of the respondents shows that perhaps there is not enough out reach going on as many non or infrequent library users seemed to have very old fashioned views of the library service.

9.8 Finance.

The financial troubles facing Sheffield are having and effect on people’s library use and are pushing some people to buy more books. It seems as though people are being quite loyal to libraries at the moment but this may not go on if the situation does not improve.

It would seem that libraries with high books spend do maintain high issues. Firth Park library is evidence of this as it has extremely high issues.

9.9 Final Comment.

At present it would seem that most people buy and borrow. One possible explanation for the decrease in issues despite this fact, could be that people are still borrowing and buying but that they are borrowing less. The librarian at Walkley stated that this was probably the case as people cannot find as many books to borrow on a visit as they used to.

It seems as though libraries are not in competition with bookshops but they are having to struggle with financial problems and an image problem which seems to hinder them quite a bit. The factors which affect borrowing seem to be mostly to do with age or occupation, many working people do not have time to use libraries. However, it is possible that if libraries were more accessible then these problems would not arise.
9.10 Further Research.

Further research could be done to investigate the effects of poverty on library use. This dissertation looked at financial problems of libraries but could only draw very tenuous conclusions about people’s wealth and library use. Further work could also be done to investigate the effects of publicity on library use to see if it has any long term effect on users or non-users.

At a time when books are available from more places than ever before and at cheaper prices it is important to know what people’s motives are for buying and borrowing. A larger scale study along the same lines as this one could help libraries and shops in understanding their users.
Bibliography.


Appendix 1.

Questionnaire on Fiction buying and borrowing habits.

1. How many fiction books do you read a month for pleasure?
2. How have your reading habits changed over the past 2 years. Do you
   Read more
   Read less
   Read about the same

3. Please give reasons for any changes in your reading habits
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

4. What type of fiction do you read? (Tick more than one box)
   Crime/Thriller
   Romance
   Family Saga/Historical
   Science Fiction/Fantasy
   Horror
   Contemporary Fiction
   Classics
5. How often are you likely to try out new types of book you wouldn’t normally read?

Very Often
Quite Often
Occasionally
Rarely
Never

6. Where do you obtain most of your books? Please rank the top three in order. You can give equal rank to any you use equally

Library
Bookshop (new)
Book Shop 2nd Hand
Jumble sale/car boot sale
Supermarket
Book Clubs
Internet
Borrow from friends
Other please state

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

Non-library users go to Question 13.

7. How often do you borrow books from the library?

More than once a week
Once a week
Once a fortnight
Once a month
Less than once a month
8. Why do you borrow books from the library as well as/ rather than buying them? (You can choose more than one)
Finance (cheaper to borrow)
Like to try out new authors in libraries first
Good selection
Convenience
Have always gone to the library for books.
Other please
state_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
________

9. How close do you live to your local library?
   A short walk    
   A short car/ bus journey  
   A longer car/bus journey (30 minutes or more)

10. Compared with two years ago would you say you borrow
    More books    
    Less books  
    About the same amount  

11. If your borrowing habits have changed over the past couple of years please tell me
12. Are there any of your answers from this section you would like to comment on?

13. How many fiction books do you buy?

- 16+ a year
- 6-15 a year
- 1-5 a year

14. How far away is your nearest bookshop?

- A short walk
- A short drive/bus journey away
- A longer drive/bus journey (30 minutes or more)

15. Which bookshop or types of bookshop do you buy from the most? (e.g. Waterstones, ASDA Supermarket).
16. Why do you buy books as well as/rather than borrowing them. (YOU CAN SPECIFY MORE THAN ONE)
   - Like to re-read books
   - Like to own books
   - Poor choice in Libraries
   - Inconvenient opening hours of libraries
   - Pressure of time involved with borrowing from libraries
     (ie. Getting books back before due date).
   - Good selection in book shops
   - Never think of using a library
   - Other please
     state___________________________________________________________

17. Over the past 2 years have your buying habits

   - Remained the same
   - Increased
   - Decreased.

18. If your buying habits have changed over the past couple of years could you please tell me why

   why___________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   __________________

19. Have you ever decided not to buy a book because you weren’t sure if you’d like it?

   - Yes
   - No
20. If you have, have you ever thought of borrowing such a book from a library in order to try it out?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please explain your answer ___________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

21. Are there any of your answers from this section you would like to make further comments on? ___________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

22. Male ☐ Female ☐

23. Age
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
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24. Are you

- Employed Full Time
- Employed Part Time
- Student
- Looking after the home
- Seeking Work
- Retired
Appendix 2.
Interview Schedules

Manager of Borders

1. Tell me what the ethos is behind Borders. What makes you different from other bookshops?
   Is this the way of the future?
2. Tell me what you think about the relationship between libraries and bookshops.
   Are they competitors?
   Do they cater for different markets?
   Added extras such as literacy campaigns? Are they a deliberate attempt to encroach on the library market? Do they increase sales for the company?
3. Do you think the buying habits of people have changed over the last 5 years?
   Has the Net Book agreement affected this?
4. What do you think determines whether people buy or borrow?
   Simply money?
   Do bookshops recognise the partnership people have with libraries i.e. Borrowing new authors and then buying them?
5. Do you think Borders attracts young people?
6. How important is image and display?
7. If another bookshop heard a Borders was moving into town would it be afraid?
8. What impact will online selling have?
   Competing with bookshops? Is this the way of the future?

Librarian, Kirklees

1. My dissertation is about Adult fiction. Can you tell me what you do to promote adult fiction in libraries?
2. Libraries often accused of only having best sellers and popular fiction. Do you promote other kinds?
3. How important do you think promotion is to libraries?
4. Has promotion increased in recent years? Are libraries generally outward looking these days?
5. How much notice do you take of what bookshops are doing? Do you ever work with them?
6. As a librarian what is your perception of peoples borrowing and buying habits.
   What makes people buy or borrow? Simply financial or something else?
7. Have people's buying and borrowing habits changed in recent years?
8. What is your perception of the relationship between libraries and bookshops?
   Do they serve different markets Are you in the same business? Competitors?
9. It has often been suggested that libraries do not appeal to young people. Why do you think this is and what can be done about it? Do you attempt to attract young people into libraries?

10. Where does that perception (of libraries appealing to women) come from? Do you think that in the past libraries have been geared towards that audience too much?

Manager of Waterstones.

1. Tell me what you think about the relationship between libraries and bookshops. Prompts: a. Competitors? Do they cater for different markets? b. Borders the way of the future? c. Added extras such as literacy campaigns and reading groups? Do they benefit the companies? Are they a deliberate attempt to encroach on the library market? Do they increase sales? d. Tim Waterstone said libraries had had their day, do you agree with this?

2. Do you feel the buying habits of people have changed over the last 5 years?

3. What do you think determines whether people buy or borrow? Prompts: a. Simply money? b. Do book shops recognise the partnership people have with libraries i.e., borrowing new authors and then buying them.

4. What impact will on-line selling have? Prompts: Competing with bookshops? Future Trade? What will it be like, more on-line selling?

Interview with the Librarian at Firth Park Library.

1. Tell me about the new library and the impact it’s had on local people.

2. To what extent do you think the impact of the new library will last?

3. Do you think opening hours would increase issues even more?

4. **Being a new library and having a new stock, did that not save you from the financial problems that other libraries in Sheffield have had?**

5. **So you say you weren’t satisfied by the stock you could get hold of, not enough titles etc. What do the readers think?**

6. **Is there a lack of guidance when it comes to stock?**

7. The perception that quite a lot of people have of libraries is that they stock only popular novels. How much contemporary, more literary stuff do libraries have?

8. What do you think determines whether people buy or borrow?
9. How do libraries see themselves in relation to book shops? Are they complimentary? Will the lack of bookfund will have effected that?
10. Can you see any way of libraries and bookshops working together?
11. Evidence suggests that libraries do not appeal much to young people in 18-35 while bookshops do (reading the situation). My own pilot questionnaires have shown this. Is this the case and what can be done about it?

Interview Schedule: Library Supplier.

1. Do you liase with libraries? What exactly does your job entail?
2. What is the relationship like between libraries and the book trade? How do publishers see libraries? Do they understand each other?
3. Have their been any changes in what libraries are buying in recent years? Are they buying more copies of fewer titles or vice versa? More fiction? More popular than literary? How do libraries choose what to buy?
4. Have you picked up any views from librarians about the decline in issues? What would you attribute to this?
5. How do you choose what to stock?

Interview Schedule: Librarian, Walkley.

1. Could you tell me what your job entails?
2. Tell me what you think the relationship between libraries and bookshops is? Different markets? Competing?
3. What do you think determines whether people buy or borrow? Simply money, or anything else?
4. Do you think the borrowing habits of people have changed over the last 5 years?
5. Can you see ways of libraries and bookshops working together?
6. It is commonly assumed that library stock mostly popular fiction. How much contemporary or literary material is stocked?
7. Women read more than men and borrow more from libraries. Why is this the case?

Interview with Reading Partnership Employee

1. Where did the idea for the report come from and what part did you play in it?
2. How could they work together?
3. What about people who don’t use libraries at all?
4. Do activities such as reading groups taking place in shops threaten libraries?
5. What about electronic book selling?