

BRADFORD RESOURCE CENTRE

ANNUAL  
REPORT

1991 - 1992



"If not now, when? If not us, who?" Primo Levi

# **VOLUNTARY, BUT NOT AMATEUR**

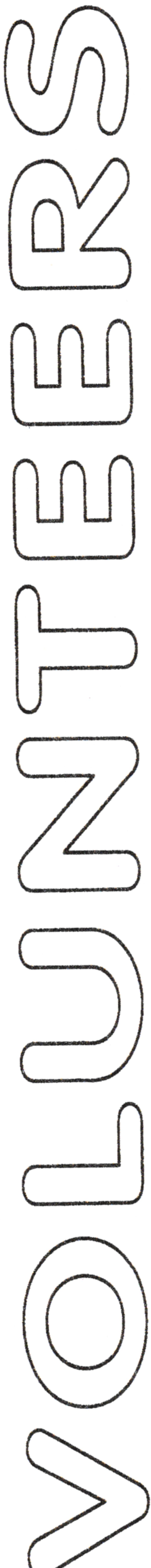
For a long time volunteers have supported the work of the centre. The Resource Centre has 18 volunteers at present. Volunteers do a wide variety of work. Some cover a busy reception desk, which also entails helping users with equipment in the centre. Some administrative tasks are the responsibility of volunteers such as looking after affiliations and some aspects of finance work. Most of our volunteers work in the library where the work seems never ending. The work can range from mundane admin tasks to specific projects and depends on what each particular volunteer would like to do.

## **A BETTER DEAL FOR VOLUNTEERS**

The task of co-ordinating volunteers at the Centre is one that has been shared by most workers from time to time, usually added on to other responsibilities. In line with our plans to do more community development work we are recruiting a worker with specific responsibility to support and develop the role of volunteers at the Centre. We are hoping this will lead to an increase, not only in the numbers of volunteers but also in the skills of existing and new volunteers by offering structured training and support.

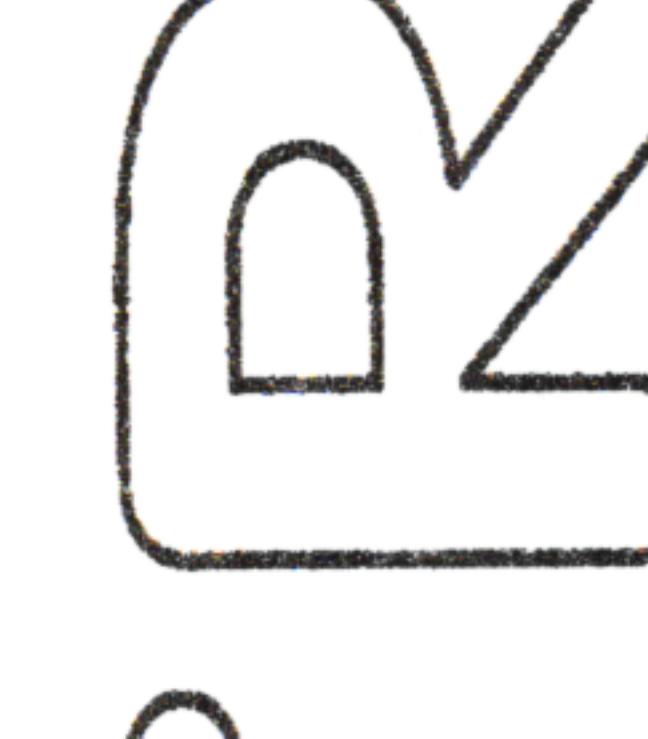
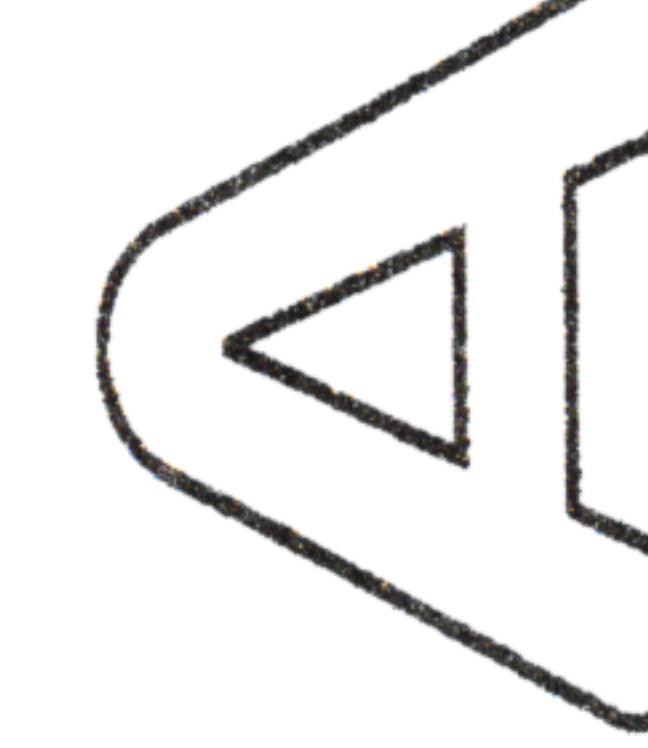
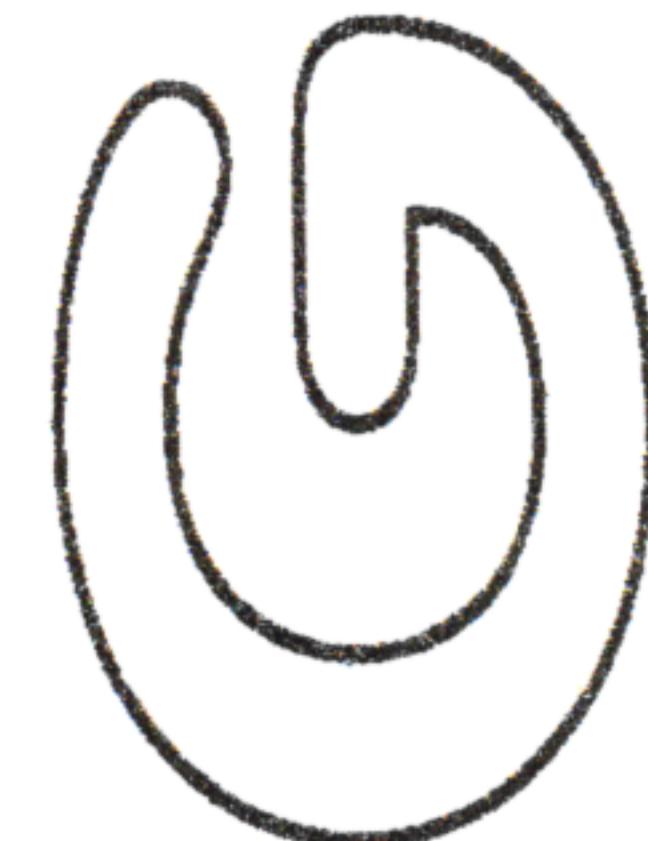
Until that time we would like to say a very big "**THANK YOU**" to all our existing volunteers- we couldn't do it without you!

**Mike Barton**  
**Lou Baruch**  
**Paul Barrett**  
**Akram Bhatti**  
**Deb Collett**  
**Winfreda Dube**  
**George Ellis**  
**Ursula Fisher**  
**Philomena Hingston**  
**Enid Hunter**  
**Noa Kleinman**  
**Peter Lloyd**  
**Sheri Lowther**  
**Abdul Rashid**  
**Steve Simpson**  
**Bob Swindells**  
**Janice Thornton**  
**Mike Weeden**  
**Ginny Wilkinson.**



# TRAINING NEWS

This has been an exciting year for training at the Resource Centre. In January we recruited a new Training Worker - Ramila Mistry - doubling the amount of time we had available for training. Sadly, Ramila left us in October so we are now in the process of recruiting again for this post. As well as teaching on the main Resource Centre courses, an important element of this post is development work with Bradford's black communities to improve the accessibility of our services.



## THE ADVICE CENTRES SUPPORT GROUP

This is a group set up to provide support, training and information to local advice workers. The group also aims to act as a campaigning voice around social security issues. We help to service this group and since being re-established we have seen numbers attending the monthly meetings increasing dramatically to an average of 20 people at each meeting.

## TRAINING COURSES

We continue to offer our free welfare rights training courses at the centre which are continually full. We are also finding that more and more people are asking us to run "personal development" type courses and also to run course in other areas in the Bradford Metropolitan District. This is something we are committed to and have made some progress on this year. We have also started to run some "women -only" courses which have been very popular.

A selection of some of the courses run this year is as follows:

- The Disability Benefits Bill
- Housing Benefit - The complexities
- Women and Benefits (women only)
- Social Security Appeals (2 days)
- Immigration Status and Benefits (2 days)
- Rights for Homeless Women (women only)
- Training for Trainers (3 days)
- 8 week basic welfare rights course (run in Keighley)
- Means - Tested Benefits (4 days)
- The Child Support Agency
- Interviewing Skills
- Disability Benefits (2 days)

We have also run in- house training for local authority workers. This year we ran a series of training courses for 6 new Benefits Advisers based in the Directorate of Housing, covering such things as , young people and benefits, Housing Benefit and Social Security Appeals.

There are some major pieces of new legislation to be introduced in 1993 such as The Council Tax, Community Care legislation and The Child Support Act. All of these will have major implications for advice workers, highlighting the need for continued high quality welfare rights training which we will endeavour to continue to offer as a free service to voluntary sector projects in the area.

# PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF BRC

Bradford Resource Centre has acquired a whole range of new machines this year, the only drawback is finding the space to put them all in.

## COPY, TRIM, BIND, LAMINATE

The Risograph copy-duplicator is a cross between a photocopier and the old-fashioned kind of duplicator. This means no inky fingers, no stencils to cut and it's cheap, quiet, fast, and good quality. It will do two colours, we may get more colours later. It's so good that 100,000 copies have been produced in the first three months. Of course we still have two excellent photocopiers with a range of features including six colours, double-side copying and enlargement and reduction.

As promised last year, BRC now provides binding facilities. What's more you have a choice of thermal or comb-binding. The first gives a smart, hard-wearing cover and the second is good for doing lots of copies.

The laminator puts a plastic cover on papers such as posters, notices, etc from ID card size up to A3 - great for membership cards, permanent display materials, outdoor notices and anything you need to protect.

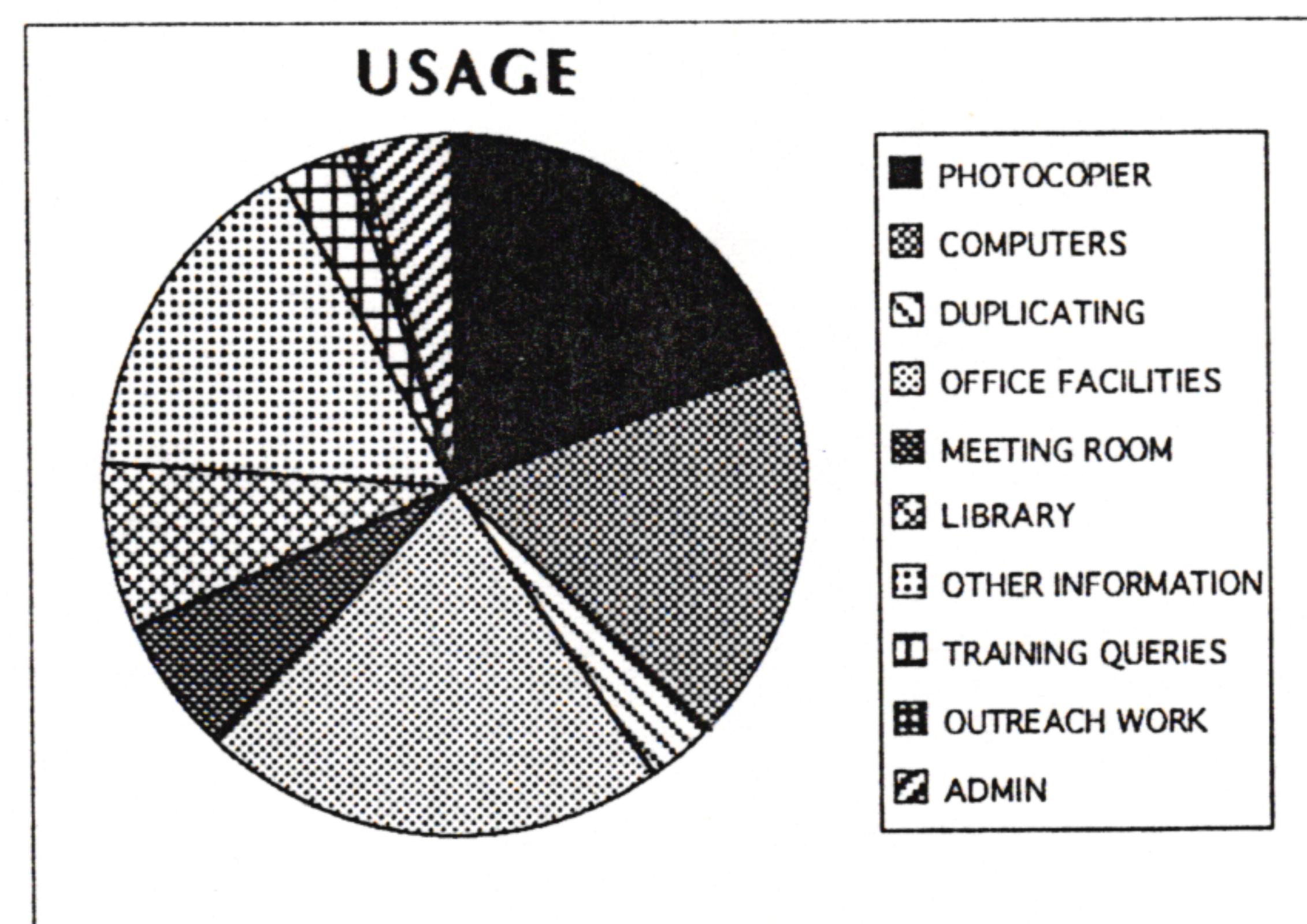
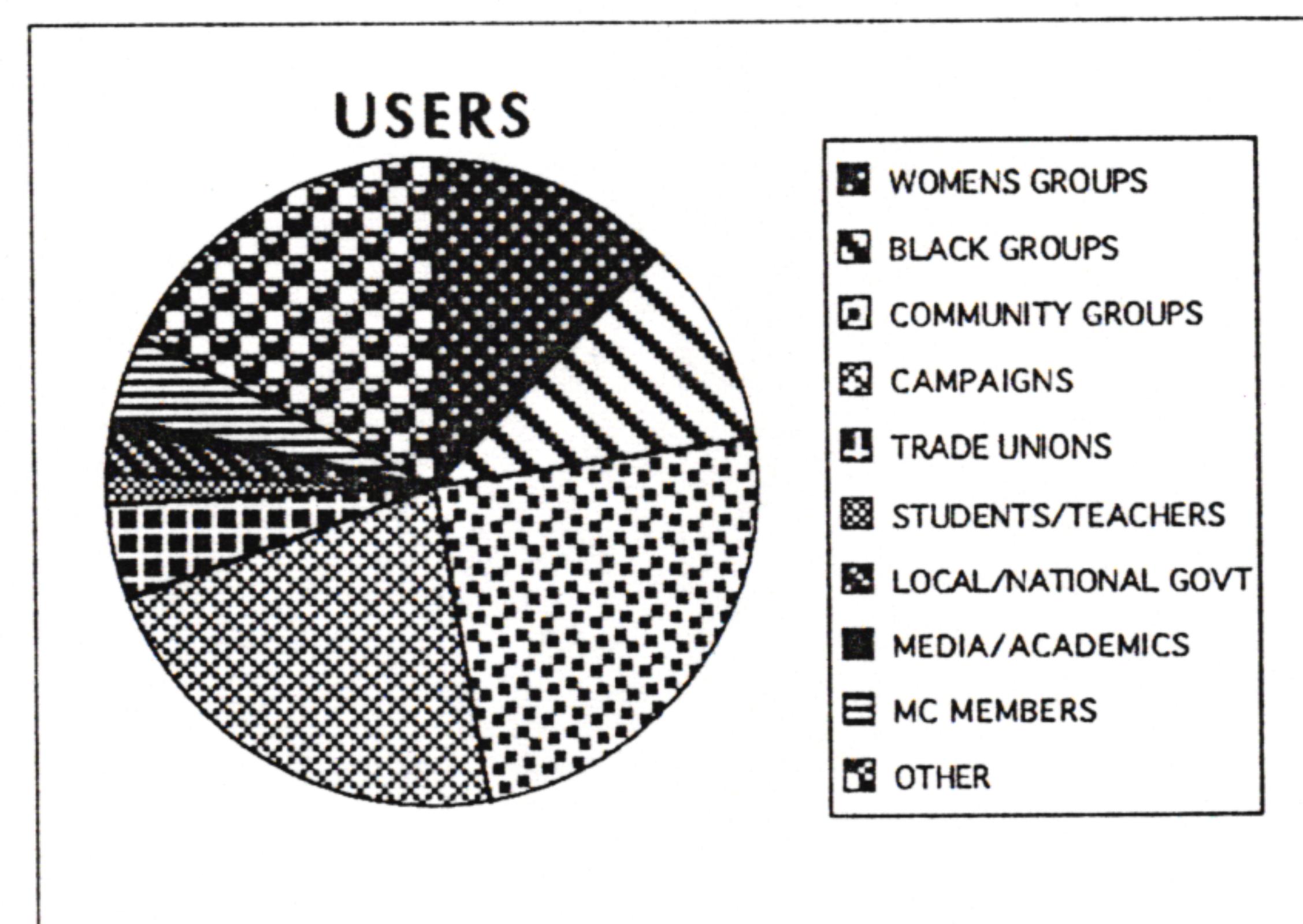
We now have a very sharp guillotine which will cut up to 200 sheets at a time.

## COMPUTERS

We bought an AppleMac computer to meet demand from users mainly for DTP and graphics work. However immediately after we bought it the Elonex PCs were stolen, so we had to get the Mac up and running quickly. By the time you read this we should have two new computers, various printers and be providing an even better service than we did before.

In time we plan to further improve our computing facilities by getting a scanner, looking at colour printing, getting more information on CD-ROM. We also plan to improve access to the computers.

The centre continues to be very busy (more than 7,000 users this year) but we have been aware for some time that a lot of groups don't know about the centre and therefore don't make use of our facilities. We decided to spend more time working with groups in the community and publicising the work of the centre more actively. We welcome requests from any groups working on campaigns or projects who feel that we could help.



# THE LIBRARY.

## Newspapers:

Remember, BRC's library is the best source of news information in the District. We take newspaper cuttings every day from the local and national newspapers on a wide range of issues - and most of these go back to 1979. We also start cuttings files on one-off issues - like the Allied Colloids fire and explosion, the BCCI scandal and the current debate and campaign about pit closures.

This year we've started taking some new newspapers: the Daily Jang, Millat, (an Urdu language weekly newspaper) Eastern Eye and the Irish Post.

## Information on computer:

We were the first library in Bradford to subscribe to newspapers on computer. We continue to take the Guardian on CD-ROM. Congratulations to the University's J.B. Priestley Library - we're glad to see they've caught up with us and take this year's Financial Times and Independent on CD-ROM, (both extremely useful).

We're also on-line through the Geo-Net Host (yes it was gobble-de-gook to us too at first - we'll be doing an article on electronic mail, message boards and databases available through Geo-Net and the Manchester Host in the next BRC Bulletin.)

## More information on computer - (how to find local community organisations and how to find out what's on.)

Soon we will be on-line to the Bradford City Library's COIN system. This is the library's community information service - it's already available on the library computer you use to read their catalogue. COIN stands for Community Operated Information Network - it contains a huge listing of local community groups - and a regularly updated diary of local events and meetings. As soon as we get the technology sorted out you'll be able to get addresses for groups and dates of meetings through our computer - and put details of your group's activities into COIN through the Resource Centre.



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## Finance, in a "normal" year....

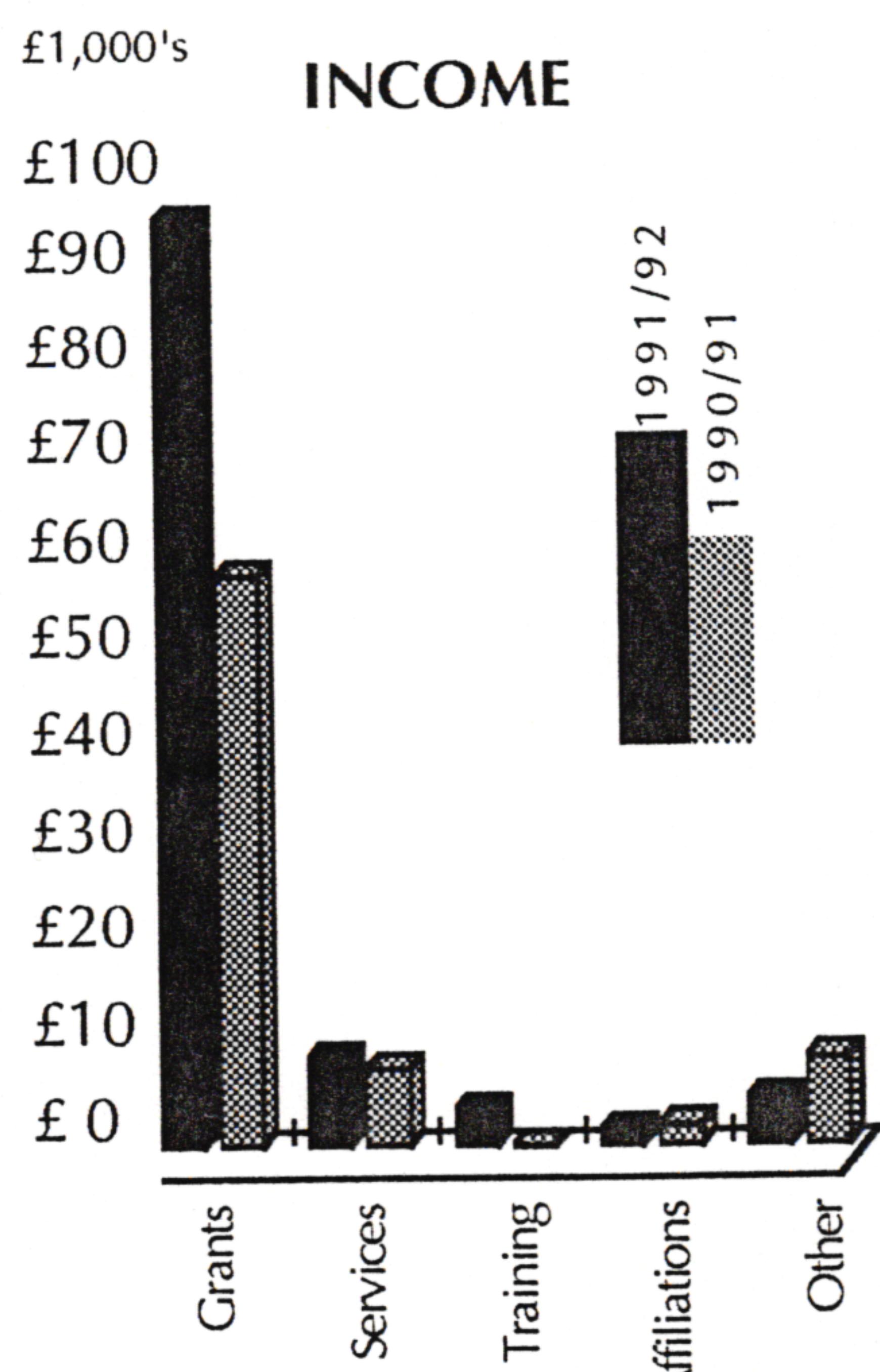
Last year's report talked of a "very exceptional" financial year". This year, 1991/92 almost feels like we're "back to normal", .

The 1990/91 figures cover a 15 month period (due to a change in our "financial year"), so comparisons are a little difficult...

### Income Domination

Our income is again dominated by our grants from Bradford Council. These have increased substantially, following the decisions to restore our normal funding and to base an extra welfare rights training worker at the centre. All our other sources of income seem insignificant by comparison .

However, income from "services", (photocopying, duplicating, use of computers, badgemaking, etc), continues to grow, reflecting improvements in the centre's equipment. We are also maintaining a considerable income from training.



### Spending Domination

Back to normal... our spending was dominated by our wages bill. The increase here is again explained by our extra post.

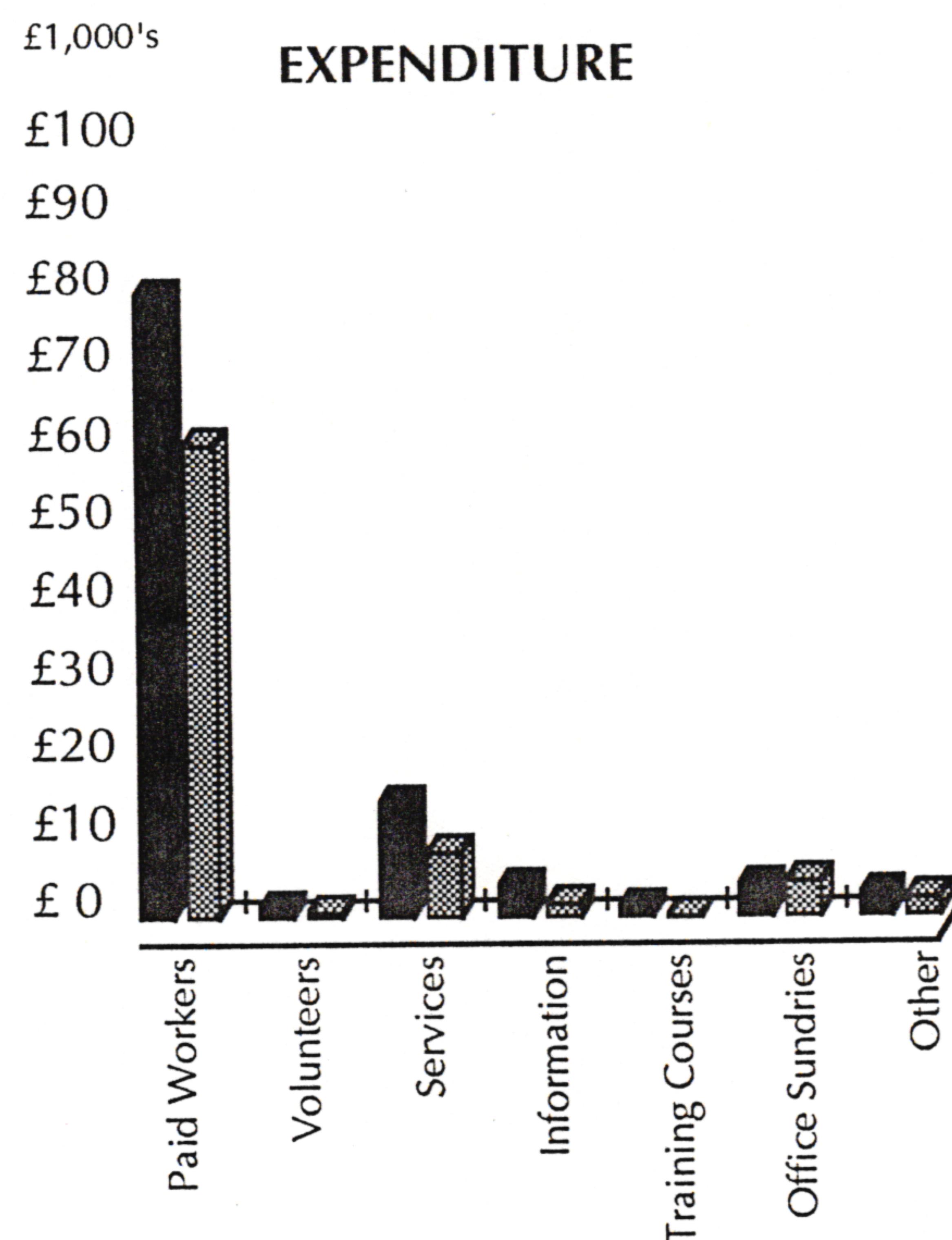
The extra spending on "services" reflects some investment in new equipment and the increase on "information" reflects our major investment in computer based information.

### Conclusion

We again ended up with a surplus at the end of the year, but this was completely explained by a delay in appointing the extra worker. In a "normal year", like 1992/93, we are heading for a considerable loss, reflecting our continued underfunding. This has been recognised to a certain extent by the council. We still await a real solution !

### Thanks

Again, thanks go to Lou Baruch and Steve Simpson, who have continued to do a grand job helping with the books. Very soon their involvement will be longer than any paid worker !



F U N D A M E N T A L R I G H T S C E N T R E

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- spot the difference**