

Peter Lor's 2nd library ABC, year 6: PQR

For background on the Library ABC, see [here](#). This instalment comes with my best wishes for 2024.

P is for the University of **Pretoria** Library. This building was completed in mid-1975. It has been altered and added to since then, but in that year, it was very new, and a new broom was needed to modernise its operation and services as well. A new director was appointed, also new senior staff. In January 1976 I joined the team as the Senior Librarian responsible for health sciences libraries. I soon became very involved in planning the layout of new library spaces on all campuses, in this building as well. It was an exciting time. We were preparing to install a new IBM mainframe-based integrated computerised system, called Dobis-Libis. (Who remembers that?) I was also involved in experimental minicomputer-based indexing systems for specialised research institutes. We were beginning to access dial-up online databases such as Lockheed Dialog. A steep learning curve!



Image: L. van Wyk, 3rd year BSc (Architecture) project, 2008. UPSpace Institutional Repository, <https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/6612>

Q is for [Queen Mary's Dolls' House](#) Library. Have I been there? No. As I have fewer opportunities for travel, I now have to rely on picture and suggestions from colleagues. This one comes from Sjoerd Koopman, who has an immense [collection](#) of postcards depicting libraries. The Queen Mary for whom this dolls' house was built in 1924 on a scale of 1:12, was the wife of King George VI, but the idea originated with her cousin, Princes Marie Louise, who enlisted Sir Edwin Lutyens, an eminent architect, to design it. Everything you see in this picture reflects the finest and best Britain could produce. The miniature books contained original stories by the likes of Arthur Conan Doyle and A.A. Milne. A royal extravagance? Exhibited at the British Empire Exhibition (1924-25), it was later used

to raise funds for the Queen's charities and is now in Windsor Castle for the tourists to admire.



Image: From: Royal Collection Trust, <https://www.rct.uk/collection/themes/trails/queen-marys-dolls-house/library>

R is for [Roosendaal](#), a city of around 67.000 inhabitants, in the province of North Brabant in the Netherlands. The public library of Roosendaal is part of the Bibliotheek West-Brabant system. I visited it on a day tour as part of the 2023 WLIC. It was included because it is an example of innovative adaptation of an existing building. What you see on the right is the rear façade of what used to be the imposing residence of a wealthy inhabitant. The large concourse in the photo was roofed over. In the house and all around the concourse are various library collections and facilities. I did not find the building attractive, but I was impressed by the range of services, including reading promotion, literacy instruction, IT courses, language courses for immigrants, and a special section for persons suffering from dementia. You can use Google Translate to read

more about the Library's services on its Dutch [website](#).



Image: Peter Lor