



THE NOISE

Members of the staff of Westfield Library in Western Australia's City of Armadale still don't really know what caused the noise they kept hearing after the library opened in 1990.

It was a high-pitched ringing that drove staff and library users alike to distraction.

There was neither rhyme nor reason to the noise. We recorded the time of day, weather conditions, direction of the wind and everything else we could think of.

Council's Property Department engaged a specialist noise company. They said, "This will be easy, there is an industrial area around the library, it will be some sort of reflective noise from machinery". They set up their equipment, tested whatever it is that these sorts of experts test, scratched their heads and went away without an answer.

No worries though, we were assured. The University of Western Australia has a department who do this sort of thing; they will be able to find out what it is.

So the University of Western Australia set up their equipment and monitored the noise over a period of time. They also left scratching their heads. "Hmm, puzzling that the noise is also there on a Sunday when there is no machinery working in the industrial area," they said. "Sorry, we don't know."

The noise reached a fever pitch such that we had to rotate the staff through the library with our other branches because no-one could stand it for too long. The public came

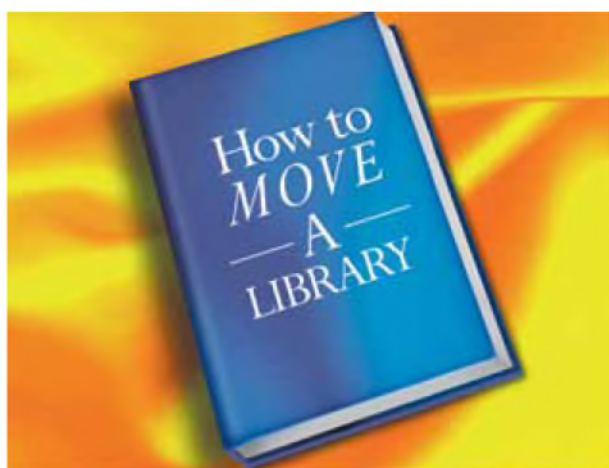
- and left. They complained about it too. It really hurt your head!

Then, just over a year after opening, the noise stopped, just like that. We had no idea why, but all was revealed by the then editor of the local newspaper, who was given the inside information by a member of the public. It appeared we had brought it on ourselves. What we had done wrong was to build the library on what was once open space used as a landing site by UFOs.

Of course! Why hadn't we thought of that? We were told the UFOs had to leave some noise emitting device on the site to send out a message to prevent other UFOs from landing on our public library. So every time a UFO came near to land, the noise was emitted from this device. The crescendo at the end was the final warning. End of story.

Now if you think this all sounds a little far fetched, we should add that over the years there have been all sorts of inexplicable things happen in this building such as computer problems for which we could find no reason and other little mysteries. We have decided that it just doesn't do to upset the little green men. We did change the library name when there was a change in locality name some years later and our library is now the Seville Grove Library. Maybe this just had something to do with it?

Thankfully, we are confident that they have forgotten or forgiven, as things have settled down and there is now harmony in this lovely library.



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Patricia Walker

Manager Libraries & Heritage, City of Armadale
pwalker@armadale.wa.gov.au

