

LONDON CLIP

Newsletter for CILIP in London

Opening The Doors

The London Libraries Development Agency (LLDA) has obtained funding from the JJ Charitable Trust to develop Opening The Doors, a project to improve access to books, reading and library services for homeless and vulnerably housed people.

The project will encourage library services in several London boroughs to consider the needs of homeless and vulnerably housed people. Research carried out for LLDA by Brent Homeless User Group (B-HUG) showed that homeless people who use library services feel there are barriers to access and want to be involved in service design and delivery. Opening The Doors will pilot new approaches and aim to find ways of working that can be replicated in other library services.

Key aspects will include improving access to lifelong learning and critically examining barriers to participation such as membership requirements. An important aspect of the project is the involvement of a number of homelessness sector organisations.

Lottery grants for London libraries

London libraries have won over £15m in grants from the BIG Lottery Fund's £80m Community Libraries programme. The money will be awarded to 12 London Boroughs to implement plans to engage local people in developing new and refurbished spaces where a broad range of activities can be offered.

The Community Libraries Programme, which was developed jointly between the Big Lottery Fund, MLA and the Society of Chief Librarians, aims to enhance public libraries as venues for a diverse range of community activities, such as reading groups, cultural events, exhibitions, courses or parent-and-toddler groups.

Tower Hamlets was one of only four boroughs across the country to be awarded the maximum grant of £2m. This will be used to build an inclusive library, information and learning centre for Bethnal Green's diverse population. The centre will complete the Borough's Idea Store strategy. Combining a traditional library space with specialist areas dedicated to learning activities, community meetings and art displays, it will help address issues of multiple deprivation in the area.

Croydon Library Service has been awarded just under £1.4 million to modernise, refurbish and extend Thornton Heath Library. Taking the idea of the library as the 'living room of the city', the funding will help transform the 1914 Carnegie building with improved access throughout, a new double storey extension providing enhanced ICT and study facilities, a new teenage space, public toilets and a café. A new lift will open up access to the lower ground floor with an extended children's library, community learning centre, meeting and activity rooms, baby change facilities and a kitchen for community use. For the first time the community will have access to the library garden and will be able to enjoy a sensory reading garden all year round.

Other London libraries to win awards are: Enfield, Merton, Islington, Southwark, Ealing, Wandsworth, Haringey, Westminster, Brent and Sutton.

Scholarship for UCL student

Thomson Scientific has awarded the 2007 Roger K. Summit Scholarship for the Europe, Middle East, Asia Pacific and Africa region to Mehrnoush Mozaffarian, a doctoral student from University College London. The announcement was made at the Online Information conference on 6 December. Mozaffarian is working towards Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Library, Archive and Information Studies, focusing her research on a gender study of UK Academic Scientific Productivity. She conducted similar research while attending Azad University in Iran, where she earned a Master's Degree in Library & Information Sciences in 2006.

Limited Edition

London Libraries Recommend... Limited Edition is a showcase of works of fiction, non-fiction and poetry from small presses and independent publishers. It features a list of recommended books, a quiz and author events. This reader development initiative is funded by the Arts Council. Further information is available at www.londonlibraries.org/servlets/llr/smallpresses.

Breaking the Rules



Blast, July 1915. Woodcut by Wyndham Lewis

The British Library exhibition 'Breaking the Rules - The Printed Face of the European Avant Garde 1900-1937' explores the creative transformation that took place in Europe during the first four decades of the 20th century - a revolution that encompassed visual art, design, photography, literature, theatre, music and architecture. An accompanying book describes and illustrates the printed work of Avant Garde poets and artists, including their manifestos, poetry, magazines, artists' books and photography.

The exhibition is on until 30 March 2008. The publication *Breaking the Rules: The Printed Face of the European Avant Garde 1900-1937* is edited by Stephen Bury.



Christine Goodair

Cross-cultural work: nurturing the skills

Jennifer Smith reports on the Sekforde Arms meeting of 9 October 2007

We live in one of the most multicultural cities in the world but how good are we at working effectively with people from cultures other than our own? Technology enables us to work with people from all over the world but what skills do you need to ensure your global team excels at cross-cultural working?

These were the issues in discussion at October's CILIP in London meeting at the Sekforde Arms. Christine Goodair was the speaker for a thought-provoking evening. Drawing on her wealth of experience, Christine deftly guided the audience through the many and complex issues of cross-cultural collaborations.

Christine noted how globalisation and IT were creating more opportunities to work with people from around the world. These opportunities have led to an increased need for improving cross-cultural understanding.

Aptly illustrating the ease of transcontinental networking was the attendance at the meeting of a US librarian who was visiting London for the Internet Librarian conference. Her contributions to the evening's discussions underlined the enrichment brought by sharing experiences with colleagues from around the globe.

Christine's thesis was that if we are to reap the benefits of working with people from other cultures, we must develop the necessary skills, 'Culturally diverse teams need cultural education, you cannot just throw people together and hope it will work.'

When discussing the skills required for cross-cultural work Christine drew on her experience of working on pan-European drug abuse information projects and also reflected on a cross-cultural leadership workshop she attended in Arizona earlier in the year.

The skills Christine identified as necessary for effective cross-cultural work included:

- patience and humour (although we agreed 'wit' could often be dangerous in cross-cultural situations!)

- acceptance and tolerance of difference
- being flexible and open to change
- an accommodating and flexible approach towards working styles, meeting practices and management processes
- communication skills, both listening and speaking
- being outcome focused
- respect for different skills and individuals

One of the more difficult aspects of cross-cultural work seems to be striking the right balance between cultural sensitivity and stereotyping. Christine advised that to avoid making assumptions based on stereotypes the leader of a cross-cultural team should instigate a skills audit when putting together or first working with a new team.

Christine illustrated the practical difficulties of working with colleagues from multiple countries by describing a collaborative project to build a taxonomy on drug-related issues. Agreeing terms for a taxonomy is challenging in one language, but Christine and her colleagues set about trying to find standard terms across multiple languages. Political views towards drug use in respective countries meant that some concepts simply didn't exist in some countries. Although they successfully completed the project, Christine felt that with hindsight cultural awareness and training would have made their work easier.

In discussing the role libraries play in engaging with multicultural communities, Christine mentioned the CILIP Libraries Change Lives Awards for many examples of the important work libraries in the UK are doing in this area. It was noted, however, that despite the profession's work in reaching out to marginalised communities, the ethnic breakdown of the library and information sector is far from representative of the communities in which we work.

The challenges of cross-cultural work were evident but Christine also stressed the benefits. For her these included stimulation of ideas, greater subject knowledge, developing skills and building a wider network. Clearly an investment in developing the necessary skills would be worthwhile for anyone involved in cross-cultural work.



Tom Palmer

From Beleek to Lowestoft - a journey through the UK's libraries

Ralph Adam reports on the Sekforde Arms meeting of 13 November 2007

'I went into a library once – it did me 'ead in' (Kat in *Eastenders*, November 2001)

Glance at the travel section of your local library or bookshop and you'll find loads of specialist guides: canals, churches, gardens, museums, pubs, hotels, monuments Even monasteries. But libraries? You can guess the answer.

Publishers have considered bringing out guides to libraries, but somehow they never see the light of day. Perhaps, it's the curse of the 'L'-word! Yet there is much to say about libraries: not only are many of architectural interest, but they can be well worth visiting for their stock, their staff and, perhaps most fascinating of all, their readers.

That is where Tom Palmer comes in. He has a passion for libraries, but feels they are under appreciated. So he is planning a travel guide. At our November evening, he entertained the audience with an account of his project.

To the naked eye, travel writing seems a brilliant way to spend a holiday: lie on the beach for a fortnight, pen a few words on your experiences and the cash flows in! The reality is hard work and, certainly, no holiday. Tom's book is no exception: collecting his material involves traversing the UK to look at public libraries (including remote mobiles), talking to staff and users, hearing their stories and recording responses. Most travel writers look at what has already been written, developing the earlier ideas. That wouldn't work in this case, as so little material exists.

The book is, perhaps, the zenith of Tom's life: he gained much as a library user and wanted to see if others had benefited in the same way. He considers libraries to have given him both a career and happiness.

Tom left school unqualified and with poor reading skills: it wasn't until he was 18 that he became a confident reader. His only enthusiasm ('addiction', he says) was Leeds United (did he

realise at the time, one wonders, how many of his heroes shared his inability to read?). Unemployed, and with few prospects, Tom plucked up courage, venturing into Leeds Central Library where he found you could read about soccer. Then he spotted titles by authors with strange-sounding 'foreign' names and was hooked! Finally, after two years of library use, he was introduced to a completely new world when his explorations led him to the hitherto unimagined delights of the reference floor! 'An extraordinary place', he says. 'You could pursue any topic in Leeds Library'. Imagine how he must have felt years later to be invited by Bradford Libraries as one of the country's first readers-in-residence!

Since then, he has become a children's author, produced a reader-development handbook, worked for, among others, the National Literacy Trust and The Reading Agency, and initiated a range of activities – including the Football Reading Game, in which football is used to inspire fans to read about the game through newspapers, magazines, books and a penalty shoot out ... in the library.

Having discovered what libraries could do for him, Tom has become a convert, a missionary – feeling many of the 'marvellous' things libraries achieve go unappreciated. He now wants to discover what libraries are for and why and how people use them.

Tom's aim for the talk had been to give the story behind his book, but the audience became so involved, interrupting with a stream of questions, that we never discovered the tale's end: he was side-tracked into, among other things, revealing his ideas on the future of libraries, his views on councillors and the role of Tim Coates ('When the Reading Agency does a good thing, Coates rubbishes it; he doesn't understand library supply').

Library tourism has shown Tom many things: that it is children who keep library issues high, that managers feel ashamed of the word 'library', preferring names like Idea Store, and how the tradition of the knowledgeable librarian is being lost. He sees librarians as driven to serve their communities, but being themselves poorly served by insensitive, unappreciative officers and councillors (he quoted one authority which chose World Book Day to announce proposed cuts to its 60 senior staff, requiring them to compete for the 20 remaining posts). Perhaps

this is because Libraries are not, in themselves, seen as income-generators. Tom feels they are 'ebbing away'. Talk of libraries re-inventing themselves on the model of US-style book shops misses the point: unlike shops, libraries can provide a wide range of services (free from the restrictions of bestsellers and turnover figures) and have closer contact with their communities, running all manner of events without an eye to profit.

Kate Mosse says authors meet a wider range of the community at library events. Perhaps, she and Tom should encourage Kat from *Eastenders* to give libraries another try!

THE information professionals' Christmas party

Where were you on 3 December? At THE party? If not, you missed a brilliant evening! For the first time, we joined forces with other groups for what, on the eve of Online, has become the networking event of the year. The appropriate venue, the Gladstone Library and Reading & Writing Room of the ornate One Whitehall Place (originally commissioned by The National Liberal Club as an alternative to the snobbishness of the Tories' Reform Club and for a major political library), is now one of London's most impressive venues.

Three-hundred happy information professionals ate, drank, talked and danced the night away to the sounds of a string quartet, interrupted only by the Awards ceremony and the draw for a 5-star Brussels break donated by main sponsor, *The Wall Street Journal Europe*.

The only disappointment: the famous book stock has been replaced by fakes – as the partying librarians discovered when their champagne-fuelled fingers tried to explore the ancient 'tomes'!

Ralph Adam

FUTURE EVENTS 2008

EVENING MEETINGS

These meetings are held in The Sekforde Arms, Sekforde Street, London EC1, 6.30pm.
Contact Phillip Powell
Phillip@montanaroad.plus.com

12 February, Why Charter?
Caroline De Brún
11 March
8 April, John Dove

OTHER EVENTS

11-12 March,
Epublishing Innovation Forum 2008,
Marriott Regents Park, London.
Contact www.online-information.co.uk/online07/new2008_events.html

14 March,
Meeting the Challenge of the Digital Library, CILIP, London.
Contact conferences@cilip.org.uk

Mid-March,
Building For Excellence,
Wanstead Library.
Contact michael.clarke@llda.org.uk

7-11 April,
Digital Futures: from digitization to delivery, King's College London.
Contact www.digitalconsultancy.net/digifutures

14-16 April,
London Book Fair, Earls Court, London.
Contact www.londonbookfair.co.uk

19 April,
Looking Back and Reaching Out,
Librarians' Christian Fellowship's
Annual Conference, Connaught Hall,
Tavistock Square, London.
Contact www.librarianscfl.org.uk

29 April - 1 May,
Internet World, Earls Court, London.
Contact www.internetworld.co.uk

29 May,
eCopyright Executive Briefing,
CILIP, London.
Contact conferences@cilip.org.uk

5 June,
Web 2.0 Strategies 2008,
Thistle Marble Arch, London.
Contact www.online-information.co.uk/online07/new2008_events.html

16 October,
Members' Day, SOAS, London.
Contact conferences@cilip.org.uk

7 November,
Library Management Showcase,
CILIP, London.
Contact conferences@cilip.org.uk

13 November,
RFID in Libraries Conference,
QEII Conference Centre, London.
Contact conferences@cilip.org.uk

2-4 December,
Online Information 2008,
Olympia Grand Hall, London.
Contact www.online-information.co.uk

Wikipedia founder opens online meeting



Jimmy Wales

Jimmy Wales, founder of Wikipedia and Wikia, was the keynote speaker at Online Information 2007, which was held at Olympia on 4-6 December. His topic was 'Web 2.0 in

action: free culture and community on the move'. Some 900 delegates from 43 countries attended the conference.

Award for Hook Library

The Hook Library at Kingston upon Thames was announced winner in the Heart of the Community category of the Public Library Buildings Awards UK and Republic of Ireland 2008. The awards recognise the best libraries open to the public in the last two years throughout the UK and the Republic of Ireland. They focus on building design, practice, management and use of the buildings by the library customers and staff.

The Heart of the Community award is for new or refurbished libraries which have been designed to enhance and/or regenerate the library space to facilitate the delivery of new, inclusive, innovative services to the whole community.

New Centre for Conservation

The British Library has a new Centre for Conservation. The centre provides a world-class facility for all aspects of book conservation including education and training, as well as state-of-the-art technical facilities for the nation's Sound Archive, enabling unrivalled standards of care for the Library's priceless collections. The Library is now able to offer much-needed training opportunities for conservation professionals as well as allowing the visiting public access through tours of the studios, demonstrations and lectures.

The centre was opened by HRH The Princess Royal. Public tours take place every Thursday at 2pm for approximately one hour. The tour provides an opportunity to see close-up the techniques used to conserve items from the British Library's collection and

to speak to conservation professionals. Advance booking is advisable by calling the British Library on 01937 546 546.

London librarians in top ten awards

Two London librarians are among the ten 'most inspired recent recruits to a career in public libraries'. The Love Libraries 'Top Ten New Librarians' competition aimed to find and celebrate ten librarians who have worked in public libraries for less than three years and are transforming services with their creativity, commitment and enthusiasm.

The competition was judged by the previous year's winning 'Top Ten Young Librarians of the Future'. They were looking for entries that challenged outdated perceptions of librarianship as a 'stamping books' and 'tidying shelves' career, and negative views of librarians as 'quiet' and 'boring'.

The winning London librarians are Bernadette Brewster, 55, Youth Librarian, London Borough of Haringey, and Josie Crimp, 25, Children's Librarian, London Borough of Croydon.

Five London Libraries

Five London Libraries is a project is to explore the role of the public library in public life and in individual peoples' lives. It started off with the belief that there is something special about public libraries. A library is a like an oasis of peace. It is a place that draws in all age ranges, the rich and poor. It is communal glue.

The five libraries include the Barbican, Peckham and the Bow Idea Store in Tower Hamlets.

The organisers decided to choose five libraries in London. They wanted to compare and contrast. On the one hand they were interested to find out how far you could stretch the concept of a library. On the other hand they wanted to know what was essential and unchanging about libraries. They are interested in collecting stories from people who have a strong attachment to their local library. Further information at <http://fivelondonlibraries.net>.

International Activities

In 2005 the Branch Committee decided that the main thrust of its international activity would be the development of contacts with colleagues in the new EU accession countries. A bursary was given to a Branch member to visit LIS in Latvia (her report is at www.cilip.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/342D96D5-EFB6-4375B0F5A5640DDA08F9/0/CILIPJago_article.doc) and in 2007 a Branch member visited LIS in Poland (her report is at www.cilip.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F469C7CF-D374-4764-AFC9-14724BDD7258/0/RenaeSatterley_Report.doc).

In 2006 a bursary was given to a colleague in the Czech Republic to visit LIS in London and in 2007 a colleague from Hungary visited London (her report is at www.cilip.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/6B51D7C9-9FAE-455D-BA9A-37364CA2871C/0/NoemiSomorjai_Report.doc). The visits were not planned as a kind of Cooks tour of LIS, but to enable visitors to discuss their particular professional interests, e.g. the member who visited Latvia discussed changes in LIS since 1991 and the visitor to Poland rare book collections.

Applications are now invited from Branch members for the 2008 bursary of £600. Details are at www.cilip.org.uk/branches/byregion/london/activities/Londonbursary.htm and also from the Convenor of the Branch's International Sub-Committee (contact details below). The closing date for applications is 31 May 2008. Applications are also invited for small grants to assist Branch members to attend international meetings at home or abroad.

For any further information and advice, please contact Edward Dudley, dudl@btinternet.com, 020 7628 3523.

CONTACTS

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