

LONDON CLIP

Newsletter for CILIP in London

Single membership card

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) has published the results of a feasibility study it commissioned from London Libraries Development Agency (LLDA) for a single membership card for all of London's public libraries. The study finds that London's chief librarians strongly support a move towards a single membership. A single card would provide greater flexibility and improved accessibility. However, the study also notes that there are significant challenges to be met, including financial and technical implications. The full text of the report is available at www.mla.gov.uk/website/programmes/framework/framework.

Networking in Croydon



Over 20 Branch members (see pic.) met in a room above the Spread Eagle pub in Croydon on 22 March.

The meeting on networking was facilitated by Sheila Ritchie and was agreed to be a useful and enjoyable experience. This meeting is one of more Branch events to be organised in and around London at a variety of locations as requested by members in a recent survey.

North Woolwich library

North Woolwich has a new library. Opened on 8 January 2007, the open plan library in Pier Parade replaces the one at Storey School in Woodman Street. It is wheelchair accessible and is connected to the neighbouring Local Service Centre.



CILIP in London survey

Thanks to all who completed the CILIP in London survey. Results are available via the home page of our website www.cilip.org.uk/branches/byregion/london.

Slave trade display

To mark the 200th anniversary of the parliamentary abolition of the British Transatlantic slave trade, a small display of related books and documents is showing at the British Library. Among the exhibits is the 1789 first edition of *The interesting narrative of the life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*. The display – 'Enslavement & the Struggle for Liberation' – lasts until 1 July 2007.

Bursary for Branch member

The closing date for the Bursary of £600 for a Branch member to visit one of the new EU countries for discussions on specific areas of interest is now extended to 31 May 2007. Details are on our website at www.cilip.org.uk/branches/byregion/london/activities/Londonbursary.htm. Applications to Edward Dudley: dudl@btinternet.com, 020 7628 3523.

Libraries and refugees

The London Libraries Development Agency and The Network have launched the website www.welcome toyourlibrary.org.uk. The aim of the site is to support public librarians in engaging effectively with refugees and asylum seekers.

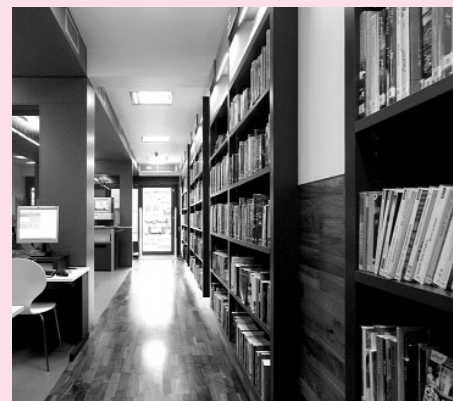
News from you

London CLIP is the regional newsletter for all members of CILIP registered in London by home or work address (if elected) and we want to hear news from you about your library service or issues to do with the profession.

The recent survey of our members gave us some valuable feedback on what you as members want from the Branch and from this newsletter. One of the views which was expressed by several people in the survey was that *London CLIP* was overly public library orientated. While there is evidence to dispute this view in previous issues (see back copies on our website), this is your opportunity to change that perception. We always welcome news and views about all types of libraries in the form of short snippets or longer articles up to 750 words). So come on - put fingers to keyboards and send us your news.

Some of you would like to receive this newsletter in email form only to reduce costs but there is feedback to suggest that some of you still prefer to get this in hard copy through the post; therefore, we are continuing to offer that option and put the newsletter up on the website to be read there. We are considering the option of having an email alert for new issues currently in addition to these existing formats.

John Lake and Monica Blake,
co-editors of *London CLIP*



The Essex Book Festival – partnership and promotion



Alan Stevens

Stephen Cook discusses the Sekforde Arms meeting of 14 November 2007

Alan Stevens (Service Development Officer: Reader Development with Essex County

Libraries) spoke on the development and continuing popularity of the Essex Book Festival, and how it is possible to promote the county's library services.

Held annually, the festival is a big attraction for both authors and readers alike and is a result of partnerships between district councils, voluntary groups and the media. It is managed by the County Library Service and is an example of how to market library services to all members of society, a fact recognised in the past with the receipt of a Library Association award. The festival appeals to a mainstream audience, but also reaches out to minority and disabled groups, as well as those in prisons and sheltered housing.

Although not marketed initially as the Essex Book Festival, it started life in the year 2000 with the theme 'Made in Britain'. There were 16 authors and 37 events, focusing on Black and Asian writing. The timescale was tight for this first festival as planning didn't start until September 1999. Now the planning process starts once audience and staff feedback from the previous year's festival is collated, ready for decisions to be made about the next one. From the outset the organisation involved a number of District and Borough Councils.

From 2001 to 2003, the brand 'Essex Book Festival' was used, with each year having a theme. In 2001 it was 'Home Grown...the pick of Essex and East Anglian writers', in 2002 'Secrets' and 2003 gave us 'Eureka!' which was meant to explore European Connections, but became a bit of a struggle to make this clear in every case. By 2003 the festival had 56 events in total, 35 in libraries and 21 in external venues. Tickets initially had been sold at County Hall, at Library Headquarters, and finally through The Mercury Theatre, Colchester, who were able to provide at-a-glance updates on sales for library events across the county.

A number of 'Quick Reads' events in 2003 focused on books that were

written for emergent readers and those with not much time to spare.

By 2004, the reputation of the festival had grown sufficiently to abandon a theme, and became known simply as the Essex Book Festival 2004. The publicity gained a smart '3-D' sheen, and advertised 53 events – 37 in libraries and 16 elsewhere. Some prominent authors were involved, including Martina Cole, Gillian Slovo and George Monbiot. The organisers were now looking out for books published at the same time as the festival. This meant publishers were more likely to sponsor events, although the actual books may not have been commercially available from stock at that time. Some publishers turned this problem into a feature by providing pre-publication proofs. For example, Saffron Walden readers were able to prepare for their event with proof copies of Mia Couto's *Last Flight of the Flamingo*. Some credence was established in this way.

In 2005 for the first time an event was used for a live radio broadcast by BBC Essex. Chelmsford Library was buzzing. The presenter talked to authors and book groups and the event projected a positive and lively impression of a modern library. It was a reinforcement of the growing message that Essex was now the Reading Group Capital of Great Britain. The scope of this festival reached a peak of 59 events, 42 in libraries and 17 in other venues. Where venues were theatres it was found better for them to sell their own tickets through their own box offices.

A second live broadcast took place in 2006 and a newer, more radical A5 programme booklet was adopted in place of the old newspaper style programme. New 'Quick Reads' featured in another live broadcast, and more adult community learners took part. Kickboxing was even demonstrated on the radio at one event! There were 56 events, with only 32 in libraries, but 24 elsewhere.

Summing up, Alan Stevens advised that 'partnerships' were crucial in creating a successful festival. District Councils have now become enhanced partners and help with more of the organising. They have venues with the amount of seating needed to accommodate a large audience for a high profile author. The festival has also proved beneficial to adult education by encouraging many new adult learners. Reading Groups have raised their profile and now number over 400! They encourage

discussion and stimulate debate as well as providing much needed help and assistance at events. More at: <http://askchris.essexcc.gov.uk/adult/Booktalkgroups.asp>.

Longer versions of this article and the one below appear on our website.

A year in the life of... the President



Martin Molloy

Isobel Thompson reports on the Sekforde Arms meeting of 9 January 2007

At the first meeting of 2007, Martin Molloy, President of CILIP and

Strategic Director of Cultural and Community Services at Derbyshire, spoke about what it's like to be President. He gave a brief résumé of his career so far and spoke about his history of involvement in professional matters, mainly through CILIP. Martin explained that he wanted to give something back to the profession because he had gained so much when younger from good public and HE libraries.

The idea of standing for the presidency had originally been put into his head by colleagues some years earlier; he had seriously considered it but the pressures of the day job were too much then. He revisited the idea later and discussed it with both his Chief Executive and his team in Derbyshire; since they were agreeable to the idea he allowed his name to be put forward.

Martin sees the role of the President as twofold. Internally, it is to be a balanced source of advice, not taking sides on issues or causing friction but helping to avoid it; externally, it is to provide advocacy to top level politicians of all parties and help them to see how libraries are relevant to them and their agendas. He pointed out, however, that opportunities to talk with politicians don't just come with the job and you have to work to create them even when you are the President of CILIP.

He mentioned how enlightening it had been to be working with CILIP staff as it gave him a perspective of seeing things from the other side of the fence. In his day job he is an official working to the elected members of his Council, but with his President's hat on, he is in the position of the elected members in relation to CILIP staff.

One of the hardest aspects of the President's job, said Martin, is the great amount of travel around the country, but it can also be instructive to see how different places treat their visitors, and he described the time when after delivering a talk he and a questioner found themselves to be the only people left in an otherwise deserted university building in a strange city. Other memorable experiences, he told us, included being harangued in a Korean temple by a little old lady and handing over the CILIP Tsunami Appeal cheque at IFLA. Speaking at the Carnegie/Greenaway Awards which had been held on the first anniversary of the London 7 July bombings was a difficult moment, but ultimately rewarding.

In this country, Martin reminded us, we have a tendency to think that we're either the best or the worst at things. We need to get away from these extremes and learn from good practices elsewhere whilst also celebrating what we are good at.

Since he was three-quarters of the way through his Presidential year at the time of the meeting, Martin had had time to reflect on what he considered he had achieved. He had mixed views. He would have liked to have published more articles, and thinks that perhaps he didn't make the most of all opportunities presented to him; but on the other hand there have been many good things in the year and he has to remind himself that one cannot do everything in a short period of time. He considers that the real measure of his success is not what he thinks he has achieved but the actual difference which he has made, whether that be an increase in people joining CILIP and remaining in membership, improved disability access, or the profile of the profession in politics.

One critical requirement for a President is the ability to manage the day job as well, a balance which takes a great deal of dexterity to obtain. He will be both relieved and happy at the end of his term of office to hand over to Ian Snowley, but he has absolutely no regrets about taking the role on. It is not easy to make the case for librarians in the Google age but it is more important than ever that we do so in whatever way we can.

Martin finished by reminding us of the two most critical issues facing the profession today. Firstly, we must get across to decision-makers the intrinsic value of libraries. Secondly, CILIP must fight to retain the professional status of

our work, not as some rearguard action trying to hold on to the past but because professionally educated and trained people are quite simply the best people for the job.

What have the global trade agreements ever done for library and information workers?



Ruth Rikowski

Ian Gardner reports on the Sekforde Arms meeting of 13 February 2007

Ralph Adam's introduction to February's CILIP in London meeting pointed

out that, whilst the World Trade Organisation (WTO) remains something of an enigma to many, its agreements are increasingly affecting cultural services (including libraries) by seeking to liberalise the provision, and trade, of services. Ruth Rikowski had therefore been invited to talk about the issues discussed in her book, *Globalisation, Information and Libraries: The Implications of the World Trade Organisation's GATS and TRIPS Agreements* (Chandos, 2005).

The meeting quickly developed into a spirited discussion, supported by a number of comprehensive handouts and illuminating quotes from Ruth's published work. From her, 'Open Marxist', perspective she described how the WTO threatens state library provision through its encouragement of trade in all services. To quote Ruth, this development in free trade thinking is 'disturbing' if you believe education, health and other services should exist 'outside of the profit agenda'.

Discoveries from the research for the book were detailed including how clear opposition to the WTO's deals is amongst library associations throughout the world, including CILIP, CLA (Canadian Library Association), EBLIDA and IFLA. A discussion considering the repercussions of PFI (private finance initiative) type deals for public libraries followed with a range of views expressed. Ruth stressed that for any private firm to be involved they would have to be looking to make money somehow whilst others questioned how a privately funded library service relates with the ethics of librarianship and the public service ethos. It was asked whether the real issue is that PFI type schemes will be deemed appropriate for libraries unless quality issues are addressed and services learn

to sell themselves; in other words there remains a need for libraries to market themselves better.

Ruth stated her belief that one threat from an increase in private sector involvement could be a further dumbing down with 'library chains' encouraging monotony rather than new writers, fresh thinkers, etc. just as is increasingly, she argued, the case with the large bookshop chains. The problem with privatising services was summed up by one attendee as being whether a service that delivers no directly measurable product can ever really be seen as efficient in the eyes of those who control funding.

A House of Lords report was quoted as having pointed out dangers represented by the WTO, including the fact richer nations have an unhealthy control over it. Indeed Ruth made the point that it is very unlikely that poorer nations realistically have much to gain. It is interesting, therefore, that of the 18 countries whose public libraries have been committed to the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) there is a range in economic strength from the USA to the likes of Gambia. The threats of commercialisation were discussed with a case mentioned when a country's legal system had effectively collapsed due to an inadequate private library service. It was also suggested that privatisation could actually increase opposition to libraries if it meant that, like with the railways, private firms were given responsibility but then subsidised by public funds.

Ruth described her own struggles through the TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) agreement and how immediately noticeable the omission of moral rights within copyright is. The language of the TRIPS agreement was described as being trade orientated, the importance of this for libraries was explained to be in the areas of copyright and patents, as it is sold by the WTO as a way to decrease blocks on trade. TRIPS' importance illuminated by examples, was of where multinationals are making use of it to patent existing Third World products or knowledge as their own commodities.

Overall, the meeting was a thoroughly interesting discussion over whether the role of the WTO, in seeking to make services and intellectual property tradeable commodities, is damaging the interests of people, especially in the developing world.

The impact of information services in the voluntary sector



Christine Goodair

Louise Manners reports on the Sekforde Arms meeting of 13 March

Christine Goodair was Head of Information Services at DrugScope for four and a half years and is now freelance. In her freelance capacity she is working on international projects for DrugScope as a DrugScope Associate. Christine worked at The Children's Society earlier on in her career. She is also Chair of European Association of Libraries and Information Services on Alcohol and other Drugs (ELISAD) and Secretary of Substance Abuse Librarians & Information Specialists (SALIS).

Voluntary sector organisations, many of them charities and not-for-profit organisations, fall into three tiers. The first tier works directly with the client base. The second tier works directly with other voluntary services. The third tier supports the second tier and there is some overlap. The charity Drugscope is both second and third tier.

At The Children's Society, library staff carried out background research for campaigns and media projects, one of which formed the basis of a television documentary on poverty. They also assisted in the development of educational materials and packs, answered supporter enquiries and searched the adoption records archive to help with family histories, particularly of people who had been adopted.

At Drugscope, information service staff provide information for media enquiries, keep the database (frequently cited as a key resource) regularly updated and answer client enquiries. Information service staff include volunteers. DrugData update is a blog available on the DrugScope website and sent out by email. The blog contains news, a weekly article, details of publications added to the information service and weblinks when available. Comments are fully moderated. The blog was developed on Inmagic but could be adapted to run on Circe. It has

a wide and appreciative readership. DrugScope's magazine DrugLinks also has a blog.

Christine has found her professional involvement in ELISAD and SALIS immensely rewarding. On the European side she drafted bids for European Commission funding. On the American side she learned that the funding to update the premier Alcohol and Alcohol Problems Science Database ETOH, produced by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), was stopped at very short notice. She also became involved in a campaign to save the ETOH Database, including lobbying the White House.

Christine takes the view that libraries can be one of the best resources available. Many users request help and advice before taking the step of going for help whether from a social worker, family centre or a treatment service. The anonymity of the library, where – it is hoped – no judgements are made, is often considered by these callers to be safe.

Barbican Library at 25

The Barbican Library opened to the public on 19 April 1982, shortly after the official opening of the Barbican Centre in March that year. Since that time, the efficient and friendly Library staff have welcomed nearly 9 million visitors and provided what many consider to be one of the best public library services in London. The actor, Kenneth Cranham, a regular user of the Library, endorsed that view in his speech at the anniversary party in the Library on 16 April and said that the Library and its staff are one of the best features of the Barbican Centre.

The Library offers a substantial book collection of nearly 150,000 books, including specialist collections in art, finance, local history and a classic crime collection. It has a world-class music library with the largest CD collection in London available to the public, with listening facilities, a practice piano and access to the Music Preserved archive of unique live recordings. There is free internet access, an extensive children's library, DVD and CD-ROMs for loan and special collections for young adults

and people learning new skills for life. In addition to the significant collections available, the library hosts regular children's and literature events with London-based organisations such as Poems on the Underground, Writers Inc and many national cultural institutes, regular reading promotions, reading groups, a home delivery service to housebound people and up to 24 high-quality artist exhibitions every year.

During its 25 years of service to the City of London, the opening hours for the Library were extended in 2003; it has undergone a refurbishment, along with the first London installation of state-of-the-art self-service radio frequency technology (RFID) in 2004 and continues to issue more than 500,000 items to library users every year.

FUTURE EVENTS 2007

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

8 May, 12 June, 10 July

Other CILIP in London events

30 May, CILIP in London AGM (speaker: Ian Snowley). Contact Anna Martin alm57@cam.ac.uk

OTHER EVENTS

28-30 June, Umbrella, De Havilland Campus, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield. Contact conferences@cilip.org.uk

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

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

4-6 December, Online Information 2007, Olympia Grand Hall, London. Contact www.online-information.co.uk

CONTACTS

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