ISSUE: 17 | November - 2008 | ISSN 1745-5472 (Online)

LONDON CILIP

Newsletter for CILIP in London

Visit to Ham House

This year Ham House was the destination for the CILIP in London summer outing. Read the report on page 2.

Collaboration in the London area

CILIP in London hosted a meeting of CILIP Special Interest Groups on 9 July. The meeting's focus was to try and spark discussion with regards to collaboration and best practice for professional activity in London.

Edward Dudley and John Lake chaired the meeting and opened by reminding everyone present that CILIP is its branches and groups and that all those present, by being involved in these groups, are vital to the success of the organisation. However, with decreases in funding likely, the central theme of the meeting was how groups could continue to flourish. Activities in the London area, where something like 20% of CILIP members live or work, are central to this success and as such this meeting can be seen as the first in an attempt at improving coverage in London.

Outcomes from the meeting included:

- general agreement to have all meetings open, and advertised as such, to all members when possible
- groups agreed they need to make more/better use of both *Gazette* and *London CLIP*
- there was interest from those present in the branch's proposed London Libraries and Information Community site http://londoncommunity.wikispaces.com/ and related Google Calendar, for sharing event information and other content between groups and members. The hope is this community site will be of interest to all professional groups, not just those included within CILIP
- a number of groups are doing good cross-sectoral work with collaboration between groups; some of those present admitted they can consider other groups more in their planning.

Other discussions included the best way of making use of CILIP HQ for meetings and the CILIP website. Overall, there seemed to be general agreement that the meeting was a success and further meetings are likely to be used to ensure the continuing improvement of professional activity in London.

Find Your Talent

Tower Hamlets launched the London pilot of the Government's Find Your Talent initiative on 23 September at the V&A Museum of Childhood. Find Your Talent will give children and their families more opportunities to take part in cultural activities, both in and out of school time. Tower Hamlets is the only London borough to be selected as one of the 10 pilot areas for the three-year scheme and is receiving more than £2m to deliver it. MLA London is supporting the pilot with other cultural agencies as a member of the Regional Contact Group.

Sue Hill Recruitment joins the blogosphere

After watching in the wings for some time, the team at Sue Hill Recruitment have launched their new blog - View From the Hill http://suehill.typepad.com. According to Fiona Wheeler, Information Manager, the aim of the blog 'is to be a place where you dip in and dip out and catch up on burning issues in the information world, news, stuff we want to share and occasionally just things the team want to get off their chest'.

Other creative uses of Web 2.0 technologies being incorporated into the daily routines at Sue Hill Recruitment include using tag clouds to look at the effectiveness of marketing literature and also to assess the power and depth of CVs and job descriptions.

The Big Read

The British Library has joined up with Camden Council Library Service to organise a Big Read to celebrate the National Year of Reading. The campaign will culminate in a free event at the British Library on 16 December when participants will have the opportunity to 'meet the author'.

Participants in the Big Read are encouraged to read the following titles: *My Once Upon a Time* by Diran Adebayo; *Black Gold of the Sun* by Ekow Eshun; *Love Falls* by Esther Freud; *The War for Children's Minds* by Stephen Law; *Greetings from Bury Park* by Sarfraz Manzoor; and *Miss Herbert* by Adam Thirlwell. These titles are available in Camden libraries and are offered at a discount in the British Library Shop.

The Big Read is taking place across Camden from 26 September to 16 December.

Informational Professionals' Christmas Party

Harrods' Christmas Grotto is already fully booked. So, it must be time to think about the festive season. And that means the Informational Professionals' Christmas Party. Last year's event was a huge success – 400 happy revellers from eight professional bodies had a ball of a time until the early hours. It was the perfect networking event.

2008 is sure to be even better. Make a note in your diary: 1 December (the night before the Online show opens). This year we return to the same popular venue: The Library at One Whitehall Place www.theroyalhorseguards.co.uk/one_whitehall_place/vtour.html. Watch our website for full details of the night's programme.

Ralph Adam

Rebecca Ursell

From the Iron Curtain to the Electronic Fence

Ralph Adam reports on the Sekforde Arms meeting on 8 July 2008

The International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS) is an important resource available free-of-charge online to British academic institutions and government departments.

Rebecca Ursell, who manages IBSS, gave a fascinating presentation of its history, development and challenges to our July evening meeting. The presence of indexing specialists meant there was much discussion of techniques.

IBSS's multilingual staff of 14 are based at LSE Library (London School of Economics and Political Science), from where a third of the database's content is sourced (until 1989, the service was run from Paris).

Providing social sciences information services is complicated: disciplinary boundaries are blurred, with little consensus on subject matter, and there are major linguistic and philosophical issues, with researchers from different political traditions using different terms for similar concepts. Geographical differences in terminology are important, too: not just between, say, German and English, but also between Britain and the USA.

Social scientists are not noted for their information awareness, and penalties for ignorance are less than in other disciplines. While there is a plethora of printed and electronic resources – books, journals, indexes, full-text packages, and much more (often with similar information) – researchers may not know what is available and which best suits their needs. Many, according to Rebecca, want a 'one-stop shop'.

There has been much research on what a perfect social science information service might look like – for example, Bath's INFROSS and DISISS projects examined users' needs and service design. Other research has embedded information specialists in academic departments and research teams or experimented with novel forms of service. UNESCO ran a project for a world social science information system.

Rebecca explained IBSS's origins. It was created by the International Committee for Social Science Documentation (ICSSD) in 1951, with UNESCO support, in a spirit of international cooperation and idealism, to overcome the Iron Curtain's barriers and balance the US-bias of similar services.

The aim was to fill a gap in bibliographical resources: annual classified print volumes, in French and English, were produced in anthropology, economics, politics and sociology, with separate editorial boards. Content came through cooperation with institutions globally. Ten interdisciplinary areas have been added, reflecting modern research trends (user surveys in 2004 and 2006 revealed that only 51% of users placed themselves within the main disciplines).

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is the current source of funding (ESRC and JISC jointly funded the service 1995-2005) and they place importance on the coverage of UK research: 25% of journal coverage is British, while 40% is from the rest of Europe and 20% North American. Major providers are in France and Germany as well as Japan, Poland, Hungary and Finland.

Even though, in the early days, IBSS was not intended for current awareness, annual publication produced problems. There have, inevitably, been variations in editing and indexing standards, and where resources permit, the current IBSS team works to bring the older material up to the standard of current material, adding abstracts, title translations and more keywords.

According to Rebecca, just under half the 1950s material was in English; that has risen to 70%, reflecting the increasing trend to publish in English, as well as the globalisation of international scholarly publishing and communication.

The full dataset from 1951 (with browseable thesaurus) is available electronically – giving early material a new lease of life (print volumes are still produced, but IBSS Online gives access to the backfiles). Since the late-1990s abstracts and book summaries (important in the social sciences) have been included: around 85% of fresh entries contain abstracts.

Computerisation began during the 1970s. The original electronic format was a SilverPlatter CD-ROM and, then, online via BIDS. There are regular tenders for UK service provision and, since August, EBSCO is the prime host (with commercial services also available through Proquest CSA and Ovid).

IBSS is now an established international player, bench-marked against subject-specific databases such as EconLit and ISI. Increasingly, research accreditation systems use inclusion in IBSS as a guide, even though there are no citations. It has grown to 2.5 million records, with about 100,000 added annually (from 2,800 journals and 7,000 books) – a substantial database (INSPEC, by comparison, has just added its 10 millionth record, with 350,000 being added each year).

In its early days IBSS Online relied heavily on document delivery from LSE Library. The first electronic fulltext links were introduced to electronic journals aggregated by BIDS Ingenta in the late 1990s. Links were gradually added through agreements with other aggregators and, importantly, JSTOR and CrossRef, and all platforms now support open URL linking.

Is there a future for traditional abstracting and indexing services in the Google age? For Rebecca, it is crucial that IBSS reaches out to open web searchers by exposing content-rich data to search engines – for instance the printed edition is now available through Google Books. IBSS also makes use of Web 2.0 technologies, with its own blog (available as an RSS feed) where topical issues are examined and hidden 'treasures' from the IBSS database are highlighted.

The future for IBSS will, she hopes, be to build on its tradition of cooperation for seamless, integrated access to the world's scholarly social science publishing.

Summer in Arcadia

Ralph Adam reports on the branch summer outing on 12 August 2008

You're visiting a historical property. Where do you automatically go first? The library! And that's what CILIP in London did on this year's August Trip.

The venue was Ham House, one of the country's finest surviving 17th Century mansions - with a dark and turbulent past. It is an amazing Stuart house on a strikingly beautiful part of the Thames, near Richmond, known as Arcadia. The mansion has remained almost untouched for nearly four centuries and

is full of rare and quirky objects. Directors love using the house and garden for period dramas - if you've seen a BBC Jane Austen adaptation, such as *Sense & Sensibility,* you've probably seen Ham House

After an audio-visual explanation of the house's turbulent (and confusing) history and a brief introduction to its main content, there was time to explore the building. Next, we headed for the library which really is one of Ham's most interesting features.

The National Trust, with over 150 book collections, probably has in its care the largest number of historic libraries in the country. Most are the 'indigenous' collections of their original owners. Since the latter part of the 19th century, and after World War I in particular, many aristocratic libraries have been sold: the need for funds overrode the importance of having a collection of old books - however rare.

Although the Trust was slow to realise the importance of its books, its libraries are considered to represent the equivalent of a national library's rare-books collection. They are an incomparable, though extremely fragile, resource for the history of private book ownership, with many rare books, and others of great beauty and interest. The Trust is, now, seeing the importance of its role in preserving country-house libraries.

Ham House is an excellent example: a fascinating library with an interesting and complex history. Unfortunately, it is not indigenous, but has nevertheless become, by far, the best collection of 'imported' books in a Trust house, thanks to the collecting skill of the enigmatic Norman Norris.

We were very lucky in being able to hear Sarah Bakewell, who has been

Sarah Bakewell with Ralph Adam at Ham House

cataloguing the collection, talk about it and show us examples of its content.

The original library, a magnificent collection by all accounts, was sold between 1687 and 1692 while an equally important later one went as recently as 1938. One commentator had described that collection in 1819 as a 'very wonderful book paradise'. Then the room lay empty for 50 years until Norris's collection arrived.

Norris was a serious collector, travelling around England buying up books 'for a song' at auctions and country-house sales for much of the 20th century. His collection arrived at Ham in 1994 - a fascinating memorial to the destruction of country-house libraries.

Norris was also a born cataloguer! He meticulously recorded details such as where and when each book had been bought and its price.

While the books in Ham House library may not be indigenous, the other items certainly are. It has the oldest surviving country-house library interior, exquisitely furnished with the original cedar shelves, table, elbow-chairs and a huge set of library steps (complete with seat and shelf). One table was re-acquired as recently as 2006. We were also shown mahogany pole-screens with circular maps and two globes (one with an original leather cover) from the 1740s.

Unfortunately, closing time caused Sarah to shorten her talk. She was so interesting, however, that members of the group encouraged her to continue speaking over a meal! Several members of the House's staff tried to listen to the talk - they explained that it was their only chance to find out about the library (which is, apparently, not normally included in briefings).

There was still time to take tea in the Orangery (with its lemon grove) and to explore the gardens (all the plants were introduced before 1700).

After a pleasant stroll along the Thames to Richmond, we finished the day with a quiet meal in a riverside restaurant.

Our August trips are always interesting and a chance to meet informally away from the hurly-burly. Places are limited, so why not put Tuesday 11 August 2009 in your diary now?

We should like to thank Mark Purcell, the National Trust's Libraries Curator, for his help with arranging this event.

Henry Higgins

Libraries for the 21st Century: Is Hillingdon the future?

Ros Willis-Fear reports on the Sekforde Arms meeting of 9 September 2008

Ralph Adam interviewed Henry Higgins, who was accompanied by Jean Palmer, Hillingdon's Director of Planning and Community Services, and Deputy Director Andrew Malin at this first meeting after the summer break.

Higgins became involved in Hillingdon libraries through his portfolio for Sports, Culture and Leisure in 2006. He believed libraries were in dire need of help as they represented the largest portion of his budget and he questioned why people were not using them.

Engaging Tim Coates as a consultant, a retail refit to brighten branches was costed and shop fitters employed. Their report reinforced ideas of a retail environment, increasing opening hours and book stocks, while still saving money, and using a coffee outlet to entice customers! The aim was to complete refitting all of Hillingdon's 17 libraries by 2010.

Higgins stated that the resulting impression of the refurbished libraries is light and airy and does not inhibit anyone from entering, with the added attraction of a coffee shop! (Will libraries become clones of High Street bookshop chains?) A partnership was formed with 'Starbucks'; and an outlet in every branch will return profits to the library. Another partnership, with libraries as Apple computer training centres, produces a further revenue stream. Local primary schools are invited to use these; children then bring parents in, resulting in families being library users.

For Higgins though, the bottom line is books and reading, and getting items off the shelves and into people's hands. If it's newspapers it doesn't matter whether it is the *Sun* or the *Telegraph*.

Book selection is subcontracted direct to branches. Better discounts have been negotiated with suppliers emphasising libraries as 'cash customers', who pay accounts monthly. Branch managers select and procure stock and processes

Continued from previous page.

slimmed down with delivery direct to branches. Titles are on the shelves shortly after publication, and requests obtained within 48 hours.

The staffing structure is 'flat', breaking down the barriers between professional and non-professional staff. Yes, they do have a number of professional librarians, but are not 'precious' about professional staff in libraries. (What about professional standards of service?) Branch managers are well supported, and they select the best person for the job. Higgins' believes he is serving the community, and that people working in libraries are there to serve the public. If they don't, they are in the wrong job!

What about Hillingdon's salary bill? Jean Palmer admitted to being shocked by the low level of staff salaries in libraries. The salary bill has been increased, and salaries for Branch Managers increased in line with their responsibilities.

What about Hillingdon's libraries reference and information services? This was more contentious. Higgins' view appears to be that information on the Internet is all that's needed for research! There appeared to be no real awareness of the benefit of information services in libraries. Would anyone think of going to the library for information or research help in Hillingdon...? It was pointed out that Hillingdon has many fantastic online resources but library staff didn't really know how to use them or what they had!

Statistics of increased uptake appear impressive, but this may be due to interest in new or remodelled facilities. They want to attract typical non-users, those 'not bothered' about libraries, and are obtaining councillor and officer buy-in. Libraries should be accessible and enjoyable. No staff consultation had been undertaken in the refurbishments though.

Yes, attractive Apple Mac computers are the front of libraries, with more 'ordinary' ones near the back! There are Nintendo evenings, football shown on TV, and also Wii. They are doing anything to get people into the libraries. Success is seen as getting people into the libraries and children in into books. Opening till 10pm, they claim to get students from Camden who want to use work and study space!!

Survey results prior to refurbishment indicated that users rated choice and attractiveness of stock and attractiveness of the building as low. In Higgins' view, failing as a business. Had there been damage and vandalism to stock and computers in the new and refurbished libraries? No, as people are now taking responsibility as they've been provided with good quality computers and stock.

Higgins states his ethos is that 'a Library does books' and that this is the priority. He realises the need to use the Internet, and will also provide modern technology, such as e-books, but the basic product is books. In Higgins' view, the library is a place rather than a service. His customers are his residents, and he will give them what they want. He himself wants libraries to be successful and sees it as basic business commonsense that people should be using the facilities and taking books out.

Branch Committee

CILIP in London has the following Committee vacancies with effect from January 2009:

- President, Vice-president, Honorary Secretary, and Honorary Treasurer - each to serve for one year until 31 December 2009
- five Committee members to serve for three years until 31 December 2011.

The Committee usually meets four times a year and there are two standing subcommittees. Other time-limited subcommittees may be set up from time to time. Committee members are expected to contribute at meetings and be prepared to take on one 'task' at a time (e.g. organising an event, creating a Committee response). Information about the role of Committees and the work of the Honorary Officers is available on the CILIP website.

A nomination form is also available on the CILIP website. Forms should be returned to Peter Beauchamp at peter.beauchamp1@btinternet.com.

FUTURE EVENTS 2008-2009

2008

18 November, Engaging the Disengaged: Repositioning Services for NEETS, CILIP Executive Briefing, CILIP, London. Contact conferences@cilip.org.uk

21 November, Climbing the Family Tree, CILIP Information Services Group (London & South East Section), CILIP, London. Contact anne.hayward@slough.gov.uk

26 November, Managing the Library and Archive Environment, National Preservation Office Training Day, British Library, London. Contact www.bl.uk/services/npo/environment307.html

27 November, Digital Consumers, CILIP Executive Briefing, CILIP, London. Contact conferences@cilip.org.uk

28 November, CPD25 Focus on Disability 3: Supporting Dyslexic Students, London Mathematical Society. Contact www.cpd25.ac.uk

1 December, Information Professionals Christmas Party, One Whitehall Place, London. Contact admin@cityinformation.org.uk

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

12 December, Tackling the Preservation Challenge: Practical Steps for Repository Managers, British Library, London. Contact http://www.dpconline.org/graphics/events/081212RepMngrsWkshp.html

16 December, The Big Read, British Library, London. Contact www.bl.uk

2009

13 May, Branch AGM, CILIP, London. Contact cilip@london.com

22-23 June, Content Architecture: Exploiting and Managing Diverse Resources, ISKO UK conference, London. Contact www.iskouk.org/conf2009/index.htm

CONTACTS

Editors: Monica Blake, John Lake

Please send copy for future issues to: *info@blakeinformation.com* or John Lake, Barbican Library, Silk Street, London EC2Y 8DS

©CILIP in London 2008

CILIP: the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE
Website: www.cilip.org.uk

cilip
Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals