

# LONDON CLIP

Newsletter for CILIP in London

## Codex Sinaiticus



The world's oldest bible has been reunited online. All 800 surviving pages from Codex Sinaiticus, the earliest surviving Christian bible, are now available at [www.codexsinaiticus.org](http://www.codexsinaiticus.org).

To mark the online launch of the reunited Codex, the British Library is staging an exhibition, *From Parchment to Pixel: the virtual reunification of Codex Sinaiticus*, which runs until Monday 7 September 2009. The exhibition tells the story of the 1600-year-old manuscript and reveals how cutting-edge technology reunited its pages.

The virtual reunification of Codex Sinaiticus is the culmination of a four-year collaboration between the British Library, Leipzig University Library, the Monastery of St Catherine (Mount Sinai, Egypt), and the National Library of Russia (St Petersburg), each of which holds different parts of the physical manuscript.

## MLA London team

The MLA has announced that, following agreement with the Mayor of London's Office, it will complete its national transformation with the creation of a regional team for London to be operational from April 2010.

Trustees of MLA London have agreed to support the changes and move to wind up the last remaining regional MLA agency. The changes will enable MLA staff supporting the sector in London to focus on core functions of driving improvement, providing advice and brokerage, advocating on behalf of the sector and its users, and leveraging in additional funding, while enabling MLA to reduce further its overhead costs.

The changes have been agreed following an independent review of MLA's investment in the capital, which

recognised the Mayor of London's statutory responsibility for culture and his power to appoint the chair of MLA London.

The review also recognised the successes of MLA London and its staff in developing the London Cultural Improvement Programme in partnership with the other cultural agencies, the London boroughs, Government Office for London, and Capital Ambition, as well as other programmes on adult skills and economic impact, and its ability to draw in funding for the sector from key stakeholders including the London Development Agency.

The new structure also proposes a London sub-group of MLA's Board to focus on the delivery of priorities for the capital. Following its reorganisation last year, the MLA is already operating across the country in three other area teams covering the North, West and East, each headed by a Director of Engagement, supported by a Regional Manager in each English region and a small team of Area Engagement Advisors.

## Remote working

How will you keep your team going through the next tube strike? A recent report ([www.it-analysis.com/business/change/news\\_release.php?rel=11679](http://www.it-analysis.com/business/change/news_release.php?rel=11679)) claims 'up to 5.2 Million hours [were] wasted by London commuters' due to June's 48-hour tube strike.

Whilst physical libraries may still need to open to provide a service, this may not always be possible, for example when disasters strike. What resources are available to Library and Information Service (LIS) staff to communicate when away from work? Although many of our services will provide electronic resources to users, and in many industries the LIS may well be 100% electronic, do we have internal communication systems in place for when forced to work externally?

Below are some free services (on top of the kind of commercial offers mentioned in the above article) which may be of interest for those working from home.

'Video Conferencing' sites. Sites such as [Vawkr.com](http://Vawkr.com) allow for group video chat

at a URL so you can pass that to others who can then chat to you without the need for software downloads.

*Telephone+ (Skype)*. If downloads are not a problem for you or your colleagues, Skype offers telephone style communication, video, text chat and other options.

'Private Twitter'. Yammer.com is sold with the tagline 'the Intranet has evolved' and allows for a form of private messaging similar to Twitter but restricted to users with the same company as your own - allowing for status updates from those working at home. There is a very useful iTunes Application that can be downloaded for iPhone/Pod.

There are of course many more tools - some of which can be found via the Directory of Learning tools (<http://c4lpt.co.uk/Directory/>) - which can help team communications.

For more on remote working the below sites are a good start: <http://remoteworker.wordpress.com/> [www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/d/682/a/3849](http://www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/d/682/a/3849)

See also *Teleworking for library and information professionals* by Monica Blake (London: Aslib, 1999).

Ian Gardner

## Plaque for James Duff Brown

CILIP in London is working with Islington Council to erect a plaque to commemorate the work of James Duff Brown (1862-1914), the first Borough Librarian of Finsbury and, later, Islington.

Duff Brown was an influential and innovative librarian who introduced open access in libraries and was among the first librarians to employ women. He devised three classification systems: Quinn/Brown (1898), Adjustable Classification (1898) and Subject Classification (1906), and produced *The Manual of Library Economy* (1907), which remained the standard text in librarianship for many years. In addition, he wrote manuals of bibliography, cataloguing, classification and library equipment; introduced formal training courses for librarians; and produced several key reference books on music librarianship.



**How to improve National Rail passenger information**

*David Allen reports on the Sekforde Arms meeting of 14 April 2009*

Jason Durk

The mission statement of National Rail Enquiries (NRE) is to provide timely, relevant, accurate and consistent information that is both accessible and understandable. Of course one problem with this is that the National Rail system itself is often none of these things. The degree of engagement of the audience was remarkable: almost everyone present had a story to tell, some of them had several, and many were timely, relevant and accurate.

Jason Durk, who is Head of Information Services at National Rail Enquiries, began with an overview of the responses to the snowstorm of February 2009. These were lamentable, but the failures of English language usage were a minor irritant compared with the failure of the rail network itself - in the face of this there was little relevant information that could be provided for the public. Indeed it is difficult to picture what useful information could have been given that would have helped anyone except a dedicated actuary. Despite this the indicator boards and Customer Information System (CIS) are used by 85% of customers and are regarded as the most trustworthy source of information by 96% of those questioned.

The rail information system was created from some 60 separate systems for the new coordinating body of the quasi-privatised rail industry. It is part of the Association of Train Operating Companies, which includes the 21 independent companies which provide the national rail service. The central hub of this information network is the Darwin database which mediates between the informational inputs and outputs of the system. This is a real-time database which tracks all trains, and powers 80 separate applications.

The main inputs begin with the Train Services Database (TSDB) which is the basic timetable information, created once every six months. This will be modified by service changes necessitated by planned or unplanned works or events. The Train Running System (TRUST) provides information on train movement, largely derived

from the signalling system, which reports when trains pass the fixed sensors along the line. Tyrell is the rail staff messaging system, and this feeds in real-time reports from staff on incidents. The CIS provides input as well as output. These information sources are in order of increasing granularity. TSDB is accurate twice a year on production, while each of the other sources gets closer in time and geographically to the individual delivery of service. After the extensive floods of 2007 a Train Editor was introduced and this is also part of the Darwin system. Manual intervention can be made to update the train information, and has improved accuracy.

The information flow is not parallel, however. A driver encountering a problem will phone the signaller. The signaller will contact the control room, and the control room will contact Network Rail. A solution to the problem will then be decided on, and only at that point does the disruption information get to the NRE system. There are obvious operational reasons for this - the publicity fallout for announcing problems before proposing a solution need not be speculated on - but it does slow the overall process. A study on the London Underground highlighted the 'control room culture' as a major problem in information flow. The target is a single truth made available simultaneously through all outlets, the Pontius Pilate problem. Of course the truth has to be carefully phrased, the Bay Area Rapid Transit system from San Francisco reports 'Person under train' as 'Medical emergency' just in case they put ideas into potential suicidees heads. NRE has discussed the progression terminology from Good Service to Major Delays.

The system does command support; NRE's telephone number is the most dialled in the UK, the indicator boards are widely used and widely trusted, and the online service is valued by customers. Station staff are less enthusiastic, and this may be because NRE although organising the information has less control over output. The advertising content of the website was criticised, but it has to be self-financing, and there is no advertising budget for NRE itself. There is certainly a problem here, because after listening to the presentation I went home and checked the online system I use whenever I travel by rail; it was indeed NRE, but it had not previously impressed itself on my consciousness.

For the future Global Positioning

System (GPS) technology would provide real-time information on where trains are and how fast they are going, allowing a measure of prediction for the service. WiFi would allow real-time planning of journeys with the relaying of connection and other service information, freeing onboard staff for other duties. The next incarnation of the Darwin database will include a learning capability, so that a measure of statistical prediction can be built in to reporting service changes and disruptions.

The purpose of clear and consistent information is to allow service users to make informed choices. Such a detailed understanding of the rail system is required to interpret even the best service information that an element of advice is almost always needed. It is in the provision of this advice, normative information, without creating unsustainable legal liabilities that is the real challenge ahead for National Rail Enquiries.



Franklyn Tancock

**Past, present and future systems for plant recording in The National Trust**

*David Allen reports on the Sekforde Arms meeting of 12 May 2009*

Franklyn Tancock's career has ranged from the National Trust to private gardens, from market gardening to ornamental gardening, and from Devon to Scotland. He is ideally placed to be the National Trust's Plant Collections Curator and the man responsible for the introduction of new computer-based recording methods.

The National Trust (NT) has grown spectacularly in the years since the 1950s, with property and garden acquisition that must be unprecedented since the dissolution of the monasteries. The NT now has in its care over 200 gardens/parks. These have been acquired because of their historical associations, their architectural significance, the importance of their plant collections, or all three.

Plant cataloguing began at the NT in 1976 with the Conifer Survey. The gardeners were issued with paper forms, showing the garden divided into sections on which the species present and any changes made could be recorded. The system was eventually put onto a Paradox database, which

generated enormous report matrices, and queries were a major exercise. All the computing was undertaken centrally; input and output was all on the basis of paper forms and reports.

In 2002 the National Council for the Conservation of Plants (now Plant Heritage) gained lottery funding for a database for their national collections. The NT invested in the scheme to help produce the Demeter database. The large number of fields, and the fact that the database could not be networked led to the NT removing itself from the scheme.

In 2003 Franklyn Tancock was given a 12 months secondment to work with IT staff to produce a new intranet-based database. This involved reducing the content to some 30 to 35 fields per plant. International standards of data transfer were implemented and the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) plant finder was used as the authority for establishing plant names. The data is based on a hierarchy of garden areas. This system now hosts 130,000 records. Records can be unlinked and re-linked for correction and can be propagated to create child records. Plant accession numbers are used to generate tag numbers (to be attached to the plants themselves). An intranet 'read only' version is available for all staff, and is searchable by location and by plant. Reports are pre-defined and pre-generated by Discoverer software from outside the database, and can be made available on paper. The system was designed for over 1 million records.

A new upgrade to the system allows registered users to choose information from a drop-down list to help avoid mistakes and all the information required can be entered on a single page. Plants which are not in the RHS system, usually plants not available commercially, can now be added by the user. One important feature is that the value of the plants can be recorded – an original introduction or a veteran tree, for example. All the data will be available via the NT's GIS browser which is its tool for overall property management, and plants can be added via this module.

The system will deliver an inventory of the NT's plant assets leading to: better plant management; better achievement of conservation needs; planning facilities for replenishment of aged stock; easier addition of new specimens. It will be available to a wider audience and promote dialogue in the areas of identification and nomenclature, and the sharing of

knowledge. It should widen engagement with the NT's plant collections.

The database is a management tool. Highlighting plants for priority propagation as part of the plant conservation programme is one undertaking. Another part of the long-term project is the possible involvement with the Millennium Seed Bank at Kew, where seeds of authenticated species could be stored. Lastly the RHS want herbarium specimens of known first introductions of garden plants to act as a standard and control for future nomenclature and identification. These are all part of a global strategy for plant conservation.

The project is part of the Yorkshire Bank and Clydesdale Bank 'Outdoor Programme' sponsorship deal with the NT, worth £1.5m. Of this, £450,000 is for plant recording: photographing and identifying plants at 80 properties over three years, and employing both contractors and volunteers. The funding has provided for the use of sophisticated GPS technology, where a range finder can be linked to a Magellan GPS machine to accurately log the position of a plant, with the main features of the database available on that machine. From this data a map can be produced to reveal details of the plantings. These surveys can also be linked with aerial photographs.

The latest news is that, Chicago Botanic Garden has invited the NT to be its first European partner in an extended worldwide plant database system, using Google Earth. This database will be usable in real time to manage the plant collections.



John Bowman

## Robert Proctor

*Stephen Cook reports on the Sekforde Arms meeting of 9 June 2009*

We all know that there are some pretty eccentric people in our profession and in a way it was nice to hear John Bowman confirm that it wasn't any different 100 years ago. For the hardy souls who were not deterred by the tube strike on this lovely evening a treat was in store. John, who until recently lectured at University College London, had undertaken some major research on his subject, the life of bibliographer Robert Proctor (1868-1903). He will soon be publishing an

edition of Proctor's diaries (Edwin Mellen Press).

Proctor's life was short but he accomplished much. Born at Budleigh Salterton in Devon, he soon developed a precocious love of study and went from a preparatory school at Reading to Marlborough College at the age of ten. His father died a year later and he left Marlborough to settle in Bath with his inseparable companion for life, his mother.

In 1881 he entered Bath College and rapidly progressed. He won an open classical scholarship at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, joining in October 1886. He excelled in his classical studies and graduated in 1890. While he was an undergraduate, Proctor engaged in antiquarian research outside the school. He made what transpired to be a stimulating visit to Greece. Since a schoolboy he had collected books and from this came his interest in bibliographical study. This led him to prepare a catalogue of Corpus incunabula and printed books up to 1600. Remaining at Oxford he continued his study of early printed books. Between 23 February 1891 and September 1893 he catalogued some 3000 incunabula in the Bodleian library and did similar work at New College and Brasenose.

Eventually Proctor gained entry into the library of the British Museum where he remained an assistant in the printed books department until his death. It was here that he quickly became an expert on typography and bibliography, rearranging the incunabula held there into an organised system. First by country, in order of the spread of type printing press (so Germany first), then by town and then by printer. He set himself the task of describing every fount of type used in Europe up to 1520 and secured his reputation by *An Index to the Early Printed Books: from the invention of printing to the year MD (1500)*. This took four years and was published in 1898. He then started a similar index for the period 1501-1520. Of the proposed four sections only the German one appeared in his lifetime (1903).

John alluded to Proctor's eccentric character throughout his talk. He was impetuous and very accident prone. Ladders suddenly gave way when he used them. He strained himself doing nothing. He injured his hand. He had no patience and was constantly on the go. He spent hours picking raspberries. He

also knew he was always right and was very conceited; he even called the Director of the British Museum foolish.

His best friend was A.W. Pollard who helped him organise a volume of his previous writings. Other acquaintances were Joseph Grafton Milne, an expert on coins, and Sidney Cockerell, a curator at the British Museum. He joined the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and met William Morris with whom he became obsessed and developed a mutual interest in the Icelandic Myths.

Proctor's main form of relaxation was walking in the country with his mother. He thought nothing of walking overnight to visit friends in Surrey calling on them at the crack of dawn, as fresh as a daisy, or by arriving for work at the gentlemanly hour of 11.30.

He didn't like Christmas and ignored it. He also had heavy socialist sympathies and was a Boer sympathiser during that war. An anti-monarchist he referred to the King as 'Loathsome Fat Guts' and Victoria as 'The Old Washerwoman of Windsor'. Reading greatly occupied his time, with Zola and lives of the monarchs being his favourites.



The only picture of Proctor was extracted from a group photograph after his death. On 29 August 1903 Proctor left London for a solitary walking tour in Tyrol. He

reached the Tashach hut in the Pitzthal on 5 September and left to cross a glacier pass without a guide. Nothing more was ever heard of him. Because he'd written a list of his last wishes before he left, a touch of mystery pervades his story. Was it suicide? Was he bumped off?

Of the four volumes of diaries his mother only passed over three. Why? Was there something to hide?



### Meet the committee

*This is the first of an occasional series introducing the committee of CILIP in London. We begin with Ian Gardner*

I joined the committee

over two years ago and have held the post of Communications Officer (CO) for around 18 months.

Since taking the CO role I have helped the committee experiment with a number of options for disseminating information to you, the members, and other interested parties. This included trying to decide on best practice in sharing event information with other organisations and their members. The result of the experiments was the <http://londoncommunity.wikispaces.com> site and, especially, the Google Calendar (which is available via that site as well as directly).

We have a number of groups contributing to the Calendar now and I would recommend everyone subscribes to it for event information (via RSS or Google Calendar) and if you want to advertise anything on it just email [CILIPinLondon@gmail.com](mailto:CILIPinLondon@gmail.com) for editing access to the Calendar (anyone can edit the rest of the wikispace site). More information on all of this is available via the above wikispace URL.

Away from the committee, I blog about my random work-related thoughts at <http://iangardnergb.blogspot.com/>. The blog covers issues related to my current work on topics such as education, higher education and information services.

Please contact me via the blog, wikispace site or email if you have any ideas for group activity, communications, etc.

### Branch finances

CILIP in London has had its capitation halved. The committee is considering ways of cutting expenditure. Among the options are producing *London CLIP* only in electronic format or reducing the number of issues (currently four a year) and reducing the number of Sekforde Arms meetings to five a year instead of ten. If you have any thoughts on this, please write to *London CLIP*.

### FUTURE EVENTS 2009

#### EVENING MEETINGS

These meetings are held in The Sekforde Arms, Sekforde Street, London EC1, 6.30pm.

Contact [cilip@london.com](mailto:cilip@london.com)

8 September, Paul Sturges

#### OTHER EVENTS

10 September  
Not Museum Pieces: the Role of Archivists and Librarians in Museums, National Gallery, London.  
Contact [www.nationalgallery.org.uk/what/events/2009/sep/default.htm](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/what/events/2009/sep/default.htm)

24 September  
Licences and their Negotiation (UKeiG Course), Thistle City Hotel, Barbican, London.  
Contact [www.ukeig.org.uk](http://www.ukeig.org.uk)

15 October  
Members' Day, SOAS, London.  
Contact [conferences@cilip.org.uk](mailto:conferences@cilip.org.uk)

10 November  
Making search work (UKeiG Course), Thistle City Hotel, Barbican, London.  
Contact [www.ukeig.org.uk](http://www.ukeig.org.uk)

1-3 December  
Online Information 2009, Olympia Grand Hall, London. Contact [www.online-information.co.uk](http://www.online-information.co.uk)

2-4 December  
5th International Digital Curation Conference (IDCC) - Moving to Multi-Scale Science: Managing Complexity and Diversity, Millennium Gloucester Hotel, London. Contact [www.dcc.ac.uk/events/dcc-2009](http://www.dcc.ac.uk/events/dcc-2009)

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