

LONDON CLIP

Newsletter for CILIP in London

Committee Officers

At its meeting on 6 April, the Committee of CILIP in London noted the election of the following officers: Peter Beauchamp (President, Peter.Beauchamp1@btinternet.com), Vaughan Whibley (Vice President, vaughan@vwhibley.freeserve.co.uk), Anna Martin (Honorary Secretary, alm57@cam.ac.uk) and Tayo Ajibade (Honorary Treasurer, Tayo.Ajibade@bakernet.com). Please contact these people as appropriate, and note that Edward Dudley has relinquished his posts of Acting Honorary Treasurer and Acting Honorary Secretary.



(From left to right) - Peter Beauchamp, Vaughan Whibley, Anna Martin & Tayo Ajibade

Conference Grants

CILIP in London is offering small grants to support UK library and information workers applying to go to an international conference, including such conferences held in this country. The sums awarded would probably amount to a small proportion of the whole cost of such a visit. Branch members wishing to apply for such a grant should send details of the conference they wish to attend to Anna Martin (alm57@cam.ac.uk) by 31 July 2006.

Spit-Lit

Spit-Lit 2006 was launched on World Book Day (2 March) with the opening of The Reading Room exhibition at Oxford House in Bethnal Green.

The festival, which celebrates women's writing, coincided with International Women's Week. Among the writers featured were Heather Brooke, who spoke at a CILIP in London meeting in March 2005, Barbara Ehrenreich and Bonnie Greer.

Read Dating

Read dating was one of the activities held around World Book Day and the Get London Reading campaign. In this form of speed dating, participants are asked to display the title of their favourite book alongside their name tag. Read dating in London was organised by the London Libraries Development Agency (LLDA) in association with Speedater.com. Events took place in Tower Hamlets, Southwark and Kensington and Chelsea. Speedater.com have since approached the LLDA to run monthly read dating events in central London libraries.

Business & IP Centre

On 9 March, the British Library opened its enhanced Business & IP Centre. This service is designed to cut costs for start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and to support entrepreneurs from the initial spark of inspiration through to successfully launching and developing a business. It aims to help the launch of 25,000 new UK businesses in its first five years.

Users of the Business & IP Centre have free access to 40 databases including Fame, Amadeus, Economist Intelligence Unit Viewswire, Financial Times, OneSource, Lexis-Nexis, Dialog and the Complete Business Reference Adviser (COBRA).

AGM

The CILIP in London AGM will be held at 6pm on 24 May at CILIP (7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE).

After the AGM there will be an open meeting under the rubric: Working in London: Starting Out and Moving On. Three speakers will very briefly outline the expectations of employers. Vivien Robertson, Site Services Manager, King's College London, Julie Gibson, Head of Libraries and Museum, London Borough of Enfield, and the Business Manager of CILIP's INFOmatch will endeavour to deal with the vast range of workplace LIS in London.

After these short presentations, they will be joined by Ralph Adam, who will indicate the value of a qualification in LIS outside these areas of work, and a representative from the London and SE Divisions of the Career Development Group (CDG) to form a panel to answer questions and to lead discussion. Material from CDG and INFOmatch will be displayed.

All are welcome, particularly members of CDG and the Personnel Training and Education Group, but only CILIP in London members may take part in the AGM. In order to estimate the significant refreshments for the occasion, please reserve your place, preferably by email, to: Vaughan Whibley (vaughan@vwhibley.freeserve.co.uk, Tel 01689 858807).

Ready for 2012?

Getting on track: how local authorities can maximise the benefits of London 2012 is a new publication from the Local Government Association (LGA). The LGA is committed to ensuring that all local authorities have the opportunities to maximise the full range of benefits that the 2012 Olympic Games can bring for their communities (before, during and after the events).

The publication explores such potential benefits as creating a significant cultural and sporting legacy, and partnerships with local businesses to enhance investment in sporting and cultural facilities. It can be downloaded from the Publications section of the LGA website: www.lga.gov.uk.



From Rusholme with Love

Ian Stringer from Barnsley Libraries kicked off the 2006 series of CILIP in London evening meetings with an entertaining talk. He focused on his social inclusion work within Barnsley, which has the tenth smallest ethnic population of any borough in the UK. As its population resides mainly on greenbelt land, Ian's work has been challenging.

The first project is a council-funded Dial-a-Read scheme which complements the mobile libraries. Community transport buses called Dial-a-Ride are used. People can just ring up and ask to join the scheme and on average there are 10 people on each trip. The scheme has got a quarter of the borough's housebound users into libraries. They choose their books, enjoy a cup of tea and can participate in events taking place in the library, like the 'Keep Warm' initiative. Sometimes there are author events to which local reading groups are also invited and the mostly elderly users can join in.

Readers can explore the other library services. Users enjoy researching their past, and the most popular service is the archives. As many library users were born and bred in the local area, the pictures and records from the archives help to jog memories. Some users participated in the local museum's Reminiscence Day and had pictures displayed on the website.

Support from the project's council and social services has meant it has not cost the library money; indeed the library has made money through room hire. A reader questionnaire was issued to improve the scheme but the response rate was low, as most wanted to use the library to relax.

The second initiative is the Russian Children's Club. This is for the children of refugees who have settled in the

local area. One of the helpers is a former librarian from Estonia. The project, which received funding from Barnardo's in the first year, takes place for two hours each Saturday. A word-of-mouth approach was preferred and little advertising was done. Around 85 children turn up for stories about Russian literature, fairy and folk tales. The Christmas Party held on 6 January is always a high point! The (W)YMLAC - (West) Yorkshire Museums Libraries and Archives Council - has provided funding for the second year and this has now been secured. The scheme now also caters for Russian adults by running UK citizenship and practical help sessions.

The third initiative is a partnership between Barnsley Libraries and Everthorpe prison (in the East Riding). The prison has an IT suite and the staff wanted to give the inmates the chance to develop new skills. A project was devised to convert local history books into large print format. These books are often out-of-print so this scheme gives the library a second copy to cope with demand. They produce roughly 12 a year and it has proved beneficial for all. As it has been so successful, the plan is to extend it to other prisons within the area. There has been funding from the Prison Service but (W)YMLAC has also purchased a new bindery machine for the prison enabling the prisoners to learn another new skill. The gains have been books for Barnsley Libraries, development of a relationship with the prison and the opportunity to help in the rehabilitation of the prisoners.

Ian also told of experience throughout Yorkshire as a children's librarian running the mobile library for children. It was especially good for disabled children who were able to use the van like other children. He used to play games and keep them entertained while encouraging them to have a love of books.

He took the mobile library to Kirklees' twin town in the Ruhr, Germany, and to a 'mobile meet' in Slovenia, a convention of mobile librarians and their vans and has been to many different countries using the library to raise funds for IFLA projects.

The title of the speech is due to the fact that when going abroad he usually flies from Manchester staying with his son in Rusholme.

Outsourcing

Outsourcing has become commonplace in library services in the UK over the last ten years with success stories across different sectors. Peter Griffiths' talk highlighted some of the routes to success.

Outsourcing is defined as the buying in of one or more parts of a service. In terms of libraries it is not a new idea and one of the earliest examples was the purchasing of Library of Congress cataloguing cards which saved libraries doing their own original cataloguing. More modern instances include the management of a library website.

Peter pointed out that almost any kind of service can be outsourced from document delivery to cataloguing and shelving. Cases of outsourcing are sometimes found in unexpected places: the new libraries in Brighton and Bournemouth were funded as Public Finance Initiatives and by making the library part of an overall complex, with shops, restaurants and offices that could help to pay for the building.

The talk outlined a few reasons why a library service may choose to outsource: outsourcing can help your service to provide more while enabling it to stay within its funding. It can also help you to take advantage of economies of scale and use a bigger organisation's purchasing powers. Additionally, an organisation that outsources will be able to choose which activities to concentrate on, reducing its spending on staff skills by outsourcing some of their roles. Finally, outsourcing can assist an organisation to develop new ideas.

Before starting an outsourcing project, you need to research your service - what aspects would benefit from outsourcing, which are core and non-core activities and what is desirable and essential? Without a focus for what it is you want to achieve, outsourcing will be a failure. Traditionally it was non-core, 'nice-to-have' items that were outsourced but now some essential functions are regularly outsourced, for example, as a way to reduce staffing. This should not reduce staffing levels so much that in-house staff cannot cope under emergency conditions.

The scope of the outsourced service must be understood by both the bid team and the supplier and regular communication will manage everyone's expectations of the partnership. This

will help build a relationship so if there are any changes, they can be made easily. Defining the terms of the contract is imperative and it should be written in clear English. It is essential to read the small print so you know your position if things go wrong. There should be room for change, but constant changes should be avoided as it stops the results of previous changes being evaluated. Specifying the expected standards and results is important, but it is up to the supplier how they are achieved.

An outsourcing project is not without risks and there are common ones faced by any organisation: firstly there is the issue of maintaining standards. Ensuring that contractors adhere to your service-based goals may be at odds with their desire for profit. There may also be issues regarding their accountability particularly if you are a public sector organisation. The incorrect completion of the project is a big concern with around 80% of outsourcing cases having such complaints illustrating why it is vital to express your project terms clearly from the outset. It will help to minimise any time-consuming delays and problems. Finally the supplier market is not huge so your choice may be restricted. There is an element of cherry picking by suppliers to cream off the 'best' contracts.

Peter's talk caused a lively debate proving that outsourcing is an area of concern. The book *Managing Outsourcing*



Peter Griffiths

in Library and Information Services by Sheila Pantry and Peter Griffiths (October 2004; £32.95) may be obtained from Facet Publishing.

Tsunami Collection

The CILIP in London meetings of 10 January, 14 February and 14 March raised £17.40, £25.70 and £17.10, respectively. This amounts to a total of £236.48, including the £176.28 previously raised. The collection is now closed.



Karen Blakeman

The Mysteries of RSS and Blogs Explained

A full audience gathered to hear Karen Blakeman rise to the challenge of speaking at the Sekforde Arms - sans Internet, sans Powerpoint - and demystify the new web services that are advancing current awareness and communities of interest. Karen started by explaining how to access Really Simple Syndication (or as others have it, Rich Site Summary) and use those little orange buttons labelled RSS that are scattered on web pages. RSS is a way of keeping on top of changing web content by feeding headlines for display on special software known as a RSS reader or a news aggregator.

The practical benefits of RSS are attractive - email inboxes can be swept clear of dozens of separate news announcements, spam is bypassed, messages can be dropped directly into folders and sources can be readily unsubscribed. Readers can be downloadable, standalone programs such as www.feedreader.com, built into web browsers (Firefox already provides this feature and MS Explorer is expected to introduce it soon), or accessed on a remote web service such as www.bloglines.com. For once Google is not leading the technology and Karen was scathing in her judgement on the usability of Google Reader.

Some publishers (for example the British Medical Journal, and Nature) have been quick to pick up on the value of RSS as a way of promoting their titles. The government, however, has dragged its feet in exploiting a tool that is so well suited to keeping the public and professional groups up to date; think how accountants would welcome an instant official news service on changing tax regulations. Karen publishes a RSS feed from her own blog site using Feed Spring (www.usablelabs.com/productFeedSpring.html) and

acknowledged how well it has served her own business.

If RSS is a means of delivering customised information to individuals then blogs (originally, web logs) are the means for individuals to publish on their own account. Personal web diaries have been around for some time but blogs are increasingly used by collaborative groups and Karen pointed to her own involvement with the blog published by UKeIG (the UK eInformation Group, formerly known as UKOLUG) at www.ukeig.org.uk/blog/. Collaborative blogs on corporate intranets have taken off within technologically savvy industries like pharmaceuticals and IT hardware - IBM actively encourages their staff to blog.

In business sectors where the personal touch and the building of a loyal customer base are paramount, blogs are showing their worth as marketing tools. Saville Row is just such an area where www.englishcut.com is an award winner. Karen highlighted the major benefits of blogs as information sources - currency, the Guardian's blog was first with the breaking news on the day of the London bombings last year, and access to expertise - she gave four stars to <http://librarianinblack.typepad.com> for its news gathering about library technology.

Blogs do have drawbacks. By their nature they are laid out chronologically and while some tag their contents and display category lists they are often not the most welcoming of sites for new readers. Specialist blog search services are available and the advanced search on www.yahoo.com comes with a useful feature that limits searches to RSS feeds. A more sophisticated tool is www.blogpulse.com, which provides graphical plots of trends in discussion across the blogosphere. Using Blogpulse a company can immediately sense how its products are faring by a search on its brand names. Karen ended with a health warning. Blogs are addictive and UK users are the greatest addicts with more blogs per head than anywhere in the world.

The presentations from Karen's talk, including many links to RSS and blog resources can be found at www.rba.co.uk/presentations/index.htm. Karen's own blog is at www.rba.co.uk/rss/blog.htm and her e-newsletter is at www.rba.co.uk/tftr/index.shtml

Richmond Library for Transformation

Richmond Library is to be transformed into a model of a future library service with reading at its heart. It is one of three libraries involved in Love Libraries, a campaign to explore a new vision of a 21st century reading service. The others are Newquay Library and Coldharbour Library in Gravesend.

Love Libraries was launched on 22 March by David Lammy, Minister for Culture. It aims to showcase an exciting, replicable template for other libraries, and to galvanise consumers into demanding a better standard of service from their local library.

The project will involve visibly transforming the image of the library buildings, drawing on the expertise of retailers, designers and space planners to re-model interiors. Library opening hours and book stocks will be reviewed to ensure there is a good range of the newest bestselling titles as well as an extensive backlist, and publishing marketing mentors will be attached to each library.

A Book for Every Londoner

A Book For Every Londoner took place from 1 to 16 March 2006. This series of free activities in London libraries around World Book Day showcased the city's cultural diversity and encouraged Londoners to make more time for reading.

The programme was put together by Sue Stewart on behalf of the London Libraries Development Agency (LLDA). It was funded by Arts Council England, GOL (Government Office for London) and ALM London.

A wide range of author events took place across 15 authorities. LLDA particularly wanted to target emergent readers and people who might not have thought of attending a library or literary event, and also to ensure that there were Get London Reading events in a wide geographical spread.

Authors included Robert Elms, Jackie Kay, Francesca Beard, David Nobbs, John Hegley, Matt Reilly and Rowan Coleman - the latter two are Quick Reads authors.

The Front Page

The Front Page is a major newspaper exhibition at the British Library's exhibition galleries in London from 19 May to 8 October 2006. It examines the growth and development of the national newspaper in Britain over the course of the last 100 years.

New Name for London Agency

ALM London has adopted the new trading name of MLA London. The change was made in April 2006. MLA London is the strategic development agency for museums, libraries and archives in London.

International ISBN Agency

The International ISBN Agency has moved to London. The international agency, which provides support and information to more than 160 ISBN agencies around the world, has left its long-term home at the State Library of Berlin. The move followed a decision by the Prussian Cultural Foundation to discontinue its support for the agency.

In April, EDItEUR, the international body that develops and promotes book trade standards, took over responsibility for the day-to-day running of the International ISBN Agency. Brian Green is the new Executive Director. He commented: 'With the imminent arrival of the 13-digit ISBN and the increased use of ISBNs for digital publication, this is an exciting and critical time to be taking on the management of the International ISBN Agency.'

The changes do not affect the ISBN agency for the UK and Ireland which continues to be operated by Nielsen BookData from its office in Woking, Surrey.

Ask an Expert at the BL

Dame Anita Roddick of Body Shop fame has launched one-to-one creative advice sessions in the British Library's newly launched Business & IP Centre. These 'Ask an Expert' sessions aim to inspire and motivate SMEs, innovators and budding entrepreneurs to pursue and exploit their creative ideas.

Evening Meetings

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

13 June, Land Registry's information systems, Peter Collis

11 July, Promoting libraries, Brian Hall

Other CILIP in London events

24 May, CILIP in London AGM, CILIP, 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE, 6pm (Refreshments at 5.30pm). Contact Vaughan Whibley vaughan@vwhibley.freemove.co.uk, Tel 01689 858807

13 or 14 July, Coffee Morning in Croydon. A chance to provide feedback, in a relaxed atmosphere, on how CILIP can work better to serve you. Call John Lake on 020 7382 7098 or Email: john.lake@cityoflondon.gov.uk

8 August, Excursion

OTHER EVENTS

10 June, Unpacking the Library: Literatures and their Archives, University of Westminster. Contact Dr Sas Mays, S.Mays@westminster.ac.uk

16-17 October, Internet Librarian International 2006, Copthorne Tara Hotel, London.
Contact 01865 327813, info@internet-librarian.com. www.internet-librarian.com

26 October, CILIP Members' Day & AGM. Contact 020 7255, conferences@cilip.org.uk

15 November, RFID 2006, QEII Centre, London. Contact 020 7255, conferences@cilip.org.uk

23-25 November, Textual Scholarship and the Material Book, Institute of English Studies, University of London. Contact Dr Wim Van Mierlo, wim.van-mierlo@sas.ac.uk

28-30 November, Online Information 2006, Olympia Grand Hall, London. Contact www.online-information.co.uk

CONTACTS

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