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Nikki Myall

Knowledge & Information Services

Building H18 Room 3

Dstl Fort Halstead

SEVENOAKS

Kent TN14 7BP

Tel: 01959 892785

Fax: 01959 897167

Email: njmyall@dstl.gov.uk

All contributions should be addressed to the Editor

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Editorial

Thank you to all those who managed to make it to the AGM earlier this month. Once again the formal part of the meeting was followed by a lively and interesting “Question Time”. For those of you who couldn’t make it a podcast and photographs from the event will be made available on the GLIG website in the near future.

In this issue we have a report on the recent visit to the Middle Temple Library (p.4) and our thanks must go to our hosts for arranging such an interesting and informative visit. Looking forward to other events I would like to draw your attention to an exciting course GLIG is currently planning on “Government Information in the Google Age” which will be held at the British Library on 10th November 2008. Not only have we got a full programme planned for the day but you will also have the opportunity to have a tour of the Library and attend the evening drinks reception where the group will be presenting the 2008 GLIG Awards (including the Lifetime Achievement Award). Please fill in the form on p.3 to book your place.

Following the article on secondment in a previous issue, a librarian from the FCO, currently on special unpaid leave and working in New Zealand, gives us further insight into secondment opportunities and her own experiences abroad (p.6). Meanwhile continuing our theme on how Government Libraries have changed over the last thirty years, a former colleague reflects on how even though technology has changed the way we work, interaction with the customer still remains of vital importance (p.8).

Finally the Tsunami Working Party gives us an update on their recent successful fundraising activities (p.16).

Thank you to all the contributors to this issue. If you would like to comment on anything in this issue, or contribute to future issues, please let me know.

Nikki Myall
Editor

Government Information in the Google Age

The Government Libraries and Information Group presents an outstanding line up of experts in the delivery of Government information in the fast moving information age.

Venue: Conference Room 4, British Library St. Pancras

Date: 10th November 2008

Time: 9.30 – 4.45

Cost: £125 + VAT (£146.88) includes lunch and refreshments throughout the day

Programme: TBC

- Introduction: the market for online government information
- Loss of access and the legal framework
- National Library of Scotland TDR
- Archiving Welsh Assembly and Welsh Government
- Web Continuity
- Archiving the Westminster Parliament: strategic approach
- Hansard Digitisation Project
- Preserving government information in the face of conflict
- Maintaining access to government information in the USA

Following the event there will be a drinks reception from 5.30 – 7.30 which will include the presentation of the 2008 GLIG Awards. You will also have the opportunity to have a tour of the Library lasting approx 30 minutes.

Any questions regarding this event please contact David Taylor
david.taylor2@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or 07779 376745

I would like to attend Government Information in the Google Age on 10th November 2008. Joining instructions will be sent on confirmation of booking

Cancellations made within 2 weeks of the event and non attendance will be invoiced for the full cost of £146.88

Name:

Address:

Email:

Cheques Payable to CILIP Government Libraries and Information Group

BACS Transfer: Lloyds TSB Sort Code 30 91 79 Account No. 1439414

Completed forms should be posted to: Karen Gommersall, DWP Library – Steel City, Upper Ground Floor, Steel City House, 12-18 West Street, Sheffield, S1 2GQ

Review of GLIG visit to Middle Temple Library

This popular tour was well attended by librarians from a range of government and related libraries. For most of us it was unlike anywhere we'd worked before which made it all the more interesting.

One of the four Inns of Court, the Middle Temple is situated in lovely surroundings. Immaculately kept and surprisingly tranquil given its central location off the busy Victoria Embankment, it is a place of quiet study for students, lawyers and barristers.

The library was housed in a Victorian building in the Gothic style until this was destroyed during bombing in 1940 and 1941. Fortunately much of the library stock survived or had been moved temporarily off site. A new building designed by Sir Edward Maufe was opened in 1958 which houses the current library.

The library was founded in 1641 by Robert Ashley who bequeathed his personal library to the Middle Temple. The Inns of Court in the past functioned as the 'third university' after Oxford and Cambridge and the diverse collection acquired from Ashley reflects a breadth of subjects including not just law but also science, history and theology.

The library's current stock reflects its specialisms of law, government publications, human rights, European communities, United States law and ecclesiastical law. It is also home to a special collection on capital punishment.

Inside the library is large, airy and attractive, spread over various floors with a balcony around the upper floor. The main library space is a mixture of desks, computer terminals, shelves of reference books, and bound government and legal publications – a fair reflection of its necessary mix of the old and the new.

On the upper floor balcony can be found a pair of globes called the Molyneux Globes. They comprise a 'Terrestrial Globe' depicting the world more or less as we know it today (though minus Australia) and a 'Celestial Globe'. They date from 1592 and were dedicated to Queen Elizabeth I.

The Library has an extensive collection of rare books comprising not only Ashley's collection but also works owned by John Donne, Ben Jonson, William Petyt and others. We had the chance to view a selection covering

diverse subjects and bearing illustrations of anything from different types of insect to the fires of Hell! We were also shown the impressive new loft conversion which provides storage space in environmentally controlled conditions for the archives, rare books, maps and manuscripts.

Touring the rest of the Inn, we walked through wood panelled corridors and anterooms adorned with paintings and coats of arms into the impressive Elizabethan 'Middle Temple Hall' with its double hammer beam roof. Used in the filming of 'Shakespeare in Love', it is a regular venue for plays and concerts and was set out for a production of 'Dido and Aeneas'. Some of us were keen to grab a programme of upcoming events as we left!

The tour was interesting and informative, made all the more worthwhile by the knowledgeable staff on hand to show us around, and I very much enjoyed it. If they offer the tour again I would highly recommend it.

Abigail Phillips, House of Commons Library

A view from abroad

Carole Edwards, a librarian from the FCO, is currently on special unpaid leave and working in New Zealand. Having read Patrick Ryan's article in the Nov 2007 issue of Government libraries journal, she has been inspired to add her own thoughts about going off on secondment.

Patrick Ryan's article in the November 2007 issue of the Government Libraries Journal struck a chord with me. Like Patrick, I was starting to feel the need for discomfort. I had worked in the same place (the FCO, in my case) for a number of years, and felt like a fresh challenge. The new millennium, and the forthcoming arrival of a Major Decade Birthday, added urgency to my restlessness. Eventually, the thought of making a major change to my situation became less terrifying than the thought of another decade of comfort passing me by unnoticed. It was time for action!

Having worked in the FCO for 10 years, enviously listening to tales of diplomatic life in exotic places, it seemed only natural to go overseas – as far away as I possibly could. I ended up in New Zealand, intending to spend around 6 months living and working there. 7 years later, I'm still here – oops! (I am missing out a large chunk of the story at this point, concerning the bureaucratic detail of work permits, residency, citizenship etc, mainly because the system has undoubtedly changed since I had to deal with it).

I spent my first 9 months working with colleagues in the British High Commission in Wellington, where I was poacher turned gamekeeper – a user of the FCO library services! Since then, I have worked for a corporate library, a government library, and a university library. I can safely say that the levels of discomfort have been more than adequate to keep me on my toes. For instance, returning to an academic library, after a gap of 13 years, was a culture shock. I found myself surrounded by an enthusiastic, irreverent, yet un-cynical community of scholars, united by their love of learning – and keen to speak their minds. It has been a breath of fresh air. The NZ government wants universities to be 'critic and conscience of society', and they certainly do their job well! Nobody has to follow a 'line to take' here; saying what you think is positively encouraged and expected.

Patrick spoke of the professional benefits and wider understanding that he has gained from his secondment. I can certainly relate to that. While we use many of the same skills – after all, the principles of our profession are the same the world over – practising these in a different *context* is a hugely valuable learning experience. But there is, of course, more than just the professional angle to consider. From a personal perspective, the learning and development gained from living and working in another place are unquantifiable. I have enjoyed, for example, learning about colonialism from the other side, re-reading history from a non-Eurocentric perspective, and getting to grips with biculturalism (in NZ we are legally required to give equal respect and consideration to the Maori world view, language and culture).

Add to all that the travel opportunities, fabulous food and wine, long empty roads amid some of the most stunning scenery in the world, and you can see why I would recommend this to anyone as an unforgettable and life-changing experience. And yes, I will be back at the FCO eventually!

Carole Edwards, Foreign & Commonwealth Office Library (and Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand).

Government Research Libraries – A Defensive and Outer-Circuit Reminiscence

Decades ago, the first reminiscence of a librarian approaching the Civil Service (CS) was not a library, but facing the interview panel at the Civil Service Commission's office in Saville Row in an era of the pan-CS 3-times a year librarian recruitment round. The 15 member panel included a representative of each body who was interested in you specifically, plus all those who had a post being interviewed for that day.

Having successfully been appointed, I joined the library service at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough as a Librarian IV. My introduction to my first professional job was rather daunting as I walked down to the main gate where the drive was bordered by the gaunt remains of 2 blackened sheds. This was September 1968, and one was looking at the sad remains of the recent Brequet Atlantique crash at the air show two weeks previously. It was a reminder of the darker side of the vibrant and challenging world of aeronautics research.

One entered a professional world run in a seemly laid back fashion by R.C. 'Wilbur' Wright – the first professional librarian in the Ministry of Aviation research establishments. Although this was a world of 5x3 catalogue cards, it was also a sphere highly flavoured by the influence of Fairthorne, who started his information career as a scientist at Farnborough in the 1950's.

We were expected to combine subject specialism, alongside the ability to apply oneself to all the necessary professional tasks to maintain an efficient service. Also, it was an introduction to the mysteries of the 'grey' literature and the realisation that there was a world of information resources beyond books and journals. One had to come to terms with reports literature, and the complexities of supply, and the frustrations of the lack of bibliographical tools. There were also specifications, maps, trade literature etc., including the visits of the cherry-uniformed ladies of Technical Indexes.

Subject-wise, we needed to firmly understand how to obtain the very best results from our tools, which were the printed bibliographies and abstract journals. A literature search required patience and application as it could entail weeks of working our way through the abstract journals, copying our entries onto the 5x3 catalogue cards for the typist to turn into a bibliography. One epic (RAE-Lib-Bib-327) took my boss and I over a

year to produce the final product to the satisfaction of the customer and ourselves to become the definitive bibliography of its time on the subject of “rain erosion”.

CS recruitment problems meant the possibility of promotion from Librarian IV to III (Higher Executive Officer level) could come very early, in as little as 12 months, if you had appropriate experience. But, one could be promoted without the necessary experience, especially if you moved to a singleton post and promotion in the early 70s took me to Dorset and the world of military bridging and soil engineering at MVEE (Military Vehicles & Engineering Establishment). It meant learning not only how to provide a service in a new subject but professionally, it also meant being on a very quick learning curve about the practical aspects of being a singleton librarian responsible for the whole service, whilst reporting to a scientist, not a senior librarian. Many of us had to learn lessons in this environment very quickly, and overcome our blunders.

This was also the era of co-ordinated indexing. Could we use such techniques in our environment. Should we pre-coordinate, or post-coordinate? Would be better to use edge-punched, or centre? But, automatic computers were coming over the operational horizon, especially if your establishment had a bureau computer, as MVEE had and we began to experiment. But, at this point in 1975 I found myself taking a transfer to SRDE (Signals Research & Development Establishment). This meant moving into the world of military signals and communications. Another subject world to learn, seek to understand and provide a service for. In possible ‘new’ development terms, I found myself using a teletype producing punched paper tape as the input for a printed catalogue – long winded for little positive results!

1978 saw my move to RSRE (Royal Signals & Radar Establishment) Malvern and a return to being part of a professional team, with proscribed responsibilities, yet with a larger personal team. The mergers of military research establishments over the next two decades brought with it challenges of bringing together different practices and service expectations. Although I arrived with one customer base, I again had to learn about new subject areas that the locals were interested in, even though they were similar in basis. It was an interesting time as we were encouraged to adopt new practices, especially if that would provide a deeper service from the same resources.

Arrived to find that local initiatives had led to MoD computer consultants carrying out a review of computerisation possibilities for the library service. The report was very positive, and led to the library becoming

involved with the “Admin Computing Department”. They developed internally written software named SCROLL which ran on an ICL1906 from which a COMfiche catalogue was produced. Input on 80-column cards enabled us to input the whole of the book catalogue in-house aided by the use of unit entry in cataloguing. This period also saw the adoption of an online-input computerised issue system for the reports which proved very successful, despite the then limitation of overnight update. It also had a useful by-product in the form of a very basic catalogue comprising originator and report number.

CAIRS was another leap forward in 1987, including the finesse of both upper and lower case! It was precipitated by RSRE’s decision to change its central computing facility, and the need, as well as the desire, to upgrade our software. Making the software choice was interesting as it not only had to meet our aspirations but work compatibly on a computer bureau ring of three named Thorin, Ingold and Frodo (named by a Tolkein fan, who was a literate Brummie as well!) For the first time we were able to provide an online catalogue which all staff on-site could access with Thorin being the ‘live’ computer for us, whilst the user logging in was directed to a ‘copy’ on any of the three.

This change also provided us with the ability to include the grey literature, especially the research report collection, deepening the level of service we were able to provide. With the report collection, we had taken the decision back in 1982 to prepare for the probability of computerisation and the coming availability of PCs. Indexing using the software Dbase III meant we created records that were converted and transferred into CAIRS successfully although this had meant double indexing in order to maintain the card catalogue.

In the early 80s the RSRE library was offered its first PC. Although basically still looking much the same today, what different capabilities! Firstly, no coloured screens, just a choice of green or amber characters, and 5 ¼ inch floppies, with storage limited to 500K bytes. I remember the debate whether we should buy a 20MB standalone hard drive for £1500!

In 10 years following, CAIRS’s adoption as our software showed its versatility in allowing us to devise numerous database applications for the services the library provided to the establishment. This was to such an extent that we were a problem child when DERA (Defence Evaluation & Research Agency), which Malvern was now part of, decided to upgrade its library management software and adopted the UNICORN software in 1998. It was an interesting time trying to meld 19 databases from 15 institutions into one, with their local peculiarities and adaptations. One

came to realise during this process again how independent we had been as librarians, as we sought to meet what perceived were the local needs and requirements. However we realised that it was necessary to operate to formal standards, especially for input and daily operation routines, if this was to be a positive working tool for the future.

Through the 70s and 80s, computer networks were also making an impact on the ways in which we worked, leading to what is now available on the desktop. On arrival at Malvern in 1978, my colleague, in order to access the then available online bibliographic databases, was using a teletype via an acoustic coupler over a BT line to access the ESAIRS service (based in Italy). The initial speed was 75bps using a dedicated line, Over the years this leapt upwards to 1200bps, then 9.6kps, finally to megabytes per second from the desktop routed through a site-based ISDN node. Malvern had been involved with the US ARPANET service and this local expertise and interest in computer networks had provided the opportunity for an email request service from our users since 1982, and the early adoption of electronic requests to the British Library.

Now the internet is ubiquitous and is allowing the development of personal alert services. Yet it is not a modern phenomenon. In the research environment, there has always been a demand to be aware of what is being published, especially in journal literature. Pre-computers, it was always difficult mainly due to time and effort required to manually scan and type up the results. Consequently subject literature searching was mainly limited to the retrospective. Although in the 60s, abstract publishers like IEE and IEE were publishing journals like “Current Titles in...” real progress towards providing a current awareness service proved possible when organisations such as Inspec and NASA began to computerise their abstract journals.

For commercially published material, the ability to access and provide, especially electronically, has grown many fold, but ‘grey’ literature has remained our Cinderella. Our major concern in the area was, and still is, research reports. Supply, acquisition and bibliographical control have always proved problematic, complicated by the challenges of confidentiality and security. Acquisition has often meant a direct approach to the originating organisation, after ascertaining their existence and whereabouts. And, with the decades bringing a number of organisational changes, who might be their successor! Often success depended upon building up a network of specific contacts and people who might know.

One thing ‘grey’ literature in the defence community highlighted was the extensive networking that went on, both official and personally. FODLIS (Forum of Defence Librarians) and its predecessors, the Procurement Executive Librarians group, the Technical Information Officer’s meeting and the Defence Research Agency (DRA) Libraries Working Group gave us many opportunities to meet, be informed, discuss and network. Sometimes you wondered what the point was, but most times your knowledge was enhanced in some way, often through a contact made or renewed. This was further enhanced by extended contacts made through groups such as ASLIB, NGLIS, the Government Libraries Group and CILIP’s newest SiG the Aerospace and Defence Librarians Group (ADLG). Indeed after DRA was formed the Head of Site Services, who the Libraries reported to, was perplexed as to how the library staff knew each other at every level, whereas in the rest of the new department the group heads hardly knew of each other’s existence!

The latter years saw a move into “Knowledge Agency”, and the years being filled with interesting projects, working alongside science based professionals, whilst being required to meet the needs of the user and providing a service at a local level. In many ways it was hugely satisfying, and a good way to bow out.

There are four things that have never changed and never will:-

- The cyclical nature of the opinion in which library and information services are held,
- The highs and lows of financial provision
- The patience and perseverance often need to information provision possible, especially in the confines of information handling in government
- The need for the human interaction in dealing with the user

The latter will always be a requisite no matter how e-provision develops. We need to talk to the user and interact with them as human beings. E-contact may be quicker, but face-to-face contact will continue to provide the bet, as you learn what their real needs are, as well as the personality you are working for.

It is still the case of know your customer.

Peter Trevett, ex-Knowledge Agent, previously Dstl Malvern

Minutes of the 29th AGM of the CILIP Government Libraries and Information Group

Held at the Ewart Room CILIP HQ at 6.00pm on the 9th May 2007

Present: Graham Monk (Chair)
David Smith (Vice Chair)
David Taylor (Hon Secretary)
30 Members

1. Apologies

- 1.1** Nikki Myall, Karen Gommersall, Helen Challinor, Julia Chandler, Tom Meechan, Alison Raison, Margaret Fuller, Lynda Cooper, Polly St Aubyn, Paulette Hill

2. Minutes of the 28th AGM and matters arising

- 2.1** There were no amendments to the previous minutes and these were signed as a true record.

Proposed: Sue Westcott Seconded : Alice Laird.

- 2.2** Graham called upon Suzanne Burge as the outgoing Chair to say a few words. Suzanne thanked all present in particular the current committee and she looked back on a long association with GLG/GLIG that had seen her hold all significant posts on the committee the last 10 years as chair. There would be many happy memories to look back on and there were too many to thank individually but she would be remaining on the committee.

- 2.3** In reply expressed his thanks from all present to Suzanne for her huge contribution to Government Libraries and GLIG in particular as well as a significant contribution to the wider profession such as the merger of the former LA and IIS. She had always been glad to give of her experience, time and effort to all levels of the profession and this had been recognised both informally and formally many times.

3. Secretary's report

- 3.1** We continue to play an active part within CILIP and the wider library community. Membership is slightly down on last year at 1170. Visits during the year included the Home Office , HSE Knowledge Centre and City Business Library. A new

printer for the GLIG journal has been appointed and this will give more control of the process and a faster turn around time. David thanked Suzanne, Graham and Nikki for their work in helping this happen.

3.2 The recent EDRM event had produced a health surplus despite attendance being disappointing. During the year we had 3 new committee members - Diana McAuley, Deanne Mitchell and Graham Monk. There were also 5 resignations - Brian Hall, Karen George, Peter Griffiths, Peter Coyne and Sue Carter.

3.3 No formal GLIG Award was made this year however it was agreed to make a one off award to Louise Dick for her outstanding work with the Tsunami Working Group (TWG) including a spell as a volunteer at Hikkaduwa Library. The TWG (Anoja Fernando Tom Meechan and Alice Laird) were congratulated on their continuing work that has seen a sum of 1 000 000 Sri Lankan Rupees (c£4000) handed over. Liz McLachlan asked the Secretary if there were any plans to move to an electronic journal. David indicated that this was being discussed on an ongoing basis by the committee but it was felt a significant proportion of our members would be disadvantaged. However Graham added that we should be more confident in making this decision and not be forced into it. David added his personal thanks to Suzanne for the patience and support she had shown during his time as Secretary.

3.4 The Secretary's Report was accepted
Proposed: Melanie Harris Seconded: Liz McLachlan

4. Hon Treasurer's report

4.1 Anoja indicated that there were 3 sets of accounts had been agreed and signed off by the Independent Examiners and CILIP. In addition accounts for the TWG. Anoja thanked Rowena Wells of CILIP for her help in the preparation of the accounts. Despite the drop in capitation the income stream from the EDRM event saw us maintain a sound financial position

Proposed : Karen George Seconded : Alice Laird

5.0 Group Councillor's Report

5.1 GLIG CILIP Councillor's Report 2004-2005

While no formal report was presented Sue Westcott highlighted the work done by our Councillor Julia Chandler. In particular her consultation work with both GLIG members and a wider audience and that this was appreciated by CILIP. Additionally it was important that the views held within the sector were taken account of where appropriate.

6.0 Appointment of Independent Examiners

6.1 Both Melanie Harris and Dave Picken indicated that they were willing to stand for a further year.

Proposed : Liz McLachlan Seconded: David Smith

7.0 Motions Received

7.1 It was agreed that if any, these would be taken after AOB.

8.0 International Co Operation (Tsunami Affected Libraries – Sri Lanka)

8.1 Anoja Fernando outlined the continuing fundraising work being undertaken by the TWG and the recent significant donation that had produced much publicity in Sri Lanka. Suzanne announced that at the close of the meeting she would be presenting the one off award to Louise Dick. Following on from this Louise made a short acceptance speech that included a very heartfelt and emotional letter of thanks from a young user of the Hikkaduwa Library which was very well received.

9.0 Any Other Business

9.1 Sue Westcott highlighted the forthcoming pre IFLA event in Cardiff and also that Patrick Ryan (UK govt sector representative) had asked for more ideas of the issues that they wanted raised. Sue then asked what contribution GLIG was to make to Umbrella 2007. Alice Laird outlined the speakers that would take part in GLIG sessions including the poster sessions and presenting the GLIG Award as well as the high hopes for the new venue.

Tsunami Working Group - Update

With the new library building now fully operational, the GLIG Hikkaduwa Library Appeal working group are turning their focus to how they can best provide ongoing support for the library at Hikkaduwa. Recently, the Director General of National Libraries in Sri Lanka, an enthusiastic advocate of our support with whom we had built up a good relationship, has moved on, and we are hoping to continue to build positive relationships with the support of the new Director General.

This year has also seen continued fundraising efforts. In March, a meal was held at the Archduke Restaurant on the South Bank, providing an opportunity for new and long-term supporters to meet for a meal and raise money. The meal was highly successful and enjoyable, and we are particularly grateful for the efforts of David Smith, who not only proved willing to give a speech to all the guests, but who ended up giving it three times, once to each of the tables, rather than attempting to shout over the noise of the busy restaurant! The meal raised £430, with a further £215 of very generous donations around that time.

We have also had a number of book sales being held for the appeal. The House of Commons Library were very kind to host an event which included an impressive programme of music by library staff and an excellent range of food, including home-made Sri Lankan snacks which raised £346. The DWP legal library has also contributed the proceeds of their Book People sales, raising £163.

David Taylor's fundraising efforts also continued, with his attempt to swim a distance proportionate to that from Leeds to Hikkaduwa in stages between January and the GLIG AGM on the 11th June. David exceeded his original target of 19000 m, and by the AGM had reached 75000 m. David intends to continue with his swimming, and welcomes any further sponsorship and donations to the appeal. Details and an opportunity to donate online, can be found on the GLIG Hikkaduwa appeal web pages: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/government/appeal>

We continue to be very keen to hear of any ideas for ways in which we can continue to support the library community in Hikkaduwa, to build upon the success of our work to restore the building. We welcome comments, as well as donations and volunteers.

Please contact Anoja Fernando at anoja.fernando@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or Karen George at karen.george@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

