



Annual Report 2009/2010

**For presentation to 2010 AGM
To be held on 9 November 2010
At CILIP HQ**

The last annual report covered the period to the end of March 2009. This report therefore covers the period April 2009 to March 2010, though as the AGM is being held in November 2010, some later developments may be mentioned.

This has been a positive year for the LIHG. We carried out a survey of members to inform the Group's strategic direction and help to set priorities for Group activities. It was encouraging that respondents expressed a high level of support for the current range of activities and events; a report of the survey results appeared in the summer 2010 newsletter. The Group supported two seminar series, in London and in Scotland, as well as organising our own annual conference and other member events.

Committee changes

We were sad to lose Rob Westwood as Committee Secretary, following his move to Canada. He remains on the committee as an ordinary member, participating via email. We are delighted that the post has been rapidly and ably filled by Miriam Walters, a newly qualified librarian working at the University of the West of England.

After 4 years as Newsletter Editor, Yvonne Lewis felt that it was time to move on, and has been replaced by Renae Satterley of the Middle Temple Library.

John Crawford also stepped down from the committee following his appointment as a CILIP Trustee, though continues to take an active interest in the Group.

Membership

Membership stands at 582 as of October 2010, plus an additional 20 non-CILIP members, recruited as a result of our annual conference. This is a slight drop on last year, when we had 600 CILIP members and 12 non-CILIP members, but given the overall decline in CILIP membership is not surprising, and suggests that we are managing to retain members despite the increase in CILIP's charge for 'additional' groups.

There are currently 313 members of LIS-LIBHIST, continuing to show a steady increase from 293 in 2009, compared with 267 members in 2008. The site is fully archived, has discussions going back to 1998 and forms a strong research resource.

Publicity

The Group now has a monthly email to members of its news and forthcoming events. This service is provided by CILIP. The number of members receiving the monthly mailing has gradually increased, from just 135 when the Group first used the service in May 2009, to 242 by September 2009 and 262 as of October 2010. This is still less than half of our membership, and it would be good to see the figure rise further. Instructions on how to subscribe to the ebulletin were posted to all members in June 2009. Details of how to receive the monthly email will be circulated again in the 2011 annual postal mailing to members to try to publicise this facility further.

It did not prove possible to update the website as regularly as we might wish over the past year, as CILIP's change of content management system took longer than anticipated and some teething problems were experienced in editing after the new system was in place. We hope that these problems have now been resolved and that updates will be far more frequent in the coming year.

We have regular mailings of events via LIS Lib-hist and SHARP-L and also via the Facebook group. Our Publicity Officer has produced bookmarks for distribution at relevant events giving details of our website address and other useful contacts.

A yearcard went out to all members in the annual mailing, together with a survey of members which produced a good response, some 90 members taking the trouble to let us know their views about the Group's activities and priorities.

Newsletter

Three issues of the newsletter were produced on schedule in 2009-10. Issues are made available on our website and distributed by post to those members who have requested hard copy. The online newsletter is now available in an A5 format more suitable for printing. CILIP is currently unable to provide us with the means to email the newsletter directly to members, but notification of new issues is given on the monthly email bulletin and on lis-libhist. We encourage all members with internet facilities to access the newsletter online, as this is a significant financial saving for the Group, allowing us to devote more funds to the activities which members have identified as priorities. Following feedback from members, one issue of the newsletter each year will be sent out to all members in hard copy together with the yearcard annual mailing.

Library & Information History

Our journal *Library & Information History* (formerly *Library history*) continues to flourish under the editorship of Toni Weller, with four issues appearing each year. Alistair Black, our North American editor, will be covering Toni Weller's maternity leave during the second half of 2010. Supplementing Karen Attar's work as book reviews editor, from 2011 a regular bibliography of new books in the field will be compiled with the assistance of Katie Birkwood and Caroline Nappo. This is a development which we are sure will be welcomed by readers.

The first issue of the journal for 2010 published the proceedings of the LIHG's 2009 annual conference.

Awards

Library History Essay prize 2009:

The Library history essay prize, sponsored by Emerald, is awarded to the best article or essay published in the preceding year. Two nominations were received in 2009 for articles published in 2008. After lengthy and careful deliberation the judges regretfully decided that neither entry fully merited the prize, so the award was not made.

Ollé Award for 2009:

The Ollé Award is an annual studentship up to a total annual sum of £500, open to undergraduates or postgraduates in any discipline working on library history. Unfortunately yet again we have not been able to make this award for 2009 due to a lack of entries. After much consideration, the criteria for the Ollé Award have now been totally reworked, simplifying the application process. It is hoped that this will make it more appealing to researchers.

Events

LIHG Annual Conference. This took place in April 2010, so is technically just outside the limit of this report, but it seems sensible to report on it at this year's AGM. The conference was on the theme of *Parochial Libraries: past, present and future*. We are grateful to Lambeth Palace Library for hosting the conference, which attracted over 40 attendees, 20 of whom were not previously members of the LIHG. Eight excellent speakers gave a diverse and fascinating range of papers, which we hope will be published via *Library & information history*. We would also like to thank the Historic Libraries Forum for supporting this event.

By the time this report is received, the Group will also have participated in an Anglo-German conference at Wolfenbüttel, which will be reported fully to the 2011 AGM.

The Group once again supported the highly successful series of seminars at the University of London, and this year also gave some financial assistance to a seminar series in Scotland, organised in conjunction with the *Edinburgh history of libraries in Scotland*. The latter attracted particularly large attendance, which is extremely gratifying.

An afternoon Group visit was organised to the Chawton House Library in May, as part of our strategy to provide Group events in different areas of the country, both to engage local members, and to publicise library history and information history to a wider audience. We would like to thank Chawton for their assistance in organising this highly enjoyable and informative visit.

Publications

The project with Edinburgh University Press to publish the *History of libraries in Scotland*, in which several committee members are involved, suffered a setback this year. Following the end of the current project funding, bids for continuing funding for staffing, development of online research resources, and associated events were unsuccessful - probably a reflection of the current economic climate. The publication itself will still go ahead, and the editorial team is working hard to ensure that momentum is not lost despite the loss of financial and staff support.

Meetings Report 2007-2008

Three committee meetings were held in 2009-10: in June 2009 in Cambridge, November 2009 in Manchester (which was also the AGM) and in March 2010 in Leicester, where besides the standard business meeting, an extraordinary meeting was held specifically to consider strategy in the light of feedback from members.

Future direction of the Group

Our full review of strategy following consultation with members showed that the aims set out in 2009 remain entirely valid, namely:

- To continue to develop the regional activities of the Group, organising events throughout the country, with the aim of attracting new audiences as well as our existing membership.
- To work with other organisations in the UK and beyond to broaden awareness of library history and information history.
- To make effective use of electronic means to keep members informed, to publicise Group aims and activities, and to provide resources for those with an interest in library and information history. Whilst using electronic communication mechanisms wherever appropriate, we will continue to communicate with all members via a postal mailing on an annual basis, and to provide materials in hardcopy for those unable to access electronic resources.
- To continue to support research and publications in the field through bursaries, awards, and other appropriate assistance.

Kathryn McKee
LIHG Chair