You can't go it alone

Celebrating the past helps us to build for the future, says *Alistair Campbell*.

Brought up in Edinburgh, the capital was my education: Chambers Street Museum; James Thin; trainspotting at the Waverley Station (my anorak long since despatched!); Tynecastle, where Willie Bauld, Alex Young and Dave Mackay strode like gods; and Corstorphine Library which, in retrospect, if not quite providing a pool of awe, had sufficient acres of promises and more than a few wonders for taking.

School was the Royal High where the English Department was inspirational, the atoms of delight revealed with knowledge and enthusiasm. Then Edinburgh University where a degree in politics and history was followed by a B Com and then two misplaced years as a trainee accountant.

I had, I suspect, always wanted to be that other kind of book keeper. I was always an avid reader and fascinated by books and by other people's interest in them. Hence a career in public libraries; a year working for Edinburgh being followed by a postgraduate year at Robert Gordons and then employment as Librarian at Carnoustie in Angus under the guidance of that kindest of librarians, Gavin Drummond.

Some seven years later came a move to Moray for what I had intended would be a two year stay at most to gain experience before returning to central Scotland. Some 20 years later I am still there, the quality of life, not forgetting one of our key local industries, being an irresistible attraction. And yes I still gained that wider experience by remaining in Moray as well as the opportunities to be involved in our professional organisation and contribute to the work of SLIC. In short, I am incredibly fortunate to work for a local authority and communities which recognise the importance of public libraries in their daily lives. Professionally I am privileged to be working in libraries at one of the most exciting times in their history, but more of that later.

My first presidential column provides the opportunity to glance backwards and then peer resolutely ahead, seeking for some theme, appropriate or otherwise, around which to shape the next 12 months. That theme, which also gives the banner headline for the CILIPS conference in June, is 'Celebrating the Past, Building for the Future'.

Looking backwards demands more than just a cursory glance, in that later this year we celebrate 150 years since the passing of the Public Libraries

(Scotland) Act. Airdrie, in good alphabetical style, was first off the mark in those far off days, with Dundee a less than close second some 13 years later. And while initial adoption of the act might have been slow for a variety of reasons there is little doubt that it was external funding that led to the period of most rapid acceptance some 100 years ago, the wealth of Carnegie making that material difference in establishing the public library as a key community service.

The events organised by CILIP in Scotland to celebrate these 150 years, not least a travelling exhibition to be launched by the Minister in March, offer every public library service the ideal opportunity to assert its profile and promote the dynamic new opportunities offered through the People's Network provision, which ironically too has relied on significant external funding.

If we fail to deliver on the People's Network, we fail. But we are not going to fail, because one of the major characteristics in its development has been the underpinning recognition that a partnership approach is essential, and that frankly no public library authority, whatever its size, can go it alone. This partnership approach is clearly exemplified across public library services through such initiatives as the SLIC e-content group and by co-operation across the sectors in providing integrated approaches to learning opportunities.

The People's Network is far from solely a public libraries concern and challenges all libraries to seek more integrated solutions in providing learning and high quality information.

That we can celebrate the past with satisfaction and continue to build effectively for the future is very much due to the achievements of Robert Craig. As first full time Director of the SLA and founding Director of the crucially influential Scottish Library and Information Council, Robert's leadership has taken us literally from 1984 to that Brave New World of libraries which is now ours. His advocacy made libraries and librarianship credible and influential locally and nationally, his gift of achieving real co-operation for the benefit of all ensuring he was our friend as well as our leader. His advice was always eagerly sought and readily accepted, his work behind the scenes always effective.

The respect and affection that Robert generated across the profession and at the highest levels of government were celebrated at his retiral lunch in Glasgow on 31 January when over 80 of his colleagues, past and present, from within and outwith the profession, enjoyed an excellent time.

Lord Provost Alex Mosson of Glasgow, Alex Howson a former President of the SLA, Bob McKee, Chief Executive of CILIP and Rosemary McKenna MP on behalf of Peter Peacock, Deputy Minister for Finance and Public Services paid formal and witty tribute to Robert the 'Godfather', who in turn replied in his own inimitable style. It's a great privilege to have known and worked with the man.

Where CILIPS, SLIC and Scottish library and information services now stand is tribute indeed to the achievements of Robert Craig, and we should take great pride and strength from his legacy and look forward to the continuing work of his successor Elaine Fulton and the team at Hamilton.

What are you doing tomorrow?

Don't leave *Matthew Perren* alone with the tumbleweed - he wants you to respond to his ideas. Read on and take action - now!

In a couple of months I'll have been doing my job for a year. That'll be me half way through my contract and in another 12 months time I'll be away: a dim and distant memory.

In the meantime I'm still here, a living breathing resource with 17 years of bookselling experience behind me. Experience of doing promotions; writing recommendations; training and encouraging people to do the same; setting up reading groups; recruiting and training people to share their love of books with the public; choosing and buying contemporary fiction, poetry, narrative non-fiction and every other category under the sun.

I've been writing articles in this journal for 10 months and I've been putting out the Reader Development Bulletin for nearly as long. I enjoy it. I like hearing an idea, understanding how it works and then passing it on.

And there's my problem. I pass on ideas and then... nothing. I sit in the office in Hamilton and watch the tumble weed go past. At least I have my heavy-lifting, high dusting and making tea for the Director to keep me busy.

But you can save me and here's how. Below you'll find some ideas. They are cheap, easy to do and will be more helpful in increasing your issues than doing nothing. I'm on the other end of the phone for anyone who wants to ask for help or advice. I might even come to see you if you ask nicely.

The first idea is really simple. Put some books face out at the front of the library. In order to choose the best place for them, walk out of the front door, clear your mind and pretend you're a library user (well you are aren't you?) and walk back in again. Where did your eye fall first? Put the display there.

Once you've done that, you can start to play with the books you put there. A good first principle in Reader Development is: try to pick books that haven't issued for a while because, let's face it, Catherine Cookson and Margaret Thompson Davis don't need the help.

Done that? OK now you can start to play. Here are some ideas I've seen used in libraries and bookshops. They all work.

- Books from a particular country: You could have Italian novels, travel guides, travel literature, even cook books.

- Books that are about to be withdrawn. You could call it "Last Chance to See.." or "Last Chance Saloon" and if you think they're lame then think up your own.

- When I was bookselling I had a list of short books in my head that I used to recommend to people who didn't know what to read next. Usually the authors with a fairly large backlist so that if they enjoyed the snack they might go on and eat a full meal. It worked really well. People sought me out to thank me for introducing them to an author they might otherwise have missed. I have a list here that I can let you have as a starter. If you've a short book of your own that you'd like to add then let me know.

- Books that have blue covers. Or red or green or orange. You decide. I'm not kidding; this not only looks lovely but it works. Titles get brought together that would never normally get within 10 yards of each other which challenges your readers to pick up something new.

- Shout about your new stock before it arrives. One library I visited had produced a list of forthcoming books. It was photocopied, on three sheets, just titles and author names. They had produced hundreds of copies - but they had all been taken in the first week. Perhaps you

could add a reservation slip to the bottom. It's great to pique the interest of your readers like that and to encourage them to use your services.

- Get colleagues to write a short recommendation for their favourite book. It should be no more than three sentences long and written in clear, accessible English. I have templates here that I can let you have that will allow you to type the comments onto address labels which you can then stick on the book. (Some libraries use the back, some the front, some inside the front cover.) Display them prominently at the front of the library, face out, indicating that they are recommended reads. You could even photocopy the sheet of labels and stick that up too. I've got some sheets of recommendations already done here that I will happily email. Of course you'll have to put up with the books I recommend. I dare you...

- You could put a slip into the book to encourage readers to feed back their own opinions on how they found it. These can be left with the book to create a sort of informal book chain or copied and pinned up for everyone to read.

So there you are. Some quick and easy things to try along with the offer of cheerful, well-informed and, frankly, free help. I don't think it gets better than that does it?

Contact me! 01698 458 888. 07799 662 931 (mobile); slic1@slainte.org.uk.

Information Scotland is delivered online by the SAPIENS electronic publishing service based at the Centre for Digital Library Research. SLAINTE (Scottish libraries across the Internet) offers further information about librarianship and information management in Scotland.

Cables and connections

Elaine Fulton, **new Director of CILIPS and SLIC, reveals her future plans.**

I see my main role as Director as to promote and support the aims and objectives of CILIPS and SLIC for the benefit of members and the wider

community. A key role is to give strategic direction to CILIPS and SLIC and implement the policies agreed by the governance structures of both organisations. Communication, advocacy and leadership are the challenges of this post, in particular to communicate the value of library and information services and professionals to policy makers at the highest level in government

In the last five years library and information services throughout Scotland have undergone great changes due to the impact of electronic resources and the Internet. However there is still much to be done to ensure the current level of interest in the pivotal role that library services of all kinds is maintained and secured. Consolidation is the key and developing support for the profession will be an immediate priority to ensure that the skills of library and information professionals are recognised by others as relevant and necessary in the 21st Century.

At the same time the profession needs to have a mechanism to make sure their skills and competencies are up-to-date. The creation of digital libraries and the information explosion will mean that professionals will need to demonstrate their understanding of technical issues and have the skills to create robust metadata, which will help to ensure that information can be accessed easily and quickly. In addition I believe the mediation role of the librarian with users will be important. Information literacy and information management and consultancy are areas I hope that CILIPS can develop in the coming years.

The current and developing landscape has five main strands:

- Lifelong learning
- Digital libraries
- Modernising government
- Reader development and cultural support
- Social inclusion.

Libraries have a long history of working in these areas and more recently the People's Network and other related initiatives have raised the profile of the profession's role in encouraging lifelong learning. The sector has key skills which can enable access to information and learning. Librarians have long prided themselves with their work in reaching into communities, encouraging and supporting reading and literature. In the next few years balancing of all of these roles will be crucial to be able to respond to the needs of users.

One worrying trend is the status of library and information services within organisations and the falling number of library professionals who are able

to reach executive and senior management level within organisations. This is in spite of a growing acceptance at a central government level that libraries have a role to play in supporting the Information Society. I hope to look at how we can offer our members opportunities to develop management competencies which will help them to progress into more senior roles within organisations. There is also a real concern about securing sustainable funding as libraries develop their information roles further.

The People's Network gives us a real opportunity to show the range and diversity of what library and information services can offer. The public are responding positively to this investment in the UK's public libraries – visitor numbers are rising, comments from the public are positive and more importantly people who would not normally have thought that the public library had something to offer them are becoming users. This can only be positive and we need to build on this success ensuring all staff are well trained and that the biggest single investment in public libraries since Andrew Carnegie is not squandered.

2003 is the anniversary of 150 years of public libraries in Scotland we are hoping to run a number of events throughout the year which we hope will attract media attention including a travelling exhibition celebrating the service.

For SLIC and CILIPS working with others has been the key to the successes in the recent past and this will be no different in the future both at a political and organisational level. This involves talking to a range of other organisations about their aims and objectives and "selling" libraries to them. The advocacy role of SLIC and CILIPS is one of the main functions of the Director, which I look forward to, as I have always believed that as a profession we have much to offer but we are not very good at marketing ourselves.

Much of the success in the recent past has come through co-operation and collaboration. It is one of the true strengths of the profession that is not often seen in other professions. This is something we can build on.

As Robert Craig said, it will be a tricky task "...to maintain the momentum of the last dizzy few years." He is absolutely right. Both SLIC and CILIPS have had many successes recently, but they don't happen out of the blue, they are as a result of much hard work, lobbying and support from the members. So I am ready to work hard and continue lobbying and I look forward to continued support from the profession.

My life as a techie

Elaine's background is in public libraries with posts including library assistant, Branch Librarian, Audio and Reference Librarian and Systems Librarian. For about 10 years what attracted her interest was the role that electronic systems could play in delivering better and more effective services. That led to a brief sojourn working for a library systems supplier which, she says, "Gave me a whole different view."

She continues: "I am an anorak – a techie. At one stage in my career I was known to carry cables, connectors and a screwdriver in my handbag! The development of ICT in libraries really inspires me. It's not a panacea to cure all ills for library services, but with sound investment in resources and staff it can really improve the quality of service."

Value added facts

George Kerr **describes the amazing database deal for Scotland's public libraries that SLIC has secured with left-over funding from the People's Network.**

In Scotland, the national People's Network project, designed to provide all public libraries with a range of fast public terminals accessing the internet, has been part-managed by SLIC. As the project neared completion it became obvious that there was a residual amount of funding left over from the sum which had been made available to fund the infrastructure for the project.

A similar sum was left over in England and Wales, and there competitive bids were encouraged from public libraries for projects which would enhance the 'basic' provision. In Scotland it was thought that it would be more socially inclusive to spread the benefits of spending this residual sum (c £500,000) across all library authorities. SLIC persuaded the New Opportunities Fund (the funding authority) to allow the expenditure to be incurred to fund marketing for the new-look libraries, web enable public library catalogues and to seek a range of online subscription databases which could then be offered to library users right across the country.

This external funding might be the only opportunity which smaller library services would have to provide this sort of service. It would provide the opportunity to try to attract unit cost savings by negotiating a national consortium deal. In addition it would enable a test of the value of such products using the Scottish national access as a large 'test bed'.

A range of online subscription databases was selected by those libraries in Scotland who already had some experience with such products. All the companies were then asked if they were interested in the concept and in being involved in an assessment process. It was made clear to them that the available money could not fund subscriptions to all the products and that they should view their involvement in the project as a marketing opportunity. All the companies were asked to supply month long test logins which were to be supplied to all 32 Scottish Public Library services. They were invited to attend an 'Information Day' at Edinburgh University Library where they would all have the opportunity to demonstrate their products online to representatives from the 32 Scottish library services. Finally they were all asked to quote a price for provision of online access to public terminals in every Scottish public library based on a two-year deal. The quote was to indicate if there was a price variation depending on the number of simultaneous users and remote authenticated access. The quote was also to include the cost of staff training and product marketing. Of the 16 companies approached, 12 eventually decided to participate.

The Information Day was held in August after all library services had had about 4-5 weeks online access on a test basis. The day consisted of presentations about the potential of subscription databases for public library customers, followed by detailed demonstrations of the online products. The library service representatives examined the products critically, followed by a feedback session. All representatives were then asked to send a measured assessment to SLIC based on a 'score' (on a scale 1-6) for each product.

A decision had been taken earlier that, if funding allowed, one database from each of several different types (e.g. general information, online newspapers, company/management information) would be chosen. Pulling together the scored assessments, the wish to have a range of different types of database and the individual product prices, three options (which included slightly different mixes of the products, and the pros and cons of the mix) were then presented to a meeting of Scottish heads of library services in early September, and one of the options was then chosen. The whole process was designed to secure consensus across all 32 library services.

The favoured option included three products. Know UK; Newsbank (an option on any five chosen titles); and Kompass UK. Unsuccessful companies were contacted and assured that their 'failure' in no way represented any problem with the product but simply the fact that in a very competitive field they had assessed slightly lower than their competitors. At the information day all companies (most of whom already had existing Scottish customers) gave an assurance that, in the event of success, they would ensure pro-rata refunds on existing contracts. The unsuccessful companies were reminded of this since the refunds would release additional funding for some library services, who might wish to take this opportunity to extend their online subscription database provision.

National (or in larger countries regional) consortia arrangements of this type bring many benefits:

- Discounts of up to 40% compared with individually negotiated library deals, are possible.
- Smaller and less wealthy services are able to offer a range of services which might otherwise not be possible.
- The size of the deal also meant that invaluable add-on access provision, such as remote authenticated access, was included at no extra charge. This will be an invaluable extra social inclusion benefit available via the People's Network.
- The willingness of the successful companies to offer refunds to existing customers should mean that these libraries will be able to further extend the range of online databases available for customers at no extra cost.
- The willingness of all the companies involved to include significant staff training will be significant in maximising use of the new services.
- The willingness of the successful companies to contribute to the marketing of the new services will help to maximise use.
- Maximising use will be important in future assessment of the impact of the PN and thus a vital part of any future sustainability arguments put before funding organisations.

George Kerr is SLIC Consultant and formerly Customer Services Manager, West Lothian Council Library Service.

Training

On an equal footing

The New Opportunities funded Training for School Librarians recognises the high level of their ICT skills, says *Rhona Arthur*.

It was back in 1998 when the Government announced its intention to allocate £230 million of National Lottery Funding to provide Information and Communications Technology (ICT) training for teachers and school librarians. The Scottish fund amounted to £23m. The training was part of the Government's commitment to the 1997 Connecting the Learning Society paper which aimed to have all schools connected to the Internet by 2002. From the outset school librarians were seen as an important part of this strategy and representatives from the sector and SLIC have been involved in the development of the programme.

The aim of the programme is to embed ICT in everyday learning and teaching and to equip teachers and school librarians with the confidence and skills to do this. Ultimately the raising of the standards of pupils' learning experience and achievement was the main driver.

Discussions were held at COSLA in 1998 with BECTa and a range of representatives who discussed research into the current skills base. It was established that, in general, school librarians had a higher skills base than teachers. A range of Expected Outcomes (New Opportunities Fund website, http://www.nof.org.uk/) were defined by the Scottish Executive, which it was anticipated would provide teachers and school librarians with the appropriate knowledge and skills to understand when, when not and how to use ICT effectively in learning and teaching.

It was agreed that training could be provided by a range of providers – higher and further education institutions, local authorities, private companies and consortia – and that proposals should be examined so that there was adequate coverage. The New Opportunities Fund (NOF) invited interested parties to apply for Approved Training Provider status. This commenced with advertisements in newspapers and introductory seminar, prior to scrutiny of the proposals of the applicants by a panel of experts (including HMI, educational representatives and librarians).

The aim was to ensure adequate capacity, a choice of delivery mechanisms, a commitment to coverage of the Expected Outcomes within

a Scottish context, flexibility, robust management and appropriate quality assurance. There were seven providers who initially applied to provide training for school librarians and four were felt to have demonstrated an appropriate Scottish and school library context. However, only three are still delivering training. By comparison, 14 were originally approved to deliver training to Scottish teachers, 10 are still in operation (of these, two deliver training throughout the UK and eight in Scotland only). The NOF allocation worked out at £450 per head and the funding could only be spent with an approved training provider. Providers were able to claim 30% when trainees signed up and 70% on completion.

Quality Assurance by HMIE

The overall responsibility for the quality assurance of training in Scotland was given to HMIE and a team of Inspectors and Associate Assessors was established. Part of the team evaluated the training materials for each curricular area and for school librarians at the beginning of the training and the quality of the school librarians' learning materials were assessed as either good or very good. The other part of the team was trained to carry out evaluations of the training providers.

A series of eight quality indicators (the Scottish New Opportunities Fund support web site, http://www.ngflscotland.gov.uk/nof.asp) were agreed in early 2000, and evaluations of all providers were carried out in each year of operation. The evaluation teams examine the self-evaluation report of providers, carry out questionnaires, visit schools, speak to Education Authorities and training providers, observe training, collect evidence of best practice and scrutinise internal quality assurance mechanisms.

Following the discussion of the evaluation report with each provider, an action plan has to be submitted, clearly setting out plans for improvement. HMIE then carry-out a follow-up on the action plan and a mid-year report is also submitted to HMIE to ensure that the quality of the training programme is kept on track.

Throughout the programme, HMIE has held a series of meetings with the teams of Inspectors and Associate Assessors, the Education Authorities and Approved Training Providers. These discussions have provided a useful platform for the exchange of ideas and information, kept all parties up to date with developments and encouraged sharing of best practice. More information about the programme is contained in an HMIE interim report ICT: Into the Classroom of Tomorrow (available at http://www.hmie.gov.uk/) which was published in June 2002.

The ICT training was a massive undertaking – the up-skilling of an entire profession in a tight timescale – by NOF, who were at that time a newly established funding body. NOF's role was to provide the funding and a robust structure for the training. They were not the provider of the training and were responsible at arms length for the quality assurance. Many of the trainers were newly created consortia, which had to respond quickly to the needs of the programme. The uptake of training is over 90% but concerns about completion (and the definition thereof) still persist.

The Training Providers

School librarians had the opportunity to select from three training providers – Scotia, a consortium led by Glasgow University, the Robert Gordon University and Queen Margaret University College, Scotsys and the Learning Schools Programme (LSP), a consortium of the Open University, RM and SCET (as it was then). Scotia and LSP offered face-to-face workshops led by trainers which were supplemented with self-study modules to be completed between the workshops. Scotsys carried out intensive training with staff identified by the local authority and then the local authority staff delivered the Scotsys programme at local level. All programmes included websites, discussion lists and email contact elements.

The crucial element in the success of the training and customer satisfaction rested with the completion of the training needs analysis (TNA) and the provision of appropriately differentiated learning. Weaknesses in these procedures in the early phases of the programme gave rise to concern, and resulted in some librarians having an unsatisfactory training experience. The NOF training was not ICT skills-acquisition based, as in the case of the Public Library Staff ICT training's ECDL component but focused on when, when not and how to use ICT in learning and teaching.

Also, it is important to understand this was not primarily driven by value for money but by providing a blanket level of knowledge and understanding, rather than developing an individual's skills as far as possible given the sum of money provided. However, the learning materials provided to the teams of assessors show a range of challenging extension materials for those with well-developed ICT skills.

Impact

Overall, the evidence collected by HMIE and the approved training providers demonstrates that the programme has had a positive impact on teachers and school librarians. There was always a high level of ICT use in school libraries/resource centres compared to many classrooms but visits

to schools and discussions with practitioners show that there is an improved level of confidence and greater expertise.

In some instances, school librarians were not widely familiar with the Expected Outcomes. Where HMIE found this to be an issue, providers have been asked to ensure that there is more emphasis and coverage.

There were, in some places, issues about access to hardware, software and Internet connections. Glasgow, for example, opted to wait until the extensive PPP programme, which has resulted in the building of many new school libraries, had been completed. Other school librarians found themselves waiting for email addresses or the right software or for the Internet connection to be reactivated after the school holidays.

Issues

For both teachers and school librarians, as with the Public Library Programme, identifying time to complete the modules and undertake extension activities was a problem. The training was most often agreed between the Head of School Library Service (or equivalent), the training provider, head teachers and the school librarian. In some cases the roles and responsibility of the Head of School Library Service and the training provider was not clearly understood and this led to confusion about important issues like the monitoring and signing off process.

In some cases, head teachers were not always aware of the content and progress of their librarian's training and consequently the need for non-contact time to allow for study went unrecognised.

The success of the programme also rested with the ability of each individual librarian to maintain motivation and the quality of their time management skills. Progress should have been encouraged by the use of progress checks, based on the Expected Outcomes, and creation of portfolios of work. This was not always implemented consistently. The progress check should also have been used to assess further training needs and build towards the individual action plan required at the end of the programme.

The quality of the learning experience

The overall quality of the learning experience improved where the TNA was used to inform trainers and differentiated training was provided. The training was most successful where school librarians:

- had a broad understanding of the Expected Outcomes;

- understood the structure of the training programme and could see pathways clearly;

- had the necessary motivation and time management skills to complete modules;

- felt supported throughout the process, in the school, at authority level and by the trainer;

- could see the relevance of their training to their work in the school library;

- were able to access examples of best practice;

- had the opportunity to use skills actively during training and immediately afterwards;

- could draw mutual support from peers;

- and were clear about the "book-ends" of the training – the TNA, the final action plan and the signing-off process.

Putting ICT into practice

There are many good examples of PowerPoint, which is easily tracked to the NOF training, as it was not widely used prior to the programme, being used effectively in learning. These include presentations running on library websites to support pupils as they embark on research, use search engines or create bibliographies.

More interesting, are the examples of school librarians who are actively trying to convey to pupils a critical judgement of when and when not to use ICT. This is evidenced in working with pupils to develop research strategies, evaluating sources and a recognition that all that is www is not gold. It is increasingly recognised that information literacy and the development of information handling skills will be one of the key areas for school librarians.

Legacy

The NOF ICT Training for Teachers and School Librarians is approaching its final phase. The training must be completed by the end of this year. The Scottish Executive has funded Masterclass, its latest ICT training initiative. Education Authorities were invited to identify a total of 600 participants for intensive ICT training so that the participants can return to their Education Authorities to promote learning communities in ICT.

The first sessions were held at SETT (the Scottish Education and Teaching with Technology) Exhibition in September 2002 and this is followed by a four-day residential training course at the Stirling Management Centre, with sessions on Managing ICT resources, ICT and learning styles, ICT and inclusion, the MIICE toolkit, Think.com and a collaborative task. Of the 600 participants 16 have a school library background, and their sessions are in early March.

An online community of Masterclass participants is being created based on the use of Think.com and participants are expected to contribute to the content on an ongoing basis. The long-term future of this programme is still under discussion.

This is the first instance of school librarians being included on an equal footing in teacher training to my knowledge. HMIE have been meticulous in their efforts to ensure that their interests have been represented throughout the programme. Alan Ogg HMI has maintained a high-level of contact with SLIC throughout the programme and the exchange of views and sharing of expertise has resulted in improved ICT training to the benefit of school librarians.

Rhona Arthur is Assistant Director, SLIC.

Writers in the flesh

Commemorating our dead writers helps us cherish those still living, writes *Colin Will*.

I have written before about name changes - how carefully they must be considered (if at all), and how important the 'right' name is. So it's a pleasure to welcome the very positive ring that *Information Scotland* has.

Along with the new name, we have a new editor. So it's also a pleasure to welcome Debby Raven, and another one to say thanks and best wishes to

Wendy Frankiss in her new ventures. (Heavens, all these pleasures - I'll need to go away and lie down).

After the indulgences of the festive season, I was going to call this column The Waist Land, but I resisted. As I write this, I'm about to celebrate Burns Night in the usual fashion so I'll have to redouble my efforts in the gym in a vain attempt to burn off the calories. Why do we single out Robert Burns from the distinguished ranks of our fine writers? MacDiarmid rated another poet higher - "Not Burns, Dunbar!", but MacDiarmid was a very 'either-or' kind of person, and the idea that anyone could enjoy both probably didn't appeal to him. I'm a big admirer of Dunbar myself - the poet as well as the place - and I've frequently quoted his works in public (they can't touch you for it). But I find that my enjoyment of the poems and songs of Burns doesn't diminish my liking for the works of Dunbar, or of many other writers.

Who then, aside from Burns, should we celebrate? In the early nineteenth century, Sir Walter Scott was the most popular Scottish writer of his time, but maybe our literary tastes have changed. Being obliged to read him for the 'Highers' in the 1950s certainly didn't help my appreciation of his worth. The ideas and stories are strong, but his language is very much of his time, and today's society is so different from his that it's often hard to identify with his characters.

A later nineteenth century writer, Robert Louis Stevenson, on the other hand, is someone I still read for pleasure, and he'd have to be on my 'Best of' Bookshelf. How would you commemorate RLS? *Treasure Island* Toasts anyone? I'm looking for Samoa ideas - maybe I'll maybe take my ass to the South of France for the summer.

Byron was a major poet by any standards, with bags of charisma, idealism and talent, but it's often easy to overlook his Scottish birth. He lacks the common touch, and some other characteristics of our national identity. Or am I wrong? Somehow though, a Byron's Supper doesn't sound quite right.

No, I'm back to The Immortal Memory again. Burns had a unique combination of characteristics that make him loved here and abroad, two hundred years after his death. I don't think anyone else since has had the same claim on our affections, or not to the same extent.

How do we regard our living writers? One of the most encouraging features of the literary scene in recent days has been the success of festivals. I remember, for instance, the first Edinburgh International Book Festival. This has gone from strength to strength, proving again and again that readers like to see and hear writers in the flesh. And why not? By and large we're interesting and lovable people, with something worthwhile to say.

Sitting in a tent on a dreich Edinburgh summer day with an enthusiastic writer can be a rewarding and enriching experience.

Another very successful festival is StAnza: Scotland's Poetry Festival, which takes place in St Andrews every year. This year it's changed to a spring festival, and it's on in March, with joint themes of Poetry and the Garden, and Poetry and Song. The list of featured writers and musicians is as impressive as ever, and with a national and international flavour (www.st-and.ac.uk/standrews/stanza).

Going to poetry readings is another good way to 'Meet the Writer'. A long-established Edinburgh group - Shore Poets - meets monthly and has huge (by poetry standards anyway) audiences. To find out what's on in your area, one of the best information sources is the Scottish Poetry Library's website (www.spl.org.uk). They have an events information service delivered by e-mail, and a good links page. It's a valuable specialist supplement to the services local librarians provide.

At the same time as the audience for poetry is a reasonable one, the situation for poetry publishers is as parlous as it ever was. Subscriptions are the bread and butter for poetry magazines, with Scottish Arts Council support being the jam (and some go without). It is so difficult to keep going and to make ends meet, that I sometimes ask publishers why they continue. "For the love of it" is the usual answer, and we should all be grateful that there are enough people who care about our literature to want to make more of it available to everyone.

Who remembers Burns' publisher? Who (apart from me) will raise a glass to the person who, by printing and selling his work, and by promoting the writer himself, laid the foundations for all those Burns Clubs and Suppers, and the whole Burns Experience in all its manifestations?

Colin Will, Dunstampin Books

Claiming our territory

A conference in Wales and other events highlight that IT capability is as crucial as literacy and numeracy, finds *Alistair Campbell*.

Early March, and the road and miles to Dundee for the national launch of the People's Network in Scotland. A virtual launch, no less, when in tripartite wooing of the media Anniesland, Dundee and Oban were linked by video conferencing. And what a satisfactory morning it was, the Minister Dr Elaine Murray, and the Chair of SLIC, Rhona Brankin, proving to be articulate and enthusiastic advocates for libraries and learning. And our Director, Elaine Fulton, a SOAP star at last!

Cliché, or not, the People's Network is the biggest thing to happen to public libraries since Andrew Carnegie, and yes it should also be a pretty big thing for other types of libraries if it's being developed and delivered appropriately. A robust ICT network, locally and nationally, is almost in place.

The last boxes and pieces of spaghetti are finally being connected by those authorities at the mercy of BT's inadequate rural provision. Library staff across the country have been trained in ICT, developed to assist others in its use and some are now qualified to deliver even wider learning opportunities to existing and new library users.

And the fundamental challenges of high quality content are being addressed. We are already seeing: excellent local heritage material; co-ordinated online reference provision via the NOF residue funding; key topic gateways; effective children's and teenage portals; authorities preparing their own online learning material; the identification and accessing of relevant learning content; and the commitment to reader development to encourage greater use of traditional services.

And underpinning this, as evidenced by the Public Library Heads of Service meeting in mid March, a commitment to genuine inter-authority working which seeks national solutions to providing relevant content and reducing unnecessary duplication while allowing for local needs and emphases. Will the vision of nationally guaranteed levels of information provision become a reality? I hope so.

Libraries as learning centres and learning points, some as Learndirect Scotland Centres, as ECDL centres, as SQA centres, often in partnership

with local colleges and other providers with a re-trained and re-energised staff? - Yes.

Libraries as key outlets in the social inclusion and modernising government agendas? - Yes. Library and Information Services tasked with responsibility for council information and council websites? - Yes. A new recognition within local authorities of the importance of organised, high quality information, managed by library professionals? - Yes. Absolute recognition of the power of partnership? - Yes.

These are just some of the characteristics of the brave new world of the People's Network where the rate of change has been incredible. And no doubt the implementation was exhausting, but the opportunities are exhilarating. And I suspect that the core elements of enhanced application of ICT, refocused services, the management of change, increased partnership working and new emphasis on lateral thinking typify many other library sectors in recent years.

That is why I was delighted at Dundee to record a genuine appreciation of the commitment of library staff to the Network. The following day provided the icing on the cake when my own authority confirmed a new career and salary structure for all public library staff because of the Network.

"Lovely the woods, waters, meadows, combes, vales". Mid March and the pleasure of attending the Welsh conference at Llandidrod Wells, bang in the middle of Wales, the theme '24/7, opening up access'. The hospitality was excellent, and the conference content stimulating, in that our Welsh colleagues have similar challenges to our own. And while their professional infrastructure is relatively strong and there is a sound commitment to co-operation, their services lack the organisational infrastructure that we enjoy in Scotland because of SLIC.

The key themes included resource sharing for the future, health information for all, reader development and co-operation between the FE/HE and public libraries as in North Wales. This latter development might well benefit from the experiences of the Ayrshire Library Forum which has made great achievements in delivering integrated lifelong learning and information opportunities across the sectors.

Learning Centres and ICT literacy developments in the most deprived areas of Bridgend via their Life centres was of particular interest. Provision also includes a mobile learning centre with satellite technology. Ah, if only we could guarantee that this would work in Glenlivet, Knockando or Cardhu, where the local atmospheres have a particularly unsteadying effect on clear and focused reception!

The key paper was by Sheila Corrall, President of CILIP, on the theme of 'Developing Information Capability'. We have in the last 150 years moved from the industrial society to the so called information society, and yet so many of our citizens lack the fundamental skills to find, organise, interpret and use appropriate information.

Who better than the library profession to address this problem? This shouldn't be new territory, but it should be our territory, and our opportunity to develop appropriate initiatives and associated qualifications at a national level.

And these are surely equally as important and as deserving of funding as the current national initiatives on literacy and numeracy. Now, there's a test of our negotiating skills!

Profile: Alison Hunter

Remote access

Running a rural library service that reaches right into the community.

Alison Hunter has been in post as Library and Information Services Manager for Shetland Islands Council Library Service for just over nine months. She started her career as a school librarian with Strathclyde Regional Council and has been a mobile librarian, branch librarian and then a young people's librarian with both Edinburgh City and East Lothian.

A spell acting up as principal librarian in East Lothian convinced her that she would like to develop her career and manage a library service, hence the move to Shetland.

She firmly believes that coming from a children's specialist background is an excellent grounding for developing a career both in terms of the skills involved and partnership working. Project management, bidding for funds,

engaging with young people and adults, events organisation and working in partnership across libraries, councils and other agencies are crucial and transferable to a head of service post.

It is an exciting period of development for Shetland Library. The service has recently moved to a newly refurbished church building with a state-of-the-art learning centre. The quality of the new premises was confirmed by two recent awards for refurbishment and by the number of people flocking in to use email and access the internet.

A restructure of the service is currently being implemented with additional library assistant posts to cope with the demands of the new building and the People's Network.

Another post of Learning Services Librarian will have the dual remit of developing and managing the learning centre and contributing to the lifelong learning agenda throughout Shetland, as well as implementing and running a library management system for the service. It is hoped to have the learning centre branded as a LearnDirect Scotland site and to set up partnerships with the local colleges and colleagues in community learning development to deliver training.

The next stage in the centre's development is to programme in taster sessions targeted at specific areas of the population, computers don't bite sessions, core skills and other training and to encourage groups to book the centre out of hours.

In Shetland school library staff report to the library service which holds a budget for lending and reference material for schools. The post of Young People's Services Librarian has been created to manage the staff in each of the eight Junior High/High schools, and support them in developing a library and information service to young people in Shetland.

While school book provision is of a very high quality, access to ICT in school libraries is in need of improvement. An ICT Education Strategy group is working towards this improvement and together with a new library management system will provide libraries in schools with much better access to ICT and online learning.

Delivering on initiatives such as Bookstart and Chatterbooks will also be an important remit of the Young People's post. Bookstart was launched in January and baby book sessions are taking place regularly throughout Shetland. Chatterbooks reading groups were launched at the beginning of April with an excellent session from children's author Keith Gray. Five groups are now underway in Shetland.

Alison feels that the biggest challenge for her in Shetland is the remote nature of the communities served. She believes this challenge can be met by turning school libraries, where possible, into community libraries, reconfiguring mobile routes and to continue to develop library collections for island communities.

ICT will also bring advantages both in terms of the People's Network and a new library management system; the council has just awarded Talis the contract for this. Users at a distance will be able to request, renew and ask for information at any time. Where appropriate, material can be delivered out through community libraries, the mobiles and the van delivery service.

There is an excellent range of community facilities in remoter parts of Shetland such as village halls and leisure centres as well as schools where partnerships could be developed to provide a library service.

Alison's priorities for the service are to complete the recruitment to the Library team and to build the team up to deliver a first class service to the people of Shetland. To this end the service is hoping to gain the IIP award in May. Developing access to People's Network and providing more content working in cooperation with library services and other agencies across Scotland is another ongoing priority. Implementing the library management system will also be a major task in the next few months. As well as improving access, it will allow the stock to be more usefully exploited and the service to be monitored and evaluated.

The management system will also help to build on reader development initiatives. Shetland Library has found Reader Development training to be of great benefit and will be cascading the skills gained down to other staff.

In the wider professional field, Alison considers the most important current issues for public library services are both building on and sustaining the People's Network and the fall in issue figures. "The People's Network has certainly increased the numbers of people coming in to libraries and the challenge is to encourage them to use other library facilities as well," She says. "Given recent and continuing developments in the library service in Shetland I feel that the service is ready to meet these challenges. I am looking forward to working with my staff, the Shetland community and library colleagues throughout Scotland.

Information Scotland is delivered online by the SAPIENS electronic publishing service based at the Centre for Digital Library Research. SLAINTE (Scottish libraries across the Internet) offers further information about librarianship and information management in Scotland.

Reader development

How reader-centred are you?

Matthew Perren **explains how to make choosing easy for your readers.**

You'll be pleased to hear that I'm feeling a little less lonely now than I was last time. The teddy on my desk is slightly less tear-stained that he was and the number of pictures of my elderly dog and cat are down to reasonable numbers again.

My last column got a great response so I obviously got something right. I don't think it was the lovely photo so I have to assume it was what I wrote. So thanks to the people who got in touch.

Given that I'm not alone out here I thought I'd talk a little about readers this time. Specifically I'm going to talk about being reader-centred - one of the guiding principles of Reader Development. It's a piece of jargon that's been coined to describe a way of working. Like all jargon its inventors think its meaning is clear. Like all jargon it's not so I'll try to explain it.

Put simply, a reader-centred approach to library work puts the interests of the reader at the heart of all the book-related work the library staff do. Easy! That's what you all do now isn't it? Is it?

I'll come clean at this point and say that it's taken me a year to finally get my head around this idea so don't feel bad if your head is spinning. First I'd like to refer to some of the ideas I wrote about in my last column.

I talked about face out display and where to put it. The best way to broaden the range of peoples' reading is simply to give them some choices. "But they already have choices", I hear you cry, "Look at all the books we've got!"

Well, that's fair enough: you have got lots of books. Your stock selection teams work hard to pick stock that will issue but some of it still doesn't, which is heartbreaking if it is a book you've read and loved.

Imagine you are one of your readers. You've come in for a browse (research shows that 70% of users are browsing). What would you rather look at: rows of spine on stock or a face out display? Go into a bookshop and look at how many people are looking on the shelves in comparison to those looking at the tables and dumpbins. In my experience it's two to one looking at tables.

Readers respond to this type of display. A reader-centred library will give it to them. Now where do you put it?

In shops they talk about their hot-spots and they spend a lot of time working out where these are. Once they've found them they use them for displaying things that they want us to notice. So how do they find them? Well I mentioned one method last time: walk into your library as if you've never been there before and see where your eye falls first. Another way is to observe your customers as they come in. Where do they look? Where do they stop? Which direction do they turn once inside the door? After a few days of careful observation you'll have a good idea of where your primary hot-spots are. That's where you should locate any promotions or face-out displays.

The idea, again, is to give them what they want. To make choosing as easy for them as you can. Generally people don't like looking for things and they are often shy of asking. If you can offer them what they're looking for without them having to ask, then you're onto a winning formula

In my last column, I also talked about tried and tested promotional ideas. All of them are great and all of them work but I have a confession: they're not strictly reader-centred. A truly reader-centred promotion starts from a different place.

All of my ideas are arrived at by thinking about how to put books together in an interesting and meaningful way. A reader-centred promotion starts by thinking about who it will be aimed at and then looks at the books that will make it up. So, a Science Fiction promotion and a promotion aimed at young male library users will have distinct differences - although maybe some of the same books. The SF promo will encourage the SF buff to read more SF. The promotion for young men will have some SF in it but it will also have other stuff, chosen by you, to appeal to young men. Looking at this and seeing some of his favourite books the SF buff will be encouraged to look at the other things displayed alongside and may well be encouraged to read more widely.

We want to help people to read more widely and to break out of their habitual reading territory. Taking a reader-centred approach will help to do that.

Finally - reader comments. Last time I offered some which I and colleagues had written. These are great but wouldn't it be better to have them written by your own readers?

Think about book reviews in the papers. The ones I like best are the ones where people choose their Summer Reading or Christmas Choices. Why is this? Well, the standard book reviews are written from a critical point of view and they are formal and often quite negative. The other sorts are refreshing because the reviewers talk about the books that they've enjoyed - like a reader. Try using your own recommendations (or mine, I'll happily send them to you) as a taster and to encourage your readers to write their own.

So there you are: reader-centred work explained. Please contact me if you want more information or if you're interested in getting my book recommendations emailed to you. I'd love to hear from you.

Get in touch! Contact Matthew on 01698 458 888; 07799 662 931 (mobile); slic1@slainte.org.uk

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150 years of public libraries in Scotland

The More We Are Together

To coincide with celebrations of 150 years of public libraries in Scotland a series of articles will look at how libraries from other sectors have fared over that period. *Stuart James* starts with higher education.

150 years? A mere blink of the eye to such as Saint Andrews, Aberdeen or Glasgow Universities founded in the fifteenth century, or to Edinburgh of the sixteenth. Why, even Anderson's College (later to metamorphose into Strathclyde University) came into existence at the end of the eighteenth century and preceded these new-fangled rate-supported libraries by more than 50 years.

As the new libraries were to be the working man's (and woman's) university, they offered a truly public and very distinct contrast to their academic neighbours. Old the university libraries might be, but accessible they were not, except to a small academic community of scholars (and their friends). In some cases, the admission of undergraduates to university libraries was a matter for acrimonious debate into the twentieth century. Such conditions did, however, help preserve some remarkable collections for our wider enjoyment today in a very different virtual world.

The new and the old not only co-existed but came slightly closer together in professional terms. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw a developing professionalism among librarians in both sectors, with catalogues being produced and problems of conservation and use beginning to be tackled; still, in university libraries that tended to be against a backdrop of strong academic control and chronic shortage of resources (a world view familiar still in some institutions). University libraries generally kept their foundation and major collections in a central library, while as book production burgeoned during the new century teaching or research collections began to appear in academic departments; only now are more of these finally being deposited in the central collection, while new specialist collections still spring up in many departments.

The expansion of volumes grew apace, with buildings, catalogues and librarians struggling to keep pace, and well into the 1960s and 70s often enough failing to do so. University expansion of the 1950s and beyond brought alarming prospects of university libraries acquiring more and more books and gradually swallowing whole campuses (and their budgets). The Atkinson Report of 1976 tried to call a halt by inventing the concept of the self-renewing library: one of those ideas doomed to failure in its literal interpretation, but putting the concept of collection management very much on the agenda, where it has remained ever since.

Not only libraries were expanding, but the whole sector too. 1882 saw the arrival of the University College Dundee, but it was to be the second half of the twentieth century which produced first new universities in Stirling and at Heriot-Watt, Edinburgh, then in 1992 of course the scrapping of the binary divide to bring five more new universities into the fold. Not all that new necessarily: just a few years later Paisley was to celebrate the centenary of

its foundation in a previous guise, while Napier, Robert Gordon's, Abertay and Glasgow Caledonian had either been around for some time or contained constituent parts which dated back a long way. In the meantime too specialist art, teacher training and agricultural colleges had developed and post-1992 these (and so their libraries) also came into the formal higher education sector either as independent bodies or (as now with all the teacher training colleges) by merger. Nursing education, too, came into higher education in the 1990s, bringing another raft of specialist libraries into the sector and complementing in new institutions the medical school libraries in many of the older universities. Thereby the health and higher education library sectors have been drawn into closer partnership.

By the latter part of the twentieth century the professional basis of university librarianship was well established. A generation of able and powerful librarians established collection, service and management standards which their successors would gratefully inherit; those foundations paved the way for automation which initially affected (or saved from drowning in chaos) university libraries. Scolcap of blessed memory was primarily an HE initiative: ultimately it was to fail for a number of reasons - technical, commercial and organisational - but it gave many of us a first taste of addressing the issues of automation, and of collaborating with one another.

Those were interesting times in every sense, but most of the scars seem to have healed. Certainly they have largely healed in terms of collaboration today, which is at once deeper, more extensive and more effective; the change in the Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL) in recent years is symptomatic of the real benefits of genuine collaboration between institutions of differing sizes, missions and histories.

Earlier mention of Atkinson (not forgetting Follett) points out that until devolution, universities and their libraries were funded and administered from UK sources; now we are all devolved to the Scottish Parliament and Executive, under a Scottish Higher Education Funding Council. But a tension exists, for many of the contexts for university libraries - especially the large research libraries - are United Kingdom or European and internationally focused; and for all of us the backbone electronic services on which we rely originated in JISC.

How far Scotland should, or can, develop its own policies and infrastructure is a matter of debate still. But the policy in Scotland is clear, and brings us almost full circle over 150 years. Lifelong learning underpins us all and if we have become very good at collaborating with each other we are also getting a lot better at collaborating with those now community-charge-supported libraries we are celebrating this year.

There is an exciting future for HE libraries in almost any terms - collection development, service development, virtual libraries and all the issues which arise with them - but it is one we share more than ever before with libraries in all sectors. The last 150 years may have been interesting; the next promise to be even more so.

Stuart James is Librarian of the University of Paisley

ICT and education

Embedding a vision

ICT literacy must start at school. *Carol Doig* reports on the recent 'Masterclass' training of leaders to take it through education across Scotland.

Over 10 weeks 600 head teachers, senior managers, local authority representatives and school librarians from across every local authority in Scotland have been gathering together for intensive ICT training.

The Masterclass training - organised by SEED, Learning and Teaching Scotland and Rhona Arthur (Assistant Director of SLIC) - follows on from the National Lottery-funded New Opportunity Fund (NOF) training. The aim was to create a shared vision of the potential applications and challenges of integrating ICT into the curriculum, and to encourage leadership to embed these visions in learning, teaching and management of education across Scotland.

From 4 to 7 March, a group of 60 people - including a large representation of librarians - met at Stirling University to participate in a series of seminars and workshops aimed at creating a core of key ICT personnel who have the skills to take forward ideas and disseminate information through every level of their local authority. Over the four days, 17 librarians were brought

together to share good practices and to work, collaboratively, on pertinent tasks.

Masterclass representatives attended seminars about MIICE (Measurement of the Impact of ICT on Children's Education), HGIOS and ICT (How good is our school), managing ICT resources and taking a closer look at the contribution of ICT to learning and teaching.

In addition, a series of workshops offered 'Masterclassers' the opportunity to experience practical classes about digital technologies, ICT and learning strategies, developing ICT across the curriculum, think.com workshops and e-learning.

The workshop experience
David Muir, tutor at Jordanhill, gave a presentation on the five-step model for e-learning: using electronic means to further learning. David's model - taken from work done by Gilly Salmon and Steve Heppel - was broken down into the following steps:

1. Access and motivation
2. Online socialisation
3. Information exchange
4. Knowledge construction
5. Development

David Muir made a few pertinent observations. The discussion focused on the practical implications that Jordanhill had with poor student take up of e-learning. The emphasis was on giving students or pupils the skills to access electronic resources/learning in the first place - creating skills was only the first step! Additionally, David Muir also pointed out that an interactive programme does not necessarily mean that pupils are learning. People can take part in something, but unless the activity is linked to or develops classroom learning then why use ICT; what purpose is it going to serve?

Two sessions offered hands-on experience of learning how to shoot and edit videos. Masterclassers were introduced to cropping, adding music, inserting titles and sequencing clips. The workshops also looked at using copyright-free music and animations, and demonstrations of video technology, as applied to classroom teaching, was shown to all participants. Again, the emphasis was on integrating the technologies into classroom teaching, rather than using the IT as an 'add-on'.

The third session introduced participants to the Think.com website. The site has been specially set up to provide pupils and staff with ideas for using

and developing ICT. It is a closed online community - open to Masterclass participants only - which will continue to offer opportunities to contact and share information with other Masterclassers.

Day Two saw Ivan Mykytyn, EdICT Training, give a presentation about learning styles. Ivan talked about the 'Multiple Intelligence' theory of Howard Gardner and how it could influence the way that teachers and librarians present information to pupils: are visual presentations a better way of presenting information to visual learners? All participants took part in two quizzes which were used to determine which type of learning was most appropriate for an individual - this exercise caused a lot of laughter and a few denials!

Sandra O'Neill, Call Centre, gave a presentation about special educational needs pupils in education. Sandra produced a box of useful technologies, but she also gave good practical tips about adapting existing ICT - increasing pixel sizes on monitors to help visually impaired children, or slowing down the mouse speed to help pupils with coordination difficulties.

Seminars
The MIICE document was also used to examine components for evaluating and assessing the impact of ICT in relation to performance indicators set out in HGIOS (How good is our school?) for both primary and secondary schools. The MIICE toolkit is particularly relevant to secondary schools, classroom practitioners and school librarians, because it provides measures which can be used to determine the effectiveness of ICT in attaining learning outcomes in teaching. As with HGIOS, models at level 2 and 4 are exemplified in the MIICE document.

Several presentations were also given on the development of ICT across the curriculum. Margaret Robertson, Educational Advisor for Inverclyde, talked about her role in taking forward the use of ICT in science and maths in her local educational authority. Margaret talked about the use of Integrated Learning Systems. This included a look at the use of Successmaker in maths, laptops in science for logging data, interactive whiteboards, Heriot Watt's SCHOLAR website, and alpha-interface software for Physics.

Rhona Arthur, Assistant Director, SLIC, gave a presentation on examples of good practice in school libraries. Rhona used examples from Linlithgow, Ellon Academy, Banff Academy, and James Gillespie HS to illustrate her points about the potential use that school librarians could make of ICT. Rhona discussed the role of the librarian to manage intranets and to exploit these valuable tools to give pupils greater opportunity to access electronic resources. Intranets could be used for storing Powerpoint presentations,

creating online lessons, or preparing website resources. Information skills and ICT were another big part of Rhona's presentation. The skills programme could begin with something as easy as supporting pupils to log onto a networked PC, or it could mean helping pupils to evaluate the appropriateness, relevancy and authority of websites.

Collaborative tasks - Librarians
The three librarian groups were each given a task to complete over the four days. The groups worked on:

1. Creating a framework to help users identify and evaluate information, and to establish criteria which help the user to find the most appropriate information for their needs from the perspective of primary, secondary and staff.
2. Producing a template to allow school librarians to develop a structured approach to planning and assessing the impact of Internet-based projects.
3. Creating a mapping progression of library skills using 5-14 guidelines.

The collaborative tasks produced a great deal of discussion and ideas about the various topics. Templates and evaluation sheets, drawn from the experience of many school librarians, were designed and will be made available on Slainte (www.slainte.org.uk) for every librarian to use. For the future, the setting up of a resource bank - to share good practice - was discussed, and the possibilities for such a resource will be investigated by Rhona Arthur. Work on the third task will take longer than the six hours set aside at Masterclass, and North Ayrshire's Audrey Sutton is leading the project to create a progression of library skills using 5-14 guidelines.

The final day of Masterclass was taken up with group presentations of all of the collaborative tasks. Newly acquired skills - digital video - were used to produce some highly entertaining presentations. Presentations will be available to view online at Think.com for Masterclassers.

Conclusion
The main achievement of Masterclass is to create an e-community with the skills and will to develop ICT literacy, at all levels, throughout Scotland. The classes allowed ICT specialists, classroom practitioners, head teachers and librarians to share and develop their visions of using ICT. The first step to developing toolkits for librarians has been taken and, hopefully, colleagues will have been inspired enough to lead the progression of these projects. This was an invaluable opportunity to network. However, a few pertinent points were made:

- Remember to crawl before you try to walk - e-learning is only useful if individuals have the skills to access online information;
- You want to use ICT, but what for? Would it be more appropriate to use another medium?

Carol Doig is Librarian at Bell Baxter High School, Cupar, Fife

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Something to air

A load of froth?

Coffee draws new users, but *Graeme Hawley* urges you to look beyond high street names.

At some point over the last six or seven years, in amongst New Labour and the Internet, the most bemusing thing has occurred. I speak of the deification of coffee. It has become more than a hot drink. It is taking over the world, and now looks set to take over our libraries.

Increasingly the subject of journals and library discussion groups, the big question is whether the library should give up valuable space to house a coffee shop of some sort. And the answer seems to be a resounding *yes*.

Tracing the history of this largely American trend, it seems to be that bookstore chains such as Borders and Barnes & Noble have transformed customer expectations of what libraries should be like. And bookstores have relaxed so much now that many 'customers' are in fact using them as libraries, skimming through books over an hour or three, and then leaving without buying. Perhaps the only purchase they do make on their visit is a cappuccino and muffin. Coffee attracts.

So it would seem a good idea for libraries to wake up and smell those lucrative beans. They pull the people in and, unlike bookshops, our books aren't for sale anyway. Unless, of course, there is no proven correlation between coffee drinking and book reading; "To support the idea that having

a café will increase circulation still is not conclusive. There is no quantitative data to validate this conclusion."[1]

Despite the wonderful feeling that we often get from developing and embracing new users, studies in America have found that often the extra visitors that come to the coffee shop have come just for the coffee. And is a library such a dismal place that we can only get people to attend by exploiting their caffeine addiction?

Of course, if coffee attracts any new users at all then it is a good thing. My opposition to coffee shop domination, therefore, is not a dislike of the concept, but of the execution. I am fed up of coffee, of the religion of it, and of the supposed artistry of taking five minutes to bang that chrome thing on the side of the espresso machine to empty out the sludge. It's really noisy.

Even more, I am fed up of the frothy franchises and their blitzkrieg marketing policy that has left no room for competition. And I am now concerned to see that they are finding their way into libraries with clever books for kids campaigns [2].

I consider high street outlets are the antithesis of social inclusion and community focus - the buzzphrases of the moment. The prices of these franchises are socially prohibitive, especially for families.

How do coffee shops fit in to the notion of joined up government? Education, health, the economy, crime, and social harmony are all to be addressed through a network of libraries, schools, health centres, and business communities. With a recent study showing that Glasgow and Edinburgh are the first and second fattest cities in the UK [3], how does sugar-intensive coffee shop fare tie in with concerns about obesity problems?

But through the vessel of the coffee shop libraries could do something really wonderful - if not a café run by a big chrome franchise. The venue could even become integral to the whole programme of social inclusion and community focus. It could be run by a local charity, an arts group, or just a local firm selling some lovely home baking. Your library, rather than hosting just one of dozens of identical outlets, could be the only place in Scotland where you can get a cup of tea and one of Mrs Magee's triple oatcake surprises.

These alternatives may not make the same returns as renting out your space to a big name, but what price bad publicity? In an attempt to modernise, it is important that libraries do not fall into the Cool Britannia trap. Equal in number to the young trendies who go to these places are

others who object to the global chains' quest for profits. If we plan our libraries on what is cool now, let's not be too surprised when we are naff in 2008.

There are stumbling blocks. In an attempt to assess the viability of charity-run coffee shops, I spoke to the WRVS and Shelter. Gillian Osrin, from Shelter, said that they had not considered this option so far. Although the suggestion had a theoretical appeal, the logistics and health and safety issues of running a catering outlet were concerns and the practical appeal of a café was not immediate. Despite these issues, the charity sector is large, and could still provide options, as could small local catering firms.

If coffee is an effective way of attracting new users, then it seems that the argument for a café is clear. So lets have a coffee shop, but lets also take the opportunity to show why libraries are different from bookstores and the high street generally, and at the same time bolster the buzzphrases with some real action.

Graham Hawley is Cataloguer, National Library of Scotland.

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Selected reading:

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Allegra Strategies. Market overview and key statistics: Project Cafe3. (www.allegra.co.uk/cafe3_overview.htm)

Carlson, Scott. The deserted library. (http://chronicle.com/free/v48/i12/12a03501.htm)

Clayton, Mark. Food for thought. (www.csmonitor.com/2002/0122/p12s01-lehl.html)

Johnson, Doug. Cafes, gift shops give public libraries a new image. (www.s-t.com/daily/06-00/06-04-00/e08li193.htm)

Welcome to the coffee cup. (www.librarysupportstaff.com/coffeelibs.html)

Many thanks also to Gavin Johnstone, NLS, for some suggested reading

Endpiece

On and off the shelves

Brian Osborne ponders on writers going in and out of fashion, and on one Scottish author he hopes will stay in favour.

The 150th birthday of Scottish Public Libraries, which we are celebrating with the commemoration of the passing of the Public Libraries (Scotland) Act 1853, made me think about fashions in literature - well it would, wouldn't it?

I wondered what was being published in 1853 and like a good retired librarian I turned to the British Library catalogue and entered 1853 in the publication date field. This produced 17,033 hits and I decided that if this article was to get written before the deadline (and one so wants to impress a new editor) I couldn't scan them all. So I looked up some authors who were active in 1853 and found that Dickens published *Bleak House,* Mrs Gaskell published *Cranford* and Charlotte Bronte brought out *Villette* that year.

Not a bad bag but then I thought of all the other thousands of 1853 books lingering, uncalled for, in the stacks of the British Library and from there it was a short leap to think of more modern writers who have gone in and out of fashion.

Here I have to, as they say, "declare an interest."

Neil Munro is slightly more than an interest for me - he has been a major concern of mine for nearly 15 years now and also a modest, but regular, source of income. In what was to be one of my very few good ideas I decided that what the world needed was an annotated edition of Munro's Para Handy stories - and some 40,000 copies later the world seems to agree. (Birlinn, GBP 8.99 if you wish to go out and make it 40,001.)

Fifteen years ago the Pan edition of the Para Handy stories was all that remained in print of an author seen in his own lifetime (1863-1930) as a major historical novelist in the tradition of Scott, Galt and Stevenson. The novels like The New Road had gradually gone out of print and, like so many other writers, in the years after his death his reputation declined. We have seen the same thing happening with Eric Linklater more recently.

In his own lifetime Munro had been attacked by Hugh MacDiarmid (but who wasn't?) for his failure to deal with modern issues and for concentrating on the past history of the Highlands. Whether there is much validity in MacDiarmid's attack is, I think, doubtful but it certainly had an influence on Munro's standing in the Scottish literary canon.

However reputations can rise as well as fall, and Munro's has revived remarkably in the last ten years. Five collections of short stories, five of the major novels, a Munro anthology, and a volume of poetry are now available. The Neil Munro Society was founded in 1996 (Secretary - Brian D. Osborne - now do you see what I mean about "declaring an interest"?) and, proof positive of a revival, there is even a website (www.neilmunro.co.uk).

The most recent evidence of life after death for Munro comes in the publication in February 2003 of Exploring New Roads: Essays on Neil Munro. Edited by Ronald W Renton and Brian D. Osborne (all right, all right, you get the picture!) and published by House of Lochar, it represents the first serious attempt to put Munro in his proper perspective as a major Scottish literary figure.

What is remarkable about the collection is that heavyweight academic figures such as Douglas Gifford and Ted Cowan, respectively the Professors of Scottish Literature and Scottish History at Glasgow University, have contributed to the project. Ten years ago Munro would not have received anything like that degree of academic respectability, nor would his work be seen as appropriate material for a doctoral thesis at Glasgow - which another of the contributors to the essay collection is currently completing. Interestingly enough this PhD candidate is of Polish birth and did her Master's degree in Dusseldorf - interest in Munro is international.

There have been valiant efforts - for example through the Canongate Classics - to make a wider range of Scottish writing available to be read, studied and enjoyed and it is surely essential for the health of contemporary Scottish writing that writers and readers should be able to place today's work in the context from which it emerged.

CILIPS conference 2003 - Branches and groups

A healthy future?

Presentations from CILIPS' Branches and Groups included updates on health information and what new entrants to the profession are learning, writes *Debby Raven*.

The Branch and Group Day at the Annual Conference proved popular as usual. To the conference's 150 delegates were added 220 extra for a varied programme on the Wednesday. This is just a taste of presentations by Scottish Health Information Network (SHINE); ICLG(S); and CoFHE/UC&R(S)

A recent study put access to health services as the top requirement for health and wellbeing. But if you don't know about what services are available, how do you get help?

Access to health information is crucial and Norma Greenwood, of Glasgow's Health Promotion Department, ran through what the UK's biggest health authority is doing.

Within Norma's wide remit is Community Learning Strategy at city level, and embedding Lifelong Learning into the health service. Talking of local ICT strategy, she said it is "fabulous because now someone is saying how important libraries are", working as they do across silos with local authorities.

Glasgow is still a city of contrasts with some pockets which continue to score highest on all deprivation indices including smoking during pregnancy, weight at birth and lung cancer in females.

Studies provide a lot of information to work on but also show up shortcomings: language is a huge barrier to accessing health information.

Currently only 6 of the trust's 42 languages are being met, in terms of information dissemination.

Virtual access is crucial in strengthening both public and professional access to information, especially evidence-based. Not so far in the past, Norma reminded us, only consultants had access to computers. Now, the Glasgow Health Information Gateway offers desktop access to learning, evidence and knowledge - databases, journals and books; NHS, HE, voluntary sector websites; libraries; and local and national government information. Although primarily for the healthcare community, everybody must be interested, for example, in the links to a health news monitoring service.

Services for the public are soon to include Information Kiosks bringing health information and education out across city in a cost-effective way and in collaboration with the City Council.

The Gateway raises the profile of what libraries can offer as it links directly to the cities' learning centres and libraries. But at the same time it is essential that all library staff themselves know that such a resource exists.

Glasgow Health Information - www.ghi.org.uk

Soon all Scotland will have access to NHS24 - the Scottish arm of NHS Direct. A national phone number leads to assured health information and advice, including if required a nurse consultation and evaluation for what to do next. Four boards have the service so far, explained Gillian Heron, Information Officer, North. As well as offering the public a new entry point to health information, it aims to reduce inappropriate workload and duplication of effort in the NHS.

The people who develop IT systems and those who want to apply IT often don't speak to each other, said Norma Greenwood. Can the same be said of those who teach IT and those who apply it in their work?

Alan Poulter took the opportunity of his CILIPS conference slot to consult the assembled professionals on his university's approach to teaching ICT skills to library students. Strathclyde University has a relatively new multimedia-centred ICT course. But is what they are teaching real-world driven?

The course, Fundamentals of ICT, tries to go beyond the click-by-click approach of applications-based teaching. Aiming to get students to think more about things such as where things are stored, sorting out their own problems, and going beyond OS specifics in practical lab-based tutorials.

Some surprises were that few students were aware of subscription-based databases, what to do with a compressed file, how to trouble shoot beyond turning off and on and hoping for the best.

Amongst the 'over surveyed' students, learning advanced web searching skills was found to be the most invaluable component.

The audience wanted to know if the course would be put online. This is not considered suitable for this type of training; CPD courses were a more likely progression.

There was surprisingly little mention of training for supporting the public in developing ICT literacy, and a comparison with courses run elsewhere would have been useful. Responses to whether the course had got it right ranged from 'a frightening amount to learn in such a short time' to 'don't they learn this at school these days?'

Glasgow Digital Library

Conceived by Derek Law, inspired by California, and currently unfunded, the Glasgow Digital Library is free resource, based at Strathclyde University's Centre for Digital Library Research. It is minimalist (read underfunded) but collaborative, explained Alan Dawson. Initially funded under the Research Support Libraries Programme, it faces the usual issue of sustainability.

Good for looking at nostalgic pictures of Glasgow and as far away as Antarctica - main collections include 'Red Clydeside' history of the Labour movement in Glasgow, the Voyage of the Scotia, 'Memoirs and portraits of 100 Glasgow Men'; and records of the '99 Scottish Election. Alan described how a straightforward book becomes a searchable and linkable 'collection'.

Glasgow Digital Library - gdl.cdlr.strath.ac.uk

The Ongoing Adventure

To secure the future of the profession and the recognition of its true worth are what concern *Alistair Campbell* most in this important anniversary year.

Scotland's economic base was rapidly changing, the population moving away from traditional ways of life and work. New communications systems were stretching across the country. The divide between rich and poor was pronounced and there were significant challenges of health, welfare, education and democratic disengagement.

This was mid nineteenth-century Scotland moving from agriculture into industry. Or could it be Scotland today, moving from the industrial to the global information society?

The Public Libraries (Scotland) Act of 1853 allowed free public libraries to be funded from the public purse. To modern Scottish libraries comes the People's Network funded also from the public purse, but by a somewhat different method.

This year we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Public Libraries Scotland Act and the completion of the network part of the People's Network. But how should we celebrate?

Should the people observe two minutes of pandemonium at their local library? I must confess, this particular Norman McCaig legacy rather appeals to me. Perhaps, more appropriate would be to highlight the work and importance of all libraries, because a key component of a successful People's Network provision is the partnership element with other types of libraries and information services.

And this year isn't just about celebrating libraries, it's about celebrating the achievements and relevance of library and information staff. And it should also be about promoting and developing career pathways in library and information work, because if we don't start doing that now, we may face a less then secure future.

We have a proud past. And this past and our present services have been expertly encapsulated in the Cilips display which is touring Scotland with the story of a key public service that is central to enhancing the lives of Scotland's people and Scotland's communities.

The 1853 Act to establish public libraries for the Instruction and Recreation of the people "was not a response to public demand, but rather the work of philanthropists and reformers who saw it as an ameliorating moral and educational force." How closely might these intentions relate to the social justice and lifelong learning initiatives we participate in today?

In our age of rapid change, it is interesting to note that it was not until 1946, with the inclusion of Argyll, that all Scotland had access, the familiar "torch of learning" sign being displayed on scores of buildings across Scotland. Now there was an effective brand identity! It was Carnegie's millions that melted away much of the opposition to adopting the Acts, the capital investments procuring municipal commitment to maintaining and developing the service. But this commitment was not always able to sustain adequacy.

The challenge of sustainability after significant capital investment is mirrored 100 years later by the People's Network provision. The 50 years since the centenary of the Act are characterised by rapid development in response to social, economic, governmental and technological drivers. The role of the public library widened as post war Scotland took advantage of increased leisure time.

There was a continued acceleration of new library provision, a significantly increased emphasis on cultural and extension activities and an ever increasing uptake of the services until the late 1980s when the unprecedented borrowing levels began to stutter and since 1986 have shown a persistent decline, as has funding in real terms.

And while it is clearly a matter of deep concern, and cause for urgent action, that in the majority of our library services less then 30% of the population borrow books, we should take pride that 150 years after the passing of the Act, the vast majority of the population use our services and that according to the government, "our public library service is one of our most important and respected public services, offering levels of customer usage, satisfaction and brand loyalty that most private organisations can only dream about."

The English Audit Commission's Building Better Libraries report states, "Libraries hold an important place in people's hearts, but they are losing their place in people's lives." Let us ensure this doesn't apply to Scotland. But we cannot be complacent in the light of changing social habits.

Let us pay tribute to the services delivered by libraries libraries to citizens, learners, children, Scotland's businesses, community organisations, housebound, prisoners, those in hospital and increasingly our virtual

visitors. And we should celebrate the diversity of materials and methods we use in supporting and in changing people's lives.

But in so doing we must not lose sight of the centrality of the book and its unique, enfolding, simple, subtle power, or of our mission to promote reading as an essential lifelong pleasure and skill. Today's libraries still offer that pool of awe, and wonder for taking, so eloquently expressed by William McIlvanney. But his acres of promises have been overtaken by the new technology whereby you literally can hold "infinity in the palm of your hand, and eternity in an hour".

I quote from Advocating Libraries, "Who speaks for Scottish Libraries? Who can make the profession and the public listen, believe and commit to the ongoing adventure? In the late 60s, 70s and early 80s, it was people like Peter Grant, Alan White and Alex Howson. In the early 80s, 90s and into the 21st century it has been Robert Craig." Well I think we all have a role in speaking for Scottish Libraries. And in the immortal words of Robert Craig "nobody ever said it would be easy."

Libraries and information services have never been as important as they are now and for the foreseeable future. The Government's response to New Library the People's Network in April 1998 identified that libraries contribute to four of this government's most important policy objectives. They underpin education and lifelong learning; they enhance public access to knowledge and information; they promote social inclusion; and they have a role to play in the modernisation and delivery of public services.

Five years on I believe we are more than exceeding the expectations of the People's Network, but progress is uneven. It is, I believe, the best thing that has happened to public libraries in the last 100 years and it also should be a pretty big thing for other types of libraries. And I cannot accept William McIlvanney's views that "computers have arrived in the library like an electronic fifth column in the citadel of Gutenberg. At the moment they inhabit the same space in uneasy truce." Computers are not the enemy, they are allies of other library materials, services and skills.

A robust ICT network, locally and nationally is in place offering free internet and learning access, albeit the universal broadband envisaged has not been possible and there are still challenges in connecting up mobile libraries.

Let us trust that the Digital Scotland initiative will remove the remaining inequalities. And let us seek to ensure, that provided we deliver, the increased communications costs of the People's Network will be met by increased national funding. But I would stress, we must demonstrate our

ability to deliver that which is required. Staff have been trained in ICT, developed to assist others in its use, but I would suggest that on its own, NOF ICT training is insufficient to meet the learning and information needs of our communities.

Essential in many services has been the enhanced focus on learner support development with staff becoming qualified, for example, in coaching skills, and online tutoring. Already in several services, we are seeing that essential shift in the role of library staff from provider to adviser, tutor and support to those accessing learning and information opportunities. The fundamental challenges of high quality content are being addressed. We are already viewing excellent heritage material and approaches, for example, Enrich Scotland.

The challenge is not in making all of these resources available to the already interested, but in using them to energise local community involvement and in parallel, exploiting their tourism potential, in partnership with the key agencies.

The NOF residue funded online reference provision is an excellent boon in achieving geographical equity, with key information available via every Scottish public library. This funding will further ensure all public library catalogues should be web enabled and incorporated within a national framework.

The effective work by some authorities in creating key topic gateways and 'white lists', children's and teenage gateways, forms the nucleus of a nationally co-ordinated provision which still allows each service to retain its own local look and emphases.

The Scottish Cultural Portal managed by SLIC sets the quality interoperability standards for all future developments and clearly asserts the importance of libraries and librarianship to the information agenda at a national level. Services are identifying and preparing online learning content using, for example, the SUfI skillnet platform or benefiting from partnerships with colleges and universities.

There is still much to be developed in this area, but significant advances are being made. North Lanarkshire's Log-in-to-Learn could, conceivably, form a core element of a national provision which might also ensure a 24/7 help facility for learners in libraries across Scotland. This development of virtual learning environments demands co-operative approaches across the sectors.

And a further key content strand is that of reader development to encourage greater use of traditional services. Surely this is a priority area for public and school libraries to work together, as is family literacy.

What has the People's Network meant?

Libraries as Learndirect Scotland centres, as SQA centres, as ECDL centres, often in partnership with local colleges and other providers. Libraries working with Careers Scotland to ensure guidance and support. Libraries, as in Glasgow, becoming again "the learning places of choice". Library Learning Centres which dovetail with local learning plans, literacy and numeracy programmes and which support the objectives within the Scottish Executive's Lifelong Learning Strategy. Learning Centres which are based on sound marketing, clear targeting of potential users, which are committed to genuine equality of access.

And finally the understanding that it is the Library, with all of its services, resources and staff capabilities which is the learning centre for life, the welcoming place, the learning place, the magic place. Libraries with a retrained and re-energised staff, with a clear focus on the new learning support requirements - and even with new salary structures.

If our staff are delivering these new opportunities, then we must pay the market rate for them, otherwise we will be on that two year cycle of recruit, train and lose. Libraries as community resource points, encouraging and co-ordinating community websites as with Barrhead.com. Libraries acting as welfare and tax surgeries, as co-ordinating points for community information and consultations, delivering services at times and in a manner that suit citizens' needs.

A new recognition within organisations of the importance and power of well organised, high quality information, and who better to grasp this territory than our profession. I believe that such involvement in delivering corporate priorities is the cornerstone of future sustainability. And this role is certainly not exclusive to the public library sector.

Absolute recognition of the power of partnership, particularly in getting to the hardest to reach. This shows what is achievable when all library services; public, schools, colleges, universities and health, work together in a common commitment to developing a culture of lifelong learning across their communities and seek to ensure local best access for all. And tellingly, it seeks to fit this local initiative within a national framework through active participation in Cosmic - the confederation of Scottish mini clumps. Surely we can all build on this experience to achieve a genuine National Grid for Learning.

And the core elements of enhanced applications of ICT, refocused services, re-trained staff, the management of change typify other sectors within the library domain in recent years.

The impact of the People's Network thus far

Resource's first findings published in December 2002 talked of the "quiet revolution" taking place. What's quiet about it? Wide usage was identified under the six headings of learning, finding work, personal identity, community enrichment, social inclusion, and culture and creativity. That wide usage included many, across all age groups, who had no experience of computers and who were not traditional library users.

Scotland's experience would endorse these views. In short, our libraries are attracting those target groups that other providers just cannot engage with. This is surely a key role for libraries, giving confidence and competence to the less sure, the isolated, through supportive, committed staff. Many libraries are experiencing a significant increase in membership among the 18-24 age group.

In many of our libraries, 80% usage is the norm, 100% usage and booking systems not untypical. This is an incredible response to the 8.5 million hours of free access available each year.

But will this new response arrest the continued decline in book borrowing? I remain optimistic that the People's Network offers the opportunity to do so, provided other elements are in place including effective marketing, relevant stock selection policies, an interested and informed staff, appropriate reader development programmes, and opening hours that reflect citizens' needs.

The reason why we have a smart, successful library community in Scotland is very much to do with the achievements of Robert Craig and his team in developing the SLA, then CILIP in Scotland (CILIPS) as a strong professional organisation, and particularly in recent years developing the Scottish Library and Information Council, SLIC, as an organisation that can do business at the highest level of government in Scotland.

It is to SLIC and CILIPS, under the leadership of Elaine Fulton, that we look to co-ordinate action in respect of the major future challenges. And there are three in particular:

1 The future well being of the profession. There are already genuine problems with recruitment of suitable professional staff at all levels, particularly in the public library sector. Local government reform of 1996

with its flatter structures, the rapid changes in services in the last three years, and changed imperatives within library schools, have all contributed. Recent senior posts have struggled to attract an acceptable short leet. One public library authority had three applicants for three vacant promoted professional posts. There is a genuine difficulty in finding suitable young library and information professionals to fill posts in public and school libraries. As identified by Judith Elkin courses "...on the whole still miss out the people skills, social awareness, in depth information handling and user concerns." Part of the answer lies with our professional organisation confronting library schools with the real needs of services, so that we can begin to get relevant courses. It's about time services, and not library schools, called the tune.

2 To ensure that as library and information professionals, what we do is professional and that the tasks carried out are seen to be professional. But what we do must be related to today's requirements and not to an historic qualification. And yes that does imply a structured CPD process, clearly stated, clearly assessed and reviewed on an ongoing basis and possibly with compulsory re-accreditation. And CILIPS must have input to this process.

This may mean accepting that some existing tasks are taken over by other staff and that we may have fewer professional posts in future, but at a higher level.

3 To ensure career structures for all staff in all library and information services, not just those with professional qualifications. Structures based on service needs and hence responsive to change. Progressive qualifications based on relevant competencies as well as current knowledge. Progress and rewards based on delivery and achievement and not on some traditional time serving ladder. In short, structures underpinned by a genuine culture of lifelong learning.

Information literacy

We have in the last 150 years moved from the industrial to the so called information society and yet many of our citizens lack the fundamental skills and confidence to find, organise, evaluate and use appropriate information. Information literacy is every bit as essential as literacy and numeracy skills and hence is equally deserving of the significant funding currently going to literacy and numeracy initiatives across Scotland.

And if the Executive cannot find the resources, may it at least find the will to persuade our friends in NOF that this is a key area for funding that is a

natural extension of what has been achieved thus far via the People's Network.

There is existing good practice in the educational sector, for example the OU's Mosaic programme, and there is recognition within the DCMS ten-year vision for public libraries in England of its importance, but as yet there is no agreed agenda for co-ordinated action. Whatever is agreed must relate to the needs of Scotland's learners and citizens.

There is a need for a clear definition of the competencies required. A need to include its coverage in professional education and in the curriculum, core skills framework and student courses. And is there a case for an accredited qualification, equivalent to the ECDL?

Let's not delay on this, but through CILIP in Scotland and SLIC take information literacy forward as a fundamental issue in supporting national priorities and in underlining the relevance of Scotland's libraries to the wellbeing of the nation.

A national consistency

The quality of library provision across Scotland remains uneven, the current statutory framework allowing for wide variations in financial commitment from local authorities. The People's Network has brought the potential of consistent levels of access, information, technology, staff support and public expectation that are applicable across Scotland. And if delivered appropriately, the People's Network underpins the Executive's key priorities of lifelong learning, social justice and modernising government.

There is arguably a strong case for the ring fencing of library provision within an appropriate quality framework, and equally for stronger national direction and monitoring. And while some might argue for a National Public Library Service, funded and managed by the Executive, my personal view is that removing public libraries from local government would diminish the library service's potential.

While Best Value must form part of the essential framework it is insufficient on its own. Likewise while it is commendable that various services have gone down the quality routes such as Charter Mark or Investors in People in recent years, this doesn't offer the required national solution.

I would suggest that the solution lies within the Implementation of the National Cultural Strategy. Within it there is a clear commitment to review current library legislation to ensure it is appropriate to the 21st century. And more tellingly, within the recently published Guidance, recognition that

there would be benefits in giving consideration to the development of a qualitative self assessment model which would apply to cultural provision in a similar way to HMI's "How Good is Our School".

And the inspectorate? Why not SLIC being tasked with developing the appropriate standards and requirements based on best practice. SLIC identifying where improvements and associated funding are essential. And SLIC awarding accreditation to those services attaining high quality delivery. Now there's an excellent opportunity to bring back the "torch of learning" as a brand of quality.

And it is the torch of learning which lights the way forward for all of Scotland's libraries - working in partnership to ensure best access to resources, information and a continuum of learning opportunities, within a national framework. A national framework that achieves appropriate quality standards for each sector, the sharing of best practice, effective interoperability standards, and the continued development of libraries and information services as essential to the wellbeing of Scotland's people.

We all have our part to play in this ongoing adventure

Parliamentary information

A Network for the People

Paul Anderson explains the scheme to get Scottish Parliament information to the public.

After one Session, four years, fifty-seven Acts and thirty-five thousand parliamentary questions, the Scottish Parliament is now into its second term.

Since 1999, the cost of the Holyrood building, the rights and wrongs of fox-hunting and the affordability of free personal health care for the elderly

have all dominated the headlines. Committee visits throughout Scotland, combined with the short-term relocation to Glasgow and Aberdeen (when the Church of Scotland reclaimed the Assembly Hall for its General Assembly), show that this is indeed a Parliament for the whole of Scotland.

In addition to these media-friendly efforts, but less widely trumpeted, has been the Parliament's ongoing efforts at making itself truly open, accountable and participative at a community level. The Parliament has continuously since 1999 been involved in innovative schemes to ensure that the message about how its decisions affect the lives of Scottish citizens is prosthetylised to the community at large. One of the ways in which this has been achieved is through the Partner Library Network - a scheme of 80 public libraries throughout Scotland which act as focal points in local communities for information from and about the Parliament.

The Network is supported through the free supply of official parliamentary publications, as well as through staff training and development delivered by the Parliament's Library Liaison Officer. This training focuses on developing information-seeking and handling skills with regard to Scottish Parliament publications, and also covers the Parliament's website. In addition, Partner Library staff can call upon the Network's Enquiry Support function which offers a 'one-stop-shop' information service to assist in answering Scottish Parliament related enquiries.

The Partner Library Network has always been about more than merely supplying official publications to public libraries. One of the key objectives has been to use Partner Libraries as platforms for engagement opportunities between the Parliament and local communities.

During the first parliamentary session, a number of high-profile events were held in Partner Libraries involving MSPs.

A new team: a new approach

The Partner Library Network recently came together with the Education Service and Gaelic Service to form the Education and Outreach Team. Bringing together the Parliament's three most high-profile outreach services in this way means that Partner Libraries now provide an ideal platform from which to host a whole range of information and learning events relevant to local communities.

This re-alignment of the key public-facing information services is a demonstration of the Parliament's commitment to make more proactive use of the Partner Library Network to enhance opportunities for real and meaningful engagement with local communities. As a major element within

this, the Education and Outreach Team has launched a new strategic initiative which will result in more visible parliamentary outreach activity 'on the ground'.

The Partner Libraries Focus Project

The Partner Libraries Focus Project will involve local schools, community groups, Gaelic speakers and others in making use of the range of information and learning opportunities available in Partner Libraries. The Project will run for a pilot 18 months initially and will focus on three areas: Glasgow City (with ten Partner Libraries) East, North and South Ayrshire (five) and the western Highlands (including the Western Isles) (six).

The Project will involve staff from the Education and Outreach Team working closely with Partner Library staff to organise participative information and education-orientated events. It is hoped that MSPs will be involved in all community-based outreach efforts. The events will include, for example:

- **Meet your MSPs / MSP Q&A sessions**
  Arranging for MSPs to visit Partner Libraries for Q&A sessions with constituents - focusing on specific groups from within the local community - e.g., young people, elderly/retired, ethnic minorities, other communities of interest, etc.
- **Education Service Presentations**
  Presentations by our Education Service staff to pupils and school teachers.
- **Gaelic Outreach**
  Using Partner Libraries as locations for events aimed at engaging Gaelic speakers.
- **General Scottish Parliament Awareness**
  Focusing on local or topical issues community groups will be invited to have their enquiries answered by Parliamentary staff and receive guidance in the use of Scottish Parliament publications and website.
- **Greater MSP involvement**
  Encouraging MSPs and their constituency office staff to make more use of Partner Libraries - for example, by encouraging more MSPs to hold constituency surgeries in Partner Libraries.

Each event will be tailored to the practicalities of the individual Partner Libraries concerned. Where a Partner Library is unsuitable for such an event - for example, through lack of a public meeting area - the Project will seek to utilise local schools, community education centres and other suitable learning and information locations.

What will be key to the success of the Project is that these outreach events are relevant to the local communities involved and reflect local issues and concerns.

Linked Libraries

An exciting element of the Partner Libraries Focus Project is the development of 'linked libraries' - i.e., library and information services of organisations which serve specific communities of interest. They will receive a limited service provision in order to enhance engagement between their users and the Parliament. The two institutions selected for the pilot stage are Glasgow Women's Library and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig - the Gaelic further and higher education college in Skye.

The Project, which will be launched over the summer, meets many of the social inclusion criteria cited in local and national library and information initiatives.

Further information
Information about any aspect of the Partner Libraries Focus Project can be obtained by contacting Paul Anderson, Library Liaison Officer at paul.anderson@scottish.parliament.uk

Information Scotland is delivered online by the SAPIENS electronic publishing service based at the Centre for Digital Library Research. SLAINTE (Scottish libraries across the Internet) offers further information about librarianship and information management in Scotland.

Next Generation

***Catherine Kearney* gives an update on the review of further education libraries and introduces the Quality Framework ahead of its November launch.**

Last year SLIC set up a short life working group to look at further education (FE) libraries. Previously the Council had published *Libraries in Scottish Further Education Colleges: Standards for Performance and Resourcing* (1997). Since then developments such as interconnectivity, the introduction of virtual learning environments and Government policy with

regard to lifelong learning, networked learning and access and inclusion have made another review necessary.

Consequently, in April 2002 I was seconded from my post as Director of Library and Learning Services at Glasgow College of Building and Printing (GCBP) to SLIC as FE Network Project Officer to look at a review in more detail.

My starting point was the 1997 publication which had advanced a proposal that colleges establish an information and communications technology (ICT) strategy and which went on to speculate that future developments might include:

- An interlibrary network to facilitate wider access to and sharing of resources

- Conversion of existing materials to and creation of new materials in digital format

- Research into developments in ICT based library services and learning resources of potential relevance to the FE community

- Investigation of ways of providing structured access to global library and learning resources

- Provision of access to library catalogues via the Internet

- A review of staff development and training needs in relation to new technologies

Five years on from speculation, how did the FE library landscape look? Had these recommendations been taken up?

Well, from 1999 onwards the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC), the funding body for the sector, had initiated a programme of increased funding for college ICT. This had resulted in:

- A greatly improved ICT infrastructure

- High bandwith connections

- Sectoral membership of the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) giving access to the higher education JANET

- The introduction of virtual learning environments (VLE's)

- A requirement for each college to produce an ICT strategy

However, few ICT strategies gave mention to the role of libraries in a networked environment and fewer colleges still had considered the 'fit' between digital library resources and VLE's. No specific guidance had been issued from the funding body linking ICT, libraries and services to learners in a networked environment. The HMIE inspection framework made no connection between libraries, ICT and access to resources but continued to maintain that it was the number of books available to students that was important in college reviews.

A study carried out on behalf of SLIC by the Centre for Digital Library Research (CDLR) as part of the Scottish Portals Initiative confirmed that five years on from the 1997 Standards many further education library catalogues were neither web-enabled nor z39.50 compliant thus limiting opportunities for college involvement in resource sharing initiatives. In short, despite the increased ICT funding programme there was little interconnectivity within the sector. Only the UHI and Glasgow Colleges Group (GCG) had addressed networked library services. One college had scrapped its library service altogether in the belief that access to the Internet would provide learners with all the resources necessary to complete their course of study.

This is a brief summary of how things looked when SLIC initiated the Next Generation FE Libraries Working Group. Membership was drawn from other key strategic players such as SFEFC, JISC, ELLD, SFEU as well as FE and HE representatives. Assistance from SFEU's JISCmail list meant that SLIC could engage the whole sector in discussion and review and keep librarians informed of work in progress.

Committee work concentrated on the following areas:

1. **Interconnectivity** - SLIC recognised the need for all FE libraries to be interconnected if they are to realise the full advantage of resource sharing and we were also interested in exploring the strategic alliance between libraries and ICT departments to facilitate the growth of e-services.
2. **Drafting of a new set of 'standards' for online services**, which would set recommendations in a self-evaluative quality improvement framework and promote the link between libraries, the learner and ICT.

Early discussion within the Committee led to recognition that the increased use of resource based, online, flexible and distance learning, the Web and technology supported learning together with partnership arrangements with

other information providers had led to changed learner needs. We had to consider how learners wanted to access library service - physically, remotely, within VLEs etc. Network technology had opened up the potential of shared access to resources for learners who could benefit from library services without the necessity of a physical visit.

By last November, after a summer of hard work, visits to service managers and much debate and discussion, the Committee had ready a draft set of indicators set within a self-evaluative quality framework for consultation with the sector. The framework addressed the following areas:

- The integration of college learning resource services with other electronic services such as the VLE, JISC collections and learning resource management systems.

- The degree to which college learning resource management systems support access to shared resources.

- The ability of the service to comply with legislation such as DDA, RRA, SENDA etc.

- Staff knowledge and expertise in the application of technology to service delivery.

The SFEFC gave financial support to a SLIC organised consultation event in Perth, which attracted over 50 delegates. Both JISC RSC's and the SFEU gave generously of their time and assistance to make the day a huge success.

During the course of that day delegates heard from a range of speakers including Elaine Fulton, then Assistant Director of SLIC, and Bill Harvey, Deputy Director Quality and Innovation at SFEFC. The draft framework was launched, generated much enthusiasm and interest within the sector and consultation continued until early 2003.

Following the consultation exercise the draft framework was piloted in eight college libraries with assistance from library managers and quality assurance managers. This exercise reassured the Committee that the draft framework was appropriate for use.

Since the February pilot several key developments have taken the project further than even SLIC had anticipated:

- SFEFC charged SFEU to organise delivery of a series of free staff development events to underpin SLIC's works on standards development and interconnectivity.

- SFEFC has awarded funding to a college consortium led by GCG to continue development of the framework within a quality context in partnership with SLIC.

- HMIE have joined the development work in anticipation of a revised Inspection Framework due in 2004.

- SFEFC has issued new guidance to colleges suggesting they include libraries in college ICT strategies.

SLIC's willingness to support sector librarians and engage in discussion with other key strategic agencies on future service delivery has led to a better understanding of the link between libraries, librarians and the learning process. Our collaborative work with partners such as SFEFC, JISC and HMIE has raised awareness of the value and contribution of networked library services to further education. The FE Quality Framework will be launched in Stirling on 27 November. IS

Further information
Information on the project can be obtained from Catherine Kearney, FE Network Project Officer: ckearney@gcbp.ac.uk
Members can keep up to date with the latest developments by visiting the FE pages on www.slainte.org.uk

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New library

Fit for the future

In this its centenary year, Springburn Library in Glasgow relocated to Springburn Leisure Centre. The response from the local community has been very encouraging and exciting.

The old Springburn Library was in extremely poor condition. It was suffering from both rot and water penetration and would have required significant capital investment (more than £1million) before any internal refurbishment or upgrade was carried out. And this still would not have tackled the issue of its poor location, no longer at the heart of the community, or of the poor performance of the facility.

Public views were sought on the proposal to relocate the library to Springburn Leisure Centre and the majority of those who responded were in agreement.

A welcoming, innovative environment

Springburn Leisure Centre is an innovative concept which builds on the experiences of other integrated facilities. The £1.9 million refurbishment houses a state-of-the-art library, with high-tech learning centre, the Springburn Museum and a new fitness suite and refurbished leisure centre. The museum, with the assistance of the Open Museum has been put together by volunteers and tells the story of Springburn. Volunteers will work with the library and museum to develop local history.

The Civic Design Team led the development of the building and Curious Oranj, the award winning design company, were contracted to develop the new library and learning centre. Demco Interiors were responsible for the shelving on the ground floor and the furniture for the children's area.

The new building occupies a prime location at the head of the main shopping centre and the large glass front allows the people passing by to see in. The library appears as a beacon of light and activity in the evenings, helping to heighten awareness of opportunities for involvement.

New ways of working are being developed at Springburn. Visitors are welcomed at the main reception desk in the foyer by staff from libraries and sports working to provide an integrated service. To encourage maximum interaction, staff are not seated but move freely between the main reception and the library.

A book drop at the main reception desk ensures quick through-access, and colour-coded signage and clean crisp titling aid access within the library. On entering the library Express Display Units and self-service check are very much to the fore bringing material to the attention in a retail style, encouraging users to browse and try something different.

A rather striking issue point can be opened as demand requires and fabulous red leather soft seating placed around the library encourages

customers to linger, relax and take time-out. Face-out display has been used extensively to maximize our main product's most engaging feature - its front cover. This entices users to pick-up - and to borrow.

A discrete area for young adults features casual soft seating beside magazines and graphic novels. The vibrant children's zone uses primary reds and yellows complemented by zingy wall graphics to attract young eyes and two dedicated PCs engage young minds.

Books, newspapers, audio and large-print books, materials for community language speakers and local history material all complement a dynamic reader development programme.

The REAL Learning Centre

The REAL Learning Centre is accessed from the main reception desk by lift or stairs. As it overlooks the fitness suite and plays host to the museum, it thus neatly integrates library, sport and museum in a visually exciting space. Video, DVD and CD hire operate from the learning centre providing a link to lending on the ground floor.

The state-of-the-art REAL learning centre is a far cry from the one PC available in the former library. With 22 multimedia PCs, online learning, tutor-led courses, a range of software and free access to the internet, Springburn Library is indeed fit for the future and the challenges of the 21st Century.

The Leisure Centre was officially launched in June by Councillor John Lynch, Convener of Cultural and Leisure Services. Please come and visit us in our new location. Like the people of Springburn I know you'll be very excited about our new Library and Learning Centre - help us spread the good news.

Endpiece

Room of their own

Colin Will **explains how libraries offer creative spaces for writing groups.**

Many writers groups are based in libraries, and in general the host libraries seem very hospitable. Hosting is often seen as part of the library's community cultural involvement, and councils find it a positive way of delivering a local service which at the same time fits in with our national cultural strategy. And it's not expensive.

Most groups, particularly those without pushy leaders, are relatively undemanding. If they are given a warm, quiet room, tables and chairs, that's often all they either want or need. And yet I'm sure if librarians interacted more with their writing groups, both parties would gain much from the experience.

For many years I've been a member of a poetry writing group meeting in the Scottish Poetry Library. Peer criticism, a positive atmosphere, the backup resources of the Library, and a well-established formula which works, have contributed to the success of this group, which has been in continuous operation since 1981. It's an example of a leaderless self-help group with access to its own specialist resources.

I've also worked with several other general groups, all supported by local authorities, and most holding their meetings in public libraries. They're extremely varied, but from this experience I've developed the following framework:

Ten Topics for Writing Groups

1. Every group is different; every member or potential member of every group has different hopes and aspirations.
2. Atmosphere is crucial; the most successful groups are welcoming to new members, hospitable to everyone, nourishing, supportive, stimulating and challenging.
3. Everyone is capable of writing better than they think they can, but not everyone wants to.
4. Every group should have short-term, medium-term and long-term goals.
5. Good writing communicates well; the best writing communicates on many levels.
6. Good, honest, informed criticism is good for the writer, and for the critic.

7. There are limits to the potential of self-help; sometimes outside help needs to be welcomed.
8. There are no universal right answers, and there is no rule-book; you are your own best referee.
9. Sometimes it's nice just to go for a walk.
10. At the end of the day, it's all about people.
11. This list may change, and ten is just one number among many.

How does this affect libraries, and the groups they support? Let's start at the top:

While the network of Writers-in-Residence within authorities have done sterling work in setting up, supporting and encouraging writing groups in libraries, some groups want to stand outside the system and do their own thing. Libraries shouldn't treat these independent groups differently from the 'official' groups. Then again, not all areas of the country are served by Writers-in-Residence. Library staff can help groups by talking informally to members (many do this already, and it's much appreciated) to find out what they're interested in, and how they can best be supported.

Libraries can provide a welcoming and creative atmosphere. Comfortable quiet rooms, open at times convenient to the group and to libraries, should be the aim. With most groups, the social side of things is extremely important. While writing is usually a solitary activity, writers like to get together and talk. Tea is an excellent social lubricant.

Some groups aim to publish anthologies, broadsheets or more ambitious publications. Librarians can often provide advice in this area, and can possibly suggest local funding, printing and distribution services. They might also be able to support editorial work to some degree, through allowing access to computing services. They can certainly promote and possibly sell publications by 'their' groups.

Another aim might be public readings of work by group members. Why not hold the readings in the libraries used by group members? Do enough of our libraries have suitable performing spaces? I suggest not, and I suggest further that all new libraries should aim to provide suitable multiple-use facilities for many kinds of community arts, including poetry readings, storytelling and literary performances. Poetry goes well with music and the visual arts too.

One thing that I stress in the groups I lead is that reading improves writing. Some writing groups would benefit by having small dedicated collections of relevant books available for reference or lending. The collections needn't be large, but they should be selective, and related to the needs of specific

groups. Maybe the new network of Reader Development co-ordinators could help to set them up? Depending on the make-up and interests of the group, they might contain poetry, short stories, novels, magazines, self-help books (for example those by Natalie Goldberg and Julia Cameron), and the odd literary reference book.

Sometimes guest readings, visiting workshops and talks by established writers can stimulate groups and individuals. Can libraries help by putting together co-ordinated programmes within and between authorities?

Finally, there sometimes appears to be a chasm between young persons' writing programmes and the adult groups. How can we integrate the system so that we support creative writing as an activity for all ages and for all sections of our communities? Social inclusion isn't just a political target - diversity within writing groups is stimulating, challenging, and ultimately rewarding for all.

Colin Will (colin.will@virgin.net)

President's perspective

A near miss in Moray

A quiet spell gives *Alistair Campbell* time to reflect on the possible demise of the SVQ, and ends in news of near-disaster in Moray.

A quiet two months for the President gave an opportunity to recover from the delights of Peebles, with only a visit to Glasgow for the opening of the excellent Springburn Library pulling me away from Moray on library business.

It's terrific to see what is beginning to be achieved in Glasgow under Karen Cunningham and her team. And while others might envy the amounts of money secured by Glasgow for new or upgraded libraries, we cannot ignore the underlying transferable key principles and good practice that

ensure libraries involve and are relevant to their communities - attractive buildings, in the right place, in association with other key services, with welcoming environments and skilled and committed staff.

But let's not forget, given its low usage starting base, that Glasgow has a long, but determined road ahead, as indeed have all library services. Across Scotland only a handful of authorities, at most, persuade more than 30% of their population to borrow books. People's Network terminals are being intensively used, but only by a relatively small percentage of the community and the uptake of the excellent NOF residue reference services has not been earth shattering. Nonetheless, we shouldn't be despondent. Rather we should try and raise our profile locally, regionally and nationally.

A week's break in Perthshire took in some of Scotland's most beautiful scenery, even in the rain! Pitlochry gave us an opportunity for the President's entourage, yours truly drookit, wife and child to hit the shops, try out eating places, look at books, lap up information and buy some cards. In short, have an enjoyable, stimulating and rewarding time, not unlike the type of expectations our customers/students have when visiting our libraries.

And yet that visit to Pitlochry was so unsatisfactory, the high spots eventually laid low by the persistent lack of good customer care. How many times did our attempts to be served inconvenience shop staff who so obviously resented their long and personal conversations at the counter being interrupted. Haste ye back! Will ye no come back again? Not a chance!

Tourism is one of Scotland's key industries. Libraries are key components in national priorities involving lifelong learning and social inclusion. At least in libraries we deliver customer focused services, have informed staff, adopt customer service standards and pursue a genuine commitment to appropriate staff development. Don't we?

This commitment to staff development and the achievement of a qualification and career for all staff have been made more difficult by the apparent decision of the SQA to withdraw SVQs in Information and Library Services. One can almost sympathise with where they are coming from given the poor take-up of the qualification in recent years. But recent years have presented their own special challenges for all library sectors: reduced funding; new and flatter structures; accelerating use of new technology; the People's Network.

For the first time in years services have sufficient breathing space to be serious about SVQs, using them as sensible qualifications based round

organisational and service activities and in encouraging a genuine culture of lifelong learning. All we require from the SQA is the opportunity to show that there is a demand and, despite the initial, significant effort for services in securing SQA approval, that we are committed to making the qualifications available to our staff. If we fail to change their minds then appropriate alternative qualifications must be secured, hence the need for an effective Scottish dimension to the excellent work being done by Margaret Watson, CILIP President, in developing meaningful routes.

Packing for our return to Elgin was interrupted by the news that Grant Lodge Local Heritage Centre, containing Moray's local collection and archives, was hit by fire. Our emergency disaster plan was immediately put into action, staff and volunteers called in to help and our Chief Executive rolling up his sleeves to do his share of salvaging.

As we headed home, my concerns were about the Georgian building, scene of the last clan uprising in Scotland in 1820, the town's library from 1902 to 1996 and more telling for the collections - a comprehensive and unique record of Moray, not just books, photographs, maps and plans, unpublished works etc, but the material for where we live, the material that gives our community that sense of place and pride that influences their lives in so many subtle ways. Would our nationally important collections of architects' plans survive? Skibo Castle, Talisker Distillery, Glenlivet, Glenfarclas, up in smoke?

Thankfully the building sufferd only limited damage, the bulk of the collections were saved, but somewhat smoky, some archival material lost, a proportion damaged by water and already starting the slow process of recuperation. The building is being vacated and will be restored and upgraded. Alternative premises for storage and to ensure a public service are being arranged. Bad though it was, the disaster could have been so much worse.

The expressions of concern and offers of assistance from colleagues have been almost overwhelming and so much appreciated, reminding us of the strength of the professional community in Scotland in its willingness to work together. The genuine concerns of the community for their building, their material and their routes remind us also of how privileged we are, as librarians, to lie at the heart of the community, past, present and future.

Obituary

William Hunter Brown
1928 - 2003

William Hunter Brown, a former President and Honorary Member of the Scottish Library Association, died on 1 July 2003 in Perth, Western Australia. He was born in Loanhead, Midlothian in 1928 and had a distinguished career in libraries. William spent 1946-48 in the Royal Engineers, rising to the rank of Major. He was a member of the Army Emergency Reserve from 1954-1968 and was awarded the Army Emergency Reserve Decoration (ERD).

He started his library career in 1948 in Edinburgh Public Libraries and moved to become Assistant Librarian at the Scottish Office in Edinburgh in 1958.

William took up the post of Librarian at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh in 1960 and his time at RBGE resulted in his appointment as Honorary Associate, Royal Botanic Garden in 1972. His time at RGBE provided the basis for his 1970 MSc University of Strathclyde: *Provision for botanical and related literature in standard classification schemes with special reference to taxonomy and The Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, 1670-1970*, which he joint-authored with Harold R. Fletcher for HMSO in 1970.

Continuing his involvement in the library and information community in Edinburgh, William became the Deputy to the University Librarian at Heriot Watt University in 1967 and Principal Librarian at Moray House College of Education in 1969.

William moved to the National Library of Scotland as Assistant Keeper in 1973 and was promoted to Keeper in 1974. His duties included the overall supervision of Public Services, which at that time comprised Reference Services, Lending Services, the Map Room and the Music Room; the integration of the functions, collections and staff of the former Scottish Central Library with the National Library; planning for a new NLS building and in particular the creation of the Scottish Science Reference Library (later the Scottish Science Library); and a wide range of representational roles on national and international committees, but with a particular focus

on library and information services in Scotland. William served as Chairman of the National Committee on Regional Library Co-operation in 1981 and as the NLS Representative on the Course Committee on Library and Information Science of Scottish Technical Education Council SCOTEC from 1981 until 1985.

William was an active member of the profession and served on the Council of the Scottish Library Association in various posts from 1956 including the representative on the Executive Committee of the Scottish Central Library, the representative of national and academic libraries (1973-76), Chairman of the Publications Committee and President, 1979.

He was appointed an Honorary Member of the SLA at the Annual Conference in May 1980. He also served on the University, College and Research Libraries Group Scottish Committee from 1965, including as Chairman in 1973, the ASLIB Scottish Committee from1962, Chairman 1968-7, Honorary Treasurer to 1972 and was the Scottish representative on the British Library Lending Division Consultative Committee on lending services from 1973.

William was active in IFLA and served as Chairman of the Division of Collections and Services from 1981. He was presented with the IFLA award in recognition of services to national and international librarianship whilst on IFLA's professional board.

Following the death of Janet, his wife, in 1979, he married Ruth in 1981. William retired from the NLS in 1986 and went to live in Australia. Our thoughts are with his friends and family.

Rhona Arthur

Reader development

Going boldy and learning as we go

Linda Corrigan **outlines her work at the NLB with visually impaired people.**

At the National Library for the Blind (NLB), we believe that visually impaired people should have access to the same kinds of library services as sighted people. We know perfectly well that services for visually impaired people need to be delivered slightly differently from those for sighted people. We also know that many public libraries are both ill equipped and ill-trained to deliver services for visually impaired people. As specialist providers, we fully expect our services to be needed (along with those of the other specialist providers) for many years to come. However, we are also aware that it would be much better for visually impaired people to get as much as possible delivered at a local level. Our aim is to support this function by providing training and materials for use in the community, backed up with the extra specialist material that we provide ourselves.

When we talk about visually impaired people having access to the same kinds of services, we are talking about everything. Not only should we be providing, books, reading and reference material at a local level but we should also be ensuring that visually impaired people in our communities participate fully in the life of the library community. How many libraries throughout the UK have reading groups, homework clubs, careers centres, online centres, story times, author events, local studies centres, reading festivals and all the many other activities that take place in libraries? How many of those activities have visually impaired people taking part along with sighted people? The short answer is 'very few'. Is that because there are no visually impaired people out there? Of course it is not. But is it because visually impaired people don't know about them, or don't think they would be able to take part, or have never been to the library and don't know what's there? Then the answer is probably 'very likely'.

Over the last four years, NLB has run a series of pilot reader development activities in public libraries, combined with providing some accessible materials and training and consultancy for library staff. In most cases, we have tried to include an element of IT in the activities, to allow visually impaired people to taste what the internet and access technology can do for them. When we set out, Reader Development was just becoming a buzz word in libraries and the DDA was a silent cloud on the horizon. We 'boldly went' where none had been before. With the help of Opening the Book, the Reader Development Agency, we tried to avoid problems, to second guess all eventualities. We worked together to make NLB's services reader-centred and on projects such as A Touch of... which reached out to the public library world. Some things worked and others didn't but over the years we have gained a lot of experience. We now know that there is no shortage of visually impaired people out there who would like to take part in

such activities. We also know how hard it is to get in touch with them and how difficult it often is for them to attend.

There are more than two million people in the UK with impaired vision. It is estimated that in every local authority, around 1 in 30 people on the electoral roll has uncorrectable sight loss. Another estimate suggests that 1 in 4 people will have serious sight problems as some point in their lives. This amounts to about one quarter of libraries' potential clients.

Often, serious visual impairment is an invisible problem. Many people with serious sight loss can still manage to walk around and travel relatively easily. They may borrow Large Print books or Audio Books seemingly independently. However, they will never see the notice about the Reading Group or about the Writer Event. They may not use all the library's facilities, even those designed to help them, because they don't know that they are there.

NLB is a partner in the largest national Reader Development programmes: Branching Out in England, the Reader Development Network in Scotland and Estyn Allan, in Wales. This has allowed NLB to get its message to the widest possible range of library authorities. In April, Fiona Edwards of Opening the Book and I gave three days of training, for the RDN, one in each of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Most of the library authorities in Scotland were represented at one of these days and we were able to spread the word, discuss and answer questions about delivering Reader Development work with visually impaired people. It's not rocket science. It is more about thinking about your potential audience whenever you plan an activity.

As a result of the last four years work, NLB now has training programmes available for library staff and workshop programmes available for working with visually impaired people to enhance their use of the library. Pilot programmes were funded by the DCMS Wolfson Library Challenge Fund during 2001-3, and can be seen on the NLB's website under the headings A Touch of... and A Touch more... They have been tried and tested and we know that they work. Now, our challenge is to find a means of getting these programmes out to more and more library authorities so that best practice can be shared and developed.

Linda Corrigan is Reader Development Manager, National Library for the Blind.

Training programmes

If you are interested in any of the training programmes, please contact Linda Corrigan at linda.corrigan@nlbuk.org or Pat Beech, Library and Information Services Director at pat.beech@nlbuk.org.

Profile: Karen Cunningham

Learning city

Making a difference in Glasgow

Glasgow City Libraries are a success story in anyone's book, and Karen Cunningham has played no small part in it. Before taking over as Head of Libraries following Martyn Wade's appointment as National Librarian last November, Karen was Service Development Manager. In the development of new services city-wide, lifelong learning was a priority for her and setting up the innovative REAL learning centres a key task.

Before that, her role in Policy Development across the whole council included forward planning - and working on the Best Value Review (BVR), which came up with some harsh criticism of the library service. Being a librarian by profession, was it a welcome step back into libraries? "Actually, it took a lot to tempt me back, but moving back into libraries was a good opportunity to put my money where my mouth was, and not walk away from consequences of what I had put into policy development."

There was also the exciting potential to make a difference, knowing the scale of need: "I was naturally upset at the criticisms of the service in the BVR - lack of progress for one thing - but I recognised the reality of the situation. It was comparable to a lot of other local authorities then, and similarly most have now woken up to the challenge."

In a city with woeful records in health, educational attainment and deprivation, delivering a good quality learning programme with a variety of entry levels is still Karen's number one challenge. The Learning City

initiative led to the innovative partnership with Scottish Enterprise Glasgow and the setting up of city-wide REAL learning centres. "We persuaded them that libraries were ideal partners to lead lifelong learning in the city. SEG match funded and we were able to put this with the People's Network money allowing us not just to meet the demands of the PN but to exceed them in level of provision."

For Karen, the REAL branding is crucial: "It was important to me that we didn't only make the technology accessible but refurbished the buildings as well. I feel most strongly that the REAL branding allows the public to expect the same quality wherever they are. The public has higher standards now. To say they should be grateful to have a publicly funded facility is simply not what the people of Glasgow deserve."

With the Council's Adult Community Education now part of the library service, libraries play their role in boosting literacies - traditional and IT. They also concentrate on the 'softer skills'. "We have 'learning cafés' to teach confidence skills, presentation and social interaction, as well as confidence in handling ICT. And as so many young people are leaving schools without qualifications, we have set up homework clubs, and try to engage them in the fun side of ICT."

Setting standards and sticking to them is also a priority. A 'Core Programme' aims to pull together events and classes into a comprehensive prospectus, to guarantee equity of access to the public wherever they live in the city. "Our services have to appear seamless - an individual should be able to know that if their local library isn't running the course they want another one will be."

As well as improving the physical infrastructure, the service has been through a complete staffing restructure - one of the BVR recommendations. "It was absolutely fundamental to our cultural shift and to refocus the service. I must stress how wonderfully the staff have coped with enormous change and the new challenges they have been presented with. I have an extremely strong team and their level of commitment to the library service and to the city is great."

Karen explains that the profile of libraries and their staff have been raised so much that they are taking on new roles within the Council. For example, libraries have recently taken over the development of the Council website. The shift in their public and corporate profile has also meant the ability to attract other partners of the calibre of SEG, and has established the importance of information in the life of the city.

REAL has been a measurable success. A recent target of 32,000 registered REAL learners, considered ambitious at the time, was exceeded. Now there are 56,000 - nearly 10% of the population. The challenge ahead, now that the structures are in place, is transmitting this investment into a better quality service at the frontline. "New libraries, such as the recently opened Springburn, demonstrate that where we make an investment it makes such a difference, and issues go up - but how do we translate this into greater uptake of our other services?".

Another priority for Karen Cunningham and her team is to make the Mitchell the hub of information provision for the city - it may be the largest reference library in Europe but use is declining. A new visitor centre is planned and improved access for the public, businesses, and visitors to the city.

Karen is looking forward to the opening of the new Gorbals library and cybercafé, with partnership funding from SEG and the Digital Inclusion Fund. She is also looking forward to attending the Public Libraries Conference later this month where she will learn whether the Anniesland REAL centre has won a Public Library Building Award - and where she is keen to learn from colleagues from all over the UK: "I will take new ideas from anyone if I think they will help us!"

A lot of work goes into engaging the politicians, not least to make sure they know how much their constituents appreciate the service: "It means a lot to some of our communities to have a bright new library, when they have little else. They are now so much more than 'public buildings that provide books'. It's a great time to make a difference with libraries."

Conference report

Putting knowledge to work

Christine Reid is inspired by a conference which dared to ask, "What are our duties as librarians when the client is civilisation?".

Special Libraries Association Conference, 7 to 12 June, New York.

'Putting Knowledge to Work' was the overarching theme of this year's conference. This event is huge and, being held in New York, attracted almost 7000 attendees, 300 exhibitors and more sessions to choose from than there were hours in a day.

The overall conference theme focused on the critical role of information professionals in exploring and employing knowledge for strategic decision making.

Day One was 'State of the Art' day. Pulitzer Prize winning author David McCullough described his love of libraries and illustrated how, while researching, he learnt quickly never to hide what he did not know from a librarian. In his keynote address he referred to the public library as a real expression of democracy, but is concerned that society as a whole today appears more intent on building walls between things rather than collaborating. His upbeat conclusion reminded his audience that there are still more public libraries than there are McDonald's.

Day One went on to examine the current issues and trends that impact how we manage and deliver information. The issues being raised in the sessions I attended included design techniques for research portals; digital reference; and intelligent linking. A message repeated at several sessions was to give a great deal of thought to your user groups - by trying to serve everyone, you end up serving nobody particularly well.

'Future Directions' was the theme for Day Two. Futurist Stewart Brand's keynote was designed to stimulate and stretch the imagination on what the future could bring for our profession. Brand is well known as author of The Whole Earth Catalog and co-founder of The Well computer teleconferencing system and The Long Now Foundation. He has developed his insights by taking a long view on things - by this he means thinking in terms of centuries or millennia. Such thinking allows you to view current events very differently. He described the past as knowable but unchangeable and as a consequence, it is often ignored, forgotten and perpetually reinterpreted.

The future, on the other hand, is unknowable and changeable. It can also be guessable and somewhat predictable. We cannot control the future but everything we do affects it. Society as a whole should therefore think seriously about the consequences of actions. He posed the question

- "what are our duties as librarians when the client is civilisation? - memory, constraint, integration, continuity?" In this context, he reminded us of several things:

- "digital information is forever. It doesn't deteriorate and requires little in the way of material media." Andy Grove, head of Intel Corporation;
- "digital information will last forever - or five years, whichever comes first." Jeff Rothenberg, a researcher with RAND Corporation;
- "the average life span of an object on the Web is 44 days." Brewster Kahle

Brand views the internet as having the potential to be the greatest library in the history of mankind - a repository of memory, thought, culture and scholarship. However in this fast moving age, new generations of software and platforms make old data unreadable and create too many broken links. With the costs of digital preservation continuing to increase, he fears we could be facing a catastrophic extinction of data and a digital dark age. He challenged us to ensure that this does not happen.

To help me shape my own future, I attended a session on strategies for making myself indispensable to my organization. As information professionals, in addition to having to cope with growing economic pressures, we are finding ourselves increasingly at the mercy of a 'Google generation'. The advice from the speakers was to continually strive to market our services, offer advice on search techniques and demonstrate the breadth and quality of our resources.

'Globalization' was the theme for the final day with former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright focusing on the issues and trends that have a global impact on our profession. She reflected on her days in the White House in terms of '26 suits and a skirt'. While writing her biography, she was taken aback to realise just how much she had remembered that was wrong. Irrespective of war or peace, information is a mighty weapon and information professionals have an important role to play in making others aware of the wide range of information sources. Technology may accelerate the pace at which we move but not determine the direction. Echoing many voices in our profession, establishing partnerships and building networks she sees as being the way of the future. In keeping with other speakers, she stressed the importance of information and freedom in a democratic society, but warned of countries that operate outside of "the global information loop".

This year many of the conference sessions encompassed a digital theme. The strong message coming through repeatedly was that context is king, not content. Systems should be designed as if users mattered, employing

language that they can relate to. The premise put forward by Ray Tennant of eScholarship is that only librarians like to search, everyone else likes to find.

In a world of reality TV, celebrity endorsements and googling, we need to engage with our users, understand better about different learning styles and realise that what works for us as librarians may not work for those with whom we interact. We have to understand information seeking behaviour better to create more appropriate learning environments. Why? - because the information highway has failed badly and we are now swimming in an information ocean.

Information will soon be seen as a seamless commodity just like heat, water and light. To have a useful role in this future, libraries should be developed as exploration spaces and not collection spaces. Are we really ready to help a new generation of users for whom it is normal to access information on their mobile phones?

Another thought-provoking session considered professional competencies. Librarians were described as being a little too cautious when it comes to taking risks. This requires unconventional, out-of-the box thinking as the future belongs more to the unorthodox. However the trick is not to predict the future, but to imagine a future and plan accordingly. We should be prepared to be flexible and to leave behind things we are comfortable with if they are no longer required. At the same time, we need to develop strong communication skills and continually demonstrate the added value we bring.

In the race to the future there are drivers, passengers and road kill. Drivers, the industry leaders, make the rules of the game and lead in innovation. Passengers will get to the future, but their fate will not be in their hands. Road kill get run over by all the rest. We need to be clear about where we want to be on this path.

I left this conference inspired and brimming with ideas. My thanks are due to the SLA's Business & Finance Division whose award of a professional development grant allowed me to participate in it.

Christine Reid is Manager, Business Information Service, University of Strathclyde Graduate School of Business.

Conference report

A brolly good time

Graeme Hawley gets excited about cataloguing and llamas at the conference that has everything covered.

Umbrella 2003, 3 to 5 July, Umist, Manchester.

If IFLA is the World Cup of Librarianship, then Umbrella is the FA Cup. When the only drawback is deciding which of the clashing sessions you want to attend, and the apex is a toss between a three course meal on a steam train past fields of llamas, and discussing libraries and globalization issues, you know that you have come to something really fantastic. Once again, it was reaffirming to see this profession of professions engage so enthusiastically with such a variety of issues.

First on my agenda was a visit to the National Library of the Blind (NLB) at Stockport. Despite the fantastic efforts made by Pat Beech at raising the profile on the NLB over recent months, only an actual visit can truly do justice to its general brilliance. I was immensely impressed by the commitment of the staff, ingenuity of the technology, and industry of the whole operation.

The NLB is 121 years old and is entirely dependent on charity. They exist primarily to provide information and recreational resources for the 2 million visually impaired people in the UK. Working in partnership with other libraries and organizations they aim to inspire public and private institutions to do more to provide for visually impaired users.

Assessing, developing and promoting accessible e-resources for visually impaired people is a key aim. Technology such as 'Jaws' - as the mouse or keypad navigates a web page, the screen text is read out - is used alongside books in Braille. The NLB gains 800 to 1,000 new Braille titles each year; 250 of these are produced in house. The NLB has 17 copies of the first four Harry Potters, and received the first installments of the 17-volume Braille version of the Chalice of Doom, or whatever it is, in record time.

Reader development is also key. A really user friendly website was created, and training to over 100 public libraries during the 'Touch of...' project. This project gathers literature into 10 different literary moods. For each mood, a publication was issued which gave reviews and extracts from 10 different Braille items. It was the first time that Braille readers had the opportunity to browse books and pick out ones that they fancied, a great development in empowering the visually impaired user.

Next came a visit to the Rylands Library, which as you read this has now closed until 2006 for upgrading. There are two sides to this: profile raising, and building works. The Rylands Library is very much a product of Manchester's industrial history. The library was established by the third wife of the late John Rylands, the cotton magnate, who inherited £3.5 million, a staggering amount for the late nineteenth century. Mrs. Rylands spent £2 million on the library, its building and collections reflecting the Nonconformist beliefs of John Rylands. It has the biggest collection of Methodist works in the world, owns the St. John's Fragment from 125AD, and has both a 42 and a 36 line edition of the Gutenberg Bible, which is gilding the Congregationalist's lily in anyone's book. Evidently, it has an impressive past to draw on, but what of its future?

The motivation, apart from refurbishment, is the desire to welcome more people, the opportunity to showcase even more of the treasures, in more interactive ways, and the chance to establish Rylands in the minds of the public as the best library in the north of England. The Rylands Library currently has approximately 30,000 users a year. After the re-launch, it expects to attract 90-100,000 visitors.

This Rylands presentation got me thinking; profile raising is about setting fires in people's imaginations and souls, so that they go off and tell people how splendid such and such a thing is. And it seems to have worked, because the short summary of the Rylands Library is - it is splendid. The plans are well considered, and are both sympathetic to the past and relevant for the future.

For my first official session of Umbrella I choose the CIG (Cataloguing and Indexing) AGM. We are treated to a very entertaining account by John Scott Cree of his life as a cataloguer. He poses the questions: 'Why bother with classification when keywords are better for information retrieval?' and 'With full-text retrieval, what is the role of cataloguing?' He then discusses these questions through an analysis about the merits of LCSH and whether Americanized, intellectual language is the most appropriate language to index in. To a generation raised on Internet browsing, the finer points of grammar and spelling are cumbersome obstacles. John then gave an excellent example, the gist of which was that on a list of top search terms

recently, 'genealogy' came surprisingly low; 'geneology' was, of course, third in the list.

The new CIG mission statement is short and to the point: 'To promote best practice in the organization and retrieval of knowledge'. But one member felt that the word metadata should feature in the statement, a view shared by several others in the audience. But I stayed silent because of the guilt of cataloguing heresy. And my heresy is this. I don't understand the point of the word 'metadata'.

It is usually defined as 'data about data'. In terms of how the word is used, 'datadata' would be just as good, For, if we are honest with ourselves, then surely we have to concede that it is nonsense, and 'profession-indulgent', 'user-hostile' nonsense at that. If we describe a MARC record as metadata, then we are saying that the MARC record is data about data, when in actual fact the MARC record is data about... a book. Now, only if we really want to alienate our users do we need to refer to books, magazines, websites, etc., as data. In a session subtitled 'Empowering the end-user' perhaps a good start would be if we tried to speak the same language.

The following morning in a session about FRBR, I felt another dose of heresy coming on. The British Library, like most other libraries, is faced with the problem of having to catalogue an ever-increasing volume of material with diminishing resources. The outcome of this equation is typically a squeeze on the quality of records. Cataloguers are naturally averse to this, and consider the quality of the catalogue record to be too important to sacrifice. But how can we tell how good a catalogue record is? Hence the project to find hard, evidence-based quantifiable statistics that link the quality of catalogue records to the appropriateness to the end user.

There had been something bugging me about this project from the start, and that was the use of FRBR as the measure of a good 'user-appropriate' record. How many end-users search on ISBN tags? FRBR, like metadata, is a theoretical thing, and I worry that it is perhaps unnecessarily complicated. I certainly am not convinced that it represents the end-user perspective. However, the ability to provide hard statistical evidence to prove that why we do what we do in the way we do is important, is absolutely critical, and the British Library project is a good attempt at doing this.

Another CIG event, 'FRBR - User tasks and cataloguing data' was presented by Mike Heany on behalf of Mr. Tom 'FRBR' Delsey himself. This session looked at the challenges posed by cataloging e-resources. Unlike traditional book stock, the description of an e-resource and the resource itself are usually at the same location - the computer terminal, and

are separated only by a mouse click. Library users have become accustomed to particular access points, such as authors, titles, publishers, and subject headings. E-resources such as web sites do not always lend themselves easily to this manner of description. Websites are also fluid and live. Identifying and acquiring the correct 'edition' could be difficult or even impossible. It is these differences that challenge our current cataloguing practices.

And so for my third and final heresy: e-resources, and websites in particular, are different to books, so why are we trying to treat them the same. For me, the Internet is part of the throwaway culture we live in. It is instant and transient.

In 'Including the excluded' John Vincent starts by discussing his preferred term, which is social justice, the term favoured in Scotland. Then he outlined some guidelines as to what libraries could actually do. Services need to be targeted, but incorporated into the main service delivery of the library. It's no good having five computers, and then getting 15 more and assuming therefore that everyone is catered for now. John was also keen to stress that libraries could achieve far more through partnership. Make sure that social exclusion/inclusion programmes are sustainable and long term, and must relate to local community needs. Finally, staff training and support must be honest and open. Many staff may have prejudices that they were perhaps unaware of, and these need to be explored before programmes can begin.

Kath Reynolds from Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Libraries described the programme of outreach activities to introduce the library to the travelling community. Kath quickly realized that they could not expect the travelers to change their whole cultural ethos to fit in with library regulations, and would therefore have to change the libraries approach to service delivery, if they really were sincere about social inclusion. So, membership rules, proof of address, and similar administrative barriers were relaxed. It proved very difficult at first, and the concept of borrowing and returning wasn't especially popular, but over time, both 'sides' began to understand each other better, and now the service is used by an increasing number of people from this community.

Over the course of the day I had been getting increasingly excited about the evening social event. I had chosen to go on the East Lancashire Steam Train, during which a three-course meal would be served. So, we get to Bury, and there it is, steaming away. Now, there's no easy way to describe what eating a three-course meal of soup, chicken, and profiteroles on a steam train was like, but I'll have a go. We paused on a viaduct whilst they served the soup, looking over a lovely valley and converted mill. The

service was super, the atmosphere unique. At some point in the journey we passed a field of llamas, and everyone said "Are they llamas?". It took at least two hours to creep through the countryside to the train's destination of Rawtenstall. When it arrived there, all the men went to look at the engine, and the women talked about the weather and school libraries. Everyone seemed to have had an excellent time.

UMIST-bound, the coach stopped at the Crowne Plaza to disgorge would-be disco-goers. A man sitting in front with a beard and glasses said that he could think of nothing worse than dancing librarians, adding in a barely audible voice, "It's the macabre".

On the last day of Umbrella, I'm a little sad, and there are some macabre looking librarians mooching around; too much disco. My penultimate choice of sessions is on family literacy. A joint presentation about the Greenwich and Bexley public library literacy schemes provides a very useful insight into working in partnership and of how much groundwork is done behind the scenes before anything could actually be offered to the user.

Next up was Sheffield's LEA. Sheffield was terribly affected by the economic slump in the 1980s and the decline of heavy industry. Those in the unemployment culture saw the future as bleak and jobless. A cycle of poor education and illiteracy was threatening, and retraining, education and family learning programmes were seen as the best solution.

The key has been partnership. Attempts have been (successfully) made to get everyone involved in things like family learning days. 'Everyone' includes librarians, teachers, MPs, CAB, local community figures, family outreach workers, clubs, societies, national bodies, parents, grannies, brothers and sisters, local businesses, etc. The informal schemes were the perfect missing link between total absence from the education system, and getting back into the learning and skills accredited programmes. This is where libraries can shine: in making up the ground between the efforts and coverage of other institutions.

All too soon it was time for the last session, and this was a case where I had saved the best until last. It was by far the most intimate session, with only eight of us including the speaker, Ruth Rikowski. A debate was quickly underway, on the subject of 'Libraries: international tradable commodities or public services'. I felt part of a covert group, an illicit number, 'the Rikowski Eight'.

Ruth talked to us about the origins of the World Trade Organization (WTO), GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and GATS (similar agreements affecting services), and how their remit was the liberalization of

trade and services, the guarantee of free trade and the removal of protectionism. I learnt that governments could nominate any service for liberalization, releasing it into the sphere of private ownership and competitive tendering.

We don't like to think that our elected governments quietly abdicated our decision-making processes to faceless spectres who place free trade above everything, including ecological and ethical concerns. But we are going to have to, because the clandestine GATS is creeping ever nearer our territory. I am not saying that some of our public services are not in need of improvement. But they should be improved within the realm of public ownership.

The liberalization of service provision is a one-way system. Once a service has been privatized, GATS/WTO forbids it from being re-integrated into the public sphere. Instant Library may be doing a good job at Haringay, but when their contract ends, the service will once again be open for tendering. Imagine, for example, if a company with extreme political or commercial interests were in charge of a library, and how they could alter book selection policies to reflect their agenda, or even who used the library and how.

Surely all of these fears must be conjecture, and many decades away? Hardly; the mechanisms are already in place. Best Value stresses the importance of a mix of private, public corporate and charity involvement. When the People's Network money runs out, it will likely be the private sector that maintains and upgrades it. Surely society belongs to the public, not to the highest bidder.

And with that, Umbrella finishes. I take a stroll along to Canal Street and want to shake my fist at the sky, but I sit on a bench watching the busy Saturday afternoon activity. In amongst the mobile phone brigade, pub lunch crowds, and high street shoppers, there is a drag queen, sitting reading a book, and smoking a cigarette, having a private moment in a public place, socially including himself through the power of literature. It seemed a perfectly apt end to an enjoyable and enlightening conference.

Graham Hawley is Cataloguer, National Library of Scotland.

Endpiece

Once in a lifetime

***Brian Osborne* extols two gripping reads and one gripping event.**

There are not too many things that can accurately be described as "once in a lifetime" events but the publication next year of the O*xford Dictionary of National Biography* surely qualifies.

The old *DNB* has been a pillar of reference libraries for more than a century and with its supplementary volumes it fills both a vital need for a comprehensive British biographical source and a couple of shelves of most decent reference libraries. However librarians will have to face up to the daunting prospect of investing in a completely new, and completely indispensable, edition in 2004. A bit of budgetary planning and special pleading will be needed as the cost will be a fairly daunting £6,500 if you order before 30 September 2004. Thereafter the price goes up to £7,500; neither sum being the sort of spare money that I suspect many libraries will have lying around in these hard times. A pre-publication order will also get you free access to the online edition for 12 months.

As one of 10,000 contributors to the work I saw with fascination something of the process that brought this £25m project to completion and the editorial efforts that have been made to make the new work inclusive, authoritative, comprehensive and, especially in the online edition, extremely accessible through multiple search options. It will be possible to search for the entries for every subject born in, say, Hamilton (one trusts for the sake of that fine town that somebody famous was born there) or for every subject who was a librarian (thank heavens for Sir Anthony Panizzi and Philip Larkin.)

Not quite in the "once in a lifetime" bracket but still notable enough is the Edinburgh International Book Festival – an event which, under the direction of Catherine Lockerbie has prospered remarkably, and which each August makes Charlotte Square one of the most lively and interesting places to be.

Undoubtedly one of the world's leading book festivals in quality and size it represents a marvellous resource for anyone interested in books and writing, and is something in which Scotland should take a proper pride.

The Scottish Library Association for a number of years sponsored an event at the Book Festival – a sponsorship which aimed to demonstrate the Association's support for the Festival, our involvement with the book world and our commitment to literature. Sadly this practice has fallen into desuetude (a word I have long yearned to have an excuse to use in print) and we are now only represented by a shelf of CILIPS publications in the book tent, which, as a grumpy former Honorary Publications Officer, I don't really think is good enough. Undoubtedly we never recouped the cost of our sponsorship of events in additional publications sales – but that was hardly the point of the exercise.

The Book Festival is worth supporting for its own sake, and the profile and prestige that libraries and our professional body could get from being associated with it are, if unquantifiable, nevertheless real. If supporting the Book Festival seems worthwhile to bodies ranging from the Saltire Society and the Educational Institute of Scotland to Harvey Nichols and the World Wildlife Fund, then is it too radical an idea to suggest that CILIPS should get seriously involved with it again?

And finally; as they say; if you haven't already read William Dalrymple's White Mughals, let me urge you to do so now. It is always comforting to have one's views confirmed and when White Mughals won the Scottish Arts Council's Scottish Book of the Year award in June I was delighted, and not just because it was the only one of the finalists that I had read – I'll get round to the rest, I promise!

I had read the book while on holiday and managed to finish the last page, with just the suggestion of a tear in my eye, as my plane landed at Glasgow. Dalrymple's book is a masterpiece – it is a moving human-interest story of love across racial boundaries in late eighteenth-century India, it is a brilliantly researched piece of biographical writing, and a gripping picture of an age and a country with something to say about our present age and concerns.

Go on, treat yourself, buy a copy – it only costs £8.99!

President's perspective

"Reader, I married him"

Alistair Campbell ponders the ever-increasing range of library activities.

The memory of the Edinburgh International Book Festival remains strong: record visitor figures (and queues), superb weather, and Charlotte Square Gardens populated with scores of relaxing readers, books in hands, each enjoying a unique experience within a collective loud hurrah for reading and writing. For the President's entourage it was a supreme pleasure to be engulfed by the tented village. New titles, writers and publishers found, and the opportunity given to rub shoulders with the writers and book pundits of today.

At my height I accept I don't so much rub shoulders as worship at their feet. Albeit we did literally bump into Brian Osborne, that well rounded wordsmith. I endorse Brian's opinion in the August edition that "The Book Festival is worth supporting for its own sake, and the profile and prestige that libraries and our professional body could get from being associated with it...". So let's go for it, let's sponsor an event that spells out our commitment to the book and to the enjoyment of reading.

In recent years our traditional role has been under attack as book availability has widened and as new emphases on new technologies and other media have came into play. Asda and Tesco top titles, burgeoning bookshops with discounts and decaf filtering away traditional users and attracting young people to buy, rather than necessarily borrow, have hit us hard. And arguably other essential pressures such as the People's Network have meant less focus on the centrality of the book to our purpose.

Let's not harken back to thoughts of a golden age in the 70s when book borrowing increased irrevocably year on year. The world has moved on and so have demands on libraries. I was reminded of this most forcibly when visiting my local library on a recent Saturday. The café was packed, a talk on the Western Front had an audience of 80, two teenagers were selecting greetings cards from the library shop, the art print, video, DVD and spoken word areas were busy with borrowers of all ages, two dads were reading picture books to their toddlers, while all around parents and children chose books, videos, DVDs or used the internet and CD Rom PCs. The reference area was under siege, 24 People's Network terminals were in use, the

study tables were fully occupied and a grandparent was getting help with photocopying. And yes, books were being borrowed from the main lending library!

The range of activities encapsulated within that two-minute time frame demonstrates not just the capability of the library service to meet contemporary needs but also the challenges it now faces in ensuring the pre-eminence of the book and support for reading and writing.

That's why in this 150th anniversary year of the Public Libraries (Scotland) Act effective delivery of our Reader Development Strategy is so important. At a national level, Matthew Perrin put a sound infrastructure in place which, now co-ordinated by Rhona Arthur, ensures all public library authorities are involved and have a common aim. Services have grouped together to share best practice, add value and co-ordinate promotional material. These developments will widen participation in reading, increase people's confidence and enjoyment of reading and allow them to share their reading experiences, raise the status of reading as a creative activity, and crucially, build on good practice and achievements.

At a regional level the North East authorities of Dundee, Angus, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray have joined together in a campaign to attract those in the 16 - 24 age group who are not traditional library borrowers, but who may use the library for other purposes.
The *www.read.it.net* publicity campaign urges the potential borrower to browse, select, borrow, read and repeat. While this campaign is primarily a public library initiative every effort should be made to get it out to schools, community locations and FE/HE libraries.

Every effort might also be made by public libraries to explore the opportunities of integrated approaches to family history research services given the work being done by the General Register Office for Scotland, National Archives for Scotland and the Court of the Lord Lyon. Their intention is to create a family history campus based around the General Register House and New Register House buildings in Edinburgh. This will include significant development of online resources.

At a local level they are seeking to promote the availability of family history information, possibly via local Family History Research Centres run, in the main, by local authorities. Thus search facilities provided by local registration services, local archive services and local library services might be brought together on the one site. The principle is sound, supporting local community involvement and encouraging ancestral tourism, and proposing to bring together source materials and information which have hitherto been kept separate.

Although our colleagues at the GRO may not have grasped the importance of library local collections and expertise when they first proposed such local arrangements, they now appreciate what libraries can provide, particularly when supported by the People's Network infrastructure and Scottish Cultural Portal.

Hence fruitful discussions are taking place with a view to achieving a national licence to enable scotlandspeople to be accessible via all public libraries and to achieving co-ordinated marketing programmes. Also high on the agenda is the exploration of how DIGROS with all the statutory registers of births, deaths and marriages etc might be made available to specific libraries, under access protocols. The stumbling block to this is that only registrar staff may supervise the system. Will we then require to see multi-skilled local studies staff also operating as Assistant Registrars?

Given the recent relaxation on locations where couples can be married, and given libraries ever expanding roles, the phrase "Reader, I married him" would take on a whole new meaning...

Profile: Catherine Kearney

Inside and out

A new Assistant Director at SLIC/CILIPS thrives on her varied workload.

Catherine Kearney is currently working hard leading up to an event that she has been involved with for two years. Self-evaluation indicators for further education library and information services are to be launched on 24 November. This has been and continues to be essential work in reaction to the danger that the importance of library services would suffer due to Scottish colleges adaptation to virtual learning environments. Catherine was invited on secondment to SLIC to take on this task.

Now she has joined the permanent staff and her job is even more varied than the education-focused work she has been doing during most of her career to date.

As the new Assistant Director at Scottish Library Information Council/ CILIPS her work will focus not only on FE and HE issues but also on prison library services, continuing professional development and quality assurance. Another remit is to review SLIC's grant-aid scheme - funding of up to £10,000 offered for worthwhile library and information projects with the aim of encouraging more innovation and development.

Catherine was previously Director of Library and Learning Services and a senior management team member at Glasgow College of Building and Printing, one of the largest FE colleges in Glasgow with over 8000 students. She also chaired the Glasgow Colleges Group (GCG) Library Group. She has worked in other colleges, including setting up library and information services at the new John Wheatley College in Glasgow, and also in school libraries.

How does she feel about the range in her new job? "I like the fact that I can focus entirely on my own profession, developing strategies and policies," says Catherine. "Working in a college, you are always aware that education is the main business. I am enjoying working in the different sectors, and being out and about meeting other professionals - almost in a PR role. I like the variety and have hardly been in the office since starting two months ago. I visited Northern Ireland recently and it was so refreshing to meet further education librarians there, to see how seriously they took their roles, how they worked together. It was inspiring to me in my job."

The subject of Catherine's SLIC secondment still occupies her until November. She took up the role half-time two years ago, beginning with overseeing the linking of colleges' library management systems, and then concentrating on highlighting the continued need and role of libraries within new college environments. Her work involved servicing an Advisory Group of representatives from the Scottish Further Education Unit, HMIs, the Funding Councils, the Scottish Executive, Jisc and the colleges themselves. She ran workshops, held meetings, sometimes with expert speakers.

"FE Colleges were implementing virtual learning environments (VLEs). Some thought that this meant they didn't need libraries any more. So I was seconded by SLIC in reaction to the potential negative impact on the perception of library services - and also in reaction to the appalling grouping of FE libraries with refectories in the inspection regime - if the fruit

scones weren't up to much that meant the library information centre was marked down!

"A range of quality indicators were needed, based on the self-evaluative model that Scottish education uses in other areas, for each college's library and information system to be measured against. In Northern Ireland I found a much more sympathetic reception to college library services and a vibrant and energetic workforce of librarians - here they are almost sometimes just seen as an add-on. Our role here at CILIPS is to influence the inspectorate in the run up to the new framework."

Catherine has already started tackling another sector within her remit - prison libraries. Her aim is to emphasise and implement their learning role, in the same way that modern public libraries are now known for their learning facilitating role. "The challenge is how to design something of the same standard as public libraries. The culture needs to be changed; the idea still exists in some quarters that it is a privilege, not a right, to be able to visit a library in prison. Again, it is a problem of perception."

She is organising meetings of a working group to visit a different prison library in rotation, to learn about the varying cultures which appear to exist in each one, with talks from invited specialists.

At the same time CILIPS' continuing professional development role is taking up a large amount of her time. There is a need for appropriate, cost effective and enriching training, not specific to one particular group of the profession. Catherine's work involves setting up a new working group and implementing a training needs analysis. The aim is for a register of trainers, delivering training relevant to the way things work in Scotland, possibly with specially CILIPS-commissioned training programmes.

In CPD, as in all aspects of her work, Catherine emphasises the need for collaboration and sharing - promoting good practice across the sectors. She would particularly welcome input from members on what they would like to see in terms of CPD offered by CILIPS.

"We are a membership organisation and we need to ensure continuous consultation and development. My role is to make it more obvious and easier to do this - and to ensure that the contribution I make is relevant to our Scottish members' interests."

Contact Catherine Kearney at CILIPS:
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Conference report

Do you know what I mean?

***Anne Noble* and *Rhona Arthur* attended e-Lit 2003, the international conference on IT literacy, and concluded that more convergance of thinking would be a start.**

Second International Conference on Information and IT Literacy, Glasgow Caledonian University, 11-13 June 2003

The second International Conference on Information and IT Literacy was held in June, jointly organised by Glasgow University, Strathclyde University and hosts, Glasgow Caledonian University.

The eLit was established to bring together professionals from across the globe to highlight best practice, identify emerging directions and to discuss ongoing issues relating to information and IT literacy. The main challenge was interpreting all the individual definitions and the conference did give the sense that participants were talking about different things. Information literacy often meant technical IT skills.

The presentations primarily discussed the needs of higher education students but there were some useful points for other sectors to learn from. There were a vast range of papers - 3 round table discussions, 1 workshop, 5 practical demonstrations and 37 papers.

When it came to thinking about definitions of what is meant by eLiteracy, Maryann Kope, University of Guelph, Canada looked at four main concepts - traditional literacy, information literacy, computer literacy and higher or academic literacy (learning skills). Maryann looked at convergence and continuity between the strands. She felt it was essential to recognize the full range of unique skills students require to use technology in an academic context, and to use it effectively for learning. Her presentation was based on Guelph's Learning Commons (merged learning and information departments) (www.learningcommons.uoguelph.ca).

How students learn to search

Nancy Becker of St. John's University, New York looked at 'Putting Google in its Place: Understanding and Enhancing the Internet Search Behaviour of Undergraduate Students '. This research consisted of a survey and interviews (the latter on critical incidents model, i.e. successful/unsuccessful web searches). The results showed that in almost all cases, where a search was directed the success rate was higher. Almost all students described how they learned how to search from the media or friends but only one from a librarian. Most students, when pushed, could articulate the need to check website relevance and authority, but they did not know how to check it. She explained that inexperienced searchers frequently give up when they meet a problem. They rely on the system, and don't progress in their research method. Librarians have an unrealistic expectation that learners enter and leave at the same point. But, more realistic is the aim to move each one along a little. Librarians must get students to challenge their thinking; and need to get learners to transfer what they know into practice, in a meaningful context. Assignments should expose learners to searches which the librarian understands won't lead to success, and some which will, and put learners in a group so that they can reflect on why some searches are unsuccessful. This is best carried out if the learners form the research based on real information needs.

In 'Beyond IT and Literacy', Allan Martin of Glasgow University and Convener of the eLit2003 Steering Committee talked about the current IT Literacy skills programme in Glasgow University, which has been running since 1994. It is a compulsory course for all undergraduate students. There is an online IT needs analysis which defines the appropriate route - beginners' course, standard course or exemption. He noted that with the increasing provision of IT skills in schools and further education, there was a movement towards more subtle definitions of information literacy - less on how technology works and more on reflecting on appropriate usage. Allan stressed the importance of key skills and links to employability. The increased provision of Virtual Learning Environments in higher education means that the acquisition of these skills are crucial to course delivery.

Glasgow has moved to a student-centred learning model, which demands that the student reflects on their own eLiteracy development, including awareness of IT and the information environment, confidence in using IT and information tools, evaluation of information-handling actions and willingness to meet eLiteracy challenges. This is a 4-stage framework.

1. Foundation - eLiteracy required of students at or near point of entry - fundamental IT and information skills.

2. Induction - eLiteracy required for the student to function effectively as a user of the learning environment from the early stages of their course.
3. Enhancement - eLiteracy needs as the student progresses through their studies towards both graduate and postgraduate goals.
4. Graduation - eLiteracy needs on graduation - eLiteracy required for effective functioning in the work environment.

The skills are delivered by a range of providers including the library and course outwith the university and assessment is linked to a Personal Development Plan.

Confidence in the skills

Two speakers, Serap Kurbanaglu and Buket Akkoyunlu of the University of Ankara, Turkey looked at the 'Relationship Between Students' Perceived Computer Self-efficacy and their Self-efficacy for Information Literacy'. This focused on Bandua's social learning theory, "Learning certain skills is not enough, individuals should also develop confidence in the skills that they are learning." They explained that people avoid situations if they are not confident. Teachers and librarians should have high levels of self-efficacy in order to teach others. For the new students, those who rated themselves highest on the information literacy skills were the librarians, and those for computing skills were the computing students. The level of perceived self-efficacy increased in the Faculty of Education for older students. But the highest scores were for the computing students, even in information literacy.

The results of a major European survey of undergraduate confidence with, experience of, and attitudes towards computer and information technology were presented by Hamish MacLeod and Jeff Haywood of Edinburgh University. Student ICT surveys have been carried out at Edinburgh since 1990 during enrolment so the returns are 80%. During the project academic staff, students and employers were interviewed. Some 9000 new students and 3500 established students were surveyed and there was a lot of commonality in the results across Europe.

The questionnaire to new students aimed to assess how prepared they were to take up the emerging opportunities for online learning. The established students were asked about their experiences of ICT in teaching and learning in their courses. The students are well prepared and positively disposed to utilize ICT. The results showed that the gender differences are disappearing and that computer ownership (rather than access to computers) had a significant impact.

Challenge for teachers

Audrey Sutton of North Ayrshire Council discussed some of her recent research which showed that teachers are not comfortable with teaching information skills and are challenged by the definition of information competencies. It is clear that there is habitual confusion between ICT skills and information handling skills. In a four-way discussion with Stuart Robertson HMI, Nick Morgan of the National Grid for Learning and Ian Pettigrew from Govan High School, the challenges of sustainability, technical support at local school level and integrating ICT and digital literacy into the curriculum were explored.

Denise Leahy of the Trinity College, Dublin and also a member of the European Task force which set up ECDL looked at how eLiteracy could be achieved through ICT literacy (another example of complex definitions). Denise used this definition of eLiteracy as to create, search, find, analyse and use but was clear that eLiteracy needs IT Literacy. ICT literacy is the ability to use information and communication technologies proficiently. She promoted the recognition of the ECDL as the standard for computer literacy and support in the development of computer societies. She affirmed that ICT literacy is necessary for full participation in the Information Society and necessary as a foundation to participate in eLearning.

Politics and eLiteracy

The final paper looked at the impact of politics on eLiteracy. It was not easy to import an information literacy product developed in another part of the world. All sorts of political influences impacted on the access to IT and, in spite of the Internet, there are information gaps. Political concerns about IT threats to the stability of regimes create a culture of control. Regime control is preventing the introduction of technologies and eLiteracy programmes. One example cited of controlling access to information was that by 1999 in Saudi Arabia there were only two places connected to the Internet. The speaker, Nader Naghshineh, Tehran University, made it clear that this control did not just apply to developing countries; in the USA, Al Gore said, "Politicians would use every opportunity to double their control over the Internet."

This was a most interesting and thought-provoking conference, which was long on the identification of the problems and short on shared outcomes. The next eLit will be held in New York in 2004.

Anne Noble is Librarian, Marr College. Rhona Arthur is Assistant Director, SLIC.

Volunteer scheme

"Friendly and helpful and not too complicated"

They range in age from 19 to 86, and North Ayrshire has 61 of them. *Paul Cowan* **describes a remarkable scheme in which many people are willing to give of their time freely to help others onto the information superhighway.**

Over the last 30 years public libraries have seen enormous changes. Most of us have computerised our operations and more recently put our catalogues on the Web. We began to stock paperbacks and then moved into what tended to be called Non-Book Material. Records gave way to cassettes and then compact discs, videos have been joined or replaced by DVDs, some libraries lend toys and even jigsaws and we charged for most of these items. Our stock is not all arranged in the same way. Learning from bookshops and supermarkets we have tried to get away from Dewey and A-Z and arrange at least some of our stock to catch the eye of the user. We have new books, themed books, dumpbins, and quick choice books on tables and stands just inside the door. All of this change was coupled, in many authorities, with cuts in both opening hours and budgets. The luckiest watched book prices rise whilst bookfunds stayed the same.

The People's Network

It was against this background that *New Library: The People's Network* was published in1997. The report stated that, "Individual access to information and communications networks will be impeded by cost" and, "...Public libraries are the ideal vehicle to provide this access and support, and to foster the spread of vital new technological skills among the population." Somebody wanted to put money into public libraries, we were central to somebody's plans at last. After all the form filling and cabling we had to make room for all these computers. Unless you were lucky enough to have an empty room available, severe weeding and rearrangement of stock was

necessary to fit them in, all together or perhaps scattered in ones and twos across the room.

Who are the computers for?

Once the computers were unpacked and connected up we wondered who would benefit from them. Library users of course, but only those who knew what to do: surely this great initiative wasn't just for people with computers at home to reduce their telephone bills or to enable passing New Zealanders to send a letter home? In North Ayrshire Libraries we decide that we would try to help people with no knowledge of computers to make use of them. We have 17 small branches and no central library. Three of them have one member of staff, and even the biggest four branches have a maximum of three staff in the mornings and evenings. Confronted with people who have never switched on a computer, found their way around a keyboard, printed or saved, we simply do not have time to sit down with them and begin at the very beginning. Perhaps for this reason library staff were enthusiastic about our chosen solution.

Though we had no idea if we would get any volunteers or any students for them to teach, we decided, in April 2002, that we would try to recruit Computer Buddies.

Recruitment and selection of volunteers

Posters were put up in all the libraries, we sent details of the scheme to the local newspapers and to the North Ayrshire Volunteer Centre in Saltcoats. We decided that we would not offer tuition to children, because they should have learned the basics at school and we would have to run Disclosure Scotland checks on our tutors. We realised that the scheme would only be as good as the volunteers therefore recruitment and selection procedures would be vital and we would say no if we felt it necessary. We use a slightly modified North Ayrshire Council application form so we have the volunteer's employment history, previous voluntary work and the names of two referees. Everyone who applies is interviewed as soon as we have their references. Volunteers are asked about their knowledge of computers, do they know Windows 2000, our operating system, how would they start lesson one with a nervous student. What we are looking for is a certain amount of technical knowledge but also a person who is good at explaining things in simple terms: "click on that wee cross" is preferable to "select from the drop-down menu," or "scroll down the page". To date we have taken on 61 volunteers and rejected 17. Most of the 17 had more than enough knowledge of computer basics but seemed unable to explain them clearly. Volunteers who travel to the next town or village receive travelling expenses in cash immediately.

Who are the volunteers?

There is no such thing as a typical volunteer. We have 25 women and 36 men and they range in age from 19 to 86. Two of them teach computing by day and (bless them) volunteer for more of the same at night and on Saturdays. We have a few retired teachers but also a man who works in a Chinese takeaway, a plumber and a graphic artist. Some of our volunteers have qualifications in computing but most do not, indeed a few have recently completed "computers for the terrified" courses and therefore know exactly why their students fear they will break the computer if they press the wrong button.

Monitoring the scheme

Most of our students are retired, the oldest so far is a woman of 91 who has just sent her first email. We give students an evaluation form after their first session with a tutor. They are asked to rate the performance of the tutor on a scale which runs from "excellent" to "very poor". We do this mainly in case, despite the form, interview and references, we have taken somebody who is unsuitable. If we receive a number of bad evaluations from different students about the same tutor then we will politely tell the volunteer that it doesn't seem to be working and remove him or her from our lists: this has happened just once. More usually we get a lot of very positive comments on these forms. Here is a sample:

"tutor is quite funny and has plenty of patience..."; "not too complicated..."; "can't wait for the next session..."; "he gave me confidence..."; "made the very basics very clear to a complete beginner..."; "didn't realise that 60 minutes had passed..."; "took away my great fear of computers..."; "she listened, took her time to explain things, sometimes more than once and was really friendly..."; "better than reading a book on computers..."

Computer Buddies and other learning providers

One of our evaluation forms said "personal tuition much better than night school," and this is partly true. The Computer Buddies scheme offers 1:1 tuition for as long as it takes for the student to master the basics. Tutor and student build up a personal relationship, and the student does not have to worry that he or she is behind the rest of the class or wonder if he dares put his hand up and say "I couldn't follow any of that." We are not, however, in competition with our colleagues in Community Learning and Development or the local colleges and we do not offer any sort of certificate at the end of the tuition. Our aim has always been to enable people to make use of the computers in the libraries. If we are approached by people who already have a working knowledge of computers but want, for example, the ECDL

(European Computer Driving Licence), desktop publishing or web page design then we will refer them elsewhere.

When the golf course beckons...

We have found that you cannot have too many volunteers, so we are always recruiting. When we take on volunteers we cannot ask them to commit themselves to working fixed hours: there may not be any demand for tuition in their library/libraries. We ask that they should be able to teach for a minimum of one hour per week i.e. be able to teach at least one person. Tuition times are agreed between tutor and student, usually one hour every week. Some volunteers work full-time, some part-time, some are students, some are retired or unemployed and could theoretically work all the time. Volunteers, unlike the rest of us, can say no. We have now discovered that without formally resigning from the scheme, some volunteers find the golf course too tempting in the better weather, others having successfully taught a few students decide that they want a rest. Some organise their tuition around school holidays, others find a job, change shifts or move house.

Two thousand hours and counting

After nearly 18 months and more than 2000 hours of tuition the 165 students think their Computer Buddies are wonderful and so do we. Further development of the scheme is a key priority in our service plan and in the Council's E-Community Learning Action Plan. Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education took a close look at the Buddies scheme as part of their inspection of Community Learning in North Ayrshire. A powerful new online database has been developed to track all of this activity. We have never needed to advertise the scheme and we have waiting lists in four of our libraries. We have developed our own short courses to supplement the work of the Buddies and tackle long waiting lists. Almost all the students didn't think computers were for them until they saw them, free and in their local library.

Thanks to our Buddies, North Ayrshire Libraries provide a slip road to the Information Superhighway.

Paul Cowan is Area Officer (Library Operations), Educational Services, North Ayrshire.

Special libraries

More Than a Librarian

***Dawn Bellamy* describes how she tries to keep at the cutting edge in her dual-role job with an oil company.**

I am currently working for Instant Library Ltd, a library and information services company which, in one of its many roles, provides data management services for a number of oil companies. I work for Instant Library as part of a team of staff within Total E&P UK PLC, based in Aberdeen.

Total E&P UK PLC is one of the major oil and gas operators in the North Sea, and is a subsidiary of one of the largest oil and gas groups in the world - the Total Group. Within Total E&P UK PLC I perform the dual role of Document Controller and Librarian for both the Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) Department and the Procurement Department. I have held a position in Total since July 2002 following my graduation from The Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen

I have learned so much from my time here. My job is both challenging and rewarding, and my efforts to enhance the services provided to the departments have been well received. I hope to pass on the lessons that I have learned, not only for the new graduate in her/his first professional post, but also in the hope that these general principles will be useful to those of you in the Library and Information Services population in general. From my experience members of our profession all suffer very much from the same ailments - shrinking margins within which to work and higher expectations on what we must provide. I believe we must raise our professional profile and increase the user's satisfaction with an effective Library and Information Service.

I must state here that I operate in an environment where the management appreciates the benefits of an effectively managed Information Service. As part of the Instant Library team, I am backed up by a solid support framework of experience, advice and guidance. I am also currently working

towards my CILIP Charter within the Instant Library chartership program - I am just about to go on my first external training course.

Safety, Health and Environment

At first glance, safety and the environment (SHE) would not seem the most important or interesting of subjects. However, certainly in this company, I have found it to be of the highest importance, and actually an engaging and dynamic area.

SHE is of primary importance to the TOTAL Group. The UK subsidiary SHE Policy states that:
"TOTAL E&P UK PLC is committed to conduct its business without causing harm to people, with care for the environment and respecting the principles of sustainable development."

A good SHE performance can enhance a company's reputation and, when combined with a sound economic performance, help maintain the support of stakeholders and the parent Group, and satisfy regulatory authorities in order to safeguard future investment.

In support of SHE responsibilities, an effective Information Service, both in terms of published and company information, is an extremely valuable resource. The SHE department has invested in both a library service and extensive document control systems in electronic and hard copy formats. My job entails the effective management and dissemination of information from these avenues and improving the quality of the Information Service wherever practicable. I would list my main accomplishments to date as:

- Taking ownership of, and managing information systems and services within the department
- A complete review of information structure, provision and dissemination
- Effective archive management
- Development of an intranet site
- Development and implementation of an interim system to manage the transfer to a new Document Management System
- Management of the transfer to a new Document Management System
- Raising awareness of the importance of effective document control

While I feel I have achieved a great deal so far, these projects are still very much work in progress. With the implementation of the new Document Management System, a very powerful tool, I feel a great deal more can be achieved.

Procurement

Within the Procurement department I perform a much more traditional document control role - the caretakership of company information - primarily contracts and purchasing type information. Information needs to be retrieved quickly and as easily as possible in response to queries from within and outside the company. I work extensively to improve this system. The implementation of a more library-type Information Services is a growing concern within this department, and I am working towards this goal with members of the department to achieve a useful service.

I would list my main accomplishments to date as:

- Effective archive management
- Various improvements with regard to transferring over to the new Document Management System
- Liaison with the department regarding the development of Information Services provision
- Raising awareness of the importance of effective document control

Again this is very much work in progress, and I hope that with the implementation of the new Document Management System, the pace and numbers of improvements will rapidly increase.

Tips and suggestions - what worked for me ...

Instant Response: An instant response to a query, especially when sent remotely (eg email or telephone message), is an excellent way to tell your customer that they are important to you, even if the response is "I am working on it". Face-to-face is also a good way to respond where possible; it is a more effective way to clarify and expand the query and it allows the librarian and the customer to bounce ideas off each other.

Diversity, Innovation and Continuous Improvement: Diversity, Innovation and Continuous Improvement are very much linked. No service should be static, and this is doubly true in the business and special library sector.

The librarian is expected to adapt to the business while the Library Service is expected to be as innovative as any other department. A wide range of relevant services should be made available to the customer together with suggestions for improvements. Meanwhile you should continue to provide and improve on your successful core. You should set targets and promote their achievement as well as the new services you are providing. Last, but by no means least, make sure your clients know about the baseline

services you provide. This can be achieved by, for example, running training courses and awareness sessions.

Cooperation and Collaboration: Cooperation and collaboration are essential ingredients in maintaining and developing appropriate and useful products. Cooperation can either be with a representative of a group or the group itself. I find that cooperation with the group or team, or a number of people who represent its differing interests is most effective. It allows you to get a better understanding of the group's needs and it also allows them to bounce ideas off each other - what may work some members of the group may not work for the others. In this instance, you may want to talk with these people separately

Collaboration can be both informal and formal - setting up meetings, with an agenda, to suggest and develop new services, products, authorising, buying, etc. Formal collaboration can also mean carrying out customer satisfaction surveys and setting goals to improve on the service provided, where necessary. Informal collaboration means getting your customer involved, for example, testing of a new product. Informal cooperation may also involve listening to suggestions and advising on small improvements to services and systems, etc. Formal and informal cooperation and collaboration is essentially about communicating with one's customers.

Communication: It is communication that is the essence of a successful service. If your customer does not know about you and what you do, all the instant responses, innovation and continuous improvement in the world will do no good.

A good way of communicating and canvassing for ideas on how to serve your customers more effectively is to attend meetings and to network with your customers. For example, I attend the monthly meeting of the SHE department, and while I may not understand all the terminology it keeps me up to speed with current events and I may even sometimes be able to add to the discussion. I have also given a number of presentations at the monthly meeting, for example, showing my progress to date and the programme of work for the coming year, tutorials on systems, etc.

Ideally you should be located close to your customer to demonstrate a visible presence and to learn more about your customer and their needs. I am located within the departments I serve, spending the morning in the SHE department and the afternoon in the Procurement department. An Intranet or Internet site is also a good idea - it is a good forum for communicating services and products. Even being seen and showing interest and enthusiasm can help you to communicate the service you provide and encourage liaison with your customer.

Conclusion

I have tried to give you an insight into the principles and practicalities of the provision of the Information and Library Services to departments within Total E&P UK. I will continue to communicate and cooperate with my assigned departments providing them with an innovative and useful service together with relevant products in a timely manner. I hope that you may find my experiences and theories useful.

Dawn Bellamy is Document Controller/Librarian with Total E&P UK PLC, as part of a service provided by Instant Library Ltd.

Current research

Stars for Strathclyde

Alan Poulter **gives an update of research at the University of Strathclyde, which is graded as of national importance for research in information and library management.**

Teaching and research into librarianship and information science at the University of Strathclyde goes back many years, to the formation of the Department of Librarianship in 1964. This became the Department of Information Science in 1984. Recently, in August 2001, the Department of Information Science moved into the Science Faculty (after previously residing in the Business Faculty) and merged with the Department of Computer Science, to become the new Department of Computer and Information Sciences (CIS). News of this merger has taken time to percolate out into the wider community as the old Departmental websites are still receiving hits and redirecting people to the new site at: www.cis.strath.ac.uk.

A recent addition is the incorporation of the Centre for Digital Library Research (CDLR), which used to be attached to the University Library at

Strathclyde but is now an independent research unit within the Department of Computer and Information Sciences.

All undergraduate teaching in the new CIS Department is computer-science based. Existing postgraduate Diploma/MSc courses in Information and Library Studies and Information Management now fall under the banner of the Graduate School of Informatics (GSI), which has been set up to develop and extend the range of postgraduate courses offered: www.gsi.strath.ac.uk/gsi/.

Two new courses have been developed so far for the GSI. MSc Strategic Information Systems is a distance learning course for staff of the Royal Bank of Scotland. It is taught in conjunction with staff from the Business Faculty and is a completely new departure in the type of course offered by UK academic departments offering standard postgraduate library and information science courses. Also new is MSc Computer and Internet Technologies which is designed to equip graduates with the computing skills necessary to work in the exciting world of e-commerce. The GSI is also aiming to provide a series of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses aimed at local library and information practitioners who wish to update or expand their skills in particular areas. On offer this year will be two courses: Beyond ECDL: Advanced ICT Skills and Advanced Web Design and Management. More CPD courses will be on offer in 2004. For details email: cpd-enquires@cis.strath.ac.uk.

Teaching and research should go hand in hand. CIS has ten research groups in all, each group consisting of academic teaching and research staff who share a common subject interest. These groups are given at: www.cis.strath.ac.uk/research/res_groups.html.

Most of these groups focus on computer-science related topics but five cover library and information science-related topics.

Each will be covered in turn.

Research groups: Distributed Digital Libraries

This group concentrates on areas such as:

- designing and testing models for the management of digital libraries and related resources;
- identifying and evaluating legal, regulatory and policy issues related to digital information and digital transactions;
- ensuring transfer of research results into the professional and practitioner community.

It is built around the activities of CDLR whose focus is on digital libraries in general and distributed digital libraries in particular. The Centre has a longstanding partnership with the Scottish Library and Information Council, with the view to taking a "whole environment" approach to DDL research and how it impacts on service delivery, looking at a huge range of topics including:

- Interoperability
- Collaboration (e.g. in cataloguing or collecting)
- People and organisation level issues
- Landscaping
- Users and user interfaces
- Content management and delivery
- Metadata, including collection level metadata
- Interactions with Virtual Learning Environments
- Information Policy
- Quality assurance and Evaluation
- Knowledge Organisation Systems and Mechanisms
- Distributed System Architectures

Other threads such as standards and automated assistance and AI are considered to be 'meta-themes' that cut across all of the above.

Current CDLR projects include:
CC-interop: COPAC/Clumps Continuing Technical Cooperation, an investigation of issues of interoperability between physical and virtual union catalogues.
cdlr.strath.ac.uk/projects/ccinterop.htm

GDL: Glasgow Digital Library, the creation of a collaborative, cross-sectoral, digital collection for and about the City of Glasgow.
cdlr.strath.ac.uk/projects/gdlproj.htm

HaIRST: Harvesting Institutional Resources In Scotland Testbed, a development and implementation of a pilot service for access to locally created learning and research resources in HE and FE institutions in Scotland.
cdlr.strath.ac.uk/projects/hairst.htm

HILT: High Level Thesaurus. Phase II, the development of a pilot subject terminologies service and recommendations for a full service.
cdlr.strath.ac.uk/projects/hilt2.htm

SAPIENS: Scottish Academic Periodicals: Implementing an Effective Networked Service, the development of a centralised electronic journals

service for small Scottish publishers.
cdlr.strath.ac.uk/projects/sapiens.htm

SPEIR: Scottish Portals for Education, Information and Research, investigating the distributed information infrastructure requirements of the Scottish Cultural Portal Pilot, and the Public Library CAIRNS Integration proposal, with development of associated pilot facilities.
cdlr.strath.ac.uk/projects/speir.htm

The Victorian Times project, which researches and implements a service providing access to digitised materials relating to social, political and economic conditions, events, people and actions in the Victorian era.
cdlr.strath.ac.uk/projects/victoriantimesproj.htm

The Centre also hosts the *BUBL* (bubl.ac.uk/)
and *SLAINTE* (www.slainte.org.uk/) services and
the *WIDWISAWN* (widwisawn.cdlr.strath.ac.uk/) electronic journal.

Research groups: I-Lab (Information Access)

The I-lab is concerned with research into the design, implementation and evaluation of advanced interactive information access technology. Information can be textual or multimedia and the modality of access can involve graphical user interfaces, voice, or formal representations of user knowledge. Members of the I-lab are involved in a number of national and international projects and play an important role in the international information retrieval and human computer interaction (applied to information access) communities. The key research themes of the group are:

- Adaptive and interactive information access
- Multimedia and multimodal information access
- User interfaces
- Language-based and multilingual information retrieval
- Data and knowledge modelling in disease management

Its current projects are:
DELOS, on improving the effectiveness of European research in the digital library domain.
delos-noe.iei.pi.cnr.it/

Diogene, to design, implement and evaluate with real users an innovative training web environment for ICT individual training.
www.crmpa.it/diogene/

MIND, to solve the problems faced by users to access and exploit the increasing number of digital libraries available internationally through networks.
www.mind.cs.strath.ac.uk/

ODA/ILRAD Project looks at using generic decision support systems to control livestock diseases in developing countries.

OntoWeb, is an information exchange hub for ontology-based research from academic, commercial and government stakeholders.
ontoweb.aifb.uni-karlsruhe.de/

WebKit, to create an intuitive physical interface to the web, which will enhance the learning process for children.
www.projectwebkit.com/

Research groups: e-Book

The e-Book Group brings together research interests in the field of electronic books and texts. Themes covered by the group include: design and implementation of e-book authoring and reading environments; studies of metaphors for e-books, e-journals and e-libraries; evaluation of user interfaces, e-books, e-journals, and e-libraries; and guidelines for the design, production and publishing of e-books and e-journals. The group has a particular interest in the study of the use of e-books by readers with special needs. The members of the group are involved in a number of national and international projects.

Research groups: Information Strategy

The Information Strategy and Policy Group is involved in development of methodologies for conducting information audits and articulating information strategies. It also has interests in service management and metrics and methodologies associated with business continuity management, outsourcing, benchmarking and service level management.

Research groups: Libraries, Information and Communities

This is the newest group and is concerned with:
"research into all forms of library (including public, national, special and academic), with information use in social and organisational contexts and with communities created by information usage. Information can be textual or multimedia and communities can be real or virtual."

Journal and conference papers have been produced recently on the following topics:

- Beyond ECDL: basic and advanced ICT skills for the new library professional
- Design of a digital dissertation information management System
- Digital libraries and reference services
- Review of research and teaching of metadata in UK
- Thesaurus-enhanced search interfaces
- Towards a methodology for investigating sectarianism online

For more information see:
www.cis.strath.ac.uk/~pjs/lic/index.html

Conclusion

In past Research Assessment Exercises (RAE) Strathclyde has scored a four, meaning research is judged to be of national importance, for research in information and library management (Unit 61 of the RAE). Five and five star are the top grades for research of international importance. With the research currently going on in CIS, and with the potential for future research that lies within the Department, it is to be expected that a higher grade is within reach.

Alan Poulter is Lecturer at the Department of Computer and Information Sciences, University of Strathclyde.

Endpiece

Shut Up and Read

***Colin Will* invites info about prison libraries; and offers coaching on public reading skills.**

I have to confess I've never read any of Lord Archer's books - the subject matter doesn't appeal to me, so I've never even delved. Maybe I've been missing something, and if so I have to plead that there are lots of good books on the go just now which I find more interesting (Jenny Uglow's *The Lunar Men*, and Claire Tomalin's biography of *Pepys*, to name but two). Then again, I was out of the country during the latter part of Lord Archer's trial, and I didn't attempt to catch up with the case when I returned. So on the face of it, you might be surprised that something the porridged baron said recently struck me as thought-provoking and as an issue worth raising.

He was speaking at a public meeting on prison reform, and he mentioned the shocking illiteracy figures for prison inmates. He wondered if an 'enforced literacy' programme might benefit prisoners, and suggested it might go some way towards reducing re-offending. He said, if I remember correctly, that this could lead eventually to a national reduction in our prison population.

I'm not going to argue here the pros and cons of Lord Archer's ideas, but if, as most agree, low levels of literacy are a feature of prison life, then literacy training at all levels is surely something worth promoting. The education system is, I know, committed to raising literacy levels, but in some areas, and for a variety of very valid reasons, it has real difficulties. The dystopic vision appears to be that educational failures can turn into social failures, a proportion of whom offend and are jailed. In the process, low educational and social expectations lead to a feedback loop for future generations, an endlessly repeated cycle of failure, crime and imprisonment.

It occurs to me that I don't know as much about the work of the prison library service as I should. Can an insider tell me what role prison librarians play in encouraging literacy and thereby helping to break the cycle? I would really like to know, and if you'd like to share it with the rest of us in these august pages, so much the better.

Coming back to my literary concerns, I've attended a number of very good readings by a huge variety of writers over the summer. I've also attended readings which were marred by a few bad readers. In the olden days (it's *Last of the Summer Wine* time again folks), elocution was taught in schools, and the Co-op held festivals where prizes were awarded for singing and elocution. Now I know it's not an essential social skill nowadays, but I still think it's desirable to be able to speak well in public.

For a writer, it's much more than desirable, it's part of the communication process. As you dip your quill in the inkwell of life, and commit your

precious thoughts to the unlined pad of posterity, there's usually an inner voice speaking the words aloud (sometimes even spelling them). If the voice is that of some fine actor - Fiona Shaw or Anthony Hopkins maybe - that's all well and good. But if it's your own voice, what then? Do writers listen to themselves speaking? Shometimes, shurely not.

So I'm developing a wee set of coaching tips for novice and other writers who want to improve their public reading skills. Even if you don't write yourself, you might care to mark famous writers using the following pointers:

- Readers should try to make eye contact with audience members. They should attempt to clock all parts of the room - everyone present will believe they've been addressed personally.

- Having said that, they shouldn't get fixated on individuals in an audience - the fanciable, the fidgets, the one whose flies are undone, the scratcher, the sleeper or the cougher. Give them all equal attention (well, maybe not the sleeper).

- Rehearse readings beforehand. The more familiar, the more confident. Poets should know which poems they're going to read next, and where to find them in the book (and where they've left their reading glasses).

- Hand gestures should be used occasionally (George, don't do that) but only when needed for emphasis. Never point at an audience - this is threatening.

- Don't cough, belch or sniffle into a mike - if you feel one of these coming on, turn your head aside.

- Gentleman Poets should trim their beards and moustaches before a reading - it's amazing how much sound (and meaning) can be absorbed in facial hair. Poets who give long introductions to short poems should be taken out and shot. No court will convict - it's justifiable makaricide.

- Don't rush the words - the audience won't get the meaning if it's all jumbled together. And the voice should be varied and, if humanly possible, interesting.

- Watch timing. If there is a fixed time limit, over-running is unfair to those who read afterwards, and the MC will cease to love you.

- Writers should not get drunk before a reading. They may think it improves their performance, but in this respect, as in others, they are wrong.

Colin Will (colin.will@virgin.net)

President's perspective

24 hour party people

***Alistair Campbell's* year as President ends with the highlights of the historic Parliamentary debate on public libraries and the Scottish Cultural Portal launch.**

It's been a real privilege to have been President in this historic year. I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity to visit the Branches, to mix with our colleagues throughout the UK, to be provided with the platform of the annual conference and to be presented with the challenge of writing the President's Perspective in the re-christened *Information Scotland*. That our professional journal has been so effectively revitalised is clearly nothing to do with my endeavours.

The year has, in so many ways, underlined that I am particularly fortunate to work within the library community of Scotland where our size and our shared commitment enable us to work in harmony across the sectors and achieve results that make a positive difference to those we serve. And at the heart of this success lie CILIPS and SLIC.

I am absolutely convinced that we have the right formula, in that while CILIPS must speak out strongly for our individual members it is SLIC that has the national leadership role for all library services and sectors.

One of the President's most enjoyable duties is to visit the Branches. It's been a real pleasure to meet with the members, to get their comments, to discover all the good practice that is going on across the profession and to

hear concerns also, genuine concerns regarding training and development issues and about the future direction of library services. But it's sad to note that we have just four Branches currently functioning in Scotland.

At a time when there's a commonality of key challenges across the sectors and a genuine need for closer co-operation and co-ordination, the sectors and individual library professionals need to meet and mix more often. And that's a challenge for all of us.

For the President a key activity is the CILIPS Annual Conference. This offers an ideal opportunity to highlight current themes, to promote libraries and to indulge the President in riding his particular hobbyhorses, or in my case, Shetland ponies, given my vertically challenged stature.

It is also through Branch and Group Day an excellent means of bringing together so many staff from the various sectors. I'm delighted that next year that day will include suppliers' demonstrations. Other new welcome developments are the one-day, two-day or three-day conference packages, because it's vital that conference attracts a wider audience from across the sectors.

Conference is a rare blend of the serious and enjoyable: the consideration of key issues that point the profession towards new challenges within our ongoing adventure; and fun and laughter. With the theme for 2004 being partnership all should seek to attend and contribute.

November in Edinburgh, The Assembly Hall, a previous visit there to see Derek Jacobi as Hamlet, but this time it is the drama of the historic debate on Scottish public libraries and afterwards a meeting with the Minister.

And the key messages emanating from the afternoon?

- Build on the success of the People's Network.
- Deliver the Executive's priorities in relation to lifelong learning, social inclusion, modernising government and community planning.
- Work through SLIC and the local authorities to improve the standing and funding of library services.
- Develop a robust quality evaluation system.

And how could we forget that telling quote from Christine Grahame, MSP? "If people want an exciting night then call up a librarian". In our new 24/7 world might this be the national slogan we've all been searching for?

The relevance of our professional skills was superbly encapsulated within the Scottish Poetry Library in November when the Minister, Frank

McAveety, launched the Scottish Cultural Portal Pilot, www.scotlandsculture.org, a new gateway to organised, relevant information and learning. And in case we should forget, affirmation of our cultural role.

What we can achieve at a national level must be achieved at a local level within our own organisations and with our partners. The library as the gateway to knowledge and information, the library and information professional as the informed, committed gatekeeper, and much more. A fundamental truth - past, present and future - worth celebrating in this anniversary year.

It's been an honour to wear the President's badge so effectively designed by Emma Jones. It is, of course, the old SLA badge, remodelled from the core materials to be modern and relevant, not unlike what's been happening with our services in recent years.

My year as President ends in the sure and certain knowledge that in 2004, Moira Methven, our new President, will be an absolutely excellent leader of and advocate for Scotland's library and information professionals.

News feature

Scotland's portal

Stephen Winch **describes the major new portal from SLIC and the Scottish Executive which gives easy access to resources on Scotland's rich culture.**

SLIC, in partnership with the Scottish Executive, has launched a new web service that will provide access to electronic and print resources relating to Scottish culture. The service is still in a pilot phase, but has already developed an infrastructure that, it is hoped, will develop into a comprehensive gateway to Scottish cultural information.

In November 2002 the Scottish Executive commissioned SLIC to develop a cultural web portal for Scotland. The concept for the project developed from the Executive's report Creating our future... ...minding our past, which stated the Executive's vision for access for all to information and resources through electronic means. The report argued that culture in all its forms can stimulate and support lifelong learning, encourage community involvement and participation.

The pilot project to develop the portal runs for two years and aims to create a service that will:

- act as a one stop shop for information on Scottish cultural matters by acting as a gateway to information on a wide range of cultural resources, in print, audio visual and electronic formats.
- help support the development of cultural strategy and promote Scottish culture both locally and nationally.
- build on existing information networks such as CAIRNS (Co-operative Information Retrieval Network) and SCONE (Scottish Collections Network) to enhance the information landscape to include collection level resources and also printed resources.
- provide easy routes to the electronic resources of Scotland's Culture, by means of quick guides into subjects and also regional resources using an interactive map of Scotland and its regions and towns.

Key to the development of the pilot service was to build on existing information networks from the library, museum, archive communities and beyond. The library community has well developed information handling skills and the project was keen to use established standards to ensure quality information retrieval and to maximize interoperability. To this end, the project has made use of standards including: MARC 21, AACR2, Dewey and Library of Congress Subject headings. This has enabled the project to share metadata with other institutions and enabled the portal to accommodate other metadata formats such as Dublin Core.

The service contains a range of ways of accessing cultural information. At the basic level the user can search the service for websites about Scottish Culture catalogued by the portal team. For many this will be the primary use of the service and will provide access to all types of Scottish culture, ranging from the opera to fansites for local football teams. During the pilot, the main cataloguing focus has been on music, although a number of websites on literature and sport have also been added.

To add extra value to these resources a subject directory is being developed. Users can navigate down through a hierarchy of available subjects, in a similar way to the web directories that can be seen on Google

and Yahoo. In addition users will be able to access resources by region through a clickable map that groups resources by place.

Scotland's Culture enables users to make use of CAIRNS and SCONE, which have been integrated into the service. CAIRNS allows users to search for print and electronic resources available from Scottish libraries at the same time as searching for electronic items in the Scotland's Culture catalogue. At present CAIRNS incorporates the National Library and mostly higher education libraries, but SLIC is intending to expand the service to include more libraries from the public and further education sectors.

SCONE provides access to collection level descriptions of print, physical and electronic resources available in Scotland. It contains descriptions of collections held by selected libraries, museums and web services. The service is also a source of up to date information of contact details for libraries and museums.

Scotland's Culture offers all of these services from a single URL and provides an infrastructure to draw together the output of Scotland's cultural community, whether established cultural institutions or individuals creating their own cultural websites. The service now launched provides a framework to build on and SLIC and the Scottish Executive are keen for other cultural institutions to become involved with the portal project. Over the coming year the project team will be looking at expanding the CAIRNS service to include all Scottish libraries and other databases of cultural significance. The team are also looking to increase the number of collection descriptions available through SCONE and to increase the number of resources catalogued in the main Scotland's Culture database. The project is always interested to hear from organisations that may be able to help and feel that by contributing organisations will be promoting their own cultural output to the rest of Scotland and the wider world.

Stephen Winch is Portals Development Officer, Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) (Slic4@slainte.org.uk).

Further information:

Scottish Library & Information Council (SLIC) www.slainte.org.uk/

Scottish Executive www.scotland.gov.uk/

Scotland's Culture www.scotlandsculture.org/

Creating our future... ...Minding our past www.scotland.gov.uk/ nationalculturalstrate gy/docs/cult-00.asp

Profile: Margaret Kean

Change from within

Margaret Kean **describes her extensive work with professional bodies and explains why it is so important for the LIS community - and so good for your careers.**

Margaret Kean has spent most of her career in children's librarianship. This sector has seen enormous change since her first trainee job with Glasgow public libraries in 1971. But her work outside her job has been just as eventful as she has served for many years on CILIPS (previously the Scottish Library Association) committees and the CILIP Chartership Board.

Margaret has worked in a variety of posts in Renfrew County and in Strathclyde Regional Council Department of Education (SRCDE), Glasgow Division. She was promoted to Assistant Principal Educational Librarian in 1979, a time when there were only a few schools in Glasgow with librarians. "Services were being delivered in a very innovative way – Community Libraries in schools, pre-five resource centres, and multicultural resource centres – always considering how best to cope with the needs of multiple deprivation in the various housing schemes in Glasgow," says Margaret.

The situation went from librarians in only four schools to librarians in all 55 schools. As Principal Resources Development Officer with SRCDE, Renfrew Division, she turned around a very traditional service to address the needs of school librarianship in the 1990s. At reorganisation in 1996 she provided a service across the three authorities of Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and East Renfrewshire

"During my career in school librarianship I have always been committed to 'catching them young' and getting them interested in the love of books and finding out." says Margaret. Following a best value review of school and public library services, Margaret chose to make the move to Information

Manager in the Chief Executive's Department of Renfrewshire Council. She is now taking forward the Council's information management strategy involving websites, Intranet, Community portal, conducting Council information audits, modernising government initiatives – and more.

Margaret believes extremely strongly that involvement in professional bodies has enriched her career: "My involvement with professional bodies keeps me abreast of developments and able to debate how services should be delivered in a corporate agenda. I feel that I have remained enthusiastic and have been able to support and encourage new workers – many of whom have gone on to become senior professionals. This work has given me the opportunity to be fully aware of best practice and have contacts throughout the country."

She has been involved in CILIPS / SLA from very early in her career, joining the committee of the Youth Libraries Group, Scottish Branch, in the mid-1970s. Following this she was elected to the SLA in the early 1980s. "It was in discussion with Robert Craig (ex-Director of SLA/CILIPS) that I felt I needed to be involved with the profession to ensure that I did not become too narrowly focused. At my first meeting I was nominated as representative to the School Library Association in Scotland and held this post until 1997. It involved ensuring that the SLA point of view was always included in discussion and in all developments undertaken."

She has also been vice chair and chair of the Library and Information Services (LIS) Committee. This has involved discussions on the restructuring of SLA council and chairing a working group on the development of performance indicators for central school library services.

Margaret believes just as strongly in professional development. Her work on the CILIP Chartership Board has given her great insight into the importance of this side of an individual's working life. "Professional development is important. The world of work is changing continuously. If you don't keep abreast of developments, new approaches and new skills there is the danger of losing interest in your job, and it becomes routine."

Margaret has been involved with the Chartership Board since the 1980s, first as an assessor – interviewing candidates who had submitted reports which required clarification. "I was approached to join the board as full member in 1997 – this involves assessing reports continuously. Reports that are recommended not suitable for passing immediately are read by all board members and debated at meetings held in London every two months. This is very interesting work as it gives insight into all aspects of the profession and also the professionalism of our new members. It can be

stressful; no one is failed lightly and it is a huge responsibility as it affects an individual's future."

Chartership work and professional development are central to Margaret's day job as she has trained many new professionals and assisted them in the writing professional development reports. "I feel it a major achievement in having been able to give something back to the profession. A highlight for me was being given a Centenary Medal from the LA for services to the profession. This initially did not register," she admits, "...but now on reflection it is a great honour and one that I will always cherish."

Margaret is taking a back seat at last, but offers this last call to arms: "I think that it is you that make the profession and it is up to each individual to get involved. I am very sorry to leave it but feel that due to the direction my work has taken it is time to bow out."

"The biggest issue in the profession is apathy, and the expectation that 'someone else should be doing it...' There is a lack of feeling that professionalism is important. More co-operation and sharing of best practice amongst the library and information community in Scotland is vital. It is always easier to change from within."

Information Scotland is delivered online by the SAPIENS electronic publishing service based at the Centre for Digital Library Research. SLAINTE (Scottish libraries across the Internet) offers further information about librarianship and information management in Scotland.

Behind the screens

Make it easy

Research into how online catalogues for Scottish public libraries are presented on Council websites has found many obstacles to access...

SPEIR is a SLIC-funded project based at the Centre for Digital Library Research (CDLR), standing for 'Scottish Portals for Education, Information and Research' (http://speir.cdlr.strath.ac.uk/). SPEIR will develop an environment to underpin Scottish portals, creating the basis for "a coherent virtual learning, information and research landscape for all Scottish citizens,

collaboratively built and maintained via an agreed country-wide, standards-based, globally interoperable, co-operative infrastructure".

The primary focus of SPEIR is 'Scotland's Culture' (See feature on [Scotland's portal](#)), but other aims include:

- Bringing public and further education libraries, cultural 'players', and other institutions that are properly equipped into the CAIRNS, SCONE and SCAMP framework.
- Establishing an infrastructure capable of supporting the creation and continuous development of a 'Scottish Distributed Digital Library' (SDDL), based on Scotland's Culture, BUBL LINK, SLAINTE, Glasgow Digital Library, Public library 'white pages', and other services.
- Developing these into central support services for distributed portals.

Integrating public libraries into the CAIRNS, SCONE and SCAMP framework lies at the centre of SPEIR, and negotiating the creation of the SDDL necessitates the application of interoperability standards, particularly with reference to Z39.50, bibliographic practice, and taxonomies. Whilst the emerging Web Service Technologies SOAP and UDDI do offer the prospect of improved networked information, Z39.50 remains the most functional and richest form of integrating disparate sources and services.

So where does this leave Scottish public libraries? A survey conducted by SPEIR for possible CAIRNS integration revealed some interesting statistics. Of the 31 library authorities surveyed, only 9 (29%) reported having their Opac Z39.50 enabled. SPEIR can take some comfort in that 8 (26%) of the 22 authorities without 'Z' have made compliance a matter of urgency. But this will still leave 17 library authorities (55%) isolated, particularly as the majority of Scottish academic and research libraries are now connected by CAIRNS (FE libraries will soon follow).

Given this, is SPEIR viable? The fact that only 16 library authorities (52%) have Web enabled Opacs isn't encouraging. But SPEIR is also about laying the foundations to foster Scottish digital library development and facilitating the dispersal of expertise.

Yet, if information is to be shared, why do Council websites (the most basic repository of local public information) erect so many obstacles to access? SPEIR is improving access to library resources by updating the links to online catalogues and websites available in SCONE, the Scottish Collections Network (http://scone.strath.ac.uk/service/). During the course of this work, we were struck by the wide range of routes, and barriers, to discovering public library services on the Web.

We used Google searches for the names of services, taken from Scottish Library and Information Resources (http://scone.strath.ac.uk/slir/index.cfm). We also tried to locate local authority homepages, and navigate from there to the library web pages. Our aim was to identify a specific URL for pages pertinent to individual branch libraries and, if available, the online catalogue.

The quickest and easiest route was provided by those services with a Google hit in the top five. Unfortunately, some of these linked to the homepage of the Council instead of to library services, and we encountered difficulties in accessing service pages within these websites. Some were very helpful, with a clear label for library services on the site navigation bar. The next best thing was the provision of a simple site search facility. Things began to get frustrating when we had to use A-Z guides to Council services. Some only listed the names of individual branch libraries, so looking under 'L' was doomed to failure.

Using navigation menus when library services were not listed at the top level turned into a guessing game: Education? Community? Leisure? Arts? Learning? Expecting users to know the Council hierarchy does little to foster access. Many websites offered more than one of these navigation routes, often exposing their limitations.

CILIPS, SLIC, and other organisations put considerable effort into developing and improving access to public information, recognising that there will always be differences between locally administered services, reducing the effectiveness and reliability of automatic search engines in providing access for a wide range of users. SCONE seeks to provide a detailed route map to Scotland's distributed digital library, but there is one particular feature of Council and, indeed, library service websites which severely impairs its value: the use of frames, which present an identical URL for every page, thus rendering them indistinguishable in cyberspace. They are also difficult to use by visually impaired people and automatic reading devices.

While recognizing that constraints may be imposed by the software, standards, and policies involved, we suspect that immediate and long-term improvements might be possible with more of a "think globally before acting locally" approach. After all, some public library websites are actually quite good.

These issues should not detract from the immense progress that has been made in recent years in providing greater access to networked information in Scotland. Indeed, in many ways there is little to be despondent about; Scotland remains further ahead than the rest of the UK and (given that we

are small but perfectly formed) we are in a better position to develop in the information environment of the future. IS

Gordon Dunsire & George Macgregor, [Centre for Digital Library Research](#)

Reader's Days

The joy of books

Rachel Williams and _Sharon Woodforde_ describe Falkirk Libraries Readers' Day, one of the first such events in Scotland.

We have that excellent periodical, _newBooksmag_, to thank for inspiring us to organise our first Readers' Day in September. We had had some success in organising author-based events in the past, supported by several flourishing writers' and reading groups.

But we were looking for a concept that would help us to progress with our reader development programme. Every issue of _newBooksmag_ that we read seemed to have an account of successful readers' days. The concept seemed to embody everything that we needed as a means of bringing readers and writers together to celebrate the joys of reading, in a stimulating and enjoyable format.

In England Readers' Days are well established but in Scotland we are one of the first authorities to hold such an event. The day involved months of planning with help and advice from Guy Pringle, publisher of _newBooksmag_, Robert Walters of Bradford Libraries where the whole Readers' Day concept was invented, and Mary Wilson of Holt Jackson Library Book Suppliers.

An impressive line up of authors included Christopher Brookmyre, Jonathan Falla and Louise Welsh. We felt that it was important to have one really well known author in order to pull in the crowds and Christopher Brookmyre, author of _A Big Boy Did it and Ran Away_, _Boiling a Frog_, and

most recently *The Sacred Art of Stealing*, more than fulfilled this function. Louise and Jonathan are less well known, but their wonderful first novels, *The Cutting Room* and *Blue Poppies* respectively have both created a tremendous amount of interest in Scotland. In addition Derek Rodger from Argyll Publishing came along not only to sell books but also participate in the afternoon discussions.

Our venue for the event was Talbot House in Grangemouth, with a capacity to hold around 100 people proving to be exactly right for an event of this scale. The final ingredient was Guy Pringle, who acted as our MC for the afternoon.

On arrival our audience were given 'goody bags' – an essential element of Readers' Days. Although we were self-funding, we did manage to get together some book magazines, Falkirk Council publications, bookmarks and pens and pencils to give away. We hope that with future events we will be more successful in attracting sponsorship.

Christopher Brookmyre got us off to a great start by reading the highly entertaining *Bampot Central*; a fast-moving and hilarious action story set in Edinburgh. Following this, workshops offered the audience a chance to chat in smaller and more informal group settings with the author of their choice. Louise Welsh led a discussion on her best-selling book *The Cutting Room*. She also gave a taster reading from her new book, a novella on the death of Christopher Marlowe. Jonathan Falla's workshop was a fascinating insight into the process of writing both fiction, drama and for the cinema.

After tea, and a chance to chat to others about books and reading, we were back with Louise Welsh talking about the Gothic novel, the subject of a Radio 4 series which was due to be broadcast, and Jonathan Falla talked about his inspiration for *Blue Poppies*, a novel set in Tibet during the time of the Chinese invasion. To complete the afternoon, Guy chaired a stimulating panel discussion.

The day was a success on several levels. One audience member summed up what she most liked about it as: "Meeting the authors and the atmosphere of readers and writers joining together in their enjoyment of the written word." In our choice of speakers, we were able to attract a younger audience than normally attends library-based events including those elusive 18-30 year old males. As for the organising, staff all had something to contribute, from poster design to tea-making, and all felt valued as members of a team.

Readers' Days are a high profile and prestigious event. They are excellent for public relations and the public responds in an overwhelmingly positive way. Many of the people who attended are already looking forward to our next Readers' Day and we are looking forward to organising the next one.

Rachel Williams and Sharon Woodforde are Senior Librarians, Grangemouth Library. 01324 504690; www.newbooksmag.com

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Online learning

Gateway to learning

***Alistair Pryde* reports on the launch of an online learning portal from SLIC for the libraries of Scotland.**

By the end of the year, librarians in Scotland will have been told about an exciting new service being launched in his or her library. The Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) has developed an online learning portal for use in every library in every regional authority in the country.

Part of the SLAINTE site, the Online Learning Portal will give registered library users the opportunity to use the library as a source of essential skills training that can help them to improve career prospects, prepare for a return to work or satisfy any other desire to learn.

The service was developed with the support of the New Opportunities Fund and is a central part of the strategy to re-position libraries as an important part of the community.

How the service works

The system is a web-based learning platform, through which people are given access to a number of different online courses. With the help of the librarian, users can register on the system and are given their own unique username and password. From then on, it is their choice whether to access

the system from a library-owned PC or any other PC they have access to. The service was developed to be a web-enabled system that could be accessed from anywhere which gives users the freedom to use it from home, the office or from anywhere else. It also reduces the burden on PC resources within libraries.

With the website address and a registered username and password, anyone is free to access course materials or even download them and print them out. An assessment section will give users an indication of how well they are progressing, and scores can be kept for reference to track progress.

Other features include a hierarchy of user types, so that administrators can track usage within their own library and wider, within regions. At the highest level, SLIC has the ability to measure the impact of the learning portal on different communities within Scotland using the data generated by learners.

How it is funded

Perhaps the most exciting part of the project is the unique way in which it has been funded. The New Opportunities Fund was keen for the contribution it made to be put to good use, and it has ensured that library users have free access to materials. Libraries make a nominal payment per user on a block subscription basis, with additional licences available upon request. All the hosting, maintenance and a set amount of training and support is provided and paid for by SLIC which makes the whole system one of the most cost-effective learning portals around.

Courses on offer

SLIC canvassed opinion around the country to decide on which courses to offer first. There is a plan to offer more courses in the future, but the desire was to launch the system with a headline course that had a broad appeal. The winner was a complete ECDL Course (The European Computer Driving Licence), which is fast becoming the de facto standard for measuring PC skills in the workplace. SLIC felt that this course, more than any other, would appeal the most to people returning to work, senior citizens, and users wishing to improve their PC skills for career reasons.

Training

A training programme for library staff has been developed that will compliment the online help guide that is installed with the package. Libraries throughout the country are being contacted throughout December and January to establish their precise training requirements. To encourage

the successful introduction of the system, SLIC has planned a training programme for eight library staff per authority, with more places available by arrangement with the training provider. In keeping with the theme of ease of use and accessibility, training will be provided at locations that are convenient for library staff.

In the longer term, refresher seminars can be scheduled and it is anticipated that the next annual CILIPS conference will play host to a seminar on the SLAINTE portal with a usability course for new library staff and the opportunity to put questions and answers the portal developers.

Additional services

The ranges of features and functions offered by the SLAINTE portal will continue to be developed throughout the year and perhaps the most exciting of these will be the own content upload capability. Simply put, it will give regional authorities the ability to post their own unique courses online. It will be the choice of the region whether or not access is given to users outside their own region and this creates an obvious opportunity to post material online that caters for the need of specific communities.

The need for a function like this has been highlighted in the recent past by economic disasters that affect employment, e.g. foot and mouth or the closure of a major factory. At times like these the need to retrain affects an entire community and the library can play a unique role.

"We are tremendously excited by the potential offered by the SLAINTE portal", said Elaine Fulton, Director of SLIC, "and we look forward to its development throughout 2004. I would welcome feedback from users and encourage the use of the portal in every library."

E-learning

Converging worlds

***Dr Charles Duncan* suggests libraries and e-learning are overlapping.**

Question: When is a library not a library? Answer: When it is a digital repository of learning objects. Or is that still a library? Educators consider a digital repository as a collection of resources to be discovered and used in many different contexts. Is this different in any way from a library? Definitions of a library are not really helpful, what is really important are the skills needed to manage a digital repository of learning objects. Librarians have, in fact, been using these skills for years.

Over the last few years the worlds of e-learning and libraries have been converging; it is impossible to say where one stops and the other begins. Education has been moving away from CD-Roms, books and journals that cannot be easily disaggregated towards using small learning objects, editable documents where chapters or paragraphs can be extracted, and individual articles from e-journals. As the granularity of objects used in education has become smaller and smaller, from courses, to modules, to learning objects to individual media items, the number of objects has increased enormously. The job of managing this vast number of objects is daunting. At the same time libraries have expanded to add a vast array of digital media types to their collections.

These changes have made many educators aware of the word 'metadata' for the first time. Collections of learning objects are only useful if you can easily find what you are looking for. Every object must be systematically described. Libraries are where such expertise is found. So, is the answer to pass all the learning objects to librarians for cataloguing? No. There are at least four very good reasons why the challenge posed by learning objects needs to be seriously addressed by both the library and e-learning communities: scalability; identifiers; specialist metadata; the 'learning object economy'.

Scalability: To picture the scale of the problem facing those who need to catalogue learning objects, consider a university course that might have one textbook and a reading list of another ten to twenty books. In e-learning terms that same course may have hundreds or even thousands of learning objects. Fast, accurate and efficient ways of creating metadata for each learning object are essential. More people are also needed for cataloguing.

Identifiers: Every one of the learning objects needs an identifier in the same way as books need ISBN numbers. But there are many more creators of learning objects than there are publishers of books. In a world where everyone concerned with education can become a publisher of learning objects it is still necessary to ensure that every learning object has a globally unique identifier.

Specialist metadata: It is difficult to describe learning objects using the metadata schemes that are common in libraries (MARC or Dublin Core) because there are many additional aspects to describe: aggregation level; technology requirements; interactivity type and level; educational context; intended end user; difficulty, learning time; educational objective; accessibility restrictions; competency; skill level. The IEEE has established a new international standard: the Learning Object Metadata (LOM) standard. This is now being widely adopted by educators and an application profile, UK LOM Core, has been developed defining mandatory, recommended and option fields and vocabularies suitable for the UK education systems. The overriding difficulty is that completing this metadata really requires a combination of the educator's skills for the education specific fields and a librarian's skills for consistent cataloguing.

The learning object economy: The community of users of learning objects is also the community of creators of learning objects. Learning object repositories are a basis for sharing, for developing a 'learning object economy', usually based on exchange rather than cash. This means that learning objects come from a very wide range of sources. The situation is similar to a library where everyone is adding books to the shelves as well as borrowing them. This could quickly result in chaos. Suitable cataloguing is crucial to ensure that they are all discoverable. To add to the sense of a dynamic 'economy' the learning object metadata also supports annotations so that anyone who uses an object can comment on its use. This means that people can even search for learning objects based on who made comments on them.

While there are many challenges in handling learning objects in libraries the benefits are enormous. Reuse and sharing of learning objects not only reduces the time and effort in producing courses but it leads to improvements in quality. These benefits will increase further now that machine-to-machine searches and metadata harvesting are becoming common – a kind of automatic and instantaneous inter-library loan. These networks of digital repositories allow more exciting learning objects to be discovered, particularly through the 'relations' parts of the metadata. Imagine finding a useful video clip or diagram to include in a course. The relations part of the metadata associated with this object might list many modules or courses in which it is contained. So from the simplest level of media item it could be possible to find sophisticated courses containing this object. Aggregation of learning objects into more substantial learning objects and the management of digital rights when these objects come from many different sources raises many more interesting issues, but that is another story...

Dr Charles Duncan is CEO of a company developing e-learning products and formerly worked in online and distance learning at the University of Edinburgh.

Useful websites

IEEE Learning Object Metadata
ltsc.ieee.org/wg12/20020612-Final-LOM-Draft.html

CETIS (Centre for Educational Technology Interoperability Standards)
www.cetis.ac.uk/

CETIS Metadata and Digital Repositories Special Interests Group
metadata.cetis.ac.uk/

Quality Assurance for Digital Learning Object Repositories: How Should Metadata Be Created?
http://metadata.cetis.ac.uk/files/currbartobeiryan_altj_6.doc (a dialogue box requesting a password may appear, simply cancel this to access the document)

JORUM: www.jorum.ac.uk/

Scottish Poetry Library

Shelves full of inspiration

A priority for the Scottish Poetry Library is taking poetry into the classroom. *Iain Young* reports on how the library is developing unique resources including publishing the first work of our (potential) future Scottish poets; and *Ken Cockburn* describes the activities that bring them to poetry in the first place...

"For an enquirer with only a vague recollection of a poem, a search in INSPIRE by subject may direct them toward the required poem."

Scottish Poetry Library holdings include much that could be made use of by teachers for pupils at all levels. Our children's section includes colourful picture-books in verse for pre-school, and anthologies on a range of subjects and individual collections by the biggest names in children's writing for primary pupils. We cater for secondary pupils also and have a dedicated section for teenage verse. In the last year one teacher at a local secondary school set his pupils the summer assignment of borrowing and reading a collection by a modern Scottish poet from the SPL. These links are ones we are keen to develop.

We hold items for use by teachers in preparing lesson plans, some of which are tied in to the current curriculum. In addition to our own Teachers' Resource packs, our collection includes titles by the Teachers and Writers Collaborative, an American venture of relevance to teachers elsewhere, and the vibrant new series of titles from Itchy Coo, who are actively promoting use of Scots in classrooms. The majority of our titles can be borrowed, including audiobooks. We can issue lending cards to individuals or classes and have loaned items to interested pupils following workshops in the library. Access is not limited to schools in Edinburgh as the SPL operates a postal loan service which means that we can supply items to users throughout the UK.

External access to SPL holdings is facilitated through our online library catalogue INSPIRE. INSPIRE has been specifically designed for the SPL's collection of Scottish and international verse titles, criticism and background material. Holdings include cuttings, audio and video recordings, periodicals, and individual poem titles. One unique feature is INSPIRE's subject thesaurus.

INSPIRE allows for the very full indexing of items by subject, language, place of origin and period as well as personal, given and corporate names. Our subject indexing system has been developed specifically for the SPL and we can assign subjects to catalogue records down to the level of an individual poem in a collection. The potential of our database for researchers is constantly expanding: the subject authority file currently lists many thousands of terms, reflecting the almost unlimited subject matter of poetic inspiration, from artistic, social or intellectual themes to environmental or scientific ones. For an enquirer with only a vague recollection of a poem, a search in INSPIRE by subject may direct them toward the required poem. Lists of poems on a selected subject can be easily produced, which may be useful for teachers in identifying poems on subjects relevant for class projects.

Canned searches now allow library users to complete complex and defined searches without any awareness of the processes involved. Users can

currently bring up lists of Scottish poetry titles published in any given year. Additional canned searches are available on the website to display holdings for featured poets, such as those in our expanding Poets A-Z, which provides biographical information on selected modern Scottish poets. It is envisaged that in the future canned searches could be created to relate to the themes of events taking place at the library.

For more advanced studies INSPIRE encompasses the data of our ongoing index to selected Scottish poetry periodicals, the Scottish Poetry Index (http://www.spl.org.uk/search_spl/poetry-index.html). The SPI gives detailed access by author, title and subject, to all poetry and poetry-related material in 20 selected Scottish magazines from 1952. A wealth of poetry, published only in the journals and including much of our leading poets' early work, is easily traceable through the SPI. It covers critical material, reviews, selected letters, and all individual poems, analysed by subject, theme, language and literary form. The nature of this indexing means that INSPIRE provides access to information on poems unavailable in published collections. As such, it is invaluable for academic research, and represents a unique resource.

The most common enquiries received by the SPL are from users wishing to locate individual poems. These are often poems remembered from childhood, learned at school for recitation perhaps, with long forgotten titles and only vague recollections of the poet's name. We have a dedicated section on our website for just such enquiries, Lost for Words.

Our Young Persons website contains interactive poetry templates and games to assist inspiration and is used to display poems written by pupils during workshops in the library. We have also recently published a collection of poems by children and may be the first to publish works by the future crop of Scottish poetic talent.

Iain Young

"Our priority for future development is working with teachers so that they can use creative writing in their own classroom as and when they wish to."

In the late 1980s, the SPL was based in small premises in Tweeddale Court. There was room to welcome only small groups of visitors into the Library. This fact, coupled with the staff's desire to make the resources physically available in parts of Scotland beyond Edinburgh, led to the first SPL tours. The Post Office donated a van, and visits were organised to schools, colleges, libraries, prisons and writers groups the length and breadth of Scotland.

Until 1993 the visits were made by the SPL Director, Tessa, Ransford. Stewart Reid was appointed Fieldworker in 1993, and in 1996 I took over that role from him. Since then the SPL has acquired a new and larger van, which as well as the poetry it carries inside also features this specially written poem by Edwin Morgan on the outside:

The poets lie right tight in the van
(I'll read that again)
The poets try to alight from the van
(I'll read that again)
The poets are always right in the van
Of whatever invigorates mortal man.

I continue to visit organisations and venues across Scotland, offering borrowing sessions, talks and poetry writing workshops, but most of the visits involve running workshops in schools. When visiting primary schools, I try to run sessions which tie in with the current class project, or another area of interest for the pupils. In this way they tend to be knowledgeable about their subject and to have something to write about. Recently I've run sessions on such topics as the Spanish Armada, Ancient Egypt and the Second World War. In secondary schools the focus tends to be broader, involving more reading and thinking about a range of poems, as well as writing in a variety of forms.

One short form is the haiku, originally from Japan but now widely used in the West. This can be appeciated and written by pupils of various ages and abilities. Good haiku usually involve some sort of contrast, express or implied. This haiku was written by pupils in a West Lothian school during a workshop for the Japan Festival 2001, and features contrasts of scale, materials and colour:

in the cornfield
blue combine chops stems
mice collect seeds

An even shorter form is the Football Haiku, devised by Alec Finlay as a way of marking the 2002 World Cup finals in Japan and South Korea. It comprises three lines of just one word each, and is connected to haiku, the newspaper headline, and the t-shirt slogan. It allows pupils to use creatively knowledge and vocabulary they already possess. In Aberdeenshire to 'mince' the ball means to kick it hard, as in the following example:

CHIP
MINCE
BATTER

Since moving to a new building in 1999, the Library has been able to offer workshops for school groups on the premises. For these we work with a range of poets and other artists. For practical reasons workshops are attended mostly by schools in Edinburgh. Sometimes sessions are entirely based in the Library; sometimes the groups are taken for a walk nearby, for example into Holyrood Park, or around the Canongate Kirkyard, and asked to make notes on what they see to write up later; sometimes we work with other organisations such as Our Dynamic Earth or the National Museums of Scotland, to ensure that pupils are given varied stimuli to write from. Poems written in such sessions have been collected in the anthology *Poet Makar Bard*. It includes 'Sundial' written by a pupil at Gracemount High School:

The sunshine moves around the school
And warmly measures out the hours
Today will be tomorrow's past
These seeds will be tomorrow's flowers.

The success of these sessions has also led the Library to publish two Teachers' Resource Packs, each featuring a variety of photocopiable lesson plans written by poets who have run workshops. Topics include 'Tiger Imagery' by Brian Whittingham, 'My Family' by Liz Niven, and 'Riddles' by Ron Butlin. (nb The pack for P4-6 classes is currently out of print. Copies of the pack for S1&2 are available from the Library.)

Sessions have also been run with trainee teachers, giving them ideas and, perhaps more importantly, the confidence to teach poetry in the classroom. Poetry seems to be an area which is not given much attention during their training, and – with honourable exceptions – teachers often have little knowledge either of contemporary poetry, or of how it can be used in the classroom. In primary schools especially, poetry can be linked to many areas of the curriculum – language most obviously, but also drama, music, history, science and so on. Poetry can both inform, and act as an outlet for pupils' knowledge and ideas. Our priority for future development is working with teachers so that they can use creative writing in their own classroom as and when they wish to, rather than depending on external help.

A new project for us is Poetry & Architecture, an annual poetry competition for P3-S4 pupils, which the SPL is running with the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland. Due to run over five years, the theme for this year is Poet in the House. An information pack, available on request from the SPL, includes specially written poems by Jackie Kay, Robert Crawford, Diana Hendry and others, as well as a lesson plan to encourage pupils to write their own poem.

Iain Young is Librarian and Ken Cockburn Assistant Director at the Scottish Poetry Library.

Information

For further details about SPL publications, activities and resources, please contact:
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T: 0131-557 2876
www.spl.org.uk
inquiries@spl.org.uk

Endpiece

Everything in moderation

Brian Osborne **discovers a refreshing approach to promotion in Scotland's Book Town.**

Back in the summer I paid a visit to Wigtown – Scotland's Book Town – and after wandering round the growing number of enticing second-hand bookshops I decided that the body needed refreshed as well as the mind, so headed off to a nearby pub for lunch. After all I didn't get to be what our President Alistair Campbell described as a "well-rounded wordsmith" (Information Scotland October 2003) without taking appropriate nourishment at regular intervals.

As I toyed with my drink my attention was caught by the beer mats – which I saw to my surprise were advertising Dumfries & Galloway Libraries. Now, while I cannot honestly say that my pint tasted any better for knowing that Alastair Johnston was, so to speak, catching my drips, I was intrigued and impressed by this, to me, novel means of promoting libraries.

So often so much of our promotional activity goes into preaching to the converted and the substantial proportion of the population that never darkens the doors of our public libraries is given up as a lost cause, or at least as a market that is too hard for us to try to reach.

So congratulations are due to Dumfries & Galloway Libraries, Information and Archives for taking a positive library message out into the pubs and inns.

The idea of using licensed premises as a site for library advertising is of course a fascinating twist on the old concept of the public library as a sanctuary for the honest working man from the perils of strong drink and the temptations of the street. Neil Munro (who might just have cropped up in this column before) has his Glasgow waiter and Kirk beadle Erchie MacPherson discuss Robert Burns, strong drink and loose living in these terms:

"But he hadna ony o' the blessin's we have in oor time to keep him tame. There was nae Free Leebrary to provide him wi' books to keep in the hoose at nicht, nae Good Templar Lodges to help him in steerin' clear o' the horrors o' drink..." (A Bet on Burns)

Somewhere in the back of my mind or in my hazy recollections of a very old library textbook I seem to recall an old picture of a Victorian working man standing in the street pondering the stark choice – "the Public House or the Public Library" – one decision leading on to happiness, sobriety, contentment, self-improvement and domestic bliss while the other would ensure a rapid decline into drunken misery and degradation.

As a man who has enjoyed both public houses and public libraries (both in moderation of course!) I am glad that we have moved on sufficiently to be able to promote libraries on beer mats without embarrassment or controversy.

Wigtown is, by the way, well worth a visit by anyone with a taste for books and bookshops. There are now something like 30 bookshops and book-related businesses in the town and the critical mass of book businesses has now made for a real buzz. The town has also seen a remarkable transformation of the old Wigtown County Buildings and a general smartening up of the town's environment. Wigtown also hosts the Scottish Book Town Annual Literary Festival each September. All in all the development of Wigtown is a remarkable success story for an area which is well off the beaten tourist track and provides a striking vindication of the theory that economic recovery in rural Scotland could be driven by

something as seemingly irrelevant and of supposed minority appeal as selling second-hand books.

Have any studies been done on the role of public libraries as engines for economic growth? New retail complexes always place great emphasis on securing as a lead tenant some major store such as Marks and Spencer or John Lewis, knowing that their drawing power makes other enterprises keen to take space. But has anyone looked seriously at the role of libraries in attracting customers to a High Street or a shopping mall; an interesting way of fighting the marginalisation, physical and intellectual, of our services perhaps?

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