

CILIP SCOTLAND AUTUMN GATHERING

OCTOBER 26TH, 2017

DOUBLETREE BY HILTON – GLASGOW

On Thursday 26th October, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend CILIP Scotland's Autumn Gathering in Glasgow.

The event was presided over by CILIP Scotland President Liz McGettigan who welcomed and introduced proceedings.

This was followed by a joint key note speech by Douglas White, Head of Advocacy, Carnegie UK Trust, and Duncan Wright, organiser of the Save Scotland's School Libraries Group. The two-part presentation began with Douglas highlighting the importance of advocacy within the library and information sector and the aspects involved in achieving this aim. Primarily, he focussed on the use of evidence-based data, targeted campaigns, being publicly engaged, collaborative, creative, proactive, and persistent to demonstrate the significance of libraries and prevent funding reductions and closures.

The second half given by Duncan Wright, detailed his campaign to avert the closure of Scotland's school libraries. By demonstrating techniques employed during the campaign he explained the value of school libraries and the detrimental effects if these were removed. They built a valid argument using evidence-based data and presented their case to Parliament. Protests were also organised via social and traditional media and petition signatures were gathered. He also indicted how the operation provided motivation and pride within the profession and a willingness to defend the service. The campaign brought action against the cuts proving that proactive advocacy can succeed.

Several awards were then presented for Scotland's Library and Information Professional of the Year and Honorary Membership to Theresa Breslin, Fred Guy and Elspeth Scott.

Parallel sessions followed where a choice of discussions was available. I attended "The ethics of our profession and sustaining our common values", given by David McMenemy a lecturer from University of Strathclyde. He described the dilemma facing our profession between access to information and the right to privacy. The challenges we face are governed by the fact that several aspects of our jobs are being out-sourced to third parties, the increasing use of the internet, technological advances in personal data collection and new service delivery models such as the employment of library volunteers. All of which have a certain level of risk out with our control. He emphasised the need to respect an individual's right to have an open-access public library service whilst still retaining an acceptable level of privacy. In particular, we should advocate to uphold our ethical standards, maintain authority over our services, be proactive with research and initiatives and encourage more involvement.

I then joined a presentation by Siobhan Cottam and Amy Finnegan from the New Libraries Professional's Network titled "The importance of CPD and networking: findings from a survey of new professionals." Here evidence was given to demonstrate the benefits of CPD and networking within the profession. Emphasis was placed on the variety of methods which could be employed such as social media, job shadowing, workshops, articles, and

conferences. The advantages of such activities included confidence, relationship and communication building, wider knowledge of the profession, team work and developing new skills.

Further to this I listened to Catriona Wallace from the Scottish Book Trust and Dr Emma Davidson from University of Edinburgh who discussed “Bookbug: evaluating the impact in Scotland.” The workshop detailed the evaluation process and the subsequent analysis of responses and data collected. The results largely gave positive feedback for the scheme and demonstrated the benefits for children participating. These included language development, bonding and social interaction. In addition, Bookbug contributed to the success of library services by encouraging community inclusion and usage, supporting relationships with parents, working with external partners and developing long term readership in children. However, it was evident that some improvement was required, such as the introduction of more co-ordinators and sessions, more flexibility of session times such as evenings and weekends to allow whole families to attend, and creating a more inclusive environment to ease anxieties in children and adults who may not be familiar with library settings.

The final parallel session I attended was “Reading for Pleasure-strategies to engage children and young people”, presented by former Chair of CILIP Youth Libraries Group Joy Court. She provided a range of strategies to encourage children to read and highlighted the benefits that can result. Strategies included creating a reading friendly environment, allowing children to select items to read, reading aloud or in groups, belonging to a reading community, family or group and ensuring the resources were sufficient and available in libraries. The positive impact of reading was demonstrated giving numerous data regarding improved education, literacy and maths, higher earnings, increasing language skills and communication., boosting confidence, understanding and empathy with others and greater cognitive abilities.

The last keynote speech was given by James Clay from Jisc who discussed “The challenge of the intelligent library.” Primarily targeted at academic libraries, this presentation gave an insight in to how technology could be harnessed to improve the library experience for patrons and develop a more tailored service for their needs. The use of technology could be used to gather data such as which part of their studies they were at, how often they attend the library and which facilities they use. This in turn could be utilised to assess their requirements and improve the quality of experience by indicating when useful resources are available, which library areas are most beneficial to them, and using gimmicks or promotions to target non-users. However, the ethics, legal and privacy issues were ever present which demonstrated many of the difficulties involved during implementation of such practices. Obviously, consent must be sought, and safe practices adhered to.

The event was brought to a close by Liz McGettigan