

President's perspective

Old friends and new partners

***Alastair Johnston* finds a lot of professional enthusiasm at the home nations conference in Wales.**

One of the privileges afforded to your President is the opportunity to participate in the conferences of the home nations. Early March saw your Director, Assistant Director Rhona, and myself in the snow covered hills of Wales - at Llandrindod Wells to be precise.

The conference theme of 'Old Friends and New Partners' proved to be particularly apposite. Friends reunited included Neil Bennett, Chair of Cilip Cymru and Head of Information and Cultural Services for Pembrokeshire County Council. Neil and I both include Galashiels within our CVs and I lost count of the time that the phrase "blast from the past" was uttered as we caught up with the comings and goings of friends and colleagues in libraries and the library supply trade. Tudfil Adams, County Librarian of Powys County Council, and an old friend from the Bookshelf User Group days, introduced me to her Council's Chairperson with the words: "This is Alastair from Dumfries and Galloway and by complete coincidence I've spent the afternoon benchmarking Powys against Dumfries and Galloway!"

It was inspiring to hear Alan Pugh, the Welsh Assembly Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport, announce a series of investments: £35,000 to allow every Records Office in Wales to undertake outreach work in a modern way by providing each office with a laptop computer and a digital projector; and £2million to help deliver the CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales Development Programme with the aim of re-establishing public libraries at the heart of Welsh community life. The Minister laid particular emphasis on the need for public libraries to prepare marketing plans and to then go out and promote their services in the market place.

On that very theme, an initiative worthy of emulation is 'Book Prescription Wales' which is a partnership between CyMAL, the NHS, the Welsh public library authorities and the Society of Chief Librarians. The idea is simple, effective and, based on the results of the pilot, efficient. GPs are given internet access to library catalogues and issue prescriptions for particular books - the pilot related to mental health problems - with the patient collecting the book from their local public library. GPs can refer patients to sources of reliable information, there is no cost to either the patient or the NHS at the point of dispensing, and, best of all, public libraries pick up issues and potential new users - what more can one ask! The full-blown

initiative will cover a wide range of health issues, from diabetes to post-stroke recovery. And just to prove that good ideas travel faster than Presidents, [read about Scotland's first healthy reading scheme](#).

Reader Development also featured at Llandridod and the findings in Wales very much reflect those in Scotland and elsewhere. "Marketing and promoting books in a coordinated way works far better than simply leaving books on shelves to take their chance." It somewhat horrifies me that after 150 years we still find the need to repeat such an obvious truism but, nevertheless, if a few more librarians are converted to the cause then so be it!

Our very own Director brought the conference up-to-date on Scotland's journey towards cultural rights and entitlements for every citizen; on the work of the Cultural Commission; and on the role that both CILIPS and SLIC have played to assist the Commission in its work. Following [Elaine's excellent article](#) in the March issue of *Information Scotland* the final phase of the Commission's task is now well underway and I would again encourage every one of our members to contribute by whatever means possible to ensuring that the role of libraries in its widest sense is fully understood and recognised both by the Commission and then subsequently by the Scottish Executive.

Continuing the marketing theme Jim Parker, Registrar of Public Lending Right, had some very interesting things to say about authors, books, reading trends and use of the PLR database. I won't reveal the plot because within a few minutes of finishing his presentation Jim was booked for a repeat performance at CILIPS' Peebles conference! This year's theme is Smart, Successful Libraries: Developing the Library Offer. The dates are 23-26 May with Branch and Group Day on Wednesday 25 May.

The Home Nations Forum was established by CILIP as a response to the oft-heard remark that CILIP is London-centric and generally unaware of a world outwith the M25. The Forum meets once or twice a year and allows Ireland, Wales, Scotland and increasingly the English Regions to pool information and share experience. The opportunity of the Welsh Conference was taken to hold the Forum during the previous afternoon when we had updates on the Framework for Qualifications and news of the two pilots, both in the South and East of England. There was also considerable discussion on the 2006 Celtic Conference to be held in Cardiff - no Peebles in 2006, Cardiff instead!

In Asia work goes on in responding to the Tsunami Disaster and the subsequent earthquake and aftershocks. Most members will be aware that CILIP has now set up a fund with the aim of helping to rebuild library

services in Sri Lanka where more than 160 school and public libraries have either been destroyed or badly damaged. Further information can be found at www.cilip.org.uk/professionalguidance/internationalwork/tsuanmiresponse.htm, and on page 12 of the April 2005 Update.

Finally a couple of memorable quotes from Wales. On discussing the need for professional enthusiasm: "People who never get carried away should be!" (*Malcolm S Forbes*) and a reflection on the state of library cooperation: "Sharing of resources can create mutual benefits, but shared poverty does not create wealth." (*Fabian Franklin*)

Alastair Johnston



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Let me tell you a story

With more than 9000 participants, the first East Renfrewshire Storytelling Festival was declared a great success. *Janice Weir* reports.

Storytelling for children has always had a relatively high profile in community libraries in East Renfrewshire. As well as regular storytimes in each library, we have had strong links with the Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh, frequently employing its storytellers to work at events for children and young people. We have long believed in the value of storytelling as an effective communication tool, a 'stretcher' of imaginations and a way to foster a love of stories, both oral and written.

East Renfrewshire's Scottish Arts Council funded Creative Links Officer is Yvonne Wallace. Back in June, and working in collaboration, we submitted a joint bid from the Education Department and Community and Leisure Department to the Scottish Arts Council's storytelling funding strand. We could bid for up to £5,000 (and we had promises of match funding from various sources). In June we heard that we had been successful, and feedback from SAC told us that they were impressed by the joined-up working evident in the bid.

We chose National Tell A Story Day as the first day of the festival, which was to take place 29 October - 12 November 2004. A planning group consisted of library staff, the creative links officer, an arts officer and the family learning manager.

We decided to think big. Our target audience would be the whole community - from babies to residents in care homes. Our main aims would be:

- to provide quality storytelling experiences,
- provide storytelling training for library staff and teachers
- to promote the art of storytelling.
- employ good evaluation techniques no matter how difficult

Planning events in educational establishments was relatively straightforward. The audience was captive, teachers were supportive and storytellers were flexible, but the planning of community events was considerably more problematic...

We decided to try to put storytellers into places that are not normally associated with storytelling, such as sports clubs, supermarkets, the local park - and on a local bus. We had little success with the supermarket and the sports clubs but did have two unusual and very successful events in Rouken Glen Park and on a Barrhead bus. The park event involved telling stories to the walking group who meet their regularly. The 'storyteller' was actually our local studies librarian who told stories and legends relating to the park.

The event on the bus involved Michael Kerins jumping on board the Circular bus which travels around Barrhead.

At least one event took place in each of our 24 primary schools, 7 secondary schools and 10 community libraries. Of the events in libraries, some were aimed at pre-fives and their families, some at primary school children and some at adults.

A particularly successful event in a community library was the Murder Mystery Evening. Community drama staff wrote a short murder story which was performed by actors from the community drama group. The mystery had to be solved by interrogating the actors. We felt that this was an excellent way of demonstrating that stories can be told in many different ways and be great fun.

Storytellers from the Scottish Storytelling Centre trained teachers not only in the art of storytelling but also in the techniques to transform their pupils

into storytellers. Our idea was that older children would tell stories to younger children which would allow storytelling to permeate throughout a school. Library staff were given skills to enhance the skills they had already honed working with pre-fives and their families.

Following evaluation, we have had only positive comments from participants. We have recently submitted another bid to the SAC. This time the bid has been timed differently. If successful the festival will take place in January next year and will incorporate events linked to Holocaust Memorial Day and Burns Night. We also intend to concentrate on fewer but larger events.

Janice Weir is Learning Services Officer, Cultural Services, East Renfrewshire Council.

The Scottish Storytelling Centre organises training events and workshops for professionals and community members. Contact: 0131 556 2647; scottishstorytellingcentre@uk.uuemail.com; www.scottishstorytellingcentre.co.uk



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New opportunities

A special focus on social inclusion and libraries, with a look at activity around Scotland.

Supporting learning in the Gorbals

Closed in 1984 due to a decline in use, the new Gorbals Library and Real Learning Centre lies at the heart of offering new opportunities to local people. *Wilma Moore* explains how the three-year Gorbals Digital Inclusion Project is aimed at the most excluded members of the community.

The library and learning centre is the centrepiece of the three-year Gorbals Digital Inclusion Project. It aims to assist both its project partners and the community in ensuring that the people of Gorbals are aware of the opportunities offered by ICT both in terms of increasing employability, in widening skills, and interests and developing confidence in ICT.

The previous library was closed in 1994 due to a shifting population and the resultant decline in use. Glasgow City Council had identified a gap in library service provision within the Gorbals area; the opportunity to reinvest in library and learning provision came with the regeneration of the area led by the Gorbals Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP).

The new Gorbals Library and Learning Centre opened in May 2004, and officially launched by First Minister Jack McConnell. The Centre serves a population of 13,000, seven days a week. Designed for the 21st Century, it is intended to attract those who might not normally consider entering a traditional library. The design, by prestigious Glasgow firm CuriousOranj, is flexible. It offers new concepts in service, aiming to convey accessibility and inclusion, an inviting space for all the community to learn in.

As well as being a centre of excellence for IT within the community - it has 38 PCs, eight apple macs and eight wireless tablets - sofas and low tables allow people to relax with a coffee and meet with other users. Swapping experiences is an invaluable part of learning. Providing a supportive learning environment performed an integral element in the success of the project and contributes to social inclusion.

The three-year Digital Inclusion Project is a user-friendly, bottom-up approach aimed at the most excluded members of the community. At the same time, it is community-based. It is part of a three-year Scottish Executive Digital Inclusion Initiative which aims to ensure that all citizens have access to digital technology and the skills and confidence to use it, helping to combat the 'digital divide'.

With funding from the Scottish Executive, Scottish Enterprise Glasgow, European Regional Development Fund and Glasgow City Council, the Project involved close consultation with the local community. One of the fundamental criteria of the project is that it be defined by potential users.

Accordingly, a Community Consultation Group was established to enable local residents to voice their requirements. Volunteers from community groups were trained as digital champions to work with their peers and, through visits to similar initiatives, determine best practice in design and use for the new learning centre.

A Community Engagement Team was then set up. This included Glasgow City Council's Cultural and Leisure Services (CLS), Gorbals SIP, Gorbals Community Forum, Gorbals Initiative and Glasgow College of Nautical Studies. Visits to other centres were organised; development of content for learning programmes and progress paths were key areas of discussion.

Engagement, learning, content and support is continued through the dedicated Digital Inclusion Team. The team comprises a Digital Learning Manager, a Learning Support Officer and an Outreach Officer. This resource is complemented by the area based staff who manage the day-to-day operation of the library and learning centre.

Over the three-year life of the project specific targets to be met include:

- To engage with 6,000 Gorbals residents
- To progress 150 local citizens into employment (68 of whom should be under 25 years of age)
- To support at least 40 Gorbals projects to form part of a larger ICT network in the community.

Within the first year of the Gorbals Digital Inclusion Project 3,854 people from the Gorbals community have been engaged and 28 projects linked to the ICT network, significantly outstripping forecasts.

Building on this positive start the essential task continues to be:

- to attract as many users as possible from all sections of the community
- to build community defined content which will attract to the project the currently digitally disenfranchised
- to contribute to the improvement of economic activity
- to contribute to the achievement of social inclusion.

Wilma Moore is Community Libraries Network Manager, Glasgow Libraries.



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NEWS

Grants for 'equity and access' projects

Successful applicants for grants from the SLIC Innovation, Development and Research Fund 2005 have been announced. This year, they focused on library and information projects in the field of improving equity and access. Projects commenced this month (April).

SLIC received 33 applications to the Fund this year. The successful projects are as follows:

Homebound users on-line access

Falkirk Council Library Service (£7,727)

To enhance homebound users access to library service resources through web based catalogue using laptop computers and mobile phone technology.

Cultural diversity evaluation toolkit

West Lothian College (£10,000)

To produce a resource and service evaluation kit that will enable libraries to respond fully to the legislative requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.

Project Wishart

Dundee City Council Communities Department (£10,000)

To develop a transferable model for applying library and information services to the sharp end of drug and alcohol rehabilitation.

Centre for Digital Library Research at Strathclyde University (£9997)

To create guidelines for best practice in choosing and using metadata for the management of digital objects in the Scottish Information Environment.

Help yourself to learning

Scottish Borders Library and Information Service (£10,000)

To develop and deliver tutor supported learning opportunities, encourage self-help access to learning and generate hard copy support materials to include in the 'Help Yourself' literacies initiative collections in libraries.

'Right to Read' in protest

Blind and partially sighted adults and children presented a 30,000 signature petition to Downing Street recently to call on the Government to end discrimination against those who have a sight problem, reading disability or dyslexia.

95% of all books, magazines and other publications never become available in large print, audio or Braille which means that every day in the UK three million people are denied the Right to Read.

The Right to Read Alliance, made up of 17 organisations including the National Library for the Blind, RNIB, Calibre Cassette Library, LOOK, and the British Dyslexia Association, has been campaigning for two years for everyone to have access to the same material, at the same time, at the same price. The Alliance has been asking supporters to sign the Right to Read Charter, which calls for Government funding to increase the production of alternative format books and to remove VAT from audio books.

With around 125,000 print titles published in the UK each year they fear they're fighting a losing battle.

Helen Brazier, Chief Executive of the National Library for the Blind, said: "It's appalling that three million people in this country still can't read everything they want to read. We are simply asking for books for everyone – not just for everyone who can read print."

Availability of Accessible Publications by Suzanne Lockyer, Claire Creaser and J Eric Davies. Published by Loughborough University's Library and Information Services Unit (LISU) in November 2004.

Healthy reading

Scotland's first healthy reading scheme has been launched in Glasgow and East Renfrewshire.

The Healthy Reading initiative is a partnership between libraries and local health councils. Patients will receive additional support to aid their well-being, through a prescription to a book likely to help in some areas of stress or emotional problems. Seven libraries in the Glasgow City Council authority are participating, and Thornliebank library in East Renfrewshire Council. There are plans to extend the scheme to other libraries

GPs have access to a list of 35 books and can discretely point patients to self-help books aiming to lead patients to greater understanding of their problems. Rhona Brankin MSP, Deputy Health Minister, launching the scheme, welcomed the partnership and encouraged other library services to consider similar initiatives, which she felt could have a positive impact by addressing problems.

The Greater Glasgow project follows a healthy reading pilot in Cardiff, which proved so successful that it is to be rolled out across Wales as 'Book

Prescription Wales'. (see [President's Perspective](#)). And in England, other schemes are in place in Devon and Ipswich.

Reveal your information

[Revealweb](#) 'the national database of resources in accessible formats' is a database that brings together information about books produced in accessible formats. It contains more than 110,000 records. Revealweb signposts users to organisations that can supply material. The complementary *Register of Suppliers* gives information on the terms and conditions under which resources are made available and how to get hold of them. It is managed and supported by the RNIB and NLB.

If your organisation produces material that you are willing to share contact manager@revealweb.org.uk.

To sign up for a free bulletin, go to: www.revealweb.org.uk



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Social inclusion

Sites of special interest

East Renfrewshire's community websites include the internationally acclaimed Holocaust Memorial site. *Liz McGettigan* introduces them.

Connect-ER is the working title of our ICT project designed to promote inclusion and learning within the community of East Renfrewshire. The project aims to promote inclusion and regeneration through the use of ICT, through the development of community websites, their content, relevance and use.

ICT can be a strong focus of cohesion in the many elements of improving the wellbeing of residents in the authority. Our project is designed to do just that and to support the Community Plan, the health awareness and

promotion agenda, the Community Learning Partnership strategy and the Corporate Strategy. Through the Connect-ER website, development is linked to access and to skills development, enabling the best use to be made of the sites' content.

Five of East Renfrewshire's Learning Centres now have SUfl Learn Direct branding and there is a plan to extend this to another two locations in the near future. One of the centres is also an accredited grade 'A' European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) test centre enabling people to be assessed for the qualification at a location near to their home. These centres are now also accredited to deliver Individual Learning Accounts for the Scottish Executive.

The project has as its vision public libraries as gateways, access points, and centres of excellence at the heart of the community. This extends beyond library buildings to include a web of virtual gateways: networks of information, resources, people and partners. To deliver these gateways, the skills of libraries' staff and resources and ICT were linked together with traditional approaches.

Giving community groups voice and confidence

East Renfrewshire community libraries have strong links with local community groups. This helped us in sourcing the content for the community websites. On the other hand, in some cases representatives from the groups approached us, wanting to be involved. We invited members of the community groups into the libraries and offered them skills in building content and site development.

The community portal involves small businesses, community groups, citizens, the voluntary sector and public organisations. The starting point was the Council portal, which gives information about the whole community and is managed by the libraries department (www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk).

As a result, although we monitor the individual sites, they are updated by people in the community, getting help from us when needed. There is a huge amount of community ownership.

The project has largely been developed using existing resources, only the Barrhead site benefiting from £50,000 of Gates funding.

Liz McGettigan is Libraries and Information Services Manager.

East Renfrewshire's community websites:

The Holocaust website

The Holocaust website has received worldwide recognition from national newspapers, the BBC and international researchers. We recently hosted a visit from Icelandic educationalists and Spanish journalists on this site. The site was the subject of a paper delivered at a conference in Buenos Aires in August 2004. The Holocaust site was joint runner up for CILIP's prestigious 'Libraries Change Lives' Award. More than that we have had compliments and thanks from the Jewish community at home and abroad.

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/holocaust

Women Across the World

Connecting women into using and learning about ICT, the site gives a sense of bonding, achievement, confidence and pride.

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/womenacrosstheworld

East Renfrewshire access

Connects and empowers the disabled community to manage their own website. The site is fully developed now by the disabled community, and acts as a pressure group for access rights.

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/accesser

Community safety

The site offers local community safety information. It was developed through partnership with the NHS, Scottish Water, Strathclyde Fire Brigade, Strathclyde Police and the Levern Valley Partnership. It offers local up-to-date information on crime prevention.

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/communitysafety/

'It's funny whit ye remember'

Connects with our older community members through oral history and reminiscence.

www.barrhead-scotland.com/Culture/Writing/its_funny/itsfunny.htm

Substance misuse

Connecting target groups with good information. It offers access to East Renfrewshire's Substance Misuse Team, training and employment support and NHS support and information

[www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/community_safety_portal -
home/community_safety_portal -
crime_prevention/community_safety_portal - substance misuse.htm](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/community_safety_portal_home/community_safety_portal_crime_prevention/community_safety_portal_substance_misuse.htm)

Neilston railway

Celebrating local transport with the community, the site brings local history alive and offers an involvement and learning opportunity for local school children.

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/index/community/neighbourhood_and_village/access_point.htm

Busby local history

Connecting with Busby Local History Group. It instils a sense of real community spirit and leadership. A collaborative venture produced a book 'Old Busby'.

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/index/community/neighbourhood_and_village/access_point.htm

Barrhead heritage trail

Connecting with Barrhead heritage.

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/index/community/neighbourhood_and_village/access_point.htm

Bengali performing arts

A website to promote the activities of the Bengali Performing Arts group was launched in Giffnock library in January 2005 with an evening of multicultural entertainment.

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/bengaliperformingarts



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Social inclusion

Bridging the missing link in North Ayrshire Libraries

Susan Hall reports on how North Ayrshire meets the needs of users with ICT.

In January 2002, North Ayrshire Libraries implemented their Gates Foundation funding in the form of the Missing Link project. The project aimed to increase the use of the People's Network and to ensure that all citizens in North Ayrshire could benefit from the opportunities emerging from the impact of ICT. Although funding for the project ended in January 2004, the significant progress achieved has ensured that many of the developments are continuing and incorporated into the Library and Information Service plan. This success is demonstrated by the uptake of ICT learning provision within libraries.

The project was equipped with seven laptop computers and a range of lifestyle software, such as driving theory and virtual makeover, to provide an outreach service. The service provided ICT taster sessions at community events that would encourage non-participants to make use of their library service. This was achieved by identifying the needs of individuals by providing an informal approach to the benefits of ICT. The project provided services to all sections of the community, from youth clubs to opportunities in retirement groups, and successfully contributed to community learning.

The E-government agenda accords digital and physical accessibility with equal importance. Our own research with individuals suggested a variety of reasons for non-participation, such as a lack of awareness, inability to access services and fear of ICT. This has informed the library service of the requirements necessary to promote inclusion in all service provision for the future.

Evaluation of the project has identified the need for:

- The provision of informal and relevant ICT learning opportunities, supported through the highly successful computer buddies scheme, which provides one-to-one tuition by volunteers.
- The development of training materials to support library users, volunteers and library staff.
- The development of online resources on the Library and Information Service website. www.ers.north-ayrshire.gov.uk
- The improvement of physical accessibility e.g. lowered counters and induction loops in all 17 libraries.
- The provision a number of hardware and software alternatives such as trackballs, large keyboards, screen reader software and a guide to

using accessibility features in Windows to improve accessibility of electronic resources.

All provision is under constant review to ensure that the needs of service users are met.

These developments have raised the profile of the Library Service highlighting its contribution to North Ayrshire Council's Community Plan, and its community learning priorities.

Effective partnerships which include social services and health professionals have provided an excellent opportunity for consultation and referral specifically in relation to providing accessible services to all members of the community; consultation with the community ensures that services continue to be developed in response to need.

The Gates project presented an opportunity to the library service to address the Government agenda for digital inclusion by developing basic IT and accessibility elements into service provision. Working in partnership with other departments, agencies and individuals is a key element to the delivery of services, which has enabled the library service to remain an important focus at the heart of communities.



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Social inclusion

Are you accessible and approachable?

'Access for all' is something that all services aspire to, but perhaps don't always achieve. One speaker at a recent seminar, focusing on students' needs, took things back to basics - are you 'approachable to all'?

To a user with a disability, whether it is physical or visual, using a new library can be a daunting experience. The information may be there, but is it in a format they can use? A recent seminar suggested that advanced

technology, although enabling, isn't always the solution; low-tech solutions and physical support can at times be as effective.

A short video highlighted that enabling tools are only of use if web designers have produced pages enabling the technology to be effective. For instance, a Screenreader reads text on the same line from left to right, whilst visually pleasing, text wrapped in boxes when 'read' will not make sense. Web developers wishing to design web pages that are accessible to all can view advice offered by the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) and also run their web URL through 'Bobby' a service which will immediately report any faults (www.cast.org/bobby/)

Paul Brown, Director of Scottish Disability Team based at Dundee University, stressed that whilst technology facilitated access, investment in low-tech solutions should not be forgotten. These include arm rests; wrist guards; pen grips; adjustable height tables; and even a human element - he has access to a 'Human Reader' for 15 hours a week.

Paul then took us on his own personal journey using assistive technology. On entering University Paul's biggest fear was not using technology or attending lectures: "The scariest thing was the library. It was a huge building filled with things that I couldn't access -I couldn't even get them off the shelf and if I did, how would I use them?" Paul became a pioneer at Dundee University, assisting the library staff in delivering a service catering for all abilities, and helping the computing staff to develop systems. His legacy still lives on.

Email has changed his life. It was not until he was in his mid-20s that "...for first time I could send and receive, privately, my own mail." He demonstrated his talking mobile phone, but revealed that designers modify older versions rather than current models. However mobile technology is a further step towards being inclusive in today's society, in Paul's words "...it gives me access to all the crap you lot have! And I have a right to it!"

Part IV of the Disability Discrimination Act (also known as the Special Educational Needs Discrimination Act), outlines that HE and FE institutions are required to ensure that 'reasonable' adjustments are made, to supply teaching that is accessible for all students. Carol Murphy, Assistive Technology Adviser, discussed the services that the University of Strathclyde provides for those requiring additional help. There are currently 740 students with a declared disability at the University including: 31% with Dyslexia; 6% with hearing impairments; 4% who are wheelchair users or have mobility problems; and 3% who are partially sighted (approx 20 people). Strathclyde University takes a joined-up approach to accessibility; student disability requirements are shared between academic staff,

Learning and Disability Services. The Staff Student Information Server is used to record at registration any individual needs and to track recommended/ reasonable adjustments.

An IT Training Team works closely with Assistive Technology and Disability Advisers to ensure that accessibility issues are highlighted within staff and postgraduate IT skills development; from the creation of accessible PowerPoint presentations to web pages. Disability Advisers can make recommendations on issues such as funding, exam assistance and the provision of 'Non Medical Personal Helpers'.

Other assistive initiatives include a Laptop (wireless) purchase scheme; Fetch and Carry provision; access to Individual study carrels for students and helpers to share; access to Jaws screen reader and Zoom text magnification on log-in to PCs in labs; and site license to MindGenius (concept mapping software). MindGenius allows users to map thoughts and break information down into bite-size chunks. Students with Dyslexia can benefit by being able to structure and organise their ideas in written form, highlighting key points and concepts. Kurzweil 3000, a device used to scan and read documents, allows students to read and learn at their own pace. The device can scan text and read PDFs or Word files.

Robert Gormley, Edinburgh University Library Learning Resources Centre, said that of the 1500 disabled students this year at the university, around half of them have dyslexia. In these cases screen readers are very useful, using Jaws software or OCR. CCTV offers a very good method of screen enhancement and simpler remedies such as changing colour and backgrounds can help a great deal. Read and Write Gold is software which includes text prediction, a dictionary, word wizard, homophones, convert to audio facility, and a pronunciation tutor.

For students with mobility problems, adjustable desks are a must, and Robert urged the purchase of electrically operated models so that users may adjust them themselves. Different mice to suit different needs are an easy option - at Edinburgh University they have built up a library of these. For some students, however, a trackball is often easier to use. Experience has shown that voice recognition machines are no longer needed, as these are something that students are bringing to college themselves.

In the library, noise from braille embossers and voice recognition software can sometimes be a problem. Also some products are not appropriate to university use - the suppliers have not yet got to grips with the corporate environment and much equipment is geared to standalone pcs, although things are getting better. "We are often constrained by environment and technology." said Robert.

Robert stressed the importance of responding to individuals' needs, by engaging with and chatting to the users.

Information

The Enabling Technologies Seminar was held by the Multimedia & Information Technology Group Scotland on 17 March, at Edinburgh University Library. A full report is in the next issue of e-MmITS, the online newsletter, at www.mmits.org.uk



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Social inclusion

A fresh start to work

Already proactive in providing open learning services, *Charlie Bennett* describes a new initiative by North Lanarkshire libraries to improve the employability of residents in areas with high unemployment and social problems.

North Lanarkshire Council Libraries and Information Service has a track record of innovation and development of open learning services.

Our open learning service supports three important elements of the Council's Corporate Plan 2004-2008 in the areas of promoting social inclusion and boosting the local economy. These are:

- Stimulating business and the local economy by up-skilling the community in ICT subjects and therefore reducing local skills gaps;
- Promoting social inclusion by providing lifelong learning services free of charge and removing obstacles to learning by providing these services over the internet through interactive digital television, and hopefully soon through portable devices such as PDAs and mobile phones;

- Encouraging lifelong learning through our network of five open learning centres, and our award winning e-learning website at www.logintolearn.com.

To further develop our open learning service we have secured funding from Scottish Enterprise Lanarkshire and the European Social Fund to lead an exciting new project that will provide a focus for increasing employability in the Motherwell North, Bellshill, and Viewpark areas. Like many such areas these three communities are blighted by a range of social problems including high unemployment, a low average wage, bad health, and poor literacy and numeracy skills.

Increasingly jobs require a minimum of IT standards, and as a result IT skills are an important route back to work. However, in North Lanarkshire, Labour Market Information Reports indicate 32% of businesses in North Lanarkshire cite a skills gap in basic computer literacy and using IT against a West of Scotland average of 26%.

The aims of the Fresh Start Project are to increase the employability of residents in the three areas by providing vocational training in basic computing and other IT applications - word-processing, databases, spreadsheets, Internet and email - from the libraries serving them. The project will provide guidance, support, and tuition to ensure beneficiaries achieve qualifications such as the European Computer Driving licence to improve their employability. The project will support activity which addresses exclusion faced by individuals, through the provision of an integrated package of guidance, training and support measures tailored specifically to the needs of the individual.

A major partner in the project is Routes to Work which seeks to assist residents of North Lanarkshire to access opportunities in education, training and employment by providing advice, information, guidance and practical support and development to enhance their employment opportunities. Routes to Work is also North Lanarkshire's employer intermediary resource. It offers a free service to aid the growth and development of people and businesses in the authority by screening candidates and matching them against suitable vacancies; offering employers the opportunity to input to training; and signposting employers to advice and information on funding they can access.

By accessing the Fresh Start project beneficiaries will not only have access to vocational training but they will have access to a wide range of confidential advice and support from Routes to Work including:

- Individual, confidential support

- Advice on training & education opportunities and how to access them
- Access to job vacancies and job matching through our employer liaison staff
- Job search assistance
- Training grant assistance
- Help with application forms
- Help with CV preparation
- Assistance with interview techniques
- Ongoing support during training and after starting employment
- Links to work experience opportunities and other services
- Access to learning materials

A team of 2.5 outreach workers will deliver learning support to ensure that learners will achieve the European Computer Driving Licence. This support will be delivered from Motherwell Library, Bellshill Cultural Centre, Viewpark Library, and the Aquatec, a major sports facility situated in Central Motherwell. The Aquatec has been chosen as a venue for the Project because many of our target beneficiaries make use of its facilities free through the North Lanarkshire Council Passport to Leisure scheme.

Project outcomes

It is envisaged that the Project will benefit 125 individuals by improving their ICT skills, and providing careers advice and support and help with career choices and changes. Support will also be provided in applying for jobs and training, or starting a business. The aim is that 85% of beneficiaries will achieve accreditation.



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Social inclusion

Success in print

Storylines is an innovative creative writing project in Fife aimed at helping groups of Adult Basic Education students to improve their

literacy and ICT skills with the support of library staff, ABE tutors and professional storytellers. It is proving to be highly successful.

The idea for the project emerged from a series of storytelling workshops organised for library staff by Janet McInnes, Fife's temporary Storyteller-in-Residence, which showed how traditional storytelling skills could be used to stimulate the imagination and encourage people to create their own stories.

As library staff felt that this may prove an enjoyable approach for adults who wanted to improve their writing skills, they arranged a meeting with the local ABE Co-ordinator and two professional storytellers based in Fife to explore the idea of a collaborative project based in the library.

A successful joint funding application was then made to Fife's Literacy and Numeracy Plan - part of funding from the Scottish Executive via Community Learning Strategy Partnerships for adult literacy and numeracy - to pilot the project in Dunfermline Carnegie Library and Kirkcaldy.

The role of the professional storytellers is to use traditional storytelling skills and activities to enthuse and inspire the students to produce pieces of creative writing. The ABE tutors and library staff support the students with their basic writing skills and help them to develop new ICT skills to transfer their stories to print using the library's computers.

The library environment provides a relaxed atmosphere for the learners and the publication of their finished work in a glossy, high quality booklet gives them a real sense of pride in their achievement. The project boosts the students' confidence and motivates them to continue improving their writing and ICT skills and encourages them to make independent use of the library.

The pilot projects proved such a great success that a second joint funding application to run Storylines in Lochgelly Library was approved. Seven students took part in this project which was held on Wednesday evenings over eight weeks. The following are some of the comments made about the individual students:

"Initially, Isabel was lacking in confidence. However, since taking part in the project, Isabel has commented that friends and family have noticed a very positive change in her manner. She has become more confident in her own abilities and more comfortable around other people. She is a frequent visitor to the library now."

"Scott became much more communicative over the weeks and mixed well with the rest of the group. He started to use the library facilities at other times during the week and built up a good relationship with the library staff."

"John was keen to join the group to improve his literacy skills. He had always wanted to write poetry. He enjoyed the experience so much that he would now like to try writing a fairy tale."

"Anne had expressed an interest in attending the Storylines group, but was apprehensive about coming out alone in the evenings. However, such was her motivation, that she managed to persuade her 15-year-old son Paul to accompany her to the library each week. Although too young to be technically considered a member of the project, Paul joined in the group and developed a story of his own which has been included in the booklet."

"Lynda had already written several stories on her own, but she was keen to learn more about creative writing. She was a very supportive member of the group. As well as illustrating her own stories, Lynda helped illustrate some of the stories written by other members of the group. She has now enrolled in another Challenge Fund project aimed at improving literacy skills."

"Marina was unable to attend the group every week because of childcare problems. However, with the support of a tutor at the local Opportunities Centre, Marina completed a story for the booklet and has gone on to write another."

At the end of the Lochgelly Library project, a visit to Multiprint was arranged for the group to see their work being printed hot off the press. The newly published booklets were made available for the students to give to family and friends, as well as being put on display in the local library. And, to round things off, the students were invited to attend a Learners' Lunch to celebrate learning achievement in Fife, attended by local councillors and a local celebrity.

All the participants have so far found the project a positive and worthwhile experience. We are working on a third application for a fourth group in the Cowdenbeath area, and possibly a fifth group in East Fife. And the Lochgelly group has been shortlisted for the Scottish Adult Learning Awards to be announced in May.

Endpiece

Aye Write!

Brian Osborne reports that Glasgow's first city-wide book festival was lively and well run.

I know that I mentioned Aye Write! the Glasgow Book Festival in my last column but I make no apology for returning to the subject again. I do so not only because of the significance of the Festival but because I had the pleasure of attending a number of the events and also performed twice - once doing a workshop on writing biography and once, with Ronnie Armstrong, in our two-man tribute to Neil Munro's Para Handy.

Have I mentioned that this year is the Para Handy Centenary? No? A strange oversight! You had better gaze on the Centenary logo just to absorb the message.

It was a strange experience to be back in some of the normally unseen parts of the Mitchell Library - the last time I remember being in the Jeffrey Library was to sit Open University examinations back in...well... a very long time ago! And did I hear the spirits of a long line of City Librarians clanking their chains as they saw their former office converted into a Green Room for thirsty writers? And was that the ghost of my much younger self, just out of school, turning up at that self-same office to be interviewed for a job - and failing to get it because the then City Librarian was unsure that I would be able to reach the top shelves?

From the point of view of a participant and spectator I must say that it seemed a very well run and lively festival with a really good atmosphere. Glasgow pulled out all the stops, in the way that only Glasgow can, and from the number of sold out performances and the general buzz around the hallowed halls of the Mitchell the citizens of the "dear green place" would seem to have responded well to their first city-wide Book Festival.

The other half of our two-man tribute to Para Handy was deeply distressed when he realised that the organisers had programmed us to appear at the same time as Billy McNeill and Archie MacPherson (who I think have

something to do with football.) I added to his woes by pointing out that we were also competing for the same time slot with no less a figure than Alan Taylor, Deputy Editor of the Sunday Herald and sometime editor of one of Information Scotland's predecessors. I know Billy McNeill got a bigger audience than we did; I haven't had the nerve to check up on Alan Taylor's audience for his talk about wartime diaries - but we needed extra chairs brought in - so there!

More seriously; that type of programming, with something to suit all tastes and predominantly making use of local talent rather than jet-setting imported celebrities seems to have worked well and made Aye Write! a very particular and successful sort of festival. (I know Alan Taylor comes from as far away as Musselburgh but in this context he is neither imported nor a celebrity - he used to work for Edinburgh City Libraries for goodness sake!)

My personal highlight of the Festival was undoubtedly Christopher Rush's deeply-moving, raw and honest account of the death of his wife and his subsequent decision to go travelling in the Cevennes with a donkey, in the footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson and Modestine. Rush's book *To Travel Hopefully: Journal of a Death not Foretold* (Profile Books £15.99) is now top of my "must read" list - if I can find one of these public library things somewhere!

By the way, one of Glasgow's excellent initiatives during Aye Write! was to have large quantities of lending stock available to be borrowed there and then as well as having Ottakar's run a book stall - so there was really no excuse for me not to borrow or buy a copy.

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Co-operation

Co-operation at a local level

Wendy Ball describes a highly successful Open Day held recently by the collaboration and co-operation network for Edinburgh, ELISA.

The tenacity of a good idea is extraordinary. Since the publication of the City Of Edinburgh's Cultural Policy in 1999, librarians and information professionals in the city of Edinburgh have volunteered their time and resources to develop the Edinburgh Libraries Strategy (launched in December 2003) and to create an informal organisation called ELISA (Edinburgh Libraries and Information Services Agency).

Over the past six years, ELISA has generated a number of collaborative projects such as the ELISA website, www.elisa.lib.ed.ac.uk, and the Edinburgh Libraries Guide. There have also been working groups set up to tackle particular issues, such as a universal library passport and exchange of experience visits to libraries across the city. This development and the vision for ELISA has been described by Chris Pinder (2004) in *Information Scotland*.

After six years of people volunteering time over and above their 'day' job, the appointment of a Development Officer and the ELISA Open Day on 3 May are testimony to the persistence of the idea that collaborative working on a local level is a valuable and worthwhile ambition.

Co-operative library activities are part and parcel of a professional's work. This is well illustrated by the masterly map of the co-operative library activities in Scotland created by Stuart James (2004). In setting up an organisation such as ELISA it is very important not to duplicate work, or reinvent the wheel. Yet through the development of ELISA, it is obvious that a co-operative network based on the loose geographical area of 'Edinburgh' (the city boundary is not viewed as rigid) is something that LIS professionals want and value. When discussions occur in the context of 'Edinburgh', there is potential tension between the views of Edinburgh as a locality serving its citizens and visitors, and Edinburgh as a capital city, acting as a gateway to the rest of the country. However, judging by the number of national organisations that are interested in ELISA, many of them value their geographical location and see the benefits of co-operation on a local level.

The fact that people working in our sector value local contacts was well demonstrated by the ELISA Open Day when 66 people turned up to participate in events at the Edinburgh University Main Library. Amongst these participants, 36 different organisations, institutions and agencies from all sectors across the city were represented.

The Open Day had two agendas, one for ELISA and one for the individual participants. The purpose for ELISA was to raise people's awareness of ELISA, what it does and what it is trying to achieve; and secondly, to solicit ideas for collaborative practical projects that ELISA could adopt. The agenda for participants was to meet colleagues and learn about current developments.

The organisation of the day involved a team of ten volunteers together with the Development Officer. The agenda required practical results so we organised short informal sessions requiring high levels of active participation. We also designed the sessions as separate modules, so people could attend part, or the whole of the day, as their work patterns allowed. Many people took advantage of this arrangement and several smaller library teams attended in relays.

ELISA is about collaborative working and we wanted to hear from some key organisations that have been involved in collaborative working for some years. We were delighted that Stuart James (University Librarian, Paisley University) representing Ayrshire Libraries Forum <http://library.paisley.ac.uk/alf/alfohome.htm> and Judith Brown (Senior Librarian, Robert Gordon University) representing Grampian Information, www.grampianinfo.co.uk/, agreed to come and talk to us about the experiences of their organisations and the issues that have to be tackled when developing a collaborative network.

Our guest participants were also invited to join a panel for our 'Any Questions' type discussion. Some taxing questions were posed by members of the ELISA Staff Development Working Group, such as, how do you sell collaborative working to your employers and how do you collaborate with your competitors? For a more detailed report see the ELISA website www.elisa.lib.ed.ac.uk/. Further expertise on collaborative working was represented by ELISA activists, Chris Pinder from Napier University Learning and Information Services, Alason Roberts from Edinburgh University Library and Museum Service, Bill Wallace from Edinburgh City Libraries and Information Services, and Gordon Hunt from the National Library of Scotland.

Four workshops were designed to solicit ideas for practical collaborative projects that could be adopted by ELISA. The four key themes reflected the interests of the current ELISA Working Groups: 'Communications, P.R. and Marketing'; 'Staff Development and Training'; 'Access'; and 'Digitisation'. They were a resounding success as 23 practical projects were identified by the participants.

An important feature of the day was to give participants the opportunity to meet colleagues. We introduced Contact Exchange, an idea developed by Sally Kerr from Edinburgh City Community Information and Web Team, and myself. 20 'hot topics' on library issues, (identified using recent issues of *Information Scotland*), were arranged around the room and people were encouraged to stand next to topics that interested them. This had the effect of bringing together people with similar interests, although some topics were perhaps not as hot as we had anticipated!

The Open Day generated important fuel for developing ELISA. It pulled a wide range of librarians and information people out of their libraries and it underlined the value of doing this. It also identified a range of practical projects that ELISA can now adopt and take forward.

Informal feedback and some recorded vox populi on the day indicated that participants most valued the chance to meet colleagues, to hear about new ideas, to share information, and to promote their own libraries. In spite of the plethora of co-operative forums, it seems that it is the local, personal and immediate contact that most encourages people to 'think out of the box'.

Moyra Forrest, Information Officer of the Institute of Science, Technology & Innovation at Edinburgh University, gives the following participant's perspective on the Open Day:

"I booked for the morning but stayed all day... Why?

- Stuart James and Judith Brown described what had worked well in Ayrshire and Grampian respectively, were not prescriptive, and were refreshingly open about potential pitfalls
- libraries from across the city were represented
- major employers proved by their involvement and enthusiasm how much ELISA means to them
- the workshops were practical and realistic in their aims
- contact exchange did just that
- the Hospitality Team provided clear directions and a warm welcome

Edinburgh is a library-rich city with great potential for collaboration on a more formal basis than at present. Informally, librarians are a pretty good lot when it comes to sharing!

The umbrella role of the City Council in promoting an Edinburgh Library Strategy provides a useful framework for future action. Local political support is important. There were many positive suggestions about how we can all capitalise on Edinburgh's designation as City of Literature.

Themed working groups were agreed to be useful. Time is ever precious and the judicious use of information technology should help. The new ELISA Bulletin Board should encourage easy communication.

Above all, people came with a positive attitude. Most librarians care deeply about their users and the quality of service we can offer. In our Information Society hazards such as overload of information, and an information-rich/information-poor divide concern us.

It is very encouraging that at a local level ELISA is bringing us together."

Wendy E. Ball is Development Officer for Edinburgh Libraries & Information Services Agency (ELISA).

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Aiming Higher

Mapping access

Stuart James questions whether our HE libraries are making the most of the 'Heinekin effect'.

Quite a few years ago I was in a small group being shown around the library of an ancient Dutch university. In the course of conversation with our host the question of undergraduate access arose and he remarked to me, "Surely in a small country like Scotland you have the same arrangement as

in the Netherlands, that an undergraduate at any university can use the library of any other university just on production of their id card?" I had to admit that at the time that was not the case, but that we were working on it.

We are still working on it, but are a lot further advanced than we were. The SCURL website carries an access grid (<http://scurl.ac.uk/about/access.html>) which has ticks for every member in the 'reference access' column. We are all members of the UK Libraries Plus and of the Research Extra schemes. The former gives borrowing access to local HE libraries for registered distance learning students of other institutions, while the latter allows lending rights for the academic staff and research postgraduate students of member libraries. In Scotland we have even extended the Research Extra scheme to the Schools of Art who otherwise did not qualify on the UK scheme.

Over and above all that, most Scottish HE libraries are involved in the various local or regional schemes (ALF, ELISA, GALT, Grampian Information or TAFLIN) which may also have local or regional implications for access rights. So far, so good. But there is still a long way to go. Mutual borrowing rights for undergraduates is a thorny issue, but one which we are starting to tackle within SCURL. And all that is only about higher education users. What about further education students? What about school pupils? And what about members of the public? The merger of the HE and FE funding councils and the removal of the divide between HE and FE is raising some interesting questions. And the lifelong learning agenda across Scotland is raising even more interesting questions. At individual university libraries we do offer services (including lending rights) to defined categories of borrower within all three of those sectors. But it is very much a series of local arrangements often on an almost institution-by-institution basis. What we need to do now is start to codify this activity, then see how much further we still have to go.

So far I have been talking about access: the reader going to the library. But what about the library going to the reader? My own experience of operating a library service for a university which aims to act as a community university for the West and South West of Scotland is that quite often our students don't find it convenient to come to us. We offer all our registered students remote access to a wide range of electronic products – databases, journals and e-books. But when we need to reach out to them the only way we can do it effectively is by working with partners, be they public libraries, local FE colleges, or hospital libraries. Call it the Heineken effect – reaching those parts other libraries can't.

In return for that support we offer a free loan support service to our partner libraries so that members of the public can get access to our bookstock.

The fear that we might be swamped by requests from external users has never materialised. And other libraries across the UK report the same: opening the doors does not invite in the barbarian hordes. But we must be a pretty intimidating lot because, if anything, access schemes reveal levels of library anxiety ("I don't belong in a university library") among some members of the public which are very disheartening to those of us who think we are welcoming.

There is a lot going on in terms of access – across sectors. We need to codify all this, perhaps into route maps across library services throughout areas, regions, or the country – after all the National Library of Scotland fits into the process too. But having done that, we need to tell the people who most need to know about it – the potential users. We have a lot to boast about, and one of our major failings is that we don't boast about it. We need to market our services to actual and potential users alike and, even more importantly, take us up on our offers. And we need to make sure that our various paymasters also know about what we are doing successfully to turn their policies into reality. More of all that in the future.

Stuart James is University Librarian, University of Paisley, and Chair of the Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries.



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CILIPS Conference

Smart, successful libraries

***Alastair Johnston* not only identified themes, but developed them, in his fascinating Presidential Address. We present extracts here.**

The phrase 'Smart, Successful Scotland' is taken from the title of a strategy launched in January 2001 by Wendy Alexander in her role as the then Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Minister. The strategy was designed to give Scotland's enterprise agencies a three year mission – and a challenge, to build a new prosperity by raising the skills and capabilities of

Scotland's people. It was a recognition that lifelong learning should lie at the heart of the nation's competitiveness.

I am sure you will agree with me that libraries have already played a major role in making Scotland's people both smarter and more successful. The People's Network, for example, is acknowledged by the Lottery funders and recognised by Government as an exemplar project both for the excellence of the public services it delivers and for the quality and success of its implementation.

The ICT revolution, in terms of public access to computers and computer-based training is a phenomenon of the past ten years where in Scotland we have gone from 1 public library with 12 computers to 602 public libraries with over 4,000 machines. It is estimated that an astonishing 10 million virtual visits will be made to Scottish library websites this year. In academia the acceptance and speed of growth of ICT has been even more impressive.

Training for library staff

The installation and inauguration of the People's Network is, without doubt, the single most important development in public libraries since the introduction of open access lending in the 1920s. Over the UK almost 40,000 public library staff have completed a learning programme linked to the People's Network. It was recognised early in the process that there was no existing means of properly accrediting what was to be the biggest mass library staff training programme ever attempted. ECDL or PC Passport were available for the ICT technical skills but what about the other outcomes – areas such as enquiry techniques, knowledge of the range of resources available to help users, support for reader development, not to mention the advanced roles of Net Navigator, Information Consultant, Information Gatekeeper, Information Manager or Educator.

SLIC, at the request of the Big Lottery Fund, has been leading the development of accreditation to cover this area. Very soon we will see the launch of two new UK-wide qualifications targeted specifically at library assistants and new entrants to library work – whether paraprofessional or professional. A Certificate in Applications of ICT in Libraries which will cover the non-technical outcomes previously mentioned and the Advanced Certificate in Applications of ICT in Libraries which will cover the advanced outcomes such as Net Navigator and Educator. The introduction of these new qualifications is to be warmly welcomed and will, I am sure, be widely taken up across Scotland and the rest of the UK. A secondary benefit of these Certificates is their role in establishing a valid career structure for paraprofessional staff. One which begins to break down traditional barriers

between professional and paraprofessional, and one which begins to address the skills gap which, within the next 10 to 15 years, will become a yawning chasm as around 35% of professional staff in Scottish Public Libraries retire.

A national co-ordinated strategy

In the broader context the experience of the People's Network and its co-ordinated acquisitions has led me to the conclusion that there is now a strong case for some kind of nationally co-ordinated strategy or strategies for libraries. I believe that this would lead to more cost effective services being delivered to a higher standard to even more people across Scotland. There are exciting opportunities out there for joint and imaginative partnership working within and across the sectors- the Crichton academic campus in Dumfries demonstrates that the health sector, two universities and two fe colleges can work successfully together and talks are ongoing in terms of an academic input to public library developments in the town centre and vice versa on the academic campus.

At this year's COSLA Conference Tom McCabe, the Minister for Finance signalled the way forward for local authorities. He told the conference that he was not there to cut 32 Provosts – in other words, there was not going to be another wholesale local government reorganisation - but that he did want to cut Directors of Finance, Chief Executives "and the pyramid of officials below them". He said that Councils would have to come to terms with the savings that they could generate by coming together to provide services or by not providing some services and buying them from neighbouring authorities. He reckoned that one council could provide social services for its neighbour whilst the neighbour could provide education for them both.

Follow that thought through and you begin to see the case for libraries which are locally delivered within a community planning structure against a nationally agreed strategy and, importantly, which could be delivered in areas larger than that of any single local authority. I would envisage that such libraries would require to have a statutory basis and a workable definition of 'adequate'. Adequate, so defined, would then become the minimum acceptable level of service and be reinforced by output standards designed to measure quality of provision and backed by inspection as part of a quality improvement framework which would also deliver a nationally recognised Library Quality Mark. With the minimum level of service agreed nationally then local or regional priorities or aspirations could be expressed by enhancing that minimum – whether enhancement means 'more' or 'bigger' or 'better'. These locally set priorities would then be recognised within the quality framework. The same basic system of national strategy,

community planning principles, local priorities and quality improvement could equally apply to schools, health academic and other sectors. Taken one step further, local public libraries could be the community expression of a nationally supported service – using Tom McCabe's thinking why have 32 heads of service in public libraries or 32 acquisitions librarians?

That said, it is vitally important that there are strong and direct links between local communities and the service being delivered on the ground. Many public libraries already have well established consultation systems. These could be further developed to play an enhanced and more robust role within the quality improvement framework. In that way the principles of the public library service could be as easily maintained by a nationally guided service as it can by the increasingly complex structures of present day local government in Scotland.

I would have to admit that the thought of a single purpose public library organisation delivering a focussed service, using community planning principles, becomes increasingly attractive in these days of matrix management and increasingly meaningless multi-tiered and multi-functional service groupings. I have no doubt whatever that within a single-purpose national organisation the contribution of public libraries to society would receive greater recognition by government, greater recognition by local government and greater recognition by our community planning partners. As a consequence, libraries would be better able to play their part in raising standards, in improving quality of life. And within this scenario the role of the major city libraries, the National Library and other specialist libraries, would also be crucial.

Quality and standards

Quality Improvement Standards are nothing new in Scotland. One of the most successful features of SLIC has been its ability to work cross-sectorally with other bodies to achieve mutually advantageous results. SLIC and HMle, for example, have worked closely together to develop standards for schools library services, firstly with 'Taking A Closer Look at School Library Services' and, over the past year to update and realign 'Taking a Closer Look...' to reflect the 2002 version of 'How Good is our School'. This hard work – largely down to Marilyn Milligan and her Working Group – comes to fruition to-day with the launch of 'Libraries Supporting Learners' as part of the HMle series of Guides to Self Evaluation.

The time is right for SLIC to explore the potential of developing a quality assurance role. It is envisaged that this would lead to libraries being eligible for some kind of branded status – 'torches of learning' was suggested by Alistair Campbell from this very platform a couple of years ago. Many of

you will have had experience of the evidence-based, externally scrutinised, self-evaluation approach taken by such august bodies as the Office of the Depute Prime Minister for the Charter Mark award or SUFI for LearnDirectScotland branded status. There is any amount of evidence to demonstrate that such quality systems are a credible and positive path towards service improvement.

Current thinking is that the Public Library Improvement Framework – the new standards – will look at areas such as best practice in service delivery; customer care; performance management; benchmarking; pathways to improvement; management and staff development; resource management; continuing professional development; external quality indicators; self evaluation tools and, last but not least, external peer review of improvement plans.

Quite how this Framework will be taken forward depends on a number of factors including the results of the Cultural Commission's current deliberations and the reaction of the Scottish Executive to that report and to the draft standards.

Co-operation

The case for further cooperation and mutual support amongst libraries in Scotland can easily be supported by looking no further than Northern Ireland and the ELFNI Project – Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland – whereby the five Education and Library Boards came together with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure – DECAL to procure a common Library Management System which would connect all 126 public libraries and 33 mobiles. At £36 million pounds this Public Finance Initiative was not cheap but has provided seamless public library services across Northern Ireland. Any member of any public library in Northern Ireland can use any library and can borrow from one and return to any other. Imagine, £80 million, [the pro-rata equivalent of the £36 million spent in Northern Ireland], being made available to provide seamless library services for Scotland – and note I said 'seamless library services for Scotland' not seamless public library services. I would suggest that the time is right for such a seamless service to be translated from a professional aspiration into a professional objective.

Stock sharing

Within England and Wales more than 80% of library stock purchasing is now controlled within Purchasing Consortia. Increasingly we have Supplier Selection being presented as a cost effective and efficient means of ensuring that library stocks are optimised towards meeting demand. Within

Scotland, as the choice of home-based national library suppliers has gradually reduced to nil, we are witnessing experiments in joint procurement.

We are also increasingly having to look further afield to secure stock and make more use of electronic information as approvals become more difficult to negotiate. In this process there is a distinct danger that we lose what is, to me, an essential part of the selection process - certainly in the case of specialist works – that of 'handling the book' – no amount of information or digital images can replace that confirmation of a correct decision which comes from a human rather than an electronic scan. I would equally argue however that there is no need for this to be done hundreds of times across Scotland. Tim Coates [and I can't believe I'm saying this] is right - but not completely [with apologies to Robert Craig] – there is duplication and there are inefficiencies within our services – as there are throughout local government and across the public sectors. My contention is that a voluntary fix based on work by SLIC and the profession is much better than any imposed solution.

A balanced stock collection becomes more and more difficult to achieve as the number of printed books being published in the UK continues to rise year-on-year. New titles have grown from around 50,000 published in 1975 to 180,000 expected to be published this year.

One tiny step - and only a very small part of the solution - is to dramatically increase stock sharing between libraries right across the sectors. This will reduce duplication of selection of little used material and vastly increase cooperation and joint working between libraries. A few years ago the trend within larger public library authorities was to decentralise stock purchase funds to be as close as possible to the point of public use. My colleagues in the supply trade now tell me that they see a marked trend towards a reversal of this system and a movement towards centralised procurement with markedly reduced copy depth being one result. Given the various localised, and highly successful, stock sharing partnerships with the University of Paisley one really has to wonder whether the time has now come to look at a national acquisitions plan and a national procurement methodology.

Perhaps another potentially simple solution is to adopt and adapt practise from the dvd rental trade. Buy sufficient copies of popular titles to ensure that there is always one on the shelf – keep them for six months or so until there are always multiple copies on the shelf and then sell off the surplus copies either through the library, through a nationally organised library commercial operation or through e-bay and the internet.

If the average cost per loan in Scotland for public library lending stock is around 28.5p, as it is, and the average public library book, after discount, costs almost £8.40, as it does, then it follows that after 25 loans the residual value of the book will be approx £1.27. Sell it off at £2 and you've made a notional profit, sell it at anything less and you've satisfied the initial demand, most probably increased your membership as the users realise that they can always find the book they want to read, and undoubtedly improved your customer satisfaction rates.

The other intriguing argument for such a system within public libraries would be that it would attract a percentage of our existing non-users who current tell us that they do not use public libraries because they lack the motivation or capability to return borrowed items on time or, indeed, at all. To offer a service whereby stock was available to purchase outright, based on a descending price according to previous loans would, I am sure, appeal to this group of potential users. Looked at from another angle it is simply an extension of existing practise where withdrawn stock is offered for sale in many libraries.

Within Dumfries and Galloway we have been working for some time with one of our suppliers towards offering an on-line bookshop facility through our network of public libraries. I see this as a contribution towards reducing both the digital and social divides. It will serve those with no access to a local bookshop and it will also offer increased choice to those who do not possess a credit or debit card. It may well do both! Hopefully our on-line bookshop will be up and running within the next few months.

The library 'brand'

Today branding is the process by which an organisation, a product or an image becomes synonymous with a set of values, aspirations or states. The fact is that libraries have an equally strong brand with equally strong brand equity – values such as 'trust', 'honesty', 'neutrality', 'valued community asset' - you can make your own list. But what have we done with our brand in the past 152 years to make it as well known and as easily recognised as Ikea, Coke or MacDonaldis and their golden arches ? Not a lot, is the answer. There have admittedly been one or two attempts over the years to establish a brand identity - the 'torch of learning', mentioned earlier, identified County Libraries over many years. In more recent times the Public Libraries Group produced a logo complete with a very professional Design Implementation Manual. As far as I am aware, very little if anything has ever been done to promote the universal brand - libraries. The American Library Association launched '@ your library' three years ago but the take-up, I believe, has been what the government might describe as "hugely successful in a limited way".

I would like to see a global identity for libraries covering all sectors with the capability of national, local and sectoral interpretation. I would like to see national advertising on radio, television, bill-boards and on public transport. I would like to see media campaigns to highlight local services. I would like to see libraries as easily recognised as Ikea. I would like to see professional public relations consultants being used to get our message across. I would like to see every library doing everything they can to publicise their own existence.

Perhaps we can persuade those friendly people in the Scottish Executive to lay aside only a tiny proportion of their pr budget to promote a service which attracts more users than people who vote in local government elections!

Status and qualifications

It has been recognised elsewhere that one of the key issues in relation to the status of our profession, certainly within public libraries and most probably in other sectors as well, is the status and placing of the Librarian within the organisational structure. It is difficult, if not impossible, for the case for libraries to be heard if librarians are not even in the room never mind having a seat at the table. In many organisations libraries and librarians find themselves so far down the structure, typically fourth or fifth tier, that making a case within their own area is difficult, never mind making a case to a governing body. Within existing arrangements there appears to be no easy solution to this challenge but it has been suggested that it will not begin to be solved until the issue of training for leadership has been effectively addressed.

The Framework of Qualifications might be part of the solution. The soon to be launched Certificates in ICT Applications may go some way to address the issue of career structures. What remains to be done however is to firmly link these certificates to the Framework of Qualifications and, even more importantly for Scotland, to embed these qualifications in the Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework. Without that groundwork being in place it is almost certain that Scottish employers will fail to recognise the worth of these certificates, or even worse, ignore them completely.

As you know the Framework makes changes to the structure of professional qualifications and introduces Certified Affiliate status [ACLIP] to bridge the paraprofessional/professional gap. Also newly introduced is the Revalidation Scheme for Chartered Members and Fellows. The issues facing our profession would suggest that considerable emphasis will have to be placed on ensuring that we skill and re-skill our members to allow them to best respond to the needs of their services.

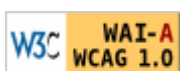
The search is now on to identify sufficient numbers of Mentors to cover both the Certification and Revalidation schemes in Scotland. This is certainly a opportunity to put something back into the profession and I would applaud those of you who already voluntarily, and willingly, give massively of your own time to assist our younger colleagues. That said, I am also aware that, at the moment, there are unacceptably long delays in the processing of chartership and other applications. I am assured by the Chief Executive that everything possible is being done to minimise these delays and I would encourage anyone interested in professional education to volunteer their assistance.

Our professional body

Our profession after all is not exceedingly large and this might also be an appropriate point to release another hobby horse. Linking an earlier piece of information – the fact that ICT training was provided to 40,000 public library staff UK wide – to the CIPFA figure of 26,357 full time equivalent posts in public libraries in the UK allows me to suggest that a cross-sectoral statistic provided by LISU of 40,587 fte posts would translate into approximately 62,500 library and information worker posts in the UK. A quick check on the CILIP website reveals that they claim almost 23,000 members – a mere 35% of eligible colleagues are members of CILIP. CILIP Scotland has a potential membership of 6,875 against a reality of around 2,400 – plenty of scope for recruitment. Confirmation of this somewhat depressing situation comes from checking an individual public library authority where only 34% of the professional staff are in current membership.

It would be wonderful if those of us who are members would take this as a personal challenge and set out from here with the objective of attracting at least three new members each into CILIP during the next six months. A 25% increase in membership in Scotland would not only gladden our Director's heart and greatly strengthen the role of CILIP in Scotland, it might also even reduce your next subscription by £20 for each new member recruited if that offer is still running.

Alastair Johnston is Operations Manager, Cultural Services, Dumfries & Galloway.



CILIPS Conference

Keynote address

"Librarians are not to be taken lightly. They are adventurers, explorers, treasure seekers and gun fighters."

In his Keynote Address, cultural commentator *Michael Russell* took a theme from the character in the Hollywood film *The Mummy* who said she was none of the above... but a librarian.

"You are adventurers despite what Rachel Weisz said in her role. You are helping our society to move from where it is, to where it might eventually get. You are a democratic force, in just the same way Andrew Carnegie imagined when he said that 'There is not such a cradle of democracy upon the earth as the Free Public Library, this republic of letters'.

"That is a dangerous job to do, but you are having to do it because of your unique skills which are, by a happy accident, exactly those that our society needs at this time. For you are classifiers, organisers, researchers, enquirers, and have a structured and methodical approach to information and in this time of change it is information that is king."

"We should not, of course, confuse information with knowledge. Knowledge, I suppose, is what comes from the wise absorption and careful analysis of information. The writer Peter Drucker said that information becomes knowledge when we know what to do with it. And you – more than most in fact more than any others – can show people what to do with it.

"Nor should we confuse information with culture, for culture is about information and knowledge being grounded within ourselves as well as within the places we occupy. And as you occupy this piece of ground, then you are a cultural force too.

"Thus you have more than a finger in all these vital pies. In the structuring, presentation and retrieval of information, in the methods and techniques of analysing that information, and in the process of personal osmosis that brings the two together and make us and our society not just what it is, but what it could be.

"But you are also explorers. You are resisting, quite rightly, the downgrading of your role and the reduction of the scope of your activities: instead you are widening your horizons and open doors to a world of information and knowledge, and to a world of culture – doors which sometimes used to be shut, and sometimes used not even to exist. You are therefore finding new ways of doing the same things, and new things to do."

He had a bone to pick with the delegates over the lack of support for Scottish writing: "In my role as an author I am alarmed – as is my publisher and most publishers – at the lack of support for Scottish writing that comes from official sources in Scotland. And your service is not guiltless, I have to say. Of your £8 million of purchasing funds spent in Scotland each year, only 2% goes on Scottish books. That is 30p per head of population. Of the 32 Library Authorities, 31 have no clear Scottish cultural commitment in their tender documents."

He concluded: "I am in favour of an information rich, knowledgeable, cultured and very human Scotland, striving for the best for each of its citizens."



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CILIPS Conference

Libraries still valued as most trusted source of information?

***Professor Bob Usherwood* of the University of Sheffield used the conference to present findings from his two-year study on how people perceive libraries.**

What the national two-year study found was that, although many respondents felt too time-poor to use facilities in libraries, museums and archives, they trusted the information there more than that provided by other organisations.

Immediately accessible forms of information were the most used, but the least trusted of all types of information. So, for example, the television, internet and newspapers were by far the easiest way to get information, but respondents most often regarded these as sources of entertainment and gossip, rather than real information.

Furthermore, they believe there is a real moral and ethical obligation to preserve and maintain these services.

Professor Usherwood explained: "The study showed that libraries, museums and archives are part of only a relatively small number of true information organisations and they are valued as such by the general public.

"Although these organisations are thought to be important, the study also highlights the improvements they need to make in order to remain relevant in today's information age.

"The guidance offered to users of museums, libraries and archives was also highly valued. However, people also said that they found opening hours inconvenient and inappropriate and indicated that these organisations should do more to publicise their services.

"Many respondents were unaware of the full range of resources available and the data also indicate the perpetuation of some outdated attitudes. To counter such views, museums, libraries and archives might consider the contemporary appropriateness of their web-based resources and how they could be used to raise awareness of the role of their services in encouraging a greater understanding of social and political concerns."

Perception of archives, libraries and museums in modern Britain, a study funded by the AHRB; conducted by Professor Bob Usherwood, Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield. Published as: Usherwood, B., Wilson, K. & Bryson, J. Relevant repositories of public knowledge? Libraries, museums and archives in 'the information age'. *JOLIS* 37 (2) June 2005.



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CILIPS Conference

Lending a hand

Dr Jim Parker, Registrar of Public Lending Right (PLR), gave news of a fascinating new service which is being developed to enable better use to be made of the valuable information gathered by the PLR scheme.

The LEWIS website will enable all libraries to find out how books are doing on a national, regional and local basis. It will also provide feedback for authors and publishers and, by providing figures on a monthly basis, monitor the success of individual library promotions.

It will provide very interesting, detailed information about how authors are doing at these three levels. You can search by genres of book, formats, by library authority or region, etc, and compare loans to sales for individual books. Searching within categories, and by several categories at once is also possible, and seasonal trends can be investigated.

In Fife, it appears, reading about serial killers is highly popular (searching by crime category in the fiction genre); for the whole of Scotland, Atkins is still the subject of the top two dieting books; and the favourite publisher in Orkney is HarperCollins.

Loans data is collected on a monthly basis from a sample of library authorities – five are used in Scotland. Sample authorities are changed every four years so that local publishing is represented.

The aim is for the site to be in use by the next financial year. It will help support what libraries are doing, Jim concluded, providing more information about what they are good at.



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CILIPS Conference

Listening to our users

For any library it is important to get feedback from their users on how the service they provide is perceived and if there are any areas they may need to improve on. User surveys can be a useful way of collecting this information but in-house design and collating of results can be time consuming.

In the **MMITS** strand Helen Dundell and Jacqui Dowd of Glasgow University Library explained their use of a commercially available option.

Developed in partnership between the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and Texas A&M University **LibQual+** was described by Jacqui Dowd as "a total market survey with 22 items and a box". Essentially LibQual+ provides a library with a ready made user survey on a specific url. The library can then direct their users to this url so they can complete the survey.

The 22 items are questions measuring user's perceptions of services. Participants are asked to rate the minimum level of service they would be happy with, the perceived level of service and their desired level of service. These questions cover three main areas:

- Affect of service (the human element) e.g. responsiveness, empathy, reliability, etc.
- Information control e.g. scope of content, convenience, ease of navigation, self-reliance, etc.
- Library as place e.g. utilitarian space, refuge, etc.

The box allows participants to provide open-ended comments. This is an opportunity for them to elaborate their concerns and also lets them be constructive in their criticism and offer specific suggestions for action.

Once the survey period is complete LibQual+ collate the answers of the 22 items and send the library an extensive report of the results. Comments added in the box are collated by the library itself, essentially LibQual+ deal with the quantitative and the library deals with the qualitative.

Glasgow University Library has been using LibQual+ since 2003 and has recently completed their third annual survey. They have found it an

incredibly useful tool for identifying services that need improvement (from the user's perspective), comparing service quality with peer institutions and developing benchmarks and understanding of best practice locally and across institutions.

LibQual+ is now being used worldwide across various library sectors including academic libraries, public libraries, national libraries, special libraries, etc. Participating institutions have risen from 13 institutions in the LibQual+ 2000 survey to 240 institutions in the 2005 survey.

LibQual+ (www.arl.org/libqual/)

LibQual+ at Glasgow University Library (www.lib.gla.ac.uk/libqual/)

Caroline Stirling, Senior Library Assistant, Edinburgh University Main Library



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CILIPS Conference

Managing digital imaging projects

"We are living in an image rich society; by the time they reach university, students will have seen more DVDs than have read books," said Dr Andrew Grout in his **Cataloguing and Indexing Group** talk for Branch and Group Day. Edinburgh University Library's digital imaging projects were explained by Andrew and his colleague Jill Evans. They talked about funding, the selection of objects suitable to digitise, the methods of creating good quality images, and the adding of appropriate metadata.

Images of material are being created as a part of organised projects and individually on demand by university staff for teaching and research. Furthermore, the creation of digital images preserves delicate special collections items held by the library, by reducing the need to handle them. Their images are distributed far more widely than the items themselves could be, and the digital image can often be viewed in greater detail than

the original object. The aim is for digital images to become an integral part of the Edinburgh University Library system.

In the past, the metadata created particularly for items digitised on demand was inadequate in a variety of ways. Without good metadata the image may lose meaning and be impossible to retrieve, said Andrew. This metadata should describe and identify the original object, but should also provide the technical information about the photographic image, its file size and compression.

The images' preservation is promoted by describing how they were captured and manipulated after creation. If the images are lost or destroyed, this information could be used to replace them. Each image should have a consistent identifier, so that it is not lost with data migration becomes necessary.

At Edinburgh, the Insight Image Delivery System was selected to manage the images, and VRA Core 3.0, which maps to Marc and Dublin Core, for metadata entry. Attempts to control the metadata vocabulary will help to promote interoperability with other systems.

Although most of the digital images within Edinburgh University are of library special collections materials, such as illuminated manuscripts and Shakespeare quartos, and some museum items, images of all kinds are increasingly important to public and special libraries, museums, schools and businesses. Images are used for a variety of uses promotional, commercial and educational. It will be increasingly important for all kinds of institutions to capture, store and record and exchange these images.

This talk addressed the challenges of such projects and pointed to some solutions to the problems encountered.

Kathryn Penfold, University of Edinburgh



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CILIPS Conference

Bridging the gap

School liaison schemes in universities help pupils handle the transition between guided study and university. The **UC&R(S)** slot looked at such schemes at Glasgow University and the University of Abertay.

A liaison scheme has been in place in one form or another at Glasgow since 2002, said Moira Sinclair. At first this involved a reference only library card, and tours by Subject Librarians. Now, it is run by the Enquiry Service and a school visit template has been established offering pupils a very practical experience of what to expect from the university library.

All Enquiry staff are trained to conduct a school tour, and pupils also have a dedicated Acoustiguide audio tour to use, adapted from the undergraduates' version. They can use the library at any time following an initial organised visit with a teacher or librarian.

The success of the scheme has relied much on building bridges – finding out what they were actually doing with senior pupils in school libraries. Seminars for school librarians were given in 2002. "We needed to learn from them," said Liz Hamilton. "Then we developed web pages for schools providing them with information, with special pages for teachers, on what was available at Glasgow. We also produced promotional posters and information leaflets."

School pupil visits have risen: from 152 pupils from 23 schools in 2000, to 491 pupils from 32 schools in 2004.

The next step is to monitor the effect of the service: at the moment there is no hard evidence about whether the library visit had input into a pupil's choice of university.

Chris Milne, from the University of Abertay, described how its school liaison programme grew out of an information literacy framework. The focus started with the Menzieshill project: pupils from a school with retention problems were given the opportunity to experience working in a university library. Pupils are given full access to the library and enrolled as associate students.

Many students at Abertay are still the first people from their family to go into HE. The university has a history of vocational courses growing out of industry in the area, and there is 80% recruitment from Tayside/N Fife.

"We want to raise the aspirations of potential students." Said Chris. People drop out because they are on the wrong course and 90% don't come back. So our programme also helps them 'try before they buy'. We help to build the confidence that university is for them, and build up their skills."

The scheme has allowed the university to adapt its information literacy programmes to fit students' needs better. An interesting discovery was that whilst ICT levels were grossly underestimated by the university, there was a need for information literacy sessions to start earlier in schools.



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CILIPS Conference

Not just a 'paper exercise'

Michael Wood HMI gave much appreciated advice on self evaluation and the school inspection process. The **School Libraries Group** session also saw the launch of a new title in the *How good is Our School* series from HMIE, **Libraries Supporting Learners**, produced in partnership with SLIC.

"In the most effective secondary school the librarian will play a central role and be seen as a 'key player'. In less effective set-ups there can be ongoing fighting for status in the school." Said Michael, setting out the difficult predicament. Someone should have clear line management of the library, but this is not always the case.

"We need to see evidence of self-evaluation embedded in schools and again in the school library," he said. The latest publication from HMIE was here to help. It is designed to help school librarians take stock; identify and be proud of their strengths; set targets for improvement; and take effective action.

It is important to report how well the library is performing to parents, pupils and other stakeholders. "Talk to your management team about today's event – particularly if you are isolated and have no line manager."

Practical tips for the inspection included the need to prepare evidence well. Use the profile which asks questions. And don't forget the visit is also a chance to talk. This is now a built-in and positive part of the inspection process and, although voluntary always has a good turn out. It is a good chance to emphasise what is working well in the school library.

Marilyn Milligan, who chaired the working party of the review, received thanks from the school librarians in the audience for all the group's hard work. She stressed that although the document was a way of providing school librarians of all types with a framework for examining their services, "Pupils experiences and meeting their needs is at the heart of this document. It is all about librarians assisting children to become successful learners and effective contributors."



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CILIPS Conference

Financing frontline services

"...make a case which highlights your contribution to the Executive's wider social and economic strategy."

Professor Arthur Midwinter, Budget Adviser to the Scottish Parliament's Finance Committee, and government expert, set out to explain why "public libraries face the prospect of spending cuts in a time of plenty". He offered predictions about financial implications facing frontline library services and finally some valuable advice.

Scottish local government funding continues a post-devolution trend of falling as a proportion of the Scottish Budget – and public libraries are a low priority in the local government settlement.

Efficiency savings are also in place, exacerbated for public libraries by the fact that pay provision for education, police and fire is exempt from efficiency gains, concentrating the budget savings on other services.

Therefore despite the Executive's commitment to promote "excellent public services" in the Spending Review 2004, and to release resources to frontline services, in practice the financial context will be more constrained.

"My expectation is that local authorities will tackle the grant reductions through a combination of savings, council tax increases and creative accounting." he said. Any budget savings which do not cut services are acceptable to the Executive.

Growth monies are targeted on education, police, fire and social work, with small funding packages for initiatives in environmental improvement and transport.

He went on to state why Councils are limited in their freedom to exercise choice: core funding for the public library service is provided through a block allocation, the Revenue Support Grant. It is built up on adding funding for specific new developments to the baseline. "In practice, budgets are dominated by inherited commitments."

The Executive has shifted the emphasis of spending control away from totals to programmes.

Finally he offered some advice: "I would therefore advise you – as a professional association – to highlight the impact of such developments on your services in a rigorous and objective way to Parliament, press and public. In particular, there is a need for robust analysis of:

- Efficiency Savings, which tend to over-promise and under-deliver;
- The contribution your service can make to economic efficiency and social inclusion;
- Your services spending needs for Spending Review 2006.

It is no longer sufficient to make a professional case for resources for your services, but to make a case which highlights your contribution to the Executive's wider social and economic strategy."

Arthur Midwinter is a Visiting Professor at the Institute of Public Sector Accounting Research at The University of Edinburgh.



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Endpiece

Writ large

Colin Will rounds up writing competitions, with all their suspense.

The number of writing competitions seems to be growing these days, or maybe they've just become more noticeable. It seems that each issue of the literary magazines I subscribe to is stuffed with flyers for competitions. For the new writer they're a good way of becoming known, or better known. And for an established writer, getting on the judging panel of the bigger ones can be a nice little earner. Very few writers make their sole living from their own writing; they have to develop multiple income streams. (Sorry about the use of management-speak, but I'm using it as shorthand.)

I've just finished my stint as one of the judges for the Tyne & Esk Writer of the Year competition, supported by the library services of East Lothian and Midlothian. I hasten to inform you, Gentle Reader, that this is unpaid, although last year we received liquid appreciation for our efforts. This is a local competition open to all those resident or working in the counties, with poetry and prose categories. Prizes are offered, courtesy of sponsorship from a local bookshop, and the winners get the chance to see their work published in a magazine, and to read their work in public at the awards ceremony. The competition is popular in both counties and is covered by local press, giving publicity to writers of quality living in the community. It's maybe small-scale, but it's ours, and we like it.

The quality of entries this year was very high, making for extremely stimulating and forthright discussions at our meetings, as each member of the panel spoke up for their particular favourites. We read and marked all of the entries, and then we discussed each one, before drawing up a short list from which the category and overall winners were selected. We're now looking forward to the awards ceremony, when the deserving winners will be announced – the suspense is terrific, and we ourselves don't know the identity of the winners.

Turning to the wider scene, there are many competitions for short story writers, of which the annual one run by The Scotsman will be well known to readers of this journal. One of the most prestigious UK competitions is the Bridport Prize (www.bridportprize.org.uk), which has poetry and short story categories, and serious prize money for the winners. A good web resource I've found recently for all kinds of writers' competitions

is www.prizemagic.co.uk/html/writing_comps.htm, which is updated regularly. It's annoying when you see a competition listed with a closing date in 2003, but that doesn't happen here.

Many competitions are specialist as to entrants and/or subjects – war poetry, poetry by women, poetry by the over 50s, young writers or whatever. If they become really specialised I look forward to one for short, white-bearded, bespectacled ex-librarian ex-clarinettist poets born in Scotland in 1942. Douglas Dunn would win, and with a bit of luck I might be the runner-up. (Did I ever tell you about meeting Douglas for the first time in the State Bar in Holland Street in 1965 when I was supposed to be working for my ALA? Remind me next time I see you.) Genuine specialist poetry competitions include those run by Mslexia, The Rialto, and Blinking Eye Publishing. The Strokestown Poetry Prize is for Irish or Gaelic writing.

Of the general poetry comps, the National Poetry Competition run by the Poetry Society (www.poetrysociety.org.uk) is probably the biggest. The Poetry Society's website also contains links to other competitions, as does the Scottish Poetry Library's site (www.spl.org.uk), and the wonderful Poetry Kit site (www.poetrykit.org).

Some booksellers and publishers also run or sponsor writing competitions. Ottakar's join forces with Faber to run one annually, linked to National Poetry Day. The Poetry Business runs a competition for collections of poems, and the prize is publication of the collection. Poetry pamphlets can be entered for the Callum Macdonald Memorial Award (www.scottish-pamphlet-poetry.com). Magazines are another great source. Writing Magazine runs its own competitions, and contains adverts for others. Poetry magazines such as Poetry London feature really worthwhile competitions, as do many more. Closer to home, members of writing groups affiliated to the Scottish Association of Writers have access to that organisation's competitions.

Some of the major literary festivals also run competitions – Aldeburgh, Ledbury and Torbay are examples. Towns and cities also hold them – Ayr has one this year to mark its 800th anniversary.

One downside of competitions is that they are prone to scams. Beware of adverts and websites which promise \$thousands in prizes and ask you to cough up a sizeable entry fee. Most genuine competitions ask for up to £10 per entry (up to £20 for collections), and that's fair enough.

Some competitions, particularly the local ones, seem to suffer from the law of diminishing returns – fewer entries in successive years, and I'm trying to tease out some of the possible reasons for this. It may be that some writers

become disheartened by not winning year after, and feel the odds are stacked against them.

The best advice I can give to those considering entering is to read the rules carefully, then, when you think you are ready to post off your entry, read the rules again. Don't use coloured paper, unusual fonts, or 'eye-catching' layouts, and don't send manuscripts in laminated folders or fancy binders. If the judges are anything like me, they'll be impressed by the quality of the content, not the appearance.

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President's perspective

Getting it right

Alastair Johnson is in campaigning mood.

Those of you who were at Peebles in May may recall a mention in my address of the delays currently being experienced by our members awaiting news of their Chartership applications. I had picked up at various 'Meet the President' events that all was not well in Ridgmount Street and that five or six months had gone by without Chartership applicants having had the courtesy of an acknowledgement for their applications. I determined that that was not good enough on several levels and embarked on a campaign. Bearing in mind that our professional body has a lot of ground to cover if it is going to increase its membership – and remembering that the current membership is as low as 35% of eligible colleagues – you might imagine that reputation and image would come pretty high up the administrative agenda of an effective and efficient organisation. More importantly there are well over 100 candidates out there who are increasingly disillusioned with a professional body who, to all intents and

purposes, appears uncaring and just plain indifferent to the difficulties being experienced by their members. At Peebles, a consultation with Bob McKee found him, it has to be said, a little mystified. He was unaware of any difficulty but did give a prompt undertaking to investigate and to do everything possible to minimise the delays...

Imagine my surprise to be told by a member of my own staff in early July of a phone call that day from Ridgmount Street. She had submitted her application in December 2004, the phone call was her first communication or acknowledgement and it was to enquire as to whether the package received by them some seven months prior was complete. Somewhat taken aback my staff member enquired as to the likely timescale for a decision. "Well, mmm, difficult to say, could be September, more likely October – depends on Board meetings really," was the reply. By this point my enthusiasm to help colleagues was turning into deep embarrassment on behalf of my professional body and dark anger at those I perceived as being responsible.

An email was dispatched to Bob – it concluded "As Chief Executive there is a time when decisive action is required and, in my view, that time has now been reached!" It also strongly suggested that a personal letter of apology be dispatched to all of the affected candidates. Bob's reply is as mysterious as was his puzzlement when initially told of the problem. It's all been caused by the candidates rushing to meet a deadline, he tells me, and if it's not them to blame it's the work pressure on members who volunteer to assess the applications, he adds." The delay... is not caused by any inefficiencies in the office here," he concludes. Did I ever suggest such a thing?

And so to my third attempt:

Dear Bob,

Chartership delays

Some of our members will have conservatively lost upwards of £500 each in salary due to the delays which you acknowledge have happened because of a deadline imposed by CILIP. Taken as a group this represents at least £50,000+ lost by our members. You acknowledge that CILIP was unaware of the likely scale of response to the deadline and I can accept that the workload on volunteers became untenable. However, when the scale of the response became clear CILIP failed over a period of seven months to put in place any system to keep individual members informed of the delays. Given that the responsibility for this debacle lies fairly and squarely with CILIP perhaps I can be so bold as to suggest, once again, that you personally write to each affected member and express a measure of regret that those we seek to encourage have been treated in such a shabby and off-hand manner. A suitable gesture for an organisation

worried about its image and reputation might be to offer a token one-year free subscription. At the same time I would also expect CILIP to support its members by writing to employers in the hope that this might mitigate the financial loss to individuals by making clear that responsibility for the delays lay in organisational failure rather than with individual candidates.

A R Johnston, President CILIPS

....and so to other things

I can pick out the word library at 50 paces and my ears pricked up when I heard one Desmond Clarke being interviewed on Radio Scotland. He told us how public libraries were in decline, that librarians had got it all wrong and that public librarians had mis-directed funds away from lending books to such unnecessary things as computers. Who was this guy and what 'new report' was being reported upon? It turns out to be yet another diatribe from the somewhat mysterious Libri Trust. From University to Village Hall starts "Perhaps only in this country would anyone think it worthwhile to debate what public libraries are for. They're for books, stupid." This report contains some real gems, "...many local authorities seem to have given up... on a well managed book-based library service"; "...many librarians no longer know how to provide an effective book-based service"; "The task this band of inward looking library experts has set itself is to identify a role for public libraries where books are secondary." You get the idea – public libraries = books. So who are Libri? A bunch of discontented library suppliers, booksellers or publishers? Doesn't seem so, Libri Trust appears to be amongst a group of charitable trusts spawned by one John Roger Warren Evans and a bunch of kindred spirits pushing for social and political change, check out [Changemakers](#). The purpose of Libri is interesting and I acknowledge the source of this information as [John Evans](#) and [Libri](#).

"Libri is registered as a charitable trust for the provision of public library services. The project is planned to operate UK wide, to supplement LA library services... The key to progress will be the identification of local situations where a community library might be developed, in parallel with a local authority system. Libri is also developing ideas for the provision of library management services, where outsourcing is an option." At a conspiracy theory level, one interpretation of all this could be that Libri's underlying aim is to control the means of providing information to the public. Worth watching!



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Lifelong Learning

Successful outcomes

One of the most ambitious achievements of the People's Network was the ICT training for staff. Now there are two new ICT qualifications to aim for. *Rhona Arthur* explains.

Following the successful roll-out of ICT training to public library staff in Scotland, the [Scottish Library and Information Council](#) (SLIC) has completed the development two new qualifications accrediting the original Outcomes 2-8, Net Navigator and Education with the [Scottish Qualifications Authority](#).

Background

As most of you will be aware, the People's Network identified three key training strands:

- **Outcome 1** - ICT technical skills content, which almost all the UK library authorities chose to deliver by training staff using the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) qualification
- **Outcomes 2-8** - variously described as the supplementary outcomes, library outcomes or contextual outcomes. These Outcomes were delivered in a wide variety of ways - using library staff, national bodies, external training agencies, independent consultants, commissioned training courses, cascade training methods and so on.
- **Advanced Outcomes** - the Advanced roles were Net Navigator, Information Consultant, Information Gatekeeper, Information Manager and Educator. Again, the [training content and delivery mechanism](#) varied widely.

The accreditation of the ICT contextual training to sit with the ECDL was raised in the early People's Network implementation but it was only last autumn that SLIC was contracted to carry out the design work on behalf of the UK library agencies. The Big Lottery Fund funded the development as a key legacy of the People's Network.

Although the qualifications have been developed in Scotland with a Scottish awarding body, they are available to the UK-wide (and international) profession.

It was important that the qualifications recognised the prior learning of the People's Network training as there was no additional central funding for either accrediting or delivering new training. The SQA say these are the biggest APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning) qualifications on their books. These are work-based qualifications and rely on partnership with employers for the completion of assignments.

Development

SLIC and the Big Lottery Fund set up a development team - Rhona Arthur (SLIC), Ted Hastings (SQA), Eion Johnston (4mostplus Consultants) and Sheila McCullough (4most plus Consultants) and their work was peer reviewed by content advisers from across the UK. The development team were conscious of the need to balance any variation in the context of library service delivery across the UK and the final content and context notes have UK-wide examples of best practice.

The development team started by reviewing the work of the original People's Network training group and training content delivered as part of the programme which many providers and authorities shared with SLIC. It became clear that two qualifications were possible within the SQA's suite of Professional Development Awards. These qualifications link on to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)[1] and carry academic credits, for use with other qualifications. By the end of March 2005, the qualifications, consisting of a number of core and optional units, were complete along with exemplar assessments.

The two new qualifications are:

- **Diploma in Applications of ICT in Libraries** (5 units)
- **Advanced Diploma in Applications of ICT in Libraries** (8 units, including 5 from certificate)

The Units are accredited across a range of Level 7-9 on the SCQF. The Diploma is accredited at Level 7 and the Advanced Diploma at Level 8 on

the SCQF, or roughly equivalent to HNC and HND levels.[2]

The content of the Diploma is five single-credit units:

Unit 1: Locating information on behalf of clients (from Outcome 4)

Unit 2: Supporting reader development (from Outcome 5)

Unit 3: Supporting users to ensure effective learning (from Outcome 6)

Unit 4: Using ICT in professional practice (Combination of Outcomes 2 and 3)

Unit 5: Supporting clients in the safe and legal use of ICT (Combination of Outcomes 7 and 8) The Advanced Diploma includes additional units:

Unit 6: Net Navigator (2 credits)

OR

Unit 7: Educator (2 credits) (candidates would choose ONE of the above)

SLIC 8: Project (1 credit)

Target candidates

As the People's Network training was workforce-wide, the development team were anxious to take a broad view as to the range of likely candidate. The qualifications are primarily targeted at staff working in the public library services in the UK. This is because they have already completed an extensive, funded training programme. Candidates might include those new to the workplace, staff seeking to improve their promotion prospects or staff using the qualification as evidence for part of the framework for professional qualifications. The qualifications, or individual Units, may also be of interest to staff working in other libraries, such as school or college libraries.

Candidates would normally be expected to have reached a reasonable level of general education, for example A-Level or SCE Higher and possess reasonable ICT skills, such as [PC Passport](#) or [ECDL](#). The qualification supports the CILIP Framework of Qualifications and can be used as evidence towards Certification, Chartership and Revalidation submissions. As an ICT based qualification it covers important, but not all, aspects of library and information work. Discussions have been held with employers to encourage them to be supportive of the qualification, with a view to including it in workforce development. Information has been circulated via the Society of Chief Librarians and UK strategic agencies. Feedback from the senior managers, CILIP, the UK professional body and training providers has been positive.

Free top-up learning

Feedback from the senior managers, CILIP, the UK professional body and training providers has been positive. Once the units were completed, work commenced on the support materials – exemplar assessments and the

development of electronic log-books to record assignments for authentication in the workplace. As the training has been completed for some time, the development team moved on to write top-up materials. These will be available from [ICT in Libraries](#). The top-up material includes diagnostic tests and refresher learning. The use of top-up learning should be integrated with initial training or new training and work-based practice, authenticated by a supervisor.

What happens next?

As these are work-based qualifications, they require a partnership between the candidate, the trainer (and this could be in-house) and a supervisor to authenticate work-based assignments. There is potential for larger employers to set up their own [SQA accredited centre](#) and deliver their own training using in-house expertise. Consortia of smaller authorities could do this effectively. Commercial providers are still offering suitable training, and other providers may emerge now that qualifications are available. Assessment for the qualification is estimated at £100 or less. There is no charge for access to the top-up materials.

There are a number of benefits for individual and employers in supporting this development. Staff will have the chance to have their Outcomes 2-8, Educator or Net Navigator learning accredited in the same way as ECDL, improve their qualifications or promotion prospects. From the employer's perspective, the qualifications will contribute towards workforce development and meeting corporate quality agendas such as IIP and Charter Mark. IS

For more information please contact
Rhona Arthur Assistant Director, SLIC.

References

- 1 The SCQF is a 12 point scale, with PhD at level 12.
- 2 Level 7 is between SVQ 3 and 4 and requires 120 credits, at least 90 must be at level 7 or higher. Level 8 is equivalent to SVQ 4 and requires 240 credits, at least 90 must be at level 8 or higher.



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Joined up working

Strongly branded Careers Information Points have been established in public libraries throughout Scotland, writes *Jane Campbell*.

SLIC, working in partnership with public libraries and Careers Scotland, is developing Careers Information Points in [100 public libraries](#) in 27 local authorities.

The project, supported by the [European Social Fund](#) (ESF), will provide public access to information on a wide range of careers ideas and advice. This includes online access to: job vacancies; learning and training opportunities; labour market information; advice on career planning and help in developing job seeking skills. A Project Board with representatives from public libraries, Careers Scotland and SLIC is responsible for overseeing the development of project.

The 100 libraries involved in the project will be branded as Careers Information Points which will allow users direct access to a variety of careers software packages including:

[Adult Directions](#): a computerised interest guide to assist with career decisions

[Exodus](#): a database of International Careers Information

[PlanIT Plus](#): providing information and details about Careers, Learning and Work in Scotland.

Additionally, there is access to the Careers Scotland [website](#) for information and advice on all aspects of career planning and lifelong learning.

To assist help navigate their way round the variety of resources and programmes a [Careers Information Guide](#) has been developed. This self-help guide is divided into six sections;

[Career Ideas](#) will support library users who are unsure about the most suitable job/career to match their skills, interests, achievements etc

[Career Information](#) assists users to find out more about careers of interest

[Applying for Jobs](#) provides advice and assistance on all aspects of job seeking skills including compiling a CV and applying for vacancies

[Information on College and University](#) includes guidance on how to apply, selecting courses and finance for study

[Work and Study Abroad](#) provides general advice on taking a year out or finding work overseas

[Voluntary Work](#) includes information on how to volunteer and the benefits it provides

Each of these sections has direct links to relevant programmes, websites and organisations to help the user quickly find the information they need.

Training for library staff in the use of the points and resources has taken place with Careers Awareness sessions being held in regions throughout Scotland. These sessions, led by Careers Scotland Information Co-ordinators, provided staff with an opportunity to become familiar with software and relevant websites to allow the information to be cascaded to other library staff and thus assist end users.

The sessions were well received and staff felt the “hands on” approach was very worthwhile. All staff attending sessions were provided with Training Packs giving full information on the project, lists of Careers Scotland contacts and a copy of the training presentation to assist with further in-house training session.

ESF funding has made it possible to develop a strong brand for the points and all libraries included in the programme have been provided with a range of promotional material including distinctive signage, posters, mousemats and promotional leaflets. This means that Careers Information Points will be easily recognisable to all users and the bright colours should attract interest.

An integral part of the project has been to build working relationships between public libraries and local Careers Scotland centres. Although the points are aimed mainly at clients who wish to self-help, referral procedures are being put in place to allow those who need additional help to be put in contact with their local Careers Scotland centre.

It is expected that a national launch of the initiative will take place by the end of November. Several successful first phase launches have taken place and Careers Information Points are now fully operational in a number of local authorities including Angus, Dundee, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and West Lothian.

Further information:

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Aiming Higher

The Generation Game

Jill Evans looks at lifelong learning opportunities offered by some SCURL member institutions.

The Lifelong Learning Strategy For Scotland, published in February 2003, by the Scottish Executive, as *Life Through Learning, Learning Through Life*^[1] embraced people-centred goals. One was a vision of “A Scotland where people have the chance to learn, irrespective of their background or personal circumstances.” In the learning market in Scotland, in 2003-2004:^[2]

46 colleges had 412,000 enrolments
20 Higher Education Institutions and
38 Further Education institutions had a total of 272,000 students

33% of taught learning is conducted in publicly funded organisations such as schools, libraries, colleges, universities and museums; 25% is held in the workplace or training centre; and the remaining 42% is received in community centres, and Learning Resource Centres.^[3]

Scotland’s population has an opportunity to select their choice of learning environment. The composition of [SCURL](#) now reflects four of these five publicly funded institutions. SCURL has recently welcomed the [National Museums of Scotland](#) and the [Scottish Agricultural College](#) as members.

The National Museums of Scotland offers [learning online](#) via three links inviting the user to learn through the internet. Teachers’ notes are also provided online.

A lifelong learning page invites all ages to participate – from pre-school, through the school curriculum of primary and secondary, to adult learning with guided tours of exhibitions, lectures, study courses, workshops and seminars.

The Scottish Agricultural College has three campuses – Craibstone Estate Aberdeen, Auchincruive Ayr and King's Buildings Edinburgh. Many flexible learning courses are offered not all requiring campus-based attendance. Some of the courses are available online and have the support of tutorials and weekend workshops thus allowing the learner to study at their convenience. The Scottish Executive's strategy paper advocated that "...adequate support mechanisms must be in place and available" to assist the learner. The SAC provides this with an excellent staff-to-student ratio. Other SAC courses are campus-based, either full-time or part-time. Subjects specialise in the rural sector and its economy.

Two LearnDirect Scotland branded Learning Centres are sited at SAC, offering 24-hour access to their registered students. The flexible learning package, Organic Farming, has won an award. The courses provide learning for owners, managers and employees of small businesses in an environment of rural and farming enterprise.

The Scottish Executive highlighted the need to assist with the transition from school to further education (FE) or colleges, from FE to a Higher Education Institute (HEI) and from College or HEI to the workplace. The SAC degree courses are conferred by Aberdeen, Edinburgh or Glasgow enabling assisted further progression.

Bell College Library, Hamilton, also acknowledges the transition from FE to HE, with a focus on part-time and mature students. Although both categories of students make substantial use of the library, they are also perhaps less confident of their abilities than the younger students. In response to this the library staff ensure that they provide a friendly and approachable atmosphere for the students.

Bell College has numerous Articulation links with local FE Colleges, which aim to promote streamlined progression from FE to HE level. In addition, the College is a partner in a collaborative project, which aims to bring awareness of LLL opportunities to school pupils who are living in areas of deprivation and with low rates of progression to higher education. The [GOALS](#) (Greater Opportunity of Access and Learning with Schools) initiative involves all the HEIs in the West of Scotland.

The Wider Access programme has a portfolio of courses for over 21s. "U Can Do It" is a free course for individuals who are considering entering higher education. This year 17 students completed the course and all who subsequently applied have been offered unconditional places to continue their studies at Bell College.

Another course was organised in partnership with [SALP](#) (Scottish Adult Learning Programme) which is a “...voluntary organisation established to support and encourage people who do not traditionally participate within the education system.” The one-day course, “Computing For Absolute Beginners” had a student age range from 30 to 80.

The National Library of Scotland is also committed, as part of its Learning Policy, to implement the [Inspired Learning For All](#) framework which means embedding learning objectives into all its projects. This includes, for example, the John Murray Archive, where the interpretation plan for the archive is structured around a generic learning model.

The [NLS](#) offers a series of trans-generational activities with workshops for schoolchildren with teachers’ packs to accompany the theme of the exhibitions. The current learning generation has the opportunity to learn from the NLS’s printed collections and electronic resources, and the generation involved with both the First and Second World Wars may share reminiscences and contribute to the vibrancy of the current exhibition “Scotland’s Secret War”.

Scotland’s changing population structure will result in fewer young people entering the workforce with the consequent growing post-retirement population continuing to secure employment.[1] Adequate training and learning opportunities must be provided for an appropriate labour market that will contribute to the Scottish Executive’s vision of “A Smart, Successful Scotland”.

Jill Evans is Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL) Service Development Manager.

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- 1 Scottish Executive 2003. [The Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland](#). Life Through Learning: Learning Through Life.
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E-resources

Free and at their fingertips

***Hazel Lauder* updates us on the provision of free access to information and news online resources via public libraries.**

All public libraries benefited from access to a range of online information resources funded by the [Big Lottery Fund](#). This initiative took place for a two-year period from January 2003 and provided access to a range of services. These included general information from [KnowUK](#), business information from [Kompass](#), newspaper provision from [NewsBank](#) and cultural information from the [Statistical Accounts of Scotland](#).

This innovative project ensured that all citizens had access to information no matter whether they lived in a small rural authority or a large metropolitan area. During the subscription use of resources developed and e-services became recognised as integral to the requirements of a modern public library service.

In autumn 2004 the Heads of Public Library Services took the decision to continue to work collaboratively with the support of SLIC to provide access to quality information resources. This demonstrated the success of the People's Network which has embedded the responsibility that public libraries have to provide access to quality information resources for both members of the public and library staff. The [Scottish Library and Information Council](#) (SLIC) developed and managed a tender process for online information services for all public libraries for a two-year period from April 2005. SLIC worked closely with the [Authorities Buying Consortium](#) (abc) who provided support and advice during the tender process.

An Invitation to Tender (ITT) was issued and a notice appeared in the [Official Journal of the European Union](#). The ITT invited tenders for three areas of information provision: general information, business information and newspapers. Access to cultural resources was secured through [Scottish Executive](#) funding of access to [SCRAN](#) for a year long period from 1 September 2004.

A number of tender applications were received and all public library services participated in the evaluation process. There were a number of elements to the evaluation process and librarians were asked to consider

the quality of resources in several areas:

Quality
Comprehensiveness
Relevance
Suitability
Training
Access arrangements
Promotion
Monitoring
Invoicing
Value for money

A scoring system was used for this part of the evaluation. Librarians were then asked to indicate if they would recommend subscribing to the resource and to indicate their preference by comparing the services in each information area.

By working collaboratively library services have benefited from considerable discounts. All library services are participating in at least one area of the two-year subscription for online resources.

In general information provision 29 library services have subscribed to KnowUK and nine library services have subscribed to XRefer services. 14 library services have subscribed to business information services from Kompass and 31 have subscribed to newspaper provision through NewsUK. This has ensured that public libraries continue to offer access to a range of quality information resources and develops their role as an information provider in the digital age.

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Curation

Saving for the nation

Stewardship of digital assets should be the responsibility of everyone reading this journal. The recently launched Digital Curation Centre, Scottish-based but with a UK remit of research, advice and support, was established to help cope with the challenges. *Chris Rusbridge* and *Andrew McHugh* introduce the centre's aims.

“Digital curation” [1] is the active management of data over the life-cycle of scholarly and scientific interest and is the key to reproducibility and reuse. Even before digital content is conceived, and after it has fulfilled its primary usefulness, digital curation activities must be undertaken and promoted if digital materials are to remain viable.

Curation is not a box to be ticked or a single process through which data passes. It is an ubiquitous endeavour that should characterise all interactions with and manipulations of digital content. Curation embraces and goes beyond that of enhanced present day reuse, and of archival responsibility, to embrace stewardship that adds value through the provision of context and linkage: placing emphasis on publishing data in ways that ease reuse and promoting accountability and integration.

The foundation of the [Digital Curation Centre](#) (DCC) reflects the belief that long-term stewardship of digital assets is the responsibility of everyone in the digital information value chain. The long-term value of data rests in their potential as evidence, their reuse possibilities, and their role in facilitating compliance and in ameliorating risk. As scholarly research and scientific study become increasingly driven by the analysis of data, long-term access to these data is crucial in enabling the verification of scientific discovery and providing a data platform for future research.

Only by promoting the ideas that underpin digital curation from the conception and curation of our digital assets until long after they have passed out of their primary usefulness can we claim to have succeeded. The Digital Curation Centre, through its organisation and practical activities, reflects these ideals through innovative research, development, service delivery and outreach.

The primary aims of the centre are:

- to promote an understanding of the need for digital curation among the communities of scientists and scholars;
- to provide services to facilitate digital curation;
- to share knowledge of digital curation among the many disciplines for

which it is essential;

- to develop technology in support of digital curation; and
- to conduct long-term research into all aspects of digital curation

Led by the [University of Edinburgh](#), the DCC consortium includes the [Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute \(HATII\)](#) at the [University of Glasgow](#), [UKOLN](#) at the [University of Bath](#) and the [Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils](#). Given the breadth and the pervasiveness of the digital curation challenge, the core partners recognise that a sustainable contribution can only be made by means of widespread activity. To ensure that this happens a network of associates has been established.

Activities have been separated into four key task areas, with an umbrella management group overseeing and coordinating the work of each. The four main areas are Research, Development, Services and Outreach. Our activities therefore range from solid research into innovative and service-led development work and a lucid outreach programme.

Research. There are various challenges to be met within the research agenda, each topic likely to generate highly visible outputs. Each will provide results that can be exploited within development activities and ultimately transformed into services. Current focuses include data integration techniques in the context of digital preservation metadata; effective data annotation techniques to facilitate subsequent searching, viewing and tracking across time, applications, researchers and migrations; appraisal for digital archiving; provenance and data quality; automatic extraction of semantic metadata; and legal issues.

Development. Current development effort is being directed mainly towards the creation of a representation information registry and repository, in order to document the structure and semantics of the ways in which digital data are stored, providing a method for accessing the content of digital objects. Representation information is not necessarily the original or official software access method or format specification, but can take the form of anything that allows the information content of a digital object to be interpreted. Tools are being developed to reside atop the registry and repository infrastructure to facilitate its population, update and use.

Services and Outreach. Services and outreach activities are regarded as vital if the DCC is to have maximum impact. Current activities are wide-ranging and directed at the very heart of community concerns and expectations. The DCC Advisory Service maintains a world class help-desk facility, which offers a first point of contact for enquiries on a range of digital

curation topics. The Advisory Service contributes to an ongoing series of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions).

The DCC also publishes a range of resources to assist institutions, data centres and repositories with their digital curation efforts. At the forefront is the Digital Curation Manual, including chapters contributed by international experts, with an editorial board consisting of leading researchers and practitioners in the field. For many topics, a less in-depth insight is offered by a series of DCC briefing papers, designed to meet the needs of senior managers, offering quick and high level overviews of the topics that are explored in more detail in the Curation Manual.

Additional DCC services include the development of audit and certification standards, in collaboration with the [Research Libraries Group](#); the development of a repository of tools for digital curation; a preservation technology and standards watch; frequent case studies; and a series of regional and institutional site visits, which offer a useful opportunity to present details of the DCC's activities. These visits also allow the Centre to get a better idea of community expectations.

A further key service is the provision of a series of workshops and training events to reflect existing knowledge and practices, and to enable the community to work together to build new understanding in other areas. Forthcoming workshops including the subjects of [Persistent Identifiers](#), [Digital Repositories](#), and [Costing Models](#) for Digital Curation.

Outreach activities are at the forefront of the DCC's interactions with its stakeholder communities. Key activities include user requirements gathering exercises; a "virtual point of presence" Web portal; a high-quality peer reviewed *International Journal of Digital Curation*; and an [Associates Network](#). The latter aims to make the DCC partnership more pervasive; it welcomes and brings together prominent members from UK data creating and managing organisations, leading data curators overseas, supranational standards agencies, and representatives of UK industry and commerce involved in digital curation.

The viability of the DCC depends upon it gathering the right level of expertise, making that expertise available to the widest community, and demonstrating long-term commitment to the provision of research, development, services, and outreach.

Encompassing insight, expertise and an acute awareness of the essential role of effective curation in all our digital activities, the DCC aims to be a standard bearer for best practice in an area that is relevant to every

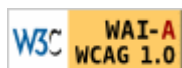
individual, institution and organisation that relies upon and uses digital information.

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1 This article is adapted from '[The Digital Curation Centre: a vision for digital curation](#)' by Chris Rusbridge, Peter Burnhill, Seamus Ross, Peter Buneman, David Giaretta, Liz Lyon and Malcolm Atkinson, presented at 'From Local to Global: Data Interoperability – Challenges and Technologies', Mass Storage and Systems Technology Committee of the IEEE Computer Society, 20-24 June 2005, Sardinia, Italy.

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Obituary

William Andrew Greig Alison (1916-2005) – an appreciation

Three significant things happened in Glasgow in 1962 – the last tram ran, the St. Andrew's Halls burnt down and Bill Alison, FLA, arrived from Edinburgh to take up the post of Superintendent of Branches in Glasgow Public Libraries. These events were not related.

A Mitchell Library insider of the day mourned on learning of Bill's success "It's not the job he has come to get that worries me; it's the job he has come to take." That insider was right to be worried because in a culture where seniority was paramount, Bill Alison personified merit and in due course, and on merit, he was promoted to Depute City Librarian and in due course City Librarian. In 1975 his post was re-designated as Director of Libraries.

In his early days as Superintendent he crossed and re-crossed the city on foot visiting branches, discovering the lie of the land and the extent of his responsibilities. He eventually established the case for a car but still walked when he could. Those early days gave him an intimate knowledge of his new city. It was quickly clear that Bill Alison was a people person and the relationships he established then stood him in good stead when as Chief Librarian of Scotland's premier public library service he faced the realities of management with decisions that sometimes were not readily or wholeheartedly accepted by all his staff.

As Depute City Librarian his responsibility centred mostly on the recruitment and training. He did this again with a real interest in the individual applicant and as his successor I encountered people whom Bill had sent back to school to improve their qualifications and consequently their long term professional prospects. He was held in affection by his senior staff and many a routine branch inspection seemed more like a social occasion than a formal visit. Cakes and savouries were laid before him and there were pleasantries and friendly laughter. During this time he was able to evaluate the library service and draw up the plans which he was quick to introduce when in 1974, around a time of local government reorganisation, he was appointed City Librarian.

In those days the city had a programme for modernising library buildings and Bill Alison inherited amongst other things the task of completing an extension to the Mitchell Library. In his early days he had been in charge of Edinburgh's Art Library and he had an eye for buildings and interiors. Several projects were undertaken by private architects and any of them who thought that Bill would not have opinions or ideas had to think again. With his City Council colleague, Andrew Mackenzie, the Chief Architect responsible for the city's civic buildings, he worked with external architects on the £12m Mitchell project providing an outstanding extension which made Glasgow's Mitchell Library (according to the Guinness Book of Records) the largest public reference library in Europe. Andrew Mackenzie had two mantras "Nothing but the best" and "Cheap is dear" and in Bill Alison he found a ready supporter so that the completed extension and finishes drew admirers from around the UK and abroad too.

When Bill Alison was appointed City Librarian in 1974 he was a man in a hurry. He was within seven years of retiring and had things to do. His staff just hung on to his coat tails as he reorganised the Mitchell Library and established a divisional organisation for the lending libraries. He created a career structure for the staff with new posts. He introduced computerised issue and catalogue systems as well as new services. Libraries were extended and modernised. New libraries were built. The staff was

galvanised. The feeling of achievement and professional attainment was all down to Bill Alison as a driving force and motivator.

Bill was a benevolent man who sometimes did good things by stealth. Learning on occasion that some individual member of staff was experiencing personal difficulties he acted off the ball to their benefit. His Union Representatives never realised what an ally he was to them because as a young librarian in Edinburgh he had been a union representative himself and was well aware of the frustration that young people felt in the face of intractable and established management practices. His enthusiasm spilt over into all his activities. He was Session Clerk of Shawlands Cross Church in Glasgow for around 22 years where he (and his wife Jessie) sang in the choir. In fact a highlight of the 1979 INTAMEL (an organisation which comprised the librarians of the world's principal cities) conference which he organised in Glasgow was when he and his wife Jessie sang as a duet "Will ye no' come back again" at the conference's closing dinner in Pollock House. The invitation seemed to work because INTAMEL returned to Glasgow in 1994.

Outside his professional life Bill Alison took knocks like anyone else. His generation was caught up in the Second World War and he served with the RAF as a medic. Home on embarkation leave he planned to be married but was recalled to his unit before the day arranged for the service could dawn. A family summit decided to bring the marriage forward and he recounted that he left for his honeymoon by tram! Rejoining his unit in the south of England he was immediately put on a troop train which came straight back to Scotland and passed through Edinburgh on its way to a troop ship at Greenock. We can only imagine his thoughts as he stood in the corridor of the railway carriage and could actually see the house where his new bride was living without any way of letting her know that he was so close. He seldom spoke of his service though it was clear that his duties involved meeting shot up aircraft and rendering aid to their crews. He was in India for a time but was back in England in an aid station when the wounded were being brought back from the D-day beaches.

In 1981, during the industrial dispute in Glasgow's libraries brought about by budget cuts, he was required to suspend Senior Librarians who had obeyed Union instructions to keep their branches open rather than management instructions to close them (to save money) and I accompanied him to act as witness. Separated at one library I eventually found Bill taking tea with, as his hostess, the librarian he was supposed to suspend – and we ended up giving the newly suspended librarian a lift back from her branch library into the city centre!

I joined Glasgow Libraries as Bill Alison's Depute in August 1974 and by Christmas of the same year my wife and I with other senior colleagues were dinner guests in his home. It was the first of many visits. Laughter-filled evenings were usually rounded off by a slide show of Bill's latest holiday. He and Jessie were fond of foreign holidays. On their return he would prepare his slides and write and tape a commentary. He took these programmes around guilds and clubs, and he was much in demand.

Bill was President of the Scottish Library Association in 1975 and was given honorary membership in 1976; President of the then Library Association in 1979. In 1978 he received the Queen's Jubilee Medal.

Bill Alison retired in 1981 with things still to do and I succeeded him as Director of Glasgow City Libraries. For the next 17 years we lunched together every four to six weeks. In the beginning I was happy to keep him informed of the progress of projects which he had instigated but as the years passed he was a resolute and reliable sounding board for projects which were evolving under my hand. As he was from Edinburgh and retired I naturally assumed that I would pay for these lunches but some of Glasgow had rubbed off on him and we paid alternately. I could never remember whose turn it was to pay but strangely enough, he could.

His family and his faith were the centre of his life. He was proud of his wife and daughters and could not have been happier when a grandson came along to put gilding on the lily. He enjoyed company and had a ready laugh. An administrator with an artist's eye he was the sort of caring librarian we do not have these days – and we are the worse off for that.

Andrew Miller



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Obituary

Geo S. Neil Mochrie

Neil Mochrie died on 27 January 2005. He loved books and cared deeply about social justice. It was no surprise when he chose librarianship as his profession.

He began his career in Stirling County Library and, after working in public libraries in Glasgow, Glenrothes and Motherwell, he became librarian of Springburn Further Education College in Glasgow. From there he moved to become the first librarian of Cardonald College where he had the exciting opportunity of creating its library.

His last appointment was as Senior Tutor Librarian at Stevenson College in Edinburgh where, together with his lecturer colleague Geoff Silcock, he produced one of the first computerised library catalogues.

Neil was also a poet. He wrote poems from a very young age and was still writing them until a few days before his death.

He will be remembered by all who knew and worked with him. His spirit lives on in the many, many poems he has written. IS

Dorothy Mochrie



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Endpiece

Deadlines & bylines

***Brian Osborne* finds that the death of the book is wildly exaggerated.**

The first thing I do on receiving [Information Scotland](#) is turn to this page. If I am on it I breathe a slight sigh of relief because I know that it will be more than two months before I need turn my mind to the column. However if my distinguished partner in crime, Colin Will, is occupying this space I immediately turn to the title page to check when the deadline is for my Endpiece for the next issue.

Deadlines and advance bookings are the joys or perils of life for the vaguely literary persons who have the pleasure of filling this page. Back in the days when I earned a crust by being a librarian I felt that my life was entirely governed by my diary and that retirement and self-employment as a vaguely literary person would be so much more relaxed and less structured. Fat chance!

As I write this I am just back from Winchester. Six months ago I was contacted by the organiser of a Writers' Conference there who had discovered my book *Writing Biography & Autobiography* and thought that I would be the ideal person to talk about 'Life writing' at her conference. She was somewhat distressed to find that anybody could come from somewhere as remote and as expensive to travel from as Kirkintilloch but she bit the bullet and hired me. So I had six months to try to work out what to say in a one-hour talk (not too much of a problem) and how to occupy five and half hours of workshop time (quite a serious problem!)

Do you remember all the discussions back in the last century about "the death of the book"? Four hundred eager potential authors at the Winchester conference did tend to suggest that the book is taking "an unconscionable time dying." Fortunately most of the 400 were not anxious to become writers of biography although Colin Will might be happy to know that poetry seemed a slightly less esoteric interest; however would-be-novelists were there in truly alarming numbers. As a sociological phenomenon I would add that approximately 85% of those attending the conference were female. Whether this represents the true gender balance of potential writers or just proves that women enjoy conferences more I leave to others to study.

Of the potential "life-writers" I met most seemed anxious to write their own life-stories – one even asked me if I had ever been tempted to do this myself. I explained that 33 years as a librarian did not generally make for exciting reading and any remotely interesting bits in my life were staying private – I'm Scottish after all!

While at Winchester I visited Jane Austen's house at Chawton. This pretty cottage would, one might think, be an ideal retreat for an author; but then you see the little round table at which Miss Austen composed her novels, and the creaking door that warned her when anybody was approaching, so that her manuscript could be tidied away and something more respectable and lady-like taken up, you realise that modern writers have it rather easier. Today, writing fiction is "respectable" even if faintly eccentric and the twenty first-century aspiring authors at Winchester, if and when they are published, will at least get proper credit – Jane Austen's first novel *Sense* and

Sensibility was billed as being “By a Lady” and subsequent ones as “By the author of Sense and Sensibility.”

Even Walter Scott, who could safely publish poetry under his own name, felt that fiction was no suitable occupation for the Sheriff Depute of Selkirkshire and Waverley appeared without his name on the title page – just as well Public Lending Right was not in force in 1814.

Let me close with a recommendation of an intriguing book: Julie Myerson’s Home: the story of everyone who ever lived in our house. (Harper Perennial, 2005, £8.99) Myerson had a really clever if simple idea – to research and tell the story of everyone who ever lived in her very ordinary late nineteenth-century London house. Worth checking out.

[Brian D Osborne](#)



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President's perspective

Culture and more.

Alastair Johnston is impressed by a website.

It is rare, in my experience, for a President’s Perspective to generate much workplace interest or discussion – not so the August piece. My purpose in raising the matter of chartership assessment delays was simply to flag up the fact that from the candidate’s perspective, as gathered from several meetings, concern was being expressed about applications not being acknowledged followed by months of little communication. The reason for the delay, whilst important for us as a professional body to identify and remedy, was not of primary concern to those left in the dark about the fate of their applications for chartership.

I am reassured, as I am sure members will be, by the Chief Executive’s response that “...all candidates were notified if assessment of their

applications was subject to a delay beyond the normal four to six month assessment period declared in the handbooks.”

In terms of the wider subject of assessment, the general consensus amongst my corresponding members seems to be that some form of assessment panels based on the home nations might assist to speed the process and I will ensure that this suggestion is relayed to the appropriate desk.

“To no-one’s great surprise, the culture minister, Patricia Ferguson, yesterday consigned the proposals of the Cultural Commission to the dustbin of history...” declared an editorial in the Scotsman, reporting the 22 September debate in the Scottish Parliament. That said, the Culture Minister stressed that Scotland’s 32 local authorities are seen as ‘key partners’ in the provision of cultural services. “Many councils are doing great things for culture, but I would like all councils to do the same,” she said.

Whilst James Boyle’s recommendations for the creation of Culture Scotland and the Culture Fund did not find favour it is to be hoped that many of the remaining 122 recommendations will be carefully considered and, wherever possible, implemented, particularly those that relate to public library standards and inspection; to supporting digital and media literacy including the sustainability of the People’s Network; to national funding for reading promotions which support literacy and reader development; and to the acquisition of Scottish materials by our public libraries. No doubt development work continues in the meeting rooms and offices of the Scottish Executive and it just might be that St Andrew’s Day 2005 will see the announcement of the way forward.

Within my own authority we have enjoyed a fantastic summer with more than 60,000 visitors to the Monet and the Impressionists exhibition in our Artists’ Town – Kirkcudbright. The exhibition was a joint venture between Glasgow City Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, and the Scottish Executive and attracted 50% more visitors than even the most optimistic estimate. It also proved, beyond a shadow of doubt, that given the right subject and the right marketing that rural Scotland can more than hold its own against the central belt venues which so dominated Scottish cultural activity. It will come as no surprise to learn that the Monet exhibition is but a step along the way to establishing an art gallery of international quality in Kirkcudbright and, given the visitor statistics from the past couple of months, we may not have too long to wait.

The Monet exhibition also proved something to me in terms of decentralising national resources. If you take a national collection, split it

into manageable lots and then spread these sub-collections around Scotland on some kind of short-term loan or circulating basis, you will attract a very much larger number of users or visitors to your resources than would otherwise have been the case. This might be overly simplistic but somewhere in there is the germ of an idea which just might be one solution to ensuring that Scotland's culture is seen to belong to all of Scotland's people!

Talking of things national, the National Library of Scotland's summer newsletter Quarto reports a hive of activity. From speed-dating to cookery demonstrations to visits by Prime Ministers and Culture Ministers. If you haven't had the opportunity to peruse Quarto seek it out and find out how things are changing on George IV Bridge, the Upcoming Events column is particularly impressive.

It is not often that I am impressed by websites. It might even be truthfully recorded that, by and large, I prefer printed sources. I have been known to print web pages and read them at my leisure rather than read a screen.

I tell you this because I have been seriously impressed by a website. Somehow or other the subject of the site – the [Home Reading Initiative](#), launched by Cathy Jamieson in August 2002, seems to have passed me by. It is designed to encourage parents and carers to share books with their children from a young age and brings together Reading Champions, teachers, librarians and anyone interested in children and what they read. There are even two Home Reading Initiative Co-ordinators, Lindsey Fraser and Kathryn Ross. The website is just one element of the Initiative. If you want to know more, try the website – just don't fall over backwards when it talks to you!

A gentle reminder of the CILIP Tsunami Fund and the ongoing international work being undertaken by IFLA and others in Sri Lanka and now America. All branches and groups are being asked to respond to the appeal and I am sure that Scotland will not be found wanting in that regard. More information about our profession's response to the [Tsunami and the Tsunami Strategy](#)



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ICT: Aiming Higher

Gates and laptops

Jill Evans begins our focus on ICT with a look at initiatives in Scotland's Libraries.

Recent publications from the Scottish Executive feature Scotland's libraries prominently, with specific reference to Information and Communication Technology (ICT). In The [National Cultural Strategy](#) the Scottish Executive noted that a key priority was to "encourage new partnerships in both public and private sectors and further collaboration within the library service to include the exploitation of ICT and the development of policies for national collections in relation to Scottish material." (Key Priority 2.2) The [Scottish Library and Information Council](#) (SLIC) oversaw the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Scottish Executive Public Libraries Excellence Fund Projects which provided public libraries with the opportunity to enhance ICT provision and learning opportunities in areas of significant social deprivation. The initiative provided £600,000 and local authorities with area based Social Inclusion Partnerships were invited to bid for up to £50,000.

To date there have been some innovative and [exciting results](#). North Lanarkshire's initiative purchased 12 laptops which were available for lending to local residents enabling the user to learn in their own home at their own pace. In South Ayrshire the 'Girvan Gateway' was coordinated by the library, which worked with local voluntary organisations delivering ICT equipment into residents' homes. It was reported that 75% of the individuals were digitally excluded for reasons of visual impairment or mobility restrictions. In South Ayrshire several participants progressed to attend the Further Education College after gaining IT skills through the Excellence Fund projects.

South Lanarkshire reported that lending laptops enabled the entire family to learn ICT skills as a family unit. The initiative helped overcome the difficulty of attending learning sessions in libraries because of a lack of childcare. In West Dunbartonshire the Alexandria Library provided 'Laptops For Loan' to local residents and this gave the learners the confidence to use the equipment before 'progressing' to use ICT equipment in the library. Such initiatives support the Scottish Executive's aims for the population to make full use of ICT for the social benefit of learning, information, and contribute

to social inclusion.

Fourteen public library services benefited from this fund and many aspects of the initial projects have been mainstreamed and are now integral to the delivery of ICT and learning in libraries. The lessons learned during the project and the recommendations in the report produced by SLIC, [Making a Difference – Libraries, ICT and Social Inclusion](#), influence service planning and partnership working.

Member institutions of SCURL also lend laptops to matriculated students although this appears to be a more recent initiative than in the public libraries. Aberdeen University offers seven laptops in the Taylor Library and seven in the Queen Mother Library for use within the library. This initiative has been well received by the undergraduate and postgraduate students with the statistics revealing 4000 loans over the previous year. Edinburgh University Library has a total of 20 laptops for loan and offers a three-day loan, which enables students to have a flexible study pattern. Strathclyde University also provides a laptop loan service. Lending laptops has ICT training implications for library staff. To protect the security of the previous borrower the hard drive may be reformatted, the operating systems, and the utilities and software packages may be re-installed.

Another initiative of a SCURL member library demonstrating ICT partnership is Napier University Library's contractual arrangement with the Clinical Library of the St Columba's Hospice. Funded by the Hospice, Napier University has provided a professional librarian on a part-time basis since 1992, assisted by a number of willing and able volunteers, and working closely with the Hospice Palliative Care Education Team. Over this time, the Librarian has managed the collection, provided user education, encouraged access to the NHS e-library and produced 'Lookout' the bi-monthly in-house index to palliative care journals. The Library is used by both the Hospice teaching and nursing staff, and students from Edinburgh University and Queen Margaret University College study palliative care at the Hospice.

The latest [SCONUL Statistics \(2003-2004\)](#) reveal a "...trend to manage a merged academic computing service and a library". The SCURL member institutions, which were eligible to submit data, indicated a fairly even distribution; nine reported a merged or jointly managed service structure and eight reported a separate structure. The Higher Education Information Technology Statistics Return in the [Universities & Colleges Information](#)

[Systems Association](#) (UCISA) [report](#) of 2004-2005, of which many SCURL institutions are members, listed the top concerns relating to IT.

They were:

- >>network security
- >>a strategic approach to infrastructure
- >>systems resilience
- >>anytime/anywhere computing
- >>learning support.

The anytime/anywhere computing matches the laptop learning initiatives and it is expected that this issue will become more significant in the next 12 months. Specific aspects of concern were network connectivity, network authentication, and accounting. The Learning Support aspect focused on the VLE development with the integration and linking to corporate information. It was reported that the average lifetime of workstations was generally considered to be three to five years.

In conclusion, the SCONUL Annual Statistical return for 2003-2004 revealed that while academic libraries appear to have become busier with more students using the libraries there was fewer library staff available to assist users. The statistics also demonstrated a fall in the number of enquiries which may reflect either fewer staffed enquiry desks in libraries or that the users were more confident of their IT skills using the electronic resources in which the libraries have invested resources and staff.

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ICT: Resources

Detecting resources

Digital content providing a unique, personal record of the impact of the Second World War in Scottish communities – from accounts collected by children – is accessible via a new website created by SLIC as part of ‘Their Past Your Future Scotland’, Hazel lauder explains.

Primary school children are being encouraged to become wartime sleuths as part of War Detectives – a countrywide initiative designed to prompt young people in Scotland to learn more about the experiences of living and working during the Second World War. War Detectives is part of the Big Lottery Fund’s ‘Their Past Your Future’ scheme, which in Scotland is being managed by a consortium of the [Scottish Museums Council](#) (SMC), the [Scottish Library and Information Council](#) (SLIC) and [Learning and Teaching Scotland](#) (LTS).

Young people have been exploring the experience of the Second World War, getting first hand accounts by interviewing local veterans and people who lived through the war. These reminiscences and historical artefacts are being digitised and will be available through the project website, providing a unique, personal and accessible record of the impact of the Second World War in Scottish communities.

12 organisations from across the country were awarded up to £10,000 funding to record the wartime experience of their community. Projects are being led by public library services, primary schools and Cultural Co-ordinators within Councils. SLIC has created a [project website](#) and digital content has been added to the site and will continue to be added until early 2006. The site retells the experience of people who lived through the war and includes tales of ordinary people missing their fathers, being evacuees and serving in the forces.

The material includes films of interviews with older people, PowerPoint presentations and photographs. As the project is relatively small-scale the project does not use a content management system. The access versions of resources are stored as part of the site’s HTML structure, while the original files are stored on CD-Rom. Before the resources are added to the site, photographs and videos are compressed for web delivery. As the contributors are principally schools and are likely to have access to broadband quality internet, the video files are compressed to around 1MB per minute Quicktime files; this provides a relatively small file size while retaining a good degree of quality.

Some of the submissions have included Word documents with photographs. These have been converted to HTML with an attempt to retain the original layout created by the schools. To maximise loading

times, some of the documents have been split into parts so that they should be accessible to dial-up users. In creating the site SLIC has worked to accessibility guidelines, this has included making sure that all images include descriptive alt tags and that transcriptions are available for all video files.

Copyright is a major issue for all digitisation projects and the project is interested in using a [Creative Commons](#) (CC) licence for the material on the site. There is now a [Scotland specific CC licence](#).

The project has had a big impact on participants; one Head Teacher has commented: "It is wonderful to see the children develop not only their IT skills but their inter-personal skills and sense of place. They have come to value the past and the sacrifices that people made."

SLIC has also been working with organisations which received Big Lottery Fund grants for projects to commemorate World War II and intends to make some of the resources created by these projects available through the website. Digital content will continue to be added to the website and the site will be a unique educational resource for future generations.

Their Past Your Future Scotland includes a unique touring exhibition and events programme, giving people the opportunity to visit a special exhibition developed by the Imperial War Museum, as well as the chance to participate in a broad range of events and activities across the country. SLIC manages the [project website](#) which includes an events calendar as well as details about the traveling exhibition.

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ICT: NHS Scotland

Transforming knowledge into practice

The NHS Scotland e-Library combines long-established skills with leading-edge approaches to knowledge management. Dr Ann Wales describes the service.

The [NHS Scotland e-Library](#) is a national online knowledge service which aims to support all NHS Scotland staff in their clinical and managerial practice, lifelong learning and research. Initiated on its current scale as a pilot project in January 2003, the e-Library is now provided by NHS Education for Scotland as a core service, attracting some 55,000 users per month. Increasingly, its remit is broadening to include partners in care in the local authority and voluntary sectors, and the role of patients, carers and the general public in shared decision-making.

The e-Library serves as a primary vehicle for delivery of NHS Education's strategy for knowledge management, as outlined in *Exploiting the Power of Knowledge in NHS Scotland* and *From Knowing to Doing: transforming knowledge into practice in NHS Scotland*.^[1] This strategic framework is designed to ensure that knowledge support becomes an integral part of improvements in patient care and the health of the people of Scotland. The e-Library represents the technology arm of the implementation pathway, working hand-in-hand with development of the culture, skills, and values necessary to realise the full potential of accessing and sharing knowledge and applying it to practice in the healthcare context.

The e-Library framework of resources, services and knowledge-sharing tools is designed to integrate knowledge support with the overarching business objectives of the NHS by:

- >>Improving patient experience and patient outcomes, including involvement of patients, carers and the public in shared decision-making.
- >>Promoting and protecting the health and well-being of individuals and the population as a whole.
- >>Developing workforce capacity to meet the needs of the changing healthcare environment
- >>Supporting Scotland's national clinical priorities – e.g. cancer, coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, mental health, healthcare associated infections.
- >>Service redesign founded on coordinated, partnership working across boundaries of organisation and sector.

e-Library resources and services

The founding strength of the e-Library is its comprehensive range of knowledge content, providing access to:

- >>Over 5000 full-text electronic journals

- >>Over 100 bibliographic databases
- >>Over 5000 electronic books
- >>Many thousands of evaluated websites and information sources for health and social care.

The principle of equity of access to the knowledge base is central to the service. The basic aim is to ensure that participants at all stages of the patient journey have access to the knowledge they require to deliver optimal patient care. Content selection policy therefore aims to address the needs of the full range of clinical and non-clinical disciplines, and the social as well as the medical model of care. Consequently, the e-Library provides not only peer-reviewed scientific information for doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, but also, for example, for Estates and Facilities, Admin and Clerical, social care and health promotion staff.

However, the e-Library has aimed from the first to be more than a passive content repository. It supports the mobilisation of knowledge through a suite of interactive services – including updating services; predefined expert searches; user guides and e-tutorials, and a directory of local library services in NHS and other sectors guiding the user to sources of virtual and human support. A personalisation tool ('My Knowledge Space'), enabling users to define their individual preferences for key resources and alerting services.

Managed Knowledge Networks

The importance of working as teams and networks to deliver effective patient care is recognised throughout NHS Scotland. Multidisciplinary teams focused on the needs of individual patients play a vital role in the current model of care. Increasingly, these teams are required to work across community and acute care boundaries and to encompass social care and other local authority agencies. At a broader organisational level, a variety of new and emerging healthcare configurations reflect the network principle, such as: regional service planning; integrated care which converges health and social care management; Community Health Partnerships which bring together NHS and Local Authority service providers for service planning and delivery; and Managed Clinical Networks which operate as virtual teams focused on particular healthcare conditions, spanning healthcare organisations and sectors.

The e-Library supports this transition to a networked model of care by providing resources, services and tools to support knowledge access and knowledge sharing within Communities of Practice, which form the building blocks of Managed Knowledge Networks.

[‘Managed Knowledge Networks’](#) (MKNs) are extended groups of healthcare staff who need to access, share and apply knowledge in a common area of interest. MKNs acknowledge the documented reality that healthcare staff frequently turn to colleagues to support their knowledge needs as well as using printed resources. The knowledge held by healthcare staff represents a significant resource if captured and used properly. The aim of developing MKNs is to ensure that tacit and explicit knowledge alike are managed effectively across boundaries of discipline, organisation and sector.

MKNs are founded on the Communities of Practice model of simultaneously building knowledge-sharing communities and developing knowledge resources.

MKNs build communities by:

>> Providing tools and support to enable communication within and across groups and teams.

>> Encouraging healthcare staff to be active in accessing and sharing knowledge.

>> Creating a network of experts and specialists committed to sharing of resources and expertise across boundaries of discipline, organisation and sector.

>> Working with local and national organisations in NHS and other sectors, Managed Clinical Networks and Community Health Partnerships.

MKNs manage knowledge resources by:

>> Identifying, evaluating and creating resources and services that will support the delivery of patient care – e.g. resources within e-Library Portals

>> Promoting development and use of resources, tools and services provided by e-Library and Portals.

>> Assuring quality of resources and relevance to the knowledge needs of Network members.

The e-Library provides subject-focused Knowledge Portals incorporating resources and interactive services designed to support MKNs in the national clinical priority areas of cancer, coronary heart disease, mental health, healthcare associated infection, stroke and diabetes.

One of the most innovative and popular tools offered by the e-Library to support sharing of knowledge are the Knowledge Exchanges, which provide communities of healthcare staff with a collaborative virtual workspace where they can share documents and work in progress, hold online discussion and create web pages. Since its launch in May, over 50 communities have established Exchanges, with purposes ranging from journal clubs to mental health teams to management planning.

Sharing knowledge across services

The information architecture of the e-Library has been designed from the first to facilitate sharing of resources across organisations and services. National and international standards for information management and information sharing are deployed. Metadata is applied in accordance with the [Government Information Framework](#) (e-GIF) and the [Dublin Core](#) standards. Indexing is based on refinements of e-GIF authority files. Subject indexing draws upon the Government Category List, the [Medical Subject Heading System](#) (MESH), and the Caredata controlled vocabulary for social care literature.

This investment in standards-based design has paved the way for the e-Library to share resources with services in the NHS, Higher Education and commercial sectors, based on Z39.50 and Web Services-based interoperability protocols. Currently the e-Library shares resources in this way with eight cross-search partners. The intention is to extend this approach to ensure that open, seamless information flow further facilitates partnership working across boundaries.

Future development plans

NHS Education's implementation plan for 2005-2008 defines the following objectives for the e-Library in each strategic area:

Patient Focus

- >>Creation of a Patient Focus Public Involvement Portal, to serve as a model for designing a public interface to the NHS Scotland e-Library.
- >>Extension of e-Library knowledge architecture to: a.) articulate more closely with the needs of the patient journey; b.) facilitate context-sensitive access to the knowledge base from electronic patient record systems.
- >>Development of strategic partnerships with library and knowledge services in NHS, Local Authority and voluntary sectors to promote access to health information.

Knowledge Networks

- >>Development of existing Portals and MKNs to support national clinical priorities; creation of new Portals and Networks for maternal and child health and elderly care.
- >>Continued promotion and development of tools to support sharing of knowledge within communities – e.g., a Knowledge Network for remote and rural care will provide opportunities for analysing how best to support communication and collaboration across distributed communities.
- >>Extended utilisation of interoperability technologies to facilitate sharing of knowledge resources across healthcare organisations. Specifically, the development of a unified online catalogue for NHS Scotland Library Services.

Workforce development

>>Development of an information literacy competency framework to support definition and application of the skills for effective use of knowledge in the healthcare setting.

>>A new competency framework and a training programme to support the developing role of the NHS Librarian in enabling uptake of these new systems of knowledge support.

>>New role-focused Knowledge Portals will provide resources and services for those staff groups whose knowledge needs have not been fully addressed to date – most notably, primary care and non-clinical disciplines, and new staff groups emerging as a result of service modernisation. A more central focus on personalisation within the e-Library will enable individual members of healthcare staff to tailor resources and services to their unique needs.

>>A key objective is integration of e-Library resources and services with the Knowledge and Skills Framework which is to form the future basis for personal development planning for all NHS staff.

The NHS Scotland e-Library strives to balance the strengths of traditional and 'leading edge' approaches to knowledge management. The familiar, long-established librarian skills of managing and organising information enable the e-Library to serve as a comprehensive, reliable collection of resources and interactive services for a large and diverse audience. These traditional skills are overlaid with a new emphasis on the role of knowledge management in facilitating communication, partnership working, and integration of knowledge support with lifelong learning. Overall, this convergence of the best of both worlds is creating a service with the combination of stability and dynamism necessary to support the continuous transformation of knowledge into practice in the rapidly changing healthcare context. IS

[Dr Ann Wales](#) is Head of Knowledge Services Group, NHS Education for Scotland.

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ICT: library studies

Future librarians digitising the past

Library studies students at the University of Strathclyde are working alongside public library services on digitisation projects. Paul F. Burton and David McMenemy describe how these ‘real-world’ practical ICT projects are incorporated into the curriculum, and how they are working successfully.

The MSc/Postgraduate Diploma in Information and Library Studies at the [University of Strathclyde](#) is in its twentieth year. In that time almost 1,000 students have passed through and moved on to work in the profession. One of the continuous hallmarks of the course has been its state-of-the-art focus on information and communications technologies (ICTs) in libraries, and an illustration of this is the module Digital Archiving and Preservation (DAP).

DAP is an elective module, taken by students in the second semester, and focused on imparting the knowledge and skills to undertake digitisation projects within a library environment. The module is taught over an eight-week period between February and April each year, and is built around imparting both theoretical understanding and practical skills in digitisation. One of the main goals of the lecturing staff when the module was originally developed was to have students involved in digitisation on behalf of a local public library service. East Renfrewshire libraries were subsequently approached to become involved and their enthusiasm and commitment enabled the module to be followed for the first time in academic year 2004/05.

The project

Initial meetings were held between the lecturers responsible for the module and representatives of East Renfrewshire libraries. The track record of East Renfrewshire in service development using ICT was second to none in Scottish terms. Their innovation saw developments like [Barrhead.Com](#), one of the first community portals developed in the UK. The proposed work the students would undertake would be an extension of such projects, offering the creation of digital resources that would enhance the local community.

Agreement was reached to allow the students to digitise 350 local history images from the collections in East Renfrewshire libraries, with the images being lent to the university for the duration of the scanning period. It was decided to concentrate these images around seven local areas, representing community libraries in the authority, namely: Barrhead; Busby; Clarkston; Eaglesham; Giffnock and Thornliebank; Newton Mearns; and Neilston.

The selection of these areas allowed the student projects to grow from merely digitising the images into creating a website that could operate as a local history site for the chosen areas. Thus the goal of the project could encompass both conservation and content creation. To facilitate this, seven student groups were formed, with between four to six students per group. Given the volume of work involved in creation of the digitised content it was felt a team approach was the way forward. However, all groups were given a high degree of autonomy to decide on how the work should be divided.

The groups were all tasked to provide a sensible structure to their site which allowed retrieval of the material, plus catalogue entries for the resources (including authority list of subject headings) and links to related resources. Guidance on web design had already been given in the first semester of the course, so that all students were assumed to be already up to speed on HTML.

Teaching on the module consisted of two streams, lectures and laboratory sessions. The lectures focused on the technical, organisational, and social contexts of digitisation, while the laboratories focused exclusively on the technical skills involved; this involved not merely scanning, but managing the digital images, file compression, and batch processing. Although the groups were free to divide the workload amongst the team members as they saw fit, the lecturing staff encouraged all students to be involved in all stages of the digitisation of the images. As well as the final websites the students were creating, the plan was to hand back to East Renfrewshire full publication-quality digital images that could be used as a master copy.

Managing access to the images

There was understandable concern among all involved in the project that the images lent by East Renfrewshire would be properly taken care of while stored at the university for the project duration. The images were collected by a member of the university staff and safely stored in a locked metal cabinet when not in use. Students were only allowed access to the images during two specific one hour laboratory sessions each week, with the two members of academic staff delivering the module present at all times. Although this made the timetable much tighter for the students, it was felt

that this was the safest way to accommodate the concerns over the safety of the images.

The laboratory used by students was situated in the Department of Computer and Information Sciences, and consisted of 60 computers, with 10 scanners. The scanning took place over a period of four weeks. It was observed during the sessions that most groups favoured a system whereby one or two students would scan an image, save the file to a central server, after which another member of the group working on a different computer would download the image and create web quality versions of the images for their website. The original scans were all created in full publication quality, and saved in TIF (Tagged Image File) file format; all web quality versions were created from this master file and saved in JPG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) format.

Part of the challenge for the student groups was to decide how their site would work from the standpoint of presenting the images to the viewer. In the lectures for the module several examples of best practice were demonstrated to the students, such as [American Memory](#), the digitisation site housed by the Library of Congress. This site is an exemplar for how libraries can present their content digitally; the site contains not merely textual and image material, but also multimedia content, such as film and audio. Lecturing staff offered students support from the point of view of technical advice, but site design and editorial decisions related to content were left up to each group to decide on individually. The lecturers concerned felt this to be extremely important, as it would be unfortunate if each group presented a final site that was identical to each of the others. The decision did seem to be justified, as there was a high degree of creativity, and major stylistic differences evident in the final seven sites.

The final sites

A preliminary date was agreed in the sixth week of the module where students would present their works in progress to both the lecturing staff and staff members from East Renfrewshire Libraries. This was deemed a great success, with a range of site designs of high quality presented by the students. The hard work put into the project by the students was evident to all, and the staff from East Renfrewshire seemed impressed by the quality of work undertaken in the time period.

The final projects and master copies of the digital images were handed over to East Renfrewshire in July. Overall the project was a great success; all material was delivered in a timely manner, to a high standard. Given this was the first year the project had been in operation, the staff were greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm of both the students and the local authority involved. Student commitment was vital to the smooth running of the

project, but most crucial was a committed, willing and positive local authority partner.

One encouraging factor was the subsequent choice of one student who had undertaken the module to pursue her Masters dissertation by digitising a collection of family papers and images that dated back to the Napoleonic War. The module gave her both the confidence and skills to build a major resource for her own family's history.

Plans for the future

It is hoped the partnership between the university and East Renfrewshire can be continued into the next academic year. Initial plans for future digitisation projects that could be undertaken include themed sites such as 'Childhood in East Renfrewshire', or 'Work and Leisure'.

It was felt that an area that could be improved for the future was the metadata created for the images. While the project requested students undertake cataloguing of all images, this was done via creation of an Access database by each group. Rather than using existing authority terms, most students developed their own taxonomy. While this was useful practice for the students from the point of view of indexing, it was felt that a more professional approach be taken, and that in the future a specific standard should be adopted.

One potential solution would be to tie in the DAP module with a module titled Organisation of Knowledge (OK) that aims to teach cataloguing skills. It is felt that if part of the assessment for OK was based around creation of catalogue records for the DAP project, that the students could afford to spend far longer on this vital aspect of the sites. Rather than devoting a large amount of time to one module at the expense of others, they could be devoting time to two modules, but still only be creating one website (and appreciating the transferability of information handling skills).

The module has given the academic staff in the department great enthusiasm for involving further real-world practical projects within the curriculum. One specific area of interest would be materials students could catalogue while studying the OK module. As well as cataloguing of digital materials, it would be immensely useful if students had access to a range of books and other physical material to catalogue.

Work with tomorrow's librarians

Any libraries with potential projects are encouraged to get in touch to discuss the possibility of incorporating them into the Information and Library Studies curriculum at Strathclyde.

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in the Department of Computer and Information Sciences at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow.



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ICT: cataloguing

Unlocking our hidden heritage

A widespread project aiming to create electronic records of early printed materials in Britain has already unearthed some exciting material in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Project Manager Norman Rodger explains.

A much overlooked part of Britain's national heritage is the wealth of printed material produced in the first 250 years after the invention of the printing press. As well as charting key moments in the development of English literature, this material offers contemporary accounts of major historical events, such as the English Civil War, the Union of the Crowns, the discovery of the Americas and advances in science and medicine.

For a number of reasons, many libraries have not been able to create complete electronic records of their own collections of these treasures, meaning that important information on their holdings has not been widely accessible. Now, thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, this issue is being addressed.

Originally launched as a pilot project in January 2003, the '[Britain in Print](#)' project aims to provide free access for all to information about the rich collections of early British books held in some of the UK's most important libraries.

Britain in Print will create electronic records for all pre-1700 British books in participating libraries and deliver these through a web-based catalogue and an online learning resource, which will contain high-quality information about the books and what they reveal to us about our shared past. It will

also create free online learning materials that draw on these resources but which match the needs of schools and other learners.

The project is being led by Edinburgh University Library on behalf of CURL, the Consortium of Research Libraries in the British Isles, and is made up of a partnership of 15 libraries spread across the UK.

How will it work?

Britain in Print is being developed in two phases, the first of which ran from January 2003 - January 2004. Phase One of the project saw the production of an online learning resource, designed to demonstrate ways in which the above material can be used. The website contains a multimedia Introduction to Printing, supported by an interactive, searchable timeline that covers the period 1450 to 1700. In addition, working in close collaboration with staff and pupils at Queen Anne High School in Dunfermline, innovative learning materials were created to assist Higher English students in the study of Robert Henryson's medieval Scots poem *The Testament of Cresseid*.

Lesley Porter, Head of English, Queen Anne High School later commented: "The study of a text such as *The Testament of Cresseid* was always going to challenge our pupils. With the development of the online resource, our pupils benefited in that they could access the site at any given time and this helped with homework, the writing of critical essays and revision. The uniqueness of the project has served to enhance the learning of our youngsters." The results of the first phase can be seen on the Britain in Print website.

Phase Two

The second phase of Britain in Print was launched in March 2005 and will run until August 2007. During this stage the project will operate in two distinct areas.

Firstly, working in close cooperation with ESTC North America, a team of nine cataloguers has been recruited to work across the partnership to complete the retro-conversion of all pre-1700 materials in the partner libraries. This work will run from August 2005 until around June 2007. Partner libraries have been split into geographical clusters with one library from each employing one or more cataloguers to work between locations within the region.

Since starting work in mid-July, cataloguers at both Edinburgh University Library and the Mitchell Library in Glasgow have already unearthed some exciting material. In Glasgow, for example, staff at the Mitchell Library have discovered a copy of what is thought to be the first book ever printed in the

city, The Protestation of the Generall Assemblie of the Church of Scotland, printed in 1638. There are currently only another seven editions of this publication held in the public domain within the UK.

Likewise, at Edinburgh University Library, a copy of John Ogilby's 1671 seminal atlas "America, Being the Latest and Most Accurate Description of the New World", has come to light. This book, which contains some fantastic illustrations and descriptions of the New World, will now be added to the four existing holdings that appear on CURL's online catalogue, [COPAC](#).

In parallel with the cataloguing activity, two additional online learning resources will be created, each of which will draw on the strengths of the materials held within the collections of the consortium. One of these will focus on a literary theme, while the other will be historical. As with Phase One, they will be designed to tie in with the school curriculum, aiming particularly at students at the upper end of the education system. The project is currently seeking schools from across the UK to assist in the development and piloting of these resources.

In addition, elements of the website begun in Phase One, such as the Timeline and the Introduction to Printing sections, will be expanded during the second stage. It is anticipated that relevant materials identified during the cataloguing will be incorporated into this work, thus integrating the two elements of the project. IS

Who's Involved?

The Britain in Print consortium is made up of the following libraries: Belfast Public Libraries; Birmingham Libraries; Durham University Library; Edinburgh City Libraries & Information Services; Edinburgh University Library; Leeds Library and Information Services; Mitchell Library, Glasgow; Nottingham University Library; Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh; Senate House Library, University of London; Sheffield University Library; Southampton University Library; The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust; University College London Library; and University of Birmingham.

Further information

For further information on the project, contact: [Norman Rodger](#), Britain in Print Project Manager, Edinburgh University Library, George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LJ, t: 0131 650 6823



Schools

A sound move

As Librarian at Grangemouth High School, Joyce Barnes has witnessed a marvellous opportunity to build up pupils' confidence – and their involvement in reading – through the BBC's Soundtown collaboration.

In September 2004, Grangemouth High School became BBC Radio Scotland's second 'Soundtown'. This project, under the BBC's community programme unit, aims to involve the school and wider community in BBC broadcasts. A studio was installed in the school and pupils were given the opportunity to be involved in a range of associated activities, from being part of the audience when programmes were broadcast from the school, to training in interview and speech techniques; from the technical side of programme production to web page design.

In the first month, it became common to see celebrities wandering round the school. Dougie Vipond, Chick Young, Gary Robertson, Lamont Howie, Craig Hill and Fred Macauley became as familiar as the rest of the staff. By October, things had settled down slightly. As National Poetry Day approached, I wondered whether Soundtown might be interested in literary pursuits...

I was approached by the then producer of Cover Stories, the book review programme presented by Richard Holloway. Would I be able to suggest a few pupils who would not be shy when asked to speak about their favourite reads? Would I! I run very active weekly Book Groups in school with pupils from all years. They aim to run one promotional event a month for staff and pupils, usually a literary lunch, ranging from big national events like NPD and WBD to celebrating books for Christmas presents, Chinese New Year, a summer reading picnic and so on. The producer was overwhelmed by the responses from the first group and their comments were broadcast in November.

In December, I was broadcast with adult recommended reads. In January, a new producer came to visit the Book Group. I explained to her how

involvement in Cover Stories had helped raise pupils' self-esteem, giving increased confidence to speak in public, for example. I also mentioned the financial constraints on school libraries and the amount of detailed planning that has to go into either arranging an author visit or indeed taking pupils out of school. Within a few days of our meeting, she arranged a spectacular surprise: Anthony Horowitz would visit the school in March to launch his latest Alex Rider novel, Arkangel.

The Book Group members interviewed Anthony for Cover Stories. Our Council in-house video team also filmed the broadcast as part of Falkirk Council's raising attainment strategy, 'Determined to Succeed'. On top of all this, BBC National Television's ten o'clock news got in touch, asking for an interview for a report about encouraging teenage boys to read. They flew a team from London to interview me with some of our boys. The excitement in school was almost tangible!

For the main event, I invited book groups from other schools and we had more than 80 excited children who listened, enthralled, as Anthony spoke for more than an hour.

The footage was shown on national BBC ten o'clock news during the Easter holidays. The Cover Stories programme aired in April and included an interview with Coral Kirkham of Edinburgh's 'Teen Titles', and Theresa Breslin talking about Divided City, the whole show conducted and presented by our pupils.

After Easter, we really thought we'd had our moment of fame... but not quite. The work of the Book Group had become well known and two more authors visited. In April, Graham Marks, author of Radio, Radio and How it Works visited to promote his new novel, Zoo.

This was followed by the American writer of Freak the Mighty, Rodman Philbrick, promoting Lobster Boy to 70 pupils from across Falkirk Council. The BBC interviewed both Rodman and myself live on The Arts Show.

Other BBC involvement included the school show, Juliet's Tomb. The BBC Let's do the show right here team were so impressed that they took the show to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, performing at the Spiegeltent in George Square Gardens. The Book Group were later asked to be in the audience there to interview Anne Fine and Vivian French for a live Radio Café programme on writing for children.

As June came to a close, so too did our session as BBC's Soundtown. It had given us so many opportunities, so much publicity and most importantly, drawn so many more young people into reading and literature promotion.

But we weren't quite finished yet. During the year, our music department had been involved in a project to write the theme tune to the new arts show, Radio Café. The producer had secured a place at the Edinburgh Castle launch of Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince for one pupil to be BBC Radio Scotland's cub reporter. The lucky pupil was chosen by means of an essay competition for Book Group members.

One of the purposes of involvement in Soundtown is to leave a legacy in the school and in the community. Pupils are on first name terms with authors, BBC reporters and producers, publicists and agents from all over the country – links that will continue. We have strengthened our association with pupils from other schools – and the Book Group numbers have swelled.



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Endpiece

Colin Will experiences a spooky coincidence which set him thinking...

Pondering the zeitgeist

Those who know me can testify that I regard booksellers as the salt of the earth, the cream of the crop; bright and enthusiastic beings who gladden the hearts of authors, and stuff like that. Some of them, however, have a touch of weirdness in their souls. I was visiting a second-hand friend recently (you know what I mean), and the chat got round to 'titles you couldn't use today'. "Colin," quoth he, "I have a collection of them. Have you seen my mid-stairs loo?"

Not wishing to offend my host, I replied cautiously that I had not, whereupon (always wanted to use that word), he led me to a seldom-opened door halfway up the stairs. There, above the usual offices, was a shelf of books with the oddest titles I've yet come across, mostly bound in Imperial-red decorated buckram. Has anyone else found the equal, I wonder, of Kak, the Copper Eskimo? Or how about Pong Ho, by Dorota

Flatau? The Gay Hazard? First prize went to Scouts in Bondage, by Geoffrey Prout. Is there a Geoffrey Prout Appreciation Society? I somehow doubt it. And, by the way, I haven't made any of these up.

I've recently had cause to ponder the Zeitgeist – well, you do, don't you? Sometimes there's an idea floating about in the ether, and maybe two or three unconnected people come up with it simultaneously. Darwin and Wallace independently came up with a mechanism to explain how organisms change over time, and Alexander Graham Bell and maybe two others invented the telephone at more or less the same time. Sometimes the explanation is obvious – competing teams working on the same problem, like the structure of DNA, when the race was won by Crick and Watson, or the human genome project, where the two teams announced the results and published simultaneously – an unusual circumstance.

The same thing sometimes happens in literature, and here's a painfully personal example. When I retired I started working on a novel set in the Languedoc region of Southwest France. It interweaves a modern story with a story of the Cathar Crusade in the early thirteenth-century. There's a cave involved, and the Grail comes into it, and my characters include an Esclarmonde, a Guilhem, and an Alizaïs.

I recently heard about a new novel – Labyrinth – by Kate Mosse, and I immediately acquired it and started to read. The superficial similarities are thoroughly startling, to me anyway. Kate's novel, set in the Languedoc, interweaves modern and Cathar storylines, it has a cave, and the Grail, and her characters include an Esclarmonde, a Guilhem and an Alaïs (slight difference there). Spooky or what? There's no possible connection between Kate and myself, and we've never met.

I'm not worried about the names. Giving away a trade secret, I came up with mine from a trawl of real Cathar period names in Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou*, but I can change them easily. Of course, they're very different books, but I'm now faced with a quandary. Do I stop writing my book, or change it out of all recognition? I don't want to be accused of plagiarism, or bandwagon jumping, but saying, "It's just a Zeitgeist thing," sounds a bit lame.

I don't know if the coincidence thing happens with poetry – or at least I haven't heard, although poetry plagiarism does happen occasionally, especially on the 'net. What does sometimes occur is that the same poem by the same author may be published in two different magazines. It's usually the poet's fault. Some adopt a 'scattergun' approach, sending out identical batches of poems to different editors, and taking the risk that they won't all want the same poems. When the mistake is discovered, it's

usually annoying and embarrassing for the editors, and counter-productive for the poets, whose future submissions may be viewed with justifiable suspicion. It's relatively easy to avoid too, by keeping good records of submissions, and making sure that a poem isn't sent to more than one editor simultaneously. For those whose poetic output is restricted, paper records will be fine, but the more prolific can easily construct a spreadsheet.

In my own case, much of what I write gets no further than the scribble in the notebook, or the fair copy. If I consider that a poem is publishable, however, it gets typed up and edited on the computer, which automatically assigns the dates of creation and modification. These dates go into a spreadsheet, with annual worksheets, which makes them easier to track. I have columns for Title (obviously), Date, Year Published, Where Published (i.e. which magazine, collection or anthology), Rejections (there's no point in sending a rejected poem to the same editor), a Consider column (to give a poem a second or third chance with a different magazine), and a Future Projects column, for possible new collections I might want to put together.

As well as keeping track of individual poems, a 'Stats' worksheet also helps me to work out how many poems I've written in any year, how many are published (and what proportion of my output this is), what the average gap between completion and publication is, and my 'hit rate' with particular magazines – at some point your head says no to the brick wall.

[Colin Will, website](#)



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President's perspective

A time for reflection

Alastair Johnston looks back at his Presidential year... and sets out future goals.

It doesn't seem like 12 months since I was crafting my first President's Perspective and pondering the improbability of being able to generate enough meaningful words to fill the space. I leave it to you to decide whether the words have contributed anything to our world.

The past couple of months have seen me travel almost the length of Scotland, listening to members' concerns, issues and areas of interest. The topic generating most interaction has been the developing, and then on-going, saga of the delays in chartership assessments. Thankfully the 'lack of customer care' message seems to have got through and is now being actioned. I have had emails from two members who end their year very much happier than they were six months ago. Their assessments have not yet been completed, 12 months on, but communication has been established and they are now being kept informed of progress. If any member feels that this does not apply to their particular case I would suggest an email to [Bob McKee](#), CILIP Chief Executive. A good start has been made but there is still work to be done to alter members' perception of CILIP as a 'slow-to-change' organisation.

The Framework of Qualifications was also a popular topic for debate and I was pleased to report members' gratitude that the development and training needs of all staff employed in libraries has been recognised within the framework. The need for wider communication of the available opportunities, particularly amongst paraprofessionals, was widely regarded as essential for both CILIP/CILIPS.

An even more thorny issue, raised on several occasions, was that of how to retain members once chartership had come and gone and career progression has been relegated from the list of daily life's critical concerns. No earth shattering solutions were proposed other than the cry of "If employers paid the subscription I would be happy to be a member." Which, to me, seems to completely miss the point of a professional body. I firmly believe in the need for a professional association to provide training, to accredit courses, to publish, to support professional qualifications and provide recruitment services. Marketing the benefits of membership to this particular group might help to change the mindset

I was mightily impressed by a day visit to Perth and Kinross and the A K Bell Library. I found a library service where enthusiasm was boundless; the desire to adapt and change services was all around; where the mix of professions was seamless; where successful projects and initiatives abounded; and where new library buildings were on the stocks. It was one of those days which will remain with me as consolation for the less good days of cuts, financial constraints and gloomy predictions. Well done, Liz,

Caroline and the team!

Within my presidential address I talked about the state of continuous change which engulfs local government. I questioned whether we have yet got the structure for Scottish public libraries right. The fact is that our current 32 unitary authorities is an accident of political history with no direct relation whatsoever to the needs of public library users. Peter Hain, Minister for Northern Ireland, has announced a cut in the number of councils from 26 to seven and the number of Education and Library Boards from five to one. The leap of faith and imagination which has resulted in one public library service for Northern Ireland is surely a move which will survive a trip back across the water for serious examination.

Looking around at the dire state of investment in library materials funds over the past 10 years, the loss of £8m from those funds, and the restricted availability of capital to invest in new library buildings and services, it is my view that we urgently need to reassess how we can take public libraries forward in a way which meets the needs of the people of Scotland rather than to continue on our present course which has more to do with the needs and imperatives of local government financial settlements and forthcoming elections. In a world where 60% of the children of Scotland would appear to have been failed by the statutory education system (*The Scotsman*, 14 November) the case for a robust public library service which addresses the needs of all of the people seems to me to be overwhelming.

We need to address the use of bookstocks across the country to increase depth of stock held nationally whilst maintaining sufficient stocks of popular materials to meet on-publication demand; we need to exploit online resources to their fullest extent whilst continuing to recognise that printed material still has its place; we need to address the issues which arise out of 32 library services cataloguing stock 32 times in 32 slightly different ways; we need to make best possible use of the limited number of stockholding library suppliers before they are forced from the marketplace to be replaced by a system of web-based mailboxes which simply act as a sorting office between libraries and publishers; we need to ensure that worthy Scottish publishers and authors are well represented on the shelves of our libraries; we need to provide services to a standard and of a quality which makes them amongst the very best in the world; standards which can be externally verified, services which users acknowledge as meeting their needs; we need to establish a branded status for libraries and to build a strong brand equity based on values such as 'trust', 'honesty', 'neutrality' and 'community'. Once the brand is identified we need to sell it through national advertising, on television, on radio and in the new media, on the sides of buses. Only in this way can we get our message across to those users we

have lost and to potential users.

If even some of this could be achieved over the next few years I might be left with the notion that the words, after all, have not been entirely wasted!

I have been ably supported throughout the past year by Vice President, Ivor Lloyd. I take this opportunity to wish him well in his own presidential year and to commend Ivor to you as a librarian who, having reached the heights of academia as Vice Principal at the University of Abertay, continues to make a much valued contribution to our profession. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Elaine, Rhona, Cathy and all the staff at Hamilton for their much appreciated assistance and support and to thank you all for the honour bestowed on me to represent you as your President throughout 2005.



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Communities of Practice

Aiming Higher

A recent quick response to the Terrorism Bill debate is an excellent example of a Community of Practice in action, writes Jill Evans.

One definition of 'Community of Practice' is a group whose members regularly engage in learning and sharing similar goals, based on their shared mutual common interest.

The Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries ([SCURL](#)) as an organisation embodies the phrase 'Community of Practice'. The website yields pertinent examples of different sectors in the library and information community, primarily – but not exclusively – in Scotland forging intellectual relationships with colleagues working on similar areas of interest. One example is the SCURL [Special Needs Group](#) where the members have produced an Audit of Services available within the SCURL

member libraries.

If you want to find out if Glasgow Caledonian University offers long loans or if the University of the Highlands and Islands provides assistance with photocopying and printing to their special needs students then check the [website](#). The information audit has been gathered and updated by the Special Needs members to share freely with the community but it perhaps could also be considered as a 'Goal' or attainment schedule for other libraries and institutions to share.

There are many groups in SCURL representing different subjects or disciplines. The SCURL Health Group is an example where training has a focus with a recent event, Full Economic Costing, hosted to answer the specific needs of the group members. However, the benefit to the entire SCURL membership was demonstrated when the report of the event was shared and has subsequently assisted some Directors of Library Service to submit their evidence of financial models.

SHERAL (Scottish Higher and Education Research and Acquisitions Librarians Group) was recently tasked by SCURL to review an e-books offer from a publisher who had approached SCURL, as a consortium. SCURL therefore produces information, such as the Audit, for the mutual use of its members and to share the information more widely but is also able to consult with other groups to gain the benefit of their skills, knowledge, and negotiating ability.

Another example of sharing skills, and benefiting from scholarly wisdom, is the current debate on the Terrorism Bill, which, at time of writing, is at the Third Reading in the House of Commons. The item was raised under 'Any Other Business' at a meeting attended in October. The subject was the result of communication the previous week from the Consortium of Research Libraries in the British Isles ([CURL](#)) and the Society of College, National and University Libraries ([SCONUL](#)). Clauses 2 and 3 of the Bill could cause potential difficulty to Libraries and an ad hoc group was convened immediately. The membership of the group comprised senior staff of the British Library, CURL, SCONUL, SCURL, [CILIP](#), [CILIPS](#), SLIC, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council ([MLA](#)), and the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians ([BIALL](#)). The Group, on behalf of the library community, has reacted immediately and responded by submitting letters to the Home Secretary clarifying the potential implications to libraries, and to librarians, with the current text of the clauses. The email communication and sharing of developments by the members of this Group is an admirable example of a community of practice where the knowledge and expertise is gathered, shared, produced and submitted within days.

SCURL is well placed in the Scottish library and museum arena to share in the organisation and hosting of training events, seminars, and conferences. The network of colleagues developed in the first few months of my appointment to the Service Development Manager post was simultaneously rewarding, and enriching. Communities of practice are evident in the further education sector with the Librarians' Network working group, LIBNET, arranging a conference in 2006 specifically titled [Communities of Practice](#), in which, SCURL will assist. LIBNET has representatives on the working group from SCURL and SLIC, University of the Highlands and Islands, Motherwell College, Stevenson College, Stirling College of Further Education and two representatives from the Scottish Further Education Unit.

SCURL, SLIC and the MultiMedia Information Technology group in Scotland, ([MmiTS](#)) demonstrated their shared common expertise organising the fifth annual E-Books event recently held in the National Library of Scotland ([see report](#)). The outcome of the planning team's meetings was a document on event organisation which offers a checklist of procedures to follow when hosting an event irrespective of which group, organisation, building, or location is responsible. It is hoped to add the final document to the SCURL webpages to share freely with any potential organiser.

The Confederation of Scottish Mini-Cooperatives ([COSMIC](#)) is a confederation of independent organisations, services and projects working together to foster and sustain co-operation between libraries, archives, museums, electronic learning services and others actively engaged in building and developing 'virtual Scotland'. Its membership includes domain level organisations such as [SLIC](#) and the [Scottish Museums Council](#) sectoral organisations such as SCURL and regional co-operatives such as the Tayside and Fife Library Information Network ([TAFLIN](#)) and the Ayrshire Libraries Forum ([ALF](#))

The COSMIC web-site gives more information about the range of initiatives supported by the group, including links to useful services such as [CAIRNS](#) and [SCONE](#).

In conclusion, there is an embryonic, but growing, acronym list on COSMIC's website so you, the reader, may wish to contribute to this community of practice by sending new acronyms to [Gordon Dunsire](#), Depute Director, CDLR.

Jill Evans is Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL) Service Development Manager.



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Focus on: Communities of Practice

Fostering a professional community

ELISA is a successful professional community in Edinburgh, but where does it go next? Wendy Ball suggests that the next stage of development for such groups involves defining your purpose and continuing to question motives.

Edinburgh libraries and information services have a long history of co-operation and collaboration. However, the publication of the Cultural Policy for the City Of Edinburgh in 1998 revealed the need and the desire for a more formal structure to this co-operation. In response to this, the Edinburgh Libraries Strategy was published and launched in December 2003. A 'cornerstone' of the strategy was the establishment of [ELISA](#) (Edinburgh Libraries & Information Services Agency). As stated in the final document: "Many of the actions in this Strategy are not fully achievable without the establishment of ELISA, which will be a delivery mechanism for the Strategy." Chris Pinder described more fully the [genesis of ELISA](#) in an earlier issue of Information Scotland.

Since the publication of the Strategy, ELISA has made significant strides, including the collaborative efforts of Edinburgh libraries to fund a part-time development officer post. ELISA has emerged as a forum where libraries and information services can listen to each other, exchange ideas and experience, work with each other when practicable, and offer a united voice outside the sector.

It operates through Working Groups that focus on areas of concern to librarians and identify practical collaborative projects with concrete outcomes of benefit to the target user groups. Current projects include a one-stop portal for digital literary collections, an Edinburgh Library Passport

and a support network for Chartership. All this activity is linked through email lists, a [website](#), a newsletter, and personal contacts.

The motivations that drive people to contribute to and actively participate in ELISA appear to stem from two sources. There are those that come from what might be called the 'professional head' where strategies, budgets, and policies are the driving forces. The professional head sees successful strategies needing investments, political agendas needing to be addressed, and the sound economics for collaborative and partnership working. Then there are those motives that come from what can be called the 'professional body', the collective activities of individual staff who are motivated by professional and personal circumstance. The professional body responds enthusiastically to working together to meet common objectives, and to creating an environment conducive to ideas and innovation.

With ELISA, therefore, Edinburgh libraries and information services have established a robust mechanism to link many of their efforts to create access to a unified information resource for all the user groups in the city.

For ELISA to develop successfully, there are a number of practical issues – after all as with most such agencies both funds and time are limited. These issues fall into four main areas.

>>Practical benefits: What can ELISA do for its members?

>>Funding: Is funding necessary? How can development time, marketing, advocacy and networking activities be paid for? What other resources are available?

>>The communication network: How can the network be as effective and efficient as possible? How can the network be mainly self-maintaining without disintegrating.

>>Common agendas: How can common agendas be identified when various tensions exist between, for example, national and local remits, competitors for the same funding, institutional and individual objectives?

In order to develop further, a priority for ELISA is that it considers what kind of organisation it wants to be – is it a 'network', a 'community of practice', or a 'professional community'? There are numerous models for co-operative activities in Scotland and further afield, but there is an important distinction to be drawn between funded collaborative programmes and voluntary co-operative activities. In funded programmes such as Inspire (Information Sharing Partners in Resources for Education), the motives are chiefly driven by the professional head, this creates different dynamics to those in co-operative activities that are based on voluntary participation mainly driven by the professional body. ELISA is unusual in being both. It is

funded by the professional head but the rationale for its existence is being sought in the professional body. People become involved with ELISA on a voluntary basis.

Professional networks are a commonly found mechanism for co-operation and exchange of ideas, strategies and expertise. A key feature of networks is that they are a response to a practical common need. ELISA's origins are rooted in the Edinburgh Libraries Strategy – therefore it was not initially a response to a practical need. The term 'Communities of Practice' was coined by [Lave & Wenger](#) in the early 1990s in their work examining learning as social participation. It describes the development of informal groupings that have a definite role in organisational functions. [Hildreth & Kimble](#) present a variety of interpretations on how Communities of Practice can function in knowledge management. CILIP defines them as: "...a group of people who share the same profession, situation or vocation. These communities facilitate professional exchange, allowing members to establish a bond of common experience or challenges."

An essential difference between professional networks and Communities of Practice is the focus of the activity. A network will focus on the flow of information and expertise, whereas, a Community of Practice will focus on the cohesion of the group, the common ground, and the participation. The [National Electronic Library for Health](#) describes the main characteristics of their Communities of Practice as being voluntary, not driven together for a specific purpose, nor to achieve tangible results, and their existence is defined by the group members. This description seems to be valid for many Communities of Practice.

The diversity of institutions and agencies involved with ELISA do not make the establishment of common ground straightforward. There are approximately 144 libraries and information services in the [Edinburgh Libraries Guide](#). They range from voluntary information services with entirely electronic resources, to the National Library of Scotland. They include all kinds of services from across the sector and across domains. The people in the photographs featured with this article are all those who have contributed to the ELISA newsletter TACIT and give an indication as to the diverse character of the potential ELISA community.

In recent years the concept of a professional community as a model of organisation has been developed further. In 2004, the Government Information and Communication Service initiated a programme called 'Improving Professional Capacity'. The aim of the programme was to "provide a practical way forward to identify and establish a wider, fully functioning, professional community of government communicators." There

are now a series of best practice [case studies](#) demonstrating the benefits of organising professional activity in this way.

So what does a professional community do? It networks, it shares best practice but it mainly provides a place to belong. The common ground is important, as are the individuals within a community as people adopt different roles that allow that community to function effectively. Also communities need investment in order to flourish. This does not necessarily mean money, or even physical resources: in the context of a professional community investment of time and ideas are probably far more valuable.

Once ELISA is considered in the light of a professional community, it is easier to understand what aspects can be developed. It is also easier to see its place in the context of other professional networks and communities of practice, and how it relates to the national organisations such as CILIPS and CILIP.

Creating a new community, or rather building on an existing one, is an exciting prospect for all involved. Certain key features of such a community have to be nurtured. Potential community members need to feel that there is something real to which they can belong. A community memory comes into being and this is a conduit for knowledge assets. The knowledge assets belonging to the information providers of Edinburgh is a resource of great intrinsic value for the city.

As custodians of the information providing services, to take nothing for granted and to keep questioning motives is surely a good thing to do – particularly for the user groups. These are the issues that ELISA has to face as it forges on in its next phase of development. IS

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Focus on: Communities of Practice

E-merging services

Marketing e-resources proved to be a major theme at this year's e-books seminar. Two Chartership candidates, who took part in its planning, report on the event.

More than 80 delegates attended the fifth annual e-books seminar, travelling from across the UK, representing various information and library backgrounds, as did the speakers. The event was chaired by Catherine Nicholson, Head of Learning Resources, Glasgow School of Art, and attracted exhibitors from Dawson Books, Ebrary, Oxford University Press, ProQuest Information and Learning, and Thomson Gale.

Opening speaker Peter Reid, Senior Lecturer at Robert Gordon University, commented that while the Internet had revolutionised information gathering and provided easier access, there was doubt over whether users were benefiting from this electronic revolution. He discussed the vastness of digital resources, the inability of users to always make effective use of them, the "cult of Google" and the lazy, inefficient searching that this sometimes causes. The importance of marketing e-resources to educate library users on what is available and how it will benefit them was also stressed. Peter finished by saying that information literacy has always been important but never more so than now with the wide range of new resources available.

Mike Thornton, Account Manager for OCLC Pica, spoke about the types of digital material available via WorldCat and presented statistics that demonstrated its growth. He touched on the debate about whether e-books are viable or not and, in their defence, showed figures that demonstrated the large increase in usage from 2002-2004: 3,796 unique users in 2002 rising to 14,350 in 2004. Mike added that he felt the e-book should be able to co-exist with printed material and also highlighted the rise in e-journal subscriptions and the subsequent decrease in print ones.

Rachel Nagel, Strategic Marketing Manager, ProQuest Information and Learning, concentrated on e-resource marketing. She outlined key aims: making invisible e-resources visible to users, encouraging their continued use and ensuring staff are confident and knowledgeable about resources. She described good promotional practice: posters on display, producing support materials such as user guides and providing desktop links from PCs in libraries. The importance of library staff working with providers who

can assist with staff training and providing support materials was emphasised. She spoke about current developments in e-provision with libraries developing dedicated information teams with staff responsible for managing and promoting e-resources, training sessions for staff and users, e-newsletters and use of library websites and intranets to promote resources. She finished by discussing other developments such as federated search engines allowing e-resources to be searched collectively.

After lunch, Margaret Leyland, Information Team Co-ordinator for London Borough of Hillingdon, gave an enthusiastic account of how marketing of e-resources works in the public library environment at Hillingdon. After describing the range of e-resources they provide, she reiterated the importance of working with the supplier and being a “demanding customer”. The supplier can help with marketing by being present at promotions, helping with design and artwork for printed publicity, banners and plasma screen advertisements. As well as pursuing the marketing strategies Rachel Nagel outlined, Margaret speaks to community groups to raise awareness of e-resources. E-services are constantly evaluated enabling them to justify continuing their usage and identify which services require more training and marketing. The effectiveness of their marketing strategy is underlined by statistics that demonstrate the substantial increase in e-resource usage in recent years.

Finally, Ewan McCubbin, Assistant Librarian at Dundee University, gave an entertaining account about a re-branding process which he helped to implement at his library. A new logo was developed and anything relating to the multi-site library was branded with it, including free pens, torches, bookmarks and toothbrushes. These items have proved especially popular during recent Freshers’ weeks, where the library has had a greatly increased presence. The website was redesigned in 2004 and usage statistics for e-books have increased as the catalogue is now more user-friendly, and the library has set up e-marketing lists providing information on new services and products. Statistics show that library usage has increased since the new marketing strategy was put in place and the importance of marketing has been recognised: it is now one of eight functional groups within library management. Ewan closed by saying that making libraries visible is important and posed the question, “can we as librarians afford not to market ourselves?”

Judging by feedback from the delegates, it was a very successful event.

Written by: Veronica Denholm, Enquiries & Reference Services Assistant, National Library of Scotland; and Angus Wark, Scottish Union Catalogue Assistant, National Library of Scotland.

Information

The annual e-books seminars are organised by the Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL), the Scottish Library Information Council (SLIC) and Multimedia, Information and Technology Group Scotland (MMITS). The fifth event took place on 14 October in the Causewayside Building of the National Library of Scotland (NLS). Further details of the [papers](#).

Two NLS CILIP Chartership candidates were invited to assist in planning the seminar to enable them to gain experience in event organisation. This entailed setting up the venue, liaising with delegates, etc.



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CPD

Delivering a quality product

Cathy Kearney explores how the redeveloped Continuing Professional Development Programme (CPD) is meeting the needs of CILIPS members.

In 2004, a sub group of the Membership Services Committee of CILIPS Council was tasked to review CILIPS' CPD programme and make recommendations on its relaunch. In August of that year, the Education Review Group, as it was called, reported its findings to Council.

Readers may recall that the fact-finding consultation process carried out by the Group took a detailed look at CILIPS' product, customers and market place. We asked members:

- >>>What were they looking for in a CPD product?
- >>>Did they like the current product?
- >>>What improvements would they suggest?
- >>>What were they prepared to pay for attendance at training events?

Our investigation revealed that CILIPS members need and expect CPD to be provided by their professional association. Moreover, our members articulated very clearly the view that CILIPS CPD can best serve them by providing training for 'core' subjects and leaving specialist training to CILIP groups, employers and specialist providers.

Members had clear ideas about what a restyled CPD programme should be striving to achieve. It should:

- >>Be reasonably priced
- >>Help members develop new skills where required
- >>Help members gain evidence for promotion, chartership or revalidation
- >>Provide certificates of attendance
- >>Offer networking opportunities

CILIPS studied all the consultation feedback and worked hard to develop a new kind of product for members in line with their needs and expectations. During a training needs analysis across the sectors we asked members to identify which 'core' skills we should concentrate on and translated this information into an annual programme which includes topics ranging from 'An introduction to metadata' to 'Bidding for funds and resources'.

So how does the new CPD programme differ from what went before? Previously CILIPS offered a mix of specialised and general skills training in a one-day workshop setting (usually limited to around 16 places) with a single trainer. Our new programme offers training in a one-day conference or seminar format and is delivered by up to four renowned professional experts and specialists. As well as expert presentations each event includes panel discussions, question and answer forums, certificates of attendance and networking opportunities. Groups have offered their enthusiastic support for the new programme and have helped with promoting events, chairing events and inputting into the curriculum.

Each event in the CILIPS CPD Programme is designed to:

- >>Appeal to all sectors
- >>Encourage discussion, debate and participation
- >>Offer value added benefits such as further reading, specialist handouts
- >>Have clear associations with the profession from corporate design to conference pack inserts and choice of speaker
- >>Adhere to a regular time pattern so members know what to expect

Our 'one-day event' format is proving very popular with members and non-members alike since we've done our best to keep attendance costs as low as possible without compromising on quality. In order to do this we run each event to a 50 delegate capacity and charge non-members a little

more for their attendance (although we do offer attendees the opportunity to join the professional association!).

How can you find out more about the CPD programme? Again we've listened to member feedback and used this as the basis for our promotional mix. A key element in our marketing strategy was to keep costs down so we had to ensure we could make potential delegates aware of our CPD programme in the most cost-effective and cost-efficient manner.

All our events are publicised on [SLAINTE](#). Details are sent to a variety of JISCMail lists (you might recall being encouraged a few issues ago to join the LIS-Scotland mailing list for library news across Scotland). Flyers for forthcoming events are placed in CILIP Conference packs and also in conference packs for events organised by partners such as SLIC. We contact previous attendees, place notices in Gazette and [Information Scotland](#) and rely also on word of mouth.

In conclusion, we want to ensure a high quality of service to our members so we are proactively measuring customer satisfaction levels and using ongoing research to keep us in touch with changing needs. Continuous monitoring and review means we can respond quickly to tweak and tune our product in line with customer demands and preferences and retain confidence in a member determined quality product. IS

[Cathey Kearney](#), Assistant Director, CILIPS.



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Schools

High school libraries, US style

As part of her studies at Robert Gordon University *Alison Turriff* is investigating how secondary school librarians in America and Scotland use evidence and research in decision making. She reports on a visit to America where she observed school libraries in action.

I found that US school libraries were very much larger than Scottish school libraries I have visited – sometimes three or four times the size, and often with related facilities such as AV suites, recording suites and teacher support rooms. Schools tended to have bigger rolls (2000 pupils in some cases).

In addition, staffing levels were better – there were usually two librarians and at least one or two library assistants. As well as providing extra support in the library, this gave the librarians the time and opportunity to reflect, to brainstorm and share ideas with a colleague onsite. There was more money for the library, too. For one school with 1,700 students, the budget was approximately £20,000. In one state they use a ‘Common Good Fund’ to fund education. This money comes from criminal activities and speeding fines. An idea in another school was to raise funds with a birthday book programme, where each parent contributed \$25 each year to library funds, with a bookplate in each new book to celebrate a named child’s birthday. Other ideas to raise money for schools included a tax-free gift scheme.

US school librarians are trained as teachers and have to hold a teaching licence before they can practice as school librarians. This means that they are also paid as teachers and have the same conditions of service. Many of them then take a part-time Masters LIS course to fulfil the school librarian requirements. Collaboration with teachers seemed to be largely informal. There was little evidence of formal INSET taking place, although there were regular working meetings, often focused on technology issues. I also found that most school librarians did not have formal policies or development plans in place. Libraries were very well equipped with computers, scanners and other equipment.

The school day is very different – schools normally start at 7.30, finish at 2.30 or 3.00, then the students attend sports activities. Vocational schools are available for students who want to focus on technical or craft trades. One major difference is that in the eight-period day, teachers have class contact for six periods, one period for preparation and one for duty. This duty can range from supervising the corridors, to offering subject-specific help in rooms adjoining the library. The supervised study halls I saw were completely silent, even with 150 students working. Students could visit the library from study hall, but had to have a signed slip and be specific about what they were looking for in the library.

I was very aware of inspirational messages throughout the school, for example on posters, screensavers and on internal radio/tv broadcasts. These included: “be the best you can be”; “risk-taking is scary but brings out the best in you”; and “reflect on the three things you learned at school today”. These messages were consolidated and reinforced regularly and students seemed seriously focused on achievement and future education and employment. One librarian talked about her belief that anything can be changed in the school culture in just three weeks. Once a problem was identified it would be challenged by everyone at all times and within three weeks it would be eliminated, for example, wearing coats indoors. How successfully could this be applied to some library problems we have?

Some schools had daily radio or TV broadcasts organised and delivered by students, including headlines, sports news, weather and forthcoming activities. As well as the most obvious front-of-camera roles, students also tackled the technical roles such as camera operator, producer and vision mixer. The students were very relaxed about the process and treated it as a daily routine.

On a serious note, one school had an unannounced lockdown drill, where staff and students prepare for someone bringing guns into schools. Rooms are identified that can be locked from inside, and the SWAT team and local police arrive to carry out their tasks of making the school safe and to evacuate casualties and disable the gunman. In all of the schools I visited, I never saw any security gates, metal detectors or security staff.

Schools had a very relaxed and warm atmosphere, and this was reflected in the libraries. I saw some libraries offering coffee and cookies (due to the early starts of some students, who could be away from home for 12 hours each day). Boxes of paper tissues were also in evidence everywhere I visited.

The most radical thing I saw was sofas and mats for students to take a quick nap between lessons! However, as the students seemed so mature and well-behaved, this facility was not abused. In many libraries classical music was being played – this was said to relax students but also to cover up background noise. I also saw fish tanks and frog tanks in libraries, adding to the relaxing atmosphere, although the frogs sometimes made a bid for freedom.

In two schools there were whiteboards with words of the week (such as

“confrontational”) and their definitions – a really simple and effective way to increase vocabulary. In one school, they promoted easy books as “Everybody Books” which they felt prevented students feel they were being marginalised. Many of the schools had accession barcodes on the outside of books, which saved time opening them at issue and return – the students then stamped their own books out.

The reading programme in many schools was based on ‘Accelerated Reader’, a national programme where books are graded according to difficulty of interest and ability. Children read the books and then answer multiple choice e-quizzes to gain personal reading scores. These contribute to formal grades in English.

Information literacy

The most impressive area of development was in information literacy, where the programme was started early, reinforced and developed constantly. Sessions began in kindergarten, with five year-old students researching an animal and putting relevant information and a picture into a simple Word document, with help from the librarian and teacher. The primary (elementary) schools I visited also had librarians. They focused on promoting literacy and simple information skills tasks. There was a wide use of electronic databases in all schools, such as e-library and Proquest, giving access to focused and relevant authoritative sources of information, rather than the use of Google-type search engines. The librarian might spend half to two thirds of the budget on these databases. Library assignments were graded and counted towards final subject grades, which makes library work relevant and a real focus for students.

I saw some very sophisticated skills, such as twelve year-olds watching a film of the Roswell incident (Alien Autopsy), finding information from different viewpoints, putting forward their opinions on the subject, listening to the views of others and debating the truth of the film as they interpreted it. One school librarian talked about the need to take students outwith their comfort zone when teaching information literacy, to make them think critically and be equipped to debate. In one school the librarians spent between five and seven hours per senior student per topic (one each term). This obviously has huge implications on time but the school had small numbers of students, and student information literacy and critical thinking skills were recognised as crucial to their education.

Information literacy development is intended to prepare students for

university work. A recent survey of university students from one school indicated that the experience of information literacy had helped their search skills, problem solving and critical thinking in university work. There is also teaching on citation forming and the bibliographic process, which is also invaluable for university students. I saw examples of a librarian reviewing and evaluating the search process with students after a research project, and establishing how they thought that their information literacy skills had developed, what their strengths were and where they still needed to develop. This evaluation and discussion is important to the whole learning process.

Comparisons

In advance of my visit, I distributed a paper outlining how school librarians operate in Scotland to American school librarians. Practically the first thing each person said when I met them was how amazed they were with the situation for Scottish school librarians. They could not imagine what it would be like to work alone without the support of other library staff, with insufficient amounts of money and without electronic databases. They were very impressed with the range of services and development work Scottish school librarians provided under these conditions. I have since spoken to many Scottish school librarians about what I discovered during my visit. People have been surprised to hear about the different situation in America. Ideas such as the development of critical thinking skills and money raising schemes created interest, and also the presence of teachers in the library for duty. Less popular ideas were the provision of sleeping mats and coffee and cookies!

In terms of collecting evidence for decision making, I did not find much difference between Scottish and American practice. School librarians in both nations collect information, but are not always aware that what they are doing is termed as collecting evidence to help them form a decision. With regard to the theory of decision making, the best fit with a formal theory is that of incremental decision making, where librarians reach an end point by working towards it year on year. Very often the model is to decide on a way forward and try it out, and if it doesn't meet requirements, to change direction.

I would welcome any input or comments. I have developed a tool to record the progress of decisions, and if anyone would like to try this I would be happy to send this to them. I aim to produce a model of good practice in

this area over the next two years, and I will be happy to share that with school librarians once it is complete.

Get involved...

These visits stimulated my interest in several major areas. If anyone has tried or would like to try some of the following ideas, I would be very keen to discuss them in more detail or to hear about the experiences of school librarians in Scotland:

- >>Would playing classical music help to reduce noise levels and keep students calm?
- >>Does working with a library assistant help the librarian have the time to reflect and collaborate with teachers?
- >>How can teacher supervision of study pupils make a difference to the work of the librarian?
- >>Can we prove that structured electronic database use offers benefits to pupil achievement?
- >>How can we introduce a programme to develop and consolidate critical thinking and information literacy skills over the whole school experience?
- >>Can inspirational messages help pupils to achieve more? (see library specialist catalogues for details of items such as banners, bookmarks and posters)
- >>How can teachers be used to support students in the library?
- >>Can the three week zero tolerance scheme work on library problems?

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End piece

Memories

Brian Osborne calls (again) for libraries to be involved more with the Edinburgh International Book Festival.

I know, I know, I have gone on about this before, but every year it strikes me more and more forcibly that, as a profession, we are losing a trick by not having some sort of active involvement with the Edinburgh International Book Festival. I accept that it was easier to think up some sort of a linked event when our professional body had an active publishing programme and regularly produced books like *The Scot and His Maps* or *Discovering Scottish Writers* but it should surely not be beyond the wit of the clever people who run CILIPS to get their heads together and find some way of being involved with Scotland's premier book event.

I spent a fair amount of time at the Book Festival this August, both for work (talking and chairing events) and pleasure (listening to speakers and browsing the bookshop) and enjoyed the unique atmosphere that is Charlotte Square in August; ticket sales were up, the sun seemed to shine most of the time, the crowds were constant, sell-out events were legion. A wide range of bodies seem to feel that it is worthwhile to be associated with this buzz of activity and to sponsor events or have some form of presence there. Why not us? Is this not just the sort of high-profile event we should be involved with?

What is the librarian's key skill? Presumably acting as an information intermediary – a role not less significant in the on-line age. So couldn't some form of co-operative library presence – an "ask a librarian" stall for example – be organised by CILIPS, drawing on the human and electronic resources of public and other libraries in the central belt. Is this totally impracticable? Is this the worst idea since 1953? Well possibly but if that particular idea wouldn't work perhaps something else would. What seems to me to be important is less the specific nature of our involvement and more the act of getting involved and what that would signal to the wider world. Would it not be worthwhile discussing with the Book Festival what sort of involvement they would welcome?

One of the highlights of the Festival for me was introducing William Horwood, the author of *The Boy With No Shoes* (Review, 2005, £6.99). Horwood is best known as the author of novels like *Duncton Wood* but here he tells the story of his own childhood in Kent. I was delighted to have been obliged to read this book, which I am sure I probably wouldn't have done otherwise. Although I am fascinated by biography as a genre I am rather resistant to memories of miserable childhoods.

Horwood's book is, however, one of the most moving things I have read in a long time – his account of being a small, unloved boy in a strange and rather unpleasant adult world had, to me, something of the flavour of the Dickens of *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist*. The story, though a deeply

unhappy one at times, is eventually positive and life affirming. A definite recommendation.

For a totally different read let me end by drawing your attention to Kathleen Jamie's superb collection of essays on Scottish nature and landscape *Findings* (Sort of Books, 2005, £6.99). Kathleen Jamie is an award-winning poet who very early in her career survived the potentially blighting experience of working with me as Writer in Residence in Midlothian.

Happily this didn't seem to cause her any permanent damage and she has gone on from strength to strength as a poet and travel writer. *Findings* is written with a poet's imagination and sensibility and really shouldn't be missed – it also has the bonus of being one of the most attractively produced paperbacks I have seen recently.

[Brian D Osborne](#)



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Obituaries

Gordon McCrae, 1947-2005

A Paisley Buddy born and bred, Gordon McCrae, who died suddenly on 3 October 2005, was known to numerous colleagues across Scotland: more particularly he was equally well-known to their children, in his alter ego of Mr. Bones, the punch and judy man. Then, more widely still, many more people across the country knew him in his various guises – the children's entertainer, the Bum Note ceilidh band, local historian, archaeologist. All that in addition to being one of the two Depute Librarians of the University of Paisley.

Gordon was educated at Paisley's John Neilston Institution and two years in the South at Kingston College of Further Education before taking a degree in archaeology at Liverpool University. Following a postgraduate

course in librarianship at the Robert Gordon College in Aberdeen, his library career took in posts at Paisley, Motherwell and Cumbernauld public libraries and Falkirk Technical College (where he met Isobel whom he married). Then in 1980 he arrived back in his home town, as Acquisitions Librarian at the then Paisley College Library, and served the town and the Library assiduously right up to his untimely death. In 1989 he was appointed one of three Depute Librarians at a staff restructuring following the retirement of Hamish Maclachlan. He had already taken supervisory responsibility for our automated system and later, with the departure of Carole Munro for Aberdeen University Library, he added responsibility for circulation too.

He brought a breath of fresh air to Paisley: he questioned everything we did and how we did it. He was not afraid to suggest radical changes, and even more importantly, to see those changes carried through in practice. Gordon never took anything, or anybody, at face value. He brought efficiency and value for money to Paisley College Library long before they ever became buzz words: he was of that generation which had been brought up to account for every penny of public money. Of course, that could have its down side too: I often argued with him that he should use trains (or even airlines) for his professional trips South on the grounds that his absence cost as much as the fare he was saving. But his frugal way with Library funds kept him using coaches, until that is his return from a trip South with the story of two drivers of his coach swapping places in the driving seat at 70mph in the fast lane of the M6. After that it was the train.

Gordon was well known on various technical committees both in Scotland and more widely: his presence on them ensured that they would approach their business in practical and realistic terms, but also with great good humour. For many years he served on the National Acquisitions Group in his capacity as editor of its journal Taking Stock, in addition to the user groups of the Library's automated systems (previously BookshelF, latterly Talis) and technical committees, including Scolcap.

His wider interests sometimes overlapped with his professional life: entertainer as Mr. Bones at parties for the children of colleagues both in Paisley and more widely, or as accordion player in his Bum Note ceilidh band. Any such occasion was enlivened by his presence, invariably to the point of hilarity if not outright riot. But behind the fun and the excitement there was an excellent musician, and an expert puppeteer, the inheritor and preserver of an ancient tradition. The other side of Gordon was to take those traditions very seriously and study them with long-held deep and expert scholarship. In that spirit he took an M.Phil at Strathclyde University with a study of the songs of Lady Nairne. He also wrote a book on puppetry techniques, among other publications.

In that same spirit too, Gordon was, through his education, inclination and pride in his home town and county, a local historian of the first significance. We have lost a walking encyclopaedia of Paisley and Renfrewshire history, the man I frequently went to with questions about buildings or incidents I had noticed, and who never failed for a full answer. He served with the Renfrewshire Local History Forum and was hugely valued by every local history society, and just about every local historian, across Renfrewshire. His generous input to other people's researches was incalculable.

To one extent this activity culminated in a Renfrewshire local history and archaeology course run through the University of Paisley's Lifelong Learning Department. Fully subscribed in its first two years, it had attracted almost the same number of students for the third year which began just a week before Gordon's death. Gordon delivered this course jointly with the Paisley Museum, but it was largely his work, and his classes were delivered in the usual Gordon McCrae fashion. This reflected the many talks he gave around Paisley and more widely, all with his unique character: the impromptu accordion tunes and sing-alongs, or the passing round of tins of sweeties (soor plums were Gordon's favourite).

Gordon McCrae the man has already emerged from these accounts, but there was so much more to him that we will cherish and remember. An energetic, forceful when need be, manager, a man who never suffered fools gladly, Gordon still always had a deep concern for all the people he dealt with, whether colleagues, staff, or Library users, even chief librarians: he might argue that something I was asking him to do was a waste of time (and I often enough agreed with him), but when I explained that we were labouring under force majeure I knew I could rely on his complete support; more particularly that I could rely on him getting things done, for he was one of the most practical colleagues I have ever known. He saved the Library enormous sums, and me much time and anguish, by bright ideas or by make do and mend. 'Can-do' people or lateral thinkers: Gordon was these, and more, long before they got fashionable names.

But especially it is the humour we will remember: the mockery of red tape and humbug, the recounting of frequently hilarious anecdotes, and the jokes against himself. There is so much to remember, some of it of a distinctly politically incorrect, but never malicious, nature: his bemusement at being asked to supply a risk assessment for a punch and judy show; his return from music or puppetry engagements with anecdotes about the goings-on; the story from NAG that we can picture so well of Gordon and the soup in the Thai restaurant; the colleagues across various libraries kept in stitches by his impromptu performances or narratives.

All of that we are now missing in this one man: the immensely able and ever practical professional librarian, but who bedded his practicality in a grasp of professional theory and ethics; the servant of the University of Paisley who did so much both to maintain the highest standards of library service and to promote the University to the wider community; the manager and the innovator; the musician and entertainer; the scholar; but above all warm and humorous friend. Colleagues and friends across Scotland and across the profession have lost a unique and irreplaceable friend. He is widely mourned but will be long remembered, by his own and almost every other generation from youngest to oldest.

The deepest loss must be his family's: we offer our heartfelt condolences to his widow Isobel and his two sons, Ross and Alastair.

Stuart James
University of Paisley



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Obituaries

Elizabeth Liversidge MBE FLA, 1914-2005

Elizabeth (Betty) Liversidge died on 9 September 2005, aged 91. With her passing, we have lost the first female President of the professional body in Scotland. Betty was President of the Scottish Library Association in 1974 and was made an Honorary Member in 1975. Perhaps an indication of Betty's outstanding abilities is reflected in the fact that it was to be a further 12 years before another woman became President.

Betty's professional career began in Glasgow Public Libraries in April 1932, where she worked as a junior assistant in the Mitchell Library. She moved on from Glasgow to the Borders, where for a few short months immediately after the war she was the County Librarian of Roxburghshire. In keeping with her modest personality she accepted that she still had much to learn about county library work and moved to an assistant's post in a larger

system. In Fife, she developed her skills and then moved to Stirlingshire in 1948, first as deputy and for the remaining years as chief.

Betty accomplished much in those years as chief and developed a well-established school library service, a programme of community library building, improved staff training and a strong mobile service. She worked with local community groups to improve services to hospitals, playgroups and care homes. A family book service was set up to combat rural isolation. Betty contributed to the wider library growth in Stirling through co-operation with local colleges and the university. She supported the County Library Circle and was Scottish representative on the County Libraries Group.

She was described in SLA News as “a librarian to her fingertips” who regretted the loss of close contact with readers and books as she moved up the management tree. This was particularly manifested in her encouragement of and great enjoyment in her librarians’ reflections on their work-a-day experiences especially their more humorous encounters. Setting high standards for her staff, Betty knew the value of high quality customer care which she worked hard to have equally applied to all. Her exceptional intelligence was matched with a warmth and real interest in people. She responded to an accusation that libraries were nice settings for middle-class recreation saying, “as a librarian, I never saw books as being for any class, but for every member of the community.”

Away from work, she enjoyed music, the Scottish countryside and was the compiler of the County Libraries Group’s Reader’s Guide The Face of Scotland. She was a founder member of the Stirling Soroptimist Club and served it as both secretary and president.

Betty closed her Presidential Address as the local government reorganisation of 1975 approached by saying, “I just find reading an essential skill, essential for the survival of the community and the individuality of us all.” She reminded delegates of Lord Reith’s words “Don’t forget those who came first – even although those who came later can go further”. Her well-deserved award of the MBE was met with delight and our thoughts are with her family at this time.

Rhona Arthur, Assistant Director, CILIPS/SLIC



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