

President's perspective

Prepare to raise your voice

Libraries provide solutions at many levels, says new CILIPS President Alan Hasson.

Just after the New Year I attended a meeting of the CILIPS Council, where I was presented with the President's Medal. The next day a photo appeared on Slainte of the presentation. I was feeling pretty good about myself. And then came my meeting with the Library Services Manager for [Scottish Borders Council](#), Margaret Menzies, who was in Dennis Skinner mode. More of which anon.

To those of you who don't know me, a brief resume. Following university, I started work in the Special Collections of [Glasgow University Library](#), recording – cataloguing would be far too grand a word – collections of Whistler-related letters and ephemera. Towards the end of the project the offer of a position in the Sudan came up, and Kate and I went off to Rufaa, about 100 miles up the Blue Nile from Khartoum. I retain from that time gratitude and respect for the vast majority of the people we met, who were generous with what they had and made a stranger welcome. I also became very aware of just how privileged Scotland is in having local and national democracy (annoying though that can be for us bureaucrats) and that the BBC is a jewel. On my return I started working for Renfrew District. I had the good luck to be sent, as my first professional post, to help open the new Ferguslie Park Library in a team which included librarians, youth workers and teachers. It was what a public library should be, indeed what local government should be: a service which evolved, was innovative, above all it was relevant to the local population and therefore was heavily used by them.

I had various positions in Renfrew District, before being appointed as Chief Librarian at Cumbernauld and Kilsyth and then at local government reorganisation as Head of Service in [East Ayrshire](#). A prominent lesson I learnt in all these and later posts was perhaps simple, but it's a constant: structures and policies, checks and balances, are there to support the talent of staff to deliver to the needs and wants of their communities, but, they have a siren like danger of becoming the prime concern.

I came to the Scottish Borders in 1998 and since then have changed jobs four times. Currently my title is Head of Community Services, which takes in Libraries, Museums, Arts, Community Learning and Development, Sport and Physical Education and various multi-disciplinary initiatives.

For the next year in my role as President, the baseline has to be the celebration of 100 years of SLA /CILIPS. Officers of [CILIPS](#) have been putting a lot of work into preparing for the year, including some good old fashioned paper-based research and threads of continuity, for instance getting young men to read, are constants through the huge changes.

It's a bit of a cliché to say we live in a time of change, but, clichés become clichés because they are accurate. And this is a time of change. Globalisation, the changing consensus on the role of the state and the continuing process which is devolution, are simply some of the more prominent factors which are affecting us. All have an influence for colleagues in all our sectors. Since I get the opportunity to write a few of these columns, let me pick one of these for the time being.

For us in libraries devolution provides a paradox. The level of access we have to decision makers, both at a political level and on policy issues is unprecedented. We have an opportunity, already being exploited, to get over the message that libraries are a solution to many challenges on many levels. But the opportunities only remain as long as we have a strong, united, Scottish-focused organisation which speaks for the sector as a whole.

This sets the context which I believe may be the biggest challenge for our profession on an organisational level: how it adapts to the new context of increasingly differing priorities and delivery within a devolved UK. To its credit CILIP has recognised, to a much greater extent than some in our sector, that the mechanisms that were appropriate in a unitary UK are no longer those which fit a federal structure with four centres of government. Whether it has recognised the full meaning of this change is still moot. Whether it can continue to evolve, events over the next year or so will give a clearer picture of. We here in Scotland will have to be prepared to make our voices heard in influencing our UK-wide organisation, to ensure that we are redesigning to a purpose which suits all our needs rather than moving some organisational deckchairs on an outdated, centrist model.

Within Scotland it will be interesting to see if we can make it clear that libraries across all our sectors are a ready-made tool to make Scotland, wealthier and fairer, smarter, healthier, safer and stronger and greener.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as I can in the next year, to hear how you are making your voices heard. I hope that I will come up to the standard of my predecessors in this presidential role and not fit the image that first crossed Margaret Menzies mind on seeing my picture, of a Victorian mill owner...



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Digital environment

Young dogs, old tricks?

On evidence from an important new report, Tony Ross and Richard Fallis conclude that libraries must learn lessons from successful Internet brands, and establish stronger, more intuitive online identities.

A familiar image: a child sits, effortlessly getting to grips with some new technological marvel, while the parents despair in the background, leafing forlornly through the instruction manual. The specific technology has changed over time, but the truistic quality of the image has remained the same, showing younger and older generations to be hopelessly divided by technology. Implicit, of course, is the contrasting of the adaptability and fearlessness of the young, with the rigid, “old dog, new tricks” mentality of older minds.

However, this image falls short of reality when it comes to the Internet, according to [Information Behaviour of the Researcher of the Future](#), the report of a new wide-ranging UCL study of the information-seeking behaviour of the so-called “Google Generation”. The report, commissioned by the [British Library](#), has attracted media attention for its debunking of some popularly-held misconceptions about the Google Generation, defined as those born since 1993, and their use of technology to access information. The report dismisses the perception that members of the Google Generation are “expert searchers” as a “dangerous myth” (p.20). While they are generally more competent with technology, they “tend to use much simpler applications and fewer facilities than many imagine” (p.18). In fact they favour types of technology that are straightforward enough to be mastered intuitively, such as the uncomplicated Google interface. Interestingly, the report adds that this is probably the case with Internet users of all ages. It questions the perception that, compared to older generations, the Google Generation prefers to consume information only in

“easily digested chunks” (p.19): in truth, all age groups exhibit a preference for bite-size information.

In presenting such findings, the report serves to diminish perceptions of a generational divide in this area, and amplify a growing awareness of the fundamental need for information literacy training across all age groups, at all levels of education, in all sections of society. The future may belong to the young but, as the report argues, “the future is now” (p.31) and, “in a real sense, we are all Google Generation” (p.21). The Internet has now penetrated society to such an extent that a more accurate version of the image with which we opened would surely show the parents competing eagerly with their kids for time online.

Different generations also exhibit common shortcomings in their ability to make effective use of technology to retrieve information. At the risk of sounding contentious, it seems to us that people, regardless of age, are generally lazy in their information-seeking habits. Faced with an overwhelming amount of information online, people are inclined to make snap decisions about its worth and veracity. Ultimately, convenience may be the most popular measure of whether or not an Internet resource is useful. If a web application is straightforward to navigate, and quickly yields information in a readily-digestible format, people will keep using it. Thus, while the Google brand has grown beyond ubiquity, users rarely use its advanced search features, or even browse beyond the first page of search results. Given such realities, a resource which cannot be grasped intuitively – or even requires formal training, to use effectively – is unlikely to be used, no matter how accurate and relevant its information. The UCL study places most online library systems in this bracket (p.9).

So how should librarians respond? They can hide their heads in the sand, or rail impotently against the tide of progress, so that they become outmoded figures, wringing their hands on the margins. A more sensible approach would be to respond proactively, in two distinct ways. Firstly, librarians can institute the sort of information literacy training which empowers people by endowing them with skills to search effectively for, evaluate, synthesize, and use information in ways that are appropriate, ethical, and legal. This may prove difficult, since it requires librarians to work to change hearts and minds which, even in the ‘adaptable’ young, may be doggedly fixed on taking the easy option when it comes to searching. Nevertheless, it is a cause that can only be helped by the attention garnered by reports such as the UCL study.

Secondly, libraries must be open to new technology, and the opportunities and challenges it brings. The UCL report, specifically referencing research libraries, argues that they must be innovative, and update their operating

practices, in order to remain relevant. They must accept that users will inevitably continue to “turn their backs on the library as a physical space” (p.8), and that the new breed of ‘virtual’ scholar may only ever want to access libraries remotely (p.34), and perhaps only as a springboard off which to ‘bounce’ (p.31) to other digital information sources. Like it or not, the revolution is happening, here and now, and libraries must ride the waves of change. At the very least, libraries must have foresight enough to learn lessons from successful Internet brands, to establish stronger online identities, and achieve more intuitive, user-friendly, functionality.

Far from threatening the existence of libraries, new technology may enable them to evolve to become pivotal to a society whose citizens are on the verge of information overload. It seems to be taken for granted that every person is, in effect, his or her own librarian, able unaided, to discern good information from bad. However, the UCL study demonstrates that this is simply not the case, and that all age ranges spanned by the Google Generation are prone to make the same basic errors in judgment.

The world needs professional librarians, now more than ever. It is therefore incumbent on librarians to adapt to meet the challenges of the modern world, and to get to grips with its technological marvels.



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Digital environment

New model learning?

Jill Evans and Elizabeth McHugh question the current business models of e-books. Are they flexible enough to ensure they are as easy as possible for the end user to access?.

[SCURL](#), [SLIC](#) and [MmiTs](#) recently organised the annual e-books event as described in the previous issue of Information Scotland, and e-books and e-journals continue to dominate areas of my responsibilities as the Service Development Manager. Two of the Affiliated Groups to SCURL, the [Scottish Academic Books Consortium](#), (SCABS) and the [Scotland](#)

[Northern Ireland Periodical Supply](#) (SNIPES) have been composing Invitations To Tender for the supply and delivery of books and periodicals. Both contracts are for three years and represent a significant expenditure for Scottish academic libraries.

I am delighted that the further education library sector is represented on these SCURL groups as our FE college librarians provide an insight into the different content with which they would wish to have access. Both groups have the benefit of the wisdom of their Chairs: Colin Galloway of [Glasgow University Library](#), Chair of SCABS; and Jeremy Upton of [St Andrews University Library](#), Chair of SNIPES. The individual members of these groups also have significant expertise in e-provision with their knowledge on the intricacies of VAT, concurrent use, single use, platform changes, bundles and deals. I am confident that the users of the libraries and institutions will benefit from the best possible deal and value for money once the contracts are let, later this year.

Last year provided me with a significant learning curve on procurement matters and engagement with the [Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges](#) (APUC) colleagues but it is the courtesy, wisdom, mutual respect and sharing of knowledge within the librarianship profession that continues to inspire me. An example of 'evidence based practice' is the second part of this article, which has been contributed by my colleague Elizabeth McHugh, Electronic Resources Manager for the [UHI Millennium Institute](#).

Accessing and using e-books: thoughts and counter-thoughts, by Elizabeth McHugh

Here at UHI we are just starting to use permanently purchased e-books. We are training the users on how to use the supplier's platform and I'm putting the MARC records, for the complete books, through the ILS and providing links to the titles held in the platform.

We are starting to build a collection in the same way as we would do with print titles – from reading lists. I am connecting them to the catalogue and trying to work out the best way of promoting them, through the catalogue and other methods, including encouraging direct links from the VLE. I suspect I'm building a rod for my own back in linking the e-book to the print equivalent and linking them back a couple of editions as well as forward (where the option exists). I can see problems with this down the line as we get more e-books. But I thought I would try it and see if it acts as a promotion method. However, there could be other ways of doing things.

Chapter and page level linking, with the attendant MARC records (if possible or necessary) both in the ILS and through the VLE, would be useful, providing the URLs are stable – and if they work with whatever authentication methods might be in use by the institution. But the URLs need to be easy to find, e.g. via the browser address bar. Putting the URLs in the platform might work from a suppliers point of view, but from my perspective it's an extra step to finding the correct URL that the user might not be willing to make. Making chapters and page ranges easy to search in the catalogue, VLE and via a federated search engine would be helpful. A question I have is, how would chapters and page ranges be represented in the supplier's platform so that the user isn't confused into thinking they are getting the complete book?

If a lecturer really would like to specify reading material within a VLE or highlight a particular section of a book, the function to be able to purchase and make accessible page ranges, chapters or otherwise, from a book, without purchasing the whole edition of the e-copy, could be part of future supply models. After all, there might be reasons why lecturers wouldn't want the whole book purchased. Perhaps this function already is available from some suppliers.

If we are looking at cost per page, are we looking at a stable cost per publisher regardless of the academic discipline the book belongs to? At what point does it become more economic to purchase the entire e-book rather than just small chunks of it? Where a new edition is issued should we be looking at an exchange model – where we purchase a title in perpetuity and if we need the new edition when it comes out then could we exchange it for a nominal fee? If there are more chapters and pages in the new edition then we pay for the extra pages and if there are less we pay a nominal fee for the edition itself. I'm not talking about a subscription whereby we would get the new title automatically – there might be good reasons for retaining an old edition, or even having both old and new in the catalogue.

Suppliers and publishers are going to have to look at ways of making access and linking methods as easy as possible for the end user – regardless of size of content and format – integrating multimedia into e-books where possible. Is it economic to purchase in micro-payments? Publishers must accept that to encourage growth in the e-book market they will have to make available titles, including course texts, that people want. They need to consider flexibility of access and change their current business models to accommodate the flexibility that 'e' provides us with. At the risk of being shot down in flames by a publisher, it's not as if users are paying for the paper the literature is being printed on...



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Digital environment

Benefits of being social

Andrew Youngson describes how the National Library of Scotland has grabbed the potential of social web applications to attract users, with a number of Web 2.0 pilots.

As is often the way, the idea to have a play with 'Web 2.0' came about over a coffee with a colleague. Gill Hamilton (National Library of Scotland Systems Librarian) and I were discussing the possible use of online applications to help fulfil library goals in an accessible, easy, cheap and, dare I say, fun way. The more we talked, the more we became convinced that NLS was missing opportunities to make our content, services and events more accessible to a broader range of people.

There is no true definition of 'Web 2.0'. My own interpretation of the idea is that it is a fundamental shift towards websites and services that utilise user-generated content and metadata and which often include a social element where users can distribute and comment on their content.

What do you pilot?

When we looked at Web 2.0 services we were overwhelmed by the number available. We decided to go with four which we felt were 'Web 2.0 brand name'. We chose to pilot: Flickr, YouTube, Wikipedia and Facebook. We felt that these would give us an adequate selection to experiment with as they covered pictures, films, information and social networking. We then searched them all for 'National Library of Scotland' and we found that NLS had a presence on all of them, from content already generated by other users. Now it was up to us to see how NLS could make its own contribution.

What do you make available?

[Pictures for Flickr](#), [film footage for YouTube](#), [information for Wikipedia](#) and events and activities for [Facebook](#) were all drawn together and uploaded.

Luckily content was not a problem for us as NLS has a wealth of material we could draw upon. To make the various media more accessible we tailored the metadata to each site, ensuring it met our needs for information, content description and, very importantly, searchability. Many organisations will have a digital presence whether they like it or not, often generated by people outside the organisation. If this is the case then making a contribution should be viewed as both necessary and beneficial. If an organisation has a strong digital presence then it has a golden opportunity to reach new audiences, become more accessible and highlight existing web resources.

It can't all be good can it?

In reality the likelihood of major unforeseen problems is slim. It shouldn't hold you back from making information and content available to all the people who could access it and enjoy it. The fear of lack of control is understandable, but using professional judgement at the point of creation should allay this. For every possible concern with utilising these resources, there are many more things to be gained.

So what are the benefits then?

These services are usually free to use. Upgraded accounts can be purchased to increase uploading limits if required, but for most organisations this will not be necessary. No specialist knowledge of web design or equipment, such as servers, is required, just a computer and web connection is needed. There are large, pre-existing audiences to tap into and most metadata can be embedded with hyperlinks to source material, effectively acting as a preview to further content and resources on organisational websites. The organisation's profile is raised by becoming more visible to new, diverse audiences and it can also make content accessible and engaging to people who might never have thought to look in the traditional places, if they are aware of us at all.

Most organisations have pre-existing content available on their websites and in documentation that can be recycled into these mediums. They also give an avenue to share media, such as photos, that would not really be suitable for an organisational website but are of broader interest. Due to the interlinking of sites and resources it is easy to attract 'passing trade' and for the accidental discovery of your content to occur. It can be linked to by other users in a variety of ways, such as mutually shared tagging or being added to favourite's lists, which in turn may highlight it to others in their network. In short, it is cheap and easy to use, raises profile and is accessible to large, diverse, pre-existing audiences. How could this not be a good thing to make use of?

After the development of these pilots there are a few key ideas worth highlighting:

- Any contribution is worthwhile, large or small. A small contribution is better than no contribution at all.
- We can only hope to contribute to the whole, not control it all.

- It may be a new medium to work in, but the issues are all familiar.
- Try not to be put off by perceived issues and concentrate on the positive aspects.

- Have fun! Enjoy your interaction with these resources.

Andrew Youngson spoke at the 'Metadata Issues and Web 2.0 Services' seminar organised by the [Cataloguing and Indexing Group in Scotland](#), on 21 February.



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Digital environment

A national showcase

Gordon Dunsire updates us on the development of IRI-Scotland, the national digital library that aims to be a showcase of Scotland's research activity.

A two-year project investigating an Institutional Repository Infrastructure for Scotland has just ended. One of the main outcomes of IRI-Scotland is a [pilot cross-repository service](#) which offers general, author, title and subject keyword searches on one or more of the seven available institutional repositories located in Scotland. An institutional repository is an

infrastructure for storing, managing, accessing and disseminating electronic versions of resources created by the institution and its members; in other words it is a type of digital library. Resources may be made available on open access or via a login, and can comprise research output, teaching and learning materials, and administrative publications.

IRI-Scotland focused on research materials, ranging from peer-reviewed journal articles through pre-prints to conference presentations, so the pilot service developed by CDLR only includes repositories from research-intensive institutions such as universities. These comprise Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Queen Margaret, St Andrews, Stirling, and Strathclyde.

Institutional repositories generally follow standards developed by the [Open Archives Initiative](#) for disseminating the content of resources. The pilot service uses the OAI Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH) to harvest or copy catalogue records from each repository into a central database used for subsequent information retrieval. All repositories supply records in Dublin Core format, which limits the potential sophistication of the pilot service compared with a library Opac, but in practice this is much less of an issue than problems caused by the content of the records.

One of the attractions of an institutional repository is that metadata can be created by anybody, and not just trained cataloguers. The result is a noticeable increase in spelling and typographic errors, a wide range of divergent approaches to identifying names and subjects, and variations in the scope and meaning of individual metadata elements. This finding was not unexpected; indeed, the Scottish higher education libraries had discovered significant variations in institutional approaches to MARC cataloguing, a more tightly-controlled metadata environment than Dublin Core, as long ago as 1999 during the [Co-operative Academic Information Retrieval Network for Scotland](#) (CAIRNS) project. IRI-Scotland therefore included the development of a draft metadata agreement for institutional research repositories, intended to meet the requirements of users and to improve the consistency of metadata content within and between individual repositories. The agreement is freely available online at <http://cdlr.strath.ac.uk/pubs/dawsona/irismetadatadraft.pdf>. Adoption of the recommendations made in the document remain future tasks for institutions and consortia such as [SCURL](#), but there is an appendix with a quick guide to avoiding many of the elementary typographical and transcription problems we have encountered.

Academic staff and postgraduate researchers in Scottish universities were asked to indicate what retrieval points, such as author and publication date, they would expect to be available when searching for research output such

as papers and theses. The top-ranked choices, by a significant margin, were author, title and subject. The service only offers keyword searching in these areas: alphabetic listing of authors is ineffective because personal names are not always recorded in family name/given name order; a title list is thwarted by the presence of quotation marks and 'non-filing' definite and indefinite articles; subject browsing is impossible because institutions use different, incompatible subject heading and classification schemes. Nonetheless, the low precision and recall supported by keyword searching is currently sufficient for what is a relatively small collection of around 10,000 items.

The number of records harvested from each repository has been growing. This does not necessarily reflect an increase in research output; rather, all the repositories are in early stages of implementation and many have active advocacy programmes to encourage uptake by researchers as well as retroconversion projects for existing departmental databanks. Thus new additions to a repository may be from old research. It is not possible to even guesstimate how many items might constitute total Scottish research output, because there is no consensus on defining 'research' or what comprises research output.

The pilot cross-repository search service interface is similar to the CAIRNS cross-library search interface, allowing the user to select a search type or index, to choose any combination of repositories to include in the search, and to enter a single search word or phrase. The repository collections are recorded in the [Scottish Collections Network](#) (SCONE), allowing repositories to be identified by institution and subject coverage (in the case of virtual sub-repositories based on departmental research output). The SCONE records are linked to the cross-repository interface to give users some information about the scope and content of each repository.

Discussions on sustaining and developing this showcase of Scotland's research activity are underway; in the meantime, the pilot continues to be maintained by CDLR, and all comments and suggestions are welcome. Gordon Dunsire is Depute Director, [Centre for Digital Library Research](#).

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The IRI-Scotland project was funded for two years by the Joint Information Systems Committee. The principal partners were the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, the National Library of Scotland, and the Centre for Digital Library Research (CDLR), with support from the Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL) and the Scottish Library and Information Council. For more about the development of the service see the [project report](#) (PDF format).



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Digital environment

Managing access

Further Education institutions are soon going to have to make important decisions with regards to the authentication systems they are using. Tony Donnelly and Paul Gorman explain why.

In July 2008 the JISC subsidy for the Athens authentication system currently in use in much of the UK education sector comes to an end. Athens is an Eduserv product that provides secure access to e-resources to those with an entitlement to use them by right of attendance on a course or membership of staff at a particular educational institution. E-resources that the institution subscribes to (usually library electronic subscriptions) are placed behind the Athens authentication system and users can access these resources either remotely or on campus by use of a single logon.

There are two types of Athens systems commonly used:

- 1 Classic Athens.** The user sets up their own account through self-registration upon receipt of an access username and password from staff (usually library staff).
- 2 Athens DA (Devolved Authentication).** The organisation creates Athens accounts centrally and integrates with a local application such as a VLE or an organisation's authentication system such as an LDAP.

In light of the forthcoming cessation of the JISC subsidy, institutions are going to have to make important decisions with regards to the authentication systems they are using. The JISC is promoting Shibboleth technology. Shibboleth is an architecture that enables organisations to build single sign-on environments that allow users to access web-based resources using a single login. The JISC summarises the main benefits as:

- Users will have a single sign-on using an institutional ID and password for a range of resources, as well as the assurance that their personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

- Librarians will be free of the burden of user name and password administration, and will have new tools for managing licenses and service subscriptions.
- IT managers will have more control of the access management process through enhancements to enterprise directories, although this will require additional institutional effort in the short term.
- Institutions will have a single service to meet the requirements of e-learning, e-research and library-managed resources. Simplification of the authentication process has also proven to lead to increased use of subscribed services.

Organisations that use [Shibboleth](#) to access resources must join or create a federation: a group of institutions and organisations that sign up to an agreed set of policies for exchanging information about users and resources to enable access of resources and services. The federation combined with identity management software within institutions is referred to as federated access management (FAM). In the UK it is called the UK Access Management for Education and Research.

It is imperative that institutions decide soon how to respond to these developments. As librarians tend to be responsible for the institutional management of Athens, we are well placed to ensure that key decision makers within our respective institutions are appraised of the situation. The crucial point here is that this is not a library-specific issue. The move towards Shibboleth affects the institution as a whole. It manages access to all institutional resources such as networks, virtual learning environments, email, and e-resources. As such, network managers, IT managers, e-learning technologists and librarians are all clearly affected. It may not be obvious to key decision makers and stakeholders within institutions. Indeed, there is a possibility that as soon as key decision makers hear that the Athens subsidy is ending, they may imagine that they are dealing with a library-specific issue as librarians manage Athens. Therefore, it is vital that librarians ensure that these decision makers are fully aware of the impact these developments will have.

What are the options, then, for institutions once the [JISC](#) subsidy for Athens ends? Options (not exhaustive) include:

- Retaining Athens post-2008. A fee would be payable as the JISC subsidy will no longer be in operation. Authenticated access to resources is by username and password. Accounts are created through self-registration. This allows access to Athens authenticated resources.

- Gateway options. A gateway will allow access to federated materials by organisations who have not yet adopted FAM technology. This gateway is a interim measure to ensure that there is no loss of service during the adoption of FAM. Crucially, the JISC and [Eduserv](#) have not managed to come to an agreement for an extension beyond July 2008 to the Federation Gateway Services contract which would be required in order for Athens to work using the UK Access Management Federation's open standards. Therefore, JISC can no longer guarantee the compliance of Athens products within the [UK Access Management Federation](#). JISC is still in discussions with service providers in a bid to provide a gateway service.
- Adopt Shibboleth. Those adopting Shibboleth must become direct members of the UK Access Management Federation and comply with Federation policy. Membership requires participating institutions to implement a range of technical activities, utilisation of an appropriate directory infrastructure and centrally created individual network accounts for all users to satisfy the authentication process. Clearly, there is a requirement for development and commitment by Network teams.

Each institution must determine its own response, we but must also recognise the importance of raising awareness of this issue. It is of the utmost importance that librarians, network managers and senior management work together in addressing the issue of FAM.

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[JISC Access Management](#)



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Digital environment

Web Focus: Virtual libraries and digitisation, tracking down the best web resources

The Perth College Library Team provides another roundup of useful websites.

Digital libraries

[NYPL digital](#) – from the New York Public Library – provides an excellent selection of digital resources, including more than 600,000 images from primary sources, historical maps, vintage posters and much more. Suitable for researchers and those with a more casual interest, the award-winning site is easy to search and contains an enormous depth of content.

Although the [digital content available through the Library of Congress](#) is, understandably, only a small fraction of the total resources held, it again provides the user with a wealth of digitised documents, photographs and recorded sound. The ‘American memory’ is comprehensive enough to warrant claims of being ‘a digital record of American history and creativity’.

Closer to home, the [Virtual Mitchell](#) provides a ‘glimpse of Glasgow in days gone by’. The vast array of images can be searched by area, street name or subject. Although it is permissible for users to download copies of the images for their own use, photographic quality images can also be purchased through the site.

Lastly, the [National Library of Scotland](#) also allows online access to its extensive range of collections covering various aspects of Scottish life.

Virtual Learning Environments (VLE)

VLEs are tools which enable academic staff to offer online courses to students who will not necessarily physically attend their institution. They are an ideal medium for distance learners, or students who enjoy working independently.

They have several advantages: remote access, flexibility in place/time, reduced administration costs, potential for higher student numbers, enable collaborative working and help to encourage student centred learning.

However, they can be time-consuming to set up initially, and learning materials may have to be adjusted to suit the digital environment.

Students undergoing online courses need to be self motivated due to the small amount (or lack of) face to face contact.

The three most popular VLEs are [Blackboard](#), WebCT (recently taken over by Blackboard) and [Moodle](#) which is a free Google product. [Wikipedia VLE summary](#)

[JISC Virtual learning environments \(VLEs\) mailing list](#) supports discussion about VLEs in education.

Online services

There is a large amount of good online services for the education sector of which three are listed here. [Intute](#) is a web resource for the education and research sectors which provides access to good quality websites with a description of the resource written by experts and then a direct link to the resource itself.

[Jorum](#) is a free repository service for staff in FE and HE institutions aiming at building a collection of learning and teaching materials, while [NLN](#) is a bank of e-learning materials free to organisations in the post-16 sector and is provided by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

More general online services which might interest anyone include [Directgov](#) which is a government website with information about all public services with links to the appropriate service and electronic forms where available; topics include information on health services, travel and consumer rights. For genealogical information in Scotland, the official government source is the [Scotlands People](#) has access to almost 50 million records and can help with building a family tree.

Perth College Library Team Emma Brown, Richard Hughes, Donald Maclean



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Digital Environment

Enhancing the user experience

Eileen Connolly explains how a new micro-site has been established at Glasgow Metropolitan College to accommodate use of the latest technologies and promote all of the college's library resources.

[Glasgow Metropolitan College](#) is the city's biggest further education college. With approximately 5,500 FTE students in four academic schools, the college make-up is extremely diverse. Students are spread across two main campuses and three annexes, and may attend in a variety of ways, including full-time, part-time, evenings and weekends.

The college library service consists of two libraries in the main campuses which hold collections related to the subjects taught there. There is also a large collection of electronic resources, usage of which staff wish to increase.

In October 2006, the college website had recently been redesigned and a new company appointed to provide hosting and content management. At that point, the library service had been hosting its own web pages for a number of years, and had been among the first to make use of Web 2.0 technologies, including blogs and podcasts. There was a very large amount of content which had to be moved to the new templates and content management system (CMS) in a short space of time. However, the existing templates within the new CMS were not flexible enough to accommodate many of the new technologies that the college wanted to employ. These circumstances combined meant that the resulting library web pages were not user-friendly. They were difficult to find and navigate, with electronic resources deeply buried.

In March 2007 a process of redesigning the library templates within the CMS and the web pages began. It was agreed that the library needed to have its own micro-site, related to but distinct from the main college web pages.

The new micro-site aims to be:

- Accessible

- Easy to navigate

- Searchable

- Strongly branded

- Innovative

- Interactive

- Dynamic

The micro-site¹ was launched in January, and has achieved each of these aims. The pages meet accessibility standards and have been designed with ease of use in mind.

It is organised around the four schools, with each school having its own gateway. As the college has a large number of ESOL students, the subject has been treated as a school. Within each gateway, users can find links to relevant forms and guides, many of which are available in up to 12 languages; links to subject guides written by library staff, and to recommended electronic resources.

Putting the electronic resources in context helps students to see the relevance to their course. Although users are encouraged to sign up for an Athens password for off-campus access, the majority of resources are directly accessible via IP from the college campus. Passwords are often seen as a barrier to the use of electronic resources, so it is hoped that usage will increase by allowing seamless linking from the gateway pages.

Each school page also contains its own Google custom search. [Google custom searches](#) allow library staff to promote quality websites and filter out others. For example, Wikipedia has been added to the list of excluded sites in all of the custom searches to try to discourage students from using it as a primary source. Users of these custom searches can suggest sites to be added or excluded, allowing them to help create searches which are

really useful to them. The searches do use Google to search the web, but promote the chosen sites. Library staff regularly update the contents of the custom searches with quality websites which they have been evaluated and approved.

The naming of the custom searches was difficult, but it was eventually decided that the generic 'Web Search' should be used. It was felt that if students do not have to leave the site to search the web, it may encourage them to remain within the library micro-site rather than going straight to Google. They do not necessarily realise that the searches have been customised by library staff.

Searches have also been added for the library pages only, and for library electronic resources only. To make the search as easy and intuitive as possible, the schools model has been carried through to the electronic resources search. Users can filter their search by school, by subject (course), or by a combination of both. This will result in an alphabetical list of resources relevant to their search. If more information about the resource is needed, they can simply hover over its name to get a pop-up description of it.

The micro-site is strongly branded in distinct colours to give a visual clue that users are not within the main college website, and the improved navigation includes breadcrumb trails which lead students back to the main Glasgow Metropolitan College website. The pages as a whole sit within the college's main branding and navigation, allowing users to move easily to other sections of the college website.

The library service has always been innovative in its use of technology, and the new pages continue this tradition. Podcasts are available on the site, and recently purchased equipment means that these can be updated and added to regularly. An [RSS feed](#) from the [library service blog](#) keeps users informed of events and changes, and allows them to leave comments on the service. Subject-specific RSS feeds have been developed and will be added in the near future.

Visual content has been added where possible.

Short flash demonstrations created using [Wink](#) allow users to find out how to sign up for and use Athens, and how to renew their library books online, and virtual tours have been created, giving users the chance to look around the libraries before visiting. The pages include 'feature panels' which can be used to add photographs, links or text.

In order to keep the site looking fresh and interesting, the content on the home page changes dynamically. Each time a user opens the page, the

logo and description of any one of up to five electronic resources will appear, helping to raise awareness of them. Library staff are able to easily change which resources will display, allowing particular ones to be promoted when necessary. The RSS news feed means that there will be regular new content as staff update the blog with information on new stock and events.

We are currently looking at a range of new projects, including collaborative work with other colleges, and the use of animation. The range of Web 2.0 technologies available means there are new possibilities emerging constantly and we are keeping a close watch for anything we can use to enhance the user experience.

Eileen Connolly is Digital Librarian, Glasgow Metropolitan College.



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Centenary

100 years – and still going strong

Kicking off celebrations for the Scottish Library Association/CILIPS Centenary, Brian Osborne explores the history of the organisations, in the first of six articles.

CILIPS, through its predecessor the Scottish Library Association, can trace its origins back to October 1908 when a meeting was held in Edinburgh and 65 names of librarians and assistants were given in and a committee was formed. Dr Hew Morrison of Edinburgh Public Library and Francis T. Barrett of Glasgow were among its members. The Library Association was well established by 1908 and the Scots had to consider what their relationship would be with the older body. Many members of the SLA would also be members of the LA and in the first annual report of the SLA is the comment: “Especially it is desired to consult the wishes of the members on the subject of Affiliation with the Library Association.”

Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau once memorably described his country's relationship with the United States as like being in bed with an elephant – and it is certainly possible to see the relationship between the SLA and the LA in such terms down the years.

By the time of the 1910 AGM, held in Dunfermline in June, discussions had taken place with the LA about affiliation and papers were shortly to be circulated to members. However, in the event the Council of the SLA felt that affiliation under the then prevailing LA rules would be inappropriate. They were concerned that the subscription level, 10/6 (52p), would be unaffordable by junior assistants; there were worries that becoming a local branch of the LA would prevent the SLA retaining as members several Scots working in England; and as an LA branch the SLA would have been unable to appoint Honorary Members.

Although affiliation was not progressed for many years the relations between the two bodies were generally positive. Discussions took place on matters of common interest such as a Library Training School and in 1927 the SLA suspended its Autumn School of Library Practice as the LA Jubilee Conference was to be held in Edinburgh and the LA was asked to allow SLA members who were not LA members the privilege of attending this conference – and 21 members took advantage of this opportunity. Although many prominent figures in the SLA were active in the Library Association – for example Ernest A. Savage of Edinburgh (below), who was SLA President in 1930-32, was LA Secretary from 1928 to 1934 and LA President in 1936 – union or affiliation still proved difficult. A proposal from the LA that the SLA should become a branch of the Library Association was rejected but a more acceptable affiliation scheme was approved by members by a ballot with 174 votes for and 8 against.

This came into effect on 1 January 1931 and allowed the SLA to retain its own constitution and provided an exit clause from the agreement, allowing the SLA to resume its independence on 12 months notice. After affiliation, the SLA had a total membership of 414 including “transitional members” who were defined as those SLA members who were not already LA members.

We shall return to the question of relationships with London in a later article but we need now to return to the early days of the SLA to look at the way it served its members. As early as 1912 the idea of District Meetings had emerged and in the winter of 1912-13 meetings were held in Edinburgh, Motherwell and Dundee and many new members were enrolled in the SLA as a result of this local activity.

By 1914 the Association had grown to 138 members and the sixth AGM, held in Glasgow, was attended by 75 members – a creditable 54% of the membership. This AGM gave the Council the thorny task of considering “the further extension of the Association’s influence among libraries and librarians”, which has surely been a preoccupation of Council ever since, even if not articulated in quite that way.

With the outbreak of the First World War district meetings were suspended and the 1915 AGM would be a utilitarian affair without the usual civic hospitality. Council, however, recommended the formation of four sub-committees to report on library construction & architecture, latest methods and appliances, bibliographical aids and publications and the economic position of librarians and assistants – the latter being another recurring concern.

A conference in 1919 looked at the role libraries might play in post-war reconstruction and that year a new branch structure was introduced with the creation of a Glasgow and West of Scotland, an Edinburgh and East of Scotland and a branch covering Dundee, Aberdeen and the North.

The post-war period and its austerities proved to be difficult – the 1921 Annual Report noted that: “It has not been found possible to arrange meetings of the Association during the past year, owing to the fact that in most libraries efforts were being made to recuperate and re-organise after the years of penury. There was a general and natural desire that visits from the Association should be withheld until the effects of the restrictions of the war period were removed.”

The Association however maintained its progressive ambitions; R. D. MacLeod and Robert Bain urged on it the need to develop publicity work in the interests of the Scottish Library Movement. In 1923, without much fanfare, the first woman was elected to the Council of the Scottish Library Association in the person of Miss Maud S. Best, sub-librarian at Aberdeen University. In the same year the Association flexed its muscles over staffing matters. The Chief Librarian’s post at Paisley had been advertised and candidates had been asked to state the salary they desired. Council felt this Dutch auction procedure was not in the best interests of the public or the service and communicated their views to the Paisley Library Committee.

The SLA has always looked beyond Scotland’s frontiers and forged links with librarians in other countries. The earliest example of this probably comes in the summer schools that the Association ran from the late 1930s – the first of these in 1937 attracted delegates from England and Ireland,

which was perhaps predictable, but also from the less probable Iceland and Sweden.

In 1954 a party of 14 Scottish librarians went on a study tour of Denmark. In 1961 the IFLA Conference was held in Edinburgh and the SLA told the Library Association that it would like to be associated with this event. One hundred delegates from 25 countries attended IFLA that year – slightly more attended the Glasgow IFLA in 2002! Scottish Librarians ventured overseas for their Annual Conference in 1968 for a Scottish/Irish Conference at Portrush.

In the Association's 75th Anniversary year the foundations were laid for a still wider approach to internationalism – one of the guests at the conference dinner was Jean Gattegno, Directeur du Livre et de la Lecture at the French Ministry of Culture. Links with French libraries and librarians were forged with the assistance of Frances Salinié of the British Council, which resulted in exchanges culminating in a joint conference of the SLA and the Association de Bibliothécaires de France and a joint mobile meet being held at Peebles in 1992.

Strangely enough for an Association dealing so closely with the written word the SLA had to wait until the 1950s for it to produce a magazine. A newssheet was called for at the 1949 AGM and one duly emerged in October 1950 under the editorship of A. G. Hepburn who was replaced as editor by Robert Walker in 1956. That year the News Sheet changed its name to SLA News and flourished under a series of honorary editors including such prominent figures in the profession as Peter Grant, Alan White, Alex Howson, Alice MacKenzie and Alistair Campbell, all of whom moved on from the Editorial Chair to the Presidential one.

SLA News and its successor Scottish Libraries, with a professional editor from 1992, continued as perhaps the most visible evidence of the Association to members until, with the creation of CILIPS, the old title became seen as inappropriate and Information Scotland was launched under the editorship of Debby Raven.

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Customer care

Are they being served?

Can libraries learn from other service professions such as the retail industry? Neil Paterson decided to find out in an investigation of customer service policies, processes and practices.

As a relative latecomer to the library profession I have been struck by many of the similarities in delivery of customer service between the retail and library sectors. I was trained in customer service techniques and behaviours during my previous 13 years of employment in the retail sector and have often wondered about the practicalities and appropriateness of carrying over those skills and learnings into my library work at Elmwood College in Fife. Is the provision of high quality customer service the same whatever profession you work in?

Having completed my Pg Dip in Information and Library Studies with the [Robert Gordon University](#) in 2006, I was then presented with the opportunity to continue onto an MSc. Here was an opportunity to examine and contrast the customer service policies, processes and practices of retailers and libraries objectively. I proposed to investigate the approaches of both high street retailers and further education libraries and see if there were any approaches from the retail sector that could be adopted or adapted in college libraries.

A multi-pronged approach was taken to gather information from the retail sector, the published library literature and the college libraries themselves.

Firstly, as I am still employed at weekends by one of the major high street retailers, I sought and gained permission to use their customer service policies and practices as retail exemplars, supported by similar information gathered from other high street retailers' web-pages.

Secondly, a literature search for current library approaches to customer services resulted in very little being uncovered from the college sector. Much of the published research was from abroad, particularly America, India and New Zealand, and often originated from within the university sector. What emerged is a well-defined customer service model that exists within the literature as outlined below:

The library's approach to customer service should be aligned with that of the parent institution. Mission and Vision statements for the library should have been developed.

Library managers should demonstrate, instill and develop a culture of high quality customer service within their library.

Policies and procedures should have been developed in consultation with all the library staff to ensure that a feeling of staff ownership is encouraged. All staff should then be trained in the emerging customer service techniques and behaviours.

Libraries should seek to engage and gain feedback from their customers during at all opportunities

Customer service policies and procedures should be reviewed on a frequent basis to adapt to meet the changing needs and expectations of customers.

Lastly I arranged interviews with the library managers of three colleges to discuss their approaches to customer service: [Aberdeen](#), [Borders](#) and [Lauder](#). All were extremely helpful and they provided rich and valuable data to analyse within the research project.

My research identified that the retail sector adopts a very similar approach to the good practice service model. While this model and customer service techniques can indeed be applied in the library sector, it quickly came to light during my college visits that this approach is not always taken within further education libraries. What was noticeable, however, was that this does not appear to have affected the satisfaction ratings all the libraries were receiving from their customers. In fact the customer relationship within those institutions that only partly followed the good practice model was as strong as those who followed it exactly.

It emerged that in a larger college the good practice model is followed to ensure consistency of customer service standards in all customer-staff service transactions. A more formulaic approach is required to ensure customer service levels are kept at a high level. However, in smaller colleges some do not feel the need to encumber themselves with policy and procedure documentation but have instead taken personal ownership of maintaining the culture of high quality customer service. Staff behaviours and their ongoing personal commitment to customer service set the quality standards. By working closely with their smaller customer base they are continually re-assessing their levels of service and can respond quickly to the changing needs and demands of their customers.

High quality customer service does exist within further education libraries. The proof is in the positive feedback and strong relationships many libraries have with their customer base. Libraries should continue to develop their

awareness of their customer needs and expectations and can indeed draw from the examples within other service professions, such as the retail industry.

Neil Paterson is Learning Resource Centre Assistant, Elmwood College, Cupar, Fife.



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Endpiece

Poetic places

Colin Will on encouraging the spread of poetry, and gathering inspiration to create it.

I'm still basking in the warmth of being appointed Poet Partner to Moray Libraries (Elgin). This is a scheme funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation in association with the host libraries and run by the Scottish Poetry Library. The SPL has 13 outreach collections in Scotland, from Shetland to Dumfries and Galloway. My job will be to visit libraries, schools, museums, art centres, reading groups and community organisations, making use of the outreach collection and other sources to encourage the reading and enjoyment of poetry. This fits so well with what I like doing anyway that it seems like a marriage made in heaven.

Other new Poet Partners include Pam Beasant in Orkney and Raman Mundair in Beasrden. SPL's website has an online [Reading Room](#) which provides backup resources and reading ideas for groups and individuals.

SPL also provides training for librarians, and a [librarians' e-zine Poetry Issues](#). The last time I was in Elgin was to lead a schools workshop on Plants and Poetry, and to take part in an evening poetry reading with my friend Valerie Gillies, currently Edinburgh's Makar. What impressed me very much about that trip was the response of pupils and audience respectively. The thing that made the difference was the obvious

enthusiasm for poetry shown by the teachers and librarians I encountered. There are already strong foundations for the partnership in Elgin, and I'm delighted to have been asked to work with them over the next two years.

Poetry and place

A sense of place is a feature of much of my poetry. I love going places, seeing things, meeting people. My recent trip last November to China and Tibet is already proving enormously inspirational. I've got a haibun on climbing the Great Wall, a haiku sequence already published in an American e-zine, and a poem on the Terracotta Warriors accepted by a magazine. A poem sequence on the Qinghai (pronounced Ching high) and Tibet section is well under way. Even while I was in Tibet, I knew I wanted to call the sequence *The Floorshow At the Mad Yak Café*. Others so far completed are: *Credo*, concerning the Kumbum Monastery in Qinghai and my own Buddhist reaction to it, *Iron Road to Lhasa*, about our wonderful 28-hour train journey (which reached an altitude of 5076m), and *Bardo Thodol Updated*, about Tibetan death customs. *Bardo Thodol* is often miscalled the Tibetan Book of the Dead, which it isn't. It's actually prayers said over the dying or dead to ease the way into rebirth.

I've also written *Kora*, about the Barkhor district of Lhasa – a combination of market and pilgrimage circuit – and the wonderful Jokhang Temple. Still to be written are poems about the Potala and greater Lhasa, and one on the Sera Monastery will follow. I may also write one on the Norbulingka, the Dalai Lama's Summer Palace in Lhasa, where we saw His Holiness' Western style bathroom and his huge 1950s radio set. These poems are semi-narrative in nature, and fairly long; probably double-page spreads in most poetry magazines. The trouble is that I'm not sure which magazines might be interested in publishing them. How do I get them published?

And what about the other parts of China I visited? Poems about Beijing, Xi'an, Xining, Shanghai and Souzhou may very well follow in future. They are likely to be written in a variety of forms and styles to reflect different subjects. We'll see. There's a small gallery of China and Tibet photos on my website.

Self-censorship

One of the features of being in a senior position in [StAnza](#): Scotland's Poetry Festival is that I have to be extremely careful about what I say in public concerning living poets. Once they're safely dead they're fair game; I can slag off ex-poets with impunity. But it's inevitable that I prefer some poets to others, and there a few whose work I really don't appreciate at all. But I can't write about them here or elsewhere.

I've developed strategies for not discussing the ones I don't like. When I say 'strategies' I mean lies. "I don't believe I've read so-and-so," is a fairly frequent porky, as is, "You know, some day I must get down to reading more of old wosname." Of course, if the poets are not domiciled in the UK, or there seems no chance of St Andrews being graced with their presence, I might squeak out a semi-apologetic, "I've never really understood that type of poem." That excuse might even be true; there are genres of poetry that I genuinely don't understand. That may be down to the fact that I trained in science rather than literature; it may be the lack of a particular life experience, or it could be due to innate stupidity.

So if you meet me at a poetry event or elsewhere and you want to discuss a favourite living poet that I can't stand, please don't connect me to a polygraph. Be prepared for fibs, evasions, and damn fine acting.

[Colin Will](mailto:colin.will@zen.co.uk) e: colin.will@zen.co.uk



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President's perspective

At a point full of potential

Two interesting events cause Alan Hasson to see the increasing importance of our skills.

I had two interesting events to go to since I last wrote this column.

On the first Friday in April I went to the launch evening of '[500 Years of Printing in Scotland](#)' at the Playfair Library in Edinburgh. The event was exactly, barring calendar reforms, on the 500th anniversary of the printing of John Lydgate's *The Complaint of the Black Knight* on 4 April 1508. The evening concentrated, as you would expect, on the technicalities of printing, but in addition it was interesting to see the mix of people to whom the printed word was core to their world: besides craft and commercial printers there were newspaper people, academics and librarians, publishers and many more.

In preparation for the evening I'd had a look at the excellent supporting website for the continuing celebrations, which are spread throughout our wee country, discovering events on my own doorstep that I hadn't known about. There was something compelling in that juxtaposition of continuity and step change. Here was a celebration of the printed word, the birth of easier access to information, with all that that would mean in turmoil and progress (cf *How the Scots Invented the Modern World* by Arthur Herman), where the easiest access to pertinent information was via an electronic medium, our generation's revolution.

My Google search for Black Knight was spot on. I immediately had the usual slew of x hundred citations. Discounting the various people from Schenectady, Perth et al whom it seemed were willing to get me to level seven and some insistent adverts for exotic products, I plumped for Wikipedia. Wrong. The prominent lead took me to an article on a Bugs Bunny cartoon. As part of the pull of the net is going down these byways, I read it. It was factually incorrect. I knew it was inaccurate.

As I wasn't carrying out serious research on Bugs, all this was amusing, but again there's an interesting tension here. Access to untrammelled information is something to be strived for, be it in the public's oversight of government or in getting to level seven. But there is the continuing need to ensure that the freedom of access to information is balanced by the accuracy of that information or at the very least knowledge that the source is possibly suspect or biased or out of date. For members of CILIPS, such guidance, be it directly or by user training, is one of the core skills, and of course, the deployment of these skills should never allow us to be arrogant enough to take on the role of censors. The assistance our professional skills and knowledge can provide to the professional or casual researcher is one which sets a continuing series of challenges in the electronic media. Recent developments in some of our publicly-funded organisations suggest that that role itself and the utility of the printed word may be one which is subject to fairly radical review.

My second event was a multi-focused seminar on the introduction of digital terrestrial broadcasting and the uses of next generation broadband. The technical developments on the first, with low-cost local broadcasting available almost universally and with the TV becoming an affordable access point for the net, have the potential to introduce yet another phase shift. The work carried out in Dundee on local broadcasting had implications on local democracy and community empowerment that places our profession, positioned as many of us are in the heart of communities and with knowledge management skills, at a point full of potential. Even given the old rubric that what this country needs is more free speech worth

listening to, the idea of an inclusive, locally-based, two-way, communication medium is compelling.

The broadband issue was, of course, more immediate and potentially even more relevant for us professionally. The Western Isles 'Connected Communities' programme, with its information hubs, people co-operating in legal work coming from London and providing it efficiently and at a cost saving, thus helping to maintain viable rural communities, was again one where the potential is obvious, given the past essays in imagination and risk such as the People's Network.

All of the above simply points out the fact that we are in a time of increasing professional change and that the speed of that change is accelerating. Some of the directions of change are clear: increasing access to e-provided information, and a more unregulated information milieu. Some are less clear, there in potential only: local voices heard more widely than before, distributed working, the primacy of the electronic over the printed as an information source, and an increasing need to re-skill and refocus.



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Aiming Higher

SHEDL for Scotland

Context

SCURL is involved in a number of collaborative activities and one of the most exciting and challenging is the Scottish Higher Education Digital Library (SHEDL). The Steering Group is convened by Tony Kidd, an Assistant Director at Glasgow University Library whose knowledge and expertise of the periodical and journal world is of immeasurable value to [SCURL](#) members. Other members of the Steering Group are Gillian Anderson (UHI) Sheila Cannell (Edinburgh University Library) Peter Kemp (Stirling University Library) and myself. Discussions at the meetings inspire radical thinking. We have investigated financial and business planning scenarios, and the understanding that SHEDL could have a significant

impact on the knowledge economy for our users.

Jill Evans, SCURL.

For a number of years, university libraries in Scotland have been looking for ways to obtain access to electronic information resources as widely and economically as possible over the whole sector. This search has grown more pressing since the establishment of 'research pools', groupings of researchers from different institutions which the Scottish Funding Council for colleges and universities has brought together, in order to form a critical mass to compete for research funding in an increasingly competitive environment. A vital part of working together is access to the same information, the same journals and databases, but this is not the current situation. As might be expected, staff at the larger longer-established institutions have access to a greater proportion of the research literature than at some other universities, and this inhibits co-operative research. Last year, SCURL, the Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries, commissioned an Investigative Study, funded by the universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, towards establishing a Scottish Higher Education Digital Library, carried out by the consultant John Cox of John Cox Associates. The final report and the executive summary are on the SCURL website. The study recommended that, provided there is broad-based support from Scottish higher education institutions, SCURL should take advantage of the co-operative characteristics of Scottish research to 'create a common research information environment for Scotland'.

The SHEDL concept is that there should be immediate online availability across the whole of Scottish higher education for research journals from the major publishers, instead of the present patchy provision (the plan is to extend access in due course to e-books, databases, and other information resources). Similar schemes are in place in some of the Scandinavian countries and in Ireland – although it is true that the Irish equivalent, IReL [Irish Research eLibrary](#) has benefited from substantial central government funding which is unlikely to be forthcoming in Scotland. However, it should be possible for a similar sized country like Scotland to achieve this level playing field. The concept is supported by the Scottish Funding Council and by Universities Scotland.

John Cox's report raised issues concerning structure, governance, funding, consultative mechanisms, content acquisition strategy and, not least, participation beyond higher education institutions. All these issues are still under consideration, but a SCURL Library Directors meeting agreed in January this year "in principle support" for the initiative. The National Library of Scotland, an integral member of SCURL, is also keen to move forward with SHEDL, and broaden availability for its readers. A SHEDL Steering Group under SCURL auspices is working towards next steps and

will report back to the SCURL members this summer.

There are particular questions on the financial implications of SHEDL. Will the sector as a whole save money via this initiative? We believe that any extra costs of widening access should be more than offset by passing on publishers' administrative savings arising from simplified authorisation, single invoicing, etc. Perhaps even more important in practice, will my institution pay more or less under SHEDL? This depends on funding, or charging, allocation models which are still being worked on, but for practical reasons if nothing else it is unlikely that there will be major changes from the current distribution. There are also concerns over institutional autonomy, but the aim is that basic information underpinning for all Scottish higher education institutions will allow each library and information service to concentrate on the individual resources that will still undoubtedly be required for its particular researchers and students.

Scottish higher education institutions, alongside their counterparts elsewhere in the UK, have benefited greatly from the electronic content negotiating activities of [JISC](#), the Joint Information Systems Committee, and its offshoot JISC Collections. SCURL has absolutely no desire to override existing agreements, or to inhibit further negotiation on content at the UK level, but rather wishes to complement [JISC Collections](#) activities to provide universal higher education access within Scotland. JISC Collections are very interested in the possibilities of SHEDL, and see it as a possible exemplar for the rest of the UK. Discussions have taken place with JISC Collections on the best way forward, and on the recently-established [Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges](#), set up following the McClelland Report to take forward best practice procurement endeavours within the sector.

The higher education sector is aware of existing collaborative achievements in Scotland, for example, the Scottish Library and Information Council's ([SLIC](#)) negotiations on resources for public libraries, and the success of the [NHS Scotland e-Library](#) – last year's investigative study included interviews with both SLIC and the NHS, and with the [National Library of Scotland](#), already mentioned earlier. There is also the vital question of further education inclusion, especially given the growing level of interaction and articulation between further and higher education. If SHEDL is successful, then no doubt we shall all be looking at ways to extend access to encompass truly national availability: the Investigative Study warned against initial "dilution of the focus" on higher education, but this does not preclude the possibility of broader agreements in some instances.

SCURL libraries are excited about the possibilities of SHEDL, and we hope to be able to report further progress in the near future.

Tony Kidd, SHEDL Steering Group Convenor.



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Career development

Like something almost being said

Tony Ross and Richard Fallis take stock of their position and also the wider career of librarianship – and how people arrive at the profession.

Now that this column has had some time to bed in, we thought we might step back and take stock a little. Feedback has been surprisingly positive, suggesting we might, as columnists, have something to offer the readers of Information Scotland.

The question is: what? Certainly not wealth of experience: we are only six months out of library school, having never worked in libraries prior to our studies. This lack of experience, though, might actually be the reason our views have value. Since we are only just getting our feet on the LIS ladder, it may be that we can bring a fresh perspective on the profession. Indeed, it has been whispered that we might constitute the voice of 'young librarianship' in Scotland.

This is somewhat discomfiting, partly because 75% of this gestalt, column-writing entity is not actually Scottish, but mainly because we will both be 30 next year. At this age, most footballers are past their prime, musicians tend to be dead (the good ones, anyway), and sci-fi fans might recall how Michael York and Jenny Agutter faced the dread spectre of death by Carousel.

OK, we are by no means over the hill, and we recognise that 30 as an age brings its own emancipations. According to the novelist John Braine, “a first novel shouldn’t be written much before the age of thirty,” while a certain Son of God is reputed to have done his best work after he hit the Big Three-Oh.

As regards job prospects, it must be said that reality has bitten hard. It is clear that a library school qualification, on its own, is insufficient: employers place more value on experience, and evidence of practical, as well as intellectual and emotional, engagement with the profession. We came to the profession by a roundabout route, and we now find ourselves scrabbling to gain, retrospectively, appropriate levels of experience. And younger people often describe how they have limited opportunities for career progression: the relative lack of LIS positions in Scotland assures a hard road ahead for those seeking entry into the profession.

Competition within the profession is likely to become even more fierce, as library schools churn out increasing numbers of graduates and as the number and variety of professional positions available fall victim to the downsizing of institutions which hitherto relied heavily on LIS jobs. While such competition benefits librarianship by serving to raise standards in the profession as a whole, there is perhaps a concern that something valuable will be lost. We have encountered many incredibly supportive LIS professionals. But there is a real danger that, if the profession becomes too cut-throat, people will start trampling on each other’s necks, rather than offering help.

Let’s face it: librarianship isn’t a life calling for most people. Rather, pursuing librarianship is, for many, a means of paying the bills which is of ethical and social value, and less subject to the moral ambiguities and extreme pressures of more ‘aspirational’ careers in, for example, law, advertising or finance. Modern work culture seems to frown on this: more and more, people are expected to have fixed career goals in mind at an early stage, towards which they work with steady determination. We are told how employers frown on CVs that show ‘blind-spots’ – periods of time spent away from one’s chosen career path, doing other things. Yet the decision to pursue librarianship is often reached only after years of doing other things. It may only be because we did fewer other things before becoming librarians, that we gained earlier entrance to the profession than did many colleagues. Consequently, the fact that we are thought of as young may actually say more about the nature of our profession, than it does about us.

Librarianship is marked by pragmatism, since many of its practitioners’ career and creative ideals originally lay elsewhere. As the job market grows more crowded, and job applicants necessarily become more aggressive, it

is vital that we resist the urge to dismiss this pragmatism as a failing. Yes, the LIS profession needs people who are idealistic and driven: it should never serve as an 'easy street' option for those who wish to coast to retirement, and who have no interest in challenging public perceptions that libraries lack dynamism. But that does not mean that people who come to librarianship sideways, so to speak, are less capable of exhibiting dedication and drive than those rare souls who may feel they were born to be librarians. In fact, latecomers to the profession may have a greater contribution to make, as they may invest a greater wealth of working, and personal, experience in their professional practice.

It might be, then, that our views befit our age, and our age befits our profession. We are young enough, still, to perceive the ongoing and pressing need for libraries to modernise, and to embrace the challenges and opportunities borne towards them on ceaseless waves of technological and social change. However, we are also old enough to value the longstanding tenets and traditions that are the foundations of the profession, and that are still valid in the modern world. If nothing else, then, as columnists we will seek always to advise the profession to do what we have done for this issue: step back and take stock, of all that has been achieved to date, and all that may be achieved in the future.



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Career development

How these tools work

If you are wary of Wikis or baffled by blogging let *Celia Jenkins* share what she has learnt at a recent CILIPS workshop led by consultant Karen Blakeman.

What is Web 2.0?

Web 2.0 is a concept, not a product, with a focus on the social and collaborative aspects of working online. The workshop showed how Web

2.0 technologies might be used as information sources, tools of collaboration, or as part of an information delivery strategy.

What is a blog?

A blog (short for 'web log') is a kind of online diary, where an individual or group can post information chronologically. Blogs also encourage participation by allowing people to leave comments. Blogs can be an excellent source of information, especially if they are written by experts in a particular field. However, as blogs are so easy to set up, some are of questionable quality and out of date.

Various search engines, such as [Google](#) and [Ask](#), as well as specialist blog search engines, such as [Technorati](#) and [Blogpulse](#), allow you to search specifically for blogs. It is also worth looking at the 'blogroll' which is a list of links to other interesting and authoritative blogs.

Blogs are also a great, and more informal, way of delivering content. The workshop presented the opportunity to set up a blog using an online application, such as [Blogger](#) or [Wordpress](#). This took just a matter of minutes.

Karen's tips on what makes a good blog, included:

- creating an author or blog profile;
- using descriptive posting titles and links;
- focusing on a specific topic or providing a 'unique voice' on varying topics.

Using blogs

There are many different ways to use blogs in your organisation. Examples include:

- newsletters;
- a marketing tool inside and outside the organisation;
- CPD – recording professional development and reflective practice.

CILIPS and SLIC aim to set up a [blog](#) which will provide a more informal means of communicating with members and encourage debate on professional issues.

What are wikis?

A wiki allows people to collaborate on documents, with the ability to add and edit content. Authorisation can be set, but by default anyone can join in. The most well-known example of a wiki is [Wikipedia](#). A wiki has a standardised format and layout, with focus on content rather than presentation. The main advantage is that there is only one centrally located copy of documents, instead of multiple copies circulating via email. It is also very easy to see what has been edited, by whom and when. A 'wiki farm' is

an online third party service that hosts wikis. This is the best hosting option, especially for less experienced users. Examples include [Peanut Butter](#), [Wikispaces](#), [Seedwiki](#), and [Wet Paint](#).

One important piece of advice from Karen was not to call your wiki a 'wiki'! Call it a 'workspace' or 'collaborative area' instead so you don't have to describe what a wiki is and also avoid the negative connotation of Wikipedia.

Uses of wikis

A wiki can be used for creating training materials, conference programmes, subject guides and intranets. It also makes an excellent project management tool.

In CILIPS and SLIC wikis are used by various working groups which are developing documents and policies. On a personal level, I have set up a Chartership wiki, which I can let my mentor access.

What are RSS feeds?

RSS ([Really Simple Syndication](#)) provides a way of alerting users to new content within a specified web page. First, register with an RSS Reader, either web-based or a desktop program, and subscribe to any RSS services.

Some RSS feeds contain just the first few lines of an item, so that people will have to click through to the original source. This in turn generates additional visits to the main website. RSS feeds can be used to create news bulletins and, as they can be generated automatically from blogs and wikis, are an easy addition to an organisation's current awareness service. RSS feeds can be displayed in one location, such as on [iGoogle](#) or [My Yahoo!](#) pages. SLIC/CILIPS have created a [Scottish Libraries Pagecast](#), which contains various RSS feeds, including one for [SLAINTE news](#). An events RSS feed is also planned.

Advantages to RSS feeds

There are a number of advantages to using RSS feeds instead of email alerts, including:

- reduced overload in your inbox;
- quicker and easier to identify items of relevance;
- able to set up filters to pick up stories that mention specific products, companies, topics.

Web 2.0 – some challenges

Other Web 2.0 technologies were mentioned, including [Flickr](#), [Slideshare](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#). We were encouraged to try them out but reminded that the emphasis should be on access to

information, and not on the technologies themselves. The workshop provided an excellent overview of the main Web 2.0 technologies, with plenty of opportunity for hands-on experience. It also highlighted the challenges of implementing Web 2.0, such as showing return on investment (including obtaining web stats) and duplication of effort. These issues are beginning to be addressed. It is early days, but also exciting times.

Information

'Blogs, RSS and Wikis: tools for dissemination, collaboration and information gathering' was a practical, one-day workshop lead by Karen Blakeman. It was organised by CILIPS and held on 11 March at the Edinburgh Training Centre. Karen is a consultant, whose company, [RBA Information Services](#), provides training on online information resources. [Blog](#)



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International networking

Colleagues overseas

Margaret Forrest reports on an IFLA Section meeting in Paris.

The grassroots of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) are made up by its 'Sections' which, like the Special Interest Groups of CILIP, cover a wide range of professional interests. One such group is the Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons (LSDP) Section which is concerned with the provision of accessible and inclusive library services to people with disabilities, patients in hospitals and prisoners.

I recently attended the mid-year meeting of the LSDP Standing Committee (SC) in Paris at which the group prepared the programme for the LSDP session at the forthcoming Quebec conference, discussed a number of publication projects of the Section and explored a couple of libraries.

Ten countries were represented by the 17 members, including Croatia, France, Japan, Korea, the Scandinavian countries, Scotland, South Africa and the US. An important responsibility of the SC is to help prepare for the annual IFLA conference, but we also spent time discussing our Section's recent publications,^[1] making arrangements for translations of these to be made available on [IFLA Net](#) and planning future projects for the Section.

Our two-day meeting was held in the Pompidou Centre and our French hosts had arranged tours of the Public Reference Library at the Centre and a visit to the library of the oldest hospital in Paris at Saint Louis.

The Public Reference Library at the Pompidou Centre (Bibliothèque publique d'information (Bpi)) is a publicly-funded resource which is highly valued by the people of Paris and beyond. It is one of the few reference libraries in the city which is open at weekends and on public holidays and there are regularly queues of people waiting two to three hours for the library to open (as there was on the day we visited). The library is under the direction of the French Ministry of Culture and is a general information resource. Its services are managed on the principles of freedom of access (no registration formalities), currency of resources (regular 'weeding' and renewal of stock), evidence based practice (informed by regular public surveys and research) and cutting-edge technologies (including the availability of assistive technologies for people with disabilities).

Before leaving for Paris, I made a virtual visit to the [Bpi library via the Web](#) and was impressed by the video which introduces visitors to the library services using sign language and sub-titles for deaf people. Visiting the library in reality helped me to understand how successfully colour coding and space planning is used to ensure greater access to all. Not only are there colour codes for the broad subject areas of the library, but also for the utility services which are part of the unique architecture of the Pompidou Centre (blue pipes for water, green for air, etc). The Bpi has seating for 2,200 readers and a counter at the entrance keeps a tally of the number of people in the building. Similar to a very busy car park, when the maximum permitted number is reached, potential readers must wait outside until a space becomes available. How many libraries in the UK have queues of people waiting two to three hours to use its services?

The library of the oldest hospital in Paris is on a much smaller scale than the Bpi at the Pompidou Centre, but is just as highly valued by its users. Evelyne Menaud, Librarian at the hospital, welcomed our group and introduced us to this specialised service which focuses on the needs of patients but also includes an information resource for healthcare professionals. The library of Saint Louis Hospital is the largest of 21 libraries serving both hospital patients and staff in Paris. Hospital libraries

in France are generally funded by the health service (rather than supported by public library authorities, as they are in some parts of the UK).

After returning home I reflected on the value of being able to meet with like-minded colleagues from all over the world to share information and ideas on issues of common concern to our profession. A few months before the IFLA Conference in Glasgow in 2002, I remember attending a 'Meet the President' event where Derek Law encouraged CILIPS members to become involved in IFLA and reap the benefits of international networking. I couldn't agree more: there is something very special about being able to develop our professional skills through working together with colleagues with such diverse cultures and languages from all over the world.

References

1 Recent publications include Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dementia by Helle Arendrup Mortensen and Gyda Skat Nielsen; Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners by Vibeke Lehmann and Joanne Locke; Access to Libraries for Persons with Disabilities: a checklist by Birgitta Irvall and Gyda Skat Nielsen. See the [LSDP Section website](#):



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International networking

House of reading

Librarians and other literature professionals from Scotland visited 'LesArt', the Berlin Centre for Children's and Youth Literature, on a Study Trip in November, exchanging work experience with fellow professionals from throughout Europe they describe their visit.

Supported by the [Goethe-Institut Glasgow](#) and their own employers, Mary Conway from [Glasgow City Council](#), Frances MacArthur from [East Dunbartonshire Council](#), Jasmine Fassl from [Scottish Book Trust](#) and Francesca Brennan from [Edinburgh Council](#), were given a warm welcome to 'LesArt' in Berlin (literal translation: the art of reading). In LesArt's own

words, the house “develops creative models for literary-aesthetic education using all the arts and media. These models are based on the experiences that children and young people make in their own lives and when reading or looking at pictures”. LesArt’s success lies in the skilful way it leads young readers into new fiction through an imaginative range of activities. We had the chance to take part in these activities, to witness children benefiting from the LesArt experience, and to meet Berlin professionals working in partnership with the organisation.

It was particularly interesting to hear Berlin-based librarians and teachers discussing their current work practices and ways in which LesArt’s work related to their own. They described joint programmes which libraries delivered with LesArt expertise and school groups visiting the LesArt house to enjoy creative activities, summer reading programmes which echoed the British experience and which were enriched by the Centre’s input.

However the group did think that some of the LesArt methods might not travel so easily back to Britain. For example, LesArt’s regular book-based pyjama parties for teenagers struck fear in many of the study tour’s participants due to risk assessment concerns. Requests for quantitative evidence of LesArt’s (undoubtedly high level of) outcomes and successes met with a sketchy response which suggested that regular reporting was not an essential requirement for sustained public funding. The strong social inclusion agenda which the Scottish representatives work within did not seem to be an institutionalised strand of LesArt’s approach.

We saw a member of [LesArt](#) staff working with a group of young boys struggling with reading. The boys’ confidence in reading aloud to a large group of strangers was both impressive and affecting and this simple evidence of the power of books and reading was a convincing credit to the work of LesArt. This experience of watching emergent readers grow in confidence and visibly enjoying the process was a true highlight of the visit.

Academy for Reading Promotion

Anke Maerk-Buermann, from the Academy for Reading Promotion, is responsible for cooperation with, and interaction between, schools, libraries and kindergarten, the training of voluntary storytellers, pre-school reading promotion, and reading promotion in families.

The objective of the project, which is supported by the federal state of Lower Saxony and the Foundation for Reading, is to improve the regional conditions for the promotion of reading competence and reading pleasure of children and young adults. The main task of the academy is providing information to, and education and further training of facilitators/disseminators, the organisation and support of a regional communication network for reading promotion and reading culture, and the

setting-up of an internet portal. Target groups for these activities are parents, teachers, education professionals, librarians and other committed reading promoters.

Main focuses were creating and support of local reading networks, training professionals - providing 400 different activities. Other projects are programmes like Bookstart (or Lesestart), the Book Buddy Project (primary children read to pre-school children) and Antolin, a web-based programme for teachers for classroom use. All the delegates found the presentation incredibly interesting.

Another presentation was given by Professor Kristin Wardetzky, a lecturer at the Institute of Theatre Paedagogics at the University of the Arts, on her special areas of research including storytelling as an art form, the theory of fairy tales, and theatre for children and young adults. Some questions were posed – what happens to children from homes where education and reading are not valued, who only encounter books at school? How do they discover the desire to read? One way to get them interested in books is through storytelling which can arouse a hunger for new stories.

A recent two-year project brought children to literature through the telling of fairy-tales. The aim of the project was to foster immigrant children's skills in the German language through the creative art of storytelling. In the first months of the project there were doubts about its success. Problems with concentration crept in and the team became aware that for a large proportion of the children, their imagination was blocked. Then children began to make up their own fairy tales that they told to their classmates, using and combining fairy tale structures and images with everyday life and media experiences. The children's concentration, creativity, language and expressive abilities had increased. Professor Wardetzky would like to see professional storytellers integrated into schools throughout Germany.

Over three days we found out more about how reading and literature was promoted to children and young people not only in Germany, but also in the Netherlands, Ireland, Sweden and Norway, and to compare these approaches with that of Scotland. The importance of reading was generally recognised, but in other countries there is perhaps more emphasis on its cultural significance; the role it can play in helping develop minds and imaginations as well its importance in education.

Interesting approaches included the 'House of Culture' in Stockholm. There are three rooms especially designed for children of different ages, where they can read and borrow books, paint, listen to a story or sing. In the Netherlands the promotion of books and the creation of imaginative spaces to support reading is the responsibility of regional agencies. And in Norway

there is a locally-based programme whose mission is solely to encourage reading among young people, using creative and modern means such as texting.

All the participants felt that there was a lack of funding to support their work, but it certainly seemed to those from the UK that there was more of a financial commitment in these countries to creating reading cultures, and less of an expectation that this should be evidenced directly.

However, one point we think all the participants agreed, and that was that reading is fun and that element needs to be at the forefront to successfully engage children and young people.

Information

The Berlin Study Tour was organised by the Goethe-Institut, the German cultural centre with a branch in Glasgow. It was inspired by seminars by Sabine Maehne, Director of LesArt, held in 2005, in Dublin, Glasgow and Belfast, at the invitation of the Goethe-Institut.

Contacts

www.goethe.de/glasgow

www.lesart.org

www.stiftunglesen.de (in German): Foundation for Reading

<http://www.akademiefuerlesefoerderung.de/> (in German): Academy for Reading Promotion

Many thanks to Gisela Moohan, at the Goethe-Institut Glasgow, for drawing this report together for Information Scotland.



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Centenary

Non-stop development

Brian Osborne looks at Education & Professional Development in his second article on the history of our professional organisation.

The Scottish Library Association never attempted to set up its own examination and qualification structure in competition with the Library Association's, even in the period of 22 years when it enjoyed total independence. It did however take an active part in training Scots to sit and obtain their Library Association qualifications and keep abreast of professional developments. Continuing Professional Development may be a buzzword of the 21st Century but it was far from unknown in the early years of the Association.

In the Annual Report of SLA Council for 1919-20, the decision to mount a series of classes in Library Routine to aid those studying for LA exams was recorded and by 1922 this week-long course held in the Mitchell Library and organised by a sub committee which included the SLA President John Minto, and E. A. Savage of Edinburgh, was attracting 80 students. The syllabus included lectures by eminent practitioners such as R. D. MacLeod on County Library Administration (a very relevant subject in the light of the passing of the 1918 Education Act which had given county councils the power to establish rural libraries) and visits to printers and bookbinders. In addition to this intensive centrally organised week-long course the Glasgow branch also offered a weekly class in Library Routine. In 1923 the Association created a Scholarship valued at £15 for an essay of up to 5,000 words. This Essay Prize proved to be something of a disappointment to the Association with fewer entries being received than Council expected and those that were received often being of a troublingly low standard.

The Autumn School moved between Edinburgh and Glasgow through the 1920s and early 1930s, each year attracting around 50 students. In 1936 the decision was taken to change the School to a summer, residential, one and the first such SLA Summer School was held in Edinburgh in July 1936. This was attended by 41 students preparing for the LA's elementary or intermediate examinations. Financially the venture lost money but Council was persuaded of its practical and educational success and agreed to repeat the venture in 1937 at Newbattle Abbey, the former home of the Kerr family, the Marquesses of Lothian, and now converted into an Adult Education Centre. The 1937 Summer School attracted 35 Scottish, 13 English, 2 Irish, 2 Swedish and 1 Icelandic delegates – establishing a tradition of international attendance that would continue for many years.

The Second World War interrupted the Association's educational work but peace saw the Association welcoming the establishment, in September 1946, of the Scottish School of Librarianship at the Glasgow and West of Scotland Commercial College. The Association's welcome for this long-

wished for initiative (the SLA had discussed with the LA the need for a Scottish Library Training School at the end of the First World War) was all the greater because of the appointment of the long-serving SLA stalwart, W. B. Paton, then Chief Librarian of Greenock, as Chief Lecturer.

Due to accommodation problems the Association was unable to run a Summer School in 1946 or 1947 but St Andrews in July 1948 saw 62 students enrolling – 42 full-time, the rest day visitors. The 1949 School saw Egyptian and Swiss students while 1950 added Indian, South African and Australian delegates. 1951 saw a move back to Newbattle.

Summer Schools always had financial difficulties and their accounts reveal as well as anything how tiny a budget the Scottish Library Association operated on in those days. In 1952 the LA requested the SLA to make savings and the SLA's General Purposes Committee recommended economies which would total £50 in 1953. That year the Library Association agreed to meet any Summer School deficit up to the sum of £20. It was not until 1956 that the Association's overall accounts showed a turnover above £1000 and it is remarkable the amount of activity, in education and in other areas of work, that was generated on what were, even allowing for the greater value of money, quite modest sums of money. The Association always has managed to generate a substantial amount of its own funding through ventures such as the annual conference – in 1952 out of a total income of £679.8.7 only £320 came from the LA capitation grant. Education for librarianship was developing, the Glasgow school at the College of Commerce went on from strength to strength. A proposal to create a second school at Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology in Aberdeen had originally failed to find favour with the SLA Council, with members questioning both the need for a second school and its location; but eventually opinion swung behind the scheme and Council voted to support the new school by 18 votes to 8 and in September 1967 the new institution opened under the direction of Jimmy Orr.

The Summer School, always enjoyable but perhaps of decreasing relevance, moved from Newbattle Abbey across Midlothian to Middleton Hall in 1978.

Education, in the narrow sense of preparing students to sit examinations, became less significant as a part of the SLA's work as the whole framework of professional qualifications changed from Library Association run examinations to a graduate profession where the dominant force was the higher education institution providing the courses and the qualification. Education, in the wider sense, had always been provided by the SLA and its local branches and if the direct involvement in initial training changed

then other areas of work more than took up the slack in the Association's time and energies.

In future articles the SLA's role in advocacy, in the long struggle for public library legislation, in standards setting and in creating the appropriate infrastructure for the SLA will all be looked at in some detail. A significant development in the Association's work came in 1965 with the first publication of the Triennial Review, a measured and objective look at developments in all parts of Scotland's library services – public, academic and special. This series of reviews allowed the Association and its members to step back from the daily struggle and see where the profession and the Association were going. Straws in the wind could be detected – a submission in 1967 on standards for the public library service, a 1969 conference on 'Libraries and Computers', and the introduction of the first automated systems, the Plessey Pen, in the early 1970s.

One area of outward-looking activity which the Association took up with some enthusiasm after a slow start was its publishing programme. Annual reports and conference proceedings had always been produced and as we saw in the last article a magazine eventually came along but serious book publication had to wait until 1971 with the publication of the Association's first hardback: W. R. Aitken's thesis on the history of the public library movement in Scotland. The publishing programme developed in the 1980s and 1990s with initiatives such as the SLA/MagnaPrint large print book series, professional works such as *The Glasgow Novel* and *Exploring Scottish History* and a range of works aimed at a wider audience and showcasing Scottish library resources and the expertise of Scottish librarians such as *The Scot and his Maps*, *Working Lives* and *Discovering Scottish Writers*. Sadly this wider programme has had to be abandoned in recent years.

The Association has also been involved with a range of initiatives to promote interest in reading – the joint sponsorship with Canongate and the BBC of the 'Quest for a Kelpie' children's fiction competition or the promotion, with the Glasgow Herald, of the 'People's Prize' for fiction and the 'Rediscovery' project all put books and reading firmly on the Association's agenda and this has continued more recently with involvement in readership development work and the highly successful multi-media '[Scottish Writers](#)' project.



Opinion: prison libraries

Could we reach further?

Prison libraries in Scotland serve one of the hardest to reach user groups. Library professionals have a lot of work to do in developing services for them, says Alan Stanley.

For some the idea that prisoners should have libraries with good collections, a range of information services and professional, knowledgeable, helpful staff provokes the derision once reserved for colour televisions in cells. Recently I wrote a dissertation intended to discuss collection development policy and practice in these services in Scotland. In the end I found myself discussing why collection development was impossible in most Scottish prison libraries.

Every prison in Scotland has an obligation to provide a library service to its population. It is largely up to the governor of each individual prison what this provision actually consists of. This has resulted in each library service developing to a large degree in isolation. This means that prison library services today vary enormously in quality. They range from small collections of second-hand fiction housed in a cupboard to smart, modern libraries with professional staff overseeing reading development and confidence-building programmes and playing valuable educational and social roles within their prison.

The majority of libraries in prisons in Scotland are staffed by prison officers without library training. They maintain access to resources but lack professional knowledge. They supervise the library service around their other commitments and can be re-deployed away from the library at short notice. There are no definitive guidelines for running a library service in a Scottish prison. The [Scottish Prison Service](#) (SPS) has worked to develop guidelines but the finalisation and implementation of these has stalled.

Many prison inmates have limited reading experience. The SPS estimated in 2002 that “12% of prisoners screened can barely read at all and 25% lack functional literacy”. Joe Levenson, Policy Officer with the [Prison Reform Trust](#), has suggested that “65% of prisoners have literacy and numeracy levels so low they are ineligible for 96% of jobs”. Criminologists often connect crime with the inability to communicate and interact with

others, whether verbally or in writing. Librarians can help: improving information literacy and the leisure reading habits of the inmates can dramatically improve their prospects. This is already being done in some Scottish prisons. At the inspirational libraries in HMPs Barlinnie and Perth, staff are determined to provide the best services to their users they can. Both these libraries provide excellent models of good practice for Scottish prison libraries. HMP Perth enjoys an excellent partnership with Perth and Kinross Council and takes full advantage of the skills and resources available through the first-rate council library service.

One development made possible by this partnership is the 'Dear Dad' initiative. A children's librarian from Perth and Kinross Council visits the prison library with a range of reading material for Dads to record themselves reading for the benefit of their children at home. The children's librarian advises the readers in selecting suitable material and delivering an effective reading. Carnegie (formerly Lauder) Learning Centre then helps the reader in designing and producing an attractive cover for the CD. This is the sort of project that can act as a goal for the developing reader, an achievement for readers to aspire to during the long and frustrating hours they spend struggling to improve their reading. The 'Dear Dad' project reveals to them one way literacy can directly improve their lives and the lives of their children. It may also improve the image of the library within the prison.

There is a huge appetite in prisons for reading material, an appetite prison managements are happy to meet, not least as part of their behaviour management strategy. And a good library service can go further. Librarians I spoke to told me that inmates were always keen to discuss and recommend books to one another and provide the type of peer support a community-based reader development librarian would envy.

So how do we ensure that good library services are available to inmates wherever they are? Within the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) there is a desire to develop the services but the strain on resources and their place in the SPS's pecking order appear to be stronger than the existing will to improve the quality.

The work of prison libraries needs to be better understood, more supported, and more appreciated. We as professionals need to do more for this sector. We need to write more articles; we need to explore more the opportunities for partnership and find out how to market community libraries to ex-offenders; and information students need to ask more questions, and use work placement opportunities to explore the work being done. If we believe that library and information services can contribute to a range of communities then we must count prisons as one of those communities.

The vast majority of those in prisons will re-enter society. Should they have had good experiences with the library inside, they may well become regular users of community libraries. Librarians talk a great deal about reaching out to those who don't use libraries. The prison library may represent a real opportunity for librarians to reach out to one of those groups.

Alan Stanley is a recent graduate of the University of Strathclyde's MSc in Information and Library Studies. He is currently job hunting in Berlin.

[Read the related article](#) from Cathy Kearney, Assistant Director, CILIPS/SLIC, on developments in the area of prison libraries.



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Opinion: prison libraries

Instilling skills for life

Cathy Kearney sets prison libraries in Scotland in context, outlining the hard work going on, which has a particular emphasis on education and information literacy.

The prison library sector is an area of provision which features rarely in the pages of Information Scotland and it is encouraging to note that students and new professionals are giving the subject serious consideration and thought. In Scotland there is a small but committed group of information professionals working to deliver services to offenders and it is worth setting Alan Stanley's article in context by exploring the extremely challenging circumstances in which these colleagues work.

Prisons are governed by the [Prisons \(Scotland\) Act 1989](#), which provides the framework for the operation of prisons, and Young Offenders Institutions (YOI). Responsibility for management of prisons rests with the [Scottish Prison Service](#) (SPS) which is accountable to the Scottish Government. [Rule 76\(2\) of the Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions \(Scotland\) Rules 1994](#) states: "The Governor shall make arrangements for lending library services for the use of prisoners which take into account so

far as is reasonably practicable their educational, informational and recreational interests.”

As Alan points out, although every prison in Scotland is obliged to provide a library service, the interpretation of this obligation can vary widely. For example, HMP Barlinnie is the only establishment to employ a qualified librarian while HMP Edinburgh and Perth enjoy a close working relationship with the local authority provider.

What does the community profile of a prison population look like? Scotland's prisons and their population are not homogenous. In 2005/6 there was a rise in the Scottish prison population to a record annual daily average of 6,857 reaching a peak of 7,094 in March 2006 ([SPS Annual Report and Accounts 2005/6](#)) but behind this statistic lies a microcosm of social exclusion. About 80% of all prison sentences are for six months or less. One quarter of those in prison have below functional levels of literacy and 33% have problems with basic numeracy. Two thirds are unemployed and three quarters leave with no job to go to. Drugs and alcohol will have played a significant role in the lives of many, as will mental health problems. Levels of suicide pose a serious problem in Scottish prisons as does overcrowding. Around 70% of those who offend will have been in care.

The [Scottish Library and Information Council](#) (SLIC) has been working with the Scottish Prison Service for almost 10 years to raise the profile of prison library services and has funded consultancy and innovative projects to help achieve this. For example, 'Are You Sitting Comfortably' was a project which encouraged offenders to share books with their children through recording themselves reading a book to video. The project was acclaimed for its impact on offenders by providing support to them in their use of the library and relationship with prison staff. The raised profile of library services through this project enabled SLIC to set up a working party in 2003.

Membership was drawn from a range of SPS staff including depute governors, literacy specialists and prison officers to progress development of a prison libraries framework. A key strategy for SLIC and the working group was to emphasise the educational role of libraries as well as the need for prison libraries to embrace the social inclusion agenda. This approach was underpinned by the SPS inclusion policy, 'Learning, Skills and Employability'. The policy recognised that learning can take place in a range of settings and contexts and set out broad aims for prison libraries upon which the working group were able to build.

SLIC was keen to ensure that libraries were available and equipped to

support and extend the formal learning already taking place by offering reader development, basic skills support and learning advice, information and guidance. The working party were united in the belief that information literacy is a key skill for life and that reader development activities can contribute to rehabilitation and reduce the likelihood of re-offending. These views were confirmed by visits to prisons south of the border such as Haverigg staffed by the award-winning Chris Billings.

The group offered some key principles for consideration by the SPS Board:

- The SPS should regard the library as an integral part of skills development and the service should be seen as core provision.
- Prison libraries should be run in partnership with local authorities.
- Prison library provision should be based on a service level agreement model drawn up in partnership and appropriate to the community it serves.
- There should be available a similar range of services to those found in public libraries.
- Realistic targets should be introduced to drive up quality and range of provision.
- Prison libraries should be recognised as resources and locations for developing adult literacy provision.

When the working party proposals were presented to the SPS Board, resources were under severe pressure by a rising prison population, the requirement for prisons, in common with other public services, to find 5% efficiency savings and the priority to end 'slopping out' by installing night sanitation facilities for prisoners. Consequently, there was little hope of our proposals being adopted in full.

Nevertheless, SLIC continues to advocate adoption of the prison libraries framework as part of a partnership approach to reduce re-offending and is optimistic that our proposals can be re-presented for discussion with the Scottish Government within the context of the Criminal Justice Plan.

[Read the related article](#) from Alan Stanley is a recent graduate of the University of Strathclyde's MSc in Information and Library Studies.



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Guest endpiece: career development

Shared developments

New Zealand-based Bill Macnaught brings news about great steps they are taking in professional development and other issues they share with Scotland.

New Zealand experiences around 14,000 earthquakes each year. The great majority go unnoticed by most people, but in an average year over a 100 will make their presence felt.

In this article I will describe the biggest 'earthquake' to hit New Zealand's library profession since LIANZA was established in 1910. LIANZA is the [Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa](#) – the equivalent of [CILIPS](#). In New Zealand we're gearing up for our big centenary in 2010, but that is not the only reason why LIANZA is planning a major shake-up for its membership.

At 1 July 2006 LIANZA had 1,244 personal members and 459 institutional members – giving a total membership of 1,702. This is less than the circulation of Information Scotland (2,300) but as a proportion of the population (4.25million in NZ) we are comparable with Scotland. According to the latest available [LISU statistics](#) on CILIP's website there has been a drop in the numbers of chartered librarians of about 17% across the UK since the year 2000. In New Zealand, despite the fact that there is no such thing as a chartered librarian, we expect the profession to grow from strength to strength in the next few years, because of an earth-shattering decision by LIANZA.

There are approximately 6,000 people employed in library and information services in New Zealand, but the level of qualification of someone calling themselves 'librarian' varies enormously. To address this the membership of LIANZA agreed at the 2006 AGM that we should take a giant step towards more rigorous professional standards. So on 1 July 2007 the library and information profession in New Zealand introduced a comprehensive scheme for registration and continuing professional development. Check the LIANZA website at www.lianza.org.nz for details of the scheme.

To qualify for registration, library and information professionals must show a theoretical understanding of the body of knowledge at graduate level and also demonstrate that they have applied the body of knowledge in a library or information management environment. Registered librarians will also be required to adhere to the profession's code of professional conduct and continue to update their professional knowledge throughout their careers. Sounds familiar so far?

Well, the LIANZA body of knowledge has been derived from [IFLA guidelines](#), but we've adapted it to include recognition of indigenous knowledge paradigms specific to Aotearoa New Zealand. New Zealand is, of course, culturally diverse and librarians have a strong sense of its indigenous culture and history consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi. In the New Zealand context, understanding the relevance of the [Treaty of Waitangi](#) in the delivery of library and information services is a core requirement reflected in LIANZA's mission statement and partnership arrangements with Te Ropu Whakahau – the sister body of LIANZA. Te Ropu Whakahau was born from a need to provide professional and cultural support to Maori who worked in libraries throughout New Zealand. It also enabled Maori voices to inform policies and practices relating to the care of Maori material in libraries and archives, and the provision of library and information services generally. Since coming to live and work in New Zealand in 2005 my professional views on freedom of access to information and freedom of expression have been transformed as a result of discussions with my Maori colleagues. Cultural and religious sensitivities will present a growing challenge for librarians everywhere in the years ahead, I suspect.

If the Treaty of Waitangi is the most distinctive aspect of librarianship in New Zealand then the challenge of digital information is the most topical. With government funding, the Aotearoa People's Network was launched a few months ago. Many similar issues and debates have taken place here as have been had in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK about the digital future of public roles. My own library in New Plymouth was one of the pioneers of the new service and Helen Clark, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, launched our service on 15 February. Currently there is not enough funding available to roll the programme out across the whole country, but a second wave of library services has just been accepted to join the four pioneers, so momentum is growing. The experience of Scottish colleagues in developing professional training materials in ICT is of great interest to us.

Among other benefits, LIANZA sees the registration scheme providing an assurance for future employers, both in New Zealand and overseas, that a registered member meets professional standards of competency in the

body of knowledge and ethics required for professional library and information work. This also means it will be possible to introduce international benchmarking and recognition of professional library qualifications for New Zealanders wishing to work overseas. CILIP has been discussing reciprocal arrangements with LIANZA since Bob McKee's visit to New Zealand in 2006. In coming months I expect the ties between LIANZA and CILIP to grow stronger as our plans for a registered profession roll out, starting with assistance in assuring the quality of our academic courses in librarianship. The dialogue with colleagues in CILIPS can only assist. After all, you've been professional two years longer than New Zealand.

Happy Centenary CILIPS!

Bill Macnaught is Manager, Puke Ariki, New Plymouth, New Zealand.



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Conference: Presidential Address

Libraries on the agenda

Alan Hasson demands your energy and involvement to do justice to our professional past.

It's a privilege to deliver this Presidential Address, in the centenary year of the professional association for librarians and information scientists in Scotland.

As I was doing my research the parallels between 1908 and 2008 kept intruding. 1908 was the full flush of Edwardian optimism. And what an interesting and optimistic time it is to be alive now. We have concerns and worries, but look around. There are millions of people in India and China, with opportunities that have been denied to them for millennia: imagine the innovations and inventions and improvements in life that these people, with educational opportunities greater than they have ever had, will bring.

Think of the talent that has been released through our growing intolerance of gender and racial prejudice. Look at the extensions to democracy that have been made in Eastern Europe, in South Africa, in South America and in Scotland.

As a professional association, whose members' business includes the support of education and who provide that hall mark of democracy, the opportunity for free access by all, to all shades of opinion, it's a wonderful time.

And of course as Scots these developments are particularly welcome. There's a lovely wee book by Arthur Herman, which sums up why we especially, should welcome these developments. It also gives in its title an insight into the difference between Americans and the British. In Britain it's entitled *The Scottish Enlightenment*. In America, where I bought my copy it's sold under the title *How the Scots Invented the Modern World: the true story of how western europe's poorest nation created our world and everything in it*.

One hundred years ago there was that same optimism, the first model T came off the assembly line, the London Olympics were held (within budget), the old age pension was introduced and then as a fitting culmination of that year's social progress... the Scottish Library Association, fore-runner of [CILIPS](#), was founded: our English colleagues had led the way 31 years before with the establishment of the LA. Since that time the Scottish association has grown from 65 members to over 2,300. In the last 100 years we have been fortunate in the leadership of the professional body. In a talk such as this only a few can be mentioned but as a sample, it would be hard to better FT Barrett, through EA Savage, WB Paton and Alan White to Brian Osborne.

It would not be doing these people justice however, if my talk focused on the past. They and their colleagues were innovators, developers of services in changing times. So must we be. Remember where our predecessors brought their services from. Closed access, ratepayers only, the jani at the door to get the books back. To show my age, I was one of those wee boys who was put off using their library (Kingston, Glasgow) for weeks, because they were asked, no, told, to show that their hands were clean.

There's a Border saying "*Its aye bin an it'll aye be*", meaning it's always been that way and it always will be. Well no. Nothing stays the same unless you make the conscious decision to step off the highway and stand still. And if you do, don't then complain that you feel irrelevant and you're not valued.

The theme of this conference is inspire and transform: regenerating services. You can read that two ways, it's either about the services which need regenerating or it's about services which help regeneration. As a member of CILIPS, at this time in our national story, my emphasis is on the latter interpretation.

The services which we run add value throughout our society, whether it's in support of lifelong learning, in the business world, in support of CPD and research, in the bolstering of democracy or in that most undervalued of areas, providing more quality to life. Walter Scott said that Scotland was a breeding country, not a feeding country. Well, we feed ourselves now through our competitiveness, our innovation, the continuing need to regenerate. If libraries don't support that thrust we are nothing.

The challenges we as a profession face are those which our nation faces. I don't want to be in charge of what some of my colleagues in other disciplines call "Cinderella services". Then again, look where Cinderella ended up when she got smart and a wee bitty assertive. Lets take a quick tour of our environment and some of the challenges that environment brings.

We have an increasingly rich society but one where the unwillingness of tax payers to sustain the panoply of public services at the cost acceptable in the 1960s onwards is taken as a given by all the major parties.

We have social divisions that are becoming accentuated whether it's in sink estates, age-related social exclusion or equipping our population to reach its full potential. The most recent figures I've seen in Scotland, stated that over 20% of the post-16 population were functionally illiterate. A recent OECD report on educational attainment stated that the UK was third bottom in rates of literacy, in what they defined as the developed world, above only the US and Poland.

Surely it's not acceptable that in the country which was the first to attempt to provide a universal education system, through the Act for Setting of Schools of 1696, the surest way to guarantee academic success in our school system is to have parents in social classes A and B.

The perception of can pay don't want to pay is reinforced by the caution, if not apprehension, with which central government views the impact of the rise of the far eastern economies. This is perhaps most sharply articulated in the Gershon Report, which has suggested a need to shrink UK public sector spend in a major manner.

The corollary to these facts is that all of us in management positions are being asked to be more efficient. What does that mean? It means both less and targeted specifically to government priorities. It's a reductionist model being articulated not only in continuing attrition of budgets but in fundamental reviews of resource allocation and purpose.

The statutory base for public libraries in Scotland is loosely worded, adding to their vulnerability. The legislation in Scotland talks of the need to provide "adequate" library services, which is so capable of interpretation. When a team comes second in the league, that may be adequate to some: it isn't to me. Cups are nice but leagues are the benchmark. In Scotland our position has been greatly strengthened by the [Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix](#), supported by government, for which once again this Institute must thank [SLIC](#), but a lot remains to be done to actionalise PLQIM.

Many current innovations strike at one of the historic core roles of librarians: as organisers of and gatekeepers to knowledge. I used Google to research for this paper, not a library. We seem to have a substantial body of opinion which says if you have access to Google, you get accurate, balanced usable information. No, you do get such information, but it's embedded in dross, or exaggeration or unacceptable bias.

And yet, and yet... I'm more than optimistic about the future for libraries and the members of CILIPS.

Recently I was invited to a presentation by the SFA at the [Scottish Parliament](#). It was a fantastic, slick presentation. They started with a film of great Scottish goals: three of them were in colour! The message they wanted to get over was how successful their engagement with grassroots football has been and it was a story to be proud of: they now have 115,000 registered players.

And yet, and yet... After years of cuts, latest figures show that about 22% of the population are active library users in Scotland, that's about a million people. And that there were just under 28.5 million visits to libraries in Scotland: that's more than the annual ground attendance at the entire Scottish professional football set up. By a considerable margin. And that over 60% of the population use library services regularly. And then of course, there were an additional 10,400,000 virtual visitors to libraries.

We build from a solid base both of use, which we can prove, and a sentiment which is harder to prove, until you try to shut a community library. Roy Clare, CEO of the [Museums, Libraries & Archives Council](#), in his paper to this conference, was absolutely right: we need to sharpen our knowledge and presentation of the measurable impact which libraries make on the

economy, on social cohesion and on myriad other government priorities. Challenge and change always bring innovation – that's the key issue for us as a profession. It's an opportunity not a threat.

We already see the innovation that the changing environment brings. Our sector is alive with new or re-invented or improved initiatives. One of the most prominent of these for me, on an organisational level, is the PLQIM . Here's a tool which allows an assessment which is meaningful to politicians to the most senior management and to the Scottish Government. It's focused on outcomes; it's a vibrant tool for use in corporate discussion of services.

I see individual projects of excellence, such as Sighthill's positive response to social challenges, proving the library as a cost-efficient social and personal regeneration vehicle. I see Penicuik's new library exploiting co-location with Sports and Education. I see Abertay, John Wheatley, our NHS libraries, West Lothian, Highland and more, all innovating.

But there is a need for much more, a need which can – must – be fulfilled by you. We have a need for more innovative ways of gaining access to new or redirected sources of funding, for new outcome-focused models of delivery. We need to exploit these sources of funding to release the creativity and energy of our staff. There is a jewel of such a project, on a small scale, close to this conference venue: Kelso's Readers' Garden. Initiated by local staff who love their community, supported by management who trust their frontline people, partnered by local community resources and underpinned by Lottery money.

But we also need to look at our skills base and the assumptions we have made in what our professional qualifications fit us for. When I first came into local government the Director of Library Services was a second tier official. My Library and Information Services Librarian, every bit as gifted, is now a fifth tier officer.

I'm increasingly struck by the common attitudes, knowledge and skills of the successful leaders of Library, Museum, Community Learning, Archives, Sports, Parks, Recreation and Arts services. As management structures flatten, the fitting of successful librarians for senior positions in multidisciplinary organisations seems to me to be a crucial part of professional preparation if influence and a knowledge of the multi-user solution which the library service can be, is not to be lost.

We are all familiar with the Tutor-Librarian: do we not need to be just as comfortable with the Librarian/Community Worker, the Sports Development/ Librarian or the Community Arts/Librarian? Parity of esteem,

flexibility, innovation, change initiators, that's what I look for in all levels of staff. A customer focus, marketeering, energy, doing it different and changing and rechanging the 'it' are what gets you motoring down that highway.

This need to sharpen is heightened by the Scottish Government's recasting of its relationship with other publicly-funded bodies. The Scottish Government through the Single Outcome Agreements has ensured that Scottish national priorities now, in potential, achieve a consistency in desired outcome locally, which has never been achieved before.

Allow me to read part of a letter I have recently received from Alex Salmond, First Minister of Scotland:

"I am pleased that the Scottish library sector is at the forefront of current thinking about modern library services, particularly in the increasingly important field of digitisation. It is a matter of national pride that Scotland has so many library and information services and that the staff of these services, and their initiatives, are well-respected amongst the international profession..."

"Local authorities throughout Scotland are bringing forward new ideas to re-invigorate and modernise the public libraries service. SLIC is strongly supporting this activity with financial help from the Scottish Government. It is encouraging to see local libraries playing a major role in the lives of Scottish people, promoting employment skills and computer skills – and of course promoting reading to provide a lifetime of enjoyment and benefit..."

And so, we, you, are, through the good work of CILIPS, SLIC, library professionals, you yourselves, recognised in the highest government circles as being an example of excellence and innovation. You are providers of solutions.

The road set out is clear: increasing interweaving of Scottish Government priorities and local priorities. For us as a profession this has been foreseen. Bob McKee, the Chief Executive of CILIP, wrote in 2002:

"Scotland is different. The different legislative and administrative context of libraries in Scotland is now underpinned by political devolution and the likelihood that over time the policy context of library services in Scotland will diverge from the policy context in England."

I started this talk by citing the continuity between 1908 and 2008. There are similar continuities between the 1930s and today. The affiliation of the then SLA, with the LA saw a merging of common interests for a common good, and the retention of autonomy. Such partnerships are never without their 'challenges'. As Bob has written:

"This state of interdependence does not mean that relations between the

LA and SLA since the union of 1931 have been harmonious. On occasion there has been friction usually because a document or policy has emanated from the LA in London without taking due account of the situation in Scotland.”

We are an affiliated body of CILIP, with a primary duty of ensuring that the interests of library and information professionals in Scotland are optimised within Scotland’s distinctive cultural, legal policy and legislative environment. That provides the sure and solid basis for co-ordination with our colleagues in the other three home nations.

To use in a Scottish context and in a library setting, words emanating from across the North Channel, Scotland is “a nation once again”. The policy context, as shown in the Single Outcome Agreements and perhaps even now, the concept of cultural entitlements, is moving apart. It will continue to move apart. The divergence of that movement can be seen also in our sister nations of Wales and Northern Ireland and England. We are operating in a federal state. As such we can no more be a branch of CILIP than can the Library Association of Alabama be a branch of the Library Association of Vermont. We are not and never have been a branch of the LA or CILIP, we are the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals IN Scotland affiliated with CILIP.

We need to build on the common interests of the professional bodies in all the kingdoms and principalities and provinces of these islands. But anything which militates against CILIPS’ primary duty to its members is not acceptable, whether that be in financial and staffing resources, in structures and governance or in responsiveness to the new, invigorated sources of legislative power that now exist.

Last year your then president noted that your Council and under Council’s instructions, your officers were engaged in robust discussions with CILIP UK on governance issues. These discussions continue. I hope for the continued unity of our profession that they will reach a mutually satisfactory conclusion... soon. I was brought up as a union man, I suppose you could put that another way and say I’m a unionist. But, things change: I’m no longer a member of a trades union.

As two of the three best poets to come out of England in the last 50 years have written:

“You can’t always get what you want,
But if you try sometimes,
You just might find
You get what you need.”

Your Council has innovated by contacting members directly to get views on what you want from CILIPS. That information, along with the views of the representatives to CILIPS Council, forms a key part of the policy underpinning our discussions with CILIP. What is also needed is your energy and engagement, your involvement in governance. Don't step off the highway. Don't be an "Aye Bin".

Colleagues, my theme today has been regeneration. Of a country, of services and of a profession. The sub-plot has been about the opportunities which our time of change provides. We are at a crucial time, we are at an exciting time. It's an interesting time. We are the people who must provide the solutions. Our predecessors have given us an honourable professional past. Make sure that people 100 years from now can say the same of us.



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Aiming Higher

Context

The annual Electric Connections was formerly organised by the COSMIC group which represents the archives, libraries and museums sectors in Scotland. A new group has been launched called Digital Access Scotland and two of the organisations represented, SCURL and SLIC, assisted with co-ordinating the programme for the 2008 event. Lisa McLaren, a CILIP Chartership candidate at Napier University Library, volunteered to assist at the event held at the Scottish Storytelling Centre on 11 March and also to submit this report. Jill Evans, SCURL.

Electric Connections, organised by SCURL and SLIC, was billed as a collaborative venture between Museums, Libraries and Archives, with speakers from each sector highlighting their current projects.

Sheila Cannell of Edinburgh University Library and Alma Swan gave an overview of [IRIScotland](#), a digital repository for the nation, and looked at its

forthcoming evaluation before leading a lively debate on the future of open access.

Kevin Wilbramson, from Edinburgh City Council spoke about the [Scottish Archive Network](#), which provides “internet access to the written history of Scotland”.

East Renfrewshire Council won the [British Library's Hidden Treasures Brought to Life](#) competition and Cathy Gormal described the work of digitising the Arbuthnott manuscript. The audience was also treated to a view of the manuscript using Turning the Pages software.

Emma Beer introduced the work of the Strategic Content Alliance, a JISC-funded cross-sectoral project aimed at bringing publicly funded e-content together. The project encourages public sector organisations to collaborate and coordinate their online activities to make the most of limited budgets.

The highlight of the programme was the Culture Minister, Linda Fabiani, launching Digital Access Scotland, a new strategic group that will be responsible for championing information environment initiatives.

Wendy Turner, from the [National Museum of Scotland](#), examined recent museum projects, including NMS Online and Scotland's Images. The final talk by Kate Lindsay gave details of the [World War One Poetry Digital Library](#). Kate spoke about the ways in which the project had harnessed Web 2.0 to reach out to users and publicised the [Great War Archive](#), where members of the public can digitise their own artefacts.

The day was a great success, bringing together people from a number of institutions and showcasing exciting projects. There were good opportunities for networking, at registration and during lunch, but what was particularly inspiring was the number of organisations that are already working together on projects and the scope for future collaboration.



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Film review

Reflected on the silver screen

CILIPS and the Career Development Group Scotland presented a screening of the *The Hollywood Librarian* in May. Gavin Stuart gives us his opinion of it.

A quick question: Bette Davis, Katherine Hepburn, and Julia Roberts have all played members of which profession? Here's a clue: Batgirl was one too....

Still stuck? What if I told you that these characters are usually portrayed as prim and proper dames most often heard proffering sharp shhh-es whilst peering over horn-rimmed spectacles? Yes, librarians have had a fairly rough time of it in films, and it's stereotypes such as these which Ann Seidl's film [The Hollywood Librarian](#) attempts to dispel.

Seven years in the making, Seidl's film intersperses clips from films with interviews with real-life librarians to, in her words, "examine the image and stereotypes of librarians". It's a noble venture, but one that ultimately – and unfortunately – fails.

While some of the clips are fun, Seidl's scattergun approach to structure all too often leaves the viewer confused as to their relevance. Confusing matters further is the film's lack of focus. The second half of the picture, which highlights the plight of US libraries in the face of budget cuts and closures, is so different in tone to what has gone before that it unbalances the whole venture.

There are undoubtedly high points: Nancy Pearl is the closest librarians have to a celebrity, and being in her company is a joy. Meanwhile, it's impossible not to be moved by the inmates who run the San Quentin prison library. But surely a clip or two from *The Shawshank Redemption* would have been perfect here?

It's hard to see exactly who this film is aimed at. Librarians surely know all the issues facing their profession intimately and will bemoan *The Hollywood Librarian's* lack of depth, while the casual viewer will find little in the array of talking heads which will actually change any stereotyped images he or she may have about the people who novelist Spider Robinson called "the secret masters of the world".



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Like something almost being said...conferences & careers

Watershed moments

Tony Ross and Richard Fallis muse on coming full circle, the benefits of attending conferences and the competitiveness of current job-seeking.

It is our hope that regular readers of this column, should they exist, value us for our directness and honesty. In that spirit, we feel obliged to confess that ideas were a bit thin on the ground this month. Therefore, we each decided to write short pieces reflecting on what feel like watershed moments in our respective careers. Oddly enough, even though we wrote our pieces entirely separately, they convey similar impressions, of us simultaneously making progress while being conscious of having come full circle – of us moving confidently into new professional arenas, while still anxiously treading water. And something tells us we are not alone.

TONY: As I write this, I'm busy putting off preparing my presentation for the CILIPS Branch and Group Day in June. Attending the event will bring this early phase of my career full circle, given that I attended it for the first time last year as a humble student and my first piece for Information Scotland was a report on it.

Branch days and conferences are excellent CPD opportunities. They help broaden experience and one's range of professional contacts, and also maintain a feeling of career momentum. Having spent (and regretted) a couple of years drifting, I value now having such a feeling and I am determined to gain new knowledge and experiences in as many ways as I can. Therefore, I am under a lot of pressure to make the most of this year's branch day. However, it and most other extra-employment CPD opportunities, are voluntary additions to an already heavy workload. To make the most of such valuable opportunities, a lot of prior preparation is advisable, which seems eminently manageable when you first agree to participating in an event, months in advance, but can prove onerous by the time the event itself comes around.

So now an investment of effort is due. Usually the thought of public speaking would colour the antecedent weeks with shades of dread, and self-doubt over my ability to deliver a coherent and interesting talk that won't condescend, baffle or bore a group of (more experienced) peers. In this instance, though, I really haven't had much time to dwell on it, because I've been so busy doing other things. This might work to my advantage, lending my presentation a natural, unharried delivery. Or it might make my performance an ill-prepared disaster, culminating in a Q&A session that sees me sinking amid a sea of queries to which I'm hopelessly unqualified to respond...

RICHARD: Recently I finished reading *The Road*, Cormac McCarthy's superb post-apocalyptic novel, recommended to me by one librarian and loaned to me by another. At one point, a character remembers how he once stood in an abandoned library and contemplated all the ruined books: "It surprised him. That the space which these things occupied was itself an expectation."

At the risk of sounding trite, libraries are spaces of great expectation, especially to me, since the landscape of my career could be about to undergo a seismic shift. By the time this is published, I will hopefully have taken up my first professional post, as a part-time Assistant Librarian in a Glasgow hospital library. Right now, I am filled with a mixture of relief and anxiety: relief at finally being able to contribute meaningfully to a library service; anxiety over what is still an uncertain future.

In this latter respect, my situation is by no means unique. Some of my friends from library school have also found work, but in positions that are part-time, temporary or not in their desired sector. Other friends, meanwhile, haven't even got that far, finding it difficult, or impossible, to even secure interviews. Worryingly, a few people who left library school full of optimism are considering changing career paths or returning to what they were doing before they tried to pursue librarianship. At the back of their minds, and of mine, sits a ticking clock, loudly counting down the hours till this year's LIS students stream out of library school, to flood an already sodden job market.

The LIS profession today is extremely competitive, and it has taken many of us by surprise. Perhaps it was naïve of us to believe that librarianship would be easier to get into than other occupations. But is it so unreasonable of us to think that it shouldn't be this hard to get a library job, without moving south? And if it's proving so hard for us, how much harder will it be for the library school students who follow us?

Having opened on a literary note, I'll close on a cinematic one. The new Indiana Jones movie features a sequence in which Indy evades Soviet thugs on a motorbike that crashes into his college library. While there, he tells one of his students that, to become a real archaeologist, the student needs to get out of the library. Whereas, to become real librarians, my friends and I first need to get into a library. Which, we are discovering, is easier said than done.

Tony is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Digital Library Research at the University of Strathclyde. Richard is an Assistant Librarian within NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde.



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Conference: CPD

You can go anywhere too

Isabel Hood and Amanda Quick offer tips on how to make the most of CPD, the subject of their conference session 'Regenerating Your Career: the Timelord's guide to CPD'.

It's been a few years since the [Career Development Group](#) Scottish Division ran a session at CILIPS Branch & Group Day. When we saw the theme of the 2008 conference was 'Regeneration', it was something of a red rag to a bull. We are both big fans of Doctor Who and couldn't resist the opportunity to stretch an analogy virtually to breaking point. What might the Doctor have to teach us about managing our continuing professional development?

We began with 'CDG Confidential', short interviews in which we went behind the scenes of our latest qualification adventures, Amanda having achieved Revalidation in 2007 and Isabel Fellowship in 2005. Amanda writes: "[Revalidation](#) was conceived at just the right time for me, three years after I had achieved Chartership. So it was time to reflect anew on my professional development. It covered a challenging period, as I was

unemployed for several months, then in a temporary post with limited CPD opportunities, followed by a new post and a glut of CPD. I struggled to be concise and to sustain momentum during a time when work was hectic with information literacy teaching. But it was a useful discipline and I intend to revalidate regularly.

Isabel writes: “I did my Fellowship for the challenge and to prove a point. The point was that it is often thought that Fellowship is only for very senior librarians in charge of vast LIS empires at the end of their careers, and somehow, therefore, ‘out of reach’. That annoys me, because it’s actually about evidencing fulfilment of the award criteria. This certainly doesn’t require you to be ‘x’ age, or in charge of ‘y’ staff or ‘z’ policy areas. The criteria are very challenging, it’s not something to be undertaken lightly or without considerable thought and work, but that’s what makes it worthwhile. So I decided to take a calculated risk and I submitted my [Fellowship](#) application six years after I Chartered.”

The TARDIS travels in time and space and can go literally anywhere. We have found the same to be true in our careers. Getting stuck into professional activities out and about has many benefits:

- | Finding satisfaction in working together for a common purpose
- | Challenging yourself – taking on responsibility and trying out things you might not get the opportunity to do at work
- | Learning new transferable skills
- | Meeting great people and forming new friendships
- | Increasing awareness of different sectors and regions

When you fill in your CILIP renewal form, do you take time to think about your group memberships? At present, you get automatic membership of your local Branch/Home Nation, plus two Special Interest Groups. It only costs a little extra to join additional groups if you’re spoilt for choice.

There have been many highlights during our years in the CDG. We have enjoyed organising one-day cross-sectoral conferences around the UK on everything from ‘Mainstreaming equality’ in Leicester to workforce development in Cardiff. We have participated in fundraising for a range of international projects – our current sponsored reading challenge is ‘Passport to Latin America’ – and a memorable excursion to the Edinburgh cow parade on a blistering summer’s day. Possibly the biggest highlight has been the many interesting and inspiring people we’ve met.

Professional involvement has enabled us to develop many skills: event management; running effective meetings; teamwork; and getting the best out of people (our colleagues are all volunteers juggling committee work with full-time professional posts); flexibility; strategic planning; and

leadership. Sometimes things go wrong, and we've learned from those mistakes. We've enlarged our horizons and had the opportunity to contribute to professional debate at the highest levels.

If joining a committee isn't for you, then you can still get about to courses and other networking events. And why stop at local or national activity? Why not apply for an IFLA first-timer grant and travel abroad? If you feel deskbound you can participate in online networks such as [CILIP Communities](#).

The Doctor keeps his sonic screwdriver close by. We've found a number of tools to be similarly indispensable, such as professional reading (and making your own voice heard); reflective writing (keeping your CV and CPD log up-to-date); and keeping a record of development activities in a portfolio.

Your companions on the professional journey are important. We encouraged conference delegates to map out their professional networks and think about whom they influence and who they are influenced by. Mentors, formal and informal, can help you set, review and achieve personal goals. We asked delegates to think about their goals for the short-, medium- and long-term and to record steps they could be taking towards them.

LIS professionals need to regenerate themselves. Our professional roles are only part of our identity. We all deserve a break – and we are better librarians for having a wide range of interests and contacts. Set yourself goals, and when you achieve them, celebrate and reward yourself for a job well done.

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Conference: Reviews

Services thriving, not just surviving

'Inspire and Transform: regenerating services', CILIPS Conference, 3-5 June, Peebles. Judy Dobbie reports.

I was delighted that the theme of this year's [CILIPS](#) conference was 'Inspire and Transform: regenerating services'. As all public library staff know, in recent years we have experienced radical changes in service provision and customer demand. I anticipated that given the range of topics and speakers, I would gain a valuable insight into the issues facing libraries today, and I was not disappointed. The programme, expertly organised by Elaine Fulton, Director CILIPS/SLIC and Rhona Arthur, Assistant Director CILIPS/SLIC, was truly inspiring.

Alan Hasson, CILIPS President, set the benchmark with a thought-provoking [opening speech](#). Speakers from public and academic libraries then described inspirational projects which have revolutionised their service delivery. Kari Lamsa from Library 10 in Helsinki described an amazing place which provides a recording studio, musical instruments for loan and even has a library radio. Their latest event was a 'Eurovision Karaoke', where customers could record themselves singing and produce their own CD. Susan Carragher, Head of Libraries from Essex County Council painted a wonderful picture of libraries which are 'thriving rather than just surviving' with a highly motivated workforce dedicated to service delivery who are rewarded for their achievements.

The visible passion and dedication of the speakers was infectious and the lively discussions during breaks and evenings reinforced my own belief that the library profession is vibrant and dynamic and on the verge of a new era. The Awards Dinner was a perfect illustration of this, with centenary medals presented to 12 people who have made a considerable contribution to libraries. I felt particularly proud to see a colleague, David Kett, receive an awarded for his extensive work with people in the early stages of recovery from drug and alcohol addictions, and Moira Methven, Head of Libraries, Information and Cultural Services in Dundee, become an Honorary Vice-President. It was also interesting to see that librarians are multi-talented (as we probably already knew) with Robert Ruthven from Stirling playing guitar with the evening's entertainment, the Bearded Pigs.

The Trade Exhibition gave a perfect illustration of the range of suppliers available to assist libraries in sourcing products which will enhance service provision.

Reflecting on the key messages I received throughout the event, I am reassured that library colleagues across Scotland and further afield are

striving for the same aims; to develop and extend our services, motivate staff and aspire to keep libraries relevant and inspirational.

The strong message delivered by all is that libraries are ready for the new challenges. As a profession, we have recognised, accepted and indeed embraced the fact that we cannot stand still and that by transforming the range and methods of service delivery, we can ensure that we are equipped for the new generations of library users.

But to do so successfully, we need to shed our reticence to boast about successes and claim our place at the heart of corporate strategies.

Judy Dobbie is Central Library Manager, Leisure and Communities, Dundee City Council.



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Conference: Reviews

Make it happen

Work together and communicate are the messages Amina Shah gleaned from an inspirational event.

At Peebles this year I found the energy and buzz stimulated by an inspirational programme of speakers truly palpable. It was fascinating to hear about developments in libraries in Finland, America, Estonia as well as services closer to home such as Essex. It was incredible to be immersed in the 'library world' for three days where it seemed we all ate, slept and breathed (very well it must be said) our professional future, past and present. As well as hearing from the official speakers, it was a great opportunity to put faces to names and meet and chat with colleagues from various sectors and countries.

Much of the focus of the discussions was of the importance of library services developing to meet the demands of new audiences. Colleagues

from Finland made a striking point when talking about Helsinki's fantastically popular [Library 10](#): library staff need to understand and experience the worlds that their users inhabit to truly understand them. It is important to realise that our jobs are never 'done' in this regard. In order to be relevant to people's lives, we need to constantly find out what our communities want and need and find ways to deliver it.

There was also a focus on the need to measure our successes and understand our failures. Alan Hasson, CILIPS President, pointed out that without rigorous performance management we can't manage our services or deliver our objectives. Various speakers highlighted the value of the [Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix](#) and the opportunity it has given library services to ask 'what' 'so what' and 'what now'.

The importance of advocacy was evident in every presentation. From getting politicians on side, fighting your corner within larger departments, shouting about libraries from the rooftops, the speakers made it clear that it is the responsibility of everyone in the profession to celebrate libraries and librarianship and make sure we let others know about it. It is clear that our colleagues in our professional bodies are all doing a fantastic job of making sure that governments realise that libraries can and will deliver.

A distinct message was that all this cannot be done in isolation; we must work in partnership with colleagues in other sectors, both public and private, and we must communicate effectively with politicians, publishers, suppliers, designers and systems providers to ensure that we have the tools and the means to make our dreams a functional reality.

I was struck by the real warmth and passion amongst the delegates. There was a genuine feeling of openness and willingness to share experiences, welcome new ideas and learn from colleagues. I was proud to be in this business – a love of people and of life are at its heart. It was clear that librarians over the last 100 years in Scotland and worldwide have been working to make people's lives better and this has all been done humbly and because "that's our job". It was inspiring to say the least to see colleagues awarded and remembered for their hard work and dedication at the Centenary Awards dinner.

Overall the message I took from the conference was for us all to celebrate what has been achieved over the last 100 years, think about what can be achieved over the next 100 and get back to work and make it happen.

Amina Shah is Senior Library and Information Officer, Central Library, Dundee



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Conference: Reviews

Talking about books

Val Phillips, Senior Library Assistant at Inverclyde Libraries, Greenock attended the Talking to readers about book session at CILIPS Annual Conference.

I facilitate a book group in Gourock Library which has been running for five years, and I was looking forward to the workshop, 'Talking to Readers About Books'. The session was led by Fiona Edwards from Opening the Book, the consultancy which covers reader development in libraries, including refurbishment, training and web presence. The excellent website whichbook.net helps find suitable books using emotions, characters and genre.

The 'ice breaker' was a great way to get to know each other. We answered a variety of questions on personal book memories. My question was a leading one "When you were in your teens, did you ever read a book just for the dirty parts?" Trust me to get that question! The discussion this provoked certainly led to a few laughs and surprises. By the time coffee break came we were all chatting away at ease with each other.

During a discussion about how best to promote books to challenging customers, various ideas were expressed about each situation. It was

worthwhile to hear about the differences in procedures between authorities. The suggested solution was not always the one we agreed with. One question raised a few eyebrows and, at the discussion later, a useful message came through as to how to help people without taking responsibility when the result was unfavourable. Stepping back from conflict and not taking things personally was a useful lesson to learn.

After a wonderful lunch we discussed examples of how we talk to readers about books without personal bias. We had all brought two books with us. One was a treat to read and the other we would not touch with a barge pole. We had to promote our treat book and then explain why the other book was a particular turn off. When all the treat books were then put on one table and 'barge pole' books on another, it became clear that one person's barge pole was another person's treat. An excellent way to emphasise the point that librarians should avoid their own personal prejudices in advising customers.

The next discussion was 'Meet the Books'. To what extent can you judge a book by its cover? We discussed cover illustrations, title and author display, size of book and size of print. Would that prejudice your choice? This debate led on to the next exercise which was to discuss an appraisal of unknown books by cover. We answered a list of questions about each book and debated the result. In groups we discussed various questions, e.g.,

what kind of book is this? Who is the book aimed at? Does it have a wider appeal than its target audience? This promoted an interesting debate which was thought provoking.

Fiona Edwards certainly 'Opened the book' for me and I look forward to using new techniques with the book group. I feel confident that I can promote professionally without bias to readers books that I would not normally read.



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Conference: Health information

We have the remedies

Joanna Ptolomey says it is important for the profession to emphasise the evidence of our impact on health information – and other sectors.

At a launch event recently an attendee said quite openly that they felt information professionals were good at organising information but poor at promotion of their skills and ensuring the continuing impact of their resources. A cheap shot perhaps, but there is undoubtedly concern in the profession about status and workers from other sectors taking on library and information roles. I believe that this is a constant problem we as a profession will have to deal with.

Instead of expecting others to change, we need to challenge this perception head-on, with evidence. We also need to be more open about showing our expertise and taking ownership of work that falls into our field of professionalism. We may be constricted by a job description, but it does not define who we are as professionals.

Through my work over the last five years in health inequalities projects, I have seen evidence that we have the skills and expertise to erode comments such as the one above. Furthermore, I believe that these skills are generic to any situation and any information professional.

Health inequalities projects may include a myriad of issues such as human rights, gender, sexual orientation, disability, wealth, housing, mobility, education and literacy, employment, class and aspirations. Health service providers have come to realise that a social model that incorporates health inequalities lies at the heart of any successful delivery model in health and social care. The other key delivery strategy is partnership working, and that now includes a model of Community Health and (Care) Partnerships (CHP's or CHCP's).

This all looks good on paper, but the reality can mean a multidisciplinary team all working from slightly different remits and representing different stakeholders. This team may include the doctor, the nurse, the health promotion manager, the art therapist, the nutritionist, the social worker, the addictions worker and the welfare rights officer. With the greatest will in the world it is hard for these group members to find that common thread of evidence that will tie them together. They all have different backgrounds, training & skills levels, and levels of knowledge. Who can save the group from information oblivion, provide evidence for decision-making and realise deliverables with immediate and also longer-term use? Enter the information professional.

We are the Switzerland of health information. We have no axe to grind, we represent the overall goal (e.g. to help develop a service delivery model based on evidence), and our stakeholders are indirectly the people of this nation and their health. We also approach information in a "tidy way", as a senior health services delivery manager put it to me recently. I believe we have "weapons of mass instruction"; also known as "the reference interview".

Think of any enquiry work: we always assume that people will ask us for what they think we can do, rather than what we can actually do. We assume that there is something deeper behind what people are telling us; we like to ask open-ended questions and avoid premature diagnosis of the question. We think about hierarchy of evidence and consider possible solutions to help people on their way. We know that spelling out our understanding of the search and our role in it can help people to clarify what they are trying to say. We understand that we are not health professionals; our business is as information professionals.

Getting to the real nub of the problem is difficult as people usually ask for what they believe is available: "...you know, the report that came out last year by the BMA..." is likely to be the report that came out four years ago by the Kings Fund. We know to ask whether they are looking for different levels of evidence and when a grey literature search would be most

advantageous. And, by the way, do they know what grey literature is and that it can be the most powerful arsenal in their evidence model?

We need to be bold. In a multidisciplinary group, the information professional needs to focus on what you can deliver, not what people think you are able to do. Take ownership of your ability to help realise goals. You will always be measured by your actions. So prepare to take action, work out what you can provide to help the group achieve its goals – and deliver it.

Can we measure impact? In this group situation I believe you can. Did you provide the evidence for making decisions, did you provide evidence for gaps in knowledge, did you provide a ready-to-use resource and is the group closer to a service delivery model?

The information professional does make a difference in transforming health information services and not just in the field of health inequalities. If we stick to taking ownership of our profession, making it relevant, and being measured by our actions, then we will succeed.

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Centenary

Talking to London

Brian Osborne looks at structure and the relationship with the UK-wide body in his third article on the history of our professional organisation.

The affiliation with the Library Association that was agreed in 1930 was probably, indeed inevitably, looked at in a different perspective from north and south of the Border. The Library Association tended to see the Scottish Library Association as a valuable addition to its branch network, smaller in size than many of its English regional branches, perhaps slightly more troublesome. On the other hand the SLA continued to have its date of foundation and its date of affiliation to the LA printed on its notepaper and was always very aware of its history, that it was not a creation of the Library Association and that it was an association in affiliation with the LA which could, on giving due notice, disaffiliate.

Although affiliation strengthened both bodies there were to be tensions between the LA and the SLA, most notably in the late 30s when the LA organised a survey of the public library services of the UK. The survey of South West Scotland by Miss A S Cooke was seen by many as inaccurate and misleading and William B Paton, then Burgh Librarian of Airdrie, at the September 1938 SLA AGM, succeeded in having a motion passed calling on the LA to withdraw this survey and have the work done again. Eventually the LA at its 1939 AGM agreed to a new survey on lines approved by a joint panel of LA and SLA members – this panel was due to meet for the first time on 7 September 1939, but events of somewhat greater world significance had intervened and it was not convened.

Writing in SLA News in 1983, on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the foundation of the Scottish Library Association, Robert Craig, unburdened at the time by the restrictions of paid office (though such later restrictions were seldom seen to limit his freedom of expression), observed: "...throughout the 75 years of its life there has existed in the SLA the belief that, despite denials to the contrary, the LA has never really understood the situation in Scotland."

In the 1950s the Library Association had re-examined its branch and section structure but the Scottish Library Association concluded in its response that it should, because of the differences in legislation between the two countries: "continue as a separate entity affiliated to the Library Association as at present."

The work in Scotland was in part funded by a capitation grant from London and, in 1963, because of a low credit balance in the SLA's accounts, the LA was asked to raise the capitation from 10 shillings (50p) per head to 13/4d per head (66p). In that year the SLA turnover exceeded £2000 for the first time. A more stable funding structure was achieved by the end of the decade when the capitation grant was replaced by an annual estimate submitted by the SLA, based on the financial activities of the past year and adjusted for inflation and any special activities it wished to undertake.

In 1970, with local government reorganisation on the horizon, the Council of the Scottish Library Association was faced with the challenge of responding to these changes in an economic climate in which the LA had insisted that only a 7% increase in expenditure could be afforded. The SLA requested the establishment of a full-time office in Scotland and negotiations with London ensued. The outcome was the welcome appointment of W B Paton, former County Librarian of Lanarkshire, and past President of both the LA and the SLA, as temporary Executive Secretary, funded by the LA and with a remit covering both Scotland and Northern Ireland. His appointment was scheduled to run from 1972 to 1975 and the efficient operation of the SLA was further strengthened by the appointment of Mary Barr as Clerical Assistant in September 1973.

The special situation of reorganisation over the temporary Executive Secretary post lapsed but the SLA pressed for a permanent appointment and in October 1984, Robert Craig, then a lecturer at Strathclyde University and who had been Honorary Secretary since 1981, was appointed as full-time paid Executive Secretary and established an office for the Association in Motherwell – the post being later re-designated as Director. The presence of a full-time paid permanent officer allowed the Association to develop its work in many areas although the significant contribution made by Council members and honorary officers should never be underestimated, not least in the negotiations with London and in the development of links with COSLA and other Scottish agencies.

With the Motherwell office established, SLA Council was soon pressing London for additional resources to support the Executive Secretary. By 1992 a professional officer had been appointed to the staff, in the person of Rhona Arthur, who became Assistant Director in 1997.

With the creation of the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) in 1991 an interesting situation had developed. SLIC was very much a creation of the SLA which had long argued for the development of just such an independent advisory body for the sector and had worked towards this with the National Library of Scotland's Library and Information Services Committee. Having created SLIC, there arose an immediate problem of staffing, in part caused by uncertain funding. There was also the potential problem of overlapping areas of work. A solution was found with the appointment of a Project Manager for SLIC and the secondment of the Executive Secretary of the SLA on a part-time basis to act as Director of SLIC – staffing gaps being filled by hiring freelance staff on a consultancy basis. The Executive Secretary/Director was thus in the potentially embarrassing position of serving two masters who might have diverging priorities or wish for different outcomes – but such things can usually be accommodated in the small world of Scottish librarianship and the

pragmatic solution adopted, however odd it might look from the outside, ensured that the two bodies would pull together rather than compete.

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A range of developments flowed from this agreement, which was to be monitored and adjusted by regular joint meetings of the two Associations. By 1995 the SLA had developed a website and email was in place in the office. Project EARL, designed to improve libraries' provision of information through the Internet, came on stream and a part-time Project Officer was funded to cope with this work. In April 1998 Elaine Fulton was appointed as Assistant Director SLIC/SLA and when Robert Craig retired in 2002 was appointed to succeed him in his joint role.

Tensions may have existed between London and Scotland but the two bodies had many powerful links, not least the succession of Scots who played significant roles in LA affairs. Some of these players have been referred to in earlier articles but in the post-war years this cross-fertilisation has continued with figures like Alan White moving seamlessly through all sorts of corridors of power and becoming in succession President of the Association of Assistant Librarians (1972), the Scottish Library Association (1980) and the Library Association (1989). Nor did it hinder harmonious relations and the development of the Scottish Library Association to have allies like the Scot George Cunningham as Chief Executive of the Library Association from 1984 to 1992.

That there has come to be a better cross-Border understanding of the distinctive Scottish dimension is beyond doubt. Bob McKee, CILIP Chief Executive, wrote in *Advocating Libraries – the collection of essays presented to Robert Craig in 2002*: “Scotland is different. The different legislative and administrative context of libraries in Scotland is now underpinned by political devolution and the likelihood that, over time, the policy context of library services in Scotland – and in each of the Home Nations – will diverge from the policy context in England.”



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Heritage

Literature brought to life

Kathryn Penfold experiences famous literary figures brought to life during a trip to the impressive John Murray Archive at the National Library of Scotland.

The affiliation with the Library Association that was agreed in 1930 was probably, indeed inevitably, looked at in a different perspective from north and south of the Border. The Library Association tended to see the Scottish Library Association as a valuable addition to its branch network, smaller in size than many of its English regional branches, perhaps slightly more troublesome. On the other hand the SLA continued to have its date of foundation and its date of affiliation to the LA printed on its notepaper and was always very aware of its history, that it was not a creation of the Library Association and that it was an association in affiliation with the LA which could, on giving due notice, disaffiliate.

Although affiliation strengthened both bodies there were to be tensions between the LA and the SLA, most notably in the late 30s when the LA organised a survey of the public library services of the UK. The survey of South West Scotland by Miss A S Cooke was seen by many as inaccurate and misleading and William B Paton, then Burgh Librarian of Airdrie, at the September 1938 SLA AGM, succeeded in having a motion passed calling on the LA to withdraw this survey and have the work done again. Eventually the LA at its 1939 AGM agreed to a new survey on lines approved by a joint panel of LA and SLA members – this panel was due to meet for the first time on 7 September 1939, but events of somewhat greater world significance had intervened and it was not convened.

Writing in SLA News in 1983, on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the foundation of the Scottish Library Association, Robert Craig, unburdened at the time by the restrictions of paid office (though such later restrictions were seldom seen to limit his freedom of expression), observed: "...throughout the 75 years of its life there has existed in the SLA the belief that, despite denials to the contrary, the LA has never really understood the situation in Scotland."

In the 1950s the Library Association had re-examined its branch and section structure but the Scottish Library Association concluded in its response that it should, because of the differences in legislation between the two countries: "continue as a separate entity affiliated to the Library Association as at present."

The work in Scotland was in part funded by a capitation grant from London and, in 1963, because of a low credit balance in the SLA's accounts, the LA was asked to raise the capitation from 10 shillings (50p) per head to 13/4d per head (66p). In that year the SLA turnover exceeded £2000 for the first time. A more stable funding structure was achieved by the end of the decade when the capitation grant was replaced by an annual estimate submitted by the SLA, based on the financial activities of the past year and adjusted for inflation and any special activities it wished to undertake. In 1970, with local government reorganisation on the horizon, the Council of the Scottish Library Association was faced with the challenge of responding to these changes in an economic climate in which the LA had insisted that only a 7% increase in expenditure could be afforded. The SLA requested the establishment of a full-time office in Scotland and negotiations with London ensued. The outcome was the welcome appointment of W B Paton, former County Librarian of Lanarkshire, and past President of both the LA and the SLA, as temporary Executive Secretary, funded by the LA and with a remit covering both Scotland and Northern Ireland. His appointment was scheduled to run from 1972 to 1975 and the efficient operation of the SLA was further strengthened by the appointment of Mary Barr as Clerical Assistant in September 1973.

The special situation of reorganisation over the temporary Executive Secretary post lapsed but the SLA pressed for a permanent appointment and in October 1984, Robert Craig, then a lecturer at Strathclyde University and who had been Honorary Secretary since 1981, was appointed as full-time paid Executive Secretary and established an office for the Association in Motherwell – the post being later re-designated as Director. The presence of a full-time paid permanent officer allowed the Association to develop its work in many areas although the significant contribution made by Council members and honorary officers should never be

underestimated, not least in the negotiations with London and in the development of links with COSLA and other Scottish agencies.

With the Motherwell office established, SLA Council was soon pressing London for additional resources to support the Executive Secretary. By 1992 a professional officer had been appointed to the staff, in the person of Rhona Arthur, who became Assistant Director in 1997.

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Brian D Osborne



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Endpiece

Coming home

Colin Will has good news about the StAnza festival – and achieves a lifelong ambition.

This year's [StAnza](#) poetry festival was a vintage one for me. Doing the introductions to Kenneth White, John Burnside and Penelope Shuttle on the Byre Theatre stage was quite daunting, but I also chaired all of the 'Past and Present' sessions, where living poets talked about poets of the past. I had the pleasure of meeting Annie Freud, Janice Galloway, Tom Leonard and Adrian Mitchell. My favourite session was the one on Basil Bunting, featuring Chris Jones and the American poet August Kleinzahler, who had been taught by Bunting in Victoria, British Columbia. We also managed to play a tape of Bunting reading from his major work, *Briggflatts*.

As I write, the good news is that StAnza has been awarded funds from Homecoming Scotland, to bring overseas poets with Scottish connections to read at StAnza 2009. We're delighted to have secured this award, particularly in view of the intense competition from a large number of applicants. We've approached writers from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, USA and many other countries – the whole Caledonian Diaspora in fact. It will be a wonderful festival. We've always looked beyond our shores, and indeed our new strapline reads "StAnza: Scotland's International Poetry Festival".

Poetry readings

I listened with interest to a Philip Larkin programme on radio recently. Before delving into a fascinating forgotten archive of the poet reading, there was an introduction by Larkin to a public reading that he had given. To paraphrase his remarks, he said that this was the first time he had read his poems in public, and if he had his way it would be the last. That kind of attitude would seem truly weird to today's generation of poets – established or otherwise. Reading your own work in public is almost universally accepted as an essential part of the poetry scene, as much as publication. Having said that, poets are not necessarily the best readers of their own work. I've said elsewhere that when listening to poetry I sometimes prefer a good actor to a bad poet's voice. Most of us write to be read aloud as well as to be read on the page, and fortunately there are opportunities to learn performance skills. Edinburgh's Shore Poets are an established group with a monthly set of readings, these days in the Mai Thai restaurant off the Royal Mile. The format – music, a new poet, a Shore Poets member, and an invited featured poet – is a tried and tested one, and it gives poets the chance to hone their skills. I was delighted to read there in April.

In early May one of my poems was read by an actor on a stage in Victoria, BC (coincidences again!), during a performance of music, dance and poetry in aid of a local hospital's intensive care unit. I'm told the performances will be appearing on YouTube, so it'll be interesting to see it. All of the poems, Canadian and Scottish, were specially commissioned, and on the theme of 'Pilgrimage'. Mine was triggered by a holiday in

Normandy, during which I travelled around some of the wartime battlefields and cemeteries. I'm now wondering about the possibility of doing something in Scotland, with poets and musicians with Canadian connections.

Utena

Along with Fife poet Eleanor Livingstone, I've been invited to take part in an international poetry festival in Utena, Lithuania. I don't speak any Lithuanian (apart from 'Du alos prasau'), but I'm advised that the organisers are friendly, hospitable, and English-speaking. Poets from Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Poland, Germany and the other Baltic States will also be attending. Earlier I was asked to send them copies of four of my poems so that they can be translated into Lithuanian for the festival.

In view of the fact that the festival takes place in public libraries, I approached CILIPS Director Elaine Fulton, and I'm delighted to say that I'll be taking gifts from CILIPS to the Lithuanian librarians. It's always good to meet fellow librarians in other countries.

Retreat

I went on a writers' retreat to Glencanisp Lodge, Lochinver, again this year. I wrote quite a lot, but it was also a great way to get away from everything, if only for a week. There's no TV or radio, no mobile signal, and wi-fi was only available in the Assynt Foundation offices. I chose not to avail myself of the opportunity to deal with emails. I saw an otter on the Lochan, photographed wild flowers, and climbed Suilven for the first time (see picture). It's been a lifelong ambition, since I first visited Assynt in the early 1950s, but until now something has always got in the way. The day was warm, the sky was clear, and the views from the top were breathtaking. It was a long expedition though – nine hours, and I was definitely feeling my age by the end of it.

The Lodge is available for groups of writers and artists, as well as for conferences, residential courses, self-catering holidays and shooting lets in season. I think it would make a marvellous writers' centre, and I'm exploring the possibilities with the [Assynt Foundation](#)
Colin Will : colinwill.blogspot



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President's Perspective

Where we stand

Alan Hasson urges you to take part in the debate about CILIPS' relationship with the UK body.

This month in my leisure time I made a conscious decision to try to get away from the concentration on change and democracy and targets which no doubt dominates your life as it does mine. After a conference that was fizzing with ideas that were all about these three themes, I think this was understandable. So I started (and finished) two excellent books on subjects I know little of: A History of India by John Keay and Steven Mithen's After the Ice: a global human history, 20,000-5,000 BC. Despite turning up nuggets of pure gold such as the importance of 13-24 Castle Street, Inverness, in European pre-history and definitely adding Gwalior, Tanjore and Sravana Begola to my must-see list, these were Bad Choices. I was back to the impermanence of everything, the constant of change even in 18,000 BC. The sub-themes of both books seemed to be: be complacent and you'll be replaced. Heh ho.

This year's conference, ably summarised in the last IS, was re-invigorating, particularly because of the concentration on delivery over the strategic framework and the quality of the change and development which were everywhere evident: no complacency there. For me the best day, amongst a series of excellent days, was that where the Branches and Groups took centre stage. I'd urge anyone committed to our services to make that one day a must-not-miss one in their calendar.

Back in the real world, I'm not sorry to say, the changes and the re-examination of how we work continues, at CILIP, [CILIPS](#) and by our colleagues in the other three home nations and their regions. This continuing reworking of recommendations, organisations, qualifications, organisational relationships and the implications of what was decided x months/years ago has the ability to get lost in a miasma of sub-paragraphs, appendices and amendments. However, if you are going to be done unto it's usually better to have a direct voice and we are, after all, a membership organisation. One of the strengths of [CILIP](#) and CILIPS must be the willingness to submit proposals for membership scrutiny. The Branch structure in Scotland already allows your voice to be heard directly, through a locality base which links directly and democratically to CILIPS Council and hence onward to the UK structures. This has been augmented recently

by the direct seeking of members' views in Scotland through the questionnaires on priorities sent out by the CILIPS office to Scottish members.

In our current context there are at least two main themes of change. Firstly, the recasting of professional qualifications and the need for continuing professional development. Secondly, the continuing evolution of the relationship of the home nations and the CILIP central administration to each other.

On the first theme I shall write little. I look forward, as an Associate, to recommendations that are soundly based in what the membership wants, needs and has approved. I was amongst the first to go through the introduction of the licentiate system. I remain unconvinced that that system was fit for purpose. Currently, having just recently completed assessments for the single status process relating to professional and para-professional activities, both within the CILIPS area and out with it, I am more than aware of the challenges which must be overcome, through our present professional qualification framework, to achieve a recognition of that professional status. Anecdotally, given the information coming from other parts of Scotland, I'm not alone in facing that challenge. The remuneration for our colleagues particularly at the start of their careers, remains too low and too varied. A professional qualification and CPD that are, in practical terms, not seen as an essential by employers is losing its purpose.

On the second theme, that of the relationship between us and our colleagues within the UK it is, as it should be, an evolving process. Part of the positive experience of being your President is an involvement in meetings with the other Home Nations. These meetings can be absolutely stimulating, both in seeing the way that the different organisations address their different challenges and in the common themes they face. The differences come directly from their social milieu, such as the importance of the Welsh language as a touchstone of identity for [CILIP Cymru/Wales](#), in the Northern Irish need to validate and celebrate diversity and in the English need for a distinctive voice. The commonality is in such as the societal challenges we face, in professional recognition, the increasing divergence of the political (read power) context within the four nations and of course in relationships to the UK body.

These last two common themes are closely inter-related and are ones to which I must return. The working out of relationships between the UK and the four Home Nations bodies is one of those organisational challenges, which if we are to remain a vibrant and relevant membership organisation, requires involvement by the widest range of members possible. Superficially it's a process of introspection of a prolonged and detailed type.

However, if CILIPS is of value to you, I would urge you to use the democratic processes in place and the opportunities to review and comment which CILIPS Council has agreed should augment that representative base, to take part in the debate over the coming months.

Before the next issue of IS I intend as a minimum to read Kirian Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* and re-read bits of Tom Peter's *Thriving on Chaos*. There's happy.



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Like something almost being said...

Web 2.0: mullet of tomorrow?

Don't rush to embrace what appears to be new without thought, or you might end up looking foolish, say Tony Ross and Richard Fallis.

We've all seen them, and cringed. Middle-aged sufferers of male-pattern baldness in convertible sports cars and aviator shades. Trendy vicars in quirky jumpers, contending that Jesus is 'cool.' Tory-boy prime ministerial candidates in backwards baseball caps, striving to win over the 'yoofs' of today.

We like to think that ours is a liberal, Guardian-reading society, characterised by a 'live-and-let-live' attitude. But, really the people above deserve to be ridiculed, for their distorted sense of themselves and of reality, and their desperate desire to be something they are not.

Most ridiculous of all may be establishment figures, who over-reach themselves in a bid to prove that they are relevant, and still 'with it.' Such efforts are foolhardy, and doomed always to fail. As Grandpa Simpson once said, "I used to be with it. But then they changed what it was. Now what I'm with isn't it, and what's it seems scary and weird. It'll happen to you!" Even those who were with it, once, inevitably end up out of touch themselves.

Librarians, we feel, need to beware these pitfalls in their rush to utilise Web 2.0 technology, befriending users via social networking sites such as Facebook or uploading content to YouTube. We are not saying that librarians should steer clear of Web 2.0. This column has always maintained that our profession must adapt to technology, and embrace the opportunities it presents, rather than running scared. Rather, we are warning librarians of the risk they run, should they wade too deeply into cyberspace for the sake of seeming innovative.

Libraries, and hence librarians, in the public sector are totems of democratic establishment. Yes, they contribute to a free society. Yes, they serve the virtuous function of facilitating open access to information. As librarians, we like to think of ourselves, not as hoarders of knowledge, but as gatekeepers to knowledge. But, while the gate that we keep may always be open, it is a gate, nonetheless, redolent of orthodoxy, and the mediation of authority. Therefore, librarians, whether they like it or not, are representatives of the establishment, which is why they must tread carefully in the domain of Web 2.0, where the emphasis is on providing direct and unmediated access to information.

As establishment figures, librarians are doomed to appear out-of-touch to core sections of the demographic. But these are sections that no-one, not even advertisers, pop stars or hit moviemakers, can ever be certain of winning over. Care must therefore be taken by librarians when courting these groups, since incursions by any representatives of the establishment into areas and media, such as Web 2.0, which are popular precisely because they are deemed free and anti-establishment, may stir up resentment among users, causing them to migrate en masse to locations that librarians, having invested heavily in Web 2.0, will be hard pressed to reach.

Of course, the perceived freedom of Web 2.0 technologies is illusory: Facebook et al are now corporate entities, which most people use not to be rebellious or to change the world but because they are dependable brands of proven quality. Given this, librarians may see Web 2.0 as a means of connecting with people on a personal level, and of relocating libraries back to the heart of local communities. But, laudable an aim though this is, it may only generate more antipathy towards libraries, since people, historically, have seldom welcomed intrusions by the establishment into their daily lives.

The explosion of Web 2.0 brings with it great possibilities for librarians, but it could also suck us into showing too much zeal for new technology. Underlying this is, perhaps, a degree of insecurity within our profession. We seem threatened by financial decision-makers who are determined to

allocate more and more LIS posts to the burgeoning ranks of IT professionals. So as to justify our continued existence, we try to sell ourselves as being on the cutting edge, and champions of change. As proof of this, we dive headlong into Web 2.0, like children competing to have the shiniest trainers in the playground.

Our guess is that, in five years, once Web 2.0 has become properly embedded in society, and can be spoken of in everyday terms without people losing their heads, librarians will look back on the zeal with which they first pounced upon it and cringe, much as survivors of the 70s now look back in horror at the size of their flares. Web 2.0 might well change the world, and librarians should ready themselves for that eventuality. But it might also prove to be the hi-tech mullet of tomorrow, and we should curb our enthusiasm for it accordingly.

Tony writes: Since the previous issue, I have secured a scholarship to undertake a PhD at Glasgow University, starting in October, and for that reason this will be my last contribution to this column. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank editor Debby Raven for giving me the chance to write for Information Scotland, and those readers who have followed and supported the column, which I will be leaving in the capable hands of Richard, and newcomer Kathleen Menzies, a colleague of mine at the Centre for Digital Library Research.

Tony is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Digital Library Research at the University of Strathclyde. Richard is an Assistant Librarian within NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde.



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Aiming Higher 1

Context

One of the SCURL Affiliated Groups, the Scottish Working Group on Official Publications (SWOP), held an event on the topic of 'From Parliament Square to Holyrood' on 23 May. The event aimed to examine

and demonstrate various online historical official publications to librarians from Scotland, with the welcome addition of two colleagues from York University Library. SWOP traditionally offers a bursary place to a student on a library course and the invitation was offered to both Robert Gordon University and to Strathclyde University. The bursary was awarded to Isabelle Clark who recently completed an MA in Scottish Studies at the Crichton Campus in Dumfries of Glasgow University. Isabelle has submitted her impressions of the training event. As always, readers' comments are welcome and I wonder in particular if any reader would care to offer their comments on duplication which is referred to in the article? Jill Evans, SCURL.

Have we lost the feeling?

In her review of an event on digitising official publications, Isabelle Clark asks whether something is being lost by no longer handling primary material.

'From Parliament Square to Holyrood: Historical Official Publications Online' was an interesting and informative seminar – papers illustrated a deep appreciation of the complexities of providing electronic information. The seminar demonstrated access to key historical texts from personal computers. Whilst the systems demonstrated will undoubtedly assist researchers, I feel that there is a missing link – the feelings and emotions that one has when handling historical data and thus connecting with the past.

Digitisation of records protects and conserves historical data. Researchers of all denominations continually require access to historical data and thus the digitisation of records works on two platforms; firstly, the records are being protected, and secondly, they are more widely accessible. The aim of the seminar was not to discuss the theory behind digitisation of records – rather it was a demonstration of the type of project which can be achieved with a lot of hard work, funding and time. Speakers shared their own areas of expertise with the audience, and some of the difficulties involved in the project's aims and objectives.

The speakers all alluded to the cost of digitising historical data. What was not clear is whether some of these digitised records are being duplicated on different web portals – a system which should be avoided at all costs. This question was not answered.

Opening the seminar were presentations by Paul Seaward and Gillian MacIntosh who gave illuminating talks on the parliamentary records. As a

user, the [Records of the Parliament of Scotland](#) were of particular interest. This site is beneficial to students, researchers, the legal profession and historians of Scotland. Paul Seaward's presentation on the UK Parliament's records was of prime value, showing the complexity of the legal and political history.

The last presentation of the morning was a little confusing – why is their a need to publish the Hansard reports in a different form? This takes up space on the Internet and is another system requiring scrutiny – there are control issues associated with this work, such as will the user be aware that this may not be the authoritative record?

Matthew Woollard's informative [Historical Population Reports](#) is aimed at providing an authoritative record for academics such as social historians and geographers; but he stressed it is not beneficial to genealogists. It is an ambitious project restricted through copyright issues, but does provide modern historians with access to key social data.

Julian Ball's [BOPCRIS](#) site is a useful vehicle for historians of all denominations but again I question the possible duplication of data. The website is a database informing the user the location of these records and thus a useful aid to the research process. Rob Newman's presentation on the ProQuest site again suggested to me that there could be duplication of information.

Undoubtedly digitisation of records is beneficial, but it is expensive, time-consuming and a worry for archivists who manage the records. For instance, the primary sources represent inherited values and traditions of the past; do the electronic versions have the same impact? Will the electronic documents be the only legacy we leave to our descendants? Are we, as archivists, denying our descendants the opportunity to handle the documents and get a feeling about emotions, from the handwritten evidence? These questions were not addressed during the seminar, but perhaps could be the subject of a future event.

In conclusion this seminar was definitely beneficial, providing a working knowledge of the projects and historical information electronically available which aims to protect and conserve vital historical data. Undoubtedly archivists from various repositories will have sufficient knowledge to direct enquiries to the web portals instead of retrieving the historical data. Regrettably users will not have assistance with the use of these web portals and will, mostly, have to learn the system by themselves or use the 'contact' facility on the websites. The information thus becomes user-friendly but the archivist becomes a machine.



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Aiming Higher 2

Energy and quality

Jill Evans reports on a busy round of meetings and conferences in the academic sphere.

The Scottish Further Education College Libraries have been invited by the Scottish Funding Council to respond by 2009 to the Scottish Funding Council Circular '[Guidance to colleges on quality](#)' which "informs Scotland's colleges of changes to Council guidance on quality assurance and enhancement of learning and teaching, arising from the outcomes of the Joint Quality Review Group."

With this consultation in mind, the Further Education Planning Group (FEPG) met on 26 June and discussed updating the FE library standards for tertiary education. We wished to develop a third version of the quality toolkit embracing new developments, and a new working party has been set up for this purpose, which met on 8 July. A swift start to some exciting work was witnessed, and you can read more about this important work in Cathy Kearney's article on page 14.

On a related theme I had the privilege of participating in the organisation of the annual SCONUL conference which was held in Edinburgh in June. Similar to the FE Librarians Planning Group, our neat, nimble and Edinburgh Librarians' Conference Planning Team was lead by Sheila Cannell, with our planning beginning one year earlier. Sheila deployed tactics like this to establish a Planning Team – invitations to coffee in the Apex International Hotel, allow the hotel's Facilities management staff to lead us to a 'break-out' room, close the door securely and declare "You are now the Conference Planning Team!".

The theme 'Think Global Act Local' was established early and speakers were invited to the conference to stimulate debate on topics such as the

Google Generation, the network reconfigures the Library by Lorcan Dempsey of OCLC, research repositories, provision of e-information in Ireland and the Scottish collaborative agenda.

An interesting diversion for the 180 attendees who were Directors of HEI libraries, FE libraries and national libraries was the presentations from two academics teaching respectively in Edinburgh University and Napier University. Their views on the topic 'Why libraries are too important to be left to librarians' delivered a thought-provoking, radical insight to our customers who teach from the content which we, the librarians, make available and deliver in the good faith that this is what they want – but is it?

I suggest that this debate with our users should be replicated in other forums and conferences as I, for one, in my area of responsibilities, am less familiar with our individual users' needs or the format in which they would prefer to learn or teach. The podcast of the conference will be available on the [SCONUL](#) website.

Many of the Edinburgh librarians welcomed the SCONUL delegates to their libraries such as the Royal College of Physicians, Scottish Poetry Library, Queen Margaret University, Napier University, Edinburgh University, Edinburgh College of Art, SPICE and the NLS. Through this column I wish to thank my colleagues for organising the tours of their library and, in particular, the logistical planning of guiding and transporting librarians on the train from Edinburgh to Musselburgh to visit Queen Margaret University.

Conferences provide the opportunity to meet new people and renew acquaintances. The SCONUL conference allowed me to invite the Royal College of Physicians' Librarian to join the [SCURL Health Group](#), and a former university library colleague and now a school librarian to join the [SLIC](#), [MmITS](#) and SCURL E-Books Planning Team. The E-books event is scheduled for 30 October in the Lighthouse, Glasgow, looking at Digital Literacy in an E-World.

In the autumn SCURL and I will be considering a response to the Interim Report from the Scottish Government, Scottish Funding Council (SFC), and Universities Scotland on '[New Horizons: responding to the challenges of the 21st century](#)', and we will be delivering an Information Landscape report to the SFC in December 2008.

We will also make progress on the work of the Scottish Higher Education Digital Library, and hopefully reach the completion of the work to procure periodical content, also printed and electronic books, the latter perhaps with the welcome participation of our library colleagues in FE college libraries.



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Lifelong Learning

Advocating information literacy

The Scottish Information Literacy Project has just been awarded substantial new funding. John Crawford and Christine Irving give an update on what it has achieved so far.

What has now become the [Scottish Information Literacy Project](#) began modestly in 2004 as a one-year project, beginning with the appointment of Christine Irving as Project officer in October of that year.

The project was itself the offspring of a much smaller but important study by Glasgow Caledonian University, the Drumchapel Project, which was an overview of the IT and information literacy (IL) skills of school pupils in a deprived area of Glasgow. This showed that there was a need for an IL framework which would link those skills learned at school with higher skills learned at University. Skills learned at school could also be directly applied in the workplace.

The initial project was therefore to develop an IL framework linking secondary and higher education.

This sole objective did not last long. We soon discovered a need to explain and promote the concept of information literacy to educational and other bodies which we either wanted to influence or seek funding from. We therefore had to develop an advocacy focus. This led directly to a petition to the Scottish Parliament, '...to urge the Scottish Executive to ensure that the national school curriculum recognises the importance of information literacy as a key lifelong learning skill'.

When the project started we quickly recruited leading IL advocates in Scotland as project partners. We have now widened the project's focus to recruit partners in the workplace and the Adult Literacies agenda. The

project has therefore now expanded to include the following objectives with an increasing focus on lifelong learning and workplace issues:

- To develop an IL framework, linking primary, secondary and tertiary education to lifelong learning including workplace and adult literacies agendas
- Advocacy on behalf of IL for education and wider community
- Working with IL champions both UK and worldwide
- Researching and promoting IL in the workplace | Identifying and working with partners, both in education and the wider community
- Researching the role of IL in continuing professional development
- Researching the health and media literacies agenda.

The project's key product from which all other work has followed is the still developing Draft National Information Literacy Framework Scotland. The initial work was done in 2006-7.

To develop the framework, other frameworks, models and definitions at home and abroad were examined. The aim was to map the existing learning that was taking place and allocating a notional level to learning outcomes utilising relevant reference points such as the SCQF ([Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework](#)) generic level descriptors. The intention of this was to provide a general shared understanding of each level which can then be linked to academic, vocational or professional practice.

The starting point for developing the framework was SCQF level 5 (Intermediate 2) as the only current national SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) qualification which is at this level. This was then used as a template for drawing up equivalent SCQF levels 4 to 1 and 6 to 7 covering secondary schools and further education colleges.

Higher education and further education colleges cover SCQF levels 8 to 12. HE uses the SCONUL model, therefore it was felt that the skills within the seven headline skills from the SCONUL Seven Pillars Model for Information Literacy should be used. In addition, exemplars of how two universities have adopted and modified this model to create IL frameworks for their own institutions were added to the framework appendices.

The SCQF levels do not cover primary schools but there is good practice in this area covering the present 5-14 curriculum within Scotland, and the City of Edinburgh's Explore model was used. A short section on lifelong learning including workplace learning was also included.

The completed draft Framework was piloted with project partners between September 2007 and Easter 2008. The piloting included the identification of good practice, some of which were showcased at the Project Open Meeting at the end of May by project partners Craigholme School, Ardrossan Academy, the University of Abertay and the [Scottish Government Information Management Unit](#) (Information and Library Services).

Early this year we obtained funding from LTS (Learning and Teaching Scotland) to identify exemplars of good practice within the cross-curricular area of IL at different levels, and within different subject matters, for dissemination through their Curriculum for Excellence sharing practice space. For project details see www.caledonian.ac.uk/ils/LTS.html.

This work offers an important mechanism to share good practice between all involved in learning and teaching and give a higher profile to the exemplars. The activities will be accessible through subject matter as well as IL activity. An example of this is an IL activity created for a second year history class involving the assassination of John F. Kennedy, or a project on impressionist painters for a first-year art class. We aim to complete this work in August.

The Framework is also beginning to achieve formal recognition. In February 2008 the [Curriculum for Excellence Literacy and Language draft](#) outcomes and experiences were published. Of particular importance to the project are the three lines of development for literacy skills:

- Reading - Enjoyment and Choice, Tools for reading, Finding and using information, Understanding, analysing and evaluating
- Writing - Enjoyment and Choice, Tools for writing, organising and using information, creating texts
- Listening and talking - Enjoyment and Choice, Tools for listening and talking, Finding and using information, Understanding, analysing and evaluating, creating texts

These development lines reflect information literacy skills and competencies contained within the framework.

In the next few months we plan to redraft the framework to make it a genuine lifelong learning document with the expansion of the primary, lifelong, workplace and community learning elements to include the allocation of specific IL skill levels to these areas.

The project has also formed a partnership with the [NHS Health Education Board for Scotland](#) which is working on its own NHS Information Literacy competency framework. Due to the experience and expertise developed on

the project's own framework, Christine was invited to join the NHS advisory group and the two projects have greatly benefited.

These outcomes derive directly from the framework. We now plan to work with LTS and project partners to link the [Curriculum for Excellence \(CfE\)](#) draft Learning Outcomes and Experiences (these will replace the present curriculum) with IL activities and the framework. We also aim to increase usage of the National Information Literacy Framework Scotland and look at incorporating IL into teacher CPD activities and initial teacher training.

In parallel with these activities we have made contacts and recruited partners to support the workplace and lifelong learning aspects of our work. We have found staff working in Adult Literacies to be very supportive. They already undertake basic skills training and understand the value of IL as an employability skill. Using our Adult Literacies contacts, the Scottish Government Information Management Unit Library Services and Health Service contacts we conducted an interview-based research project with 20 people in the workplace between December 2007 and January 2008. This suggests that there is scope for progress although probably more so in the public sector. Interviewees usually used only a narrow range of sources, mostly internally generated, and the main source of information used is always other people. Advanced internet searching was little used and there seems to be a training need here.

Following on from the workplace research findings and recommendations we have made contact with Glasgow Chamber of Commerce which is putting us in touch with SMEs (Small Medium Enterprises); CBI Scotland which will help us to meet members of larger organisations with well developed CPD programmes into which information literacy training could be fitted; the STUC whose Everyday Skills Group will be a good point of contact; and the newly established [Skills Development Scotland](#). We are also keen to work with public library services with well developed skills training programmes on to which IL training could be 'piggybacked'. [Dumfries and Galloway's Libraries, Information and Archives](#) has expressed an early interest in participating.

Over the course of the Project we have developed good working relationships with relevant agencies, notably LTS which has also funded two of our projects. Funding has also come from learndirect Scotland, for preliminary work on the framework and to develop a learning principles paper for its branded learning centres' Learning Principles Toolkit. The Framework design and piloting was funded by [Eduserv](#) and we have just obtained more than GBP 41,500 from the [Esmée Fairbairn Foundation](#) to carry on the work of the project until September 2009.

We have given as much attention to the publicising of our work as time has permitted. Our website is increasingly well used, we have reported regularly in the professional press, we speak regularly at conferences and have held open meetings. Last October John went to Washington to speak at a meeting of the [\(US\) National Forum on Information Literacy](#). Last December we received a delegation of Finnish librarians and in June we had a visit from 20 American school librarians.

We feel we have good reason to be proud of our achievements. We have created an information literacy community of practice which we lead. We are establishing networked resources and we hope that the revised Framework will prove to be a powerful advocacy tool with which to pursue the lifelong learning agenda at [Scottish Government](#) level.

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College Libraries

Progress at colleges

The 2003 evaluation toolkit for college libraries is being updated. Cathy Kearney explains.

The largest provider of lifelong learning in Scotland is the college sector, offering career-based education and training from basic entry level courses through to degrees. More than one quarter of higher education is delivered in colleges and with one in ten of the population enrolled in one, the importance of ensuring high-quality library services are available to learners is obvious.

In 2003 SLIC published [Resources and Services Supporting Learning: a service development quality toolkit](#) as an aid for college librarians

undergoing the HMIE review process. SLIC has evidence that the toolkit is well used and remains relevant but would benefit from updating to take account of significant change. A new working party has therefore been set up to review these developments, examine new policy guidance and create an updated self-evaluation quality toolkit for college libraries.

The Working Party is chaired by Charlie Sweeney, former Manager of the JISC Regional Support Centre for South and West Scotland, and supported by myself, SLIC Assistant Director. Working party members are drawn from across Scotland: Hugh Beattie, Clydebank College; Fionnuala Carmichael JISC RSC-SW; Tony Donnelly, Glasgow MET; Kirsteen Dowie, Central College; Jill Evans, SCURL; Mark Glancy, Edinburgh's Telford College; Carole Gray, Motherwell College; Craig Green, John Wheatley College; Jennifer Loudon, Glasgow MET; Donald Maclean, Perth College; Tom Macmaster, Carnegie College.

So what developments will the Working Party address? The strategic context for colleges continues to be the Scottish Government's updated lifelong learning strategy but there is also a policy framework which has encouraged efficiency, shared services and collaboration. As a result, shared service developments, college mergers and co-location of institutions have increased. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of colleges from 46 to 43 and the merging of the Further and Higher Education Funding Councils to create a unique and cohesive collaborative framework across the sectors.

The first of the colleges to merge in 2004 were Glasgow College of Building and Printing and Glasgow College of Food Technology – into [Glasgow Metropolitan College](#). Adam Smith College was created when Fife and Glenrothes Colleges joined forces, and Falkirk and Clackmannan College merged to become [Forth Valley College](#). Currently, the four Glasgow city centre colleges, Central, Glasgow Metropolitan, Stow and Glasgow College of Nautical Studies, are developing jointly a fully integrated city centre estate. In a joint venture with East Renfrewshire Council, Reid Kerr, Cardonald, and Langside Colleges are planning a new East Renfrewshire College and a new community library to be based in Barrhead and operated collaboratively.

Government funding has enabled major campus redevelopment and relocation which is transforming dated college estates. Both JISC[1] and the SFC[2] have highlighted the impact of use of space and learning technologies on the learning environment in publications featuring college case studies.

Campus redevelopment has been a catalyst for innovative designed libraries and learning centres increasingly being shared with other institutions or managed jointly. John Wheatley College entered into partnership with Culture and Sport Glasgow which delivers joint public and college library services at the Bridge, Easterhouse, via a service level agreement. Borders College and Heriot Watt University share a single service point in a new campus building in Galashiels, using a service level agreement with the University to deliver library services to the College. Dumfries and Galloway College decided to relocate to a new building on the Crichton Campus where the college library is shared with University of West of Scotland and Glasgow University.

Technological innovation in libraries has included an increasing emphasis on ICT and remote service delivery, portalisation, virtual learning spaces, e-resources, wireless technology, Web 2.0 services, RFID, repositories and an emerging debate on the future of library management systems. JISC continues to provide local advice and support for ICT developments through the Regional Support Centres and by organising user forums. Personalised learning and engaging students as partners in the design of their own learning is placing extra demands on the library.

The HMIE review framework on which the 2003 Toolkit was based came to an end in summer 2008. Following an appraisal by SFC of quality assurance arrangements in colleges, a new policy framework intended to celebrate the existing base of good practice and support its further development is being introduced.

Recent guidance issued by SFC^[3] includes an explicit requirement to report on libraries. The same guidance also highlights service development and enhancement issues, suggests that colleges consider introducing some externality to the review process and encourages the involvement of learners in the quality process.

The task of the Working Party, therefore, is to update SLIC advice in the light of these developments and changes, and produce for the sector a new toolkit framed around the SFC guidance and the revised HMIE framework. The project is due to last a year with the new toolkit being published to coincide with the SLIC FE Conference 2009. In the meantime progress will be posted periodically to the LIBNET mailing list.

References

- 1 [Designing Spaces for Effective Learning](#): a guide for 21st century learning space design. JISC, 2006
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- 3 [Council guidance to colleges on quality](#) SFC/33/2008



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Centenary

The late Brian Osborne looks at how the association has worked with the legislators, in the last article he wrote on the history of CILIPS and the SLA.

Advocacy and legislation

The great issue for the Scottish Library Association in the first half century of its existence was rate limitation. Public Library authorities operating under the Public Libraries (Scotland) Act of 1854 were only allowed to spend the product of a rate of one (old) penny in the pound on their library services – a serious limitation and one which the inflationary pressures of the First World War had severely exacerbated. In March 1919, at a Special General Meeting of the Association, Septimus Pitt, the City Librarian of Glasgow, spoke to the problems caused by this rates limitation and in May the Secretary of State for Scotland received a delegation from the SLA and some 20 library authorities. He was urged to bring about some relief from this burden – but he was unwilling to promote separate Scottish legislation.

The Public Libraries Act 1919 made the amount of rate levied for libraries a matter for the discretion of local authorities. However, the Act did not apply to Scotland, although further campaigning and protests, involving the SLA and the Scottish local authorities, managed to produce a Public Libraries (Scotland) Act in 1920. This retained the principle of restriction – at the insistence of the Convention of Royal Burghs – but raised the level to the product of a 3d rate. What had previously been for the Government an important principle – that legislation should be the same on both sides of the Border – had been conveniently set aside.

While the slightly easier financial situation was welcomed by the profession, concerns continued to be expressed about the state of the country's public libraries. In 1927 the AGM passed a motion calling on the Secretary of State for Scotland to establish an inquiry to produce reliable

statistical information about the resources and general condition of Scottish libraries – an invitation which the Secretary of State found no difficulty in declining.

The next year the SLA AGM established a special committee on library legislation and a Special General Meeting in December 1928 considered the question of the abolition of dual rating. Dual rating was a consequence of the development of County Libraries following the Education (Scotland) Act of 1918. Burghs which provided their own library services found themselves having to pay a proportion of the costs of the county library service – a service from which they did not benefit. Arguments over dual rating and the degree to which burghs were compensated for their financial contribution to county services dragged on for more than 25 years.

Local Government was not the only field in which the Association attempted to influence decision makers. The plans of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland to build a home for the National Library without taking proper professional advice from the Library Association or the Royal Institute of British Architects were roundly condemned. SLA President George Shirley in his 1932 Presidential address blamed the domination of the Faculty of Advocates in the decision-making process. In the same address he also attacked the Trustees of the National Library for appointing a Keeper of Printed Books who had only five years professional experience. Interestingly enough there are two versions of Shirley's Presidential address printed – the second one omits the attack on the Keeper's appointment but retains the criticism on the George IV Bridge site.

The 1930s saw the SLA discussing the need for library legislation and submitting drafts to successive Secretaries of State, none of whom felt moved to act. During the Second World War campaigning continued – the Labour MP, Tom Johnston, Secretary of State for Scotland in the wartime coalition government, and a notably interventionist politician, agreed to meet an SLA delegation to discuss library legislation. However, even Johnston, in the face of resistance to legislation from one of the local authority organisations, and feeling that wartime was not the moment for controversial legislation, suggested that the SLA should confine its proposals to those elements which might have universal support. Council was disappointed but felt that if abolition of dual rating, the end of rate limitation and freedom to co-operate across local authority boundaries could be achieved, something would have been gained.

After the war a number of authorities did obtain approval, by means of obtaining local acts, for the abolition of rate limitation, but this was a difficult and cumbersome process and in general, as the Association repeatedly

pointed out, the development of the library service was being hampered by this antique provision.

An Advisory Council on Education in Scotland had been set up in 1947 and had been given the additional remit of considering public library legislation. The existence of this Council, of course, provided a splendid excuse for Secretaries of State to decline discussion of such matters while the Advisory Council was deliberating – which it did for more than four years. In 1954 a Scottish Library Association delegation met with Scottish Office officials to discuss, yet again, library legislation. This time some success was achieved and the Public Libraries (Scotland) Act of 1955 met some, though not all, of the SLA's desires.

This Act was introduced to the House of Commons as a Private Members Bill, sponsored by the Edinburgh MP Sir William Y. Darling, with cross-party support. However as it was going through Parliament a General Election was announced and there was every prospect that the Bill would not be able to complete its passage in time. Two effective letters by Sir Alexander Gray, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Scottish Central Library for Students, and W. P. Paton, President of the SLA, to the Scotsman, called for the support of Scottish MPs for the Bill. A speedy passage of the Bill through its remaining stages resulted in it getting the Royal Assent on the day that Parliament was dissolved. A 35-year struggle to remove rate limitation was over, and the slightly shorter struggle over dual rating was also ended.

With some propriety the SLA decided to hold a dinner to celebrate the passing of the Act and the Lord Advocate William R. Milligan replied to the toast to Her Majesty's Ministers. Indeed a warmer relationship with Government can be seen developing – a Jubilee Dinner to celebrate 50 years of the SLA was addressed by Secretary of State John Maclay and a succession of other Ministers have since attended conferences and spoken at dinners and the Association, in both its guises, has been careful to build up links with politicians and other parts of civil society.

The 1955 Act went some way to meeting the needs of the time, but it was not long before concerns about the need for Scottish library legislation re-surfaced. The COSLA Standards route took many years to come about and in the 1960s and 1970s much time and effort was devoted to impressing on Governments of both parties the need for legislation – a need which found little response in either camp. After the passing of the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act in England and Wales with its seemingly attractive and empowering phrase about authorities having a duty to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” service, Scottish librarians were convinced of the need for equivalent legislation here.

However, government had a convenient excuse for inaction. It was, in 1964, felt inappropriate to consider library legislation while the question of local government reorganisation was being considered. By 1966 a Royal Commission on Local Government Reorganisation had been established. The SLA's written evidence outlined nine issues which it felt retarded the service's development. These included dual rating, the lack of standards and the inadequate resource base of many smaller authorities. It outlined some of the answers to these issues which included a general presumption in favour of a minimum authority population figure of 100,000, a statutory requirement to provide an efficient service based on official standards, the creation of an advisory body to assist the Secretary of State in his oversight of the public library service, and measures to assure the financial stability of the Scottish Central Library and the development of services in hospitals, homes, prisons and to the old and disabled.

The reorganisation of local government which came into effect in 1975 did indeed remove some of the problems but still left major issues on quality of service to be addressed.



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Obituary: Brian D. Osborne

Brian D. Osborne, librarian and author, died on Friday 30 May while on holiday following the Silk Road through Uzbekistan. He has been interred in that country. Brian was born in Glasgow in 1941, and brought up in Helensburgh in a well-known local family. He was educated at Hermitage Academy in Helensburgh, and later graduated from the Open University. He immersed himself in books from an early age and was not ashamed to admit that as a child he never got picked for the football team, but read everything he could get his hands on.

Thankfully, his early choice of bookselling as a career proved to be no more than a flirtation. The public library service beckoned, and there is photographic evidence from 1962 of a young man with smartly-combed hair working behind the staff counter at Dumbarton Library.

That young man rose to become Dumbarton's Deputy District Librarian, with ambitions to rise higher. However, not getting the top job of District Librarian when the post fell vacant in 1979 was probably one of the best things that ever happened to Brian – if Dumbarton wouldn't have him, then he must pursue his ambitions elsewhere.

It was Midlothian which snapped him up as District Librarian in 1983, a time when that authority awaited modernisation. Brian took on this task readily: a publications programme was introduced; activities and events of all sorts were regularly promoted; libraries were refurbished; opening hours were extended; staff restructuring was implemented. To quote one Midlothian councillor of the day: "Mr Osborne is fizzing with good ideas," – Brian liked that description.

His move to Strathkelvin in 1989 as Chief Officer, Libraries and Museums, brought the challenge of designing a new library for Kirkintilloch. His response was the creation of a bright, modern, spacious library set in a prime position within the town centre.

It was during the Midlothian and Strathkelvin days that his involvement in professional activities developed, initially through the Central Scotland Training Group, then as the Scottish Library Association's Publications Officer, and ultimately as President of the SLA in 1992. Even after his retirement in 1995, he remained active in professional affairs, carrying out freelance and consultancy work. Driven by a sharp intelligence, keen reasoning and good common sense, Brian made a significant contribution to the work of the professional association in Scotland.

Early retirement released him to do what he really wanted to do, and what he was best at – research, writing, immersing himself in the literary life of Scotland.

His involvement with research, writing and publication had started with local history titles produced by Dumbarton Libraries. He continued this interest in Midlothian where he enthusiastically introduced a publications programme which featured both facsimile reprints of out-of-print local works and new titles based on original research. At the same time, as the SLA's Publications Officer, he broke new ground, commissioning new Scottish-interest titles which often provided a showcase for the local studies collections of Scotland's public library authorities.

Thereafter, Brian really got into his stride; he published three biographies – Braxfield, the hanging judge?, The Ingenious Mr. Bell, The Last of the Chiefs; these were highly original works in contrasted fields. He collaborated with Ronnie Armstrong in the compilation of various Scottish

literary anthologies; he edited, introduced and annotated many of the works of Neil Munro and wrote several other books on different topics. He was also a regular contributor of articles on matters of Scottish heritage and history to a number of journals, particularly The Scots Magazine. Two plays, again written with Ronnie Armstrong, were staged at The Byre Theatre, St Andrews and at Perth Theatre. All of those activities have secured for Brian a lasting place in Scotland's cultural life. His final full-length work, a study of the Home Guard in Scotland is due for publication in the spring of 2009.

Of crucial importance was his work with Ronald Armstrong, Ronald Renton and others in re-assessing and reinvigorating the reputation of Neil Munro through the work of the Neil Munro Society, of which he became the first secretary, and in other ways. Munro was known for his Para Handy tales, but his novels and other works had been sadly neglected. It is to the Society's credit that in recent years all of Munro's major titles have been reprinted with modern introductions, a full biography written by a granddaughter of Munro has been published, and a volume of critical essays, edited by Brian and Ronald Renton, has appeared. This is a literary achievement of a very high order.

Brian understood the importance of books and reading. In his presidential address to the Scottish Library Association, he lamented that as a profession and as individuals librarians play too small a role in the book world in Scotland. Brian could never be accused of that. From an early date he was active within the Scottish Book Marketing Group, he served on the Scottish Arts Council Literature Committee and on the committee of the Society of Authors in Scotland. Only a short time ago, he was appointed as Vice Chair at Publishing Scotland, the new guise for the Scottish Publishers' Association.

Brian was an elder and devoted member of his local church, St Columba's, Kirkintilloch, where he was active in the affairs of the congregation, and edited the church magazine. The values he brought from that involvement were evident in all that he undertook.

There were so many aspects to Brian's life. He was widely known and respected. He brought his energetic personality to everything he did, and will be missed by many people for his sense of humour, his wit and intelligence.

He is survived by his father.

Alan Reid, Library Services Manager, Midlothian Council

I was about to set off for the funeral of my mother-in-law when I heard of the death of my old friend Brian Osborne.

He was a hard-working and distinguished librarian, and he and I worked together on many projects within the Scottish Library Association, which we both served as President on different occasions, on SLIC, and on working parties.

For the last several years we alternated writing the Endpiece column in Information Scotland. Our joint brief, though it was more informal than that, was to write about things we hoped might interest our fellow professionals, but from a literary angle. Brian was always entertaining and informative in his pieces, erudite but never dull. We were both heavily involved in literature – myself in poetry and Brian in innumerable literary and historical societies.

He was a prolific author and editor in his own right, and his writing style was clear and straightforward. We got together as often as we could, and I enjoyed his warmth, his wit, his positive outlook on life, his fund of anecdotes, and his sense that life was fun.

Colin Will



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Guest Endpiece...Job seeking

The waiting game

Neil Paterson can sympathise with anyone waiting to take up their first professional LIS post, but he's doing all he can in the meantime.

I can identify completely with Ross and Fallis' article in the previous edition of Information Scotland. On reaching the age of 32, and the career 'glass ceiling' that the absence of a university qualification was imposing, I

realised that a change of career and an acquisition of qualifications were required.

The Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen provided a distance learning (DL) alternative to returning to university on a full-time basis. Year One: Undergraduate Certificate in Management Studies to permit access to the post graduate syllabus. Years Two and Three: Postgraduate Diploma in Information and Library Studies. Despite initially not intending to go beyond that stage, Year Four turned into the MSc in Information and Library Studies and a research project into what has become my signature area, customer services.

From where I viewed the programme of study back in 2002 this would have seemed an almost insurmountable mountain to scale. Looking back now I realise that was the easy part. Whether you pass or fail is largely up to your own tenacity, perseverance and will to succeed. The difficult part is now finding a professional post to match the qualifications I have gained. No matter how hard you want to you can't create a professional post tailor-made for yourself. You have to wait and watch for the right opportunities and in the meantime build the skills where you are.

There are several points to note. As Fallis has previously observed, "the LIS profession today is extremely competitive". Small wonder. My university cohort consisted of over 60 students in the diploma stage, the largest there had ever been at RGU, and that was just the DL class. This is perhaps proof of the growing popularity of this mode of study with library employers who seek to develop individuals while retaining valuable staff expertise.

From the profession's point of view surely the large numbers of new graduates can only be a good thing – a surge of new talent with drive, vibrant enthusiasm and new ideas entering the sector. This is at a time of much change and discussion regarding the direction that libraries in the near future should take.

However, from the individual, self-funding graduate's point of view, where are the professional posts for us keen and eager new librarians? As one of my university cohort, who was lucky enough to be already employed in a university post, had earlier quipped: "They only leave here when they get wheeled out in a box."

At the end of my Diploma I asked around my informal networks for advice as to whether to continue to an MSc for the employability benefits. Lorraine Robertson, Librarian at MLURI in Aberdeen, strongly advised that I continue, citing the vast number of LIS diploma-wielding applicants she received the last time she advertised for an assistant librarian. Another

realisation, supported by my MSc supervisor, Dr. Peter Reid, is that each graduate should research and develop their own signature area of expertise and interest. With 14 years of experience from the retail sector it was almost inevitable that mine was to become customer services.

I should say that I have landed lucky. I've been at Elmwood College now for over three years, being fortunate enough to secure a learning resource centre assistant post in 2005. While not a professional post I enjoy being supported by a line manager, Christine Barclay, who is more than happy to delegate professional duties and to assist with professional development. I work for an employer that actively encourages and allows staff time for CPD. I also get to attend network opportunities with organisations such as SFEU, TAFLIN and SALG to further my training. These events offer opportunities to "get my face known" and talk with librarians from other sectors. I was invited to make a customer service presentation at the SFEU Community in Practice event in October 2007. Dr Reid also volunteered me to present a further workshop on customer services at this year's Grampian Information Conference in Aberdeen and regularly reminds me that my PhD beckons.

With a CV of gold dust material my Chartership portfolio is now also underway. So when that longed for professional post finally materialises, I'll have ticked as many of those essential criteria on the person spec as I can. In the meantime, it's the waiting game. I'll keep adding to my CV and hunting for that elusive post.

Tony and Richard, you're not the only ones looking.

Neil Paterson is Learning Resource Centre Assistant, Elmwood College, Cupar, Fife.



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President's Perspective

Alan Hasson says we should use the CILIPS Centenary to stake our claim on the future.

CILIP in Scotland celebrated its birthday with a Council meeting and dinner on the 24 October 2008 in Edinburgh. It was a chance to look back, but also look forward to how libraries can ensure their relevance in the next 100 years.

Many of you will have read with interest the late Brian Osborne's articles in this journal and noticed how little has changed. The last 100 years has often been an uphill battle and, given the current climate, we must assume the next 100 years will be no different.

Libraries in all sectors are often viewed as Cinderella services by paymasters, but it's clear the public still want and use them.

In a recent [Scottish Household survey](#), published by the Scottish Government it was stated that libraries are the most frequently attended cultural venues in the country, with almost one third of adults reporting visits to libraries in the last 12 months. Book borrowing is the main reason for public library visits by young people.

[Scotland's Schools Omnibus](#), an annual survey of secondary school pupils carried out by Ipsos MORI, found that 67% of young people visited their local library to borrow, return or renew books. This is significantly higher than the numbers using computers and the internet (37%) or borrowing multimedia materials (10%). Visits have also increased but we need to ensure we can meet the challenge of delivering services to an increasingly digital native population, whose views on the integrity of information and access is very different from generations past, although these customers still recognise the importance of reading for pleasure.

Over many years, we have claimed that we can adapt. Our challenge now is to change swiftly, be proactive, leave historic practices behind, and continue to meet the needs of our customers and promote the collections our employers entrust us with. At the CILIPS Council meeting in October a new service from CILIP in Scotland and the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) was launched which does just that.

[Scotlandsinformation.com](#) brings together years of work by CILIPS and SLIC and their partners, the [Centre for Digital Library Research](#) at Strathclyde University. It gives access to an abundance of information on Scotland's collections, be it library, museum or archive, through a map of Scotland.

Scotlandsinformation.com places cultural organisations at the heart of a digital age. SLIC and CILIPS have had very positive feedback and plan to develop more interactive services. Crucially, the service will also shortly be included in the OneScotland portal being developed by the Scottish

Government.

Creating the right presence, physically and digitally, is a key objective for library services now and into the future. Here's to the next 100 years!

Alan Hasson



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E-books: a new chapter begins?

Will e-books bring a revolution or more of the same, ask Kathleen Menzies and Richard Fallis.

A few months ago, Private Eye featured a cartoon in which Snipcock and Tweed, the Eye's beleaguered publishing duo, are confronted with an e-book and conclude that it spells doom for traditional books. "Thank God for that!" they cry, as they pause outside a bookshop window and contemplate the offerings: TV spin-offs, Jeffrey Archer's latest, a slew of political biographies, and Russell Brand's My Booky Wook.

Of course, condemning books in such terms is as narrow as arguing that television is worthless because of Big Brother, or cinema obsolete because so many films are remakes. Still, there may be justification for claiming that the mainstream of modern publishing is muddled by staleness and a lack of imagination. If this is the case, then perhaps the e-book, with its emphasis on innovation and looking anew at an old medium, deserves to be successful. The question is, will e-books be channels for fresh ideas or will their inventiveness be harnessed simply to provide newfangled access to the same old content?

[The Kindle](#), Amazon's hand-held e-book reader, has proved extremely popular and, unlike other readers, has generated quite a buzz. With deals recently being struck between leading bookshops and hardware manufacturers (Borders UK with iRex, makers of the iLiad Reader; Waterstone's with Sony), e-books might finally be about to enter the public

consciousness after years of false dawns. But, has their 'revolutionary' potential been overstated?

If it truly signals a paradigm shift, e-book production could allow talented but marginalised authors to make their works readily available, and to gain the readership that they deserve. On the other hand, if absolutely anyone is able to publish whatever they like, e-books might simply add fuel to the fire of mediocrity by turning book production into a vanity-publishing free-for-all. A kind of 'natural selection', set in motion by readers acting both as critics and quality-controllers, might weed out some of the dross, but such processes could easily be clouded by individual prejudice and manipulated by third parties. Editors, however pilloried, do serve a purpose; they flag up genuine talent and make the kinds of tough editorial decisions that authors themselves may balk at. The egalitarianism of e-books might not best serve readers. On the positive side, it could prove a real boon to librarians, justifying our continued existence as guides, able to steer readers safely through a deepening morass of reading matter.

More and more publishers are declaring – tentatively – that e-books are the future. Partly, they may be hedging their bets, claiming a precautionary stake in the new technology so that, should e-books truly take off, they retain control over the medium and do not emulate the music industry, which spurned Internet downloads for years, and lost billions. But perhaps they are acknowledging, too, that e-books are now considered 'safe'. At present, they largely signal only a literal change of the delivery medium and not of the paradigm. Beneath their surface shimmer, e-books will have much less of a philosophical resonance than the historic transition from scroll to codex.

It is probably more constructive to think of e-books as having the potential to supplement physical books. Seasoned researchers, for example, are unlikely to abandon books completely, but are even less likely to pass up the possibilities of e-books. In a time of paranoia over carbon footprints, e-books might prove instrumental in eliminating unnecessary journeys, demonstrating how technology can address problems that technology itself has spawned. In everyday terms, this also saves researchers and their institutions time and money.

The acceptance of e-books will only be accelerated by the involvement of billion-dollar corporations like Microsoft, whose Silverlight software has been at the forefront of most publicity for the British Library's impressive ['Turning the Pages' 2.0 tool-kit](#) . Certainly, being able to access, at the click of a mouse, William Blake's personal folio complete with sketches, scribbles and fragments, or the amazing wood-block printed Diamond Sutra

scrolls, is exciting and overcomes the familiar barriers of distance, accessibility, and fragility.

'Turning the Pages' is the kind of initiative that may make even the most ardently technophobic of bibliophiles see the value of e-books. By faithfully depicting rare and invaluable works in crystal-clear and magnifiable images, it presents the user with '3D' e-books that are effective, functional facsimiles of the documents they represent (although there are some glitches from a user-interface point of view). Yet, at the same time, they acknowledge, in a variety of ways, the superiority of the originals. They create a desire in the reader to touch – albeit with gloved hands – the original pages and to peer, with fascination, at physical artefacts that are remnants of minds and thoughts long decayed.

The relationship between e-books and physical books will always be strong. The codex is the format that most readers prefer, not because they are reactionary, but because it is a design classic. The ultimate e-book, then, would be portable, light-weight, durable, slimline, intuitive to grasp, annotatable, searchable, attractive, and affordable. You could use it in the bath, on a train, or inside a torch-lit tent on a remote, windswept hill-top. In other words, it would be exactly like a book.

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Aiming Higher

Three welcomes and two farewells

Jill Evans pays tribute to colleagues coming and going in the academic field.

The 'welcome' aspect is centred on the other contributor to this article, Eric Dickson of the National Library of Scotland, and also to the new colleagues with whom I have been working recently on different initiatives. A Scottish regional library co-operative groups' meeting was held recently where I worked with colleagues from different sectors who shared their knowledge and expertise. The Libraries in Central Scotland (LICS) representative impressed others with their 'Book Prescribing Service' which is a cross-sectoral library partnership involving Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Falkirk Councils, Forth Valley College, NHS Forth Valley, Scottish Police College, Stirling University, Stirling Royal Infirmary and Falkirk District Infirmary. The National Library of Scotland and the Scottish Library and Information Council also support the venture. GPs select books from the [Primary Care Book Prescription Scheme](#) on issues such as depression, eating disorders, anger, self-esteem and stress, and the titles are made available in libraries to help patients to become involved in their own treatments.

Farewells

Two Affiliated Groups to the Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries ([SCURL](#)) have been working collaboratively for the past year with a colleague whose business acumen has not been honed in librarianship but in the competitive world of procurement. The many meetings have often resulted in misunderstandings, bewilderment (on my part!) and impatience but, in retrospect, it has been exciting to be challenged on our given methods, empirical attitudes and the 'AyeBin'* methodology. One group, the Scotland Northern Ireland PEriodicals Supply ([SNIPES](#)), through the Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges ([APUC](#)), has recently let a contract for the supply and delivery of periodical content to the SCURL institutions and to some of the participating FE libraries. The other group, the Scottish Consortium of Academic Books Supply ([SCABS](#)), continues to grapple with the complexities of a Framework Agreement for each of the print book, electronic book, and standing order tenders. Throughout these protracted discussions we have been lead by a Procurement Specialist from APUC with formidable and impressive procurement skills, who has learned the intricacies of making material available to library users on an equal basis. Our colleague, at the beginning of the working relationship, acknowledged that procuring supplies did not differ significantly according to type of commodity. However, a new world of knowledge sharing, ethical behaviour, supportive collaborative business relationships, and career development opportunities have become evident to our colleague through the trusted world of librarianship. I wish to congratulate my colleagues in these groups who have shared their knowledge on the importance of ensuring that material is fit for purpose, and the attention to detail to ensure best value for money. Our colleague, Karen, is beginning a new career with the Scottish Government and it is testament to her dedication to her SCURL

colleagues that in such a short time she has gained an in-depth understanding of our business and our collaborative practices. I sincerely wish her well with new opportunities. I am sure her time working with librarians will stand her in good stead.

Another farewell goes to SCURL Minutes Secretary, Chris Taylor, who has diligently recorded the discussions of the SCURL plenary and Business Committee meetings for the past three years. Chris's 'reward' for accepting the job was to travel around Scotland by train to take minutes of discussions in many HEIs, with a brief/flying visit to Queen's University in Belfast, and to work with the Directors of library services on the many innovative services, projects and plans which have been developed. I thank Chris, on behalf of the SCURL members, for his diplomacy and his expediency converting discussion to drafts of minutes.

Jill Evans

"It has always been done that way": a NE Scotland phrase.



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The National Library of Scotland... on tour

In September NLS enjoyed a third successful three-day roadshow at the Carnegie Library in Ayr, after previous successes in Perth (2007) and Aberdeen (2006).

Our aim was simply to connect with Ayrshire people in their own area and to tell them of how they can benefit from [NLS](#) and Scottish Screen Archive resources and services – without necessarily coming to Edinburgh or Glasgow.

Of course, this was a complementary learning process, as NLS/SSA staff had an opportunity to liaise with colleagues in the public library sphere and also meet Ayr library users and get a feel for their interests. It represented an excellent (and literal) opportunity to showcase the variety of NLS

materials received under the privilege of the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003, and to encourage any local societies or individuals to deposit items with us. Examples of the variety of official publications and purchased foreign materials were also exhibited.

Facsimiles of locally relevant rare books and manuscripts were on show, and a specialist map curator spoke on three centuries of Ayrshire maps at a free public event in the reference library. Further free events covered NLS genealogical services and the various digital collections and services users could access from home. All events were well attended and feedback was positive. Successful workshops on local history for P5 and P7 children were also held, using the rich resources of the [Scottish Screen Archive](#). SSA rounded off the roadshow with a showing of some Ayrshire gems from its collection on the final evening.

We hold one roadshow per year, usually in September. If you would like to invite NLS/SSA to visit your public library service, please contact Janice McFarlane j.mcfarlane@nls.uk.

Eric Dickson, Legal Deposit Assistant Curator, National Library of Scotland



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Reader development

Better choice, better readers

Celia Jenkins is a 'whichbook reader', and here she describes what this means and why the book choice site is such a good idea in reader development.

I first read about whichbook in an article in CILIP's Update in September 2007. It was the article's theme of 'reader development' which attracted my attention, and not the prospect of earning GBP 20.00 to review a book!

Reader development is one area which I am very keen to play a part in, as it is such an integral part of an effective library service. I felt that the article's invitation to become a whichbook reader provided me with a great opportunity to contribute, especially as I currently do not work in a library.

[Whichbook](#) is a book-choice website, created and managed by [Opening the Book](#), which takes a reader-centred, intuitive approach to suggesting books and poems people may like to read. It recognises that different elements make up a 'good read', and so allows you to choose books according to your mood. Visitors to the site are presented with a series of sliding bars where they can choose between extremes, e.g. happy/sad, optimistic/bleak.

In addition, the whichbook approach allows people to choose type of main character, plot, and setting, rather than the more conventional categories of author, publisher, or genre. As a result, the tool may provide unpredictable suggestions, thereby encouraging people to read something they would be likely to enjoy but would not normally choose.

More than 200 library staff have been trained to be whichbook readers and there are currently around 50 active readers. Readers are allocated books to review. In the initial 12 months of being a whichbook reader you have to have reviewed a minimum of six books and you must continue as a reader for at least 12 months or 12 books.

To become a whichbook reader there is a six-step training process. This process includes two face-to-face sessions, held six months apart, where trainee readers and whichbook trainers meet and work together on particular aspects of the reader-centred approach to reviewing books. The first session is on benchmarking, which involves discussing two books (to be read and reviewed beforehand) and reaching a consensus on their ratings. The other is on writing comments and choosing parallels, which involves looking at examples of real comments and discussing what does and does not work, how to edit your comments, and how to write about a book you don't like.

The rest of the training process is completed online, through email communication between the trainee readers and Opening the Book. For example, trainees send via email their extracts, comments and parallels of each benchmark book for individual evaluation. Trainees are then paired and given another book to read, discuss and review together.

A set of exercises, designed to introduce whichbook readers, gives the whichbook team an idea of your reading preferences and writing style,

thereby helping them to develop your skills further. The exercises make you think critically about what you like and don't like to read, how to convey to others what a book is about in a limited number of words, and even how to write about a book positively when you didn't actually like the book yourself!

I am now reading two designated books (all trainees read the same books to benchmark) which I will review and rate by filling in a Data Entry Sheet for each. Both the book data forms and our reviews will be discussed as part of step two, with the ratings then being used as a yardstick for all ratings in future.

Even though I have just started working towards the second step, I already feel that I am benefiting from the training process. Initially, I wondered whether I would be any good at reviewing literature. However, I found the exercises both challenging and enjoyable, and I received some positive feedback. They have also reminded me that the reading experience is more rewarding when you reflect on what you have read.

The development of analytical and written communication skills is another very significant benefit. The reader-centred approach encourages you to be open and honest about your reading experiences, and makes you think about how to convey the essence of a book in a concise, informal way, while recognising that others may find the reading experience different to you.

There are also great benefits to library services and the communities they serve. Whichbook readers are able to contribute to a great resource used by librarians and users alike, which promotes public libraries and reader development. Other benefits include greater stock awareness (from being allocated different types of books) and, of course, receiving GBP 20.00 per review, which in some cases is paid into a library service fund to go towards further reader development initiatives.

I feel that becoming a whichbook reader is well worth the time and effort involved. The whole process towards 'going solo' will be a very rewarding one and one which will continue to benefit myself and others long after.

Information

For more information on whichbook/if you are interested in becoming a whichbook reader please contact Rachel Van Riel rachel@openingthebook.com



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Reader development: The children's book medals

Out of the shadows

There's nothing like CILIP's Carnegie and Greenaway Medals to get young people involved in reading, as Agnès Guyon explains.

The link between academic performance and reading for pleasure has now been well established and any initiative supporting the latter is to be embraced. The recent change of timetable for the CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway awards makes shadowing activities much easier in Scotland.

The Carnegie Medal is awarded by children's librarians to the writer of an outstanding book for children and young people. The same judging panel awards the Kate Greenaway Medal for distinguished illustrations in a book for children. The shadowing scheme invites young people to read all the shortlisted books and assess them using the same criteria as the judges. They can share their views with other reading groups through the [shadowing website](#). The shortlists for the 2009 Medals will be available from 24 April and winners will be announced on 25 June. It is interesting to note how shadowing the Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Awards supports the four capacities of the new Curriculum for Excellence:

Successful learners: Shadowing the Carnegie is a highly motivating experience for young people. It stimulates independent and critical reading, and introduces them to new authors, genres and more demanding literature. The fact that the criteria have to be adhered to in the judging process also helps in developing critical and evaluative skills. The Kate Greenaway shadowing also develops visual literacy. For both awards, young people are encouraged to think creatively, form their own opinions of a book and develop an openness for new ideas.

Confident Individuals: The shadowing scheme stimulates lively discussions and young people become more confident in talking about books and learn to better understand and communicate the feelings and emotions that books can provoke. Discussing ideas without fear of being ridiculed can

help build self-esteem as each individual can see that their opinion is valued. Shadowing the Kate Greenaway Award can involve peer reading, with the older children reading the picture books to younger ones and seeking their opinions.

Responsible Citizens: Discussions and other shadowing activities are based on a principle of respect for others. Literature opens a window onto the world and presents a variety of beliefs and cultures. The voting process, where each group decides on their favourite title, also provides an introduction to the democratic process.

Effective Contributors: Shadowing activities are done as part of a team. Young people learn to take part in debates, discussions and other group activities. They can be passionate about their ideas but need to listen to the opinions of others and have the resilience to accept that their favourite title may not be the winner. Something that even adult judges on the panel can sometimes find difficult!

The shadowing website is an invaluable tool. It provides a springboard for interaction between the shadowing groups. For the young people, it provides an opportunity to connect with other like-minded people all over the country, to find out about the books and the authors, to read other's reviews and check how a particular title is doing in the charts. It is also an opportunity to showcase their work, post photos and reviews. There are issues to vote for online, and these can also stimulate debates. Shortlisted authors and illustrators answer questions on podcasts. Librarians and teachers can get many ideas and resources from the website. There are activity packs for each of the shortlisted titles as well as more generic ones on copyright. Publicity material can be downloaded, with tips on how to publicise the group.

Groups can be any shape or size. There has been a wide range of creative activities linked to the shadowing scheme such as author events, drama workshops, art and craft activities, computer games, creating videos, producing newsletters, designing websites and writing and delivering PowerPoint presentations. An added benefit is that the library becomes the focus for all this creativity.

I would like to finish with a few quotes:

“After being a school librarian for almost eight years I can honestly and truly say that shadowing the Carnegie Book Award has been worth its weight in gold.” [\[blog\]](#)

“It was the school's first experience of ‘shadowing’ the Carnegie/Greenaway book awards that sparked off the massive enthusiasm for creative reading initiatives within the school.” [\[Literacy\]](#)

[Trust\]](#)

“It is hard to sum up the importance of the shadowing to our school. It’s a byword for aspiration and achievement in a school that faces challenges but continues to rise to them. My job is about raising attainment through enrichment, and shadowing the Medals offers us these on a plate!” (Celia Spears, Gifted & Talented Co-ordinator, Hillingdon Excellence Cluster)

[\[press release\]](#)

I couldn’t put it better myself!

Agnès Guyon is Senior Librarian, Young People's Services, East Lothian.



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Books and reading

Books for a better world

If you are looking for an ethical, easy and profitable way to clear out unwanted books, a US organisation is setting up in Edinburgh to serve just this purpose in the UK. Information Scotland found out all about it from UK Development Director Hannah Smith.

Background

Better World Books ([BWB](#)) is a social business that targets illiteracy by collecting used books from libraries and bookstores, and selling them on more than 17 online marketplaces. This generates funding for both libraries and non-profit literacy initiatives. BWB was set up in 2002 in Indiana by three graduates who realised that some good could come from selling on old textbooks otherwise destined for the landfill – and now it is establishing a UK base, in Edinburgh.

BWB has raised more than £2.4m for literacy organisations from its US operation. It has its own socially responsible online bookselling site, and will soon be launching a UK version. With specialist knowledge of rare, antiquarian and collectible books, plus the use of proprietary software that

means books are priced according to market demand, it endeavors to get the right price for each book.

IS: Why are you expanding to the UK?

Hannah Smith: In terms of what we can offer libraries, we provide a service that doesn't seem to exist in the UK on a national scale. My personal motivation for being involved is to 'do good things with old books' – and it struck me from the beginning that what BWB does is exceptional in terms of scale, professionalism and positive impact.

Why did you decide to base your UK operation in Edinburgh?

Edinburgh is the first UNESCO City of Literature and an exceptionally dynamic place for all book lovers. This, combined with Scotland's encouragement of incoming business, seemed to be an unmissable opportunity. Our base just outside of Edinburgh will serve the UK as a whole – and we are already working with a couple of libraries outside the UK and talking to some interested librarians in the Republic of Ireland.

What have you achieved so far over here?

We are already working with libraries and charity shops around the country and uplifting large quantities of unwanted books on demand. We have also formed partnerships with two national charities – the [National Literacy Trust](#) and [READ International](#). So far, we are seeing an extremely positive response to our service. There are more partners in the pipeline and we are always open to approaches if anyone has a literacy cause in mind.

Is the setup going to be similar to the US business?

We'll be importing the systems that work well in the States but adapting them as necessary, to make the most of any interesting opportunities. For example, we are working in close collaboration with READ International on an exciting university book collection project, which will see a greater percentage of each book's sale price going directly to them. We are also working with charity shops – which don't exist in quite the same form in the US. We are always open to new ideas.

How do libraries make money from their donations?

While the specific terms of our individual arrangements are confidential, typically a library could expect to receive 15% of the net sale price of each book sent to us that we are able to sell. More details on the procedure are given in an Information Pack available from our website.

How will you be selling the books that you collect in the UK?

All the saleable books we collect are listed across multiple online marketplaces – giving them the best possible chance of sale. We have customers worldwide. We take particular care over any that have

antiquarian or collectable value and we have significant expertise in this area.

How does the book donating work in practical terms? Is it an easy procedure for interested libraries?

Absolutely! We've already got some glowing testimonials from people brave enough to be 'guinea pigs' in the UK. We aim for it to be as easy as possible for people to work with us. The service is free for the participating library. It's also an environmentally sound solution to the problem of surplus books and, by following some simple guidelines, the library can make money too. Practically speaking, there is not much involved beyond packing up the boxes. We will shortly be launching our 'Client Portal' too – where libraries can organise next-day pick-ups at the click of a button.

You have also saved metal shelving from libraries in the US – do you intend to do this here?

Yes. We're still on the look out for shelving so would appreciate contact from your readers!

In what other ways is BWB involved in literacy work in the US? Will you replicate this in the UK?

In the US, BWB employees have paid volunteering time as standard – and many use it to tutor others in the community who have difficulty with reading and writing. We are looking forward to starting up some similar initiatives in Scotland.

What is your 'proprietary software' work that allows you to price books according to market demand?

Essentially our software – called 'Indaba' (a Zulu word meaning 'getting together to do business') is an automated marketplace management system (and it was created by us). It has extremely sophisticated pricing functions, meaning we get the best possible price on each individual marketplace for every single book.

BWB is sure to appeal to librarians' sense of 'giving something back', recycling, and most of all helping literacy. What would you say to readers to urge them to get involved?

Give us a try! You can't lose - it's a free service, your surplus books will be kept out of landfill and you can make money for your libraries and some great charities too. If it wasn't already free, we wouldn't hesitate to offer a money back guarantee of satisfaction!

Books and reading: book groups

Reading is aloud

Lillian Downie from Brechin High School in Angus describes how a successful class book group works.

The project was set up as a collaboration between the English Department and the School Library. Pupils were divided into groups of four and brought to the library during a reading period, and given the choice of books from a selection that had been used previously for the [Angus Book Award](#).

The pupils were asked to read the books and during their library time they take it in turns to each read a page, a paragraph or chapter aloud. They were also given homework which entailed reading up to an agreed page. In this, the pupils set their own target, which could be to the end of the chapter or further. Pupils were encouraged to support each other and the majority of groups were mixed ability which was beneficial for everyone. Low ability were helped, middle ability were encouraged and higher ability were involved with other pupils and shared their knowledge.

The pupils seemed to engage well with the idea and were keen to get on with the reading. At times, the library staff and the teacher would join a group if they were free to do so. The groups were small enough in number to make it easy for the adult to know all the names and randomly ask someone to start reading. This was a good way of keeping the pupils focused on the page and reading along with the others in the group. Amy Anderson, the teacher of English who came up with the idea, also identified extension tasks for the pupils to add to their reading skills. As they were reading, one pupil from each group would be looking at plot, character, setting and language. This was also seen as a good way of introducing the pupils to new authors and different genres, something they may not have tried on their own.

The pupils were asked to prepare a PowerPoint presentation for their classmates about the book that they had read. This was peer and teacher assessed: pupils judged presentations on content and success criteria for group talk.

For some pupils, this was the first longer-length novel that they had read from start to finish. The project was such a success that it is being extended to other year groups.

These activities can be easily placed into a wide-ranging selection of Reading, Literacy and other disciplines within the [Curriculum for Excellence Learning Outcomes](#). For example, reading and discussing books emphasising their relevance to Scottish life and culture, and involving the pupils in thinking about the writers' craft and the pupils' evaluative review. And, in the area of technologies, the PowerPoint presentations demonstrate enhance learning in different contexts.



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Reader Development

An illustration of success

Picture books open up a rich seam of creativity in children of all ages, which is why the Dundee Picture Book Award is such a great idea. Moira Foster and Stuart Syme explain.

We wanted a vehicle which was inclusive and would promote reading in a creative, fun way and which at the same time met the requirements of the curriculum. It had to be something which was manageable, flexible and supported the work teachers were already trying to accomplish in the classroom.

We knew there would be resistance to something that was seen as yet another initiative and so we piloted the project in two schools where we knew the head teachers and staff would be honest about what worked and what didn't work and whether it was worthwhile pursuing. We had decided to work with picture books because we felt this genre offered scope for a range of work on a variety of levels. As they are designed for adults or older children to read to younger children they are full of subtleties which

appeal to different ages. They are relatively quick to read and the illustrations provide an additional form of access.

The big appeal for us was the opportunity for really inclusive work. In classrooms, where children are operating at different levels, picture books offer a non-threatening opportunity for everyone to be involved. We have found using picture books allows children to see themselves as all working at the same level irrespective of their academic ability in other areas.

When we piloted the project we first visited both P6 classes with 30 or 40 picture books and just gave them 45 minutes to explore them. Both ourselves and the teachers were amazed at the positive response and sheer enjoyment the children had during these sessions. Set in a context of asking them to look at the text and illustration critically, the barriers of age or ability were completely removed. It was as if the children had discovered a rich seam of enjoyment and creativity normally denied them. P6 children are far too old for picture books, aren't they? We knew then that whether the picture book award project became a reality or not, involving older children with picture books was something we would pursue.

Now, with the [Award](#) established, we always begin by taking a large collection of picture books to each class on our introductory visit and every time it has exactly the same impact. After the pilot and following talks with school staff and pupils we knew were on the right track. Indeed the pilot model stayed pretty much intact.

How it works

Participating schools are given a framework, which they can follow to the letter or extend as they see fit, including the following elements:

- Primary 6 pupils getting to know four shortlisted titles
- Discussing the text and illustration in class
- Reading the books to Primary 1 pupils in small groups
- Reporting back and talking about this experience to their peers
- Creating a display around the books for their local public library
- Organising a vote for their own class and another for the Primary 1s
- Digitally recording aspects of all these elements
- Attending a high-profile Award Ceremony.

Each year we invite schools to apply to take part and from the applications we select 14 schools. In total 700 or 800 pupils are involved annually. We work with 14 schools because we have 14 public libraries in Dundee and this allows each school to have a dedicated space within a local library to exhibit their display.

The project runs from 1 February to 31 March each year and the award ceremony takes place in June. The flexibility of the framework enables schools to focus on whichever area is most pertinent to them at any given time, e.g. some teachers have really gone to town on the voting element borrowing voting booths and ballot boxes from the council and having presiding officers, polling clerks, canvassers, etc.

For us the most important aspect of all of this is what happens in the schools. But we know that the award ceremony gives it its high profile and lets the children see that this is something which goes far beyond the school gates. Once again, children are central as 10 Primary 6 pupils from one of the participating schools host the ceremony. The only adults on stage are the authors and illustrators and the Lord Provost who announces the city-wide winner – not known until the Lord Provost opens the golden envelope.

The winning title receives GBP 1,000.00 and each of the runner-up authors and illustrators receives GBP 250.00. All also receive a limited edition [DC Thomson & Co. Ltd.](#) comic figurine. Prizes are sponsored by the [City of Discovery Campaign](#) and DC Thomson & Co. Ltd.

There are many ways that the award enhances learning, such as: children read to an audience, and listen to responses; working in partnership with the community; reading and writing with a purpose; citizenship – learning about the democratic process; creativity (eg promotional display); personal and social development (eg buddying, paired reading); and practical use of ICT.

The project is a partnership between the Leisure and Communities Department and the Education Department. It is co-ordinated and delivered by Stuart Syme (Senior Library and Information Officer, School Library Service, Dundee) and Moira Foster (ESO, Learning Resources, Educational Development Service, Dundee moira.foster@dundeecity.gov.uk).



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Conferences: Cataloguing & indexing

Semantic web to social tagging

The annual conference of the CILIP Cataloguing and Indexing Group took place 3-5 September at Strathclyde University. The SLIC information team went along to find out about the latest developments.

The annual conference of the [CILIP Cataloguing and Indexing Group](#) took place 3-5 September at Strathclyde University. The SLIC information team went along to find out about the latest developments.

The conference kicked off with the semantic web, with a Keynote speech from Gordon Dunsire, Depute Director of the Centre for Digital Library Research at Strathclyde University. Gordon's keynote concentrated on the role of the librarian in relation to the semantic web, or web3.0. Gordon was awarded the Alan Jeffreys Award 2007 for his internationally-renowned contributions in the field of metadata, at the end of his presentation.

Thursday began with an overview of the Multilingual Access to Subjects ([MACS](#)) project. The session was led by Patrice Landry of the Swiss National Library, who explored the issues of multilingualism and subject heading languages.

The mid-morning session featured two diverse strands of classification, with presentations covering the cataloguing of concert programmes and machine readable vocabularies. Deborah Lee, Senior Cataloguer at the Courtauld Institute of Art, outlined her paper exploring the application of faceted classification principles to concert programmes. This provided an interesting insight into the issues associated with classifying such ephemera, offering comparisons and contrasts to the process with more traditional materials.

The second session was delivered by Dr. Aida Slavic, Associate Editor of the [Universal Decimal Classification \(UDC\) consortium](#). Dr. Slavic focused on classification in digital repositories and standards for representing vocabularies in machine readable format. This session included an excellent overview of developments and useful advocacy points.

Social tagging was explored by Charlotte Smith of [Newnham College Library](#), Cambridge, and the day was concluded by Terry Willan of [Talis](#) who provided an outline of developments in library management systems.

On Friday Paula Williams of the [National Library of Scotland's Map Library](#) talked about the problems faced when cataloguing place names, pointing out some of the strengths and weaknesses of existing subject schemes. She then went on to look at the developing area of Geographical Information Retrieval (GIR), which is made possible by assigning geo-referencing co-ordinates to places.

The last session of the conference included a talk by Anne Welsh of NHS Education for Scotland on how the various metadata standards and subject headings are used to provide an effective, [user-centred service to the Falls Community](#)

Emma McCulloch of the Centre for Digital Library Research then gave a demonstration of [HILT IV](#), explaining how its mapping approach will help solve subject interoperability issues and giving practical examples of its use in the [INTUTE](#) and [BUBL](#) services. Lastly, Ken Chad, Independent Consultant, spoke about the Research Information Network-funded project on how to improve the creation and flow patterns of bibliographic data.

This interesting and varied programme of events was concluded by visits to the Glasgow School of Art Mackintosh Library and the BBC Scotland Digital Library.



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Conferences: Performing arts

Gripping performance

Alan Jones reports on the SIBMAS Congress, which explored saving performance culture.

What have Can Can dancing and Information science in common? The answer is such high kicks are naturally a part of a [SIBMAS](#) congress, an information conference exploring saving performance culture. The 27th International Congress of SIBMAS (Société Internationale des

Bibliothèques et des Musées des Arts du Spectacle) took place at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama ([RSAMD](#)) this August. More than 100 participants from around the globe descended on Glasgow for a week-long conference to debate the challenges facing information professionals working in the performing arts.

It was the [National Library of France](#) in the 1950s that identified a need for a different approach to collections of performing arts and consequently founded SIBMAS as an international forum. RSAMD has a specialist performance arts library of note, the Whittaker library. It supports students, teachers, professionals and interested members of the general public alike. It is Scotland's première performing arts library and one of the best theatre-related libraries in the UK.

RSAMD hosting SIBMAS allowed for collaborations between the [V&A Museum](#) and the [National Galleries of Scotland](#). The V&A brought 'The Dressing Room' exhibition, photographs by Simon Annand. His unique images allow us a rare glimpse of the more private face of famous actors, photographed in their West End dressing rooms, preparing to go on stage during 'The Half' – the last half-hour before the start of a play. The photographs do not portray the actors from a glamorous point of view, but rather, highlight their dedication.

National Galleries of Scotland on the Mound in Edinburgh undertook 'FOOTLIGHTS: Capturing the Essence of Performance'; an exhibition which examines how artists have captured the fleeting nature of theatrical performances over the centuries. Included are works by Toulouse Lautrec, designs for the Russian theatre by Natalya Goncharova, and images of Berlin cabaret by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. There are also fantastic costume and set designs. This exhibition is open until 16 November.

One of the strengths of a SIBMAS conference is that it's not simply for archivists, librarians or curators. It also attracts performance professionals, academics, researchers and performance company education officers. All participants share a common goal of how best to collect or save performance heritage. The theme, 'To capture the essence of performance & the challenge of intangible heritage', allowed as broad a range of papers as possible, including a number on oral history. Anselm Heinrich, Glasgow University, talked on oral history and regional theatre in 1930s-40s England and Germany. Mitch Miller also from Glasgow University spoke on the disappearing life of travelling show people in Scotland.

Information professionals do not work in isolation, they must work alongside the disciplines they support. This inclusive approach is very important in the performing arts. A number of papers looked at working with

artists. Janine Barrant from [Arts Centre Melbourne](#), Victoria, Australia, gave a fascinating paper on working with Edna Everage (Barry Humphries) and pop princess Kylie. It was more than how best to preserve gold hot pants and Gladioli but also how to present their work in a museum form as Australian cultural icons. Dr Francesca Marini, UBC, Vancouver, also gave a paper on working with and filming the work of the choreographer and dancer Judith Marcuse.

There were 50 papers in all including a new innovation to the conference programme – Exhibition Papers. Participants displayed a project in the form of an exhibition, thus allowing for more interaction with delegates.

The [Lindsay Anderson Archive](#), Stirling University, presented a fine selection of items. Matthieu Bonicel, BNF, France, presented an impressive project on Mediaeval Manuscripts on theatre for e-learning. In addition, Rupert Ridgewell, of the British Library, presented an exhibition on ‘Developments in the Concert Programmes Project’.

The excellence of the keynote speakers added to the quality of the event. Professor Shear West, Birmingham University, presented a paper on ‘Portraits of Performance: Documents, Monuments or Traces?’, looking at what we can today now read into performance portraits of the past. Lighting is possibly one of the most intangible elements of performance. The doyen of theatre lighting, Francis Reid, gave a clear and precise paper based on his work, making accessible something that’s often inaccessible to many. Neil Murray, Executive producer of the [National Theatre of Scotland](#), presented a paper on Blackwatch, their hit show which has gone around the world to great acclaim. Finally Judith Bowers of the [Britannia Panopticon Music Hall Trust](#) did a performance / paper, complete with dancing girls, on her role in saving an old Glasgow institution. Judith has breathed life back into the space by recreating the music hall performances that once graced the boards in Argyle Street.

Generally, in-house classifications are favoured by specialist institutions. The [Cataloguing Commission](#) hosted a discussion about how best performance collections should be catalogued, as universal systems of classification often fall short and need customisation.

One of the greatest aspects of the conference was the involvement of RSAMD’s students. Musical Theatre students performed to a standing ovation, technical and production students presented an exhibition of costumes and props and film students edited a spectacular welcoming film on Intangible Heritage. It showcased the simple fact that Scotland has performance talent by the bucket load. This is all good news for the future performance information professionals who will try and capture some it for posterity, in what ever form it might take: text, photo, database, document or drawing.

The Congress, without doubt, made an important contribution to the development of information science and to the practical development of theatre culture on a world-wide scale.

Alan R. Jones is Drama Librarian at RSAMD and Vice President of SIBMAS. Full Congress papers will be published in January.



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Centenary

Defining moments

We continue the series on the history of CILIPS and the SLA by the late Brian Osborne. Here he looks at key moments that have shaped the professional organisations in Scotland.

In my previous articles, I have looked at services to members and branch development, education and professional training, relationships with London and legislation and advocacy. Here I would like to consider a few of the key moments over the last century which have shaped the profession and the nature of its professional organisations and the way in which the profession has been perceived.

War-time always seems to produce a laudable inclination to plan for the future and to look critically at existing systems and structures. In 1942 the Library Association commissioned Lionel McColvin, City Librarian of Westminster, to study war-time conditions and post-war possibilities. McColvin's study took in Scotland and he produced plans for an ambitious regional library structure – a proposal which did not find support in the Council of the Scottish Library Association. It did not, however, meet with the accusations of inaccuracy which the pre-war survey by Miss Cooke had done. It had the effect of provoking the SLA into commissioning its own study of library services in the North of Scotland by C S Minto, then Deputy City Librarian of Edinburgh. The McColvin and Minto Reports put the need for more economically viable units on the professional agenda, even if the

achievement of such aims had, generally, to wait until new local government structures of 1975.

In 1969 the SLA submitted 'Standards for the Public Library Service in Scotland' to the Scottish Education Department. This broke new ground in proposing minimum standards for the acquisition of stock, for staffing, including professional staff numbers, and it also sought to incorporate the 'comprehensive and efficient' requirement of the English 1964 Public Libraries Act into Scotland, under the direction of the Secretary of State guided by a Library Advisory Council and Library Advisors.

The intention was that this document would inform the thinking of the Royal Commission on Local Government which was sitting at that time. When the Commission reported, Council was concerned about the number of small authorities it proposed – about half of the district councils which would be the library authorities would be below 100,000 population – the level SLA Council considered the minimum for economic service delivery. The profession was split over this issue and a Special General Meeting in September 1972 agreed by 89 votes to 32 to back the Council's recommendation that the public library service be assigned to the regional councils rather than to district councils. MPs were lobbied to attempt to secure such an allocation, without success. The role of school library services and resource centres and their place in the regional council education service also came to the fore at this period.

Although not formally linked to the SLA, the formation of the National Library of Scotland's Library and Information Services Committee, LISC (Scotland) in 1982 – initially as a replacement for the NLS's Library Co-operation Committee – was a significant step on the route to creating the long wished-for body which would raise standards and advise the Secretary of State. The problem was that although Secretaries of State might be prepared to talk to the Association, there was very little evidence that they were keen to take on the task of telling local authorities what they should spend on their library services or how they should run them. Nor was there very much evidence that local authorities – after 1975 represented by one body, COSLA, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities – had much appetite for being told by central government how to run local services. This attitude probably would have prevailed whatever the political make-up of the country but was particularly acute post-1979 with a Conservative central government and a predominantly Labour controlled local government. The SLA nonetheless invested considerable time and effort into preparing a draft Public Library Bill which would incorporate the ideas in documents such as the Charter for the Public Library Service in Scotland.

Eventually it was realised that legislation was not the way forward and with improving relations with COSLA, that body set up a working party under an independent chairman, Brian Wilson, Chief Executive of Inverness District Council, a local authority without library functions, to review public library standards. The working party, with SLA membership, reported in 1987 and its report proved to be of huge importance in driving up standards.

After the COSLA report it was difficult for local authorities to argue that the recommended standards were anything other than an expression of best practice and impossible for them to argue that the standards were an imposition by an over-bearing central government.

In 1995 the COSLA standards were revised and by that time they had been joined by a COSLA/SLA/SLIC report on standards in further education colleges and would soon be followed by a report on standards for the school library service. Concepts such as best value and self-evaluation now came to be key components in professional life. To an extent the COSLA standards model, based on input measures, has been overtaken by output and performance-based standards but their importance at the time cannot be over estimated. I had the encouraging experience of, after a number of years of not entirely successful arguments on resources with my local authority, finding councillors citing the COSLA Standards as reasons for increasing my budget.

The contribution of SLIC to the development of library services in all sectors should not be underestimated. Even if many people outside the profession, and perhaps a few within it, are not entirely clear what the difference is between SLIC and CILIPS, there is no doubt that the weight that SLIC has as an advisory body, and the authority it was able to gain in its formative years, has made it a powerful force.

An event in 1987, though limited in its geographical area, which nevertheless had a significant effect on the profession, was the five week long strike of librarians employed in schools, colleges and resource centres run by Strathclyde Regional Council. The period was one of considerable change in education with a great emphasis being placed on independent learning and the use of primary source materials. This, one might have thought, would have highlighted to employers the particular skills of librarians who were paid substantially less than newly qualified teachers. After the removal of a national professional grading structure staff in Strathclyde submitted a grading claim for school librarians to be paid on APIV/V – the authority responded with a an offer of API/II. This was rejected by the staff who went on strike and conducted a high-profile campaign in support of their grading claim.

There was considerable surprise, both among the general public and the local politicians, that such a safe and indeed invisible group had taken strike action and were picketing council offices, lobbying regional councillors and generally behaving in a way that did not fit with perceptions of librarian-like behaviour. To a degree the strike was successful – the basic grade offer was raised to APIII with APIII/IV for post with higher responsibilities – but its main impact may have been on those who organised and took part in the strike, in terms of their political awareness and campaigning skills.

In more recent years there can be little argument about the significance of the People's Network development – largely taken forward by SLIC rather than SLA/CILIPS – but undoubtedly a defining moment in the transformation of the library service, and the role of librarians.
Brian D Osborne



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Endpiece

The conversation continues

Colin Will says goodbye to Information Scotland readers – catch up with him on his blog.

What do you put in a valedictory column? Do I say all the things I wanted to say before but didn't dare? Not really my bag, dude. Do I review all the subjects I've discussed here in the past? That would risk being firmly labelled with the BOF tag. Do I select some career and post-career highlights? Nah, too much hard thinking involved. Instead I'll just do what I usually do, which is to talk about some of my current preoccupations and recent activities.

Let's start with Lithuania. The poetry festival was held in Utena, in the north-east of the country. It's a beautiful rural part of a country I hadn't seen before, and the hospitality was wonderful. Apart from several Lithuanians,

the poets were from Latvia, Russia, Georgia, Australia, USA and Scotland (Eleanor Livingstone and I). It's quite poignant to reflect on the friendly relations between the Russians and the Georgians at that time, and to be grateful that poetry transcends the seemingly intractable issues of nationality and territory.

We gave readings in six different venues in the region. At each place, the audiences were large and very appreciative. It was fantastic to see, at one open-air reading, the Saltire flying next to the George crosses of Georgia, and the red white and blue of Russia. Poetry is an essential and highly regarded part of the national culture, and indeed the Lithuanian Culture Minister, who read at one venue, is himself a distinguished poet. I'm tempted to contrast this with Scotland, and to wonder how many Scottish Culture Ministers have any knowledge of, or interest in, contemporary poetry? As I recall, the majority seem to have been more involved with sport.

But I digress. The countryside around Utena is typical of previously glaciated terrain, gently undulating, with woodland clearings where cows are tethered singly, and where storks stalk frogs among the meadow flowers. Lakes fill many of the glacial hollows, and it's a paradise for birdwatchers and wildlife enthusiasts. Beautiful, but the economic realities are that the country has lost a large proportion of its working age population to economic migration, and I wonder how many of them will return. What will they return to? Lithuania is an enthusiastic member of the EU, and they will undoubtedly prosper, but it could take time.

The library in Utena, where we gave our final reading, is large and very modern, indeed it's the envy of many from other Lithuanian cities. The Festival organiser, Vida Garunkstyte, is the Regional Librarian, and she is very proud of her city and its fine library.

As a footnote, Eleanor and I were so impressed by the poetry of our translator, Sonata Paliulyte, that she's been invited to take part in next year's [StAnza Festival](#) in St Andrews.

The pace of life seems to be increasing as I get older. I am trying to reduce my committee work, but it seems that every time I step down from one organisation, another one asks me to join. Some day I will definitely learn to say NO.

One activity which is also increasing is my publishing work. I started [Calder Wood Press](#) some years ago, when I lived near Calder Wood Country Park, but it's only in the last few years that it has really taken off. I specialise in publishing poetry chapbooks, with four titles in 2007, six

scheduled for 2008, and eight in 2009. I didn't plan to grow in this way, it just sort of happened. This sort of publishing is mostly about people, about becoming committed to publishing work I like by poets I already know. It's a world away from commercial publishing, and it's hugely satisfying. Starting with choosing the poets, I usually ask for MS of around 40 poems, which I'll whittle down to between 25 and 30 for a standard A5 pamphlet of 36pp or less. The selection is always agreed with the poet. Then I'll put them in a sequence, and finally I'll design the book. I try to match typography to the poetry, using a font like Century Schoolbook for some books, while Arial works with poetry which is sparing and unadorned. The cover design is crucial, as that's what makes potential buyers pick up the book in the first place. I've been very lucky so far, working with authors who have a well-developed visual sense. The authors are also expected to become involved in promoting and selling their own work. I'm a one-man-band, with no subsidy or additional funding, so I couldn't do it any other way.

Of course, sales to libraries are important, particularly in getting local authors more widely known within their own communities, but the bulk of sales are to individuals, especially at readings. As I've said before, it would be nice if more libraries bought more poetry. Check out the [Scottish Pamphlet Poetry](#) website to see what's currently available.

Speaking of which, I'm not long back from the big garden party which is the Callander Poetry Weekend. The event, organised by [Poetry Scotland](#), has become a highlight of my autumn calendar. This year more than 50 poets read, a record, and the events included readings, performance poetry, poetry and jazz, and discussions. My friend Larry Butler and I held a session on poetry and gardens, combining two of my great loves.

Well, that's yer lot, as a 1950s comedian whose name I have forgotten used to say. If you bump into me in future, be sure to say hello – I enjoy a natter about the Good Old Days, or anything else really. The conversation continues on my blog ([Sunny Dunny](#)). Thanks for having me.

Colin Will



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President's Perspective

Don't let the ideas slip

Alan Hasson suggests that our diversity can make libraries' mission hard to grasp by some.

The role of President of CILIPS is fascinating. It's a mixture of pressing the flesh, sharing ideas, helping formulate policy, listening to people who are at the sharp end of delivering services and relaying what's heard back to Council and officers. During this year besides attending the national conferences held by our sister associations in Ireland and Wales, and of course our own in Peebles, I've been to events in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Dumbarton, East Lothian, Orkney and Larbert: I think it was Larbert, there lies a story. Through all of these there were common threads and so, as 'tis the season to reflect I shall do so.

First and most prominently, what a store of energy, ideas and potential we possess. All of the visits I made to CILIPS branches had the same format. Presi talks and throws out a few questions: Are we relevant? How can we be better at what we do? What are the challenges? Where are you personally and your services going? How can CILIPS help? Usually at that point I could sit back and listen for the rest of our meeting. The identification of the blocks to delivery were always similar: resources of course; bureaucracy in some places; the imposition of yesterday's solutions to try to meet today's challenges; the cycle of cut, retreat, reform and cut. But more prominently there was a positiveness about what libraries of all types could and do deliver: exploiting Web2, workplace literacies, Bookstart and beyond, the library as public open space, multi-use, co-location, CPD, cleaning beaches (I kid you not), networking over sectors, networking with colleagues (!), alliances and on and on.

Now, the interesting thing in all this was not the litany of possibles but the way these were related to the individual's workplace and community and ambitions, both personal and for their services. With few exceptions what was thrown around was relevant and do-able. I take it as a given that the people who are willing to come out to a professional meeting during what were invariably cold and wet evenings are a self-selecting bunch: they are amongst the keen ones. And here's my second common thread. What happens to all these deliverable ideas and the commitment of such people? Of course the sector is under-funded, and under threat, but it must be more than that. Is it a lack of ambition for services and an understanding of their potential by the parent organisations, bureaucratic structures which go for the safe option or a gap between the articulation of the possible and the professional knowledge on how to deliver?

And then in the course of a few weeks, I went to Aberdeen for the Grampian Information Conference and to Orkney to look at their new facilities for ICT use. Both of these in completely different ways were practical examples of how delivery can be achieved. The parts of the Grampian Conference which I attended were full not only of sessions on ideas (not all of which I agreed with, but then that's a good thing) but also of the much derided, "we-done-it-good", type of presentation. I went away, as I would think most of the delegates did, re-energised and thinking, that's worthwhile and deliverable. It was the best type of CPD there is.

Orkney is not the best funded of our library services, but something very worthwhile is going on there. My visit was too short but the impression of a staff at all levels who were professional, committed to their users and had a clear purpose was palpable. Their usage statistics particularly for ICT are impressive, particularly given the challenges the geography offers. Kirkwall Library and especially its ICT facilities were busy, and it was yet another of the wet and windy days which seem to follow me. They have their challenges: Stromness Library is simply not adequate for its community. But here again there was a practical, "can do" attitude, not simply to make the best use of the existing facilities, but ambitious plans to move, modernise and serve. Given the plans for the new complex I was shown, there's a recognition of what libraries should be and can offer.

In the midst of these visits I went to a number of meetings which were not library gatherings. At one of these I got talking to a senior person in Scottish local government. He was knowledgeable about libraries, particularly in the local government setting and we had a highly enjoyable set to about matters library-ish. One comment he made stays in my memory. After we'd been round the houses on potential and delivery, funding, SOAs, PLQIM, what actually constitutes adult education and local priorities, he said: "The point about libraries is that they are a service in search of a mission." That brings me to my third point.

I'd recently been to Dumbarton, for the last night of the West Dumbarton Festival. Here was the library service at the heart of the cultural life of their area. They had sponsorship and partners of course but the hours put in to the organisation of events throughout the area, diverse, well attended, re-enforcing their varied communities' sense of identity and heritage, but also linking to national and international themes was a major commitment. I'd previously been to West Lothian to see their integrated library and one-stop-shop, to Glasgow, sampling the delights of the Mitchell and its excellent coffee bar – not simply patronised by users of the library, to Queen Margaret University looking at their new library with its ICT to the horizon, and to Ferguslie, awash with activities for children and young people.

The emphasis in all of these services seemed to be on provision which was tailored to their host community and gave local solutions to local priorities of the most varied type. Libraries, it was clear, are an answer to a host of different challenges, which face our country in education, social cohesion, identity and recreation. We are, in potentia, solutions. That very diversity seems to give some of the bodies addressing our wee country's future a difficulty. Our potential to provide solutions is so multi-faceted that it can be overlooked, especially when that ability faces both entrenched interest groups and conventional thinking. Libraries are not a service in search of a mission; they are a solution to a host of missions.

My fourth common theme leads on from the above. That theme is of diversity, of continuing change and re-invention, and of the need to be engaged. The Single Outcome Agreements promoted by our present government provide an opportunity for library services to prove that they deliver. That delivery and the local emphasis on the purpose of library services grows out both of the core business of libraries and the varied outcomes they can contribute to. Again my visits have shown the malleability of libraries in their contribution. Certainly there are common themes but the wording and emphasis is local. The challenge, faced and surmounted by many, but still being strived for by some, is to focus and validate the diverse solutions we offer and to translate them into language which is recognised and understood by those who hold the purse strings. One of the constants in feedback during my visits has been the positive response from public librarians to PLQIM. That process is a step change from the previous equivalent, the CoSLA Standards. It fits our times and context better. It represents not a rejection of the old Standards but a recognition that there is, in this time and place, a better way of ensuring the best possible health of services. There is a need for the same sort of scrutiny of fitness for purpose linked to a willingness to change, to be deployed in relation to the bodies which support our professional lives. Change happens, the trick is to be a driver of the process, not a passive recipient.

My fifth and last theme, as I write my last column, is of gratitude. Thank you for choosing me as your President. Thank you for your hospitality. Above all thank you for reinforcing my belief in the importance of libraries and librarianship. IS

Alan Hasson

Response

Meeting varied needs

Christopher Phillips replies to '[Public libraries: political footballs?](#)' with his views on the current strategies public libraries are employing.

With advancing old age I recently had to strengthen the prescription in my varifocal glasses. For a while I struggled to adapt, finding it easy to read and see some things and difficult to recognise others. I feel a bit like that about 'Public libraries: political footballs?' in which I don't recognise some of what is said but do recognise and agree with other things, although I find them a bit blurred around the edges.

I don't recognise the bleak picture painted of unmitigated decline in public libraries. I know that traditional book borrowing has declined and that many potential users satisfy their information needs in different ways. I also know that there has been a huge investment in delivering services through alternative channels to meet the needs of our 24/7 culture and that this investment has attracted new users in huge numbers. Furthermore, where we've invested in more traditional library services, increasing hours and refurbishing buildings, then use has increased: this summer The Highland Council invested in three new joint school and community libraries (new buildings, new stock and extra staff) and the use has gone up by 40%, 60% and 100% compared to this time last year.

Where there is investment, then there are results. One way of attracting new investment is to tie in with national initiatives. Locally we work within a political context reflecting the needs of our users and the political and budgetary priorities of our councils. It would be strange if these didn't reflect the national agenda and I'd be failing in my duty if I didn't advocate the relevance of public libraries to those agendas and so maximise the potential for new investment

I agree absolutely that we need to prove ourselves worthy of funding, but I take a more positive view of measures of performance and quality. They are not there for their own sake nor are they about bean counting, but are

to help us be accountable. If we can't show that we do things better and that they make a difference then we don't deserve to be here.

Seeking staff with the right skills (which certainly differ from the skills we looked for 10 or 20 years ago) is key to engaging with users. While it's fun to point out buzzwords it's more profitable to see what lies behind them. We do have many brilliant staff throughout our nation's libraries, but we also have some whom users see as barriers. We need to change how we are if we are to survive. Again, if we aren't inclusive and engaging we don't deserve to be here.

Our libraries are not about telling users what the answers are, but about supporting users with resources and skills to find the answers themselves. If we're not neutral and even handed then we won't earn their trust. The definition of literacy in Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland is "the ability to read, write and use numeracy to handle information, to express ideas and opinions, to make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners." For me that's also a pretty good summary of what libraries are all about.

Christopher Phillips is Lifelong Learning Manager at The Highland Council.



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Aiming Higher

Observing dynamic behaviour

Jill Evans sums up recent events in education and looks back on a year full of opportunities.

The Further Education College Librarians' annual event on 28 November in the Edinburgh Storytelling Centre included a superb programme of high-quality speakers presenting innovative and exciting content. Although the event was free for the FE sector, the fielded speakers could easily have attracted a high delegate attendance fee. Richard Wallis of Talis opened

the conference challenging us to think imaginatively about the next array of library management systems while Phil Bradley suggested some practical uses for Web 2.0 in our libraries – some of which were, attractively, free of charge.

Continuing with the theme of the FE sector I have had the privilege of working with many FE librarians examining the benefits and challenges of participation in the SCURL Scottish Consortium for Academic Books Supply ([SCABS](#)) procurement process. While the SCABS procedure benefits from more than 10 years experience, the invitation was formally extended to our FE college librarians in 2008. Representatives from the Advanced Procurement for Colleges and Universities (APUC), the Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU), the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), the Librarians' Network (Libnet) and SCURL have all participated in meetings recently to share information and concerns, respond to questions, and offer support to assist in the decision-making process and I look forward to the outcome after 19 December – the date by which expressions of interest to participate in the tender must be received.

I have witnessed some of the most challenging meetings with dynamic behaviour, idiosyncratic ideas, and collaborative participants during the lifetime of the [IRIScotland](#) (Institutional Repository Infrastructure for Scotland) Project Board. Since January 2006 I have had the pleasure of watching and observing our senior colleagues debate astutely very complex subjects for the benefit of the delivery of a future service for our researchers and academic partners, calmly chaired by the Project Director, Sheila Cannell of Edinburgh University.

In complete contrast to the surroundings and personalities of the previous meetings referred to above, the SCURL Health Group was invited by Iain Milne, Librarian to the Royal College of Physicians, to hold their meeting in the RCP's building in Queen Street, Edinburgh. Iain gave us a tour of the building with awe-inspiring libraries in which one could observe the historical richness of the collection of books and the pride with which the physicians regarded their libraries. The Health Group benefited from funding from SCURL to hold a training event on systematic reviewing hosted in Napier University, Edinburgh. This event attracted an audience extending beyond the HE sector with a number of participants from the NHS and it was encouraging to note cross-sectoral interest in a shared activity.

What have been the successes of 2008? We have seen the concept of the Scottish Higher Education Digital Library (SHEDL) emerge with impressive and remarkable progress. The negotiations were conducted on our behalf by JISC Collections through Content Complete Ltd and we expect to receive access to e-content from 1 January 2009 from three publishers for

the wider benefit of our academic users. Two short sentences on SHEDL are completely inadequate to convey the complex negotiations, the worry, anguish, responsibility, delight, and astonishment of the SHEDL Steering Group's membership as we met each new challenge. The final angst? Realising that the Chancellor had announced a reduction in VAT which had an immediate impact on our contracts!

The SCONUL conference in Edinburgh was memorable where amidst a superb programme of speakers I and my Planning Team colleagues encountered a flood in the reception room I had hired in Edinburgh Castle, a (small) fire on entering the Edinburgh Castle, and a mouse running around the seminar room of the hotel in which the conference was held – this was immediately after we had to vacate the seminar room because the room had been double-booked and the bride was waiting to start her reception!

I have enjoyed meeting challenges throughout 2008 with my wide portfolio of activities and am assured that 2009 will herald more opportunities to make me feel proud to be a librarian working for SCURL in Scotland.

Jill Evans



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Reader development

Lessons in strategy

David Kenvyn thinks that all leading librarians (and leaders to be) should read this excellent text on the way forward for libraries and reading.

I have to begin by declaring an interest. I was one of the people who was asked to comment pre-publication on one of the chapters in this book. That chapter of course is excellent but it does not stand out because the other chapters are excellent as well. This is only to be expected, given the

enthusiasm, experience and commitment of the authors to the concept of reader development.

The first chapter, 'Starting with the Reader' reminds us of what a library is about. Reader development is not about persuading people to read better books, whatever they are. It is about giving people the widest possible range of reading choices, and recognising that the best book for a reader is the one that he or she likes best at that particular moment. In other words, back to Ranganathan's rules – every book has its reader, and every reader has his or her book.

Each chapter puts the reader at the centre of delivery. Each chapter has a challenge for librarians. Sometimes cherished procedures may be shown to be a totally unnecessary waste of time. This can be salutary because if there is no benefit to the reader, then the fact that we have always done something is no justification for continuing to do it. Our security blankets, of which we can be very fond, are sometimes snatched away from us

The 'wake up calls' sections are particularly useful from this point of view. All of us will recognise some of the views being expressed. One of my particular favourites was "As an upgrade to our library environments, we will be placing plasma screens in every service point over the next six months". Each 'wake up call' is embedded in a chapter that gives us the arguments to challenge what is being said, and to take the service forward in improving our delivery to the reader. And this is important, because if we are to empower the reader and encourage them in exploring the world of books, then staff need to have the assurance that they are working within an agreed strategy to a particular end.

This book sets out the processes which need to be gone through to create a reader-centred strategy, in a structured way. It leads us step-by-step through the process. It gives a very good description of the resources available, including the Frontline training course, www.whichbook.net and the importance of monitoring and evaluating what we are doing.

It is quite realistic about this. We do not have to pretend that every promotion is a success. How could we do this in Scotland, when we have the example of the 'Print Options' promotion in front of us? The point with Print Options is that we did monitor and evaluate the promotion, and we then learnt from our mistakes. We were not averse to taking a risk, but when all the evidence showed that this was not what our readers wanted, we accepted that and moved on to new ideas. The following year's promotions 'So You Think You Know Scotland' and 'Voices of Scotland Now', supported by author visits, were very successful.

This book also celebrates our successes. There is nothing that can possibly compare to whichbook.net for the range of reading choices offered. This website is the work of dedicated librarians (myself included) and is generally acknowledged to be one of the best readers' websites available. Where else can you choose a book, without knowing the author title? Where else can you choose a book by its content (happy, larger than life, sex) without having a clue about its subject matter? Where else can you find a book to cheer you up because it is about someone more miserable than you? And yet, in many libraries, when staff are asked to recommend a book they will fall back on 'Who Writes Like' or 'Sequels'. So we need to ensure that our staff members are aware of the up-to-date resources about books available through the Internet.

This book is about empowering readers and staff. If the staff are not empowered to offer reader choices confidently, then the readers will not be empowered to make those choices. It brings together the experience of librarians throughout England, Scotland and Wales, and it guides us to consider what we now need to do.

How do we apply the lessons we have learned? That will be up to the readers of this book. It is attractively designed, with clear illustrations giving examples of good practice, and it is well laid out for easy use. It will help the readers to develop strategies, including branding, to improve staff training, and to make people more aware of web-based resources that can assist people with reading choices.

So, who are the readers of this book? Anyone interested in developing the reading choices of the public in libraries. They have no other task that is more important than reading this book. The authors predict that the next ten years could and should see a "...revitalised and re-energised library service, recognised by customers, partners and funders for its unique role in enriching people's lives". And who will be leading the charge? The readers of this book.

David Kenvyn is Assistant Manager, Community Libraries, East Dunbartonshire Council.

Rachel Van Riel, Olive Fowler and Anne Downes. [The Reader-friendly Library Service](#). Opening the Book 2008.



Resources

I am a book

The ‘Living Library’, the initiative in which people ‘borrow’ a person to learn from their experiences, has come to Scotland. Ewan McCormick and Linda Constable explain the concept and its successful launch at the Edinburgh Libraries Fair.

The first ‘[Living Library](#)’ in Scotland was launched at the Edinburgh Libraries Fair in November. Edinburgh City Libraries were at the forefront of the initiative which allows someone to ‘borrow’ a person for a conversation, to explore their experience or interests and to understand other backgrounds and cultures. The project seeks to develop closer cohesion between cultures and between individuals within the community, taking advantage of the trusted place of libraries in people’s experience.

Pioneered in Denmark at the Roskilde Festival 2000, Living Library gives direct access to someone else’s experience, for example, a person who has significant experience or a different perspective to share. It can be used to confront stereotypes and prejudices, to explore diversity, or simply to stimulate conversations (loans) that otherwise might not happen.

Over the past few years the idea has spread throughout the world, with Living Library events taking place in the US, Australia, Europe, and, in December in Kyoto, Japan at the ATAC (Assistive Technology and Augmentative Communication), 2008 Conference.

The MLA ([Museums, Libraries & Archives Council](#)) funded a Living Library project in four English library authorities earlier this year: Bournemouth, Bradford, Kent and Staffordshire. There have also been Living Library events in London and Norwich with more planned for the future in public libraries, colleges and festivals. A Living Library Workshop for organisers in libraries was held in London in November 2008 and there is one planned for Scotland for early 2009.

Living Library MLA/[Local Level Project](#) by Kevin Harris and Linda Constable was shortlisted for a 2008 Award for [Bridging Cultures](#) (ABC) in November and received a Commendation for promoting intercultural dialogue in the public and private sector category. Delivered by the Institute of Community Cohesion ([iCoCo](#)), the ABCs reward grassroots, community

and voluntary organisations for local schemes and projects which promote intercultural dialogue and understanding.

What is a 'Living Book'?

Most likely a majority of readers will find that Living Books are people just like you and me. But for different reasons they are subjected to stereotyping and prejudices. They are open about who they are and prepared to share their experiences. A Living Book is a person that has chosen to be a public representative of a certain group. An example of how people can be, if only minds are open long enough to find out, who and what they really are. But before anything else, they are courageous people that stand by their convictions and are willing to discuss their values with others.

One of the great features of the Living Library and taking out a book, is that 'readers' can ask as many questions as they want. Books have been prepared and made themselves available, in order for readers to be able to dig deep and find out what they always wanted to know about the Book title.

In the history of the Living Library, all Books have been volunteers. They all have commitment and value. They all agree to being lent out for hours on end, to talk with complete strangers about important and sometimes very personal issues. It shows great character and demands respect and admiration. All our Books at the Edinburgh Living Libraries event had a way of life or a viewpoint that represented a different perspective: they had a fascinating life experience, or did an unusual job, or had different beliefs from others. It's that difference which is celebrated and explored as part of the project.

Our 'Books'

In recruiting our 'Books' for the Edinburgh launch we started by approaching a range of individuals who as representatives of various communities in the city were known to us as library users. This created a snowball effect as we soon discovered that the event had generated a lot of interest via word of mouth. We were soon approached by a number of others keen to take part!

We looked for three essential qualities in our volunteers. Firstly, they were representative of the community, secondly, their life story made for interesting listening, and thirdly, they had an ability to interact and communicate positively with members of the public, and felt confident in leading the conversation if the 'borrower' seemed uncertain of how to proceed. In preparation we had supplied our Books with a set of guidelines

prior to the event which gave them some handy hints to get the dialogue going.

For instance, one favourite starter question was, “Why did you borrow me?” which was a really good icebreaker. In practice none of our volunteers or our borrowers appeared to find any difficulty in carrying out a conversation, and indeed embraced the whole concept enthusiastically once it was explained to them.

It was important to clarify with the volunteers beforehand that they were speaking to their borrowers from a personal angle and were not necessarily representing an official viewpoint. Thus for the policeman the focus was very much on how he felt about his work as a person, not an opportunity for the public to comment on the quality of policing in the city. To help with this we suggested he come along in casual clothes. We had also reassured the Books that if at any point they became uncomfortable with the line of questioning, they could terminate the conversation straight away. Fortunately this did not prove to be necessary.

Some of our Books asked if they could bring leaflets and handouts to give away to the public giving more information about their beliefs or about the organisation to which they belonged. We didn't have a problem with this, as long as a clear line was drawn between personal experience and propaganda. However in the case of some volunteers who were also members of Alcoholics Anonymous it was agreed that some of their borrowers might potentially be in need of professional advice or referral themselves, so in that case it was entirely appropriate that they be provided with the relevant contact details.

At the Edinburgh event we had an exciting range of people lined up for the Living Library stall. These were: Policeman Blogger; Poet; Polish speaker; Quaker; Chinese speakers; War veteran; A Goth; Recovering alcoholic; Blind person; Sikh; and Muslim.

We recorded 45 half-hour official ‘Loan’ sessions in the course of the day although this does not give the full picture as some of these were group Loans, including families with children of different ages and university students. We also found that the Books were talking to each other and finding more out about each other and their experiences of the event. It was an opportunity for networking at all levels with a great amount of interest from other agencies and partners at the Fair.

Feedback

We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from both Books and borrowers:

“Such a fantastic idea and a wonderful way of passing on knowledge and information” Borrower

“Great to hear from someone I would not usually meet” Borrower

“Prompts me to find out more” Borrower

“These resources are unique. Brilliant idea!” Borrower

“Showed me how people’s perceptions could be changed” Book

Dany Abergel, Board member of Living Library Network (Global), also came to the Edinburgh Fair and said that he “...wanted to thank you for the event in Edinburgh, which I thought was a success and sparked loads of interest.”

This initiative has a lot of positive potential for Edinburgh and for Scotland as a whole in the way that it:

- Supports the building of vibrant communities by encouraging community participation
- Helps minimise social exclusion
- Reaches out to individuals by offering opportunities for personal and social development
- Supports the development of culture within the community
- Provides the public with an opportunity to explore their community heritage in a new, face-to-face basis
- Opens up opportunities for libraries to work in partnership with a number of external organisations and individuals

Given the success of the initial event, we will certainly be encouraged to repeat the event in local libraries in Edinburgh in the near future.

The event would not have been the success it was without the support of colleagues from Edinburgh Libraries, UK Living Library organisers and, last but most definitely not least, our committed and enthusiastic volunteers.

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Public libraries

A model for success

Helen Dewar describes the service model for libraries in Aberdeenshire that is reaping rewards and helping to build stronger communities.

[Aberdeenshire Council](#) has invested heavily in libraries in recent years and the faith and confidence placed in the library profession is reaping dividends. School and community engagement has improved and tailored library services serve all ages of learners through support for information literacy, reader development and preparation for further and higher education and for the workplace.

'Community library thinking' – taking professional library advice and services beyond the library walls to the wider community – has been put into practice. Professional librarians, known as 'Network Librarians', are based in academy libraries and have responsibility for the cluster of public libraries within their network as well as their link with feeder primary schools. Pupils, parents, teaching staff and members of the public are customers, and the Curriculum for Excellence is fully supported and delivered in home, school and community settings.

Community planning

Each network librarian is responsible for developing a community profile and drafting an annual plan, which includes joint school and community targets. Library staff work across school and public libraries. The integrated service brings different skills and knowledge together. Network librarians bring their knowledge of learning styles, behaviour management, resources and curricular requirements from the academy setting; branch staff bring their knowledge of local people and places and the framework and fabric of community life; and support staff based at library headquarters ensure that systems, practices, standards and training programmes are consistent across the shire and that resource levels are appropriate.

Senior managers represent the service in the formal education setting and in a community planning forum and ensure that an element of local variation exists which allows sites to pilot new services tailored to local needs: Aberdeenshire covers a wide demographic across a large rural area. All staff and customers have access to a pool of over 650,000 media resources shared across Aberdeenshire.

Measuring success

All library staff input to the planning framework and are tasked to promote lifelong learning and community health and wellbeing and to work with partners to achieve agreed outcomes. Tasks and responsibilities are delegated to staff in a way that encourages personal and career development and a sense of ownership of the services provided.

The service is delivered through a mix of purpose-built new community libraries and the existing stock of academy and public library buildings.

Purpose built community libraries

Since 2002, purpose-designed community library facilities have been introduced at Meldrum Academy, Portlethen Academy, Kintore Primary School, and Rosehearty Primary School. Library membership and issue figures for these new libraries rose markedly in the first year of opening.

Community libraries in Portlethen and Meldrum Academies were designed with conference suites, ICT suites, interview rooms, teaching areas and children's areas. Public areas are sited at the entrance to the building with links to community learning providers as well as the specialist services provided by psychologists, family support workers, Surestart workers, police and health workers.

Network librarians engage in dialogue with all of the above as well as with teaching staff. They work with the Information Literacy Librarian to design and develop programmes from primary to secondary school through to tertiary education. The model and method of engagement is the same whether the network librarian is based in a community library building or a traditional academy setting.

Portlethen Community Library: All library assistants are given responsibility for their own remit which is expressed in two key areas of the network development plan. A reader development programme and an information literacy programme are in place. These include:

- Writers' workshops run annually for Advanced Higher pupils as well as for local residents as part of a programme of visiting writers and speakers
- Support for local primary school reading festivals
- Adult Literacy tutors working in the library, either in the open area or the small meeting room, with access to tailored literacy and life skills resources
- A delivery service for housebound readers is being developed

- Community Learning and Development run sessions with victims of domestic abuse who can access careers and other material to help build confidence and prepare for the workplace.
- A 'Friendship club' for older residents. Inter generational work is encouraged and the older people are willing partners for senior pupils working on a range of dissertations.
- Internet safety sessions for parents.

Community Libraries on Primary campuses

Community libraries based in Kintore and Rosehearty Primary Schools are designed on a smaller scale. They are open fewer hours than the academy based community library and operate without a network librarian on-site.

Uptake at both primary campus sites has increased and this model offers many opportunities for service development, although the limited hours and the absence of a professional librarian on site does mean that the pace of development has been slower.

However, many of the facets of service development at Portlethen are also seen here. For example, ICT supported sessions are offered, the local college also delivers ICT classes, literacy tutors work within the library footprint, library staff support parents, grandparents teachers and pupils, and the opportunity to develop intergenerational work is present.

The expectations of the teaching staff have risen significantly since they have gained access to a wider range of resources.

As part of preparation and planning, a training programme for library assistants was put in place to help them deal with the 'new to them' customer groups of pupils and teaching staff, and an induction training programme for teaching staff was also developed. Future plans include joint training for teachers and library staff and closer links with cultural service partners.

The mix of school and public library service provision has required an operational re-think and public lending rules have had to be revised in light of the feedback from the primary pilot schemes, particularly in relation to fines and charges. The model has been useful to develop and test an Information Literacy Programme for primary school children, now available Aberdeenshire-wide. The SKIL package has been well received by teaching staff.

Library Assistants transferring from a public library service do need a professional role model and a considerable commitment of time from the network librarian, particularly in the early days of establishing a new

service. Library assistants can be expected to deal with practical issues, they help customers of all ages access resources, deal with difficult behaviours, and introduce prepared programmes, but professional librarian input is needed to support both teaching and library staff in literacy and skills development work. The Network Librarian also has to be part of the community school operational group as the professional representative of the library service. The service is working well to date and offers opportunity for further development.

Benefits

The community library acts as a focus for activity in a school setting in a way that traditional academies and primary schools cannot. The casual drop-in link and the meeting of professionals across the agencies are crucial to these developments.

Parents increasingly see the library as an approachable door to the school. Primary schools buy in more to the services of a librarian too. They see the library as a service they can use to access a range of speakers, to promote summer reading activities, to contribute to homework support and to work with the early intervention team.

School-based ICT gives access to a wider bandwidth than the public library service can offer. Video conferencing facilities offer still more opportunities. The librarian's knowledge of teaching and learning is used to community advantage. Resources are selected from their knowledge of all ages and stages of learning and cover the whole gamut of information provision.

Cross-generational work is easier. Groups interact, older people see pupils at work and see their achievements on display, this creates a good impression and counteracts the negative presentation of young people so often conveyed.

Librarians with responsibility for school and community services enjoy their role, they find it more challenging, are prepared to deal with more of the unexpected, are aware of what is happening and who is making it happen in the local community and better understand how this can and does impact on pupils, teachers and other customers.

Helen Dewar is Cultural Services Team Leader, Aberdeenshire Council.

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/libraries/events

Centenary

All together now

Alan Reid and Rennie McElroy discuss developing advocacy and partnership in the final instalment of the history of CILIPS and the SLA, started by the late Brian Osborne.

When we were invited to complete the series of articles that the late Brian Osborne was writing to mark the centenary of SLA/CILIPS, we faced a dilemma – we did not know Brian’s intentions for the final article. Should we try to second-guess him, puzzle out what he might have done and write that? Perhaps, but all who knew Brian know also that second-guessing him was a chancy business! So we have chosen our own theme, analysing how CILIPS has gone about its work and how changes of strategy and style, especially in the last 30 years, have improved its impact and achievement.

The professional community

When one of the present authors was a student of librarianship in the late 1960s, a key element of the curriculum was ‘co-operation’. This meant the rather convoluted ways in which libraries might lend books to each other (providing postage was refunded!), or even – with safeguards that could be draconian – allow readers from one library to use another. That same curriculum included little analysis of government and library-funding bodies in any sector; they were peopled by that strange life-form, the ‘non-librarian’. How far we have come; how important the journey has been.

In this journey, the contribution of SLA/CILIPS to the professional community has been crucial. Especially important has been its capacity to break through the organisational structures of the workplace and bring together librarians of differing experience and seniority to work on professional issues. Sectoral boundaries can be crossed too, with academic, public, school and special librarians working together, sharing views and experience. Each group’s contribution is tempered and improved by exposure to the others; libraries and library users are the beneficiaries.

By facilitating and exploiting such collaborative engagement across the profession, SLA/CILIPS has been able to build a consensus about the role of the library and what it can contribute to local and national priorities, and inject that consensus into the corporate agendas of government and of library authorities in all sectors.

A developing approach to advocacy

SLA/CILIPS has always spoken out for libraries, librarians and library users. Early advocacy seems to have been largely a case of senior members of the profession debating an issue at the annual conference or in a meeting convened for the purpose, then adopting a formal resolution which expressed (hopefully resoundingly!) their collective view and policy. That resolution would be distributed as widely as working contacts and formal publication allowed.

Later, issues would be addressed by a working party established by Council, consisting predominantly of Council members. Sometimes, daringly, a few carefully vetted non-librarians(!) might be invited to contribute. The resulting report would be circulated within the profession and to such external bodies as might exercise influence or control over the issues it addressed.

The report would reach these bodies in a manner not unlike 'cold calling', with predictable results. Librarians would declare that they had proclaimed standards; others would reply, "Well, you would, wouldn't you?" or worse, "So what?" Many will remember the lack of interest, the gross ingratitude even, with which the then executive received the draft Bill for public libraries which SLA had had prepared in the wake of the 1964 Act, as it sought with earnest good intent to give Scotland some perceived parity with England.

How things have changed. Recognising the need to work in true partnership with other interests and with local and central government, SLA adopted a strategy of joint working groups, or preferably, working groups led by the very bodies it sought to influence. The first real example, perhaps still the role model, for this "advocacy in partnership" was the working party on public library standards convened by COSLA in 1986-87. For the first time, we had recommendations about libraries, still developed predominantly by librarians, but validated, endorsed and published by managerial, political and financial stakeholders. Behold, they were taken seriously!

A further development was extending advocacy beyond the public library sector, again using the partnership model to expand the base from which policy was developed and thereby, to improve effectiveness.

Recommendations were produced about school libraries and further education college libraries, long the poor relations in resources and status. Successful work was also undertaken for prison and health libraries. In higher education, SCURL and SCONUL remain the primary advocates, but it is a source of satisfaction that Information Scotland now carries regular reports about work carried out with SCURL.

So the lesson to learn from this aspect of CILIPS' history is, the more you appear to relax control over the development of policy, the more highly is the eventual policy regarded by those you seek to influence.

It would be invidious to name names; too many people have contributed too much over too many years; accidental omission would be unforgivable. But yet – while not the sole originator of this shift in the advocacy model, no one has done more to install and promote it than Robert Craig, with his unique ability to perch metaphorically on the corner of anyone's desk and to chat, engagingly and apparently innocently, but to huge effect. Professional advocacy will long be indebted to him.

CILIPS and SLIC

It is difficult, now, to imagine Scottish librarianship without CILIPS and SLIC working together so closely that each is the alter ego of the other. They have created a blurred but successful linkage between the professional association and the advisory body. This has benefited all sectors of librarianship, facilitating dialogue with library authorities and government, promoting lasting development, strengthening the professional community, and increasing the heed paid to professionally promulgated policy.

CILIPS, the professional body for individuals, and SLIC, whose members are employing organisations and whose funding derives from them and from government, work hand-in-glove in (almost!) complete accord, and are managed by the same people. Add to that, that SLIC has a remit to advise the executive arm of the Scottish Government, and we have a remarkable state of affairs reflecting careful preparation of the ground over many years, studious attention to potential opportunity, and judicious communication, all made possible by the trust that SLA generated through its advocacy in partnership model.

A devolved Scotland

It is too early to pronounce with certainty on the longer-term outcomes of devolution for Scottish libraries, but it can be said with confidence that today's CILIPS and SLIC are better fitted to operate within a devolved Scotland than was the case as recently as 15 years ago. The practices and skills developed since about 1990 fit them to work confidently and effectively with Scottish government ministers and to build upon

government's growing understanding and acknowledgement of libraries' contribution to the national agenda in such fields as cultural provision, digital inclusion and education.

The collaborative work that generated the Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix as an outcomes measure for that sector, and its possible future use to define local authorities' responsibility to deliver 'adequate' library services, may be seen as a latter-day fulfilment of SLA's objective in the 1970s, when it poured so much effort into the ill-fated draft Bill for public libraries. So, it took 30 years; so, it is a different approach; so, it's 'not statutory' (ever the lament of the librarian whose advocacy has failed). But it may well prove more effective in the long term, and its very development is eloquent testimony to the relationship between CILIPS and SLIC.

CILIPS at 100

In the final third of its century, SLA/CILIPS has advanced libraries from cautious co-operation with each other, to fruitful partnership with government, managers and stakeholders. As a result, the profession now has the confidence to engage easily with other agencies and to welcome the contribution of people from many areas of expertise to what it once regarded as the preserve of librarians alone. It works productively with government and its agencies, and with COSLA, head-teachers, arts and literacy agencies, and information technology practitioners, to name just a few. It contributes to national agendas in all sectors. Its voice is heard with respect, its views heeded, the interests of its members and of libraries promoted.

However unexceptional all this may seem today, these developments retain the power to astound anyone whose involvement with the professional bodies dates back more than two decades – just half of a working life. CILIPS has come far, and will go further.

Alan Reid is Library Services Manager, Midlothian Council. Professor Rennie McElroy was formerly University Librarian, Napier University. Both have contributed extensively to the work of SLA/CILIPS over many years.



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Librarians do the ton

A poem by Colin Will

Written for, and read at, the CILIPS/SLA Centenary Dinner, 24 Oct 2008.

This land, where edge and centre
come together, where Scots Pine flourishes
in a silicon glen, where Shetland and Skibo
are as close as Durness and Dunbar,
Linlithgow and Luncarty, this land today
marks and maps a century.

100 years for the trees of knowledge
and the trees of refreshment
to grow, bear branches, clump in copses,
forests, associations, national
and across the world.

Four centuries of printed paper,
a few short years of digital data,
formats for storage and retrieval –
the book; the shelf; the stack;
the library, the sums of more
than one and nought;
the hyperworld of connections
and indexes, then a knowledge base
was born; a bookly band
formed itself in Scotland,
held out hands to the wider world.

This group of braw bibliophiles,
earnest lenders, storytellers,
custodians of culture with open doors
for all definitions of that word,
all denominations and the innominate;
orderers, Borderers, borrowers and buyers
busy bees, bawbee-coonters;
learners and loungers,
astronauts and gastronomes,
poets and ploughboys,

scholars and browsers,
idealists and pedagogues,
altruists and clock-watchers,
agreed to work together
for the common weal.

It's still so today, we gather,
each with individual visions
but a single purpose,
to "Rax That Buik"
or "Rax That Info"
to whoever asks,
whosoever they need.

The founders were no different
from us, grounded in bookfunds,
biscuits and tea, not Big Folk, just
big-minded, and which among us
has any less conceit or wits?
We've served our time,
trained in Dewey and bibliography,
learned the special meanings of 'cat' and 'class',
aside from the zoopolitical.
We breathed deeply and swallowed
the indigestible – budgets, spreadsheets,
human resources, health & safety,
while balancing the books,
our stock in trade.

We've cherished our staff
nourished our readers,
anointed our bosses
with ambrosial malts –
come on, they all did it –
met up in Peebles and elsewhere
to warm the social bonds
of fellowship, and plan
the services an unguessable
demographic would require.

We're in the vibrant hearts
of our communities,
and always have been,
and 'Wheesh' is a word

long banished to the library's
haunted wing.

We're the ones that cantilevered out
the information superhighway
from the buttresses of Carnegie,
one profession in a nation
that's never stood still,
reserved its laurels
for the deid stane busts
o the unco guid.

A hundred years, eh?
And fit for the next?
I think so, in fact I'm sure of it.
We're protean, polymorphous,
a multiplex of possibilities.
Show us a tabula rasa and we'll
write on it. Show us a book
and we'll lend it. Show us
a library and we'll fill it.
Show us – no don't show us –
let us show you,
how to adapt to a people's needs
and give a century more of service.

Here's tae us!
Wha's like us?
Damn few,
An we're a'... lightly foxed.



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