

Youth Libraries Group National Conference October 2015 – Jill Reid.

2015 has been an important year professionally for me, starting in a new job within a new Local Authority at the end of 2014 and becoming chair of the Youth Libraries Group in Scotland in February 2015. Having the national Youth Libraries Group Conference here in Scotland was undoubtedly a highlight.

The National Committee, headed by Agnes Guyon created an amazing, diverse and engaging programme that stimulated from start to finish.

I was lucky enough to receive a CILIPS Professional Development Fund grant to be able to attend the whole weekend. Being fortunate enough to work in an integrated school and public library there was so much for me to take back to my setting in Aberdeenshire.

Karen McCluskey, Strathclyde Police started us off by reminding us why the work we do is so very important. Working in schools or public libraries, it is the young people of this country that need fair access to information, books and resources in a safe and welcoming environment. We provide this. Karen is an engaging, inspiring speaker and set the enthusiastic tone for the conference.

The morning continued in a positive way with Pam Dix chair of The International Board on Books for Young People reminding us to understand who our communities are and signposting us to other communities and cultures book awards to broaden our stock and knowledge.

Desmond Spiers gave so much practical advice on using different types of books with young people. This is something I'd like to explore in my setting, especially with the p7s in their transition up to s1.

Bev Humphrey's session demonstrating good apps was especially useful for me as Mearns Academy is the first school in Aberdeenshire to pilot a project where using ipads every day for teaching and learning will become a reality. I was delighted to find out about apps to support dyslexic readers from the Overlays app and publisher Barrington Stoke.

Mearns Academy is a Rights Respecting School and is currently working towards achieving Level 2. LGBTQIA* issues are high on the agenda here, and learning about stock we can add, how to display this stock and an increased general awareness of the subject was invaluable from the session with John Vincent and Elizabeth Chapman.

Day two was as engaging and left me with so many practical ideas. The graphic novel panel made me question how best to display the stock in my library, and ideas for new titles.

The author panels talking about the gender gap, mental health in books, diversity, and Africa in children's books gave me so much to think about in terms of the stock in my library, how to display it and how to use it with the young people.

Listening to authors such as Sarah Crossan, Miriam Moss, Tanya Landman, Will Grill, Sita Brahmachari, and the amazing Lisa Williamson over the weekend was such an honour. I'll never be short of ideas for author visits again!

Thanks again to CILIPS for funding my place and congratulations to Youth Libraries Group for putting on such an amazing event.