

CILIPS Annual Conference – 3-4 June 2019 Apex Hotel, Dundee

I am working towards my Chartership and as part of this, I thought it would have been a good idea to attend the CILIPS Annual Conference in Dundee. This for many reasons: two of which being networking and getting a better understanding of what is happening in other library sectors in UK.

I have been so lucky to be awarded one of the funded places through CILIPS Professional Development Fund so that I could attend both days of the Conference. I didn't know what to expect since it has been my very first conference: what a delight the whole experience has been! The theme of the conference, which has shaped the talks of both days, has been *Courage, Laughter and Innovation: A Resilient Profession* and CILIPS President Yvonne Manning has made sure that this was going to be the tone of everything.

The breakout sessions I have chosen were based on my interests: public and academic library sectors and open source. The first day I attended: *Libraries on the Move – A report on Scotland's mobile libraries* by Dr. Alyson Tyler, *Leveraging libraries. Community, open access and Wikimedia* by Jason Evans (National Library of Wales Wikimedian in Residence) and Sarah Thomas (Wikimedia UK), *Ambition & Opportunity: Journey's end or the start of new beginnings?* by Fiona Clark (Aberdeen City Libraries), Andrew Olney (Glasgow Life) and Rhona Arthur (North Ayrshire Libraries). The second day I have been to *Open Access, Plan S and new models for academic publishing* by Dominic Tate (University of Edinburgh), *Embedding GDPR within your information and library service* by David Smith (Director of DJS Management Solutions Limited), *Scotland's academic and national libraries and their engagement with social media* by Louise Annan (University of Glasgow Library) and Stewart Hardy (National Library of Scotland).

I would like to write something about two of the talks I have been to: one during the second breakout session of the first day, the other the first keynote of the second day.

1. *Leveraging libraries: community, open access and Wikimedia* Sarah Thomas, Wikimedia UK and Jason Evans, National Library of Wales. It has been eye-opening listening to what happens in the “behind the scenes” of Wikipedia. And little I knew about Wikimedians too. Dr Thomas has talked about the training projects and events (edit-a-thon), physically involving libraries, in order to get people educated to edit Wikipedia. One of the events had been held in the Inverclyde area.



Jason Evans has illustrated what NLW and he have accomplished. He has focused more on the WikiData project of Wikimedia. He showed what can be achieved and made me think: what could happen if all the libraries were able to invest a small part of their resources in a Wikimedia project? Because the concept behind Wikimedia is to make knowledge accessible: and what are libraries (especially public libraries) if not places where knowledge is being made freely attainable? Training people in every library would make the accessibility of knowledge so much easier and faster. An example of this is the project of digitisation of the material held at the NLW: this material is physically held at the NLW, thus if they weren't on Wikipedia, they wouldn't be seen unless going to the NLW. These images would be hardly discovered. I found that the ideas presented at this talk could be actualised in libraries which could benefit from projects in partnership with Wikimedia. Something to think about!



2. The second day has been full of other inspiring presentations and talks. However, one of the most charismatic speakers has probably been the first keynote of the day by Ms Jane Cowell, CEO Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service with *Innovation is a state of mind*. She has been tremendous, captivating the CILIPS delegates with her brilliant ideas. Her whole speech was focused on innovation, how to innovate the library service, how this should be done with a focus on the needs of the local community and make it compatible to the needs of library users. She found that one key element that libraries should have in order to be innovative, is being able to quickly adapt and change. Making appeal to the common experience of economic restraints encountered by libraries all over the world, Ms. Cowell has suggested that these should not be regarded as an enemy and they can actually aid to “shape and focus the problem”, helping to be creative in finding solutions to the problems. Jane Cowell has showed to the Conference delegates what passion, creativity and inventiveness can produce. She presented two projects: one, “Libraries after dark”, where the community library would have been open until 10p.m. offering teas/coffees to the users, providing a safe place for people at risk of gambling as well as for those at risk of social isolation. The other, project LUCi in partnership with Solus UK, stems from the concept of having a more personalised digital library, which is more focused on the user than to the digital library itself: a bit like what one would expect from websites like Amazon and Netflix, this project would like to give the user a customised experience. There certainly are different circumstances in which she has managed to apply her suggestions at the Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service, to those that are in Scotland and it would be interesting to see how her proposals could be applied to the Scottish Libraries.



The entire experience at the CILIPS Conference has been uplifting and inspirational, a great opportunity to meet new people from all different LIS sectors and I went home with plenty to think about. And all this thank to CILIPS Fund!