Having worked in Public Libraries for 18 years and suddenly finding myself facing redundancy, I decided to apply for one of the funded places offered by CILIPS Tayside to attend the CILIPS Autumn Gathering in Perth, I thought this would be a great opportunity to see all the other good things being done in other strands of the profession. I was delighted to have been awarded one and looked forward to the event. Leading up to the event I spent some time deliberating over which of the Breakout speakers I wanted to attend and I have to admit it was a tough choice as there were so many interesting speakers.

The day itself it began with lots of laughter as President Yvonne Manning (aka Humpty Dumpty) opened the event by introducing the brave few who had attended in fancy dress as their favourite nursery rhyme, followed by an interesting & passionate talk about Open Knowledge & Data by Catherine Stihler.

Then it was time for the first breakout session “Information Science at Think Analytics” which interestingly showed there were correlations between cataloguing and the work they do for TV companies. (The work that goes on behind the “If you liked this? Then we recommend this”)

Next up was a very entertaining and motivating session by AH Proctor – Why Libraries and Storytelling Matter, an avid supporter and user of public libraries all her life, it was wonderful to hear her talk about their importance and about her visits as an author to schools and libraries and the difference that they can make to children’s lives.

After lunch, Joseph Coelho told us all about his library marathon, he has taken on the challenge of joining (and borrowing from) all library authorities in the UK, another very passionate & lifelong user of libraries, we need more people like him and AH Proctor shouting out about our importance, particularly in areas of deprivation. Libraries are some of the last free places that are all inclusive and non-judgemental and we need to fight to preserve this despite the current climate.

Kindness was the theme of an afternoon breakout session and I think everyone who attended was left with a warm feeling after hearing of the steps taken at Glasgow University Library to make their spaces and services work better for their students and staff, and the fantastic things that have been happening in North Ayrshire with their programme Kindness Rocks! So very inspirational and again reinforced the benefits of libraries as welcoming places where all sorts can take place, from Ukulele and Samba classes, to learning to cook, brilliant work North Ayrshire I’m in awe!

Lastly Dr Sarah Morton asked “How do you know you are making a difference?” the difficulties of measuring how activities and programmes are achieving their goals, again very useful & interesting.

I had a brilliant day in Perth, met some lovely Librarians and most of all it reinvigorated me and my love of my profession, thank you for the opportunity.