

# LONDON CLIP

Newsletter for CILIP in London



## New Director for City of London

David Bradbury, Director of Libraries, Archives and Guildhall Art Gallery, has announced his

retirement after seven years at the City of London Corporation.

He will be succeeded on 11 May by David Pearson (above photo), currently Director of University of London Research Library Services (ULRLS).

During his time in the City of London, David Bradbury has overseen several major innovations, including the unification of the libraries and archives into one department, the refurbishment and modernisation of public areas for many of the Corporation's archive and library services, and securing funding for the City Business Library to be housed in Guildhall Library.

## A microcosm of many diversities

In February 2008, City Hall hosted an international symposium on Heritage, Legacy and Leadership. To mark the anniversary, and to launch the report, a seminar, with many of the original participants, was again organised in City Hall.

Roy Clare, Chief Executive of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), in his introduction to the report, pointed out that, in a time of economic uncertainty, people can derive strength, purpose and reassurance from culture, the arts, and the celebration of heritage and identity. He emphasised that collections, references, information and materials belong to us all.

Other symposium contributors had described how interwoven are the history of the city with the history and heritage of its citizens. Doudou Diène, the UN's expert on racism, gave a thought-provoking keynote address in which he talked of 'the whole world living in Britain, with London a microcosm of many diversities'.

At last year's event, speakers were criticised for not recognising the importance of London's wealth of

libraries (especially local history collections) as repositories of the city's heritage. This was, unfortunately, reflected neither in the report nor in this year's seminar – where libraries' importance was, again, raised from the audience.

The message that libraries play a key role in recording the 'microcosm's' heritage appears to have been noted; let's hope that it will be a feature of future events in this series.

Ralph Adam

The report of the 2008 Symposium is available as: *Cultural Leadership Programme (CLP)/Mayor's Commission on African and Asian Heritage. Heritage, legacy and leadership: ideas and interventions*. CLP, 2009. An electronic version is available at: [www.culturalleadership.org.uk/uploads/documents/HLL%20web\\_295.pdf](http://www.culturalleadership.org.uk/uploads/documents/HLL%20web_295.pdf)

## Henry VIII: Man and Monarch

The British Library is holding an exhibition to mark the 500th anniversary of Henry VIII's accession to the throne. 'Henry VIII: Man and Monarch' is guest-curated by historian and broadcaster Dr David Starkey and sponsored by PACCAR Inc. Important and rarely displayed items from the British Library's Henry VIII collections, including correspondence, key official documents, maps and books from the King's own library, are exhibited alongside loans from other national museums and collections. The exhibition, which is accompanied by a variety of events, runs until 6 September.



## Visitor from Estonia

Anneli Kuiv of the National Library of Estonia was awarded the 2009 CILIP in London bursary to visit London. This annual bursary is to enable a library/information professional from one of the new EU countries to meet colleagues in London. The intention of the bursary is to give recipients opportunities to discuss topics of common interest rather than just to visit libraries as such.

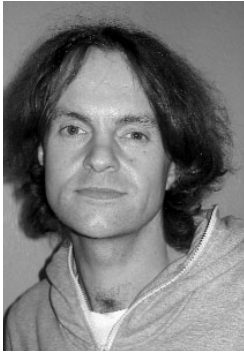
The Branch arranged a number of appointments to enable our visitor to discuss topics of common interest with London colleagues, including R&D (her main responsibility in the Estonian National Library), information studies, collaboration between libraries, digital collections and e-services. She met colleagues in the British Library, London School of Economics, University of Westminster, Department of Information Studies, University College London and the City Business Library. A visit to CILIP HQ gave her insight into its many activities including services to members.

CILIP in London also offers a bursary to enable a member of the Branch to visit one of the new EU countries; Maria Cotera of University College London and 2009 President of the Career Development Group met colleagues in Slovakia in February.

Edward Dudley

## Journey of the Book

The Bibliographical Services Section of City of London Libraries is offering a behind-the-scenes look at how the City of London's public libraries obtain and catalogue books. On 21 May 2009 at 10.00 am, the Section is conducting a tour that will enable visitors to follow a book through the various stages of ordering, accessioning, cataloguing and preparation for the shelf. There will be plenty of opportunities to ask 'why?' as well as 'how?' The tour is expected to last around an hour. Places are limited so booking is advisable (020 7332 1143; [bssgeneral@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:bssgeneral@cityoflondon.gov.uk)).



Neil Selwyn

**Digital natives - myth and reality**

David Allen reports on the Sekforde Arms meeting of 10 March 2009

Neil Selwyn is Senior Lecturer

at the multidisciplinary London Knowledge Lab part of the Institute of Education, where his work focuses on the sociology of technology. He is the author of *Young people and their information needs in the context of the information society*, Brussels, Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe/European Agency for Youth Information and Counselling, published in 2007.

We are told that digital natives have grown up with digital technology; they are immersed in it. Reading or watching TV is too slow and boring. The web is the next step in brain evolution (Homo sapiens with one finger always on the button). This is a seductive image, but how realistic is it?

One of the key aims of anyone dealing with upcoming generations of young people is to consider the realities of IT use within their lives, not just the potentials of IT use. We need to consider what we really know about young people and IT. And we need to use that knowledge to help young people.

The concept of the digital native is highly persuasive, particularly to policy makers. The key ideas are outlined (repeatedly) by influential authors such as Marc Prensky, Don Tapscott as well as technologists and other cultural commentators. In short the digital native thesis asserts that those born since 1980 have innate confidence with technology, all types of ICT are part of their being, and the digital landscape is all immersive.

This can lead to a number of unrealistic expectations for young people, and for the institutions with which they interact, and the debate around the concept is highly polarised in overly positive and negative terms.

The positive view is that young people are empowered. They are autonomous

creators and critics who can create alternative institutions and social structures bypassing traditional social controls. Youngsters can handle information differently; learning is scaffolded by technologies a million times more powerful than the human brain.

The negative view is that young people are disadvantaged by technology. The ICT universe is full of risk and danger, physical, emotional, and sexual - a more engrossing concern in the UK and USA than elsewhere. Andrew Keen, for example, believes we are creating a dumbed-down generation. Tara Brabazon believes that students doing research are just repeating the first things they find on the Internet (instead of repeating their professors?). Susan Greenfield, a neuroscientist, is afraid that children will lose their ability to empathise. A minor strand in all of this is that old friend, the idea of alienation and dis-engagement: that self broadcasting has replaced listening.

What role can there be for adults and for institutions in this World 2.0? All are disempowered, they are digital immigrants not natives and they retain a characteristic accent. Even to talk about 'the internet' is part of a pre-digital dialect. Digital technology is a means of escape beyond the grasp of the non-native.

Some argue that we need to redesign institutions, and remix the content. Others that we need to control access to the resources. But both these arguments are flawed. In *Children and the Internet*, Sonia Livingstone (2009) argues this is another moral panic. Why should an essentialist view of these social phenomena be only applied to technology? The Web 2.0 agendas piled onto the museums, libraries and archives sector need careful assessment in view of the tensions between a demand led and a supply-led web resource.

Reality is messier. Though the majority of households in the UK have web access, around one-third still do not. This is digital exclusion writ large; the major correlate for creating or consuming web resources is the parental education level of the young people concerned. Class and age cohort define web use. Research shows that consumers vastly outnumber creators, and the creators may well be the old Web 1.0 creators in disguise. Club

Penguin for children aged between six and fourteen is a wonderful resource, created by that digital dinosaur Disney!

The real fascination is with non-users. The noted US internet researcher Danah Boyd found that distinct swathes of young people make little or no networking sites. The non-users consisted of the disenfranchised (can't) and the disaffected (won't).

Context is always the key to technology use. For some young people computers represent a resented dependency at school, some old people are too busy to bother themselves with computers.

David Allen posed several challenges and opportunities for us and demonstrated that there are many agendas represented in the discourse, neo-liberal attempts to remove government responsibility for education not least.

Young people need adults and adult institutions more than ever.



Susie Andretta

**The 'FILE experience': empowering medical librarians**

Diana P. Restrepo reports on the Sekforde Arms meeting of 10 February 2009

I attended this talk by Susie Andretta, a Senior Lecturer in Information Management at London Metropolitan University, partly because I was interested in the topic and partly because, as an overseas student at UCL, I wanted to know how CILIP supports the professional development of its members.

Susie started by asking us to describe information literacy (IL) by selecting one of the two definitions (one from CILIP and one from the ALA) included in the handout she gave at the beginning of the talk, or by providing our own description. Some people from the audience suggested improving the CILIP definition by including the phrase 'how to find it' in its description of IL. The new definition would therefore

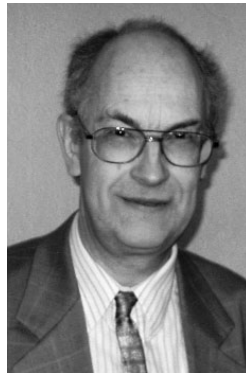
become: '[...] knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, how to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner'.

Susie then explained that FILE (Facilitating Information Literacy Education) was sponsored initially by London Health Libraries as part of their Learner Support Programme for medical librarians, and later the National Library for Health (NLH) funded the delivery of this course as part of its CPD strategy. She pointed out that in the current complex information environment one challenge faced by medical librarians is to address user diversity in information literacy competences by facilitating learner-centred learning to redress the balance between the person doing the learning and the person providing the support required.

The comments made by previous participants of FILE who attended the event were useful and gave us an idea of the impact of the approach Susie employs to deliver this course. Susie also announced that the NLH is sponsoring a conference on Evidence-Based Information Literacy (EBIL) to celebrate the contribution and commitment made by all the medical librarians who have participated in the courses funded by the NLH (of which FILE is one). The conference will be hosted by the Wellcome Library on 17 September 2009. This is a conference with a difference as the gathering will be run partly as an 'unconference' where the exploration of a topic is done entirely by the participants of the event, rather than following the traditional approach of providing a series of talks by experts.

At the end of the talk Susie addressed questions from the audience about the possibility of marketing FILE to librarians who work outside the NHS, such as those in independent medical libraries or even in academic libraries. She explained that the current delivery of FILE is funded by London Health Libraries and NLH, although in the near future, Susie is considering opening FILE to other IL communities.

Readers may be interested in: S. Andretta. 'Facilitating Information Literacy Education (FILE)'. In Brine, A. (Ed.) *Handbook of library training practice and development*, Vol. 3, Gower Publishing, 2009, in press.



Keith Manley

## Love, blood and teddy bears: the rise of twopenny libraries

Stephen Cook reports on the Sekforde Arms meeting of 13 January 2009

In Mary Poppins, Julie Andrews famously sang, 'Feed the Birds, Twopence a bag'. At the first CILIP in London meeting of the year Keith Manley sang with equal vigour, 'Feed the Mind, Twopence a loan', though public libraries of the 1930s may have suggested an alternative lyric and the Library Association at the time didn't want to sing at all.

Keith Manley is an Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Historical Research, where he worked as Bibliographical Services Librarian; he is also the former editor of *Library History*. But before he began Keith pointed out, for those of a fragile disposition, that no teddy bears would be harmed during the course of the evening's lecture.

Twopenny libraries created a conflict of interest between public libraries and popular culture. The issue was even raised in Parliament on 25 July 1935 when the 3rd Earl of Iddesleigh rose in the House of Lords to make a statement on the phenomenon. He opined that they had no value and encouraged people to read a poor standard of fiction mostly about love and blood.

Found on high streets and run by booksellers, they were the original corner shops. St Pancras witnessed the birth of an early version of twopenny libraries when the area saw the birth of 13 libraries in the 19th century. Eventually they were even housed in temples of grandeur, such as the one in Old Street, which occupied a marble saloon.

Keith had painstakingly researched Home Office Papers to uncover this story. He advised us their popularity covered three decades, from the late 1920s to the 1950s. They were private, circulating libraries that charged twopence for a book loan. Part of the reason they were so successful was due to reforms of the 1911 Shop Act when hours worked by shop assistants were regulated. These reforms were a cause

of some agitation. Twopenny libraries claimed they were not actually involved in the retail trade and therefore exempt from the restrictions on opening hours that governed the management of other shops. The House of Lords took the view that workers were being exploited. Shopkeepers, you can imagine, were not impressed. In one instance there was a test case on whether a man who ran a pitch on Skegness beach, which also offered entertainment known as 'slippery bears', was a shopkeeper or an amusement caterer.

Some would say these days that the people who opened twopenny libraries were entrepreneurs, that they were merely filling a gap in the market not yet met by public libraries who saw themselves as offering material of a more highbrow nature aimed at educating its readers. Queenie Leavis attacked them as 'Twopenny Dram Shops' and J.D. Stewart of Bermondsey Libraries felt they supplied the 'daily dose of imaginative dope' which upon reflection was quite healthy when compared to any other dope that may have been available at the time. Let's face it, when you've been working the Docks all day or stitching suits at a workbench trying to keep your head above water you need some form of relaxation that doesn't overtax the brain but instead soothes it with light entertainment. Hence the reason why Victor Gollancz's Yellow Jacket novels really took off. It was also the making of Mills & Boon and the Edgar Wallace books. Even George Orwell fired both barrels satirising them in *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* noting, 'Women clients wanted something modern but not deep' and also 'But this was one of those cheap, arid, evil little libraries (mushroom libraries, they are called) which are springing up all over London and are deliberately aimed at the uneducated'.

There were, it has to be said, some alternative libraries in existence already. WHSmith, Boots and other booksellers readily lent books but for a while they were outflanked. The twopenny libraries had catchy names such as Dragon Libraries, Well-Bound in Harlesden and the Blue Triangle libraries of Walthamstow.

Twopenny libraries eventually disappeared, although some lasted until the 1960s. Presumably, the eventual expansion into the same areas by public libraries and the cost of rent and rates made them unviable.

## Review of Godfrey Oswald's *Library World Records* (2nd edition)

Ever wondered what the most overdue library book was? Or where the oldest surviving block-printed book was printed? Or which author has held the longest book signing in the UK? Or how much a copy of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, hot off Caxton's press, sold for in 1998? Godfrey Oswald has done the work for you: with this fascinating second edition of *Library World Records*. The book celebrates all aspects of library life, and lists the various world records in an orderly index that only a librarian could create: contained within are records for national, public, academic and subscription libraries, special libraries, archives, librarians, associations, and databases, authors, and even records about the library buildings we use. Want to know what is the oldest library building in Europe? Or – more obscurely – where the largest collection of African legal databases can be found? These records and more are here, and all detailed in a fascinating personal and humorous fashion.

Oswald's book is also more than simply a comprehensive list of records: it is woven together with a strong and poignant sense of library history. If you want to know what exactly happened to the greatest library in the ancient world, in Alexandria, you can find out under the record sadly titled 'Twenty-three Major Libraries That Have Suffered Devastating Fires or Natural Disasters'. The strong historical emphasis that runs throughout the book is tempered by an astounding collection of facts about the contemporary library world. For instance, I never knew that the budget for the most expensive library in the world – the National Security Agency Library in Maryland, USA – is one billion dollars per annum, a figure which dwarfs the annual budget of many countries, or that the British Council is officially the library with the most branches worldwide (1,441 libraries and information centres in 110 countries). Shouldn't we know these facts and be championing them?

Aside from a great reference tool, and a fascinating snippet of library history, the

guide is also very handy for the avid library enthusiast on holiday! The images and detail on fascinating library buildings from across the globe, in places like Japan and Portugal, provide a real glimpse of the less well known, but no less interesting buildings that the world's books inhabit. Oswald even intersperses the records with some travel advice for the hardened librarian-on-tour: according to him, the most amazing view of the Victoria State Library building in Melbourne is, apparently, 'at night, when the whole place is lit up inside and outside, showing the magnificence of architect Joseph Reed's design'.

At this time of uncertainty for libraries and librarians, the personal, insightful and fascinating snippets the book offers remind us of a number of important things: how libraries have long been at the centre of communities, collaborating with users and authors, how they have been very good at responding to change throughout history, and finally, reminding us how the relationship between libraries and governments is an important one, and one that has lasted centuries. As for the most overdue book? It was *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum Septentrionalism*, taken out of Sidney Sussex Library at Cambridge University in 1667 by Robert Walpole – and returned by a direct descendant of Walpole in 1956, some 289 years later. Needless to say, no fine was charged!

Stephen Sharrock

## CDG president

Maria Cotera is this year's president of the Career Development Group. She is pictured below at her inauguration on 26 January with CILIP in London committee members.



Left to right: Stephen Cook, Maria Cotera, Peter Beauchamp, Sabelo Mapasure, Tina Reynolds, Ralph Adam

## FUTURE EVENTS 2009

### EVENING MEETINGS

These meetings are held in The Sekforde Arms, Sekforde Street, London EC1, 6.30pm. Contact [cilip@london.com](mailto:cilip@london.com)

12 May

9 June

14 July

### OTHER EVENTS

12 May, E-books and E-content 2009, University College London. Contact [www.econtent2009.com](http://www.econtent2009.com)

13 May, CILIP in London AGM. Speaker Peter Griffiths, President of CILIP. Contact [cilip@london.com](mailto:cilip@london.com)

19-20 May, EPublishing Innovation Forum, Marriott Regent Park, London. Contact [www.epublishing-forum.com](http://www.epublishing-forum.com)

20 May, Scientific Text and Data Mining, Royal Society of Chemistry, London. Contact [www.rsc.org/cicag](http://www.rsc.org/cicag)

21 May, Journey of the Book, Guildhall Library, London. Contact [bssgeneral@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:bssgeneral@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

21 May, Microsoft Office SharePoint 2007 for Intranets and Projects, Thistle City Hotel, Barbican, London. Contact [www.ukeig.org.uk](http://www.ukeig.org.uk)

22-23 June, Content Architecture: Exploiting and Managing Diverse Resources (ISKO UK Conference 2009), University College London. Contact [www.iskouk.org/conf2009/index.htm](http://www.iskouk.org/conf2009/index.htm)

30 June, Beating the credit crunch: Preparing bids to secure additional funding (UKeiG Course), CILIP, London. Contact [www.ukeig.org.uk](http://www.ukeig.org.uk)

15 October, Members' Day, SOAS, London. Contact [conferences@cilip.org.uk](mailto:conferences@cilip.org.uk)

1-3 December, Online Information 2009, Olympia Grand Hall, London. Contact [www.online-information.co.uk](http://www.online-information.co.uk)

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