

focus

on International Library and Information Work

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ILIG

International Library
& Information Group

Editorial



Thank you for downloading the latest issue of CILIP
ILIG *Focus*.

Alas, this is my last issue as Editor. I've been lucky enough to have had the honour of editing *Focus* for the last five years but... after some careful deliberation, I've decided now to be a sensible time for me to step aside. I've seen a fair few changes during my tenure, chief among them the move to *Focus* becoming an Open Access journal. The change brings with it some fantastic opportunities. Whilst I aim to carry on assisting with the development of *Focus* in my continued role on the CILIP ILIG committee, my hope in having someone else take up

the reins is that this will enable us to make the most of the possibilities now available to us.



**SPECIAL
INTEREST
GROUP**

On that note, I'm delighted to introduce Joanne Fitzpatrick as my successor. Jo comes to the role with a wealth of relevant experience, including previous editorial work on 'The Bibliomagician' blog. I'm sure she'll do an amazing job and I look forward to seeing where she takes Focus in future.

It seems appropriate that my final issue as Editor includes a contribution from Dr Patrick Lo from the University of Tukuba's Faculty of Library & Information Science in Japan. Patrick has been a frequent contributor to Focus during my time editing this journal. Receiving the wide-ranging interviews, articles and books for review he has sent has always been a pleasure. Following on from the very well-received interview with Lawrence Tarlow (New York Philharmonic Principal Librarian) in our last issue, Dr. Lo interviews Dr. Tim Lentz about his work with the Detroit Opera House in a piece which exudes the passion he shows for his role.

We also have an article on the British Library International Library Leaders Programme contributed by Marcie Hopkins - an initiative which has brought together delegates from a diverse range of countries and sectors, helping to further their knowledge and understanding of key issues within the librarianship and information sphere. There's an Erasmus+ report from the CILIP ILIG committee's own Sarah Brain too, reminiscing about a productive visit to the University of Warsaw in Poland back in June, including a trip to one of my own favourite libraries - Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Warszawie - with its fantastic roof garden.

So that's almost it from me. Before I sign off, I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed during my time as Editor - it's been amazing to have had contributions from five continents, with some astounding and at times truly very touching stories along the way. A few which spring to mind include the incredible work achieved in Beirut, Lebanon to rebuild libraries rocked by a large-scale explosion there, the Hope Community Village Library Project which Katherine Coussement set up in a remote part of India, along with articles we featured showcasing the career of our much-missed former CILIP ILIG colleague Shane Godbolt. Others I'd like to thank include John Lake, my predecessor, for entrusting me with the Editor role in the first place and for showing me the ropes, along with another former Editor, Roger Stringer, for words of encouragement along the way. Thank you to everyone on the CILIP ILIG committee for their support and help in sourcing contributions (as well as for being willing to chip in with their own, now and then!). CILIP Chief Executive Nick Poole deserves thanks as someone who has offered kind feedback about the journal and who has frequently helped to promote this, which has been

a big help. I'd like to thank you too - dear readers, of course and... last but by no means least, I will take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to Alice Tyler for her superb proof-reading efforts and Gill Harris for her brilliant design work - I certainly couldn't have done this without either of you!

As a final thought, in what haven't always been easy times, editing *Focus* has highlighted for me how the things which bring us together across borders, including values the vast majority of us share as information professionals, remain much stronger than those aiming to tear us apart. Long may the spirit of global co-operation and comradeship continue within the sector!

Do continue to get in touch with your stories from around the library and information world, wherever you happen to be - the address is the same: iligfocus@cilip.org.uk

Wishing you all health, happiness and peace in 2023 and beyond.

Philip Segall, Editor

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The British Library

International Library Leaders Programme

by Marcie Hopkins

Welcoming library professionals from around the world to its buildings in London and Boston Spa is a core activity for the British Library (BL). In an average year – the pandemic period excepted – the BL engages with library and cultural professionals from over sixty countries. These visits range from short one-off meetings to week-long and sometimes multiple month-long fellowships - an exchange which goes to the heart of the Library's international purpose: "To work with partners around the world to advance knowledge and mutual understanding."

Since the creation of a dedicated International Office a number of years ago, we have developed a better understanding of the interests which have drawn overseas library professionals to visit the BL. While the reasons for such visits are multifarious, we have seen a number of recurring areas of interest over the years, particularly in digital project delivery and digitisation workflows, conservation and storage. The majority of these visits are short – sometimes even ad-hoc – alongside much longer placements in specific departments. Until recently, however, there existed no programme which would offer an in-depth overview of the BL while affording spaces for deeper discussions and exchange – something we felt our own teams would also benefit hugely from.

In 2018 we decided to create such an offer in the form of a five-day programme which would invite approximately twenty library professionals from around the world to spend time at our sites in London and Yorkshire. Learning from colleagues in institutions who already offer similar programmes – the Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A), the British Museum and the British Film Institute, the structure of the programme was designed for working library professionals, aspiring leaders and mid-career managers with a minimum of three years' relevant experience in a library, archive or cultural institution.



Marcie Hopkins is Head of International at the British Library. She works to increase engagement in those regions of the world whose cultures and histories are reflected most strongly in the British Library's collections, and supports professional exchanges in national library networks. Marcie was Secretary to CENL (Conference of European National Librarians) between 2015 -2021 and is an active member of the IFLA Europe Regional Division Committee..



Delegates outside the British Library Reception and Reading Room in Boston Spa

The first International Library Leaders Programme (ILLP) was held in November 2019, with attendees from Australia, Canada, Israel, Jamaica, Poland, Qatar, South Africa and the USA. Attendees were asked to think about a challenge particular to their work, which they would then explore with others during the five days at the British Library. A large number of topics were covered during the week, framed at various points by strategic conversations with the British Library's Chief Executive, Chief Librarian and Chief Operating Officer. It covered tours of the building and storage areas, digitisation projects and digital scholarship, research services, conservation and digital preservation as well as the development of cultural and learning programmes in libraries. The highlight for the group was a day-trip to Boston Spa in Yorkshire, which houses the majority of the national collection in a number of bespoke, high-density storage buildings. We were also particularly pleased to host a networking evening for the group, welcoming guests from other libraries and CILIP, the library and information association and at which the CILIP Chief Executive addressed the guests.



CILIP CEO Nick Poole addressing delegates at an ILLP event at the British Library

After this first successful pilot we had to pause the programme, as the coronavirus pandemic did not allow for travel and in-person gatherings. In true lockdown-style we did however keep in touch with our 2019 ILLP alumni via video link, and celebrated the first anniversary of the course online in November 2020. The group has been remarkable at staying in touch with us and with each other to this present day.

Planning the next iteration of ILLP during a global pandemic was challenging. After long deliberations about the feasibility of scheduling the course we decided to proceed and advertised for a programme in 2022, this time scheduled for the summer to maximise the chance of the programme going ahead. The International Office team was subsequently



"After a stimulating, intensive, and fun week, I returned with new resources and ideas to share with colleagues. Equally important, I had a strong new network of peers at institutions in nine different countries. We've remained in contact and it's been invaluable, particularly as we've each been responding to the extraordinary circumstances of this past year."

Megan Barnard

Associate Director for Administration and Curatorial Affairs,
Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

thrilled to receive a fantastic number of applicants, and selected participants from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, The Netherlands, Slovakia, South Africa, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United States of America.



International delegates discussing library matters at ILLP

While the structure and content remained similar, we changed some of the presentations and workshops to take into account feedback from the first group, and to cater to the prospective participants' interests. We therefore provided a particular focus on strategy development for libraries, something that was very current also for our own staff in view of the British Library strategy refresh planned for 2023. Furthermore, media and information literacy was also an additional area explored in a workshop held with the Chief Librarian.



British Library Chief Librarian Liz Jolly presenting at an ILLP event

The diversity of the latest group brought a real richness to these discussions. Participants came from university, public and museum libraries, and even included a director of a national library in Europe. Diversity and inclusion was a major theme, as well as the future of services for a new generation of researchers. While the week was impacted by rail strikes, disruption caused by the July heat wave preventing us travelling to Boston Spa, and hotel fire evacuations on Euston Road, it was nonetheless another successful course bringing peers from around the world together to take a deep-dive into many areas of library management.



A behind-the-scenes tour of the British Library Conservation Centre

We plan to run the programme again in July 2023, with the call for applications opening in December 2022. Attracting library professionals from as many regions as possible is one of our main aims, and we are actively looking into ways to support library professionals unable to pay the course fee to apply in the future. The British Library is very grateful to CILIP for its support of the programme since 2019, through assisting in the applicant selection process and participating in networking events. It is just one of the examples of how CILIP and the British Library have been collaborating closer on international engagement for the United Kingdom's library sector, an area which holds much exciting potential for the future.





ILLP delegates visiting some of the British Library's public spaces

ILIG on Facebook and Twitter

If you're on Facebook, why don't you join us?

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Make contact with librarians around the world and start networking!

@CILIP_ILIG

Follow us to get the latest updates on CILIP ILIG news and events, tweets from CILIP conference, news from CILIP and of international interest, and to communicate with us and let us know what you would like CILIP ILIG to do for you.



Erasmus+ Staff Mobility Week

University of Warsaw, Poland, 20-24 June 2022

by Sarah Brain

In June of this year, I was fortunate enough to take part in an Erasmus+ staff mobility week in Warsaw. Each year, several institutions within the European Union offer staff development weeks for library staff. This is an opportunity to visit another country and learn about the way in which academic libraries operate there. More information about the programme is available on the Erasmus+ Staff Mobility website.¹

There were sixteen participants from many European countries, including France, Spain, Belgium, Sweden, Latvia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia, Germany and the UK.

We received a warm welcome from our hosts. In addition to learning about the University of Warsaw library, participants had the opportunity to give a short presentation. The programme also included various cultural activities, including a visit to Łazienki Palace and the Royal Castle in the Old Town.

It was an excellent opportunity to meet with colleagues across Europe and exchange ideas and good practice, whilst also learning about Polish language and culture. It is impossible to capture all of the wonderful activities here, so I have included just some of the highlights from the week.

University of Warsaw

The University was founded in 1816 and the first university library was opened in the same year. It is the largest university in Poland, with a current student number of approx. 40,000. The University is based on three campuses, with the main campus near the Old Town. It offers over 200 programmes, twenty four of which are taught in English.



Sarah Brain is Subject Librarian for Economics, Finance and Management at the University of Bristol and a member of the CILIP ILIG Committee. In her day job she spends much of her time helping international students to access the information they need for their studies.

Library Services

The University has one main library - Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Warszawie (BUW) - and forty smaller branch libraries.² The smaller libraries are not run by the main Library Service. Each one is owned by their



The Old Town Square, which was destroyed during World War Two and rebuilt from surviving architectural plans. The University, also destroyed and rebuilt, is next to the Old Town



Main entrance to the University's Old Town campus



Main entrance to the library building

faculty/school and is run by them. Altogether, there are approx. 240 staff members running the branch libraries, all of which are employed by the school/faculty.

The current building for the main library was opened in 1999 and includes a beautiful rooftop garden. This is open to the public and is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Warsaw. It is one of the largest of its kind in Europe and offers a panoramic view over the city and the river Vistula.

BUW is both a University Library and a Public Library, with the ratio of library users being fifty five per cent university students and forty five per cent non-university users. This is one of the reasons why the library is not open 24/7.

The ground floor includes the Catalogue Hall, which showcases the historic card catalogues. These can still be used to find older materials, with stock from the 1980s onwards on the online catalogue.

On the first and second floor there is a range of different study spaces, in addition to the open stacks. Around twenty per cent of the total printed library stock is available on open



Library entrance



Card catalogues on the ground floor



Study spaces in the library

stacks, with the remaining eight per cent in closed stacks. BUW is a legal deposit library, requiring publishers to send a copy of published books to the largest fifteen libraries in the country.

The library has produced a video showcasing the main library as well some of the smaller branch libraries: Libraries of the University of Warsaw/Biblioteki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego - YouTube³

There is also further information about the library building and gardens available at: <https://www.buw.uw.edu.pl/en/about-us/building-and-garden/>⁴

Library promotion

Since the new library was opened in 1999, it has become a popular space for students, who have even created a new word 'BUWing' (pronounced 'booving') to refer to the library and spending time in it.

Library promotion is a strong element in the library, with a dedicated team that includes a graphic designer. In particular, the team designs themed posters for the library every year. The posters have attracted quite a following amongst students. A regular promotion is BUW for Owls, which runs during the winter and summer exam periods when the library is open overnight until 5am.

Library strategy

The library has recently updated its strategy, with an external consultancy firm employed to facilitate focus group sessions from the staff and student perspective. The outcomes of these discussions were used to create a strategy that focuses on three main areas: community, collections and space.

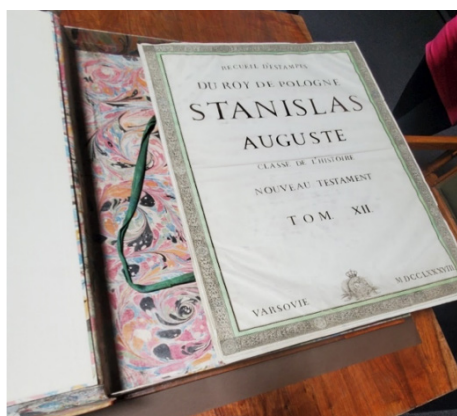
Part of the new strategy includes the regulation of borrowing and circulation rules across departmental libraries and to enable all students to use any of the libraries. This is an on-going challenge, as all branch libraries are independent. However, an opportunity to align all libraries will come about in 2024, when there are plans to introduce a new library system - Alma.

Participant presentations

As part of the programme, all participants were given the opportunity to present on our own roles and libraries. As there were sixteen of us, it was quite an intensive morning. We had been set the challenge to present using the PechaKucha style of presentation. This consists of twenty slides, with twenty seconds to talk to each one, with a total of

400 seconds. The slides are set to automatically change every twenty seconds, so there's no time to hesitate or forget what you were going to say! In fact, even though we had all practiced in advance before arriving in Warsaw, we all found it a challenge to keep to time and it ended up being quite an entertaining morning.

It was interesting to hear other participants, and highlights for me included hearing about interactive and innovative approaches to teaching at the French Red Cross, and developments at one of the libraries at Sciences Po in Paris. Closer to home, the other UK colleague from Winchester presented on a brand-new library building that was opened in 2021.



Portfolio of prints originally belonging to Stanislaw August Poniatowski, the last King of Poland.



Special Collections

There are seven departments within Archives and Special Collections.⁵ Our programme included sessions with Early Printed Books, Manuscripts and the Print Room. As a large part of special collections was destroyed during the Second World War, it was a privilege to view some of the precious surviving objects. The Early printed books⁶ collection covers the period 1475-1800. We were fortunate to see some of the older and more rare books from the collection, including Hartman Schedel Chronicle of the world (1493, in Latin) and Louis Renard Poissons, ecrevisses et crabes from 1718. This contained amazingly intricate colour drawings of sea creatures. Other books viewed included Athanasius Kircher Mundus subterraneus (1665), the works of a famous Polish poet Jan Kochanowski from 1598 and one of the first moving anatomical books from the seventeenth century.

The Manuscripts⁷ collection contained 4,139 items in 1939, but by the end of the war this figure was reduced to just 262. The earliest surviving object dates from AD 825, a text in French.

The Print Room⁸ was established in 1880. It includes approx. 55,000 architectural drawings and prints, mostly from the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. Some of it comes from the last King of Poland's collection and includes predominantly Western European artists. After the November Uprising in 1831, the entire print collection was confiscated and taken to the Academy of Fine Arts in St Petersburg. It was returned to Warsaw in 1923 under the Treaty of Riga, which ended the Soviet-Polish war.

During the Second World War, nearly sixty per cent of the collection was lost through pillaging and burning. The latter took place after the Warsaw uprising in 1944. During our visit we viewed a folio of prints of the last king of Poland, Stanislaw August Poniatowski, from 1788. In total, the King had collected 167 portfolios, seventy of which remain today.

Intercultural competencies: international users and the academic library

International students are important for Polish universities. Across Poland in 2021, there was a total of 84,689, which was below the target of 100,000. At the University of Warsaw, the number has decreased slightly, from 4,802 in 2019 to 3,810 in 2020 (this represents 6.6 per cent of the student body). They do however have the largest number of international students in a single public Polish university. The number of Erasmus students doubles each year. All library staff are offered intercultural training, and English courses are provided for staff in addition to other foreign languages. Staff are also encouraged to participate in the Annual Conference for International Students in Poland, which is aimed at staff who support them.

In the library, a survey was carried out to obtain international students' views on what a library means to them. The top two responses were printed books and journals, and a place to study.

Royal Castle visit

During the Second World War, the vast majority of Warsaw was destroyed. After the War, the entire Old Town was rebuilt using pre-war architectural plans, including the castle. The visit included a self-guided tour of the building with audio guide, and it included information on the history and fascinating objects and art works. For more information on the castle see Royal Castle, Warsaw - Wikipedia⁹

Visit to Łazienki Palace

Even though the programme ended officially at lunchtime on Friday, in the afternoon we were offered an optional visit to Łazienki Palace,¹⁰ which is situated on the outskirts of the city. Many of the archives and objects that survived the war had been moved here when the Nazi occupation began. So, when the Nazis destroyed Warsaw in 1944, the palace and its contents survived, thanks to its location. The palace itself is on an island surrounded by a lake, all of which is situated within a spacious and leafy landscaped park. The palace is open for free every Friday and the park is open to the public all year round. It was a lovely way to end what had been a rewarding, interesting and enjoyable week.

Website list / Further information:

¹Network of the Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA): <http://staffmobility.eu>

²List of University of Warsaw Faculty Libraries: <https://www.buw.uw.edu.pl/en/uw-libraries/uw-faculty-libraries/>

³Libraries of the University of Warsaw/Biblioteki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego – introduction via YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKxh_8iTjs&t=100sfasdfa

⁴BUW – Building and Garden: <https://www.buw.uw.edu.pl/en/about-us/building-and-garden/>

⁵BUW – University of Warsaw Library Archives: <https://www.buw.uw.edu.pl/en/uw-libraries/university-of-warsaw-library-archives/>

⁶BUW – Early Printed Books Department: <https://www.buw.uw.edu.pl/en/research/special-collections/early-printed-books-department/>

⁷BUW – Manuscripts Department: <https://www.buw.uw.edu.pl/en/research/special-collections/manuscripts-department/>

⁸BUW – Print Room: <https://www.buw.uw.edu.pl/en/research/special-collections/print-room/>

⁹Royal Castle, Warsaw via Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Castle,_Warsaw

¹⁰The Royal Łazienki Museum: <https://www.lazienki-krolewskie.pl/en>

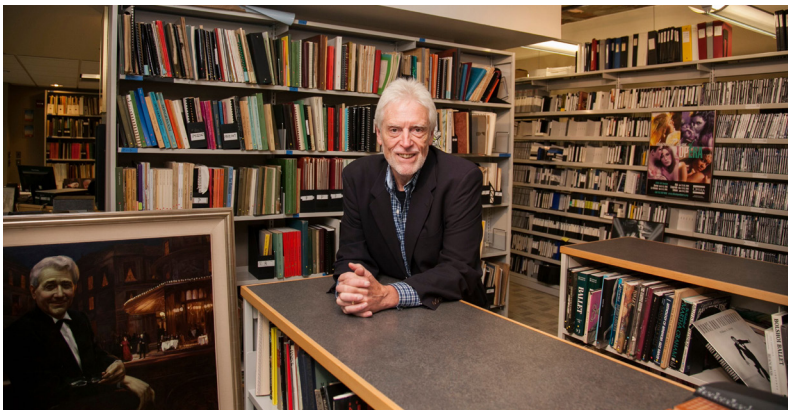


Interview with Dr. Tim Lentz Archivist & Director Detroit Opera Archive and the Allesee Dance and Opera Resource Library at the Detroit Opera House

Dr. Patrick Lo
(*Director, Liberal & Martial Arts Association*)
Co-authored with:
Dr. Hermina G.B. Anghelescu
School of Information Sciences
Wayne State University

Introduction

Detroit Opera is the principal opera company in Michigan in the United States of America (USA). The company is situated in Detroit, where it performs in the Detroit Opera House (DOH) and throughout the metropolitan area. In 2022, Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT) changed its name to Detroit Opera. The opera company has its own orchestra, chorus, children's chorus and extensive dance and arts education outreach programs. In 2005 MOT won a National Endowment for the Arts Access to Artistic Excellence Grant to support its staging of the world premiere of Margaret Garner – just one of many awards and grants it has received over the years.



*Dr. Tim Lentz – Archivist and Director of the Detroit Opera Resource Library
at the Detroit Opera House*

Dr. Timothy Lentz has been involved with archiving and chronicling the history of the opera company since 1991. In the following interview, Tim Lentz discusses the highlights of the Detroit Opera Library collections, as well as how the Library and Archive support the daily operations and marketing programs of the opera company.

Please can you firstly tell me about your educational background - where did you study music, for example? Do you come from a family of librarians, archivists or performing artists?

I am currently employed by Detroit Opera as Archivist and Director of the Allesee Dance and Opera Resource Library at the Detroit Opera House. I also serve on the Advisory Board for the School of Information Sciences at Wayne State University. I received my B.S. in Mechanical Engineering at Michigan State University, my secondary certificate in Mathematics at Wayne State University and my music credentials at Oakland University. I completed my M.A. and Ph.D. in Theatre and Dramatic Music Literature at Wayne State University. Among my duties at Detroit Opera, I continued to chronicle the history of the company and my essay "The History of Michigan Opera Theatre" for the David DiChiera Monograph was awarded first place for feature writing by the Society of Professional Journalists (Detroit Chapter).

Have you always worked in music-performance librarianship?

I taught in the Rochester Community Schools, in Michigan, for thirty-five years with thirty-one years as Vocal Music Director/Theatre Coordinator at Adams High School. I was selected as a State Finalist for the 1982 Michigan Teacher of the Year and have been listed in *Who's Who Among America's Teachers* seven times. I received a Resolution of Tribute from the Rochester Hills City Council and an award for Outstanding Service to Youth from the Rochester Jaycees. I received a Certificate of Appreciation from the National Honor Roll, was nominated for 2006-2007 Michigan Teacher of the Year and was awarded Rochester Community School's Excellence In Education Award in 2003.

In addition, I was extensively involved in all aspects of the creation and construction of the three Rochester Community Schools auditoriums, including design, acoustical concerns and general management. I was the bass soloist at Meadowbrook Congregational Church in Novi for fifteen years. I also have an extensive theatre resume including directing productions at Wayne State University and freelance work directing in Detroit area dinner theatres as well as treading the boards thirty-eight times in roles including Sky Masterson in *Guys and Dolls*, Fredrik Eggerman in *A Little Night Music*, El Gallo in *The Fantastiks* and the title role in *Scapino*.

During my time at Adams High School I was very active in the Michigan School Vocal Music Association (MSVMA). I served on MSVMA's Executive Board as Treasurer for

eighteen years, and was supervisor of the East State Solo & Ensemble Festival for two years. I led workshops on musical theatre at MSVMA's annual choral directors Summer Workshop three times and twice conducted Honors Choir music reading sessions. I was recognized by the MSVMA as a Director Emeritus. I directed fifty-eight major musicals as director of the Adams High School annual musical and Rochester's Summer Music Theatre. I also directed and produced or technical directed an additional fifty-five non-musical productions with Rochester Community Schools.

Could you provide a brief introduction to the Detroit Opera, formerly Michigan Opera Theatre?

In the spring of 2022, the Board of Directors approved renaming the company, an effort to rebrand, capitalize on the growing cache of the Detroit name and move forward into a new era. There is a national trend to move forward, modernize, as it were, and deal seriously with the aging audience. In the interest of survival, the new trends are all based on building a new audience, attracting a younger audience to the opera house and growing beyond the traditional mainstage offerings which are attracting a dwindling audience. The



Detroit Opera exterior

idea is to expand the repertoire to include a new, hip, exciting approach to the bill of fare. This includes a serious effort to include operas by American composers, and subject matter of a more contemporary nature.

Detroit Opera's President and CEO Wayne Brown (who took over when our founder David DiChiera retired) has done an incredible job of keeping the company in the vanguard of contemporary trends and has brought in a stunning new group of internationally recognized artistic leadership to show the way.

Dr. David DiChiera served as the General Director of MOT for nearly fifty years. Please could you describe your time working with him.

It is important to understand that the names David DiChiera and MOT are essentially synonymous in the first era of this opera company. Their history is completely intertwined; they are indeed virtually one and the same. This premise illuminates the idea that to build an opera company, the right person must be found to lead the diverse forces and meld them into a working entity that can achieve the desired goal. In the first era in the company's history, it was DiChiera at the helm: impresario, the visionary... the guiding spirit. He was the heartbeat from the beginning, involved with every aspect of the company aesthetically and economically; an astute businessman with unparalleled people skills.

Marc Scorca, president of OPERA America stated: "There is only one David DiChiera on earth. He is the most winning and visionary person I know."

Dr. DiChiera maintained a continuing commitment to scheduling diverse repertoire, including well-known, classic material mixed with more contemporary and American works. Also, using established well-known singers mixed carefully with new faces and including a measure of young, up-and-coming performers in casting was a DiChiera specialty over the years. There was a continuing commitment to the fundamental goals of presenting productions of the highest quality, offering outreach that brings programming to the most diverse audience possible and using the arts to affect the revitalization of the community.

To chronicle the history of the company and as a tribute to my mentor and friend, in 2017 I published "Michigan Opera Theatre – The DiChiera Legacy". *Michigan History* magazine reported the following: "In this premier work on Detroit's Michigan Opera Theatre, author Timothy Paul Lentz reveals one man's quest to build an opera company for Detroit's citizens... In particular, Lentz details the entwining history of David DiChiera's personal endeavors with the opera, and its subsequent success as a result of his efforts."

In the fall of 1971, at the Music Hall, David DiChiera and his young opera company planted the seed that resulted in the rebirth of the theatre and entertainment district



David DiChiera addressing the audience before a performance

in Detroit, a district that at the turn of the twenty-first century was one of the largest in the nation. Beyond the theatre and entertainment district in an even larger context, DiChiera's efforts were an important and significant contribution to the renaissance of the city of Detroit and the cultural life of the greater metropolitan area in general. It was a classic example of citizen initiative working through private enterprise.

Could you describe your path to becoming the Archivist of MOT?

I met David DiChiera in 1991. I had decided to write my Ph.D. dissertation on the history of MOT and knew I had to talk to the company's founder to start this process. We hit it off right away; it was a happy meeting between someone who wanted to do this project and someone who wanted to see it done. The beginnings of this company go back to the early 1960s, and over the years they had collected a significant amount of programs, newspaper articles, radio and TV interviews, photos, recordings and the like. Of course, none of this material was organized. At the time, our arrangement was simple: Dr. DiChiera would provide full access to all the materials that the company had collected and, as I worked through the materials for my dissertation, I would organize them.

Throughout the 1990s, I immersed myself in all things MOT, actively participating in many of the events and activities. I had become so involved with the company I was asked to write an overview piece on the history of MOT for the program books for both the Gala Opening and the first season in the Detroit Opera House in 1996.

In the spring of 2001, I submitted my dissertation, "The History of Michigan Opera

Theatre: The Formative Years, 1963-1985," which was unanimously approved. In 2006, I retired from the Rochester Community Schools, and signed on to continue my work with MOT, this time as an employee in a role that I was uniquely qualified to fulfill; archivist/historian/resource library director.

In 2006 when the construction on the Broadway Street side of the Detroit Opera House was completed, David DiChiera asked me to create a library and archive as a permanent resource center. Starting with an empty room, I created the Allesee Dance and Opera Resource Library.² It is the official library and archive for Detroit Opera/MOT, and specializes in materials specific to dance, opera and MOT's over fifty-year history. I also led the effort to establish a website which makes the library/archive resources available to the public.

Could you outline your job description and scope/areas of responsibilities?

The library staff and I have developed a website. It can be found at DetroitOpera.org under the "Learn" tab.¹ As a result of a tremendous amount of scanning and data entry, this site has a great deal of content, including a complete Scanned Programs collection, a Performance Search that shows casts and staffs for all productions, an Image Collection and a Search by Name function.



Bryce Rudder, seen here shelving opera scores, is the Digital Asset Manager/Senior Librarian of the Detroit Opera Resource Library

The Resource Library is not a lending library. You must utilize the resources on site.

The Resource Library houses the Detroit Opera/MOT Archives. The archives have been organized chronologically in metal edge document storage boxes. There is also a David DiChiera personal archive and a Community Programs/Karen VanderKloot DiChiera archive. We are currently processing all of their personal materials into our collection.

The Detroit Opera/MOT Archives also include our Image Lab which is the home for all photography up to 2005. This is all the pre-digital photography. We have scanned and digitized over 2000 images from the early days and they can be found on our website.



Stalwart volunteer Armando Delicato working on organizing the Resource Library's extensive opera CD collection

Our opera and musical score collection is the one used most often by our artists in residence as well as our visiting artists. They are constantly using this extensive collection for opera research and preparation.

One of the most interesting collections is the collection of reel-to-reel audio tapes. There are approximately 300 tapes of performances dating from 1976 to 1985. The library staff is digitizing this collection. The challenge is that these tapes are decomposing and in order to get them to play, so that we can capture them on the computer, we have to “bake the tapes”. After much research on this subject the staff found that the best way to do this is to use a food dehydrator. Put the tape in for fifty minutes and it bakes the tape on a low, steady temp so the emulsion on the tape is solidified to the point where they can play the tape and capture it on the computer.

The Library has audio recordings of most of MOT's operas. This CD collection can only be accessed here in the Library since there are so many contractual obligations. There is also a large collection of DVDs that have been converted from VHS tape from the “early days” and a collection of professionally made DVDs of all the operas since 2005. This substantial collection serves as an important resource for our artists and production department.

There is also a large collection of commercial dance videos that the dancers and choreographers find very useful as a resource for their work.

There is an A/V [Audiovisual] component system in the Library that has the capacity to play LP records, any kind of disk, audio cassette tapes, VHS video tapes, Laser Disks and Betamax video tape. In these rapidly changing times there are many different formats and the staff do their best to keep the various machines working so they can access any format that comes their way, and be able to convert them to a digital format.

How did the Resource Library get its name - Allesee Dance and Opera Resource Library?



David DiChiera and Wayne Brown presenting Maggie Allesee with a Lifetime Achievement Award

Maggie Allesee is a well-known philanthropist and a longtime supporter of Detroit Opera/MOT. Mrs. Allesee was MOT's first \$1 million contributor and has been called one of the most significant advocates for the performing arts in the greater Detroit metropolitan community. In 2015 Mrs. Allesee was honored with the MOT Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of a lifetime devotion to the arts. Her generosity continues to the present, especially in regards to the Resource Library and Detroit Opera/MOT's dance programming.

Could you describe the staffing structure of the Allesee Dance and Opera Resource Library?

The Library has a paid staff of three: the Director, a Digital Asset Manager/Senior Librarian and an Associate Archivist. Included in the regular staff are three volunteers that make significant weekly contributions and a regular stream of university interns who appreciate the hands-on experience.

Artistically speaking, what makes the Detroit Opera House unique?

The Inaugural Gala at the Detroit Opera House, on April 21, 1996 - featuring Luciano Pavarotti making good on his celebrated promise to perform in person - is the single most significant event in the entire history of Detroit Opera/MOT. The dream became a reality as Dame Joan Sutherland declared the Detroit Opera House "open and ready for music." This magnificent theatre was not just a world-class home for the opera company; it also instantly became a cornerstone in the cultural life of the city of Detroit.

The building was constructed in 1922 by the legendary theatre architect C. Howard Crane and opened as the Capitol Theatre. It was Detroit's first movie palace. The theatre is crafted in the opera-house style, so it has the best features of the old-world European opera houses, and it would be married with the most efficient and technically advanced production capabilities with a brand-new stage house. It was a unique renovation, combining restoration with new construction. This is a theatre that allows opera to be seen and heard as it was meant to be. C. Howard Crane took care of the acoustics when designing the building for unamplified sound and the acoustical properties of the auditorium are truly splendid. The Detroit Opera House is a state-of-the-art facility comparable to the world's leading venues of lyric theatre presentation.

When people talk about Detroit Opera (MOT), which opera productions immediately come to their mind?



*Catherine Nicolia-Staples, Associate Archivist,
processing historical materials into the companies
Archival/Historical collection*

The opera company's history shows an astonishing tradition of excellence with regards to production values. This is a result of the DiChiera legacy of being sure to present the highest caliber performances. So it is difficult to suggest favorites but I will offer some suggestions. From a historical perspective, I would list the following:

The Barber of Seville, 1970, directed by Italo Tajo and featuring Maria Ewing

Menotti's *The Medium*, 1972, featuring Sal Mineo and Muriel Greenspon

Boris Godunov, 1974, featuring Jerome Hines
The Pearl Fishers, 1978, featuring the debut of the MOT Orchestra conducted by Mark Flint

Aida, 1985, featuring Leon Mitchell

Turandot, 1986, featuring Ghenia Dimitova

Norma, 1989, featuring Dame Joan Sutherland

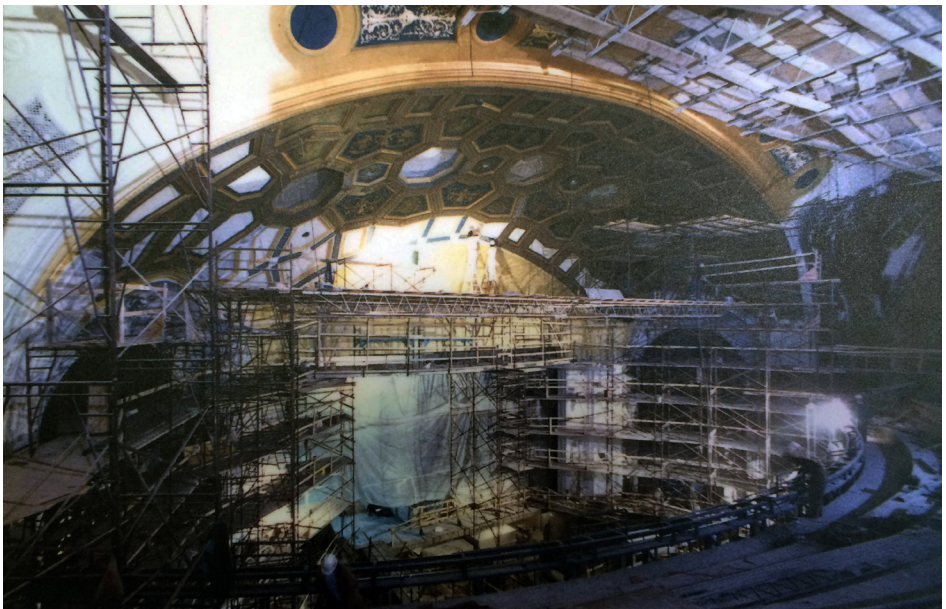
The Gala Opening of the Detroit Opera House, 1996, featuring Luciano Pavarotti

As I said, the consistency of impactful opera productions is a hallmark of the DiChiera years and it is not easy to create a limited listing. I will continue with a few productions that I found particularly powerful.

Margaret Garner, World Premiere, 2005, featuring Denyce Graves

Cyrano, 2007, World Premiere of David DiChiera's magnum opus, featuring Marion Pop and Leah Partridge

Frida, 2015, the Midwest Premiere of Robert Xavier Rodriguez's contemporary opera on the life of Frida Kahlo



The Detroit Opera House during renovation

The Passenger, 2015, Weinberg's rarely performed and recently rediscovered opera the haunting story of the Holocaust.

The Valkyries, 2022, directed by Detroit Opera's Artistic Director Yuval Sharon

When people talk about the Detroit Opera (MOT), what is the very first image that comes to their mind? Does the Resource Library play an important role in supporting the brand building of Detroit Opera?

With the addition of a new and inspired artistic leadership team all the talk is about the new direction that is occurring. The first production coming out of the pandemic was a "drive through" presentation of a section of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* titled *Twilight of the Gods* that was staged in our parking structure. There has been a production of one of the most popular operas in the repertoire, *La bohème*, done in reverse order. And to begin this season, a production of Act III of Wagner's *The Valkyries* (in cooperation with the Los Angeles Philharmonic) that is a high-tech treatment done with green screens and projections. Our new name is bringing a new vision, intent on developing a broader audience and creating an innovative era in our pursuit of a fresh ambitious standard for American opera. Exciting times to be sure.



Board Chair Robert Dewar, Dame Joan Sutherland, and David DiChiera cutting the ribbon for the Gala Opening in 1996

As the Archivist/Librarian at the Detroit Opera, which parts of your job do you find most rewarding and which do you find most frustrating?

The position of Archivist and Resource Library director has provided me with a front row seat to one of the great performing arts success stories in American regional opera. It has been a true joy to work with my friend David DiChiera, and to preserve and chronicle the history of Detroit Opera/MOT. Our current president and CEO Wayne Brown and our immediate supervisor Chief Administrative Officer Patricia Walker have also been completely supportive. It has been a consistently rewarding experience and while it has been a great challenge, I can honestly report that there has been no downside to my tenure at this wonderful opera company. The work is not easy, but it has never been what one might call frustrating. It is truly my honor to serve Detroit Opera.

Could you describe your typical day at work?

My primary responsibility is to manage all aspects of the Archive and Resource Library and to direct and focus the staff and volunteers to see that all requests for information are met and that progress continues on archiving, digitizing and cataloguing. My typical day involves this management of Archive and Library activity, assigning responsibilities and projects and overseeing all the staff's activities. At the same time, I keep an archiving project going of my own, as time allows. Right now, my ongoing project is digitizing all of our performance DVDs using the HandBreak software. It is an open-source software that is easy to use and has worked very well for this project.

Internet connectivity and other mobile technologies have and will continue to change our world completely. Disks are of course basically already obsolete, long gone are the days where we send in a disk with a grant request or to a director who wants to see and study his or her work. Digital delivery is where it's at.

Our goal is to continue being a vital resource for the opera company, providing information and materials on an everyday basis and preserving our history for future reference.

For politicians and other people who say libraries will become obsolete soon, what do you have to say to respond to that?

It is so important for politicians, and everyone else, to realize and accept the vital importance of libraries, and schools, and the arts in general to our society. Investing in libraries, and schools, and the arts in general is investing in our future, it's investing in us. These things will not become obsolete, on the contrary, they will remain at the core of our existence and they will feed our minds and our souls. I fear for us if we don't feed our minds and our souls.

COVID-19 has turned the world upside down. How has Detroit Opera been coping with COVID-19 and how have you coped?

COVID-19 has indeed turned the world upside down, especially for artists, performers and arts organizations like Detroit Opera. The closing of normal operations made for a tremendous challenge and Detroit Opera (MOT) hunkered down with only the bare essentials during this pandemic. Unhappily, the entire Library staff was furloughed during the crisis but were recalled in August 2021 and assumed our regular operations.

Why do people turn to music in times of crisis?

Music and theatre are a necessity in our world. They are not a frill of some kind but are critical for our understanding of ourselves, as individuals and as a society. Music and theatre feed the human spirit and mind and give us the much needed opportunity to come together as a community, to become deeper and wiser and more understanding of ourselves and our world, and the complications we face in this complex thing we call life.

Any other interesting and inspiring stories that you wish to share with the readers?

It is truly exciting to report that after a long and exhaustive search Detroit Opera has recently named Yuval Sharon as its new artistic director. He is one of the world's most acclaimed and visionary opera directors, and in 2017 he received a coveted MacArthur



Detroit Opera House interior view from the auditorium

Foundation “genius grant.” He has stated that; “My hope for Detroit Opera is that it becomes the most progressive opera company in the country.” His first production pointed toward the future while dealing with the difficulties of the pandemic. He inaugurated his tenure in October 2020, with a radically reconceived chamber-music reduction of Richard Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung* called *Twilight of the Gods*, in English, staged in Detroit Opera’s parking garage with the audience staying in their cars to accommodate safety protocols. In addition to Sharon being named artistic director came the appointment of the renowned and internationally acclaimed Soprano Christine Goerke, as associate artistic director. These were bold and stunning developments and Detroit Opera’s future looks to be very exciting indeed.

What would you like to be remembered for when you retire?

Starting with an empty room and piles of overflowing boxes all over the opera house and at various residences, I have been able to establish the fully equipped and fully functioning Detroit Opera Archive and Resource Library. I would be proud to be remembered for this, and for articulating the history of the company for posterity.

Websites / Further information:

¹Detroit Opera: Learn - <https://detroitopera.org/learn/>

² The CILIP ILIG YouTube Channel: latest recordings Detroit Opera: Dance and Opera Resource Library - <https://detroitopera.org/learn/resource-library/>



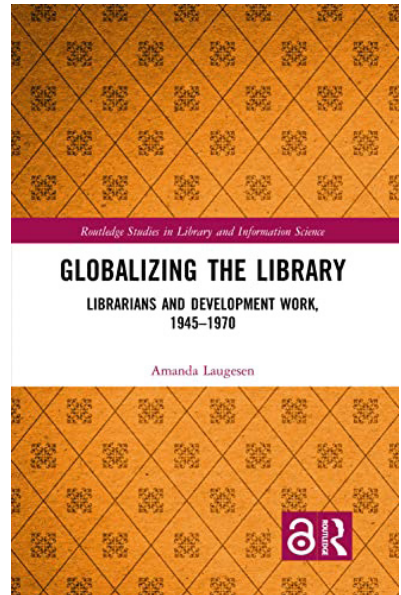
Another view of the exterior of the Detroit Opera House



Book Review

Laugesen, A. Globalizing the Library: Librarians and Development Work, 1945-1970. London, UK: Routledge. 2019. 182 p. ISBN: 978-0367660864.

The tendency of scholars in our field has been to examine the evolution of books, libraries, and information networks as separate historical entities. Reports of library development have tended to focus on describing a single intervention and have been characterised by a failure to fully consider the context within which developments took place: the political, economic, educational and broader social and cultural circumstances; and the interplay between local circumstances, the professional context, and the constraints within which the international development agencies operated. Now, however, library history is increasingly being treated as an integral subset of the broader field of information history. The period between 1945 and 1970 was, arguably, one of the most remarkable periods for international interventions in library development in modern history. It was, therefore, surprising, and ultimately disappointing, to find that a book presenting insights into this period is so slender — only 180 pages.



The author of this book, Dr. Amanda Laugesen, an Associate Professor and Director of the Australian National Dictionary Centre at the Australian National University, is a cultural historian whose interests encompass reading, books and libraries. In this book, she seeks to place the post-war global development of libraries within the fields of modernisation and internationalisation, revealing the “dynamics of power involved in the construction of infrastructure.” The opening chapter ‘Imagining the global library’ identifies three themes that the author perceives as the philosophical and ideological underpinning of library development during the third quarter of the twentieth century. Subsequent chapters are presumably intended to supply the evidence to support her analysis, but don’t do that very well because of fundamental flaws in the book.

One of her three themes was the library as an instrument in fostering peace in a post-war world. Many countries used information provision and libraries in their cultural diplomacy, but she criticises the relevance of activities undertaken by the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) in the absence of any information about the development assistance provided by other countries.

Her second theme was libraries as a force for modernisation linked to decolonisation and the process of nation building, claiming that modernisation was “a powerful intellectual paradigm that shaped politics and policy through the 1950s and 1960s”. Modernisation was essentially focused on economic development. However, she seems unaware that, before the 1960s when the United Nations and all its agencies made this a central policy, there was still limited demand for scientific and technical information in many countries because there had not yet been much industrial development there.

The third was libraries as a contributor to individual and civic progress, founded on the development of literacy but she fails to provide any evidence that literacy developers encouraged libraries to support their work or that school and public libraries in the developing countries actively and successfully engaged with neo-literates.

As an introduction to post-war international library development, this book should be approached with some considerable caution. It is notable not for what it covers, but for how it covers it and what it omits.

It explores the ideas of a number of librarians, principally from the USA and the UK, and summarises the activities of some organizations from those countries — and, to a lesser extent, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) — in a variety of so-called ‘developing’ nations. However, it mainly focuses on development work in a few countries in (mainly Anglophone) Africa and some in South-East Asia. It thus leaves the reader in ignorance of the wider range of actors, challenges and experiences that contributed to global library development.

It offers not even a brief historical perspective on any experience garnered from how or why library development had or had not been undertaken before 1945 in the colonial territories seized by the US in 1898 and by the UK in 1918. Nor is there any mention of the legacy from the pre-war activities of various foundations, the International Federation for Information and Documentation (IFID) and League of Nations’ Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, all of which contributed to shaping initial post-war attitudes and policies for library development.

The book claims to rely on a rich range of archival sources, but in practice these appear to be only some of the country file archives of the British Council, and the archives of the American Library Association’s International Relations Office. There appears to have been no examination of the central policy files of the UK’s British Council or the corresponding files of the other United Kingdom government agencies which were the Council’s principal sources of funding. Similarly, there appears to have been no examination of the files of the US Information Agency (USIA) nor if they have been de-classified since I was last able to look for them in the US Archives in 2010. It correctly emphasises the role of USIA as an instrument of USA government propaganda but it shows little understanding

of the aims of the British Council or its relations with government, and the reader is left unaware of the co-existence and role of the British Institutes and the British Information Services during this period.

The author acknowledges that information about the work of individuals can be limited but falls into the trap of then basing some of her own comments on limited research. Her remarks about the British/Australian UNESCO consultant, Harold Bonny offer a particular example. She seems unaware that some of his activities signalled UNESCO's belated recognition that the library development of the Arabic-speaking countries should be regarded as outwith the boundaries of Africa and Asia and treated separately. However, she cannot stop herself commenting on some of Bonny's activities outwith the self-defined horizons of the book, inter alia misrepresenting his role in Iraq as if it had been confined to library training. She bemoans that women were little used as roving 'experts' but fails to suggest those who might have had the necessary expertise and stature. There is no mention of those who did undertake such roles, even the most notable, such as Evelyn Evans, the founding Director of the Ghana Library Service, and Dorothy [Williams] Collings, who became the founding head of the library school at the University of the West Indies.

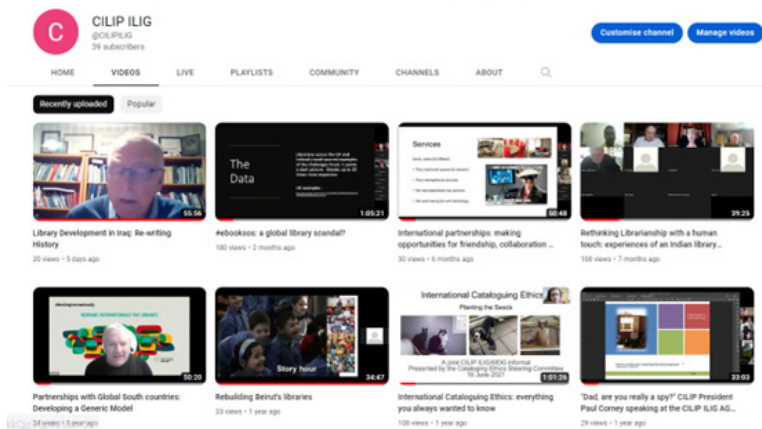
She claims to examine "ideas and aspirations surrounding information and the library" but it is not difficult — because of examples such as these — to become concerned about whether her admittedly lucid discussion may be based on selective use of the available evidence, imposing a perspective on social issues that would not have occurred to the actors in the events described. She claims to describe the impact on various countries but only describes the manifestations of assistance, saying little about what further development they stimulated. The author does not seem to recognise that much of the period described in this book can be best described as one of experiential learning, when the relatively recently established agencies responsible for cultural diplomacy and library development forged an understanding of the situation in countries with less well-developed library services and of the opportunities and impediments that their staff and 'expert' consultants encountered there. All this does a disservice to those who were involved and whose efforts were based on their understanding of the situation to be addressed and on the application of the tools and resources then at their disposal.

The author admits that there is more to be explored: "Any exploration of international library work must tease out the complexities and limitations of library thought in this period and question some of the assumptions built into the ideologies that motivated international library work." It is, then, difficult to explain the publication of an account that offers a one-dimensional opinion based on a little knowledge, stretched too thinly. Its publication does no favours to the reputation of a scholar who had previously focused very effectively on several hitherto unexplored niches of library history.

Professor Ian Johnson
Aberdeen



The CILIP ILIG YouTube Channel: latest recordings



You'll find recordings of our latest CILIP ILIG Informal events via the links below:

#ebooksos: a global library scandal? – 7 September 2022

Yohanna Anderson, Subject Librarian at the University of Gloucester, led a discussion into the #ebooksos campaign in the United Kingdom and globally. During the session, the library profession's role in countering these issues was also explored, along with the long-term consequences if they are not addressed: <https://youtu.be/tYoVoundokc>

Library Development in Iraq: Re-writing History - 23 November 2022

Professor Ian Johnson - former Associate Dean of the Aberdeen Business School, Robert Gordon University, presented his research and in-depth knowledge on Library Development in Iraq: <https://youtu.be/yBWBzophqkl>

Thank you to everyone who attended these events and to our speakers.

Thanks as well to those who attended our Writing Better Funding Bids sessions in November & December hosted by David Burgess.

Supporting colleagues in Ukraine

In the last issue we featured ways to support those affected by the current war in Ukraine. CILIP has set up a Ukraine Crisis Hub and you will find updated information about how to help here:

<https://www.cilip.org.uk/general/custom.asp?page=ukraine>

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

CILIP ILIG INFORMALS AND MEETINGS

LIBER 2023 Annual Conference

5-7 July 2023 – Budapest, Hungary

The 52nd annual conference of LIBER (Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche – Association of European Research Libraries)

More information here:

<https://libereurope.eu/event/liber-2023-annual-conference/>

IFLA World Library and Information Congress 2023

21-25 August 2023

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
88th Annual General Conference and Assembly -
Rotterdam, The Netherlands

IFLA's World Library and Information Congress.

Keep up to date with the latest via the IFLA website:

<https://2023.ifla.org/>

Registration: <https://2023.ifla.org/congress-registration-information/>

Call for volunteers: <https://2023.ifla.org/call-for-volunteers/>

Keep an eye on the CILIP ILIG Events page on the CILIP website
for further listings and booking information:

<https://bit.ly/2zC2TQq>

