

focus

on International Library and Information Work

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I had hoped that this issue would concentrate on the libraries in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa but sadly some of the promised articles could not be produced in time although I look forward to publishing articles from Iraq and Jordan in future issues. There is however an interesting historical article about the National Library of Iraq which was a pleasant and unexpected surprise and articles from other parts of Africa including Togo, Uganda and Zimbabwe are also included and provide some fascinating insights into libraries in those countries.

The IFLA World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) in Singapore has proved to be a fantastic occasion and I am grateful to Paul Tovell as the recipient of the CILIP IFLA First Timers' Award for his experiences of the Congress, which provides encouragement for many in the UK to consider attending the 2014 WLIC which takes place in nearby Lyon, France.

It is good to see the familiar name of John Pateman on the contributions submitted from Canada and his short article on comparing the UK and Canadian public library scenes is food for thought for us all. John's article on how things are done in his new home library, (Thunder Bay Library) will also appear in two parts in this and the next issue of *Focus*.

Finally, there are contributions from Ruth Jenkins on her attendance at a Staff Mobility conference in Bergen, Norway and Ian Stringer on his visit to the Sagrada Familia Library in Barcelona, Spain which make interesting reading.

John Lake

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Over the last few years, I have been trying to understand why and how some developments had taken place in Iraqi librarianship. In the course of this, I came across a claim that Gertrude Bell, who was well known as an intrepid traveller, archaeologist, and political adviser in the Middle East in the early years of the twentieth century, had assisted in the foundation of the Baghdad Public Library. I already knew of the existence of this library and its transformation into the National Library of Iraq, but the mention of its origins caught my attention sufficiently to lead me to explore further.

Gertrude Bell's involvement with the Baghdad Public Library had been only briefly noted by a few of her western biographers. All of them have contributed to a myth that she founded it. However, in a letter to her mother in November 1919, she wrote that:

"I have also attended a meeting for the promotion of a public library for the native population. The scheme was started by the wife of one of the judicial officers, Mrs Forbes..."

The library was initially to be called the *Mustansiriyah* Library after one of the great medieval centres of scholarship in Baghdad, but was eventually named *Maktabat Al-Salam*, the Baghdad Peace Library, when it opened in April 1920, a few years after the end of the First World War in which British forces had occupied the Ottoman provinces that now comprise Iraq. Searching the literature revealed only one other mention of 'Mrs Forbes.' Why was her contribution not given more recognition? What motivated her? And, who was she?

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It is now possible to say that she was Muriel Forbes, the wife of Henry Forbes, a Judicial Commissioner in the Indian Civil Service who was seconded to the British Administration in Iraq in 1916. Muriel was born in Russia, the daughter of a businessman whose Scottish family had settled in St. Petersburg in the early nineteenth century. Her mother was born in Perthshire, the daughter of an Income Tax Collector. Her brother had become a senior police officer in India, and it was through him that she had met her husband. They married in India in 1914, and Muriel joined her husband in Baghdad shortly after the end of the War.

Writing about the Library thirty years after these events, Yunus Dagher, the Curator of the National Library of Lebanon, provided the only other public acknowledgement that it had been initiated by Mrs. Forbes, but claimed that "on her death, it was left in the care of Miss Gertrude Bell." This appears to be based on a misunderstanding. Mrs Forbes was still very much alive. In late autumn 1920, she and her husband had left Iraq for home leave in Britain before he returned to his post in India. She died in Herefordshire in 1969.

Miss Bell did not mention the library again in her letters until June 1921 when she mentions that she had attended a meeting of the 'Baghdad Public Library' Committee, and only then informed her parents that she had been elected its President. As she mentioned her re-election as soon as it occurred in both the following years, I think we can assume that this was the first time. It is fair to say that, after Mrs. Forbes left, Miss Bell was committed to promoting the library's development. Her surviving correspondence does not make clear whether she continued as President until her death in 1926, but she certainly appears to

have remained involved with the library. She successfully solicited free copies of books for the library from publishers in Britain, was involved in organising local fund raising events, and wrote articles for the review that was published from the Library. When a well known Syrian-American writer, Ameen Rihani, visited Baghdad in 1922, a reception was held in his honour at the Salam Library. Miss Bell's opening remarks on that occasion were reported in a local newspaper, and clearly express her belief in the value of the library as a means of sharing understanding.

In overseeing the library, Miss Bell seems to have revived some ancient traditions. For example, a manager or librarian was appointed in about 1921. Like librarians in the Akkadian empire 4,000 years earlier, when collections of cuneiform tablets first began to be organised in recognisable libraries, he was a priest, an Iraqi Carmelite Father, Anastas Al-Karmali, now well known as an Arabic lexicographer. Subsequently, he himself followed another long established tradition - by donating books from his private collection to the library.

The motive attributed to Muriel Forbes – "*a public library for the native population*" – was perhaps an echo of the social reforms and philanthropy that had played a major part in the development of public libraries in Britain in the nineteenth century. It is probably no coincidence that the Baghdad Public Library was conceived during the passage of the Public Libraries Act of 1919, which reflected a major commitment to public library development in England and Wales, and which was possibly an occasional topic in the English language newspapers read by the expatriate community. But it chimed well with Gertrude Bell's desire to help the British and Iraqis to understand

each other, and probably explains the energy that she devoted to its development.

Bell had chosen her focus well. After the end of the First World War, the British administration of the League of Nations' 'Mandate' to manage the development of the new state of Iraq had stimulated social changes that had made a faltering start during the final years of the Ottoman regime. Iraqi society was not entirely ready for some of these changes, but the development of public libraries could be seen, not as a threat to the established social order, but as the revival of an ancient tradition. It was thus one that could be adopted without reservation and adapted with enthusiasm. The *Maktabat al-Salam* does seem to have started a trend. Another public library was established in Mosul in 1930, with a personal gift from the local mayor, and some support from the town and provincial authorities. In addition, local people banded together to open small libraries in several provincial towns during the next twenty years. The government opened a new library in Basrah in 1942, and, after 1948, finally made public library provision a requirement for all the regional government authorities. The new public libraries that began to be found all over Iraq not only supported the development of literacy, but also – in the era before broadcasting and cinema became widespread - provided a form of enlightenment and entertainment for an emerging middle class comparable to the 'literary salons' that flourished during the Arab Caliphate in the Middle Ages. However, initially, these libraries were little used, partly because of the low level of literacy and the scarcity of books in Arabic, but also because a deposit, often equivalent to about £23 (at 2013 prices), was required to borrow an item. Moreover, the collections were generally in closed access; few had

catalogues; and those catalogues that existed were generally lists of recent additions pasted on the library walls. Such practices were, of course, also reminiscent of libraries during the Caliphate.

Gertrude Bell died in 1926, and could not have foreseen the future of the Maktabat al-Salam, which underwent several changes of location and changes of name during the next half century. Initially, it was a private, subscription library, further supported by donated money and books. However, it ran into the financial difficulties that should have been predictable given its small potential subscriber base, and she had to arrange for the Library to be taken over by the Ministry of Education in 1924. In 1929, it was relocated and renamed as the Public Library. In 1931, the Ministry merged it with two other libraries. These changes in name and location probably explain why none of Bell's biographers noticed its significant evolution.

In the mid-1950s, some shortcomings in the development of libraries in Iraq were becoming apparent, and were attributed to the absence of a national library. However, the Baghdad Public Library was beginning to be referred to as the 'National Library,' possibly as a result of discussions between the British Embassy and the Iraqi government. In settlement of outstanding claims for damage to British property during a brief pro-German wartime revolt against the Iraqi monarchy, the Iraqi government had agreed to pay £150,000 (about £3.5 million at 2013 prices) into a joint Anglo-Iraqi Trust Fund to be used for the benefit of Iraq.

Some land had been purchased by the British government to provide a site for the construction of a new Embassy, but it was

later acknowledged that it could be used for other purposes. Various ideas for a building on the site to be financed from the Fund were suggested before the British Council Representative, John Jardine, gained some support from Iraqi Cabinet Ministers for a proposal that a National Library might be built as part of a new civic centre which was planned on an adjacent site, with a contribution from the Fund towards the costs. The Council's Librarian in Baghdad, John Ferguson (previously Deputy County Librarian of Shropshire), began discussions about the proposed Library with a well-known British architect, Robert Pearce Hubbard. Preliminary plans and a scale model had been prepared by 1958, but a Revolution intervened, and army tanks occupied the proposed construction site. Although the model seems to have been lost, a copy of the plans recently came to light in the Iraq National Library and Archive.

The British proposal for the National Library building was abandoned after the Revolution. Although the Baghdad Public Library was eventually designated as the National Library in 1961, the Fund was used to pay for another project. However, when a new National Library building was finally completed in 1977, about £70 million (at 2013 prices), more than half the construction cost, was met by the Foundation established by a bequest of a naturalized British citizen, Calouste Gulbenkian, the founder of the Iraq Oil Company.

For those who are interested, there will be more information in a paper about the British contribution to the early development of libraries in Iraq that was presented at the conference 'Gertrude Bell and Iraq – A Life and a Legacy' held at the British Academy in September 2013. The proceedings are expected to be published in 2014 by the British Institute for the Study of Iraq (Gertrude Bell Memorial).

Uganda's Primary School Libraries: a lamp worth lighting

by Alison Brumwell*

I'm not sure who once said "A library which is not used is like a lamp which is not lit", but I do believe this is worth noting, particularly in the current climate of public sector spending cuts. Regardless of where you stand politically on the thorny issues of funding of public libraries and the role of the voluntary sector, or whether school libraries and schools library services should be statutory, it is clear that we, as professional librarians, must shift our focus. We should be far more creative and proactive and cannot afford to be overly attached to premises or collections management. All of these are key points that have been hammered home to me during my work as a volunteer with Africa Educational Trust, and in a more recent project with Media for Development in Harare.

After I first wrote about primary school outreach in eastern Uganda for 'Focus' in July 2012, I felt I had probably exhausted anything meaningful, or insightful, I had to say. I knew how much the experience had meant to me, personally and professionally, and felt I had conveyed accurately, and with considerable feeling, the vivid impression that the country and its people had made upon me. What I believed at the time was a one-off experience took on an added dimension when I was fortunate enough to be invited back to Uganda earlier this year by Africa Educational Trust and Jenny Lewis, Volunteer Co-ordinator for AET. As a result I returned to Uganda in February 2013 very eager, but full of trepidation, at the prospect of meeting new challenges during the course of my second visit.

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School desks, funded by Monsanto

It is amazing how quickly change, for good or ill, can transform lives (and even terrain) and I found the Uganda I visited this year had changed perceptibly in the course of just 12 short months. For a start, the increased police presence at Entebbe Airport, and on the main road from Kampala to Mbale heading towards the Kenyan border, was startling. I was curious about the armed checkpoints and was told this was due to anxiety about the outcome of the Kenyan national elections in March 2013, as a result of the widespread post-election violence that took place across Kenya in 2007 and 2008. While the Kenyan elections were relatively peaceful this time around, there are still deep divisions across the entire region, including; land grievances; corruption; ethnic tensions; weak and unreliable infrastructure; and socio-economic inequality that have yet to be effectively addressed.

Uganda faces its own unique challenges, not least of which is contending with the often devastating consequences of unpredictable weather. It was not a huge factor for our AET team in February 2012 as the so-called "rainy" season had passed. This year was different, though, and eastern Uganda had to cope with torrential rain and mudslides well into March. In

a repeat of the landslides of March 2010, which destroyed crops and villages in Bududa district, and resulted in significant loss of life, the area was again badly hit in August 2013. As many roads in the Mount Elgon area are unsurfaced and extensive tree clearance has taken place to accommodate population growth and the demand for agricultural land, significant rainfall can have devastating consequences. The overall national de-forestation rate across Uganda was reported by NEMA (National Environment Management Authority, 2006) as 2%, but with an acknowledgement that this is significantly higher in some parts of the country. Having witnessed first-hand this February how quickly the weather can change, as our driver attempted to manoeuvre down rutted roads while waves of orange water sheeted down the mountain-side, was a truly sobering experience and one I won't soon forget.

Uganda also faces the growing challenges of meeting its population's health needs. HIV and AIDS are on the increase; HIV infection rates in Uganda have increased to 7.3% in 2012 from 6.4% in 2005, according to the Uganda AIDS Indicator Survey (The New York Times, August 2, 2012). These increases don't just affect urban centres like Kampala, but the rural ones too. By their late 30s, roughly one in 10 women now become HIV positive, while for men roughly one in 10 are infected by their early 40s. HIV



Monsanto-funded Latrines



PIASCY slogans are commonplace on school walls

and AIDS awareness has been embedded in the Ugandan primary school curriculum since 2004, delivered chiefly through PIASCY (Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to Youth). I am not qualified to assess whether this has been successful, or will prove to be effective in the long-term, but I did see evidence that even the youngest of primary school children are aware of the PIASCY ABCs (Abstain, Be Faithful and Condomize). Slogans advocating abstinence and warning against early marriages are emblazoned on the walls of many primary schools and are just as prominent as the Ugandan flag and portraits of President Museveni.

So, when I revisited Mbale and the surrounding area in February 2013, it was with a much tighter focus and a slightly different remit. In 2012, Africa Educational Trust launched a new primary school education project in eastern Uganda, funded by Monsanto Company, a U.S.



– A Magnificent View of Mount Elgon



The need for school desks in this P2 class is evident

biotechnology-focused multinational. AET's chief focus in Eastern Uganda, to date, has been to support primary schools in improving their resources, including the set-up of school libraries. The new Monsanto-funded primary education project in the Sironko and Bulambuli districts of eastern Uganda was planned with the view to working intensively with ten rural primary schools in the least accessible and most deprived areas of the country. Premises will be improved through the development of school gardens, the constructing of latrines at two schools and providing desks for all ten schools.

The Strengthening Primary Education in Hard-to-Reach Farming Communities (PEF) project acknowledges that basic sanitation, nutrition and crude accommodation are key barriers to learning. Many children in rural Ugandan primary schools have to sit on the ground in overcrowded classrooms, where pupil numbers can exceed 70 per class. Hunger is also an issue, with many children travelling considerable distances to schools on foot, often with a stick of sugar cane to last them throughout the day. The development of school gardens is therefore seen as essential. Africa Educational Trust's intention is that schools in these more inaccessible rural areas will see the benefits already realised by other primary schools they have targeted in Mbale, Manafwa,

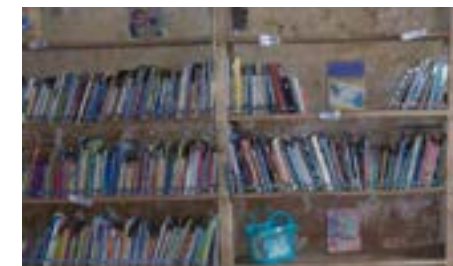


Buginyanya Primary School library, before our audit...

Sironko, Bulambuli and Kapchorwa districts.

The PEF project also recognises the importance teachers play in providing quality education to their children, often in the face of ongoing changes to the national primary curriculum. The Monsanto Fund aims to enable AET to expand their set up of school libraries in an effort to improve access to books and information for both pupils and teachers. Teachers will also benefit from training workshops designed to upgrade their skills and assist them in coping with under-resourced working environments.

So this is where I re-entered the picture in February 2013. I benefited so much from my initial experience in Uganda in 2012, but I knew I would have to hit the ground running when I returned as our initial plan was to set up two school libraries per day and also audit previous school library set-ups at Buginyanya



....and after



unloading a delivery of desks



Julia Donaldson is just as popular in Uganda

and Kapsekuny Primary Schools. I arrived in Entebbe on 16 February and set off on the always colourful and eventful four-hour bus trip from Kampala to Mbale on the Elgon Flyer the following morning. The team met me when I reached Mbale, then it was off to the Shine On Hotel for an evening of classifying and processing primary non-fiction donations from Book Aid International and a briefing from Jenny Lewis. The Monsanto-funded PEF schools were our priority and the volunteer team, consisting of myself, Jenny and Elizabeth Boardman, a retired teacher and Early Years specialist, had also scheduled a day-long workshop in Sironko at the end of my eight-day stay. We were supported, again, by the wonderful AET Projects Co-ordinator Sam Obina and his equally committed and wonderful colleague, Daniel Wokuti.



Training school staff at our session in Sironko

I was confident I could cope with the physical rigours of extensive travel, endless classification, processing of book stock and library set-ups, not to mention all the standard hiccups (no shelving ready upon our arrival, the ubiquitous Ugandan rat, etc.), but the PEF project required that little bit extra from all of us: on-site inspections to ensure that building of latrines and delivery of desks was on target and fairly detailed lesson observations. While Jenny and Elizabeth are qualified teachers, I am not. I have to admit that I avoided lesson observations until the bitter end. It was not too difficult for me to determine whether pupils were concentrating, whether books were being used appropriately in a lesson, whether group and/or paired work was taking place and whether girls were being equally engaged, but how to evaluate, or comment on, using the thematic curriculum effectively? Or whether there was sufficient/appropriate reference to using books in the lesson plan? Or adequate reference to teaching methodology? According to Jenny, I rose to the challenge and was at least able to present something intelligible and useful on paper in my observations.

My last working day of this trip to Uganda was a memorable one - our day-long staff training session in Sironko. Sadly, Sam was

back in Kampala sitting an exam for his Masters degree, so the training was delivered by Jenny, Elizabeth, Daniel, me and the inspirational librarian Jane Ojok, who runs the community library in Mbale. Staff from six of the ten PEF-supported schools were in attendance and we had a lively, engaged and interesting day. Our focus was on delivering effective primary school library provision, focusing on the essentials of good practice. Delegates ranged widely in terms of their respective roles within school and included head teachers, deputy head teachers, teachers and librarians. We managed to cover the basic primary school library organisation, how to use information books and poetry as teacher resources and supporting pupils' recreational reading and 'free reads'. As much as this all meant, my favourite moment of the whole day was spent leaning against a tree trunk during dinner break, several metres from the classroom, reflecting and enjoying the sun while a rather scraggy tethered cow grazed next to me.

What delegates gained from our training, according to feedback collated from their evaluation forms, might seem quite basic to library and information professionals here. Learning about the essentials required to be an effective librarian, maintaining



Our AET team

basic standards of order and cleanliness, ensuring adequate premises are in place (i.e. shelving, weatherproofing), fostering a sense of community involvement and ensuring that ongoing opportunities for professional development are available were all highlighted as crucial to a primary school library's success and sustainability. In Ugandan schools needs are stripped down of necessity, use of social media is extremely limited and so-called library 'ecosystems' are beyond the reach of even the country's best universities. Uganda and its education system need to tread firmly on solid ground before even attempting to venture into 'the cloud'.

But we're not all that different, at least in terms of what we should be delivering to our pupils in our respective primary schools. Day in, day out, we all want to provide a clean, safe learning environment for each of them and one that stimulates, engages and inspires. The gap between Ugandan and UK schools exists purely in terms of resource provision and professional expertise, not in terms of imagination or passion, and this is where we can make a positive impact. With patience, persistence and commitment, it's a gap that I believe can be narrowed even further.

The Story of Matenda School Library

2012 ILIG International Award Winner Hosea Tokwe* from Zimbabwe tells his story

Somewhere along the dusty road that threads through rural Zvishavane in Zimbabwe is an old primary school. The school is just 20 metres from the road, but what strikes most are the old buildings, classrooms and teachers' quarters. This is Matenda School. Built in 1927, the school was once sited at Danger, near Chionekano range of mountains through which the Lundi River passes.

Early in May 2007, I received an e-mail from a friend Driden Kunaka, a Zimbabwean Librarian now based in New Zealand requesting me to go and set up a school library at Matenda School. He had been asked by a banker and also a Zimbabwean, Ben Magaisa (a former pupil of Matenda School) to assist in getting book donations and help establish a school library. This was to be purely voluntary and Driden teased me whether I would take up the challenge. As a librarian who loves voluntary work and with a deep commitment to support and foster the development of school libraries out there in remote rural areas, I boarded an afternoon rural bus that plies the route and arrived on a Friday evening towards sunset. A total stranger, I felt that I was being followed by suspicious looking eyes, as I walked towards the school yard. Maybe I was a spy, they thought of me. An hour ago all children had left for their different homes, and now the school looked totally deserted except for a few teachers loitering around the school houses.



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After meeting the Deputy Head, I did not waste my time in calling for a meeting and explaining the purpose of my visit to an awe stricken audience who had yet to size me up. Aware of my need for a better approach, I encouraged the few teachers present.

I learned that it takes a kind heart and persuasive tongue to bring rural teachers to a better understanding of the vision I had for their school. Most rural school teachers in Zimbabwe are poorly paid, so I used tact and an element of kindness to win them over, buying them soft drinks and giving them a little money for draught beer. Slowly they were opening up and as I talked about the educational value of a library I saw a few nodding in appreciation. These were the few teachers of Matenda School, who dared listen to me, much later they were convinced about my mission, but one teacher stood up after the meeting to confess he had silently suspected me of being a cunning political agent out to leave them in trouble. That began the road towards the Matenda School Library Project.

In Zimbabwe, most rural schools do not have libraries. Most rural school pupils who sit for grade seven examinations do not perform very well. Another factor that affects their schooling is that their parents are poor and cannot afford fees and levies let alone buying exercise books and textbooks. Without books children cannot read, this is not a good foundation for their education. However, Matenda School has a high level of discipline, commitment and level of togetherness as I was to learn later.

Around the end of the year in late November 2007, I was back at the School with a box of books, a donation from a credit line provided by Margaret Ling (Margaret Ling was once

the UK link with the ZIBF in the 1990s), that enabled me to purchase 50 books from Weaver Press touching on local themes and culture. I also wrote and received a couple of book donations from Darien Book Aid Plan based in the USA. But I still remember vividly my terrible experience. At a time when the economy of Zimbabwe was on its knees, I missed the local bus that plies through Matenda. That day I then used the Zvishavane road dropping at Muzondiwa Shops along the main road, and then started walking a distance of 25 km in the forest using a road towards Matenda School. Arriving at the banks of the Lundi River around sunset and with no sign of any living being, I searched for a crossing place in vain. I put one foot in the river, at the same time trying to balance my bag full of books and nearly drowned. At the same time I had to negotiate three to four metre deep holes left by gold panners. I was risking my life, but that did not deter me from delivering the books and luckily I arrived at the school around eight o'clock at night.

Early March 2008 saw me travelling to Matenda School with a truck load of eighteen boxes of children's books sent by Ben Magaisa. Ben's brother, who was driving, would occasionally ask about the political situation, for this was at a time of heightened tension as Zimbabweans waited with bated breath for the "2008 Harmonised Elections" results. I had to endure another 25km walk in the dark night this time at a precarious time of political violence, but since this was for a cause, divine intervention safely led me to my destination.

With the much improved political situation after the birth of GNU (Government of National Unity), I would occasionally travel to Matenda School, either to help with



caption needed

accessioning the books or help supervise the installation of wooden shelves. Using my experience we also classified some books using simple Dewey Decimal Classification. I also typed simple shelf guides and with the help of school children we arranged the books by subject on the shelves.

On 10 July 2010, the Matenda School Library Project was launched. Present were local chiefs, headmen, councillors, school heads and teachers from local surrounding schools. Then there was the School Development Committee and the school children and the Matenda School Marimba Group that provided the entertainment.

I look back on that day with genuine satisfaction, for that gave me the opportunity to showcase my professional expertise. To tell them the virtues of having a library and the lives it would transform. As I stood, with all eyes glued on me, the lessons I learnt was to understand the community you should first be accepted and trusted. The Marimba Group children, had composed a song in praise of the work I had done, as I sat transfixed at the melodies voices coming out from the innocent

souls, I felt deep satisfaction and almost broke into tears.

Receiving the 2012 ILIG International Award was no fluke. It drove me back to 2007 from the day I agreed to go to Matenda enduring the rough ride of a crowded rural bus with plumes of dust - an experience few would have liked to witness. I am most grateful to ILIG for

a true award; despite the distance they saw my humility, my professional zeal, dedication and commitment to make a difference to a community. I vividly remember one day as I sat on a rock in a forest on my way to Matenda School silently meditating to myself Why am I doing all this with no reward? Little did I know that CILIP ILIG would provide the reward, a reward of a lifetime? Thank you.

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Two Years in Togo or, "librarianship put to the test"

by Céline Huault*

This article first appeared in Issue 67, March 2013 of the Association des Bibliothécaire de Français (ABF) journal, Bibliothèques(s). With thanks for the permission of the Editor, Philippe Leveaud to allow this article to be translated and published in Focus (Editor).

"Join a local development project instigated by an NGO and become manager of the Community Center of a big village close to Lomé, the Togolese capital. After nearly two years in this context which brutally put theory to the test, read on about the author's striking experience."

After returning to France on the 2nd of October 2012, Céline Huault now reflects back on those 23 months spent in Agoè Nyivé

toward the international context. The choice of Africa was made and she was hired by the association STEJ Togo¹, an NGO since 2011.

From learning...

At first, this Community Center manager position would have been dedicated for a national employee but this job profile was not easy to find on the ground, especially considering the biblioeconomic aspect. Therefore, I was associated with a Togolese



The Community Centre

(Togo), where she arrived in November 2010 for an international solidarity volunteering (VSI) assignment. Following librarianship studies in Rennes and Aix-en-Provence (France) and positions in French public libraries and associations (ATD Fourth World), this "vocational and convinced" librarian turned

professional, Edem Adjeoda, a librarian responsible for the socio-cultural animations during one year, which resulted in me becoming manager of the Community Center by the time I left. As a manager, I had to define and direct the projects and their planning, to animate and develop partnerships around those projects as well as decide on the organisation and the general orientation of the structure, in collaboration with the executive direction of the NGO. Relative to human resources management, I had to manage and supervise the Community Center projects team (computer room, library, sociocultural animations, literacy classes) as well as



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"Masque" workshop

volunteers and trainees from various cultures and countries (Togo, France, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo). I dealt with the relations with the external stakeholders teams. I took part in the fundraising linked to the functioning of the Community Center. I acted as a catalyst and "tried to ensure that everything could be possible" (a good definition of a manager position heard during one IFLA World Library and Information Congress).

During those two years, the Community Center has been totally re-organised regarding the functioning, the opening hours, the communication, the work methodology, the activities and services offered, the partnerships as well as the book collection and the spatial organisation of the library...

We systematically provided sociocultural animations on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Some counselors animated homework clubs every Friday. Other clubs were put in place: a Theatre Club on Friday afternoons, Dance and Juggling Clubs on Saturday mornings. Twelve pupils from Agoè took part every year to the English Club animated by the British School of Lomé pupils.

We created a street library near Agoè's

market every Saturday between 3pm and 5pm and we acted to spread this concept in Togo and with other colleagues abroad (for example during the IFLA Congress). The visits of the Community Center have a real impact on the blossoming and thriving of young people, especially children. Activities bring more cohesion between them, their sociability is increased. Children are mingling in this place where they leave their dull daily lives; they feel themselves highlighted, appreciated for their real values, listened to and understood. Let's notice that young people represent 84% of readers in libraries (mostly pupils from primary school), however, few structures have a children and young adults dedicated area.

We welcomed lots of toddlers, not yet sent to school, who came with their older sisters or brothers. Children came alone, since only a few parents cross the entrance of the Community Center, except the parents of the sponsored children (around twenty). Students also visited the Center. The computer room was used by young people (emails, social networks, video games etc.). Additionally, expressive activities like writing or drawing revealed real talents. Some young people discovered a true calling in themselves.



Class in the library



Slam writing workshop

I tried to work deeply on the partnerships of the Community Center. First, I made contact with book orientated professionals: librarians, authors, storytellers, illustrators, book-shoppers, publishers, LIS student etc.. Agoè schools also occupied a large place in our structure. Then I enlarged this to the associative ground: art, culture, childhood etc.. All those people expressed their interest by visiting us, encouraging us, coming for performances and interventions...

Those two years were a wonderful learning period. I read a lot of professional documentation on topics like librarianship (especially in Africa), inter-culturality, project management, human resources management, and so on. I kept a watch on the book scene in Togo as well as the cultural events, especially those related to books. Otherwise, I benefited from several training experiences: those dispensed by Aimée Abra Tenu, Executive Director of the NGO, around project management and some training during the festival *Le Gain du Conteur*, which allowed me to be aware of the storytelling in Togo and to get advice on storytelling practice. I took part in training about human resources management organised by France Volontaires. I considered all the visits and exchanges with librarians and

cultural professionals as part of my training.

... to the reality on the ground

Beyond personal issues that could get into this kind of experience abroad (adaptability, emotional remoteness), I had to face some professional difficulties. When I arrived, I noticed a lack of documents about the activities that happened in the structure and the team only kept few records about past events. Furthermore, the previous manager resigned nearly six months before my arrival. No handover, no directives! The structure cultivated only few partnerships, except with some schools in the area, and in a non- contractual way. Every day I faced the same difficulty: the lack of calm at my desk, located in the heart of the library. I was constantly in charge either of the reception desk to welcome visitors, or at the exit, with the necessity of control. Although this gave me the capacity to get a strong focus and made me grow "eyes on the back", I have to admit that this wasn't ideal. Another worry, far from the least important was the lack of financial resources. It is difficult to get on with a minimal budget. This problem gives rise to others: problems of communication, the need to resort to volunteering – which is in itself really insecure, the inability to defray the



"Street library" in the French Institute of Lomé

stakeholders, who renounced even to visit, the impossibility of putting some projects in place, to buy books from the scholar curriculum and so on... It is a daily challenge and we had to face some distressing moments, for example during the campaign launched with the help of the Association Bibliothèques Sans Frontières/Libraries Without Borders Save the Agoè Library².

The situation improved but remains fragile... The linguistic barrier, which was bound to happen, as I didn't speak Ewe (the local language), caused me problems because some children and some of the women taking part in the literacy classes, didn't speak French. I was astonished by another structural problem in the whole libraries network³ in Lomé. The different stakeholders don't communicate, don't know each other and therefore don't co-operate. The high cost of means of communication (phone and Internet) and of transport, are discouraging the attempts and harm both the information flow and communication. The libraries network LIRE Togo⁴ was born drawing on this situation.

On a wider scale, libraries have a lack of means for the layout and acquisition for their development. Most of the time, books are not chosen by librarians considering the needs of the community, but come from donations,



Book donation from the Gutenberg library (Paris)



Book presentation

most of which are inappropriate. Finally, the librarian trade is not well recognised. There's no LIS training in Togo. Often complemented by "on-the-job" training (frequently in the French Cultural Center in Lomé), librarians are, most of the time, volunteers. They change jobs each time a better opportunity comes along, so managers don't care about the training of these "temporary" staff.

Assessment

Those two years went very fast – a sign that I didn't get bored. I retain numerous and wonderful souvenirs. I am convinced that this Community Center has an extraordinary potential. It is possible to organise lots of different activities there, much more than we could ever imagine. It is henceforth well-known and recognised as a quality structure, at a national and international scale. The sum of everyone's engagement made this possible. I really appreciated working in this Community Center and felt free to put new projects in place.

I got lots of pleasure from joining the "young, dynamic and talented" team of this NGO because everyone has invested in their job. STEJ is made of varied profiles and skills, for everyone's profit. The Community Center's team changed totally during those two years.

This permitted a great sum of contribution and I greeted all the volunteers who came so many times even if their economic situation was precarious. I met wonderful people. I know that I left matured by this experience and that I learnt a lot, personally and professionally speaking. I am now part of the International Commission for the French Librarian Association (ABF) and a member of the Standing Committee of the IFLA Section of Libraries for Children and Young Adults.

References

- ¹www.stejtogo.org/
- ²<http://stej-france.aiderenligne.fr/sauvons-la-bib.html>
- ³The Public libraries network is no longer managed, since the end of the partnership with the French Cooperation and Cultural Action Service in 2008. The Community Center STEJ is part of this network as an "associated library" (because it was made from a private initiative, an NGO in this case).
- ⁴LIRE Togo is the only Togolese librarians' association.

Notes

STEJ Togo

Created in 2002, the NGO STEJ Togo acts for children's education, access to culture and rural community development. STEJ Togo is non-denominational, it doesn't take part in any political debate and works in partnership with local communities where strong values like respect (both ecological and human), solidarity, responsibility, sharing and exchange are promoted. Since 2000, the NGO realised different projects : a Community Center, a rural primary school, a pupil's sponsorship program, access to drinking water and sewage facilities and finally some income-generating activities: Zam-ké, Vivifruits and soap production.

Togo

Togo is the smallest francophone West African country, located between Ghana and Bénin. Nearly half of the Togolese are less than 15 years old, although the mortality rate stays fairly high. Illiteracy affects a quarter of men and more than half of women in the country. Lomé is the capital of the Togo. This city of one million inhabitants is located in the far West of the country; it's a border-town with the Ghana. Agoè Nyivé is considered as the suburb, with more than 20,000 inhabitants.

Sacred Spaces in Singapore: Report from the IFLA World Library and Information Congress 2013

by Paul Tovell *

Singapore is famous for re-inventing itself, for expansion on precious land reclaimed from the sea, and for being a city at the crossroads of continents and cultures. It is in fact a perfect metaphor for libraries in the 21st century, and a fantastic venue for the World Library and Information Congress. It is also very apparent that Singaporeans love their libraries – they are extremely proud of having the world's first Green Library for children, they arranged banners hanging in the city centre to welcome us all to Singapore, and the conference was reported very positively in the prestigious *Straits Times* newspaper!

I had never been to a conference on this scale before, where 4,000 library professionals had gathered together from 120 countries all over the world (only 20 of whom were from the UK). When I heard I had won the CILIP First-Timer award to attend it, I knew this would be the opportunity of a lifetime to network and connect globally with thousands of contacts. As soon as I heard the good news from CILIP, I began working on submitting a paper proposal to see if I could present in a session, and sent it off just before the deadline. In the end the proposal was rejected, but having met the committee (Public Libraries Section Standing Committee) in Singapore they assured me that they could only select four papers from hundreds, and they would welcome other papers for their blog. So the work had not been wasted, and it was a good way of getting to know more people before I even went. I

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Visiting Choa Chu Kang Public Library

had also made a list of some objectives to focus on, which helped me to choose which sessions to attend (there were over 200 throughout the week) but apart from that I had little idea what to expect when I got on the plane.

I arrived in Singapore with 24 hours spare to acclimatise to the tropical heat. My first concern was that it would be very hard to break into groups of old friends on their annual meet-up. In reality, as the conference went on I realised that lots of people were a bit intimidated by this immense crowd, and sat on their own a lot! I decided to concentrate on just making a few good connections. The best advice I received before the conference was to attend a committee meeting on something I was interested in. The Public Libraries Section one happened on the first day, and I was there. That turned out to be the best decision of the week: by attending, I got a ticket to attend their social dinner later in the week, and volunteered to help organise a conference in Birmingham next year as a Corresponding Member of the committee. That meeting basically made the conference for me. Nothing hammers home the global nature of our profession like hearing Finnish and Australian colleagues discussing the new Library of Birmingham, (see news article in this issue – Ed.) less than 20 miles away from where I work!

There were definitely similarities with the Olympic Games here – we had our very own

Games-makers in the army of enthusiastic volunteers, many of them library staff themselves, who made everything run extremely smoothly. Also the opening ceremony had an Olympic feel, with its traditional Chinese dancing and 80 Singaporean schoolchildren on stage waving flags and singing along to the Congress anthem (“So young... so free... the world is your playground”). As one speaker put it, libraries truly are “sacred spaces” in Singapore, directly comparable with the much-loved Botanic Gardens in the centre of the city.

Whilst most of the sessions involved listening to presentations, some of them were in the style of a World Café, where you could discuss issues around tables with your colleagues from all over the world, swapping to a different table every 10 minutes. I attended one about e-reading, which was an eye-opening experience: in Australia, for example, libraries are really wrestling with e-lending rights. They don't want on-site access only as they often have a very large rural population a long way from libraries, they can't lobby for a national model because libraries are state-funded, and publishers based in the UK and US won't give them the rights to e-material. What a headache! IFLA has been working hard on this¹, and in some parts of the world library associations have lobbied very successfully – such as the American Libraries Association². This was part of a whole day given over to e-reading and how IFLA is working very hard to lobby publishers internationally to remove the barriers to reading content online (e-books is a misleading term as it's not only books that are online!). They call it the *Right to e-Read* programme³. But not every success story came from a big country – I was highly impressed by the way some 'developing' countries are very effective at getting library agendas noticed by governments. For example, public libraries directly influence every one of the



The opening ceremony – eighty Singapore schoolchildren take to the stage to say thank you to the worldwide community of librarians

7 pillars in Botswana's national vision for 2016⁴.

It was interesting to experience live Tweeting during a conference, and I attended a small tweet-up for those delegates who were watching each other's twitter feeds all week and wondering if they'd chosen the right session to sit in! It was great to return home and see all the quick thoughts, comments and moments of inspiration I'd had earlier.

I joined in a great workshop about making global connections and taking any Continuing Professional Development opportunities that came along. I heard about the Libraries 2.013 virtual global conference that is very easy to get involved with⁵, joined the International Librarians Network⁶ to experience some global peer mentoring (my new buddy is called Johnny from Las Vegas Libraries), and learned a lot about the way to improve your online brand, which is of course international by definition. Another note about brands – I'm so glad I took business cards with me!

Singapore does branding very well, in fact the whole country is a brand in itself (cue 'I love SG' T-shirts). We were challenged at the start of the conference by news of an OCLC worldwide survey amongst non-librarians which showed that the most popular word people associate with libraries is 'book'. Whether we librarians

like it or not, books are a brand that libraries have developed over centuries and our challenge is how we take that forward. We would be crazy to turn our back on the kind of association that takes millions of dollars to create, but we need to ensure that it is a positive association. The Central Public Library have branded their children's section independently as "The World's First Green Library for Kids" with grass carpet and tree-house in the middle, recycled wallpaper on the walls, recycled cardboard sculptures, and an area specifically for parents to read to children. The result: a highly desirable place for children to drag their parents!

Singaporeans are famous for their hospitality, and we saw this throughout the week. The renowned IFLA Cultural Evening took place on the Tuesday night, when we were bussed across to Sentosa Island, the rich playground of Singapore which contains the Disneyland-style theme parks. They laid on a beach party for us – think 4,000 librarians raving on the sand and you're about there – which was the most surreal part of the trip. The other window onto hospitality came on our last day, where we could select a library to visit. I chose the Choa Chu Kang public library, located in a shopping mall. There was a buffet of hot Chinese food provided on our arrival (anything less would have been shameful by Singapore standards),



Inside the world's first Green Library for Kids, Singapore Central Public Library

and then we had a talk and tour of the building. I was fascinated to learn that the trend there is for fathers to take their children to the library while the mothers shop! There are always plenty of students in the library because they tend to live in flats which aren't conducive to quiet space. And as for technology, there are 200 e-reader devices on loan to the public which are very popular. The result is that a staggering 24% of all the members of this library are teenagers. When we asked a librarian whether public libraries suffer from image problems, the reply was, "No, public libraries are the cool, trendy places – it's academic libraries that have a reputation for being stuffy and serious!"

It is almost impossible to mention everything I've learned, and I certainly feel like my involvement with IFLA is only just beginning. The most highly-prized document I possess now for Continuing Professional Development is my Certificate of Attendance, because it is the first professional document I've ever owned which really is recognisable in every library service in the world. My heartfelt thanks to CILIP for the First-Timer grant that meant I could attend, and my strong encouragement to anyone reading this to apply for future grants! The 2014 conference will be in Lyon, France from August 16-22, and in 2015 it will be in Cape Town, South Africa.

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- ¹See <http://express.ifla.org/node/6316>
- ²See <http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/f8ac9caa#f8ac9caa/1>, a supplement to American Libraries magazine which gives an overview of the work.
- ³Find out more at <http://www.eblida.org/the-right-to-e-read.html> and <http://www.readersfirst.org/>
- ⁴See article here <http://library.ifla.org/258/>
- ⁵See <http://www.library20.com/2013>
- ⁶See <https://ilnetwork.wordpress.com/>

Staff Mobility Week at the University of Bergen, Norway

by Ruth Jenkins*

Introduction

Since 2010, the University of Bergen in Norway has held a Staff Mobility Week (SMW), a programme of discussion and events to encourage learning and networking with international colleagues¹. I visited the University of Bergen this year, in June, and found the experience valuable, affirming and enjoyable. This year, SMW was divided into three groups; the Library group; the Health, Safety and Environment group; and the IT group. The theme of the Library group's programme was the *Library and the Researcher*², which offered me great learning opportunities in my role as a subject liaison librarian.

Since I work in a university library, the visit was funded through my university's participation in the Erasmus Staff Training Mobility programme. I had previously only heard of Erasmus as the funding body for student placements abroad, particularly for foreign language undergraduate degrees, so I was pleased to learn staff in higher education institutions (HEIs) can visit European universities for training and development opportunities through Erasmus.

The University of Bergen, in 2012, had just under 14,300 enrolled students, and just over 3,400 staff. The Library Service³ consists of five faculty libraries and the special collections department.

Sharing experiences and knowledge

On arrival at the University of Bergen's student centre I was greeted by smiling, friendly faces, and immediately felt welcomed. As part of registration, I also received an umbrella –

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Participants in the Library group

Bergen gets a lot of rain, and this was a running theme of the week.

The Library group included 11 participants, from Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Poland and the United Kingdom. The programme was a rich mix of discussion, visits and presentations from participants. With librarians from around Europe gathered in one room, sharing marketing success stories was a great introduction to one another. As a marketing assistant myself, it was valuable to hear what had and hadn't worked in the others' libraries. Participants presented on topics including outreach with schools, events during a national week of libraries, and a brand new library building.

Our discussions on the role of librarians in reference management were comforting – it became clear we all face similar difficulties, regardless of our countries. The discussion centred on the reference management software EndNote and training in its use. It was useful to discuss best practice models for providing support for reference management, and consider alternatives to our own approaches. Learning

best practice from colleagues at the University of Bergen and around Europe was a huge draw to attend SMW. We heard about how Bergen's library staff have employed evidence-based practice for a recent small refurbishment. It was a clear demonstration of how to apply evidence-based practice to librarianship, and has helped me consider my own practices and decisions more carefully to ensure I am considering all the available evidence.

I always find visiting other libraries hugely beneficial for professional development. The opportunity to visit the Picture Collection, part of the University's special collections, and their Social Sciences and Arts Library were valuable to see how other libraries operate and compare with my own practices back home. The staff in these departments were very generous with their time, and full of enthusiasm for their work.

A key difference I noticed between Norwegian and UK higher education libraries is the subject knowledge of librarians. The librarians we spoke with had PhDs or similar in their subject liaison fields. Additionally, there seems to be significant collaboration between HEIs in the Nordic countries. Projects demonstrated to us were jointly funded



Bergen's famous hanseatic buildings

and developed by Norwegian institutions⁴, including the information literacy and skills platform *Search and Write* (<http://sokogskriv.no/en/>), and *PhD on Track*, a hub of information and resources for PhD students (<http://www.phdontrack.net/>).

An international network

Every evening there was also a social activity, including a walking tour of Bergen, hike up Mount Fløien, and a stunning dinner, which gave the three groups a chance to catch up and compare experiences. It also allowed the University's staff to show Bergen off, especially as we enjoyed unusually dry weather. The staff were so welcoming and enthusiastic, and worked hard to create a balance of sessions and 'extra-curricular' activities⁵. Having never visited Norway before, I found these activities and excursions especially interesting.

The social time was just as valuable as the presentations and visits. Participants got a chance to discuss in depth where they had travelled from, and learn about university practices across Europe. For instance, it was during a lunch break spent in the University's beautiful botanic gardens we compared information literacy instruction in the Czech Republic, Germany and the UK, and it was over a bowl of hot salmon broth we discussed similarities and differences in the Norwegian, Danish and English education systems.

There was a wonderful atmosphere to the whole week; we were working, and learning a lot, but it was always interesting and fun. The Library group bonded quickly; Librarians often have a stereotype as quiet, shy and retiring, but at SMW the Library group gained a reputation for their sociability.



The Library group at Mount Fløien

Visiting a European university through Erasmus Staff Mobility was a valuable opportunity for continuing professional development, and allowed me to further develop my professional network with international colleagues through knowledge and experience sharing. I highly recommend Erasmus Staff Mobility as an effective and worthwhile opportunity for professional development.

Notes

¹www.uib.no/international/mobility/administrative-staff/staff-mobility-week

²www.uib.no/international/mobility/administrative-staff/staff-mobility-week/staff-mobility-week-2013/program-for-the-library-group

³www.uib.no/ub/en

⁴*Search & Write* (<http://sokogskriv.no/en/>) is jointly funded and developed by three Norwegian HEIs: Bergen University College, the Norwegian School of Economics, and UoB. Similarly, *PhD on Track* (<http://www.phdontrack.net/>) is the result of collaboration between six Nordic institutions: the Norwegian School of Economics, Bergen University College, UoB, the Norwegian National Library, Aalborg University in Denmark, and the University of Oslo.

⁵I would like to thank all the organisers of SMW 2013, and in particular Britt-Inger Bjørsvik, Principal Librarian at the Law Library and all the library staff who hosted, presented and participated with us.

ILIG has a twitter account:

@CILIP_ILIG.

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Having worked in UK public libraries for 34 years and Canadian public libraries for 34 weeks, I thought that it might be useful to share some of my observations on the differences and similarities between libraries on both sides of the Pond. This is a snapshot of my first impressions and not an in-depth research article. The views – and prejudices – expressed are entirely mine. I left a UK system which seems to be in rapid decline and found a Canadian system that is still growing. This polarisation has shaded my views, which always tends to be black and white, rather than grey. So here are 50 shades, or thereabouts, of contrasts and comparisons between our respective library systems.

Strategy

Public libraries in Canada seem to have a clearer idea of why they exist and where they are going than their UK counterparts. In the UK there has been an endless debate about the purpose of libraries (a classic case of fiddling as Rome burns) while in Canada most public libraries seem to have a Strategic Plan containing clear statements of Mission, Vision and Direction.

Structure

Form should follow function, but I have detected no discernible pattern of this in Canada. There is some evidence that service and staffing structures are being driven by Strategy, but this is by no means the norm. In the UK form is being dictated by public spending cuts and the austerity agenda. The public library is no longer considered as a public good. It is now just another service competing for scarce resources.

Services

Canada has some excellent public library buildings with generous opening hours, well funded collections and imaginative programs. New public library buildings are used to make a statement – that libraries matter and are here to stay. Book funds have held up under financial pressures and the e-book movement is building momentum. Programmes cater for the needs of both adults and children, but there may be an over-reliance on puppet shows? In the UK more libraries are closing than being opened, particularly in England. Book funds have been salami-sliced for years to avoid the need to make more visible cuts. Adult programming is not a large feature but children's events are very popular, especially the Summer Reading Challenge.

Staff

Staffing levels, pay and conditions are better in Canada than the UK. This maybe, in part, due to the highly unionised environment and locally-negotiated collective agreements which exist in Canada. Trade union membership in the UK is in steep decline and there have been wage freezes and significant restrictions on union activities. Pay and conditions are negotiated at a national level, creating a take-it-or leave-it scenario which does not take into account local conditions. The Canadian workforce seems more stratified in terms of the qualifications required to carry out specific job roles. There has been a large scale devaluing of library professional skills in the UK workforce: there is a trend for senior staff to have management rather than library qualifications; and there are now more unpaid volunteers than qualified librarians working in UK public libraries.

Systems

Many barriers to access have been removed from Canadian public libraries. There are no charges for borrowing DVD's, CD's or talking books, or for using the Internet or Wi-Fi. Even the final taboo – library fines – has been challenged by some systems. In the UK these barriers remain in place and have become more significant as the need to raise income to replace government funding has become more acute. Everything is charged for – apart from book loans and information – which has created a two-tier service for those who can and cannot afford to pay. This has created a downward spiral in levels of library use.

Governance

Most Canadian public libraries seem to have governing boards which place them at arms-length from local, provincial and national politics and politicians. Board members represent the demographic of the local community and bring a wide range of skills to the library service. This governance structure creates a positive and progressive relationship

with funding bodies and enables a wide range of partnership opportunities. In the UK most public libraries are part of "City Hall" and subject to the petty political prejudices and pre-occupations of local politicians. This creates a post code lottery whereby the quality of the library service received is in direct relationship with the political priorities of the ruling party.

Community-Led

The UK flirted with community librarianship via outreach initiatives in the 1970s and through the *Open to All? Public Libraries and Social Exclusion project*, which I was a lead member of, in the 2000's. Austerity and budget cuts put an end to these efforts in the UK. The torch was passed to Canada where the Working Together Project piloted *Open to All?* ideas in four library systems. Today, those ideas have taken root and are becoming mainstreamed across Canada. That is why I moved to Canada to become CEO of Thunder Bay Public Library, where I can continue the work of *Open to All?* and develop library services which can identify, prioritise and meet community needs.

Interested in joining the ILIG committee?

contact the ILIG Chairman, Doug Knock for a chat about what is involved and the benefits to your career of being on a CILIP special interest group committee

email: dougknock@aol.com

* John Pateman is Chief Executive Officer of the Thunder Bay Public Library, Canada

Before I moved to Canada in October 2012 I had not heard of Thunder Bay. I had been to Vancouver, Ottawa and Montreal but Thunder Bay was new to me. It reminded me of that Bruce Springsteen song, Thunder Road, for some reason. When I came over for my interview I asked several people why the place was called Thunder Bay. Nobody seemed to know. I quickly learned that Thunder Bay was originally two cities – Fort William and Port Arthur – which were amalgamated in 1970. To create a single city with a unified identity they named it Thunder Bay. This was in fact what the original First Nations inhabitants called the area, because they believed that the sacred Thunder Birds lived on nearby Mount McKay. They also believed that the peninsular in Lake Superior is a Sleeping Giant because it does indeed look like a huge rock figure lying down in the Bay. We are very proud of our Sleeping Giant and Sacred Mountain and we are also very proud of Thunder Bay Public Library (TBPL).

Brodie Resource Library

TBPL has a presence in both the North and South cores of the city which reflect the historical settlements of Fort William and Port Arthur. The Brodie Resource Library of the Fort William Public Library (now the Thunder Bay Public Library) opened its doors to the public on April 29, 1912. This free public library was one of 125 Carnegie Libraries across Canada. Born in 1885 as the C.P.R. (Canadian Pacific Railway) Employees' Library, it was attached to the bathing room of the West Fort William roundhouse, which also had a smoking and literary room. Fees were \$1.25 per year for CPR employees; outsiders were required to pay \$1.25 for use of the tub. By 1909 it had become the Fort William Public Library and welcomed

Miss Mary J.L. Black as librarian – a position she held until 1937.

The library was constructed with a \$50,000 grant from the Carnegie Foundation. Designed by architects Hood and Scott, the library was built in accordance with standard Carnegie requirements (such as central entrance, tiled mosaic floors, and interior columns). The ornamental details included in the building's design are of particular interest. Stained glass windows were installed on three sides of the exterior and portray notable authors, from Dante to Tolstoy. My all time favourite writer – Dickens – is featured, which reminds me of my birth county (Kent) and Tennyson recalls my last position as Head of Libraries in Lincolnshire. So I never feel far from home in Thunder Bay. Further, 'Public Library' is inscribed in the parapet with ornamental scrolls surrounding it. As T. Morris Longstreth writes in *The Lake Superior Country*: 'The bright symbols of intelligence and taste shone everywhere.'

The reputation garnered by the Fort William Public Library was in large part earned by the skill and dedication of Miss Black, who believed the key to a successful library was its ability to provide the best possible service to its patrons. Without any formal training or education in the field, she quickly became a respected leader in librarianship. She integrated the library into the community through membership in all manner of local groups and societies. The majority of available information about Miss Black pertains to her professional and community pursuits, as opposed to any personal revelations. She became the first female president of the Ontario Library Association in 1917 and published many articles, speeches and commentaries on the state of Ontario public libraries at the time.

With a strong focus on service, Miss Black sent the first mobile collection into 'New Ontario' in order to provide personal service to those in remote communities.

The building has a varied history under the guidance and after the retirement of Miss Black. When the Spanish flu epidemic struck in 1918, rooms of the library were converted into an emergency hospital for overflow of patients. Miss Black was keenly interested in the artistic community of northwestern Ontario, and developed a collection of art that could be borrowed by patrons of the library. In 1940, the ground floor of the library was offered to billet men recently enlisted in the Lake Superior Regiment. The Thunder Bay Historical Museum resided in the library for almost 30 years before moving into a separate building nearby. The library also hosted an office of the National Film Board from 1947 to 1967.

Significant renovations were completed in 1956, which included the addition of a new two storey wing on the south side of the building to house a growing collection. By 1980, large-scale restorations were underway to return the interior space to a semblance of its original glory. In 1981 the Brodie collection was rearranged with the adult fiction materials moved to the new Victoriaville Branch in the Victoriaville Mall. On February 27, 1982, the City's Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (L.A.C.A.C.) designated the Brodie Street Library a historically significant building. In 1995 the Victoriaville Branch Library was closed and the fiction collection was returned to Brodie. At this time the Children's space at the Brodie Resource Library was renovated in order to allow room for the returning adult fiction collection.

Today Brodie is one of our two main resource libraries with 18,800 square feet. It is located in the heart of the downtown core, right next to City Hall and the bus terminal. The building is jointly owned by the Thunder Bay Public Library Board and the City of Thunder Bay. There are metered parking spaces for 22 vehicles, plus one disabled accessible parking spot. Brodie Library serves as the main reference centre for the system providing microfilm, government publications, newspapers, magazines, a local history collection and free public internet access including Wi-Fi. It also houses non-fiction, fiction, large print, paperbacks, literacy, materials in other languages, audio-visual materials in a variety of formats, and young adult and children's collection which includes CD-ROM resources and work stations. Brodie offers children's programming and Home Service Delivery to South Ward patrons utilizing branch staff, Friends of the Library volunteers and family members.

Circulation of physical materials at Brodie is steadily decreasing year-over-year, but circulation and usage of electronic materials is steadily increasing, both e-books and databases. The most popular circulating item types are DVDs, fiction books, non-fiction books and music CDs for both juvenile and adult audiences. In-person visits have increased over the past three years which may be due to the re-location of the south side public bus terminal in April 2010. There has been a steady decline in the number of programmes held at Brodie, primarily due to the large community programme room available at the new Mary J.L. Black Branch Library. Many groups continue to make use of the available public meeting spaces including the study room and Fireside room. One-on-one computer

*John Pateman is Chief Executive Officer of the Thunder Bay Public Library, Canada

and portable device training and social media training sessions are becoming the norm. In-house usage of computers continues to rise along with Wi-Fi usage which is provided free of charge at all branches.

Brodie Library is operated by 18 full-time, 15 part-time and 5 Sunday staff. The library is open 44 hours per week: Monday to Wednesday 10am - 9pm, Thursday to Saturday 10am - 5pm, and Sunday 1pm - 5pm.

Mary J. L. Black Branch Library

The Westfort Branch library was opened at 151 West Brock Street in October 1938. It was 9,224 sq. ft. in size and named the Mary J.L. Black in honour of Fort William Public Library's first librarian. Sadly, Miss Black had passed away the year prior to its opening; however her spirit was alive and well in a much-loved community branch. Brodie and Mary J.L. Black became part of the Thunder Bay Public Library in 1970, following the amalgamation of Fort William and Port Arthur. The history of these libraries continues to shape the way in which TBPL serves the city of Thunder Bay and teaches the importance of adapting to the new while respecting the traditional. Having recently celebrated the grand opening of the new Mary J.L. Black Branch Library, it is inspiring to see a brand new facility that would make Miss Black proud.

The move to the new location took place in June 2011 after a long planning period and with great support from the local community, City of Thunder Bay and the Governments of Canada and Ontario. It is a freestanding structure owned by the Thunder Bay Public Library Board. With a floor area of 9,400 sq. ft. it is considered a mid-sized community branch meeting the needs of people who live in the Westfort neighbourhood. The library is situated

in a residential area near a public school; it is located on a public bus route and adjacent to the West Thunder Community Centre.

Mary J. L. Black library offers reference and information services and a selection of material including popular fiction, large print, non-fiction, magazines, audio-visual and a small French collection. Children's CD-ROM stations, Wi-Fi and public internet stations are also available. Children's programming is offered and meeting space is available for public booking. There is also a training lab with PCs which patrons and small businesses can book to use for training purposes.

Circulation of physical materials at the branch is steadily increasing year-over-year due to the increasing amount of foot traffic through the new building. Electronic usage, both e-books and databases, are strongly used as well. The most popular circulating item types are DVDs, fiction books, non-fiction books and music CDs for both juvenile and adult audiences. In-person visits have increased due to the high amount of exposure the new building has received since it opened. There is improved (free) parking which is attracting new users to this facility. Programmes are offered in the Community Program Room which includes a full equipped puppet theatre and cinema screen. There is also a Story Hour Room for smaller Children's programs and a Study room which can be booked by students or small groups. In-house use of computers continues to rise along with Wi-Fi usage.

Mary J. L. Black Library is operated by three full-time and six part-time staff. The library is open for 33 hours each week: Monday, Wednesday and Saturday 10am - 5pm, Tuesday and Thursday 1pm - 9pm, and Friday 1pm - 5pm.

Past and Present Advances in the Sphere of International Librarianship in the UK

by Lee Houghton, Doug Knock & Kathleen Ladizesky*

It all began in March 1967 when a meeting of over 50 people was held at the Library Association headquarters and it looked at the international aspects of librarianship with the intention of forming a discussion and research group based on international and comparative librarianship. Three main aspects emerged - a) the need for information on foreign librarianship for UK librarians, b) the need for a centre for foreign librarians to meet up with UK librarians and c) the teaching of comparative librarianship at universities had created a demand for research in the area.

From this the International and Comparative Library Group was formed and a report of the March meeting was printed as '*Focus on International and Comparative Librarianship*'. The Group's first conference was held in Gorebridge, Midlothian in 1974¹ and throughout the years meetings and seminars have been arranged which underline work in the field of librarianship in the international field.

Forty six years later the International Group of CILIP flourishes, although the original Comparative aspect is no longer a big factor. Library Schools no longer play the same part in the running of the group and the committee is now drawn from diverse areas of the library world and not so strongly supported by University library schools. *Focus* is now called *Focus on International Library and Information work*. Through the years it has proved a useful tool for those wishing to examine the International Library area between the 1960's and the present day.

*Doug Knock is the Chair, Kathleen Ladizesky is Treasurer and Lee Houghton a member of the current ILIG Committee.

Fast forwarding, at this time ILIG is involved in a most important development and is working with CILIP to develop a Branch for overseas members. In 2012 the late Norman Briggs published an article in *Focus* on CILIP's overseas membership². Here he outlined the possibility of modeling an International Branch on the present UK SE Branch saying the organisational problems for both would be quite similar.

To get things started, in 2013 a questionnaire was circulated to the 662 ILIG overseas members to gather their views on formation of a Branch for CILIP's overseas members. 178 replies were received and ILIG chair, Doug Knock, arranged them into a workable form. After this Lee Houghton and Kathleen Ladizesky examined them in more detail and the following conclusions were drawn from these replies:

Data collected in the Survey Monkey questionnaire included country of residence, age, gender, UK citizenship, if the person was an Institutional or Personal member of CILIP and if they belonged to a professional body in their country of residence.

Other questions on their qualifications, employment sector and pay were included. All these results can be seen in the survey summary that is attached to this report.

The central question asked whether there should be a CILIP branch for members resident outside of the UK and only 8% of the 178 respondents said "No". As many of the "Uncertain" voters offered to help set up an International Branch, it is expected that these votes can be turned into positive ones.

From this we can then surmise that 92% of voters would have positive feelings towards an International Branch.

Another key question asked what members would want from an International Branch. It was seen from the results that all choices were popular, and overseas members voted for exactly the same things that CILIP are proposing at the moment as part of their Branch and Group review and the idea of developing Regional Member Networks:

- Providing support for continuing professional development
- Encouraging relationship-building and communication between overseas members, especially those in the same region
- Involving overseas members more in the activities of CILIP and giving them more of a visible presence on the CILIP website

Many of the respondents indicated that they would consider helping to set up and run an

International Branch, and the ILIG Committee feels that now would be a good time to include overseas members in the discussions around and review of Branch and Group activities.

A prominent part of CILIP's message from the current Branch and Group survey is that membership recruitment and retention is crucial, and that having a strong presence at a local level is key to the survival and growth of the organisation. We strongly believe that this sentiment should be extended to overseas members too.

ILIG is looking forward to progress on CILIP's overseas members Branch in the coming year.

References

- ¹.WHATLEY, Allan (ed), Proceedings of the International & Comparative Librarianship Group Conference Scotland, 1974, ICLG ISSN 0906904056 £7.50 .
- ².BRIGGS, Norman, CILIP's Overseas Membership - an ILIG Committee perspective *Focus on International Library & Information Work*, 43(2) pp. 68-9

ILIGlist and Facebook

ILIGlist is an e-mail discussion group run by, and primarily for, members of ILIG, but open to all librarians and information professionals involved in LIS activities across the globe.

To join the list, please send a brief message to <iliglist-owner@yahoo.com>.

If you have already joined ILIGlist, please spread the word to colleagues

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

www.facebook.com/groups/13131232426

If you're not on Facebook, maybe it's time you were!

Make contact with librarians around the world and start networking!

Sagrada Familia Library, Barcelona, Spain

a report on a visit by Ian Stringer*

Whilst on holiday in Barcelona, with friends, I was able to visit the newly transformed Sagrada Familia Library, with my colleague Janice Nichols of Calderdale libraries. The Chief at the library is Monica Medina Blanes a colleague of mine from my days on the IFLA Public Libraries Section Standing Committee. She kindly arranged my visit. Monica is currently on maternity leave with her lovely baby son, Guim, but kindly arranged for an English speaker to show us around.

I had hoped for a good English speaker and was delighted to find our guide had a Stoke accent. Jaume Alvarez Bromley has a Spanish father and a mother from Stoke so we were in excellent hands.

As with Stuttgart, on my previous trip, the local authority is a firm believer that libraries are needed more than ever in times of recession, so they are upgrading many of the 40 libraries in the city. No one should be more than 15 minutes from a library.

In the Eixample district there is a world famous building, the Sagrada Familia Cathedral designed by Antoni Gaudi which is under continuous construction. The new library is just 50 metres away. It is a converted chain store and is directly above the market place. You can borrow books by Jamie Oliver upstairs and buy the fresh ingredients for his recipes on the floor below.

*Ian Stringer is a committee member of ILIG, past Chair of the Mobile Libraries Round Table and a member of the Public Libraries Standing Committee of IFLA, as well as an extensive career in UK public libraries.

The library features a big children's section and a similar sized 'Teen' section. The whole library has floor to ceiling windows on all sides so is bright and airy and parents can watch their children from other parts of the library. Each room has ample seating space. There is a large media library and all departments have free access computers and the children's section has lots of games.

Barcelona City does not have the obsession with money that is found in so many UK libraries. There are no fines, no charges for in-stock items and a mere €1.50 for external loans. Borrowers incur penalty points for overdues and get 2 weeks suspension when they reach 50 points. (*Spanish football has clearly made a mark on its libraries! Ed.!*)

Each Barcelona library specialises in a specific subject. Naturally the Sagrada Familia library specialises in books on Gaudi and his contemporaries. They have a very extensive collection about him and his contemporaries. All in all, the Library is well worth a visit if you are spending time in Barcelona.

With thanks to Monica and Jaume for making our visit such a good one.

Hon. Fellowship Award for Norman Briggs

Norman Briggs BSc MA MCLIP (11 March 1937 – 8 March 2013) was awarded a posthumous Hon. Fellowship to CILIP for his innovation in government and military information services and for his passion for the profession. The citation records that Norman was an enthusiastic and committed activist in CILIP and IIS Special Interest Groups and Regional Branches. A special event was organised by CILIP's Chief Executive Officer, Annie Mauger, for Norman's family to receive the Award in September and his wife Jennifer Briggs was very appreciative of the acknowledgment of his dedication to the profession. - See more at: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/cilip/news/exceptional-library-and-information-professionals-honoured>

Seminars and Informals in 2013

Check the calendar on the back of this issue for details of seminars and Informals which will be webcast in 2013. The seminar on Marketing with Terry Kendricks on Friday 25 October is already near capacity and the free seminar on Public Private Partnerships on Friday 22 November is also booking fast.

Overseas Members

Simon Edwards, the Director of Professional Services in CILIP attended the ILIG Committee meeting on 9 October to discuss how the service to Overseas Members can be improved following on from the survey which ILIG carried out earlier this year on behalf of CILIP. There was agreement that ILIG may be able to work to provide some of the support in the form of improved communication from and to CILIP as an organisation, between Overseas Members in regional groupings and by assisting CILIP in the opening up of learning opportunities on-line to members who cannot physically attend learning opportunities as

ILIG already does some of this through web-casting the regular "Informals" and occasional seminars. The improvements will need to be approved and worked out in more detail therefore it will be sometime in 2014 before this can be pursued. We will keep members in ILIG informed of progress as it happens.

Focus on International Library and Information Work

The *Focus* team are pursuing making *Focus* available electronically on subscription to non-ILIG members and free of charge to ILIG members in addition to the web version already posted on the ILIG pages of the CILIP website. We hope to have this up and running by early 2014 so watch out for details. We are committed to providing hard copy issues of the journal for those people who wish to keep receiving it as long as finances allow – so don't worry if that is your preference!

The Hosts Directory

This resource has gone from strength to strength this year since our Chairperson, Doug Knock, gave it a facelift and booted it into the international arena through IFLA. For more details and to join the hundreds of people now signed up to this resource please visit:

<http://www.cilip.org.uk/international-library-and-information-group/events-and-activities/hosts-directory>

Visitors from Belorussia and the Ukraine

ILIG has organised successful programmes for visiting librarians from these two countries in 2013 with much appreciation received from both groups. We hope to have a report from one of the Ukrainian librarians on the visit in the next issue of *Focus*. Many thanks were expressed to our Secretary, Anna Jablkowska for her organising skills in making these visits so successful.

A Directory of Libraries, Information Units and Archives in Malta, 2nd Edition. Compiled and edited by Marion Borg, Yvonne Schurer and Laurence Zerafa. Malta: MaLIA 2013. pp240. ISBN: 978-99957-0-481-0. Price: 12 Euros. Sponsored by the Central Bank of Malta and Emerald Group Publishing.

Once again the small but vigorous Malta Library and Information Association (MaLIA) comes up trumps with a well thought and well produced professional Directory of LIS workers and archivists in Malta. The First Edition of the Directory (produced in 1996) was a great success and this new and expanded Second Edition should prove an equal and welcome triumph. With an ever growing emphasis on networking and "contacts" this Directory should prove of inestimable everyday value and relevance to the LIS profession and archivists in Malta. The book also serves to demonstrate the rapidity of growth and richness and variety of the present Library and Archives scene in Malta. Whilst cherishing its unique national identity, Malta can comfortably take its place as a modern European state with a growing and valuable LIS and archives environment to help sustain this growth.

The three Editors have arranged the Directory into several useful Sections e.g. Main Directory, Subject Groupings and Geographical locations, thus making it easy for the busy practitioner to use the book. The Foreword outlines succinctly the aim and scope of the book – "a useful tool for locating information resources and referral" and hopes that it will facilitate inter-library co-

operation and also be of use to the publishing and bookselling industries. As stated earlier, the range and scope of the Directory is remarkable; entries range from the Air Malta Technical Library (1800 books) and the Bird Life of Malta Library (200 books) through to the Central Public Library (110,110 books) and University of Malta Library (350,000 books). Each entry in the Directory also covers non-book holdings such as CDs, multi-media packages and archival collections. Of particular value to the harassed practitioner is the name of the appropriate "contact person" in the Unit, enabling a more helpful personal professional approach by the enquirer.

So, all in all a very helpful and timely Directory, which will prove its value daily to the busy practitioner. As the Editors wisely point out, it is very difficult for a Directory to be fully comprehensive and that it is "in the nature of all Directories to have a short life!" MaLIA is thus well aware of the rapidly changing LIS and Archives environment in Malta and hopes to bring out regular updated Editions – and is aware too of the colossal workload and dedication required to achieve this important professional goal. We wish them well.

Dr Mike Freeman, FCLIP
Hon. International Relations Officer
West Midlands Branch of CILIP

Canada

Canadian Library Association Conference, Winnipeg, 29 May – 1 June, 2013

The Canadian Library Association (CLA) conference is a great opportunity to meet with library colleagues from across the country to discuss areas of common interest and concern. It is not as big as the Ontario Library Association (OLA) conference, but it still covers a wide range of issues and initiatives. And Winnipeg is a beautiful city with some wonderful architecture including the new Museum of Human Rights which is due to open in 2014. CLA organised tours to this Museum (with hard hats) plus visits to some of Winnipeg's public libraries and the Manitoba Archives and Legislative Library.

Canadian Urban Libraries Council

On the first day of conference I attended a meeting of the Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC) which represents the larger public library systems across Canada. This meeting was held in the Millennium Library, Winnipeg Public Library, which is a very impressive facility. The CULC meeting opened with a look at the key issues emerging around the country. Each CULC member talked about the challenges and opportunities facing their particular library service. Three key issues emerged from this discussion:

1. Governance and the role of Boards
2. Shared services with City Councils
3. Strategic planning & organisational change

I was able to talk about the Fundamental Library Review (FLR) at Thunder Bay Public Library (TBPL) which encompasses a new Strategic Plan and changes to the organisational structures, systems and culture.

The next major item for discussion was the *Alternative Format Delivery Project*. This was

a report from the CULC / CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind) working group on alternative formats. The aim is to develop a Canada wide service which delivers materials to people who are blind or who have a visual disability. A number of options were discussed for achieving this, including a subscription model funded by all the key stakeholders – federal and provincial governments, CNIB and public libraries.

At the working and networking lunch (delicious food provided by a local First Nations catering service) I was able to talk to the Edmonton CEO and Calgary Deputy CEO about my upcoming visit to their libraries to talk about community-led service planning and organisational change based on my experience in the UK and at TBPL.

After lunch we covered a wide range of subjects including: *eBook Working Group update; Core Competencies & Intelligences for Future Urban Library Workers; the Royal Society of Canada Expert Panel on 'The Status and Future of Canada's Libraries and Archives'; Pilot Project on Library Use; BookNet Canada Report; Freedom to Read Week 30th Anniversary; 2014-2018 Strategic Directions; CULC compliance with the New Not-for Profit Corporations Act.*

The presentation by Ken Haycock on core competencies was of particular interest as it can inform the FLR at TBPL. I put TBPL forward as a case study and I volunteered to contribute to the Royal Society Expert Panel which will help to shape the future direction of Canada's libraries. I also offered to work on the Strategic Directions and so I am now on three CULC Working Groups.

CLA Reception & Trade Show Opening

After the CULC meeting I went to the CLA Reception and Trade Show Opening where I was able to network and talk with a range of exhibitors about their latest products.

Opening Ceremonies & Keynote Speaker

The CLA conference Keynote Speaker was Cory Doctorow who is a science fiction novelist, blogger and technology activist. He is the co-editor of the popular weblog Boing Boing (boingboing.net) and a contributor to The Guardian, the New York Times, Publishers Weekly, Wired and many other newspapers, magazines and websites. He co-founded the open source peer-to-peer software company OpenCola, and open access was the theme of his presentation. There is a world-wide move to limit open access to information via copyright and intellectual property rights restrictions. Software manufacturers are also making it increasingly difficult to share information. Who 'owns' information and how it is communicated will be a key challenge for public libraries in the future.

Living Library

I took part in the CLA Living Library which is a library version of the Human Library. People can borrow human 'books' who are experts in their field. My book was all about 'social exclusion' and I was heavily borrowed by librarians who wanted to know more about the community-led and needs-based approach to library service delivery. In the process I also met some very interesting people and made a number of useful contacts.

Leading from the Centre

I attended a very interesting session on Leading from the Centre: Using Basic Project Management Tools to Support Innovation by

Nancy MacKenzie (Senior Manager, Calgary Public Library). Calgary have adopted some very simple but highly effective project management tools which enable them to turn high level strategic ideas into innovative action. This approach will help to inform the Systems Review at TBPL.

The Great Debate

I also went to the Great Debate on the following proposition: 'Be it resolved that librarians in libraries are no longer needed.' A vote was taken at the beginning and only a handful of people were brave enough to vote for this motion. Leading for the proponents were two academic librarians from Ryerson University Library and the University of Manitoba Libraries. Speaking against the motion were two public librarians from Guelph Public Library and Regina Public Library. The debate was light hearted and jocular in spirit but at its heart there was a serious subject – in this day and age do libraries need to be run by staff with professional library skills or a different range of competencies. The answer, of course, is that we need both. The ideal 21st century librarian will have technical library skills plus competencies in the management of people and resources.

In conclusion, CLA was a great opportunity to take a reality check of what is happening in public libraries across Canada and how this relates to the Fundamental Library Review at TBPL. It seems that TBPL is heading in the right direction with a focus on community-led strategic planning and a needs-based approach to service delivery.

**John Pateman, CEO/Chief Librarian,
Thunder Bay Public Library, Canada**
johnpateman9@hotmail.com

United Kingdom

The New Library of Birmingham

Located in Birmingham's Centenary Square, the Library is expected to attract over three million visitors a year, is already attracting 17,000 visitors per day with many more visiting online, and is holding a four month Discovery Season of events, displays and activities to mark its opening which took place on 3 September 2013.

Designed by Dutch architects Mecanoo, the Library is intended to transform the city's library services and become a major cultural destination, housing Birmingham's world-class collections of archives, photography and rare books as well as a million printed volumes, the largest number held by any public library in the UK. Of these, over 400,000 books are available on the Library's public floors. With outstanding resources and access to expert help, the Library is a centre of excellence for literacy, research, study, skills development, health information, creative expression and entrepreneurship.

At 31,000 sq metres the building is around 20% larger than the old Central Library building and is the largest public library in Europe. The ten-level Library shares a spacious entrance and foyer as well as a flexible studio theatre seating 300 people with the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Sited in Centenary Square it forms, along with The REP and Symphony Hall, a new cultural heart for the city. The Library of Birmingham is a flagship project of Birmingham City Council's 20-year Big City Plan, focusing on the regeneration of the city and the most far-reaching city centre development project ever undertaken in the UK.

An outdoor Amphitheatre, surrounded by wild flower planting, in Centenary Square is designed to provide a performance space for music, drama, poetry reading and storytelling.

There are two outdoor garden terraces, children's spaces and a panoramic viewing gallery at the summit, where visitors are able to enjoy stunning views from one of the highest points in the city.

The Golden Box

A 'golden box' of secure archive storage occupies levels five and six of the building and contains the city's internationally important archive, heritage and photographic collections. Whilst the Library's precious collections are kept safe in this protective environment, thanks to an on-going programme of digitisation they are being opened up to the public online and through digital innovations projects using new technology. A new gallery enables select parts of the collection to go on display through a programme of exhibitions. The Library contains one of the world's largest Shakespeare collections, the Parker Collection of Children's Books and Games, the Early and Fine Printing Collection and the Boulton and Watt archive.

Shakespeare Memorial Room

Above the golden box, visitors can explore the Shakespeare Memorial Room, an original feature from the city's Victorian library. The Victorian room with its wooden panelling and glass cabinets has been moved in its entirety and painstakingly restored. Although the Library's Shakespeare collection outgrew the room in the early 20th century, the collection is still housed in the Library.

Photography & film

The Library of Birmingham's Photography Collection is one of nine national collections. Recent additions including the Val Williams archive, work from the renowned photographic cooperative, Magnum Photos, and three major exhibitions from internationally-acclaimed photographer, Brian Griffin, who has a

substantial collection held by the Library of Birmingham. The Library's photography hub GRAIN is already researching, developing and delivering new, ambitious high quality opportunities, strengthening photography in the region. GRAIN has also collaborated with the FORMAT International Photography Festival to offer a new Library of Birmingham photography prize.

The Library of Birmingham is also home to a **BFI Mediatheque**, providing free access to highlights from the BFI National Archive - the world's most diverse collection of film and television - and partner archives around the UK. Visitors can log on at their own personal viewing station and enjoy over 2,500 complete titles, including a specially curated selection of film and TV featuring Birmingham and the West Midlands - from a university procession captured by Mitchell & Kenyon in 1901 to Julie Walters playing the title role in an account of a fellow West Midlands icon, The Mary Whitehouse Story (2008).

For more details of the library, its events and programmes visit <http://libraryofbirmingham.com>

The International Librarians Network Peer Mentoring Program

The International Librarians Network (ILN) peer mentoring program is a facilitated program aimed at helping librarians build and develop international networks and learn about librarianship around the world. Following a successful pilot scheme, the formal launch of the program took place in September. The ILN is open to anyone working or studying in the library and information sector. It's free to take part and the only requirements are an internet connection, a spare hour each week,

and a desire to build professional connections. To find out more about how the program works have a look at our website:

<http://ilnetwork.wordpress.com/how-the-program-works/>

If you're interested in participating, you can sign up online here: <http://ilnetwork.wordpress.com/join-iln>. Alternatively, if you have any questions about the ILN, feel free to get in touch with Helen Murphy, ILN UK coordinator ilnetwork.wordpress.com

Law Librarians Award for Attendance at the AALL Annual Meeting in 2014

The Foreign, Comparative and International Law Special Interest Section (FCIL-SIS) of the American Association of Law Libraries is now accepting applications for the 2014 FCIL Schaffer Grant for Foreign Law Librarians. The Grant subsidises a foreign law librarian to attend the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), the world's largest law librarian professional organisation. The FCIL Schaffer Grant for the AALL Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas (July 12-15, 2014) provides a waiver of the AALL Annual Meeting full registration fee and a grant of a minimum \$2,000 to assist with accommodation and travel costs.

Applicants must be law librarians or other professionals working in the legal information field, currently employed in countries other than the United States, and with significant responsibility for the organisation, preservation, or provision of legal information. The application deadline is November 30, 2013. The Grant Committee will not consider late or incomplete applications. Please note: Grant winners must pay all expenses in advance. Grant awards will only be disbursed shortly before or at the AALL Annual Meeting.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ILIG INFORMALS AND MEETINGS

ILIG is delighted to announce the next ILIG informal.

Wednesday 11 December 2013

6pm

Theme to be confirmed

Check the CILIP website Calendar of events and, of course the ILIG web pages on it, to be among the first to know what will be happening that evening.

See more at: www.cilip.org.uk/international-library-and-information-group/events-1#

ILIG Committee Meeting

Wednesday 12 February

1.30pm - 4.30pm

followed by ILIG AGM

6pm - 8pm

speaker to be announced

Eurolis Conference

Friday 22 November 2013

Public Private Partnerships

One Day Conference organised with Eurolis at Europe House, London.

Fee-free but booking essential.

See <http://eurolis.wordpress.com/seminars-2/> for more details.

Keep up-to-date with ILIG via its web pages at www.cilip.org.uk/ilig

If undelivered, please return to ILIG, c/o CILIP,
7 Ridgmount Street, LONDON, WC1E 7AE, UNITED KINGDOM

