Two keynote speeches described the big picture, illustrating a certain defiant creative energy about making library and archive physical spaces irresistible for learners in the digital age. Madeleine Lefebvre, chief librarian for Ryerson University, Canada, described their Student Learning Centre due to open in 2015. (http://ryersonbuilds.ryerson.ca/student-learning-centre/) Fiona Courage, Special Collections Manager at University of Sussex, described The Keep (http://www.thekeep.info/about_us/building/) as a space shared by academic and local authority services. (She related it to the National Archives’ action plan: Archives in the 21st century in action refreshed 2012-15). Comprehensive online access through catalogues to digitised archive content is more easily realised in actual shared space, leading to virtual shared space.

We’re not all in a position to participate in the big shared project, but committed librarians, both from the university and local authority, working with enthusiastic academics, can produce fertile cultural and learning partnerships. Collaborating on exhibitions, both online and in civic space, scoping dissertation topics and affirming the student experience of a special collection through the social media available all promote a sense of identity and a place within the community.

A particular example of this academic and civic engagement with a collection was the subject of the workshop of Val Stevenson from Liverpool John Moores University. She talked about using special collections and archives to generate, develop and support research and scholarship. She referred to work with a photograph archive, (that of Keith Medley.) putting on local events, exhibitions and using a commercial partner for selective digitisation. When it came to the larger project on contributor ledgers for Punch (available soon http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/HSS/124772.htm), the small, focussed project costing next to nothing, demonstrated the will and ability to tackle the bigger project. I listened wistfully to the reference to the metadata team - a whole team! - which provided the template for the cataloguing. She also referred to a research team - another whole team! - which wrote bids.

Suzanne Tatham and Stuart Lamore, at the University of Sussex talked about integrating Talis Aspire reading lists onto Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment – or - the open source content management system used as VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) at Sussex. Reading lists were separate from the moodle called Study Direct and they needed an integrated system for users. http://vimeo.com/61188252. The workshop was totally convincing about the importance of ease of use for students and the importance of a dedicated technical person.

Catherine Pink and Lizz Jennings presented a very generous workshop on ‘Reviewing Data Management Plans’ for PhD students. The requirements of EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council) are pushing many universities to see research data management as an institutional priority and placing the librarian in a crucial role. They provided funder requirements, templates, tips, common omissions on DMPs and handed out real research proposals for exercises and discussion. (www.bath.ac.uk/research/data/support) It had very useful applications for all disciplines and for university repositories.
Gaz Johnston’s presentation on Open Access was extremely comprehensive and can be found here www.slideshare.net/ciliparlg/the-long-song-and-the-panopticon He could not have been more helpful.

A delegate from an overseas commercial background was sipping coffee. She was slightly stunned. The generosity of the contributors and participants with mistakes ruefully admitted to, tips freely shared had disarmed her. It was an inspiring and affirming couple of days.