

RPg

Retired Professionals Group

CILIP

SPECIAL
INTEREST
GROUP

Issue 95 • October 2021

An illustration showing the back of two people's heads as they look out over a city skyline at sunset. The skyline includes various architectural features like spires and domes, with a prominent tall spire in the center. The sky is filled with horizontal bands of orange, yellow, and purple. The people in the foreground are rendered in dark, solid colors.

Explore UK's
historic houses
and heritage

Post-Lib

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Now more than ever we
want to make sure we stay in
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you can sign up to receive
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at **<https://lnkd.in/d4DQCqe?>**

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Chair's Welcome Note

Ian Orton

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Since the last Post Lib back in June your Committee have been trying to get things back to normal with more partnership working, contributing to the Community Strategy, having held some serious discussions about money, planning for the future, finally getting the annual lunch in place and producing two editions of Post-Lib.

As I mentioned in the last Post-Lib your Committee have continued to meet by Zoom since the early part of 2020 including the Annual General Meeting held on 8th June 2021. The AGM was very positive with over 20 people 'attending' and being Zoom there was also a number of well-behaved dogs and cats!

It was interesting that at the end of the AGM there were informal chats among those who had logged in and while it was not a face-to-face, the attendance was much better than usual. This places the Committee (and many other organisations) in the position of having to decide whether to swing back to expensive face-to-face committee meetings or sticking with Zoom. It is likely your Committee will continue

to meet four times a year with three Zoom meetings and subject to finance, one meeting a year in London. Please let me know if you have any concerns with these proposed meeting arrangements.

The Annual Lunch has been changed three times but is now settled at Tuesday 21st September 2021 at the Civil Service Club at 12.30 noon for 1pm. We expect between 20 and 25 as opposed to the usual 40 but hopefully there will be the usual numbers at the 2022 lunch on Tuesday 26th April again at the Civil Service Club.

Charmaine our Visits Organiser is co-ordinating visits for the future which can be viewed on the Post-Lib link via the Cilip website. But as part of the Zoom age, we have started a number of virtual visits including an art exhibition that actually felt as if you were wandering around the gallery.

Also using Zoom, RPG with our partners (K&IM SIG and ILIG) held another Knowledge Café on 16th September on the theme of Personal Knowledge Management, and I do recommend joining one of the sessions. Many thanks to David Byrne again for both

co-ordinating and promoting Knowledge Cafés. Again, all details on the RPG's web site.

Money continues to be a challenge. We are not sure what support we will receive from Cilip in the future, but we know we need an income of around £1000 to produce 2 electronic and 1 hard copy of Post-Lib a year. So, although we have not featured adverts in Post Lib in the past we now have agreed to take 'appropriate' adverts within Post Lib to try and reduce the costs. Any thoughts on other ways to make money or reduce costs are very welcome! Thanks to Judith our Treasurer for keeping us on the straight and narrow.

During the last few months your Committee has been strengthened by Vincent McDonald as Secretary, but we still need a Marketing and Communications colleague to help put us more firmly on the road – anyone with a few hours to spare a month? Please let me know.

RPG are your Committee and I really would like your views on anything to do with our group, please let me know if we can do anything better! **PL**

Ian Orton



Editor's note

Christiana Ikeogu

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Welcome to the 95th edition of CILIP RPG's Post-Lib

I am in awe of creation – weather, plants and animals, and the impact they have on our lives, our mood, and reactions to activities around us. The short period of sunshine and summer seem to have injected fresh hope and energy in our community, making the adjustment to the new normality of today's life easier. I hope there is something that is helping everyone to find comfort and inspiration to carry on.

As you work through this issue of our communication tool, I hope you appreciate and possibly acknowledge the efforts fellow members have applied just to share their life experiences.

My sincere regards to Tom Roper for giving us insight into the contributions fellow librarians make at the frontline. On the same note, I thank Alan Cooper who works tirelessly to contribute articles for this magazine and

his role in the Committee, as our web editor.

Please take time to read Genny Andrews' work on the professional life she never expected to experience. She just made me laugh, as I imagined what life must have been like for her at the time. I also wish to thank Sian and Charmaine whose support in proofreading ensures your magazine is well looked after. Tours and visits are back! David Byrne is also making us more creative by organising virtual tours. I strongly recommend them. As Ian, our Chair affirmed, all the Committee members work very hard to keep RPG in good stead.

Please continue to think of what and when you can contribute articles to enrich the Post-Lib and our group. Wishing each one a healthy future. **PL**

Christiana Ikeogu

**NEXT
ISSUE**

Please send articles in MS Word for the next issue before 24th January 2022 to the editor at the following address: Christiana Ikeogu, 130 Elphinstone Road, London E17 5EX
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News and Views



COVID-19 and Health Library Services by Tom Roper

Until I retired at the end of February 2021, I was a clinical librarian attached to several teams in an acute hospital trust in southern England, including critical care, acute and emergency medicine, and some of the surgical specialties. So it was that, early in February 2020, I went to a critical care journal club meeting. After we had discussed a paper presented by one of the doctors in training, an extra item was added to the agenda: one of the consultants gave a briefing of what was known about what we came to call COVID-19. At this point, the first UK cases had been identified, but we had to rely on what had been published in the Chinese literature, and reports from Italy. It was clear that it was dangerous. With the gallows-humour for which the medical profession is famous, we noted wryly that those who

seemed to have the worst outcomes were men over 50 with comorbidities, a group well represented among the more senior of those present. A month later we found ourselves in lockdown.

Health libraries and librarians are good at responding to crises: in my time in the profession, we had risen to the challenges of HIV/AIDS, of foot and mouth disease, (for the animal health information specialists amongst us), severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome), and the

“Health libraries and librarians are good at responding to crises: in my time in the profession, we had risen to the challenges of HIV/AIDS, of foot and mouth disease...”

novel H1N1 influenza pandemic of 2009-2010. What do we do? We do not, of course, treat those affected; but we can provide the information that those healing the sick need to apply the most effective treatments, and manage the developing flow of information. In the COVID-19 pandemic, reliable information for the public became of particular importance.

There's a research project in search of a PhD student: a bibliometric comparison of the growth of the literature on COVID-19 with previous health emergencies: SARS, MERS, HIV/AIDS. A torrent of literature burst out: as well as conventional publication routes, preprints came into their own, as a way to disseminate research findings quickly. Not only did we have to adapt to new interfaces which lacked the refinements of the bibliographic databases

we were used to, our skills in appraising the quality of literature were indispensable here: preprint servers speed up publication by dispensing with conventional peer review. Conventional publishers also rose to the challenge, many lifting their paywalls for COVID-19 related material.

It was important to share search strategies to interrogate both the new and the conventional sources. Emerging diseases are no respecters of the workflows of database providers: we needed to devise complex search strategies that located relevant items when nomenclature had yet to be standardised. In the English NHS a search strategy bank⁽ⁱ⁾ was established, which at the time of writing holds 247 searches, freely available for anyone to use, update or adapt. Information specialists at the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) developed model search strategies for COVID-19 generally ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ and, more recently, for long COVID ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾.

Among the questions we were asked were, in the early stages, questions about the natural history of the disease and its transmission, both in hospitals and in community settings. These were followed by an urgent need to understand the disease in special populations – the young, the old, ethnic minorities, and of course questions about the safety of clinicians seeing patients with



“Evidence Aid, a volunteer body which specialises in collating and summarising the evidence about how to respond to disasters and emergencies, developed COVID-19 resources accessible to everyone worldwide.”

the disease: types and levels of personal protective equipment (PPE), how to perform aerosol generating procedures such as intubation or bronchoscopy safely. In public health questions about transmission, isolation, and quarantine, testing and so on became important matters of public policy.

One of the remarkable features of the pandemic has been the speed at which vaccines have been developed and deployed. Chinese scientists isolated and published the SARS-CoV-2 genetic sequence in January 2020, and researchers, including the famous Oxford team, lost no time in developing vaccines. After trials, the first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was given in December 2020, followed by the Oxford-AstraZeneca jab, four vaccines now having UK regulatory approval. As vaccines became available, so we found a

new challenge: not only to marshal and synthesise the growing research literature on vaccine effectiveness, but to reassure the so-called “vaccine hesitant” of the safety of the vaccines. Rumours and misinformation were rife, even, in some cases, among health workers themselves, and could potentially have impeded vaccine take-up. At the request of the communications department, we set up a page on the trust intranet populated with the latest high-quality research on vaccines.

Most NHS libraries offer a current awareness service: the user sets up a profile of his or her interests, and when new material is added that matches the profile, they are emailed at an interval of their choosing. The KnowledgeShare service ^(iv), used by over NHS libraries services, made all its COVID-19 material

available without the need for authentication.

As for our services, it is remarkable that we were able to continue without too much disruption. In the early days of the first lockdown, some services closed their doors, but our online journal subscriptions and e-books were unaffected. In some hospitals libraries were requisitioned for stores for PPE or as areas for staff to recover after shifts, but Health Education England estimated that 60% of services were able to stay open, albeit in some cases with reduced staffing. We had to tackle the question of whether COVID-19 could be transmitted by handling physical library materials – the risk is negligible after 72 hours.

We were already used to delivering our training online, which covers topics such as how to find journal articles, how to use social media, how to publish research – the move to offering all training online was therefore not a shock. Of course, our own professional conferences and seminars had to move online too – some had to be cancelled, but many moved online and proved highly popular. Indeed, attendances at some increased, as the barrier of travel to a conference venue no longer applied and we were pleased to welcome international attendees to events they would not have been able to attend in usual circumstances. To overcome the isolation of working from home, we set up a

weekly Lunch at the Library event on Zoom, to reproduce online the social exchanges we used to have in the staff room: sometimes we would solve a crossword together, one of us might set a quiz, or we would just gossip.

There was a strong international dimension to the health library response to COVID-19 too. IFLA's Evidence for Global and Disaster Health Special Interest Group and Health and Bioscience Libraries Section organised several webinars bringing together delegates from all over the world.

Evidence Aid, a volunteer body which specialises in collating and summarising the evidence about how to respond to disasters and emergencies, developed COVID-19 resources accessible to everyone worldwide ^(vi).

It was a strange time to retire, and it is too early for us to learn all the lessons, but I think we can be proud of the contribution health libraries and librarians have made to the fight against the pandemic. Evidence has been at the centre of policy decisions and public discussion; people, such as Professor Chris Whitty, the Chief Medical Officer and the Deputy CMO, Professor Jonathan Van Tam, became public celebrities, as they delivered information-rich presentations at the regular press conferences. This interest in the appraisal and application of scientific evidence to public life can only be healthy. 

Tom Roper

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Volunteering in Heritage by Alan Cooper

Thousands of people in the UK volunteer with local heritage organisations to make a real difference to their community in an enjoyable way. There is a large variety of opportunities available, including historic parks and houses, canals, churches, industrial sites, oral history projects, one-place studies and local history societies. This is a brief overview of what's available as a heritage volunteer, illustrated by examples drawn from my local area.

Many national organisations have local branches or supporter groups run by volunteers. In my area they include the Arts Society, the Gardens Trust, the Council for British Archaeology, the Church Recording Society, the Churches Conservation Trust, the National Trust, and the Western Front Association. Most provide a programme of speaker meetings, currently often online, or provide opportunities for practical experience of activities such as archaeological digs. The Church Recording Society, for example, has over 800 volunteer Recorders in more than 80 Groups around the UK who record in great detail the contents of our places of worship.

Heritage visitor attractions

There are also many volunteers assisting heritage visitor attractions. Heritage England, for example, is the public body in England responsible for the historic environment and provides a wide variety of opportunities from helping with their huge archive to diving for their protected wrecks and helping with historical research.

Historic Houses is the country's largest collection of historic houses and gardens with more than a thousand members. Volunteers are needed to help in the main gardens at Rode Hall & Gardens, Cheshire alongside their gardener. "No experience necessary but general interest in horticulture, willingness to work in all weathers and enthusiasm essential." Earlier this year volunteers were needed in the Bonhams salerooms in New Bond Street to oversee the public visiting the Grinling Gibbons exhibition.

The National Trust is responsible for over one million collection items at over 200 historic places. Volunteer room stewards help bring the stories of these places to life for visitors and archive and conservation volunteers help to care for

"Historic Houses is the country's largest collection of historic houses and gardens with more than a thousand members. Volunteers are needed to help in the main gardens at Rode Hall & Gardens, Cheshire alongside their gardener."

and catalogue the collections. Volunteers have helped digitise the Trust's archive of images of the Sutton Hoo excavation, have helped conserve and record the collection of over 20,000 books at Belton House, and have been busy photographing and cataloguing 30,000 objects in the collection at Erddig, Wales.

Close to Milton Keynes is Stowe House, a grade I listed





Belton House

country house which is the home of Stowe School. Stowe House has a team of more than 70 volunteers, and roles include Community & Learning Assistant, Visitor Experience Assistant, Tour Guide and Social Media Assistant. Volunteering is viewed as also about meeting new people and making new friends. There are monthly volunteer Coffee Mornings, and twice-a-year volunteer trips to a historic property, an end of season party, and a Christmas Dinner.

Oral history projects

The National Trust has several ongoing oral history projects, including at Rainham Hall in London, Croome in Worcestershire and Quarry Bank, Cheshire. Volunteers help to interview and record the memories of local people

and those with a connection to the places the Trust looks after. Local to me is the Living Archive Milton Keynes. Since the 1970s it has been using local lives, reminiscence, and events as the starting point to create expression of Milton Keynes' social history as musical documentary plays, over 100 films, over 20 books, photographic exhibitions, and hundreds of digital stories. Local people of all ages and backgrounds have been involved in interviewing, research, writing, performing, creating songs and music,

“Oral History Society supports people who want to record and preserve spoken history and share it with others”

organising exhibitions, editing books, film making, and creating websites. Founded in 1973, the Oral History Society supports people who want to record and preserve spoken history and share it with others. It provides advice for beginners, community groups and family historians, holds a wealth of information about local projects, and has a network of accredited individuals who are experienced in oral history and willing to help.

Museums and galleries

Most museums and galleries have volunteers working for them. They work in all sections of the museum from front-of-house to collections departments. Some museums are entirely run by volunteers. You can find tips and resources on the Museum Association's



Bletchley Park

website on how to get started as a volunteer, though it is best to approach individual museums directly to find out if they need new volunteers.

Local to me are 5 museums run entirely or mostly by volunteers: Buckingham Old Gaol Museum, Cowper & Newton Museum, Milton Keynes Museum, the National Badminton Museum and The National Museum of Computing. At Buckingham Old Gaol, opportunities exist for volunteers to work across the Museum in a variety of roles, including welcoming visitors and selling museum entry tickets, books and souvenirs. The National Museum of Computing has similar front-of-house roles, but is also looking for volunteers for collections management, computer restoration and library and archives work. Among other roles volunteers are needed at

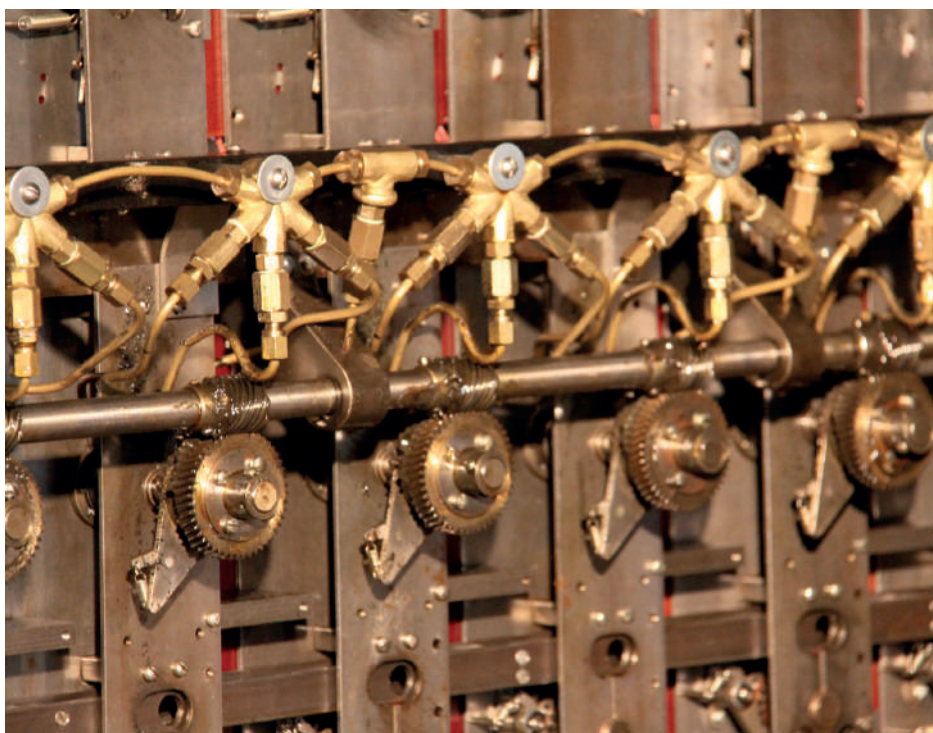
DID YOU KNOW

Bletchley Park was purchased by the government in 1938 to house the Government Code and Cypher School. It was run by the Secret Service and commanded by Commander Alastair Denniston. ... Bletchley Park was Britain's top code-breaking centre and was credited with shortening World War Two in Europe.

the Cowper & Newton Museum to make Georgian costumes for the Museum and its events. At Milton Keynes Museum volunteers are involved in all aspects of running the Museum as room guides, cafe and shop staff, administrators, educators, event organisers, maintenance workers, gardeners, and

collection specialists. The National Badminton Museum is looking for volunteers to support it in any of cataloguing and conservation work, acting as an ambassador in the regions, designing promotional material, advising on marketing and outreach, developing the website, and advising on IT support generally, developing and researching the collection and archives, and planning, designing, and staffing exhibitions and events both at badminton tournaments and on-site. You needn't be based in the Milton Keynes area as the Museum needs support and promotion all around the country. You can find out more about the Museum by joining the free RPG visit taking place next April.

The Volunteer Makers website has a map showing museums which have used their services in recruiting volunteers, which



A working reconstruction of the Turing-Welchman Bombe used to break enciphered messages in WW2 is on display at The National Museum of Computing.

would help identify opportunities to volunteer in your area.

Local heritage societies

Interest in local history has grown since the Second World War and local history societies have sprung up everywhere. The British Association for Local History seeks to be the national umbrella organisation in the field, with about 1,500 to 2,000 members, though they include individuals, county associations and libraries as well as local societies. Its magazine, *Local History News*, carries reports of the activities of its member societies. You can find a directory of local history societies on the localhistoryonline website.

The Society for One-Place Studies is a recently formed not-for-profit organisation for individuals, societies and groups researching the residents of a particular place by gathering a

full range of historical records, memorabilia, and stories, and analysing them to gain insights into the social and economic workings of that place. It has 154 members in the UK, as well as a small number in the USA, Canada, and Australia. The blog on its website provides news of current studies of villages and towns in the UK and elsewhere.

In my area the umbrella body for local history societies and one-place studies is Milton Keynes Heritage Association which has over 70 members (though they include national institutions such as the Bletchley Park Trust as well as local branches of national bodies). Similar umbrella organisations exist in other parts of the country, such as the Bedfordshire Local History Association and the Avon Local History Association. 

Alan Cooper

FIND OUT MORE

Historic England has devoted part of its website to volunteering in heritage, which provides a good start point. However, there are many other opportunities to volunteer in heritage which aren't mentioned by Historic England, and it would be well worth looking at the websites of the organisations I've mentioned as well.

Alan Cooper



From Dreams to Reality: Starting work by Genny Andrews

I was never going to go to work, and I had fathomed out how to avoid the inevitable.

As children, my sister and I were taken several times to visit two great aunts and uncles who lived in Sussex. One couple lived in an imposing large house with a walled garden in Lewes, the other couple in Burgess Hill. I liked their imposing large house best, set in a large and wonderful garden. We were not allowed to go upstairs to the staff accommodation on the top floor. Daily life in this household was seamless and happy. The chauffeur used to drive uncle to his office in London several days a week, Afternoon tea taken in the library was a formal affair with a silver tea set of course. As the years passed, I learned that the aunts had married wealthy brothers.

Forward to my years as a pupil at Ware Grammar School for Girls and time to take 'O' levels and think about a career. Because I was never going to go to work, I told my best friend who had a plan we would start training to become nurses in a large London hospital. There, we would be spotted by two rich, good-looking young doctors who would fall hopelessly in love with us, then get married

(meaning that we would have a meal ticket for life, smart thinking!). So, we got reading, fiction about nurses, then facts, germs, broken bones, blood. Not for me!

My father was becoming anxious that I had no ideas for the future. Following a school visit to be shown the Roman remains of Verulamium, I had wanted to become an archaeologist, but I had dropped Latin to learn German. One day, father had met a Librarian and knowing that I enjoyed reading, suggested that would be the way forward for me. But there was a sting in the tail when I learned that I would need to study hard to pass the examinations for what was then The Library Association. That idea was a real turn-off but one day I found myself being interviewed by Miss Austin the County Librarian for Hertfordshire. I would be contacted when a vacancy for a junior assistant became available. I was not switched on to the idea but had to go along with it.

I started work at Hertfordshire County Library H.Q. on 3rd September 1951. I was assigned to the junior department, and I did not think much of the situation that I found myself in.



"I started work at Hertfordshire County Library H.Q. on 3rd September 1951"

Yes, there were certainly shelves full of books but what were all these drawers of catalogue cards? Some needed to be put into alphabetical order, the others numerical. The numerical ones consisted of three numbers, but some had decimal points. I dutifully carried out these tasks but neither of the staff explained what it was all about. I had to learn that the books sat on the edges of the shelves too. Today I am sure that the reason for these processes would be explained. I was called Genna, my old Grammar School name and the only light moments of the day were when the admin officer saw me and exclaimed "there's little Genna" as though I was something rather strange.

My next move at H.Q. was



Ware library

to 'centres' department, that is, village centre libraries. The Librarian did explain what my job would be and much later in the afternoon, took me through a door to the loading area for two large walk-into vans. Just inside the door of each was a short pair of steps which were necessary to gain entrance from the ground to floor level when parked outside. I welcomed this move and enjoyed being out and about in the Hertfordshire countryside.

Now I will fill you in about the names of the places where I worked when I left H.Q. Ware branch library was housed in a Georgian town house. There was an impressive central portico and ahead, one entered through a large door into a high, wide corridor with a door at the

other end. To the left was a large through room with 2 windows with folding back half shutters facing the road and a large glass window at the further end with a central glazed door. There was a huge fireplace with a gas or electric fire and large notice board over, with a display of book jackets. The glazed door opened onto a covered tiled patio with 2 steps down onto a wide drive for two-way traffic. The council works depot, and the fire station were located down there. The matching room to the right of the library front door was used for the mother and baby clinic and access to this was via the original back door off the patio. So, we were working in a shared building. On the ground floor, was the library, the baby clinic and antenatal

consultant's room.

The first floor was the home of the local district nurse and the midwife and a drop in point for other visiting health staff working in the area. The top floor was a privately rented flat. The wide staircase would have been very impressive in its hey-day. Precise specifications of the building can be found on the internet.

So where was our kitchen? It was in the extension of the house, presumably where the servants worked and was situated to the left near the bottom of the staircase. There were small windows, low doorways and so on. One had to walk first through the large old room, then used as the waiting room for mothers and babies. Diagonally across that room was a small door which opened

onto a stone floored room. The ceiling was low, and the place had a dampish smell about it. The long, shallow brown stone sink with a small window above it, had one cold water tap. This is where we made some of our cups of tea and sometimes boiled eggs for our late nights tea-time breaks (eaten behind closed shutters in the library of course). As to the toilet facilities? This was accessed via the door at the further end of the wide entrance corridor. Then one turned to the right passing the width of the mother and baby clinic where there was a small door. On opening the door, one stepped down into a dismal enclosed outside area where the sun never shone and there it was in the right-hand corner. A small brick-built toilet. It did have an electric light, but the toilet paper never felt dry. In damp or wet weather, the paving slabs from door to door became slimy and treacherous and when it was dark, one had to take a torch to light the way. Those were the days and our working conditions. Today, it would be described as 'totally unacceptable'.

Working in shared premises, meant that we got to know members of the health staff coming and going. I must mention 'Butch' who was an integral part of our day. He was an elderly Londoner who I think was employed by the council. He was always cheerful and happy to help. We would watch

for him coming toward the patio at certain times of the day carrying 1 or 2 cups of tea for us. He had checked staff numbers earlier in the day and helped us out as we could not go to the kitchen once the library was open. I believe that the tea was made in the fire station. Of course, come Christmas, we always bought him a present. 'Butch' was a pleasure to know.

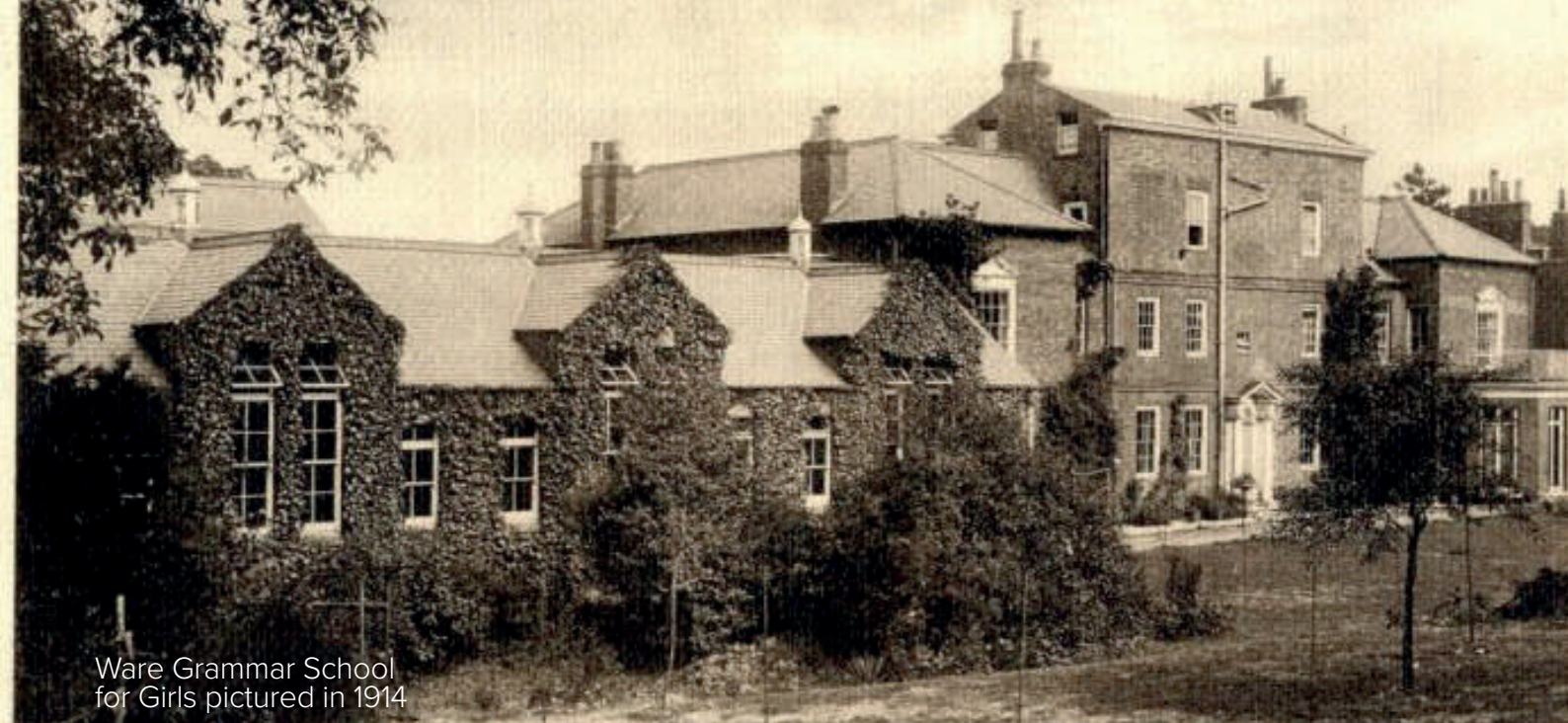
Buntingford branch (part-time opening about 3 times a week including one evening, by one member of staff), This was about 11 miles away and one had to travel by the number 331 bus, Hertford to Buntingford. Fortunately for us, the bus stop was almost outside the library door. Not so at the other end and in inclement weather, it seemed to be quite a hike especially if one had a bag full of urgently needed books. The library was housed in a room of a building used by other people. To the left of the entrance area was a staircase. On one evening of the week there would be a hustle and bustle on the stairs as members of the local band met for practice. Suddenly, they tuned up and were still playing

"Mrs Plum was proud of her son, and I used to hear everything about him. Then there was a former Spitfire pilot during WW2. He would tell us how he 'blew them out of the sky'"

as we locked up and left. The library door was half glazed so the actual room, heated by an electric fire in winter did not feel so small and shut away.

Creature comforts there were extremely basic. A kettle plugged in behind the counter. In the winter we would bring a thermos of hot coffee with us and any urgently needed requested books as well. It was a question of the survival of the fittest. The toilet was at the end of a corridor through a door up a step behind the counter. The plan of action if things became urgent, was to hurry to the outside door, look up and down the road and if no-one was about, make a quick dash for it. Yes, those were the days! There were 2 cafés nearby so that we could have a proper dinner, always remembering to collect the receipts so that an expenses claim could be made. At tea-time, we drew the curtain across the window in our entrance door while we ate something to keep us going.

Our library users here were a mixed bag. There were what one might call ordinary people and then there was a sort of 'upper class'. I found a Lady X. who lived on the edge of the town in an impressive old house, an agreeable person to deal with (she gave me a lovely oval flower decorated dish as a wedding present). The other, what one would have called 'upper class' people lived in lovely houses in the main street.



Ware Grammar School
for Girls pictured in 1914

One regular customer was Mrs Plum, mother of Philip Plum, President of the L.A. in 1992. Mrs Plum was proud of her son, and I used to hear everything about him. Then there was a former Spitfire pilot during WW2. He would tell us how he 'blew them out of the sky'.

We didn't much like home time in the dark weather, it was cold and creepy waiting for a bus that one hoped would come and soon. One summer day as I waited, a young man who was a frequent visitor to the library, stopped by on his motor bike and asked if I would like a lift as he had to go to Ware. My only thought was that it would save time, so I got on with my bag sandwiched between my abdomen and his back. I was then told to hold on tight round his waist and we were off! He stopped in the main street, and I got off and thanked him. He then turned the bike round and zoomed back. (Had to go to Ware?) A few days later, I met his sister, an old Grammar School friend who confided in me that

he was keen on me. Every time that he came into the library, I just wanted the ground beneath my feet to open but I just had to carry on as normal.

Western house (The original building was the Union Workhouse for the old and poor of Ware. The hospital was built later). This was visited one morning a week to provide a library service to the patients in the hospital and residents living in a building across the road. The books etc. were housed in a large locked, wall cupboard unit in the original building. I hated going into this room as it was not unusual for a mentally disturbed resident to wander in. I had an escape plan worked out, to make a speedy dive for the door and go and report it for it did use to happen. Books were carried to the wards in a shallow wicker basket divided lengthwise by a wicker divider. It could be slightly tipped up so that the books looked as if they were arranged on two shelves. The stock was mostly romance, westerns with a few detective stories and

occasionally we had a requested book. I cannot remember the issue method, something pretty compact as we had to carry the basket around the buildings to the readers. Given that the walk to W.H. was nearly all uphill and the site from the wide entrance drive was uphill too, this would seem to be a not very enjoyable part of our duties. However, there was a resident named Alfie who carried the basket for us to certain places. This made him feel a V.I. P. of course and he was well known around the site. It was a service that we were happy to deliver to this special sector of people not all original residents of Ware. The organisation of getting a big change of stock was the job of the Branch Librarian of course. The B.L. or me, went on alternate weeks. Our tea-break was taken in the sewing room where the staff gave us tea and biscuits. We gave them a Christmas present by way of thanks. We dreaded having to make this weekly mostly uphill trek in inclement weather.



Ware Union Workhouse / Western House

“Being a woman never held me back, and the dissemination of information is still part of my daily life.”

So, this gives you a picture of my work life which for the most part I just loved. Betty Simpson, the Branch Librarian was very good with all the people and was well liked. She wanted all people to be treated fairly and with care and consideration and no preferential treatment. We could never forget Mrs B.H. Wood. She was a Swiss lady and she and her husband and son ‘Chreestopher’ lived in a fashionable part of the town. Christopher was a very clever teenage son, no trouble and so on. She was petite and very smart and in winter, always wore a red coat and hat. However, even in the coldest weather, she never, no, never wore a scarf and showed a bare V neck. So, what was she made of? She came in one day soon after Betty was wearing her engagement ring. As this seemed to be going unnoticed by Mrs Wood, I had to take a step back and point to my finger and Betty. Well, she was just delighted and wished her every happiness. When Betty left, Doreen Chubb came as our B.L.

and was affectionately called ‘Chubby’. She was popular too.

I was married in 1955 and in 1957 I left on maternity leave but did not return to work. However, my enthusiasm for working with books and information for the public never went away. About 1960 we moved house to Sambourne in Warwickshire. When our son started school, I returned to work part time at the Alcester Area Library. This included working on a rural mobile library. My husband, realising that working with people, books and information was in my blood, suggested that I study to become a Chartered Librarian. When our son started at Grammar School in 1968, I was accepted at Birmingham Library School. It was an enjoyable but hard slog juggling the daily journey, study, home and family, and Dragon our standard sized long-haired dachshund.

But I did it, getting my professional letters ‘A.L.A.’ in 1971! I had a wonderful and successful career. Miss Lorna V. Paulin was appointed County Librarian of Hertfordshire

and in 1966 became the first woman President of the Library Association. I used to meet her at the Annual General Meetings, and she would always ask about my son whom she had asked to meet when he was young.

Being a woman never held me back, and the dissemination of information is still part of my daily life. I just cannot leave a stone unturned!

So, looking back over the years, for someone whose ambition had been never to go out to work, I found my role in life. I always felt that I was privileged to serve my fellow man. On returning to work in 1970, I was determined to get up the professional ladder. One thing is certain, that, being a Postscript.

Dear readers, I do realise that some of the above memories may not be entirely accurate, but this all happened many moons ago. My home now is in a McCarthy & Stone Retirement PLUS apartment in Oxfordshire and I am very happy! PL
Genny Andrews.



Welcome to a new initiative From RPG

Committee for friends and former colleagues to reconnect and possibly catch up with one another. Please respond and share news and views that will benefit individuals.

My name is Christiana (Christie) Ikeogu. I would love to reconnect with the colleagues and friends I worked with during my first professional post, after library school at the City of London Polytechnic (presently part of the London

Metropolitan University). I was based at the Old Castle Street, under the headship of Mrs R Pankhurst, followed by Maureen Castens. The period in question is between 1982 and 1987. Other names that stick to my memory are – Carol Westaway, Maureen Knight, Nigel, Mark (my direct manager who commuted from Reading).

**Please give me a shout
if possible on 07957726215 or
email: christieikeogu@gmail.com.**

Events and Announcements

Friday October 15th 2021

Time: 2.00pm

Venue: Hockey Museum and Library

Address: 13 High Street Woking GU21 6BL

Description: We think we have the largest collection of hockey books, magazines and associated publications in the world. These date from the 1890s through to the present day. The Museum's shelves hold in excess of 1,300 books covering some 650 titles which are organised by subject, e.g. biography, coaching, indoor hockey, Olympics, and umpiring. If you are looking for a particular book, then you can look through our online catalogue which is divided by thematic sub-categories on the left of this page. The Museum is also home to a large number of magazines, handbooks, rule books, programmes, fixture lists and minute books.

No.of places: 15 - 20

Approx duration: 2 hours

Cost: Free but there is a donation box!

Travel: The museum and library is about 100 yards from Woking station. There is a car park but it is in town, so further away and likely to be full!

Please contact Charmaine if you would like to come on:

charmainebourton11@hotmail.co.uk or 020 8395 9209

Monday, 25th October 2021

Time: 12.30 to 1.30 pm

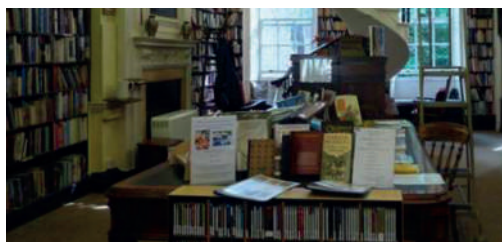
Venue: Bromley House Library (Virtual)

Description: Bromley House Library, founded in 1816, is a flourishing independent lending library situated in the centre of Nottingham and is one of the few remaining subscription libraries in the country. In addition to the many fine reading rooms spread over three floors of a Grade II listed Georgian townhouse, there is a beautiful walled garden, which is one of only two remaining in the city centre. The visit will comprise the following:

- Welcome and background to Bromley House Library
- History – key facts
- Special collections and conservation
- Restoration of the top floor
- Managing the Library today - including systems implemented
- Projects for the future
- Q&As

Please contact David Byrne if you would like to come on *david.f.byrne@icloud.com*

This online visit is free, with the option to donate £5.00 to RPG.



Tuesday 22nd March 2022

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: Moravian Church House library and archives. Can also see Chapel and Church.

Description: The library contains printed books relating to the history of the Church both in Britain and abroad, biographies, Moravian hymn and tune books and theology. The archive material consists of records relating to certain congregations particularly those no longer in existence, mission reports, Synod minutes and much more.

Address: 5 - 7 Muswell Hill, London N10 3TJ

No. of places: 10 - 12

Cost: Free but donations very much appreciated

Please contact Charmaine if you would like to come on: charmainebourton11@hotmail.co.uk or 020 8395 9209

Tuesday April 19th 2022

NB: This is the day after Easter Monday

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: National Badminton Museum

Address: National Badminton Museum, Bradwell Road, Milton Keynes MK8 9LA

Description: The National Badminton Museum was opened on 9th September 2003. The National Collection of badminton rackets, shuttles, books and memorabilia is one of the finest and most comprehensive collections of badminton artefacts in the world.

No. of places: 30

Cost: Free but they ask for a donation of £5.00 per visitor!

Please contact Charmaine if you would like to come on: charmainebourton11@hotmail.co.uk or 020 8395 9209

Tuesday 26th April 2022

Retired Professionals Group Annual Lunch 2021

Our ever-popular Lunch is still in the pipeline.

Time: 12.30 for 1pm start.

Venue: The Civil Service Club, Great Scotland Yard, London SW1A 2HJ.

For more details contact

Ian Orton: ianorton5@gmail.com or phone 07841 577991



FOR NEXT ISSUE Please send articles in MS Word for the next issue before 24th January 2022 to editor.rpg@cilip.org.uk

