

RPg

Retired Professionals Group

CILIP SPECIAL
INTEREST
GROUP

Issue 96 • February 2022

Making 2022 a year of adventure and discoveries



Post-Lib

RPG Committee 2022

Chair: Ian Orton

ianorton5@gmail.com

Secretary: Vincent McDonald

vjmcd@hotmail.co.uk

Treasurer: Judith Allery

treasurer.rpg@cilip.org.uk

Vice Chair: Sian King

sianking70@gmail.com

Post-Lib Editor:

Christiana Ikeogu

editor.rpg@cilip.org.uk

christieikeogu@gmail.com;

Web Editor: Alan Cooper

info.rpg@cilip.org.uk

Marketing and

Communications: vacant

Visits Organiser:

Charmaine Bourton

charmainebourton11@hotmail.co.uk

Other Committee Members

David Byrne

Valerie Bearne

For general enquiries about the Retired Professionals Group please contact

info.rpg@cilip.org.uk

Now more than ever we want to make sure we stay in touch. If you haven't already, you can sign up to receive email alerts from RPG at ***<https://lnkd.in/d4DQCqe>***

Or, if you would like help, please contact David Byrne on 07850 791002.

For changes in membership circumstances contact ***membership@cilip.org.uk***

Contents



Chair's Note 04

Ian Orton

Editor's Introduction 06

Christiana Ikeogu

News and Views 07

CILIP RPG 100 Club

Trending 08

Visit to the hockey museum and archive

By Charmaine Bourton

Making Connections 10

The Catastrophic incidents at the University of Cape Town and the Parliamentary Precinct. By Peter G Unaderwood

People 16

Amongst women By Vincent McDonald

Reports, Events Announcements 24

Time to catch up

1 in 8 goes free[†]

Book a holiday and **10%*** of the cost will go back to **CILIP RPG**

Travel. We've all missed it the joy of discovery and exploring somewhere new. But 2022 is the year to catch up. The world is opening up again, and it's waiting for you. We'll look after you every step of the way - so all you have to worry about is your packing.

With limited 2022 availability, make sure you book early to secure your preferred date and itinerary.

Call **01283 248 304** (quoting **CILIP RPG**)

Visit **rivieratravel.co.uk**

For group enquiries email **groups@rivieratravel.co.uk** or call **01283 742 322**

Email **affinity@rivieratravel.co.uk** (within 24 hours of booking online to request 10% donation)

Don't forget to mention **CILIP RPG** at the time of booking

Bookings for individuals as well as groups are accepted. *Some elements are not commissionable - for full details on the affinity offer, please visit rivieratravel.co.uk/affinity. †Applies only to river cruises of 7 nights or more, departing in 2023 and booked before 30 April 2022. Free place offer can be exchanged for cash back after travel of 12.5% if 10 or more travelling. Riviera Travel retain the right to withdraw this offer at any time. Prices are per person based on two sharing a room/cabin. Prices subject to change and availability. Visit the website for our full terms and conditions.





Chair's Welcome Note

Ian Orton

Contact me

chair.rpg@cilip.org.uk • ianorton5@gmail.com

The last three months have seen a slow return to normality (despite the fact COVID has certainly not gone away) with the Annual Lunch finally taking place and an increased number of electronic events. With CILIP confirming that special interest groups will not be funded in the future the challenges of making RPG become self-funding became even more urgent.

Your committee have continued to meet by Zoom since the early part of 2020 including the Annual General Meetings and this looks like it will continue into 2022 and beyond. The next AGM is on Tuesday 7th June 2022 at 2pm by Zoom. The Zoom link will be circulated nearer the time, so please try and drop in – you can participate during the meeting and there is an opportunity for informal chat afterwards. Although a face-to-face committee is unlikely in the near future the Zoom meetings are easy to manage and people are getting used to the experience.

The Annual Lunch was finally held on Tuesday 21st September 2021 at the Civil Service Club and there were 26

members and guests. We held a raffle for the first time and the surplus income from the lunch was enough to pay for the artwork for a copy of Post-Lib. The 2022 lunch is on Tuesday 26th April again at the Civil Service Club and details are within Post-Lib.

Annual Lunch 21st September 2021

One of the ideas that came up at the Annual Lunch was the re-introduction of the residential visit within the UK and beyond. To test the water for this, your committee have prepared a three-day residential including outings to local places of interest etc. planned for October 2022 centred within the Lake District. We are keen to promote this aspect of RPG which was once very popular with trips to Australia! I suggest we start with the Lake District for openers.

Now that COVID is a bit more

under control Charmaine, our Visits Organiser, is co-ordinating visits which can be viewed on the Post-Lib link via the CILIP website. We started virtual visits last summer and these are beginning to lift off. When I wandered electronically round a Suffolk Art Gallery, courtesy of RPG, I was not quite sure what to expect but it was so real I recommend everyone to try a virtual visit. We want to communicate more with the RPG membership and are looking at a number of virtual visits linked to RPG Networking and Member Days. If anyone would like to help with this at regional level please let me know.

Money continues to be a challenge and we are trying new ways to make us self-funding and one of them is establishing a 100 Club. Most of us know the 100 Club idea from community activities but supporting RPG via a 100 Club will help keep RPG alive. Details of the proposed 100 Club are in Post Lib. Why not sign up- it will keep RPG going and you could win!

Despite the challenges of COVID, RPG are promoting many activities for the





“Most of us know the 100 Club idea from community activities but supporting RPG via a 100 Club will help keep RPG alive. Details of the proposed 100 Club are in Post Lib.”

The RPG lunch will be on Tuesday 26th April at the Civil Service Club



A trip to the Lake District is planned for October 2022

membership but this would not be possible without the RPG Committee: Sian as Vice Chair who has a corporate brief on the role of RPG within CILIP, Vincent our new Secretary who has the challenge of the minute taking and general co-ordination, Charmaine has continued to organize visits to places of interest throughout COVID19, Alan who has strengthened our IT role within CILIP, Judith has continued to balance the books with a smile, Christie who has made Post-Lib the jewel in our crown and David who remains a

powerhouse of creative energy planning for 2022 and beyond 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? If you would like to know a little more about this rewarding opportunity, 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!

**Ian Orton,
Chair RPG**



Editor's note

Christiana Ikeogu

Contact me

editor.rpg@cilip.org.uk

christieikeogu@gmail.com

Welcome to the 96th edition of CILIP RPG's Post-Lib

What a roller coaster start to the year 2022! As we adjust to the Omicron infestation, with reduced contact with families and friends over the Christmas period, then comes the news of energy price rises, hospital waiting lists getting longer, and catastrophic stormy weather hitting coastal regions in Britain and other parts of the world. One would have thought that leaders of the world have enough problems to solve rather than escalation of border disputes presently heating up between Russia and Ukraine and involving many other countries.

However, over here at RPG, there is so much positivity and inspiration for a better future. Our Chair, Ian Orton and committee members are continuously punching above the weight of the SIG, as you will discover from the articles below.

As the doors open for mixing and partnering with other organisations, Charmaine and David have worked hard in organising visits, virtually and face-to-face. You will be thrilled, as I am, with Vincent McDonald's story of his career among women. I was also inspired by the sincerity of Joseph Wormald who shares his journey into librarianship. His article will

no doubt move you to reflect and possibly share your own story on why and how you ended up in the profession.

It is always good to look back and assess as well as appreciate our progress in everything we do. I am delighted that Pat and Tom Featherstone have kindly reported past adventure and tours RPG made long before the present committee members came into power. I hope their work will encourage us all to have a more positive outlook and understanding that age is not a barrier to making a difference in the profession. I am sure those who worked and enjoyed those trips will be pleased by what they achieved in those days.

Our business plan, annual report and accounts reflect the efforts committee members are putting into the affairs of the SIG. Our gratitude goes to the Chair, Vice Chair, and the Treasurer for those reports. As Ian has stated, we would like to hear your comments and suggestions, and on how the group is performing. We are RPG! And we are CILIP!

With best wishes for a better year ahead.

Christiana Ikeogu

NEXT ISSUE

Please send articles in MS Word for the next issue before 23rd May 2022 to the editor at the following address: Christiana Ikeogu, 130 Elphinstone Road, London E17 5EX

E: christieikeogu@gmail.com
You can also speak to her over the phone on 07957726215

News and Views



CILIP RPG has big plans to secure our future and develop what we offer to colleagues across CILIP and beyond.

We have come up with a new way to replenish the coffers to allow us to grow and develop, benefitting all those who have an interest in our work. The idea is to have a 100 Club with each number paying £2 per month (£24 per annum). At the end of each month the numbers will be drawn, and three winners announced. On the basis of 100 members, the proposed prizes will be £30, £20 and £10, with an additional prize of £50

every six months.

CILIP RPG provides various events, visits, and webinars at low cost or free of charge, so this is a way to try to ensure a modest but regular annual income. The 100 Club is open to all CILIP Members. If you feel you are able to support CILIP RPG by being part of the 100 Club that would be wonderful. It is possible to buy as many numbers as you wish! In the first instance we need to gauge whether we would have sufficient support. If you would be willing to participate in the 100 Club please get in touch at the link opposite.

JOIN THE 100 CLUB

Please complete the brief CILIP RPG 100 Club Survey: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MDYGZC3

Visit to the hockey museum and archive

By Charmaine Bourton

- **VENUE:** Hockey museum
- **LOCATION:** Woking, surrey
- **DATE OF VISIT:** 15.10.21

The Hockey Museum is the world's first and only museum dedicated to hockey. It is located a very short distance from Woking station.

Hockey is played in many countries and more people play hockey than cricket.

The museum was originally located in Milton Keynes but is now in its current 1890s Victorian building. It is independent of any governing body. The museum aims to preserve, share, and celebrate the history and heritage of hockey.

It has won a President's Award for services to hockey and has an accredited museum certificate. The "modern" version of the game dates from 1871 when a set of rules was drawn up, but there is evidence of a game being played by hitting

a ball with a stick in 2,000 BC. However, a game is not considered to be a game if there are no formal rules.

How the museum works

There are 56 collections and study topics including clothes, ties, caps, goal keeping equipment, sticks, balls, 2000 pin badges, 450 hockey stamps (believed to be a complete collection), programmes from around the world, postcards, pictures, and illustrations. The film collection consists of over 100 films including a March 1938 television programme which depicts hockey as the first ever live sport to be televised.

There is a cabinet of films divided into male and female from 2001 – 15 shots from a single camera behind the



"The museum aims to preserve, share, and celebrate the history and heritage of hockey."

goal – so every player can be seen. This is a useful resource for those wanting to research relatives who were in hockey teams. There is a quilting collection (see photos - note the Olympic rings present in each picture) created by UK top quilter, Pat Deacon. They are all embroidered with the name of the game and results on the reverse.

We were taken to see the volunteer's workroom, where



on Tuesdays and Wednesdays 4 students studying for PhDs, 1 Masters student, and students from Royal Holloway meet to work. The university also provides interns!

We were interested to see a “Quarantine” section – not just relating to Covid, but donated items, mainly clothing, which are left in crates for 2 – 4 months to make sure there are no unwelcome inhabitants therein!

Next, we had a lesson on how to catalogue a hockey stick! None of us on the visit had studied this at library school and for those of you reading this who also didn’t cover this you must include: The type of stick - field,

indoor, goalkeeper; the shape of the head; the type of grip; the material used on main shaft; the type of wood used and the manufacturer’s mark.

Next, Jill, the librarian showed us the library - a small, but very well organised space. She couldn’t use Dewey so made up her own system. The stock basically covers men’s and women’s hockey, Club histories, biographies and handbooks produced by associations that ran the game, biographies, annuals, and fiction – remember the Angela Brazil books!

The original intention was to collect four copies of each book in case other hockey museums



opened in other parts of the country, so a book could be given to them, but this hasn’t happened yet!

Finally, we were shown the archives. The archivist started as a volunteer and was so inspired that he qualified as an archivist! He showed us the minute books from the 1870s which showed the formulation of the rules being worked upon. Part of the rules for women’s hockey was they could stoop and use their long dresses to stop the ball!

We had a fascinating couple of hours here and highly recommend a visit!

Charmaine Bourton

Making Connections

Fire! The Catastrophic incidents at the University of Cape Town and the Parliamentary Precinct.



By Peter G Underwood

The years 2021 and 2022 will long be remembered by LIS professionals in South Africa for two catastrophes. In 2021, part of the Library of the University of Cape Town was destroyed by a fire that raged across the mountainside, and the year 2022 opened with the destruction by fire of a portion of the Parliamentary precinct in Cape Town. Fortunately, the Parliamentary Library was largely unscathed; however, older items held in basements in another area of the precinct may have been severely damaged or destroyed by water damage. Because the precinct has been declared a crime scene – arson having been alleged – the Library staff and conservators have not been able to visit the scene to assess damage and begin salvage. Allied to this disaster, a recent news report suggests that a digitisation project undertaken



to preserve historical texts may have been affected by quality control issues. The report, by James Stent, can be read here: <https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/exclusive-parliaments-botched-digitisation-may-mean-millions-of-precious-documents-were->

lost-in-fire-20220128 (site visited 1 February 2022).

Fire and water are the elemental forces of nature that librarians perhaps most fear: the extinguishing of a fire by water may cause more destruction than the heat of the fire itself. On the morning

of Sunday 18 April 2021, high winds drove a wildfire across the slopes of Table Mountain towards the Upper Campus of the University; this partly-wooded area provided the perfect terrain of a biomass of flammable vegetation to create a high-intensity fire capable of consuming everything in its path and of leaping roads to spread further. The destruction embraced some historic buildings, among them Mostert's Mill, which was the last working windmill in South Africa, and some community areas, such as the Rhodes Memorial Restaurant and Tea Gardens.

The fire quickly spread to the campus, with damage to residences, faculty buildings and the destruction of the Jagger Reading Room. This building was the original Reading Room of the Library of the Upper Campus, designed by J. M. Solomon, and had been sensitively restored and refurbished, re-opening in May 2013. It enabled the collocation of the Special Collections, consisting of the African Studies Collection, Manuscripts and Archives, the Audio-Visual Archive, and the rare books collections — including books, pamphlets, periodicals, photographs and film, archival material, maps, and posters. The quality of the collection had long been recognised

internationally for its extent and depth.

The contents of the ground and mezzanine floors of the Reading Room were completely destroyed. What remained was the material held in basement stackrooms, into which a considerable volume of water from the firefighting equipment had settled. Automatic fire doors had prevented the conflagration spreading to the rest of the library.

The morning after, with smoke still rising in a few areas, it was time to be grateful that no lives had been lost. The call for volunteers to assist with a rescue and recovery mission was quickly answered by many students, alumni of the University, members of the community and retired staff, of which I am one. Many experts on conservation also volunteered their services and several South African companies provided equipment, refreshment for the teams and other support.

Of principal importance was safety of the volunteers; before entering the shell of the Reading Room — which had been declared secure by structural engineers — every volunteer had to attend a safety briefing and respond to a brief questionnaire about physical ability, following which the volunteers could be assigned

to an area. For those of “riper” years, the Triage Tent was considered suitable in that the work was intricate but less-demanding physically. The main component formed a human chain to label and pack the contents of the basement stackrooms into plastic crates (generously donated by a South African supermarket company) and pass them to the surface, where the contents could be sorted into material that needed exposure to the air to dry and that which needed suitable packing to be subjected to freeze-drying for later conservation.

A blog by Lara Kemp Reusch of DK Conservators provides a fascinating insight into the process of conservation: <https://blogs.uct.ac.za/memory/2021/11/one-books-conservation-journey>

Many staff contributed memories of the event and its impact on their lives: <https://blogs.uct.ac.za/memory/jagger-library-recovery/>

There are plans afoot for continued conservation work and for the rebuilding/reimagining of the site of the Jagger Reading Room. Much has been lost — but not the creativity and enthusiasm of those who care.

Peter G. Underwood
Emeritus Professor
of Librarianship
University of Cape Town

Making Connections

What larks! RPG (Previously RMG) Trips 1997-2008

By Pat Featherstone

Writing this article has been a trip but this time down Memory Lane and yes, there were larks but there was also a serious side to them as visits were made to some wonderful libraries whose ages ranged over more than a thousand years of history and we met colleagues who were only too pleased to show a group of 'oldies' around and also on occasion ask for advice.

Please note that all these reports were written up in Post-Lib, and the numbers in brackets refer to those issues in which they appeared, and which of course give rather more details than there has been space here.

The first trip was in April 1997 and appropriately enough was a literary weekend in Bath (10) where the emphasis was very much on the life and works of Jane Austen with talks and a walking tour of the city.

This was followed in March 1998 by a visit to Paris (12) where the highlight was a visit to the recently re-located

Bibliothèque nationale on the banks of the Seine, although its brutalist architecture did not please all. By way of contrast the library of the Augustinian Abbey at, founded in the 6th Sainte-Geneviève, century, was a treasure trove of manuscripts and incunabula. The Archbishop's Palace now houses a technical library set up for workers engaged in restoration and conservation.

Shortly after that in June of the same year there was a theatre weekend in Scarborough (13) where our colleague (and professional magician) Roy Field had arranged a tour of the Stephen Joseph Theatre where many Alan Ayckbourn plays have been premiered and which started life in the library reading room. We also saw a performance of his latest and on the Sunday morning there was a short tour of the North York Moors

The following year (1999) saw us back in Europe with a visit to Prague (15). Here we started



with a walking tour of the Old Town and this was followed by a visit to the newly refurbished City Library where a tower in the form of a well had been incorporated into the structure to symbolise the depth of knowledge in the collection. Also visited were the National Library which was housed in a former Jesuit monastery where the ceilings were as magnificent as the books and manuscripts and an equally beautiful building housing the library of the Strahov Monastery.

Then In April 2000, Edinburgh (19) was the venue for a four-day trip where Toni Bunch had organised a very varied (and packed) programme for us.



Canberra Parliament house

We saw the grand premises of the Signet Library and some wonderful prints in the Library of the Royal Botanic Gardens. We also visited the Russell Collection of early musical instruments where Jean Plaister showed an unexpected talent by playing for us.

We again returned to Europe in October 2001. This time to the south of France, where from our base in Menton (25) we visited a wide range of libraries, gardens and museums along the Côte d'Azur and the Ligurian coast, all organised for us by John Garrod a former Librarian at NATO but now living in Monaco. It was fascinating to see the influence of 19th century British

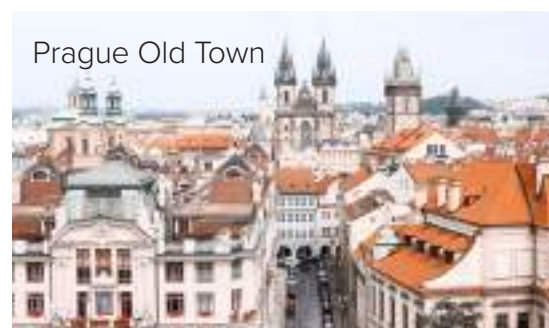
ex-pats on the area, and which accounted for the large number of English language books in some collections. One of the more unusual museums was in Monaco where the National Museum houses a fascinating collection of automata and just for the record, we did not visit the Casino although that was tempting as a possible means of funding future RMG tours.

Nearer to home, 2002 saw a short trip to Norwich (27) in April where Rex Stedman had organised a visit to the (then) new Central Library and also took us on a walking city tour.

The travel arrangements for many of these early visits were arranged by Sheila Wilson who



Stephen Joseph Theatre



Prague Old Town

was reprising her role, earlier in life, of Tour Organiser in the AAL (Association of Assistant Librarians) and it was that organisation to which most of the participants in these tours had belonged. This meant that there was a solid nucleus of people who had known one another for most of their professional lives and during that time had also built up a wide range of contacts. This proved invaluable in setting up many of the tours particularly IFLA contacts and the staff of the British Council (such as Frances Salinie in Paris) not to mention colleagues living in the area to be visited who could supply much local knowledge as to places to visit.

Then in November 2003 came the 'biggy' - a three-week tour to Australia (33 also Library Association Gazette 27/02/04 for a more comprehensive

Making Connections

report) stopping off at Hong Kong on the way out and Singapore on the way back. Getting into Australia was not easy for Doreen Bailey, one of the more elderlies in the party, who was stopped when sniffer dogs decided that her luggage contained a 'suspicious substance' – this turned out to be lavender bags which she had made to give to a friend in Sydney! On the plus side, Tom was very pleased to be re-united with his luggage which he had not seen since Heathrow. Sydney was the busiest part of the tour with visits to Parliamentary, State, Central Public and a branch library. It was not all hard work though. We panned for gold at Sovereign Hill, a recreation of a mining village just outside Melbourne, although even here we found a library in the shape of a Mechanics Institute, and once up in Queensland we marvelled at the natural beauty of the rain forest and the Great Barrier Reef. We met up with our equivalent group, the Pearls in Canberra, and in Melbourne saw Mike Ramsden who had moved from Aberystwyth to Australia many years before. Meeting up with long-unseen friends and family was a recurring theme of this tour. We think that at least ten libraries were visited ranging from the grandeur of Sydney University to the high-tech of Woodlands Regional Library in



Chetham's Library in Manchester, England, is the oldest free public reference library in the English-speaking world

Singapore.

This had obviously given members a real taste for travel because 2004 saw first, a visit to Cambridge (36) in April where Paul Kirwen used his influence as a Fellow to get us into several of the college libraries. This was then followed in October by a 17-day visit to St. Petersburg (37 & 38) where Ron Surridge led a party through seven libraries, a conservation centre and several museums including of course the wonderful collections of the Hermitage.

The following year again saw two visits, Dublin (39) in April where Deidre Ellis-King, the City Librarian gave us a warm welcome, particularly to Tom who had been on her appointment panel some years before. Trinity College was a 'must' as was the obligatory pub crawl even if it had a literary theme! In the National Library

we were given a private and very knowledgeable tour of their Ulysses exhibition. The Royal College of Surgeons was noted not just for its library but also for having sheltered Countess Markievicz and her fellow fighters during the Easter Rising (the bullet holes are still there on the brass plate at the entrance)

But then in September we were globe-trotting again with a tour of eastern Canada (41). Here we visited libraries in Montreal, Quebec, Ottawa and Toronto. In Montreal we visited the newly opened Grande Bibliothèque. From there we moved on to Quebec where our language skills were tested by the proudly Francophile inhabitants and the staff of the Laval University ("you want me to speak English this late on a Friday afternoon!"). The coach journey from Quebec to Ottawa threw up another surprise when the



musical accompaniment to lunch required audience participation and Beryl and Mike Saitch duly obliged with an impressive performance on the spoons. Ottawa is home to the National Archives Preservation Centre, and we were very taken with the staff offices on the top floor which were in the form of small individual houses. Our final stop was Toronto where in addition to libraries, including the Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books, there was a side trip to Niagara Falls and of course a winery where we learned all about ice wine and its unusual production.

After this 2006 was a quiet year with a short visit to Buxton (43) where we visited the grand library of Tatton Park, now in the hands of the National Trust, where one of their conservators told us about the on-going work of preservation. We also visited the RNIB just outside Stockport where we saw how Braille books



Countess Markievicz

were produced and visited Manchester to go to Chetham's Library, the oldest public library in the country which still contains some chained books and was also the place where Engels wrote the 'Condition of the Working Class in England', based on his observations of life in Manchester at the time.

Services for the visually impaired also featured in our week-long visit to Germany (49) in September 2007 when we visited the Deutsche Zentralbucherie für Blinde in Leipzig. This came at the end of a tour where we had visited both sites of the National Library in Berlin and the Amerika-Gedenke Bibiothek whose deputy director Christina Sauer has been a good friend of ours for many years. It was interesting to learn how all these institutions are adapting to Berlin, and Germany itself, being once more united. Unification was also the theme of our visit to the State University Library

in Dresden where collections scattered throughout both the city and the region had recently been brought together under one roof and during a city tour, we were also able to marvel at the wonderful restoration work that has taken place since WW2. The tour was organised by Joan Woollatt who probably holds the record for having participated in nearly all these trips.

The final trip was a long-postponed visit to Cardiff (51) in April 2008. This was organised by Bob Nichols who had laid on a varied programme of visits which included the National Museum Library, Rhondda Heritage Park where the group donned miners' helmets for an underground tour which included an all-too-realistic demonstration of using dynamite at a coal face, and a tour of the new Senedd (Welsh Assembly) and its library on Cardiff Bay.

So, there we have it. 15 trips over the course of 11 years and ranging across the British Isles, Europe and further afield to Australia and Canada. Yes, there were larks, visits to wineries and receptions figure almost as much as libraries in the reports, but we would like to think that by meeting other colleagues and finding out about mutual problems and successes we added a little more understanding to the world of librarianship.

Pat and Tom Featherstone

Amongst women

By Vincent McDonald

John McGahern's 1990 novel takes its title from 'Blessed art thou...' and made it into The Guardian's 2015 list of the 100 greatest novels of the 20th Century. Moran, the principal male character, is a former guerrilla fighter in the Irish Independence struggle in the 1920's. His wife, three daughters and two sons struggle with the religious and patriarchal stranglehold of the Ireland of the time. The novel is more about the women than the lone man. I loved the book when I read it, decades ago. It was unusual to read a man writing such an empathetic portrait of women.

When I left school, I had no real idea what I was going to do. My Mum came home one day and said, 'Vincent, there is an advert in the bus; they are looking for postmen'. So, I applied and became a postman, getting up at 4.30 to start work at 5 am.

I was 18 years old, and going out drinking, heavily, to pubs and dances 2 or 3 nights a week. After about six months in the job, I started coming out in boils, which were slow to heal. I still have the scars, on my fingers,

wrist, shin, face. I went to the doctor. 'Your blood is run down', he said. 'You need to give up going out at night or getting up at dawn'.

I gave in my notice the next day. I went to the Youth Employment Office in Harrow, Northwest London. 'What do you like?' the adviser asked. 'Books and football, but I know I will never play football for England'. 'What about a library?'. So, she rang Harrow Libraries. No vacancy for library assistants. 'Could you get to Brent?' 'Yes, there is a bus'. She rang them. This was a Tuesday. They said, 'come for an interview'. I went that Thursday.

I was interviewed by the



Amongst women by John McGahern, Quality Paperbacks Direct, 1990

Borough Librarian, a man who later became City Librarian for Birmingham. 'I see from your application that E M Forster is one of your favourite writers. What did you think of A journey to India?'

At the end of the interview, he offered me a job as a library assistant. 'Your appearance is fine', he said, 'but you might want to think about having elocution lessons'. He was referring to my North London



Vincent's retirement party, pictured with staff from Newmarket, one of the libraries in the area he used to manage



council estate accent. I left the interview pleased to have the job, and a bit sneery about this man who had questioned my accent but got the title wrong for one of the great novels of the 20th Century. I started work as a library assistant the following Monday.

My first boss, the Branch Librarian in the quiet library where I started work, was a spinster. Her Senior Assistant Librarian was a man, there were two female and two male library assistants. The Branch Librarian seemed unhappy, she would speak rather brusquely to me, and I sometimes wondered if she disliked men. It came as a huge surprise to hear from a friend who worked at one of the other libraries in the borough, years later, that my friend had walked into a rarely used room in the Central Library, looking for something, and had disturbed my boss shagging one of the

other (male) branch librarians.

In 1909 a survey had found that 41 percent of librarians were women. By the 1960's, 70% of the profession were female. Women's wages remained lower than those of their male colleagues, and of women in other professions. In 1979, Sheila Ritchie undertook research into the positions and pay of female librarians and produced an article entitled '2000 to 1: a sex oddity' which was published in 'Assistant Librarian' in Mar 1979. It showed that though women staffed most public libraries, it was male staff that dominated senior positions in the profession. In response to this, the author helped found Women in Libraries, the first feminist group for women in libraries. An inaugural conference was held and attracted over 200 women, who agreed on three points. First, the rights of women as employees in the profession and

as library users were not being given proper attention; second, a movement was needed to put this right; third, it should not be restricted to feminist librarians, but open to all women, staff, and users.

Two years later, a group of around 10 women, initially known as 'The Feminist Library Workers' Group', organised a conference at the Polytechnic of Central London. At the end of the meeting, a group was formally brought into being, entitled 'Women in Libraries' (it existed until 1990), and a majority vote decided that it should be open to women only.

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and the Archives and Records Association (UK & Ireland) (ARA) produced a report in 2015, the UK information workforce survey, the most extensive study of its kind anywhere

in the world. It revealed that despite having a predominately female workforce at 78.1%, male library and information workers typically earned more than women and were nearly twice as likely to occupy senior management roles than their female counterparts. Of those working more than 22 hours a week and earning £30,000 or more annually, 47% were men and 37.3% women.

Gill Furniss, MP and former librarian, contributed to an Information Professional article in March 2018, on Gender Parity in Libraries: 'The large majority of information professionals and library workers are women. However, we know that few are in managerial positions, and we know that many information positions are voluntary. Women make up the majority of the voluntary industry. It is possible that more women, particularly older women, are overlooked for paid positions. Women also hold more part-time roles and so are less likely to progress to the top of their career'. It seems that there is still a longstanding and intractable bias against women in libraries.

I remain grateful to Brent. After a year or so as a library assistant, they gave me holiday employment, and a retainer grant to supplement my local authority grant, while I studied two years for my library

qualification. I ended up, with qualification, working in the Brent Central Library. There was a reserve stock upstairs, accessed by a spiral staircase, which presented challenges to the women library assistants wearing the short skirts which by the early seventies were normal.

I was courting a woman, Kim, who I wanted to marry, but we knew that the meagre wages of a very junior Assistant Librarian would not allow us to buy a home in London. We wished to move out of the city to a more rural area. I have this theory that children who grow up in a metropolis long to move to the country, whereas country-raised children long to live in a big city. A job was advertised in the Library Association Record for a Branch Librarian at a part-time library in a village in Buckinghamshire. I applied, was interviewed, and got the job, and proposed to Kim that same evening. We married in 1976 and moved into an end terrace cottage in a little village close to Woburn Sands. I worked there for three years, before moving to be Senior Assistant Librarian in

"The large majority of information professionals and library workers are women. However, we know that few are in managerial positions."

a larger library in Bletchley.

Eventually I left Buckinghamshire to work in Bedfordshire, with responsibility for a fairly busy branch library and three mobile libraries. The six staff in the library were all women, the three mobile drivers were men. Once, one of the library assistants asked me for a reference for a job she had applied for outside of the service. She told me she would be very grateful if I gave her a good reference. 'I would do anything for a good reference; and I do mean anything' she said, looking me square in the eyes.

Then a mobile driver left, and we appointed a woman in his place. She had to pick the mobile up from the depot where it had been serviced. She called into the workshop there to collect the keys.

'Are you with the driver?' The mechanic asked. 'I am the driver!' She replied, gleefully.

After working in Brent, Buckinghamshire, and Bedfordshire, I ended up in Suffolk, where I worked in various jobs in the library and culture sphere for 24 years until retirement. For most of that time I was an area manager, with 15 libraries. All but one of the managers were women. I rarely had a problem with them. I was assisted by a team of six librarians, half women,



“Women get on and sort problems without making a fuss. They are generally more empathetic. They are less egotistic. They are also more likely to bring cakes into work.”

half men. The only ones that presented problems were the two men. Women get on and sort problems without making a fuss. They are generally more empathetic. They are less egotistic. They are also more likely to bring cakes into work. Every Easter I remember the simnel cake that one of my woman colleagues used to cook and bring to the staffroom; every birthday Judy used to bring fruit cake to my desk.

It was after retirement that I gradually came to realise that it wasn't only the love of books that had given me such a satisfying working life. It wasn't only my late wife who was a heroic woman. That women as a whole were better as work partners, and as daily companions. This didn't mean I disliked men. On the contrary, my four oldest and dearest

friends, that I am still in contact with, are men I have been friends with from childhood. But simply that, overall, women are nicer, and easier to work with, and more sensible.

I loved the book *Amongst women* (and the excellent TV mini-series that came from it). It presents what Robert McCrumm called a 'hauntingly beautiful evocation of a world and a landscape'. McGahern had an intense attachment to his mother, and he is buried beside her. On a visit to Ireland a few years ago I went to visit the house and grave, in Aughawillan in Leitrim, and the nearby lake that plays such a beguiling yet unsettling part in his oeuvre. In the tiny quiet village, I asked the only person I could find for the location of the house. The man pointed. As I stood looking, a car drew up, the window wound

down, and the driver asked the man who had directed me what was going on. It was obviously a big event in the village. 'He is looking for the McGahern house,' I heard my helper say. Then they both looked at me with bemusement.

Virtually my whole working life was spent in libraries. I remain grateful for a bus advert which led me to a job and a profession that allowed me to work with books, and to provide access to books and learning for others through my work.

It was a fine working life because I was surrounded by books; and was amongst women.

Vincent McDonald
Vincent is the author of Honey from Dorabjees (2013), about two post-retirement years working for VSO in India.

The Accidental Librarian

By Joe Wormald



I have always been impressed by colleagues who were clear from the start that they wanted to be librarians. I came into the profession rather more casually and thought that an occasional series of, at times, my equally casual progression might provide a little light entertainment. This episode tries to recapture the library world of 1950 and my approach to it. Later episodes, if the Editor's and readers' patience can stand it, will cover the ground at a much quicker pace.

"Looking back on our careers" said my friend "it looks as if it was a planned and effortless rise up the career ladder. In fact, it was a matter of chance and luck". That was certainly true in my case: in fact, I only became a librarian by chance.

School Certificate taken, results not yet known, the world of work beckoned and not having any idea of what I wanted to do I took up the offer of an interview with the Careers

Adviser at the Headmasters Conference. As I wasn't too sure what a career was, all my suggestions were dismissed as having no prospects, and I wasn't too sure what he was recommending. Finally, he suggested librarianship, to which I made the classic response about standing about stamping books all day. My adviser thought there was more to it than that, "You can take exams, get letters after your name, that sort of thing" he said and anyway, brightening, "You will be doing your National Service in eighteen months' time, after that you may have a better idea."

"My induction consisted of one day at the Central Library in the Walworth Road where I was shown how to sort and shelve books, operate the Browne issue system, and use a date stamp neatly."



Given the various commitments of the armed forces at the time (1950) it occurred to me afterwards that he may have thought that a friendly bullet might solve the problem for me.

There were two immediate vacancies, Mitcham and Southwark. Southwark was the easier and shorter journey, so an easy choice. (As it turned out that decision affected not only my career but my personal life for the next sixty plus years.) Anyway, an interview was arranged with the Chief Librarian, who seemed less concerned with my potential



than when I would start, and his preference for employing males. "Women just get trained and then get married and leave". Truly, the past is a different country!

My induction consisted of one day at the Central Library in the Walworth Road where I was shown how to sort and shelf books, operate the Browne issue system, and use a date stamp neatly. I was also told I would join the Library Association and study (in my own time) for its Entrance Examination after one year. One sign of the changing times was

that the three other new entrants were all girls.

Now fully trained I was sent to the Branch Library in the Old Kent Road. The building, now demolished to make way for a flyover had been built in early 20th century Gothic in tribute to the Canterbury Pilgrims. There were four staff, the Branch Librarian and Deputy being qualified, and two Assistants, and a stock which was still largely 1930s and earlier, although this improved as war-time restrictions on book production eased. The library was open from 9.30 until 8pm

five days a week, with a half day on Wednesdays. I found it a pleasant if undemanding way of earning a living, duly took the First Professional Exam at the LA's Chaucer House. In due course my colleague was called up for National Service and, to the Branch Librarian's disgust (and my delight) his replacement was female—a Miss Gibson. Despite that, life resumed its peaceful way until it was my turn to disappear for two years on for National Service.

To be continued
Joe Wormald

Reports, Events and Announcements

RPG Chair's Annual Report 2021

By Ian Orton

Being an eternal optimist, I thought 2021 would see off COVID 19 and somehow, we would get back to normal! Well, I got some of it right COVID has not gone away however the Retired Professionals Group continued to rise to the challenges of COVID and we did lots of things during 2021 and have some bumper things are planned for 2022 and beyond!

I now fully understood the term 'electronic freedom'. During 2021 when we had several committee and informal meetings, the AGM and site visits by Zoom and other arms of social and other media. The continuing convenience of social media has also meant more RPG members are now communicating via email etc. allowing us to ensure everyone gets Post-Lib and saving postage.

Finance challenges for CILIP has meant a decline in support for the special interest groups (including RPG) and prior to the decision by CILIP that special interest groups would have to be self-funding from 2022 RPG had started to attract funds via

sponsorship, partnership, online courses, and visits plus other creative avenues. You will see the advert from Riviera Travel in this edition of Post Lib plus Riviera will contribute 10% of any RPG holiday via Riviera to RPG. We also agreed that subject to RPG support we would introduce a 100 Club during 2022. A combination of this type of income will allow RPG to become self-funding and even grow! There are details of the 100 Club in this edition of Post-Lib. Please think about joining, it's not expense, it all helps RPG and CILIP survive, and you can win! Finance will continue to remain a challenge but the decision by CILIP to move the headquarters should create an operating surplus that will help the membership in the future.

Our Annual Lunch is a major event in our year and although

"Partnership remained the challenge and opportunity of 2021 for RPG both to promote the group and attract funds."

we had to change the date of the Annual Lunch twice during 2020 and once during 2021, we finally were able to hold the lunch on Tuesday 21st September 2021 at the Civil Service Club. Despite the tail end of COVID 26 people enjoyed the lunch, these included RPG, CILIP and guests; for the first time we had a raffle which helped the lunch to make a small surplus of just under £200 which is enough for one electronic edition of Post Lib. The 2022 Annual Lunch is planned for Tuesday 19th April at 12.30 and details are within this edition of Post-Lib.

Post-Lib continues to become the main link for RPG members to share experiences and views. Subject to funds we plan to produce two or three electronic and one hard copy a year and although more of the membership are receiving electronic copies some members are reluctant to share email details with CILIP/RPG. I understand the concern about handing out your email details, but CILIP/RPG will not share your email details with a third

party! So please the more we send by email the more we save your subscriptions.

Partnership remained the challenge and opportunity of 2021 for RPG both to promote the group and attract funds. At the 2019 CILIP Conference I was approached by colleagues who asked about what retired librarians do and since then RPG has started to sell itself as a brand that is about many things of which retirement is just one! Charmaine has organized visits on a regular basis and were it not for COVID face to face visits would still be ongoing, but COVID has meant we have to offer more electronic visits and this programme is now firmly in place. During 2021 as your Chair, I visited an Art Exhibition in Suffolk, spoke with a Russian Librarian, and discovered that public libraries have played a big part in fighting loneliness during COVID and many more such events. Details of such events are circulated to RPG members and on the web site.

2021 has been a year as we slowly edge towards normality 2022 will be even more fun!

Ian Orton,
Chair RPG



RPG's Business plan for 2022

The RPG Committee has formulated its planned activities for 2022 following participation in CILIP's Big Conversation. Our plan is in line with the strategic aims in the "We are CILIP" campaign which can be found at <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/StatementOfPurpose>. In particular, as a Special Interest Group, we aim to build a strong community network and to grow our membership so that CILIP can continue to be a sustainable and thriving representative organisation.

Bringing this down to a practical level, these are our priorities for 2022:

- a programme of monthly visits throughout Summer
- a programme of bi-monthly virtual visits
- at least one event focussing on opportunities for retired information professionals
- an annual lunch at the Civil Service Club, open to all CILIP staff and members
- a 3-day residential visit within the UK
- publication of two electronic issues and one printed issue of the journal Post-Lib, using an external printing service and including advertising space.
- electronic newsletters to members promoting all activities
- strengthening regional RPG representation
- an automatic welcome message to new members
- setting up a 100 club
- at least one Committee member to attend CILIP Annual Conference
- support Anthony Thompson award in partnership with ILIG

Our online AGM on 7th June 2022 is an opportunity for any RPG member to comment on these plans – we are always open to new ideas!

Sian King
Vice-Chair, RPG

Reports, Events and Announcements

CILIP Retired Professionals Group 2021 Accounts

(Since 1st January 2021) Prepared by Judith Allery (Hon. Treasurer)
for Committee Meeting 11th January 2022

Current Account (Unity Trust Bank)

Income		
Month	item	£
B/f 1.1.21		£2,808.12
April 2021	FY18 VAT Refund	£208.27
July 2021	CILIP Special Grant (Note 1)	£872.00
Sept. 2021	Annual Lunch Income (Note 2)	£835.50
Sept. 2021	Annual Lunch Raffle (Note 2)	£120.00
Oct. 2021	4 Donations re Bromley House Visit	£20.00
Oct. 2021	K&IM Group Joint Webinars (Note 3)	£197.50
Oct. 2021	Repayment of CILIP Recovery Loan (4)	£100.00
Nov. 2021	3 Donations re Bromley House Visit	£15.00
Dec. 2021	3 Donations re Salisbury Cathedral Visit	£15.00
Total Income at 31.12.21		£5,191.39
Expenditure		
Year	item	£
2019	Printing & Postage for hard-copy Post-Lib	£690.31
2020	Committee Meeting Travel Expenses	£184.35
2020	Committee Meeting Subsistence	£20.09
2020	Electronic Post-Lib Design	£200.00
	Mailshot expenses	£38.43
	Committee Postage	£15.99
	Committee Travel	£24.60
	RPG Recovery loan to CLIP	£100.00
	Webinar on Supporting Local Libraries (1 delegate)	£118.80
	RPG Annual Lunch (Note 2)	£772.20
	2021 Electronic Post-Lib Design	£200.00
	Manual Handling Bank Charges	£3.80
Total Income at 31.12.21		£2,368.57

31.12.21 Current AC balance: £5,191.39 - £2,368.57 = £2,822.82 2021 overall profit was £14.70

Summary of 2021 Income	
Item	£
B/F @ 1.1.21	£2,808.12
Annual Lunch	£955.50
CILIP Loan Repayment	£100.00
CILIP Special Grant	£872.00
Joint K&IM Webinars	£197.50
VAT Refund (2018)	£208.27
Visits	£50.00
Total Income	£5,191.39

Summary of Expenditure 2021	
Item	£
Annual Lunch	£772.20
CILIP Loan	£100.00
Committee Travel & Subsistence	£229.04
Manual Handling Bank Charges	£3.80
Post-Lib (2019-2021)	£1,090.31
Postage	£54.42
Public Policy Exchange Seminar	£118.80
Total Expenditure	£2,822.82

Note 1 - Funding

Although there was no Annual Funding (formerly Capitation) from CILIP for Special Interest Groups and Member Networks during 2021, the one-off grant of £872 was received by the RPG in July 2021. This will ensure Post-Lib is published as RPG's main Member offer. In future all MNs/SIGs are to be self-sufficient.

Note 2 – Annual Lunch on 21st September 2021

24 guests attended: Income was £835.50; Invoice was £720.20; Surplus was £63.30

The raffle organized by David made £120.

Total amount raised = £183.30.

Note 3 - Income from joint courses with the K&IM Group

The K&IM Group paid RPG the sum of £197.50 which was half of the income (£395.00) from the 3 joint courses held with the K&IM Group in 2020 and early 2021.

Note 4 - Recovery Loans to CILIP for 2020/21

(a) The sum of £100 loaned to CILIP from the RPG Current Account on 10th May 2021 was repaid on 29th October 2021.

(b) The sum of £500 which came from a donation to RPG/RMG and held in trust by CILIP was loaned to CILIP for the Recovery Programme. This should be repaid to RPG by end of 2022.

Judith Allery, RPG Hon. Treasurer
8th January 2022

Reports, Events and Announcements

RPG Tours and Events March - October 2022

Monday 14th March 2022

Time: 2.00pm

Venue: Moravian Church House Library and Archives

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

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.

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: 2.00pm

Venue: National Badminton Museum

Address: 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



Wednesday, 23rd March 2022

Venue: Virtual Visit to the Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL)

Description: Join Nicola Davies (RPSL Head of Collections) for this tour.

- An introduction to philately
- A brief history of the RPSL (oldest philatelic Society in the world, established in 1869)
- The move and redesign of the RPSL library & collections during 2019
- International work with other philatelic libraries
- Current conservation and volunteering projects

This virtual visit has been organised by CILIP RPG (Retired Professionals) in association with CILIP East Midlands and U3A (University of the Third Age).

Cost: There is no charge for CILIP and U3A members to join this virtual visit: you are invited to donate £5 to support CILIP work with library, information and knowledge professionals across the UK.

For further information, contact David Byrne: david.f.byrne@icloud.com Tel: 07850 791002

Ad Hoc Art UK

Tuesday 26th April 2022

Time: 12.30 for 1pm start.

Event: Retired Professionals Group Annual Lunch 2021

Venue: The Civil Service Club, Great Scotland Yard,

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

For more details contact Ian Orton: ianorton5@gmail.com or phone 07841 577991

Monday, 30th May 2022

Time: 3.00pm (Doors open at 2.40 pm for refreshments.)

Venue: Tour of Trinity House

Address: Trinity House, Tower Hill, London EC3N 4DH

Description: This building was built in the years 1794-96 by Samuel Wyatt, Surveyor to the Corporation and brother of the famous James; Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger laid the foundation stone on 12 September 1793, and the first Court inside the new building was on 23 May 1796. It was gutted in 1940 when a German incendiary bomb lodged in the roof of the stairwell, leaving nothing of the original building save the Trinity Square façade. Professor (later Sir) Albert E Richardson undertook the reconstruction of the house by using a number of photographs of the rooms, taken by Country Life magazine in 1919, to reconstitute almost exactly the interior in its original form. Trinity House, which is Grade I listed, was refurbished and redecorated in March 1990; the redecoration is, where possible, in keeping with the 1790s period when the house was originally built.

No. of places: 10 - 12

Cost: £10.00 You can either pay direct on the day, or they will supply details to pay by bank transfer.

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

Reports, Events and Announcements

RPG Tours and Events March - October 2022

Tuesday, 21st June 2022

Time: 2.00pm

Venue: Dana Research Centre

Address: 165 Queen's Gate, London SW7 5HD

Description: The Science Museum's Dana Research Centre is home to their library and archive services in London and to their Research and Public History Dept. The Science Museum's library and archive world class collections houses over half a million items.

No. of places: 15 - 20

Cost: Free but donations much appreciated

Please note: The hosts have emphasised that this date is provisional, TBC in April.

Please contact Charmaine if you would like to come on:

charmainebourton11@hotmail.co.uk or 020 8395 9209



FOR NEXT ISSUE

Please send articles in MS Word for the next issue
before 23rd May 2022 to editor.rpg@cilip.org.uk



100

CLUB

**Please complete the brief
CILIP RPG 100 Club Survey:**

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MDYGZC3

