

The LIBRARY *Campaigner*

Supporting friends and users of libraries



The launch of World Book Day 2006 in Cardiff.

Putting the joy back into reading!

You've probably seen the Quick Reads books in your library. What's it all about? *See page 11.*

Library + information Show preview. *See page 15.*

What Friends are for – roundup. *See page 7.*



THE LIBRARY CAMPAIGN – AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

To advance the lifelong education of the public by the promotion, support, assistance and improvement of libraries through the activities of friends and users groups.

Executive Committee Meetings 2007 dates

12 May AGM in London
(see full details on page 3)

14 July venue to be arranged

8 September venue to be arranged

11 November venue to be arranged

The Officers and the Executive Committee meet regularly every two months, 1–4pm usually on a Saturday, usually in central London. Campaign members are always very welcome to attend. If you want to come to a meeting contact the Secretary to receive an agenda.

We would like to hold more of these meetings in the regions, both to encourage members to come and to help those committee members who have a long journey to London. We have recently met in Lewes, Birmingham and Rotherham.

If a local group would like to invite us to meet in their area, we would be delighted to come.

Thanks to ...

- **Unison**, for its continued and valued support.
- **CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals)** for permission to adapt certain material for this issue from its journal, **Update**.



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News: *Laura Swaffield catches up on a busy time*

A lot is happening that we'll have to cram it all into a small space. First, TLC members gathered in London in January to form a focus group – part of consultants PricewaterhouseCoopers' work on revamping the Public Library Service Standards. The result, we now know, will be very different from the old PLSSs. We'll make sure users' views are represented when the info emerges.

The TLC Handbook has been well received, and orders are coming in from outside the membership, including bulk orders from enlightened library services such as Sandwell. It was useful to get an endorsement from library supremo John Dolan (see page 4), who has read it, likes it and says: 'It's important that people from every part of the community have their say on the development of our public libraries. I hope to be involved in a dialogue with TLC in the near future about their views on user priorities and how to engage all sectors of the community in the debate. The Handbook is a useful resource for friends and user groups.'

TLC Chair Brian Hall and Secretary Andrew Coburn recently met Daniel Ferguson, Chair of TLC's Australian equivalent, FOLA (see TLC Handbook). We have much in common.

A big surprise is the sudden demise of Libri – the public libraries ginger group. Libri says the new 'blueprint' (see page 4) gives 'real hope' that MLA can 'develop a workable strategy for significant improvement'.

Libri became famous in 2004 by publishing Tim Coates's controversial report *Who's in Charge?* accusing public libraries of wasting money and neglecting the basics – especially books. A report in 2005, *From University to Village Hall*, accused 'inward-looking library experts' of downgrading books. When last I looked, these were still on its website: www.libri.org.uk.

Libri's small group of trustees was assiduous in making contacts, and from time to time had the ear of ministers, MPs, civil servants, professional associations, chief librarians – and quite a few library users.

TLC, on the other hand, speaks for local grassroots users and groups. And it has no intention of fading away. Emphasis on consulting users has never been stronger. We – and you – are here to make sure this is really made use of.

Already TLC is getting your views fed in at top level on the blueprint and on plans to make library book-buying more efficient.

The AGM will be a forum to discuss TLC's role in this new future. What is TLC for? What are Friends/user groups for? To start some thinking, this *Campaigner* showcases some different member groups. What's yours like? Tell us! **Please:**

- Volunteer to help on TLC's exhibition stand (see p.15);
- Come to the AGM;
- Send us your newsletters;
- Send us news of 2007 local budgets and/or battles.

THE LIBRARY CAMPAIGNER SPRING 2007, No.74

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The Library Campaign

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 12 May 2007 from 14:00 hrs

At UNISON, 1 MABLEDON PLACE, LONDON WC1H 9AJ.

AGENDA

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Election of Chair for Campaign AGM 2 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 20 May 2006 3 Annual report for the year ended 31 March 2007 4 Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2007 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Election of Executive Committee – Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, 6 Ordinary members of the Executive Committee (of whom 2 shall be representatives of local groups) 6 Any other business |
|--|---|

Nominations for elections and items for other business should be sent to the Secretary by 5 May 2007.

The accounts and annual report will be circulated at the meeting and will be put on the Campaign website (www.librarycampaign.com) Members can also request them from the Secretary if they are not able to attend.

For building security reasons will everyone intending to come to the AGM please let the Secretary know in advance.

The AGM will be followed by a meeting of the Executive Committee which all members are invited to attend.

Blueprint: they want your views!

Take advantage! This 'blueprint' marks a new phase in the quest by to improve public libraries. And users' comments are wanted.

What?

The blueprint document* sets out some basics about public libraries. Comments are wanted from all 'key stakeholders'.

And that – glory be – includes library users. There is a questionnaire to fill in, and if users don't take advantage of such an offer, they can't complain about future policy...

The blueprint has been set out by MLA (Museums, Libraries & Archives Council), which develops policy and advises the government (see the TLC Handbook).

The government has already set out its *Framework for the Future* for developing public libraries. Ever since it has been the bedrock of MLA's action planning. We covered it in *The Campaigner* in 2003 (spring issue, No. 66). And it's still there on the MLA website (www.mla.gov.uk – look under Programmes).

Funding for this action plan runs out in 2008. But the new blueprint is not a radical departure from its thinking. The new blueprint is not some radical new departure from the Framework. Maybe one of its main differences is that John Dolan, MLA Head of Library Policy, is proving refreshingly willing to join the trend to consult library users – in real life, not just in rhetoric.

'I'd be grateful,' he told us, 'if groups would consider responding to the questionnaire, but I'd also like to moderate that by maybe meeting groups who represent different kinds of user and/or are in different parts of the country. I'd be interested to hear from a diversity of views. I don't want to cut out anyone – especially 'protesters' but also want to know if you knew of groups who are coming at it from a different view. I'm looking for different perspectives.'

TLC is sorting that now. But the more users and groups who can add to the pile of questionnaires, the better.

Why?

The stimulus for all this, says John, is pressures on council budgets and local government reform, demanding 'services shaped around communities'.

And the ultimate aim is to have clear

backing from everyone to launch a campaign this autumn – to promote public libraries, and make sure their case is heard by the decision-makers – local, regional and national.

John says: 'There must be a clear sense of purpose and value endorsed by current and potential library users, policymakers, library managers/staff and all stakeholders, on what communities can expect from their libraries.'

'This is critical to the future success of the public library service, and positions its worth at the heart of future policies. It is time to take a hard look at both its role in society and the services it can and should be providing to every citizen.'

Where next?

The densely-written blueprint sees

libraries in three main roles (see panel). It stresses their universal accessibility, their ability to make partnerships with almost anyone, the unique level of trust placed in them and their role in making expert help easy to find.

These qualities, it says, place them ideally to foster the development, education and quality of life priorities that have been placed on local authorities.

All this takes adequate resources, the paper stresses. But to earn them, libraries must have 'a culture of responding to and leading on community expectations', plus good leadership.

Also vital is proper 'recognition' by policy-makers at all levels. Agreement on the blueprint will be an essential tool for advocacy. So it's up to library users to make sure they are fully involved.

THE QUESTIONS...

Both blueprint and questionnaire are available electronically only – but that should by definition not be a problem to anyone who can get to a public library. The questions (apart from the ones about you) ask if you support the basic elements of the blueprint – PURPOSE, KEY ROLES, KEY CHALLENGES FOR IMPROVEMENT, KEY ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS 'WHAT EXCELLENCE WOULD LOOK LIKE' and ACTIONS FOR 2008-2011. If not, what would you prefer?

PURPOSE of PUBLIC LIBRARIES: UNIVERSAL ENTITLEMENT TO...

- The skill and joy of reading
- Knowledge in all its forms, including print, audio, visual & digital media
- Essential information, learning and knowledge at all stages of life
- Involvement in the social, learning and creative life of the community

KEY ROLES of PUBLIC LIBRARIES...

1. A community place: a high quality public place for reading, learning and discovery, bringing together communities, as individuals and families, with empowered and motivated staff committed to delivering customer focused products and services that are responsive to community needs.
2. A development agency: successful partnerships with core service providers to offer a wider range of opportunities and services and develop the skills and knowledge of communities, including vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
3. An online library: 24-hour universal access to online reference services, through trusted library resources and expert help.

AND THE REST...

The detail can't be summarised in a small space, so visit and see for yourself. But note that under CHALLENGES the blueprint notes that 'what users want' is better books and other stock; under ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS the first item is 'Focus on the user, potential users and the community'; and under ACTIONS FOR 2008-2011 the first item is 'Engage local communities in the development of and priorities for their local library service....' and 'Customer-focused standards...'

FIND OUT MORE * A Blueprint for Excellence: Public Libraries 2008-11:
www.mla.gov.uk/website/programmes/framework/framework

SWOTting up – what are the prospects for the public library service?

Andrew Coburn reviews the major trends in 2007

The government has recently released two reports which purport to point the way forward for public libraries – technically only in England, but in practice with probable ramifications for the whole of the UK if they come to fruition.

One is a report from Ruth Kelly's Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) entitled *Developing the Local Government Services Market*. The paper concentrates on public libraries and proposes new ways for working. These

include more use of technology, devolution of the ownership and/or management of libraries to local communities, and the possibility of local trusts or other new 'mechanisms' delivering library services.

The second report may be thought of as *Framework for the Future: the sequel*. (We outlined the original *Framework* in the spring 2003 *Campaigner*, p.7). It is produced by the Museums, Libraries & Archives Council (MLA) and is called *A Blueprint for Excellence* (see page 4).

It sets out a vision for developing libraries over the next three or four years. Unsurprisingly, it links in many ways to what DCLG says. (I understand that the DCLG paper has been available to those in the know for some months.)

Below I consider some strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the public library service as I see them. I suspect that there will be many similarities with what government is saying – but not all are necessarily good things.

SWOT: STRENGTHS

Libraries have a good reputation with the public, including non-users who, when surveyed, think that they should be maintained – presumably 'just in case' or as a community resource. Politicians at all levels also approve of them. In local government, from where they are officially run, libraries can be pointed to as an example of something for which politicians can take the credit.

Libraries' staff are also a strength. It is all too common for the number of qualified librarians in public libraries to be reduced. In some places at least, this has produced a justifiable outcry.

But even the unqualified people you see on the counter or walking around re-shelving books are generally regarded as important by users. In many libraries the ability to connect

directly with users and ask them how their cat is doing now, or whether they enjoyed the latest Maeve Binchy, is valued and valuable.

Finally, on the plus side, *Framework for the Future* and its implementation, as well as other initiatives of recent years such as Bookstart (see winter 2007 *Campaigner*, p.5) and Love Libraries (*ibid*, p.8), have put the library in a good light.

You can join a reading group through your branch, get books for your child to read (or take them to an event in the Summer Reading Challenge, which now has virtual if not actual nationwide coverage) or look up something on the internet when you don't have access at home.

All of these stem in large part from the proposals, funding etc which have been in place for the last few years.

SWOT: WEAKNESSES

But it is still not all good news. Some weaknesses are becoming apparent, though some have been around for a while.

Closures and cuts in book buying funds have been well publicised everywhere from Clacton to Carlisle in the last year or two. Slightly to my surprise, the spate of further proposals which I expected to arise from the latest round of budget setting has not been as large as I had expected. But the example of Buckinghamshire (where eight branches did close and not all have been saved by the local community) is perhaps the highest profile of a number.

With continuing pressure on local government to save more money, and in more visible ways, this is likely to continue even if some of the technological advances anticipated by DCLG come to pass.

Authorities are also hitting problems with income generation. This was ostensibly part of the problem in Buckinghamshire, but it has hit other places too.

For instance, online services: if you don't need a member of staff to process your request to borrow something (because you can do it sitting at home) why should the library charge you to do so? If it doesn't, it won't get so much money.

For instance: DVDs and CD hire are being challenged by downloading and by commercial lending services who don't mind when they get the stuff back (they just won't send any more till they do). So the income – which is required to replenish the stock – will fall.

Overall, balancing the need to offer a competitive service with the budgetary requirement is causing headaches in not a

few places. More or less since it started, we have been warning about the cost of sustaining the People's Network. The cost of buying and setting up the original computers and training the staff was met from lottery money.

We are now way past that period. As libraries have to replace the kit they are finding money hard to get. Once again the spectre of charging users for what used to be a free service has become a reality in a number of places.

And for even longer the status of libraries in local

government has fallen. Despite their popularity, perhaps even because of it, I doubt there is a local authority in England where the Chief Librarian sits on the top management board of officers. It would be interesting to find out how many chiefs even report direct to the chief executive rather than through at least one other tier.

The implication is that the ability to fight the library corner is diminished. Steps may be made to save money or organise services by people deaf to the appeals and needs of libraries.

SWOT: OPPORTUNITIES

But there are opportunities. The Local Government White Paper, to which the DCLG document above is clearly related (winter 2007 Campaigner, p. 14), will allow libraries to explore different ways of working.

The push to give local communities more power could be good for the libraries. Challenging authorities to ensure that they are delivering in the best way may reveal some things that could be done better, cheaper – or, on the other hand, not done at all.

One of the specific motivators for local authorities in all contexts is the idea of 'joined-up' local government and work with other partners, especially in the public sector. Libraries need to grasp this concept. Joined-up government has fallen out of favour as a mantra but the concept is still good. If libraries are in danger of losing their place in the local authority hierarchy they may be able to regain it by working

with other departments.

Local government is under pressure to slim down its property portfolio in a planned way. Here is where the need for a new library could blend with the desirability of replacing other facilities. For instance, libraries in or with schools are certainly not a new idea. Although this has to be handled sensitively, the concept could allow us to replace at least some of the buildings already well known to be past their use-by date.

We do still have significant public support. This likely to continue wherever initiatives like Love Libraries show improvement locally, as well as where closures are met with public opposition. And, as I mentioned above, the polls still consistently say that libraries are 'a good thing'. Library authorities and user organisations (both the Library Campaign and local groups) can use that.

SWOT: THREATS

Finally, what are the biggest threats? First is still cash. Authorities, and therefore libraries, are going to have to continue to find efficiency savings under the Gershon regime. The next round of this looks to be requiring 3% 'cashable' savings.

This means that instead of saying 'Look – we have done x % better in delivering services with the same money', we have to say: 'Look – we have delivered the same (preferably more) services with 3% less money.' This will be a hard task when so much of what libraries spend is on buildings and staff – not to mention books. It just ain't true that all authorities have a lot of slack in all these areas. And the same demand on all of them is going to cause hardship?

A concept that has got a certain amount of attention in a variety of areas recently is the 'long tail'. In essence this means that while a proportion of the books that libraries stock get the highest use and attention (as well, perhaps, of spending), what we need to consider is the stuff that does not get used much but is required by the serious researcher or the person looking to do a specific job.

This long tail used to be covered by larger libraries, which could afford to ensure that they bought at least one copy of such books, as well as by regional collection schemes – these meant that one library service agreed to buy all the books on a particular subject to ensure that all topics were covered somewhere.

Both of these methods of ensuring coverage are in trouble

now. Regional collections are falling victim to space and cash problems. The regional coverage idea has also fallen on hard times. If there is still a vision of public libraries as places where you could go (I mean actually go rather than visit online) to consult on the rarer topics, it is under threat.

If that is so might we lose some of the support that the public show for their service, when they discover it no longer does one of the things for which it was so well known.

The last threat is again related to the strengths listed above. And that is the de-skilling of staff. Skills that most qualified librarians learned when they studied are now being regarded as less specialist and more easily learned on the job. So even the idea of a specialist children's librarian is taking a knock in some places.

Cataloguing (my own area of expertise) and the trained reference librarian's skills are disappearing even faster in public libraries. The rise of self-service may lessen the contact which even front line staff have with library users.

In all of this may we once again be showing the public a face of the service which they will regard with less favour? As with post offices and banks, a good deal of noise is made when face-to-face services disappear. Libraries need to guard against following the trends too closely.

I suspect that some readers of the *Campaigner* have a different take on some of these issues, especially the negative ones. Please write to the editor to put your views.

Richmond reflections

Groups that are not set up during a crisis are comparatively rare. Ron Salmons shows how it works in Richmond

Unlike many Friends of libraries groups, we were not created in opposition to an immediate threat of library closures. It was in anticipation of possible closures, as revealed in 1994 in a BBC programme about closures elsewhere in the country. The programme invited the viewers to send for further information. In due course I received a start-up pack from The Library Campaign.*

We had some preliminary discussions with a Lib Dem councillor about how the council might respond to a Friends group. This led to a letter addressed to the Chairman of the relevant committee.

A meeting was then held with the Chief and Deputy Chief Librarian, to explore how we could be of assistance to the service, and how they could help in setting up the group.

They agreed to co-operate, and provided a list of about 100 people, known to be well-disposed to the service. We sent them all a letter inviting them to an inaugural meeting chaired by Bamber Gascoigne. A committee was formed.

From the start there was an assumption that we should proceed on the basis of support and co-operation with the service. We also agreed that our position should be that of a group of informed library users, rather than claiming to represent all library users. As one member expressed it succinctly, we would be 'a candid friend'.

We have been invited to participate in council working parties on library policies from time to time. We were also consulted on the choice between closing some small branch libraries and reducing library opening hours. (We chose the latter, and they have since been reinstated.)

We informed ourselves by studying the numerous national reports that were produced at the time on the role of public libraries. We also read the journal of the Library Association (since re-named CILIP, Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals).

These sources provided valuable content for our newsletter, which was sent to all the councillors and distributed to library users via the libraries. We felt that councillors needed to be educated before any crunch issues arose.

With a view to the possibility of library closures we also sought to persuade residents' associations to see the local library as an essential element in the local amenities. In this, we had limited success.

As the years went by, our income from membership subscriptions income was maintained. But active participation declined. Having begun with about 100 active members, we found that fewer and fewer were attending meetings and responding to requests to join the committee or take



Ben Fogle launches the refurbished Richmond Library and shows off some of the Love Libraries publicity material.

on the officer roles. This is a not unfamiliar experience with voluntary organisations in the absence of immediate threats.

However, a possible way forward was then suggested – cross-committee membership with the Richmond-upon-Thames Arts Council. This body seeks to promote and support arts activities of all kinds, throughout the borough.

Three options were put to the Friends members at an AGM: (a) Continue a minimum holding operation, available to respond to any future challenge; (b) Wind up the organisation; (c) Merge with the Arts Council as a defined entity with administrative support from the council, which would revise its stated aim to read: 'Promoting the Arts and the Libraries'.

The merger was agreed. It provides us with a more secure position, and it also provides us with access to a wider database of shared values through its newsletter and mailing system.

It is still early days to assess the merits of the change. But the constructive relationship with the library staff that has been developed over many years continues. Changes in council political control and council members will require constant attention...

Richmond upon Thames Arts Council
The Friends of the Arts and Libraries

Books & Readers
Reading Development in Richmond Public Library Service

Which books should the library buy?
Your chance to take part in stock selection for the library

Which websites help readers to find the books they want?
A look at some useful websites guiding you to books you'll really want to read

A workshop providing you with an opportunity to decide on future book stock and to learn more about reading development.

The Head of Library Services will give a short introduction.
The main sessions are for readers to express their views and for the librarians to give advice.

Tuesday 24 October 2006
7.30pm
Richmond Lending Library on Little Green
A chance to see the new layout

For further information please contact either
020-8744-2106 or 020-8831-6100

The Richmond Friends holds one meeting a year called a Forum. The focus is agreed in a discussion between the Friends Chairman and the Chief Librarian. It had the added dimension this year in that we held it in Richmond Library, recently refurbished by the Love Libraries project.

Happy as a Sandwell boy

Sandwell council was much admired from the late 1990s for its decision to stop closing small local libraries. Fred Barnfield still admires them...

If I've got it right, Sandwell Federation of Libraries came about around eight or nine years ago, formed out of representatives of Friends and User Groups in the borough.

It all came about at the invitation of the Council, in particular Cllr Williams, and the Chief Librarian at the time, Keith Hayes.

The timing couldn't have been more perfect. Five libraries had recently been bulldozed and now we were down to 19, with possibly more cuts on the agenda. It was at this time I joined a very active committee, intent on stopping this trend (notably: James Durant, Bill Hipkiss Big John Hodgkins, Bob Sharples, and Cllr Terry Williams).

Since then no more libraries have been lost. Those named have moved on or retired and sadly Big John passed on. They have been replaced by members like myself, dedicated to follow the example they set.

Today, although we are short of numbers we include a former mayor of Sandwell, Cllr John Sullivan, and a real enthusiast, Heather Hampson, as Chairman. Presiding over us all is the present Chief Librarian, Linda Saunders. We meet regularly every three months.

I have represented them at the Library Campaign meetings these last two years and had a chance to compare like with like. I have been able to tell Cllr Linda Horton, in charge of Sandwell Culture & Leisure with responsibility for libraries, that Sandwell can feel proud of the service they provide with available funds, due to their dedicated staff and organisation.

As for TLC itself, where I have attended meetings as an 'outsider' and then as a representative of the Federation, my overall impression is that all library staff, Friends groups and users are fortunate to have such skilled and dedicated members fighting their cause. And what can I say about Unison, who sponsor the Library Campaign – without any interference. They must have a greater love for our great institution than myself, with their commitment. At the heart of the meetings, what I observe more than anything is the individualism of the committee, strength of character in their differences of opinion but united in team spirit to one cause: our great libraries, to not only preserve them, but also advance with the future.

Central to Sandwich life

In Sandwich, Dick Perry reports, the group was set up in the classic way – to fight cuts

The Sandwich Library Guild was born in the small, charming and ancient Cinque Port of Sandwich some ten years ago, when Kent County Council (KCC) took it into their heads to reduce the library service to the community.

Saturday morning opening was to be abandoned.

This looked to be the beginning of the end. The community, now a haven for the retired, had lost its main post office, its agricultural market and its remaining trade from the quay. What next?!

A protest group gathered, demonstrated and pamphleteered, raised a campaign fund and tried to make a noise. The KCC elections of that year made all the difference, and the Saturday opening was saved.

Was that the end then? What to do with the cash? What else could be achieved?

What has developed is a support

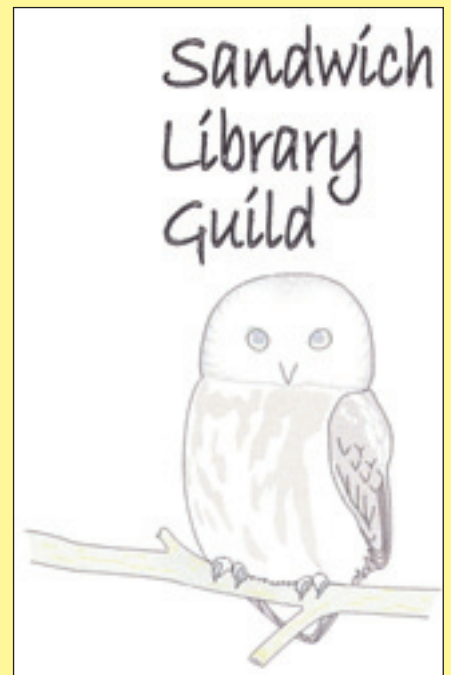
group with a membership of over 100, drawn from the town and local villages – and an enthusiasm for a small and cosy library with a valuable garden where the reader can sit.

The post-war and purpose-built building is central to the active commercial life of the town. The staff are first-rate and aware of local opportunities and needs. Their work for young children is most impressive.

The battle is with the financial management at Maidstone, the commercial emphasis which leads away from book provision and a commuter/media oriented public who have lost the habit of scanning shelves of books.

The Guild gives financial support where needed and a helping hand with activities and the garden.

Importantly, it also provides a platform for cultural activity. Each year there is a programme of lectures in the Guildhall on a wide variety of



historical and social interests, and group outings to places of interest in Kent. The speakers are largely drawn from the local community.

All the while a beady eye is kept on Maidstone. Most recently the Guild has been used to speak up against the proposed reduction of 77 library staff countywide.

Next steps in Seaford

Shirley Linsell describes a successful Friends group that was NOT formed to fight closures.

Some, to paraphrase, are born great and some have greatness thrust upon them. When I volunteered to become membership secretary of the Friends of Seaford Library about four years ago I little thought that in two years I would become Secretary and then Chairman.

Our library was built on the site of the gas showrooms in 1947, and we still have two floors desperately trying to suit everyone's reading habits. The children's section is shared with the reference department. Upstairs, computers and DVDs take up book space.

This is why the Friends were formed in the year 2000. The committee was chaired then by the late and much missed Chris Smith. This job he did, with one year's break. Then he came back and shared the job with me until his untimely death.

Seaford is a town of 23,500 people, a mixture of young and old. It is not true that Seaford is the place where the elderly live because they couldn't make it to Eastbourne. There are a lot of flourishing organisations. One is a renowned branch of the University of the Third Age. This year I shall be again running a reading group.

We are lucky that all our councillors are very supportive, whatever their

Chris Smith, a member of the Library Campaign's executive committee, died unexpectedly last year. An ex-librarian, Chris was a stalwart of his professional organisation, CILIP, but also an extremely active library user.

As well as his work for the Campaign, Chris was Vice-Chair of his local Friends of Seaford Library, in Sussex. He worked tirelessly to get the tangible support of the community and the local MP. In 2004 the result was an ambitious revamp of the library (plus new stock), which has proved a striking success. He will be much missed.

particular party, and our MP [Norman Baker], who is our patron, turns up every year for the AGM. The Head of Lewes Libraries is also a great support.

So far we have had a refurbishment. This included better access for wheelchair users and a different staircase, reception desk and entrance. The interior was repainted, had new shelving and – best of all – received 50,000 new books. This led immediately to much higher usage, making Seaford one of the busiest libraries in the county.

All this is a lot better, but still it is only papering over the cracks. We had constantly lobbied for these improvements, and I regularly go to meetings of the council just to remind them about FOSL. We need a new library, and will continue to fight for it.

The committee are marvellous. Our hard-working secretary and I are always on the phone planning some plot or other. One committee member is our publicist, one our archivist and one our fund-raiser.

Our treasurer is my long-suffering husband, who says he is only temporary until we find someone else.

We have stood in the pouring rain on fun days, watched our stall blow away in a gale at the putting on of the Christmas lights and stood in the sunshine by the sea. All for fund-raising.

We have bought an umbrella stand for the library and this year are paying for the furniture for the children's section – dedicating it to Chris.

We have counted the number of people using the library for a survey. Our excellent staff very kindly kept us supplied with tea. An observation: people who want to borrow the computer are sometimes very nasty to the staff.

We get on very well with the library staff. They are always cheerful and smiling and the head of libraries is great with advice and support.

Apathy, as in a lot of things, is our main problem but we will carry on until Seaford has the library it deserves.

Disillusioned in Lewisham!

Patricia M. Richardson wonders why she ever started...

Apart from being just an ordinary borrower from public libraries across the globe, for over 55 years, what do I know?

For the past seven years, I have joined every library campaigning group going. I have contributed to reports, seminars, conferences, kept minutes, saved newspaper cuttings, read reports, collected colourful, expensive brochures.

I am Secretary of the The Users & Friends of Manor House Library, Lewisham, Minutes Secretary of Libraries for Life for Londoners, and a regular attender at Library Campaign Executive Meetings, et al!

I have spent untold hours running the library user group – hours I will never get back! I have chased councillors, influenced elections and wondered why the libraries in my borough do not improve, and I visit less and less.

And still, in the past few months, I have attended a

Unison/Compass conference on public services, a PricewaterhouseCooper consultation on the future standards for delivery of your public services (in this case libraries). And I know that Barry Quirk, Chief Executive of Lewisham Borough Council, is conducting a 'Right to Manage' initiative into the transfer of council assets (including library buildings) to local communities.

I conclude that the government has no intention of continuing public services.

We've had the volunteer programme. Gershon is not delivering except by sleight of hand – we fire the employees, then spend more in using agency staff to get the work done. So where will Varney and Ruth Kelly's new Local Government Bill lead us?

Despair? Yeah, that's just about it! We're all going nowhere and it's very expensive. Oh! By the way, did you know Brent may close four to six of its libraries?!!!

THE ESSENTIAL RESOURCE for LIBRARY FRIENDS and USER GROUPS

The Library Campaign is the umbrella body for all UK Friends/User groups. It provides essential advice on forming a group, information, advice, contacts with other groups, campaign material, news, a magazine, a website, meetings – and a voice for library users with the national press and the policy-makers.

The Library Campaign, 22 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0TB
email: LIBRARYCAM@aol.com
www.librarycampaign.com

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I wish to join The Library Campaign and enclose a Cheque/PO for £for one year's membership.

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Address

Post code Tel:..... Email

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I confirm that I am a UK tax payer and pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax to be reclaimed in the tax year. I would like my/ our subscription (plus any donation) to be treated as Gift Aid.

Signed Date

MEMBERSHIP RATES

Individual £15.00	Concessionary Rate £10.00
Local Organisation £20.00	Trade Union Branches £30.00
Local Authorities £200.00	Company/National Trade Unions £100.00

Others please write for details

Please make cheques payable to: The Library Campaign.

It saves a lot of time and money if you pay by Bankers Order.
If you are able to do this please fill in the form and return it to us.

BANKERS ORDER FORM

To The Manager.....(Name and address of your bank)

Please pay The Library Campaign
(HSBC, Salford University Branch, The Crescent, Salford M5 4PB. 40-40-39, a/c 61277405) the sum of
£every year starting on(date) until further notice

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(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Please return to: The Library Campaign, 22 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0TB.

Registered Charity (England & Wales) No. 1102634

Quick Reads

Dumbing down, or crucial development work? Every library authority has signed up for this year's campaign, so you have probably seen a display of Quick Reads books. But what are they?

The 2007 titles



Quick Reads was launched by Tony Blair on World Book Day 2006. It is a collection of fast-paced, bite-sized books – of high quality – for emergent readers (ie, adults learning to read), or for anyone who has lost the reading habit or simply wants a short, fast read.

The central idea is to make reading a pleasure again. For many literacy students, reading is hard work. For many others, the whole idea of picking up a book is unfamiliar and uncomfortable. Even relatively fluent readers are diverted from reading for sheer pleasure by the pressures of the school curriculum.

Quick Reads was conceived as a way to make the first steps into reading for pleasure as easy as possible – without compromising on quality. The books have all been specially written by best-selling writers or by celebrities, and published by mainstream publishers. Only the price – £1.99 – is low.

We had an excellent workshop and follow-up lessons are in progress... We read Minette Walters' Chickenfeed and thoroughly enjoyed it. One learner read it 14 times over the Easter holiday!

Workshop organiser, Dudley College

The project has been a remarkable collaboration between authors, publishers, book retailers, libraries, the education sector and other partners. Twelve short books were published in March 2006 and a further 12 in May. The writers included Richard Branson, Hunter Davies, Tom Holt, Conn Iggulden, Val McDermid, Courttia Newland, Mike Phillips and Joanna Trollope.

Our Learning Resource Centre has had a successful response from promoting the Quick Reads. We have collated a colourful display with comments from students who have enjoyed a particular Quick Read – quotes such as 'Learnt a lot', 'Interesting, made you think about life' and 'Funny, romantic and enjoyable'. The Division of Learner Services have good links with the local library and on this occasion invited academic staff to give us their top ten reads and why they enjoyed reading them. It has been enjoyable and successful because users were able to find a book which suited their needs, sit back, relax and enjoy!

Sharon Gray,
Hartlepool College
of Further Education

The response from readers was overwhelmingly positive. 'I haven't read a book since I was at school and I'm in my 30s now. I couldn't put it down. It took me three hours to read and it was brilliant. I'm going to get another,' said one adult learner from Evesham.

As a bonus, the books also proved attractive to fluent readers. They found the books were good enough to enjoy in a couple of hours, in between more demanding reads.

The books

The four most popular titles in 2006 turned out to be by Maeve Binchy, John Bird, Andy McNab and Minette Walters. These have been re-released for 2007. Much of the 2006 backlist is also available.

Meanwhile World Book Day 2007 (March 1) saw eight new specially-commissioned titles that are 'easy to pick up and hard to put down'. Audio (www.wfhowes.co.uk) and large print versions (www.bbcaudiobooks.com/libraries) are also available.

As in 2006, there is a 'something for everyone' mix of fiction and non-fiction. The latter includes Kerry Katona showing how she has made positive use of some of the worst experiences of her life, the late quit-smoking expert Allen Carr on his own struggle to give up and BBC World Affairs Editor John Simpson sharing some high-octane experiences.

The first batch of titles have been issuing like hot cakes and were well received by our emergent readers group, The Ashton Amateurs (a name they decided on themselves).

Tameside Libraries

Fiction comes from TV actor Ricky Tomlinson, Adèle Geras with a modern ghost story, Maureen Lee with 'a story of hope and self-discovery', a new Doctor Who book and *The Sun Book of Short Stories* (selected from the paper's short story competition, launched on World Book Day 2006).

A national campaign

The Quick Reads campaign has widespread private and public sector support from across publishing, bookselling and printing. Other partners include the DfES (Department for Education & Skills), NIACE, the BBC RaW campaign, the TUC, the National Literacy Trust, the National Reading

Campaign, the Vital Link and the Reading Agency. Quick Reads has received funding from the DfES, Arts Council England, World Book Day and National Book Tokens. (See side panel for some details.)

This year it is working with NIACE and the TUC (Trades Union Congress) on a massive outreach campaign, building on the work done in 2006. Promotional packs have been sent to colleges and other learner institutions across the UK with the aim of getting even more emergent readers and tutors signed up to Quick Reads. NIACE is also targeting major employers. The TUC is using its *unionlearn* initiative, with a mailing list of over 40,000, to encourage every one of its 800 workplace learning centres and all its learning reps to spread the word.

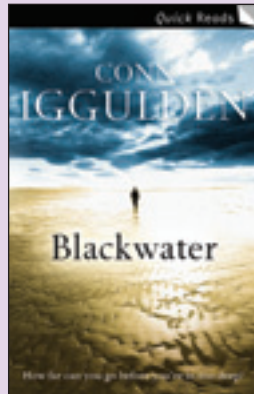
Other high profile activity is taking place with Quick Reads partners such as BBC RaW and Business in the Community. In addition, there will be bus and radio advertising direct to the consumer.

Libraries

Libraries play a key role in ensuring that learners have access to these books through their partnership work with adult literacy providers and their support for the BBC RaW campaign. It is particularly useful for libraries to be able to supply multiple copies to support reading group activities.

The Quick Reads team at NIACE says: ‘Quick Reads relies on the work of librarians, practitioners, learning reps, educationalists – and many others – to spread the word. It reaches out to the 12

FICTION TITLE: BLACKWATER BY CONN IGGULDEN



This is one of the first books I have sat and read cover to cover. It was a very good dark story that had me thinking even after I had read the last page. I did not want to put the book down. So full marks to the author, more books like this please these are just what I need.

Terry, on Blackwater

My daughter is 20, very dyslexic, and has never been able to read through a book in her life so far – she gets in about five pages and gets so lost she gives up. Last weekend she read this book from one end to the other, oblivious to the rest of us, and it was wonderful to see. She has now rushed out and bought two more. Thank you, thank you, thank you. She has always wanted to read and has shelves of books that have been attempted and not finished. We have bought other books that were meant to be designed for those with difficulty in reading but they have never been right. Please make sure that all the authors involved know that it is a great thing that they have done, and encourage many more to join the scheme.

Juliet, Surrey

This is the first book I have ever finished. Just my sort of book.

Reader at Holme House Prison, Stockton on Tees

million British people who struggle with reading and the one-third of the population who never pick up a book. Your encouragement could make a significant difference to many people’s lives, providing widespread access to the joys and opportunities that reading can bring.’

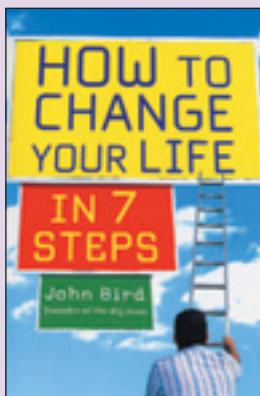
The Quick Reads team supplies display and promotional materials (including posters, mugs, bookmarks, pens) and promotional planning and media guides. All these are free of charge. The campaign is backed by nationwide publicity, but helps local libraries, colleges etc to organise their own activities.



The launch of World Book Day 2006 in Cardiff.

My learners in one of the dyslexia support groups decided to listen online to the authors as they read their first chapters. The response was amazing. Many continued to read on after the audio had finished. The stories are gripping and the fact that a dyslexic learner such as Richard Branson contributed, as well as the down-to-earth John Bird, made them really extra special, positive and inspiring. A big fat juicy thank you for producing these books; letting us all know about them; giving money-off vouchers and doing a really good quality piece of work in getting adult readers engaged. I do hope it all continues – there is a great demand by lecturers like myself for something more inspiring. Dyslexic learners can have very good IQs and need good material to keep them reading.

**Karen Gregson,
South Leicestershire College**



**NON-FICTION TITLE:
HOW TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE BY
JOHN BIRD**

I’ve never liked reading since leaving school. But after reading this book I felt I have to start reading again. I found this book so positive and uplifting to read, that I’m definitely going to get myself a copy.

Emma

A big thank you to John and the people who chose the book as part of the Quick Reads series. I have recommended it to friends who are undergoing troubled times and have previously not had a chance to do very much reading, but because of the format of the book have returned to it and have found reading a great comfort. Everyone should read this book!

L Davies

Who's Who?

NIACE

NIACE, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, is a major force behind Quick Reads. Mainly for adult education workers – but very happy to supply anyone else who can promote the campaign – it provides free promotional material (posters, bookmarks, mugs, pens etc), news/updates on the whole campaign and practical ideas on publicity, running events, setting up reading groups etc etc.

www.quickreads.org.uk
0116 204 7072

The Vital Link

The Vital Link is run by The Reading Agency in partnership with the National Literacy Trust and the National Reading Campaign. Its aim is 'bringing libraries and adult literacy together through reading for pleasure'.

In other words, to take adults beyond the grind of learning to read and into enjoying it – thus sustaining the habit.

The Vital Link has run successful pilot projects, and developed training and materials to help both librarians and adult literacy practitioners. Advice and free downloadable materials to support Quick Reads are part of this work. This includes an online toolkit for library staff developing services to support adult learners.

www.vitalink.org.uk

BBC RaW

BBC RaW (Reading and Writing) is the BBC's biggest ever literacy campaign. Running over three years with massive TV, radio, online and on-the-ground support; it is aimed at adults who are reluctant readers.

www.bbc.co.uk/raw
08000 150 950

World Book Day

World Book Day is the biggest annual celebration of books and reading in the UK, now in its tenth year. Quick Reads is only one part of its work.

www.worldbookday.com

Literacy

People in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland who want to find out about free courses to improve reading and writing skills can call 0800 100 900.

Libraries change lives!

Once again, a major highlight of the Library + information Show (see page 15) is the finals of the Libraries Change Lives Award run by CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals – a supporter of TLC!).

The winner will be announced by popular poet Roger McGough at the show, at NEC Birmingham. LiS co-sponsors the award.

This year the shortlist of three demonstrates just how varied is the work that good libraries do. It also shows the kind of 'partnership' working that comes up again and again as a demand from government – and as a magic word that unlocks funding...

Welcome To Your Library is a much-needed positive answer to anti-immigration hysteria. An existing public amenity is used to make newcomers into useful and well-integrated citizens. Funded by a charity, developed by a partnership of several library services, it is tried and tested and is now sharing nationwide what it has learned. And the benefits will spread to many library users beyond those directly targeted. What an efficient use of resources!

In East Ayrshire, the well-established principle of 'bibliotherapy' – try a book

instead of a drug – is being developed in a partnership of the library and the health services. To suit all tastes, it's available in the leisure centre as well as the library. And the academic sector has been roped in to do an all-important evaluation of its success.

In Leeds, schools work with a charity on an idea that is simple, but of fundamental significance – children with sight problems want to be one of the crowd, just like all other kids. Being able to read the same books at the same time works wonders. And it shows clearly in their school performance, too. (All it needs now is a huge increase in the number of titles available in accessible formats, as the RNIB will tell you).

The three finalists have one more thing in common – they can point to measurable results. As public service cuts start to bite, this will be vital. Nigel Thomas, chair of the judges, stresses: 'It is more important than ever for library services to demonstrate their value: to potential funders, to governing institutions, but most importantly to customers they serve. All this year's projects have been exemplary in this respect.'

Read Yourself Well (East Ayrshire library service) is a bibliotherapy scheme that provides early intervention and an alternative, non-drug treatment for people with depression and mild mental health problems. Ten per cent of appointments with GPs involve some degree of mental health difficulty.

The scheme employs a full-time bibliotherapist, who arranges three confidential meetings with clients and recommends books and self-help materials from a list specially chosen by health-care professionals, carers and people who use the service. This has proved very successful in supporting and educating people with mild mental health problems.

The bibliotherapist also works in Leisure Development with the Community Health Improvement Partnership and 'lifestyle referral' teams, seeing clients who need support to improve their general health – the bibliotherapist points clients to a range of services, e.g. walking groups, gym and exercise classes as well as bibliotherapy.

The project is to be evaluated by Professor John MacDonald of Paisley University.



Morag McGrath, East Ayrshire's bibliotherapist.

Welcome to Your Library (www.welcometoyourlibrary.org.uk)

(funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and co-ordinated by the London Libraries Development Agency) aims to increase opportunities for active engagement by refugees and asylum-seekers in public library planning and delivery. This should improve access and quality for everyone.

The project began in 2003 as a pilot in five London boroughs (Brent, Camden, Enfield, Merton and Newham). In 2005 it extended nationally to Hillingdon (with Healthy Hillingdon), Leicester, Liverpool, Southwark and Tyne & Wear (a consortium of Newcastle, Gateshead, North and South Tyneside and Sunderland councils).

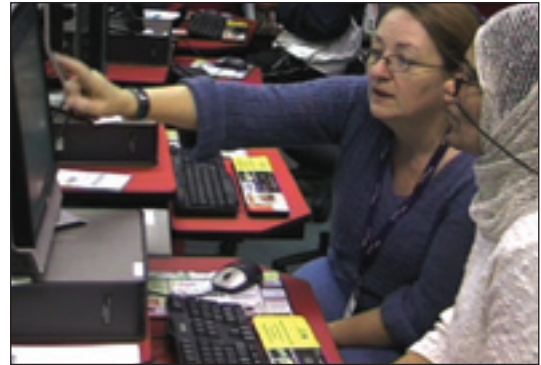
Two services (Leicester and Camden) are successfully developing work experience and volunteering opportunities for refugees. Between them they have taken on more than 40 people. Over half subsequently found jobs, with other positive impacts on participants, communities and the library service.

Camden Libraries offers 12-week work placements of 15 hours per week. This contributes to refugee integration, a core theme of Camden's social inclusion strategy. The scheme has built self-esteem, contact with the wider community and an understanding of workplace rules and regulations.

It has also enabled refugees to access basic skills such as CV writing and ICT in library learning centres, and provides a daily routine to follow, balancing home and work life.

In Leicester Central Library, 22 people have taken part and 13 went on to find jobs. This, and the feedback the library service has received from participants and partner organisations, is evidence of success.

WTYL is a crucial lifeline for many asylum-seekers and refugees, who are among the UK's most excluded, vulnerable and disadvantaged people.



Welcome to Your Library in Leicester.
Photo: Leicester City Council



Welcome to Your Library in Camden.
Photo: London Borough of Camden.

Large (Leeds School Library Service) stands for Leeds Always Reading Group for Everyone. It loans fiction books in large print format to visually impaired (VIP) children who are educated alongside their sighted peers in mainstream schools. The main aim is to enable VIP children to read fiction themselves.

Books in font sizes N18 and N24 are produced by the National Blind Children's Society. If a child is very visually impaired, magnification may be used, or stories in audio format provided.

Children are identified by the VIP team of the local education authority, Education Leeds. Each child receives a box of resources once a term, such as a catalogue of books to choose from.

The service, started in September 2005, was initially focused on pupils in Key Stage 2, but has been extended to Key Stages 1 and 3. Now 42 children in 33 schools use the service; 390 items were loaned in January. Books in N24 are particularly expensive, but demand for them is growing.

Feedback from teachers shows that in less than two years there has been a significant rise in confidence, reading ability and the enjoyment that children receive from books.

Large also helps promote social inclusion, allowing VIP children to read along in the classroom with their sighted peers.



Library + information Show

It's here again on April 18-19 – your best chance to find out what's going on in libraries, the hot topics, the most useful new products, the good practice that maybe your own group (or library) could learn from.

This year the Library + information Show is on 18-19 April. Now in its 18th year, it is the only national show for the whole library and information community – public, school, academic and workplace sectors. And for those who use their libraries!

As always, The Library Campaign will have a stand. Extra volunteers are always welcome (contact Eric Hiron-Smith, details page 2). We will again be able to show off our bright new banners and display stands. The re-vamped journal is proving popular and eye-catching. And librarians as well as users seem impressed with the new edition of the Handbook.

Our stand is a great chance for TLC to meet members, and also to spread the word among visitors – both library users and librarians – who haven't come across us before. Or didn't realise how much they needed us until now...

Elsewhere at the show, this year sees over 125 exhibitors, the usual wide-ranging programme of free seminars, and talks by authors – which inevitably spill into the café area for after-session chat and autographs. This year's authors include Mary Hoffman, Hilary McKay and David Nobbs.

New this year is an all-day conference (18 April) on Library 2.0, chaired by John Dolan, MLA Head of Library Policy. This cutting-edge concept will attract the techies, who'll want to know how libraries can use the new culture of Web 2.0.

The website (www.lishow.co.uk) has details of all the exhibitors and speakers. It is wise to plan your visit in detail, as some sessions have to turn people away. And if you pre-register online you can avoid the queues.

If your interest is children and young



Crowds at last year's L + i Show

people, hear Jonathan Douglas, the new Director of the National Literacy Trust (which is now running a family reading campaign, among many other things); Professor Sheila Corrall on information literacy (ie, helping people evaluate the deluge of information now available, online and elsewhere); Geoff Dubber of the School Library Association on the same thing in schools; or Ciara Eastell of The Reading Agency on supporting young people – a big issue now that local authorities have a duty to give young people 'places to go'.

Other highlights include an account of Bolton's arts-led library consultation project, which is cited again and again as best practice.

Two cracking speakers who always inspire are Miranda McKearney, Director of The Reading Agency and Rachel Van Riel, Director of Opening The Book.

For something more out of the obvious groove try Clive Hopwood of Writers in Prison Network, or Pat Beech, Manager of RNIB's national library service for people with sight problems.



Two highlights (always packed) will be the presentation of awards from TLC's supporter CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals). The Libraries Change Lives award (see page 13) will be presented by Roger McGough. The McColvin and Besterman medals are for reference works, both printed and electronic, on subjects ranging from Bob Dylan to crematoria, international law to children's literature.

Other useful features include the cafe and the Reunion Bar. A special treat for booklovers is the Independent Publishers Guild stand, with the latest releases and publishers on hand – a chance to discuss some innovative books that don't necessarily get major (or any!) reviews or publicity.

NEC, Birmingham (Hall 18)

Wednesday 18 April (10am–5pm) + Thursday 19 April (10am–4pm)

The NEC is served by Birmingham International station, with a covered bridge link, and has its own car parks (travel via M6, M1, M40 and M42). Birmingham International Airport is a few minutes away.

Where the Library + information Community Comes Together

Library + information Show
18th + 19th April 2007
NEC, Birmingham



18th + 19th April 2007. NEC, Birmingham

<p>PUBLIC +</p> <p>Public library staff and local authority personnel responsible for library services</p>	<p>SCHOOL +</p> <p>Head teachers, librarians & teachers responsible for the school library</p>	<p>ACADEMIC +</p> <p>Library and learning resource managers from further and higher education</p>	<p>WORKPLACE +</p> <p>Information professionals and knowledge workers from government, health, legal, industrial and commercial sectors</p>
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- Meet over 125 exhibitors showcasing the latest products, services and solutions for libraries and information centres
- Don't miss the much anticipated **CILIP Libraries Change Lives Awards** presentation
- Join us for the **1 day Library 2.0 Forum**

- Learn from independent experts and practitioners in a **wide ranging programme of free seminars**
- Hear from leading authors talking about their latest books
- Meet up with **old colleagues** in the Reunion Bar
- Visit the **'Knowledge Management Network'** stand to network with peers from leading workplace associations
- Plan your latest acquisitions at the **'Independent Publishers Village'**
- Discuss your next career move with recruitment experts at the **'Careers Clinic'**

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