

Annual Report: January-December 2007

Introduction

2007 was another busy year for The Network, including:

- Developing, running and participating in some 30¹ courses and conferences
- Producing Newsletters for January-December 2007
- Working with the LLDA and the partner library services to deliver phase 2 of “Welcome to Your Library”
- Working with the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to promote the role that libraries play in supporting looked-after children and young people
- Developing with Electric Putty the new Network website
- Attending a number of key conferences and meetings.

Further information about these – and other – areas of work are in the report that follows.

Membership has continued to grow (and now every local authority in the East of England region, as well as in the East Midlands, belongs to The Network), and, although we have lost two members, we have gained 6 new organisational members.

Increasingly, The Network is being seen as one of the places to make contact with other people to share and develop good practice, to ask for information, and as a way in to libraries, museums and archives.

Tackling social exclusion, creating community cohesion and developing approaches to community engagement are all still at the top of the Government agenda: it is increasingly clear that libraries, museums and archives have a key role to play in this, and The Network is contributing to the spread of good practice and the raising of our profile.

2008 is going to bring a number of new challenges, particularly around the changes to local government, community engagement and integration, the personalisation agenda, and funding – together we can ensure that The Network continues to contribute to all this and to support members in developing services.

John Vincent
December 2007

¹ 21 in 2006.

Membership, contacts and enquiries

Organisational members at December 2007

There are 133 organisational members (plus the MLA Partnership and the LLDA).

Here are the new joiners and leavers.

Joiners

City of London
Durham
NIACE
New Leaf Books
Science Museum
Suffolk

Leavers

Hounslow
Middlesbrough
South Eastern Education & Library Board.

Individual members

At December 2007, The Network had 10 individual members.

Partners

The Network is working in partnership with a number of key organisations and individuals, including Anne Harding, Bookscan, CILIP Scotland, CILIP Wales, CyMAL, DCMS, Evidence Base, NAAN [English Heritage's New Audiences and Access Network], NALD [The National Association for Literature Development], Proud Heritage, the Quality Leaders Project, RNIB, The Reading Agency, and the Time To Read network, and they also receive copies of the newsletter.

Membership of JISCMail lists

The following lists are open to anybody:

List	2007	2006
LAC [people working with looked-after children]	306	269
LGBT [people working with LGBTs – new list]	25	-
Travellers [people working with Travellers]	117	83
WTYL ["Welcome to Your Library"]	401	275

The following are for Network members only:

List	2007	2006
Network Newsletter	440	392

The Network [for circulation of general information and enquiries]	248	198
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The following is for Network and Prison Libraries Group members only:

List	2007	2006
Prisons [new list]	29	-

Contacts abroad

We have had a number of enquiries about The Network (particularly the newsletter) from people outside the UK, and now email the newsletters to:

- Albert Arko-Cobbah (Vista Campus Library, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa)
- Marcia Aronson (Manager, Adult & Readers' Advisory Services, Ottawa Public Library)
- John Gehner (Coordinator, Hunger, Homelessness & Poverty Task Force, ALA Social Responsibility Round Table)
- Liza Harrington (InterFuture Scholar, Suffolk University, Boston, Mass.)
- Anne Berit Helland (Bergen Public Library, Norway)
- Nick Jones (Nacka Library, Sweden)
- Rajashekhar Kumbhar (Padre Conceicao College of Engineering, Goa, India)
- Marian Morgan-Bindon (Queensland)
- Bern Nolen (Eastern Regional Libraries, Victoria, Australia)
- Lorraine Seeger (Eastern Regional Libraries, Victoria, Australia)

Enquiries

2007 [January-December 2007]	75 ²
2006 [January-December 2006]	122
2005 [January-December 2005]	83
2004 [January-December 2004]	102
2003/4 [April-December 2003]	50
2002/3	46
2001/2	15
2000/1	8

² Since April 2003, this figure also includes enquiries made to JISCMail.

The work of The Network, 2007

Report by the Networker

I worked some 1,505 hours for the Network between January-December 2007. This is an outline of what that has involved.

A major part of the work has been in developing and delivering the wide range of training courses, and the involvement in the second phase of “Welcome to Your Library”. I have contributed one article to *Public Library Journal* and have collected most of the content for and written the Newsletters in this period. The number of emails received continues to mushroom!

I have also attended a number of meetings with key contacts (the list of which is at Appendix A).

In addition, I have carried out all the administration for the Network, including invoicing and banking income; dealing with suppliers’ invoices and raising cheques; and answering the large number of letters and e-mails about the Network’s work.

The work can be broken down approximately as follows:

Activities	Hours 2007	% 2007	Hours 2006	% 2006
Preparation, delivery and follow-up to training courses [self-financing]	274.75	18%	302.75	22%
“Welcome to Your Library” Phase 2	289.50	19%	223.75	17%
Looked-after children & young people – “Right to Read” advocacy [Paul Hamlyn Foundation-funded]	98.00	6.5%	104.25	8%
Action Learning Set for MLA SE	67.00	4.5%	-	-
Southampton report for MLA SE	7.00	<1%	-	-
Work on <i>Blueprint</i> [MLA-funded]	13.75	1%	-	-
<i>Externally-funded work</i>		<i>c49.5%</i>		<i>c47%</i>
Managing The Network, including new members, adding to JISCMail lists, filing, etc (57.50); enquiries (11.75); accounts (66.00); maintaining our Website (70.00); responding to reports etc (7.00)	212.25	14%	141.75	11%
Emails	203.75	13.5%	183.00	14%
Work on newsletters	208.00	14%	231.25	17%
Other activities (eg attending meetings)	130.50	9%	154.50	11%
<i>Paid for from subscriptions, income from courses, etc</i>		<i>c50.5%</i>		<i>c53%</i>
TOTAL	1504.50	100%	1341.25	100%

Welcome To Your Library

The Network has continued to work with Helen Carpenter (the WTYL Coordinator) and the LLDA on the project. This has included co-preparing the weekly Digest; running training courses; preparing content for the WTYL website; attending meetings of the NE consortium, with the evaluators (ADP), and with multikulti.

WTYL came to an end in November 2007. As well as holding a final partners' event, WTYL also published the evaluation report³ and a good practice guide⁴, and The Network was involved in the preparation of both of these.

There is some money left in the budget for dissemination and advocacy, and this funding is being transferred – with the agreement of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation – to The Network; Helen Carpenter and I will be working on this for the first three months of 2008.

The Network website

The new website (www.seapn.org.uk) was launched at the beginning of November 2007, and has received positive comments from everyone who has used it.

Our thanks to CILIP for hosting the previous site and for assisting in the smooth transfer, and to Electric Putty for the design and creation of the new site and its smooth launch.

MLA South East work on community engagement

The Network was part of a successful bid coordinated by Local Level⁵ to run training courses and facilitate Action Learning Sets for MLA SE. I am facilitating eight Action Learning Sets, involving staff from libraries and a museum in the South East.

Initiatives and Developments

- RNIB asked if they could add their Gateway Champions to The Network JISCMail list (rather than setting up one of their own) – they have now been added, which means not only that there is greater sharing of information about visual impairment, but also that the Champions see other Network information
- East Midlands SCL have asked The Network to work with them to set up benchmarking of services in the region for looked-after children & young people; migrant workers; and Travellers
- East Midlands SCL and The Network are also working together to develop a conference on aspects of libraries' contribution to community cohesion
- English Heritage have asked The Network to contribute news items to their website, "Our Place"⁶

³ See:

http://www.welcometoyourlibrary.org.uk/content_files/files/WTYLEvaluationReportNov07.pdf.

⁴ See:

http://www.welcometoyourlibrary.org.uk/content_files/files/WTYLGoodPracticeGuideNov07.pdf.

⁵ See: http://www.local-level.org.uk/Local_Level.asp.

- Following the Prison Libraries Group Conference, a working group⁷ is developing a programme for increasing the welcome by public libraries for (ex) prisoners and their families
- Contacted by Julius Honor (CRE) about how to get *Catalyst Magazine* into libraries
- Nottingham have added the newsletter to their intranet.

Attendance at seminars, formal and other meetings, etc

- CSG meetings (February, May 2007)
- Reception at UCL to launch *British librarianship and information work* (February 2007)
- East Midlands Society of Chief Librarians meeting to discuss working together (March 2007)
- Second meeting of “Plenty”, Inner Vision at the NUT [looking at developing work with looked-after young people], London (June 2007)
- Post-WTYL meeting to discuss future developments (August 2007)
- Meeting with Southampton Libraries management team to discuss background to MLA SE community engagement report (September 2007)
- Meetings of Prison Libraries Group Post-Conference Working Group (October, December 2007)
- Meeting with PHF and The Reading Agency to discuss work with looked-after children (December 2007)
- Meeting of the National Year of Reading Working Group (December 2007)
- Final meeting of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation “Reading and Libraries Challenge Fund” Panel (December 2007)
- Reception to launch English Heritage’s “Our Place” (December 2007)

Conferences, seminars, etc attended

- Sat in on Customer Care course run by Liz Howells⁸ for Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (February 2007)
- “Fulfilling Their Potential” conference, Chelsea Football Club, London (February 2007)
- “Creating sustainable futures for all: engaging with Black minority ethnic children and young people in care”, BAAF Conference, London (May 2007)
- “Investigating Freedom”, launch of film at the British Museum (June 2007)
- “No Outsiders” project, London dissemination event (June 2007)
- National Youth Agency seminar to launch *Public libraries: promoting young people’s active involvement* (July 2007)

Visitors from abroad

- Nick Jones, Librarian from Sweden, to discuss social exclusion etc in the UK

⁶ See: <http://www.ourplacenetwork.org.uk/>.

⁷ Andy Cooke (Prisons Libraries Group), Natasha Innocent (MLA), Tricia Kings (TRA), and John Vincent.

⁸ Liz had sat in on one of mine last year.

- Noemi Somorjai (Hungary) to discuss library provision for LGBTs

Other Key Activities

- Chaired Social Justice discussion group for MLA as part of the consultation over *Blueprint*, wrote up notes and prepared a paper
- Production of monthly newsletters
- Co-production of WTYL Digest

Responses made by the Network

- “Your chance to tell us what you think” – Commission on Integration and Cohesion (January 2007)
- Draft bid by Birmingham’s “Connecting Libraries” for funding for a small refugees project (May 2007)
- Guidance on the New Duty to Promote Community Cohesion (DfES) (May 2007)
- Request by Camden for information on blocked websites and searches (May 2007)
- “An investigation into the training needs of public library staff regarding censorship and intellectual freedom” [LIS student questionnaire] (June 2007)
- *Securing excellence: delivering for communities – Museum, Libraries and Archives and the Local Government White Paper* [MLA paper] (July 2007)
- “Reading groups for visually impaired people” [LIS student dissertation] (July 2007)
- “‘The right man for the job?’ The role of empathy in community librarianship” – University of Sheffield draft research report (October 2007)

Publications

Articles

- John Vincent “Changing, going, gone?”, *Public Library Journal* (“Social exclusion” column) Autumn 2007, pp15-19

Contributions to ...

- John Pateman and John Vincent “From social inclusion to community cohesion” in *British librarianship and information work 2001-2005* (edited by John Bowman, Ashgate, 2007).

Courses and other events (January – December 2007)

1. Our own open courses

None in 2007.

2. Other organisations’ open courses/Lectures

“Community Engagement”, one-day course (with Cathy Herman) for CSG, Coventry (November 2007)

“Services to older adults”, seminar organised by BASIN/LibrariesWest (October 2007)

Scene-setting and summing up for workshop “On the Out” at the Prison Libraries Group Conference, Scunthorpe (October 2007)

“Libraries and social inclusion: how are we doing?”, Keynote address, Forum on Interlending conference, London (July 2007)

“It could be me ...: a workshop to look at the role we can all play in supporting colleagues with mental health problems”, talk at Umbrella, Hatfield (June 2007)

“Tackling social exclusion: the national picture”, presentation for the CSG Northern Day School, “Learning in Libraries: how libraries can support the Skills for Life agenda and help those seeking work”, Sunderland (June 2007)

“Supporting Looked-after Children”, one-day course (with Anne Harding), Swindon (June 2007)

“Supporting Looked-after Children”, one-day course (with Anne Harding) for Sinto, Sheffield (April 2007)

“Community Engagement”, one-day course (with Cathy Herman) for MLA South East, (March 2007)

3. In-house courses and talks

“Library services for LGBTs”, Hertfordshire Library Service (December 2007, half-day course)

“Tackling social exclusion”, Renaissance East Midlands, Lincoln (November 2007)

“Information needs of migrant workers”, presentation for the SPiCE training day for people with responsibility for developing services to refugees and migrant workers, Birmingham (November 2007)

Workshop (run twice) on key lessons learned from WTYL for “Love Libraries, Love Learning”, Staffordshire Library & Information Services Staff Conference, Yarnfield (November 2007)

“Tackling social exclusion”, Buckinghamshire Library Service (November 2007, half-day course)

“Tackling social exclusion”, lecture to MSc students, UWE, Bristol (October 2007)

“Welcome To Your Library – connecting public libraries with refugees and asylum seekers” [part of the WTYL programme], Gateshead (June 2007)

“Welcome To Your Library – connecting public libraries with refugees and asylum seekers” [part of the WTYL programme], South Shields (June 2007)

“Tackling social exclusion”, Buckinghamshire Library Service (June 2007, half-day course)

“Tackling social exclusion”, Buckinghamshire Library Service (May 2007, one-day course)

“Tackling social exclusion”, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Library Service (May 2007)

“Welcome To Your Library – connecting public libraries with refugees and asylum seekers” [part of the WTYL programme], Sunderland (May 2007)

“Library services for LGBTs”, Hertfordshire Library Service (March 2007, half-day course)

“Tackling social exclusion” workshop, University of Brighton MA in Librarianship course (February 2007)

Seminar for students, London Metropolitan University (February 2007)

“Tackling social exclusion”, Book Aid International (February 2007)

Facilitating “Partners for Change” training day, Taunton (February 2007)

Facilitating “ICT training needs of visually impaired people” workshop for MLA SE, Worthing (February 2007)

“An overview of community cohesion”, Lincolnshire Library Service (January 2007, two half-day courses)

“Tackling social exclusion”, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Library Service (January 2007)

“The broader picture: readers’ groups and social exclusion”, session for Kent Reader Development Training Day (January 2007)

4. Conference

None in 2007.

Complimentary letters/e-mails

Here is a small selection of comments made about The Network’s work this year:

“[The newsletter] remains one of the relatively few widely-circulated e-newsletters that I look forward to receiving because it’s so useful, so interesting and so relevant ...”

“... Your emails and updates have been invaluable ... many thanks – it has helped knowing that someone has the Bigger Picture and will go on caring and speaking out for lac ...”

“Thanks for all the fascinating and useful information you unearth and for sharing it with us. Thanks also for the invaluable training course you did for us on social exclusion last year.”

“Thoroughly enjoyed your course yesterday, and, judging by the remarks from the others on the way out, so did everyone else. I must admit I didn’t think I ‘needed’ to go on such a course but it was recommended to me by someone in another library. However, I thought the course was thought-provoking, informative and totally enjoyable ...”

“I’d just like to say thanks for the newsletters – they continue to be useful, informative and relevant to my team’s work, and have just given the newsletter a ‘plug’ through Council contacts etc”

“Thank you once again for this incredibly useful digest ...” [referring to The Network newsletter]

“Very useful as usual, an integral part of my CPD” [also referring to the newsletter]

“I should say, John, I had the time of my life when I attended the workshops that you facilitated ...”

Appendix A: Meetings with key contacts 2007

These included meetings with: Cathy Herman to prepare training courses; Jan Suchacki (MLA SW) to update each other; Ciara Eastell and others to plan “Partners for Change” training day; Jonathan Douglas to update each other; Sheryl Burton and Sheree Kane (NCB) to discuss “Right to Read” and looked-after children; Natasha Innocent (MLA) to update each other; Penny King and Myrrhine Crowe (The Fostering Network) to discuss work with looked-after children; Andrew Flinn (UCL) to discuss the role of The Network; Viv Bird (National Literacy Trust) to discuss work with looked-after children; Lisa Doyle (Refugee Council) to discuss work with libraries; John Dolan (MLA) to update each other; Tricia Kings (The Reading Agency) to plan Prison Libraries Group Conference workshop; Alison Shakspeare to discuss promoting her book; Ajamu (Rukus Foundation) to update each other; Melanie Burke (Electric Putty) to plan new website; Ena Fry (The Fostering Network) to discuss work with looked-after children; Miranda McKearney (The Reading Agency) to update each other; Andrea Warman and Clare Pallett (BAAF) to discuss work with looked-after children; Isobel Ashford and Charlene Arnold (NIACE) to update each other; Lizzie Crump and Karen Taylor (Arts Council) to update each other; Anne Harding to prepare training courses; Marian Keen Downs, Hannah Rutland, and Louise Chadwick (Book Trust) to update each other.