

Annual Report: April 2014-March 2015

Introduction

Welcome to our annual review for 2014-2015, and thank you for your continued support of The Network. This report covers the period from April 2014 to March 2015.

This has continued to be a difficult time for the cultural sector as a whole, and this has been reflected in the membership of the Network. Although 2014-2015 did see some members decide not to renew their subscriptions (a mix of budget pressures and staffing reductions), the majority of members renewed their subscriptions which have enabled libraries, museums, archives, and cultural & heritage organisations across the country to respond to social justice issues and to make a difference to individuals and groups in their communities – please see Appendix B for a reminder about ways of making the most of your subscription.

Our work

Key successes included:

- Producing newsletters for April 2014-March 2015
- Producing Ebulletins for April 2014-March 2015
- Regularly adding events, resources and new features to the website¹ – which has also been completely re-built (further information about this follows)
- Developing, running and participating in some 7² courses and conferences.

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

Working towards social justice and developing approaches to community engagement are still very much live issues – in fact, some organisations have even started referring to ‘social exclusion’ again: it is increasingly clear that libraries, museums, archives and cultural & heritage organisations have a key role to play in this (despite the economic position), and The Network is contributing to the spread of good practice and the raising of our sector profile.

Finally, my thanks to all those who shared good practice, made enquiries, and generally contributed to The Network – please continue doing so!

My particular thanks also go to Nick Little and Oz Osborne at Outsiders Community Consultants CIC for all their help and advice over insurance; and to the team at Electric Putty Ltd for all their advice and support over creating the new website.

John Vincent
April 2015

¹ See: www.seapn.org.uk.

² 15 in 2013-2014; 14 in 2012-2013, 19 in 2011, 18 in 2010, 24 in 2009, 30 in 2008.

Membership, contacts and enquiries

Organisational members at March 2015

There are 108 organisational members.

Here are the new joiners and leavers:

Joiners

Haringey

Libraries and Information East Midlands

Leavers

Dorset

New Leaf Books

Wrexham.

Individual members

At March 2015, The Network also had 16 individual members.

Partners

The Network is working in partnership with a number of key organisations and individuals, including Bill Bolloten and Anne Harding; ASCEL (with whom we swap ebulletins); Bookscan; CILIP Scotland; CILIP Wales; CyMAL (who are using the Ebulletin to inform lis-Wales); RNIB; Share The Vision; The Reading Agency; and Sound Delivery.

Membership of JISCMAIL lists

The following lists are open to anybody:

| List | 2014-15 | 2013-14 |
|---|---------|---------|
| LAC [people working with looked-after children] | 313 | 337 |
| Learning Disability | 108 | 91 |
| LGBT [people working with LGBTs] | 232 | 213 |
| Network Ebulletin [combining WTYL & Newsletter subscribers] | 769 | 807 |
| Older people [people working with older people] | 200 | 212 |
| Travellers [people working with Travellers] | 200 | 207 |

The following are primarily for Network members only:

| List | 2014-15 | 2013-14 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Network Newsletter | 440 | 463 |
| The Network [for circulation of general information and enquiries] | 304 | 303 |

The following is primarily for Network and Prison Libraries Group members only:

| List | 2014-15 | 2013-14 |
|---------|---------|---------|
| Prisons | 138 | 139 |

Enquiries

These now include enquiries made on the elists The Network coordinates (eg Prisons):

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| 2014-2015 [April 2014-March 2015] | 82 ³ |
| 2013-2014 [April 2013-March 2014] | 111 ⁴ |
| 2012-2013 [January 2012-March 2013] | 104 ⁵ |
| 2011 [January-December 2011] | 100 |
| 2010 [January-December 2010] | 117 |
| 2009 [January-December 2009] | 108 |
| 2008 [January-December 2008] | 87 |
| 2007 [January-December 2007] | 75 |
| 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 |

The Network website and statistics

By the beginning of 2014-2015, despite revisions, the website was becoming cluttered and hard to use, and Electric Putty also announced that they had decided to 'decommission' the existing content management system. After some discussions, it was agreed that they would build a new, simpler website, and this was launched in October 2014. It has proved much clearer and easier to use.

There was a period after the new website went live (21 October 2014-3 March 2015, when it was not connected to Google Analytics, so the 2014-2015 figures do not represent a full year.

Here are our 'headline' web statistics:

- 2304 people made 2874 visits (in 2013-2014, 3667 people made 5155 visits)
- Over 65% were from UK, the rest included the US, Brazil, and China
- 76.2% of visitors were new, 23.8% returning

³ 4 of these were from students, requesting information for dissertations; 6 of these were emails with information about jobs, that we were asked to circulate.

⁴ 5 of the 111 were from students, requesting information for and help with their dissertations.

⁵ 3 of the 104 were from students, requesting information for and help with their dissertations.

There were also enquiries from abroad, requesting information about social justice issues in UK libraries. The 2012-2013 figure also includes two jobs that The Network was asked to circulate to its members; and a request from *Museum Practice* for background information for an article on how museums, archives and libraries work with prisoners and ex-offenders.

Looking at the new website for the period 4 March-31 March 2015, the top eight popular pages were:

- Home page
- Events & courses
- About The Network
- Contact
- Ebulletins
- Joining
- Newsletters
- Annual reports.

Making a difference

As noted above, The Network makes a difference, including:

- Drawing together, highlighting and disseminating innovation and good practice (eg information about work with people with dementia and their families; copyright issues in reproducing illustrations)
- Being active in the sector on behalf of members: adding to and widening the debate about libraries, museums, archives, cultural heritage organisations and social justice issues (eg in relation to provision for LGBT people)
- Working with Network members and across the sector to help develop strategy (eg in work with older people)
- Campaigning and lobbying on behalf of the sector
- Giving advice and information, and sharing good practice from other Network members (eg public libraries' work around mental health issues; work with carers; checking what is available in the UK for Disability History Month; libraries and food)
- Giving support to colleagues (eg advice on issues to look at in relation to insurance; finding examples of other organisations that fly the rainbow flag for LGBT History Month, etc; finding speakers for LGBT History Month events; resources to support a member of the public enquiring about gender reassignment)
- Supporting people outside the sector (eg helping independent writers/publishers to get their work seen by the cultural sector)
- Linking the UK cultural sector's social justice work to that abroad (eg in the US, Canada, and Australia).

The work of The Network, 2014-2015 – Report by the Networker

I worked some 1059.25 hours for the Network between April 2013 and March 2014. This is an outline of what that has involved:

| Activities | Hours 2014-15 | % 2014- 15 | Hours 2013-14 | % 2013- 14 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Preparation, delivery and follow-up to training courses [self-financing] | 37.25 | 4.2% | 102.00 | 9.6% |
| STV/SCL/CDEG/RNIB Six Steps courses + follow-up | 5.00 | 0.6% | 189.50 | 17.9% |
| “Welcome to Your Library” further work | - | - | 1.50 | <1% |
| Enfield LGBTQ Development Programme | 28.25 | 3.2% | - | - |
| <i>Externally-funded work</i> | <i>70.50</i> | <i>8.0%</i> | <i>293.00</i> | <i>27.6%</i> |
| Managing The Network, including new members, adding to JISCMail lists, filing, etc (30.75); accounts (43.50); maintaining our website (46.00) | 127.50 | 14.3% | 107.00 | 10% |
| Emails | 191.00 | 21.4% | 187.00 | 17.7% |
| Work on Newsletters & Ebulletins | 299.25 | 33.5% | 245.50 | 23.2% |
| Work on Ashgate LGBT book* | 15.50 | 1.7% | 24.75 | 2.3% |
| Other writing | 16.25 | 1.8% | 6.75 | <1% |
| Social justice blogs | - | - | 1.00 | <1% |
| Work on SW social justice advocacy | - | - | 8.75 | <1% |
| Other activities (eg attending meetings) | 55.50 | 5.4% | 65.50 | 6.2% |
| Enquiries | 16.75 | 1.9% | 15.75 | 1.5% |
| Responding to reports etc | 12.50 | 1.4% | 4.25 | <1% |
| Supporting work with older people | 8.50 | 1% | - | - |
| Supporting work with looked-after children | 3.50 | 0.4% | 26.75 | 2.5% |
| Attending meeting re: poss EU bid | - | - | 7.00 | <1% |
| Member of judges panel for CILIP Libraries Change Lives Award | 54.00 | 6.1% | 59.75 | 5.6% |
| Trustee of the Jodi Awards | 9.25 | 1% | 6.50 | <1% |
| Involvement in LGBT History Month | 1.50 | 1.4% | - | - |
| <i>Paid for from subscriptions, income from courses, etc</i> | <i>811.00</i> | <i>91.3%</i> | <i>766.25</i> | <i>72.2%</i> |
| TOTAL | 881.50 | ~100% | 1059.25 | ~100% |

*Note: this does not include time spent researching and writing the book.

Initiatives and Developments

- After School’s OUT and The Network became working partners, John Vincent joined the small planning group for the archives element of LGBT History Month

Attendance at conferences, seminars, formal and other meetings, visits, etc

- Attended the launch of The Reading Agency/Society of Chief Librarians “Reading Well Books on Prescription for Dementia” programme, Wellcome Trust (January 2015)
- Attended the launch event for LGBT History Month, Museum of the Order of St John, London (November 2014)
- Meeting with the Surrey Libraries Equality & Diversity Action Group (November 2014)
- Attended LGBT History Month planning meeting, London (October 2014)
- Attended (and led a discussion group at) the launch of EmpathyLab⁶ (October 2014)
- Attended the CILIP Big Day, Bristol (September 2014)
- Attended meeting with the Enfield LGBT Network (September 2014)

⁶ See: <http://www.empathylab.uk/about/background/>.

- Attended Committee meetings of CILIP Community, Diversity and Equality Group (July 2014, January 2015)
- Attended launch of the National Museums Liverpool's "House of Memories" app, House of Commons (June 2014)
- Attended Jodi Mattes Trust Board meeting (June 2014) plus 'phone conference calls (September, November 2014)
- Attended Diversity in Heritage Group meeting, Science Museum, London (May 2014)
- Attended School's OUT Conference, Manchester (May 2014)

CILIP Libraries Change Lives Award

- Attended a debriefing meeting about the 2014 Award, CILIP (November 2014)
- Attended the Award-giving at the CILIP Big Day, Bristol (September 2014)
- Visited shortlisted initiatives at Wellingborough; Oxhey; Leeds (August 2014)
- Shortlisting meeting, CILIP (July 2014)

Formal responses made by the Network

- Response to the Welsh Public Libraries Review (June 2014)

Comments (eg on draft publications) made by the Network

- Commenting on a book proposal for two publishers (March 2015)
- Commenting on draft article by John Pateman, "Creating a community-led staff structure" (December 2014)
- Commenting on draft article by John Pateman, "Developing a community-led strategy" (November 2014)
- Commenting on draft chapter by John Pateman for *Perspectives on libraries as institutions of human rights and social justice* (November 2014)
- Commenting on a draft article, "Developments in LGBT provision in secondary school library services since the abolition of Section 28" for the *Journal of Librarianship & Information Science* (August 2014)
- Commenting on draft PowerPoint presentation on disability (April 2014)

Comments on CILIP matters (via CDEG) made by the Network

- Commenting on the Financing Model for Member Networks (October 2014)
- Commenting on Business Plan templates and equality and diversity (July 2014)
- Added information to the draft list of Diversity Award winners for CDEG (July 2014)
- Commenting on the Draft Dementia National Offer for The Reading Agency (July 2014)

Publications – The Network's own

- *The Network Newsletter*, issues 155-166
- *The Network Ebulletin*, numbers 150-176.

Publications – articles, blogs, etc

- In November 2014, John Vincent was cited in a blogpost⁷ on *Informed*:

“John Vincent, co-author of the blog [‘Social Justice Librarian’](#) and coordinator of [‘The Network’](#), recently raised similar concerns about the demise of outreach and targeted services to ‘marginalised groups’ in [a recent piece he wrote on libraries and social justice](#):

“We know some of the reasons why this is happening: lack of library staff, time and resources; communities overwhelmed by other demands on their time; possibly political views about ‘new arrivals’. But is there more to it? Could it be that, surreptitiously, we’ve become worn down by the calls to return to building-based services, to concentrate on existing users and their demands, to abandon ‘risky’ types of service, or services that do not show ‘high returns’ such as increased issue figures and visitor numbers? We do know that the sort of work that is required to make public libraries really relevant is time-intensive, and often involves relatively small numbers of users.”

- In October 2014, John Vincent contributed an article, “What about social justice?” to “Leon’s Library Blog”⁸
- Also in October, Siobhan Ball, Gulshan Iqbal and John Vincent wrote a blogpost for CILIP, “How to care for sacred texts in public libraries”⁹
- In September 2014, *Not the Information Forum News Briefing* (74)¹⁰ included an article, “We hate no.80: Homophobia” [pp5-7], which reviews John Vincent’s book
- Publication of notes, “Some steps towards working with LGBTQI communities – or any”, from talk at MOSI for NWFED, 19 May 2014¹¹
- John Vincent completed an article on libraries’ provision for LGBT people for the US library journal, *Library Trends* (the article is due to appear in Spring 2015)
- Contributed to the “Social Justice Librarian” blog¹².

Other developments

John Vincent was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by CILIP at the CILIP Big Day in September 2014.

The citation read:

⁷ See: <http://theinformed.org.uk/2014/11/speak-up-about-the-hidden-consequences-of-library-cuts/>.

⁸ See: <http://leonslibraryblog.com/2014/10/>.

⁹ See: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/cilip/blog/how-care-sacred-texts-public-libraries>.

¹⁰ See: <http://nif.org.uk/Newsletter%20No%2074%20Oct%20-%202014.pdf>.

¹¹ See: <http://www.nwfed.org.uk/ideas-and-resources-from-our-19th-may-lgbt-focus-event-mosi-celebrating-the-international-day-against-homophobia-6430.html>.

¹² See: <https://sjlibrarian.wordpress.com/>.

“John Vincent has demonstrated a lifetime commitment to diversity and inclusion. He has made a significant contribution to raising the profile of diversity and equalities issues in the library and information profession. John has worked in the public sector since the 1960s: for Hertfordshire (where he led pioneering work with a school for young people with severe learning disabilities); Lambeth (coordinating a one-year course for positive action trainees) and Enfield library services. As a children’s librarian he worked to develop positive attitudes to equality issues in children’s books. In 1997, he was invited to become part of the team that produced the UK’s first review of public libraries and social exclusion (from which The Network originated).

John has coordinated The Network since 1999 which works to advocate social justice, to disseminate information and to run courses <http://www.seapn.org.uk/>. With almost no funding other than small annual subscriptions and income from courses, he has managed to keep The Network at the forefront of diversity and inclusion work in public libraries, museums, archives and the cultural heritage sector.

In 2002, John led a piece of work for the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) to improve the awareness of library staff on the reading, literacy, and broader ‘cultural’ needs of looked-after children and young people. John has also worked as part of a cross-England consortium (again part-funded by PHF) to develop public library services for refugees, asylum-seekers and migrant workers, including co-writing the *Welcome to Your Library Good Practice Guide*, in 2007. John also coordinates a number of JISCMAIL discussion lists which help practitioners keep up-to-date with information and developments in the diversity/inclusion area.

John’s training work was reassessed by CILIP in 2011, and re-awarded their Seal of Recognition. John has delivered training on Diversity and Equality across all sectors of the profession. He has continued to be active within CILIP, as a member of the Community Diversity and Equality Group committee and part of the judging panel for their high profile "Libraries Change Lives" award.

He has published widely on all areas of equalities, especially LGBT, children/young people, and ‘new arrivals’ and is widely recognised as an expert in diversity and inclusion. His latest book, published by Ashgate, *LGBT People and the UK Cultural Sector*, examines the complex and conflicting relationships between LGBT people and our cultural and heritage organisations.

John received a Diversity Award from the Community, Diversity and Equality Group in January 2014 in recognition of his "outstanding achievement in the promotion of diversity" and "commitment to the advancement of diversity within a library or information setting".

Libraries in *all* sectors have a crucial role in contributing to social justice which is central to CILIP’s Vision of a fair and prosperous society. Additionally, concern for the public good in all professional matters, including respect for diversity within society, and the promoting of equal opportunities and human rights is the heart of CILIP’s Ethical Principles.”

Courses and other events (April 2014-March 2015)

1. Our own open courses

None.

2. Other organisations' open courses/Lectures

Workshop on "Working with/supporting young people who are identifying as LGBTQ" for the School Library Association annual conference, "Reading for Excellence", London (November 2014)

Session on "How have archives (and museums and libraries) treated LGBTQI people?" for the LGBT History Club, London Metropolitan Archives (July 2014)

Session on the findings from *LGBT people and the UK cultural sector* for the NW Federation of Museums LGBT Focus day, Manchester (May 2014)

3. In-house courses and talks

"LGBTQ Awareness", Enfield Library Service (February 2015 and March 2015, 2 x half-day courses)

Seminar for information studies students at the University of Sheffield (March 2015)

Seminar for information studies students at the University of West of England, Bristol (October 2014).

Appendix A: Meetings with key contacts 2014-2015

These included:

Bill Bolloten; Cat Cooper (CILIP); Andrew Flinn (UCL); Marek Kazmierski (*Not Shut Up*); Dave Percival (Portsmouth & CDEG); Tracy-Ann Smith (Diversity in Heritage); Jorge Solis (Northamptonshire); Pam Tuttiatt (Enfield)

Appendix B: Making the most of your subscription

Member organisations and individuals use The Network to:

- Ensure that their services are well placed to meet national, regional and local objectives
- Draw on and share expertise and good practice
- Work with other Network members to benchmark services
- Keep up-to-date effectively with new developments across the social justice field, without having to read every new document themselves as the information has already been distilled for them
- Ensure that colleagues across their service are also able to keep up-to-date via targeted emails to their desk-tops

- Ensure value for money by being able to book places on Network courses and receive in-house training at reduced cost.

When a library (or museum or archive) service from a local authority joins The Network, this automatically confers membership on the **whole local authority**.

The benefits are that:

- Council departments can share knowledge about issues that matter to them, and your service is placed at the centre of this authority-wide information-sharing
- It's a cost-effective way of stretching limited resources (and, in addition, other Council departments could contribute towards the cost of the subscription)
- Related organisations within the local authority area, such as independent and District Council museums, archive collections, schools, and others, can also share this targeted information in an extremely effective way.

Some public library services forward the Newsletter and Ebulletin (as well as other emails from our e-lists) to targeted contacts across the Council (thereby ensuring that the library service is contributing to corporate targets and agendas), and have also subscribed key local authority staff to some of the e-lists. Information is also forwarded to contacts in the community.

They also regularly share updates on service developments with other Network contacts, and ask for advice and suggestions on service plans. In one authority, a contribution towards the cost of the annual subscription is received from other Council departments in recognition of the value of this information-sharing.

Profit & Loss Accounts: April 2014-March 2015

Note to the accounts: One of the problems with an annual accounting system is that it does not include funds carried forward from previous years. In fact, The Network came into 2014-2015 with £13,834.40 in the bank, and some of this was used to pay for the website upgrade, together with the remainder of the funds in the WTYL account (£1,282.22) as the work involved checking all the items on the WTYL website and transferring over any that were still 'live'. Therefore, although the 2014-2015 Profit & Loss Accounts show a loss, in fact we still have funds in the bank!

Income

| | | |
|---|----------------------|------------------|
| Enfield LGBTQ Development Programme | | 1058.15 |
| Royalties from sales of <i>LGBT people and the UK cultural sector</i> (Ashgate) | | 33.13 |
| Royalties from sales of <i>Public libraries and social justice</i> (Ashgate) | | 25.08 |
| Subscriptions – annual | | 6,167.50 |
| Training courses – in-house/open: | | |
| Reimbursed expenses | | 21.40 |
| Fees: | | |
| School Library Association Conf. | 100.00 | |
| Surrey LGBT courses | 3,000.00 | |
| Surrey Staff Conf. | 250.00 | |
| University of Sheffield | 82.25 | |
| University of West of England | 80.00 | |
| | Total fees: 3,512.25 | |
| Total income | | 10,817.51 |

Expense

| | | |
|---|--------|--------|
| Attendance at Schools OUT Conference | | 170.90 |
| Enfield LGBTQ Development Programme (plus training courses) | | 504.65 |
| Hotel accommodation for EDGE Conf. ¹³ | | 129.00 |
| Insurance: | | |
| Public Liability Insurance | 118.71 | |
| Payment to Accountants for advice on insurance | 75.00 | |

¹³ The Conference was in February 2014, but the billing was late.

| | | |
|---|----------------|------------------------|
| Total insurance: | 193.71 | |
| Jodi Awards | | 3.75 |
| Postage and delivery | | 103.49 |
| Printing handouts for meetings | | 17.04 |
| Professional fees | | 9,613.78 |
| Subscriptions ¹⁴ | | 443.00 |
| Telephone ¹⁵ | | 164.55 |
| Training course expenses | | 2,378.92 ¹⁶ |
| Travel | | 887.30 |
| Website | | |
| Hosting | 105.57 | |
| Redesign and construction | 6,408.00 | |
| | Total website: | 6,513.57 |
| Welcome To Your Library website hosting renewal | | 9.58 |
| Total expenses | | 21,133.24 |
| Other income – Interest | | 11.37 |
| Net Income | | -10,304.36 |

¹⁴ Archives & Records Association; Clinks; Diversity in Heritage Group; Museums Association; National Children’s Bureau; National Secular Society; and Race Equality Teaching.

¹⁵ Includes contributions to the annual charges for broadband on Devon and London ‘phone lines.

¹⁶ Includes expenses for the Share The Vision courses, which totalled £2,237.22 (includes payments for refreshments, travel, overnight accommodation for John Vincent, photocopying, fees for John Vincent).