

Annual Report: April 2017-March 2018

Introduction

Welcome to our annual review for 2017-2018; this report covers the period from April 2017 to March 2018. Copies of the accounts are available on request.

Firstly, thank you for your continued support of The Network. Please see Appendix C for a reminder about ways of making the most of your subscription (members have commented during the year on what good value membership is!).

Our work

Key successes included:

- Producing newsletters for April 2017-February 2018
- Producing 23 Ebulletins for the period April 2017-March 2018
- Regularly adding events, resources and new features to the website¹
- Developing, running and participating in eight courses, workshops and conferences
- Researching and writing the paper for Arts Council England on equality & diversity and public libraries in England².

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 Carol Boswarthack and Madeline Barratt for being the counter-signatories for The Network’s bank account.

John Vincent
August 2018

¹ See: www.seapn.org.uk.

² Eventually published July 2018. John Vincent. *Libraries welcome everyone: six stories of diversity and inclusion from libraries in England*. Arts Council England, 2018, <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/libraries-welcome-everyone-six-stories-diversity-and-inclusion-libraries-england>.

Membership, contacts and enquiries

Organisational members at March 2018

There are 98 organisational members.³

Here are the new joiners and leavers:

Joiners

Blackpool

Leavers

Bristol

Croydon, Harrow, Hounslow – all formerly run by Carillion

North Somerset

Perth & Kinross

Swansea

Mergers

Bournemouth (merged with Poole)

Torbay (merged with Libraries Unlimited – Devon)

Leavers from the past⁴

East Dunbartonshire

Haringey

Libraries & Information East Midlands

National Library of Wales

The Reader

Individual members

At March 2018, The Network had 10 individual members.

Partners

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

Membership of JISCMAIL lists

The following lists are open to anybody:

List	2017-18	2016-17
LAC [people working with looked-after children]	279	285

³ This is correct at August 2018 – we still have a number of subscription renewals outstanding.

⁴ On 1 June 2017, I deleted a number of members from whom we just never received a response after several 'chasers'.

Learning Disability	161	149
LGBT [people working with LGBTs]	284	284
Network Ebulletin [combining WTYL & Newsletter subscribers]	642	688
Older people [people working with older people]	198	204
Travellers [people working with Travellers]	180	188

The following are primarily for Network members only:

List	2017-18	2016-17
Network Newsletter	348	389
The Network [for circulation of general information and enquiries]	248	269

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

List	2017-18	2016-17
Prisons	140	146

In addition, from November 2015, The Network took over responsibility for managing the Six Steps list:

List	2017-18	2016-17
Six Steps	206	187

Enquiries

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

2017-2018 [April 2017-March 2018]	103 ⁵
2016-2017 [April 2016-March 2017]	85
2015-2016 [April 2015-March 2016]	69
2014-2015 [April 2014-March 2015]	82
2013-2014 [April 2013-March 2014]	111
2012-2013 [January 2012-March 2013]	104
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

⁵ The range of enquiries is wide – to give a taste of them, some examples are included as Appendix B. Seven enquiries were from students, and another three were asking for job information to be circulated.

The Network website statistics

Here are our 'headline' web statistics:

- 2144 people made 2636 visits
- 90.3% of visitors were new, 9.3% returning
- Over 80% of the visitors were from the UK, US and Canada.

Making a difference

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

- Drawing together, highlighting and disseminating innovation and good practice
- 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
- Working with Network members and across the sector to help develop strategy
- Campaigning and lobbying on behalf of the sector
- Giving advice and information, and sharing good practice from other Network members
- Giving support to colleagues
- Linking the UK cultural sector's social justice work to that abroad.

The work of The Network, 2017-2018 – Report by the Networker

I worked some 1001.50 hours for the Network between April 2017 and March 2018. This is an outline of what that has involved:

Activities	Hours 2017-18	% 2017-18	Hours 2016-17	% 2016-17
Preparation, delivery and follow-up to training courses [self-financing]	49.50	4.9%	100.75	9.9%
Organising training day for SWRLS	-	-	22.25	2.2%
STV/SCL/CDEG/RNIB Six Steps courses + follow-up	85.50	8.5%	30.50	3%
STV: scanning for STV Bulletin	0.25	<1%	-	-
STV: prep of modules for community libraries, etc	4.00	0.4%	-	-
Arts Council Equality & Diversity project	155.50	15.5%	38.00	3.75%
<i>Externally-funded work</i>	<i>294.75</i>	<i>29.3%</i>	<i>191.50</i>	<i>18.85%</i>
Managing The Network, including new members, adding to JISMAIL lists (4.50), filing, etc (16.50); accounts (52.75); maintaining our website (2.25)	76.00	7.59%	76.00	7.5%
Emails	156.75	15.7%	156.75	15.5%
Work on Newsletters & Ebulletins	242.50	24.2%	293.50	29%
Work on Ashgate LGBT book*	0.25	<1%	13.00	1.3%
Work on LGBT History Month	4.50	0.4%	15.25	1.5%
Writing chapter for <i>LGBTQ librarianship in the 21st century</i>	31.75	3.2%	-	-
Other writing	8.50	0.8%	61.50	6%
Other activities (eg attending meetings)	70.75	7.0%	92.00	9%
Enquiries	16.25	1.6%	17.75	1.75%
Responding to reports etc	6.50	0.6%	11.00	1%
Supporting work with looked-after children	6.25	0.6%	0.25	~
Work on 'New Arrivals' (post-WTYL) + Libraries of Sanctuary	11.25	1.1%	1.25	0.1%
Member of judging panel for CILIP Libraries Change Lives Award	74.00	7.4%	74.75	7.4%
Trustee of the Jodi Awards	1.50	0.1%	8.75	0.9%
<i>Paid for from subscriptions, income from courses, etc</i>			<i>745.75</i>	<i>81%</i>
TOTAL	1001.50	~100%	1013.25	~100%

*Note: this includes follow-on work, such as responding to enquiries, dealing with the publisher, posting to the WordPress blog

Initiatives and Developments

- John Vincent was invited to attend the launch of the British Museum exhibition, “Desire, love, identity: exploring LGBTQ histories”, and then to meet to discuss the forthcoming tour
- John Vincent was asked to join a working group to produce the Share The Vision Bulletin, and also to produce some case studies of practical examples of improving library provision for blind and partially-sighted people
- John Vincent was invited to be part of the LGBT History Month “OUTing The Past” steering group

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

- Attended GDPR course, CILIP (March 2018)
- Attended CDEG Committee meeting (February 2018)
- Attended “OUTing the Past” presentations, LSE Library (February 2018)

- Attended meeting of the West Midlands Libraries of Sanctuary group, Thimblemill Library (February 2018)
- Attended “Talking Back!”, the 15th LGBTQ+ Conference at London Metropolitan Archives (December 2017)
- Meeting with Sue Wilkinson (The Reading Agency) to discuss possible developments of the Summer Reading Challenge (November 2017)
- Attended joint CILIP Community, Diversity and Equality Group/London Housebound Group meeting, Stoke Newington (November 2017)
- Met a student from Sheffield University to discuss his dissertation survey on neutrality (May 2017)
- Attended the opening of the British Museum exhibition, “Desire, love, identity: exploring LGBTQ histories” (May 2017)

Meetings related to the Arts Council England Equality & Diversity project

- North Yorkshire (September 2017)
- Barking & Dagenham (July 2017)
- Nottinghamshire Inspire (July 2017)

CILIP Libraries Change Lives Award

- Attended meeting to plan LCLA for 2018 (January 2018)
- Attended the Award-giving at CILIP, (October 2017)
- Visited shortlisted services at Kirklees, Glasgow Women’s Library; HMP Norwich; and Ipswich (August, September 2017)
- Attended meeting at CILIP to discuss the future of the Awards (June 2017)
- Shortlisting meeting, CILIP (June 2017)

Jodi Mattes Trust

John Vincent is a trustee.

- Attended Award-giving, Attenborough Arts Centre, Leicester (June 2017)

Formal responses made by the Network

- Responded to survey on the website and other resources from NatSIP [the National Sensory Impairment Partnership] (March 2018)
- Responded to survey on the future of The Heritage Alliance (March 2018)
- Responded to survey on researching digital networks for the University of Southampton (March 2018)
- Commented on latest version of their LGBTQ audio tour for the British Museum (February 2018)
- Responded to a survey for Arts Council England on their future strategy (February 2018)
- Responded to survey from CILIP about the need for a research and evidence portal (November 2017)
- Evaluated a book proposal, *Queering the museum*, for Routledge (July 2017)

- Responded to a summary of distance learning students' responses to my workshop, "Social justice and diversity in the delivery of library services to young people and the general public" (May 2017)

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

- Commented on restructuring of CDEG part of the new CILIP website (October 2017)

Publications – The Network's own

- *The Network Newsletter*, issues 194-205
- *The Network Ebulletin*, numbers 232-254.

Publications – articles, blogs, etc

- Amanda Wilk and John Vincent. "Welcoming LGBTQ+ people", *Open Shelf*, (December 2017)⁶
- John Vincent and John Pateman's chapter for *British librarianship and information work 2011-2015* was published (February 2017)⁷

Courses and other events (April 2017-March 2018)

1. Our own open courses

None.

2. Other organisations' open courses/Lectures

- Presentation, "Open to All: Eighteen Years On" for the CILIP Public & Mobile Libraries Group/Community Diversity & equality Group joint conference, "Chances for Life: Public Libraries for Social, Digital and Economic Inclusion", Yarnfield, Staffs (October 2017)
- Facilitated first workshop for the CILIP Carnegie Kate Greenaway Independent Review (July 2017)⁸
- Workshop on Equality & Diversity for the CILIP Conference, Manchester (July 2018)
- Workshop (co-run with Kevin Grist), "Who will fund my library project?", for the CILIP Prison Libraries Group Training Day, London (May 2017)
- Workshop, "Working with LGBTQ people", for the Surrey Heritage and Surrey Museums Consultative Committee course, "Learning on My Doorstep", Woking (April 2017)

⁶ See: , <http://open-shelf.ca/171204-lgbtq-international-perspectives/>.

⁷ John Vincent and John Pateman "From social justice to growing inequality" in John Bowman (ed) *British librarianship and information work 2011-2015*. John Bowman (via lulu), 2017, pp40-104.

⁸ For further info, see: <https://archive.cilip.org.uk/research/topics/equalities/cilip-carnegie-kate-greenaway-independent-review>.

- 4 x “Six Steps” courses (co-run with Share The Vision and RNIB) – Birmingham (April 2017), Manchester (April 2017), UWE (May 2017), London (May 2017)

3. In-house courses and talks

- Seminar for information studies students at the University of West of England, Bristol (October 2017)
- In-house “Six Steps” course (co-run with Share The Vision and RNIB) for East Sussex Libraries, Polegate (October 2017)

Appendix A: Meetings with key contacts 2017-2018

These included:

Ioannis Athanasiou (re: looked-after young people); Martha Attridge-Buhton (re: *Open Shelf* column); Colin Bray (Libraries South West); Katy Cattell (Hachette); Sacha Coward (National Maritime Museum); Chris Dobb (GLL); Steven Dryden (British Library); Rob Field (British Library); Jana Funke (Exeter University); Jen Grove (Exeter University); Niranjana Kamatkar (Wise Thoughts); Christine Ronaldson (re: STV Bulletin)

Appendix B: Examples of enquiries

These are just a few examples of the enquiries received this year, all of which required some research and a detailed response:

- Appropriate terms for equality monitoring (particularly in relation to gender)
- Whether there is an African libraries award that is parallel to Libraries Changes Lives
- How to develop partnership work in community wellbeing projects
- Prison libraries’ support for women prisoners
- Finding someone to run accessibility sessions for iPads and Smartphones
- Library staff’s role in health and social care crises
- LGBT terminology for schools
- Use of the term ‘trans*’ [with asterisk]
- How to deal with a complaint from someone with strong religious views about LGBT content
- Libraries’ support for foster carers and their children
- Working with homeless people.

We also receive job information to circulate, and have been asked to help promote a number of events throughout the year.

Appendix C: 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 elists) 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 email lists.⁹ 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.

⁹ For example, Edinburgh promoted The Network in this way in Dec 2016:

“Just to remind you that as we have a subscription to the John Vincent Network, all staff in the Council can benefit from receiving (free) this electronic information & newsletter direct by registering as below. This current awareness information network is very useful, bang up to date, well informed and a rich source of information on children and young people in care, people in prison, refugee and asylum seekers, migrant workers, people with disabilities, people affected by mental health issues, older people, equality and human rights, community engagement, social justice. Contexts are right across the spectrum of statutory and voluntary public services. To register with the Network you just need to email John Vincent who will add you to the contacts list john@nadder.org.uk. If you are aware of other staff groups which would benefit please feel free to forward this email to them.”