

TACIT



Information for librarians & information professionals working in Edinburgh – June 2nd, 2010

News

On a visit to Edinburgh University's partly refurbished Library on April 29th we saw a lot of changes and found it to be a more welcoming space. In the six-floor building, lighting was much improved, furniture more colourful and rules less strict with students allowed to consume food and drink from the adjacent and well-used café which is also open to the public.

The service had been developed for contemporary study with wireless internet access available throughout and study pods with large mounted screens, pictured in February's TACIT, proving extremely popular for group work. In some areas students can even arrange furniture to best suit their needs. The ground floor has been transformed into a more user-friendly space. The high use book collections, the HUB area, represents 50% of all loans resulting in quieter study areas on the floors above. Issues and returns are automated, freeing up staff time for enquiries. As well as an exhibition area, there are glass screens with hologram technology suspended above the help-desk displaying word clouds of the most popular searches currently taking place and digital images of the collections. Leaving the busy building we crossed over a mesostic poem, which contained the phrase "thair to remain". Once refurbishment is complete in 2012 it seems clear that EUL will be providing a key resource for students for a long time to come.

*Elaine Murray & Julie Black
National Library of Scotland*

A group from the National Library of Scotland were recently given a tour of the Advocates' Library by senior librarian Andrea Longson and we were reminded of the strong ties between the two institutions.

Founded in 1689, the library was Scotland's national library in all but name as its collections grew through donation and the legal deposit status it was granted in 1709. In 1925 the Faculty of Advocates gifted the nation over 750,000 non-legal items to establish the National Library of Scotland. To this day the Advocates' and NLS have a close working relationship with reciprocal access to collections and even a connecting doorway!

Situated just off the magnificent Parliament Hall, the private library, funded by the Faculty of Advocates, is very much a modern working library. There are over 460 Advocates who enjoy access to more than 150,000 volumes, the most current items being open access. On our visit the library was busy with Advocates preparing material, and the contrast between the historic reading rooms and modern lap-tops was striking. It has full wi-fi access and also provides access to electronic material. Seventeen members of staff deal with enquiries, cataloguing, stock management and conservation. The library has many stories to tell, with modern research areas where 'devils' (intending Advocates) sit that once held gallows or reading rooms where the Burke and Hare trial took place. We left with a real insight into a law library with a rich heritage, which is a vital asset to the Faculty.

*Julie Black & Elaine Murray
National Library of Scotland*

I went to a short workshop called Beyond Google at NLS on George IV Bridge on May 13th and was able to register afterwards on the NLS website to look at some of the NLS digital collections that they now make accessible remotely on-line, as well of course of being able to access a vast range of other on-line sources within the NLS itself. Anyone with a permanent address in Scotland can register. Oxford Ref Online can only be used within NLS Premises, but CREDO (American bias) can be accessed off-site to registered users at their home/work computers. All Oxford & CREDO items are refereed with peer-reviewed sources of course, with proper citations, so are more accurate and authoritative than Wikipedia or other (some very dubious) items retrieved by Google. Also Oxford and CREDO are constantly updated. In fact we were told that many of the Oxford Reference Works will in future no longer be published in hard copy!

There is another workshop on 15th June in the evening on the same topic.

*Christine MacDonald
Landscape Architecture Librarian*

Library Assistant Vacancy

The Scottish Poetry Library is seeking a person with excellent communication, IT and organisational skills to be a part of its imaginative, energetic and committed team. This is an ideal entry position for an individual interested in gaining experience of working in an Information Services environment based in Edinburgh's vibrant literary arts sector. For more details and a full job description, please visit www.spl.org.uk or contact julie.johnstone@spl.org.uk

Librarians at Their Best was a one-day conference on May 28th hosted by The National Library of Scotland as part of its annual Learning at Work Week. Organiser Graeme Hawley suggested that the 'no frills' event was indicative of the public sector bracing itself for a period of austerity, but this did not dim the participation of the thirty plus attending, nor the quality of the presentations. The first speaker, Colm Lennane, described a project engaging and inspiring young people in residential care to read for pleasure. His insights and anecdotes, particularly about unexpected outcomes, kept the audience's interest without any visual aids. Cleo Jones then examined contrasts and similarities between school libraries in Edinburgh and Wisconsin. Following break-out sessions on Libraries in the community, Collaborations for the future, and Innovating libraries in a digital world, Margaret Lobban described the process Edinburgh's Napier University Library undertook to obtain Scotland's first Customer Service Excellence award. She offered sage advice: "Every student counts: your first encounter may be the student's last." Finally, Angela Forster spoke of the opportunities and challenges of building a new public library for Newcastle and how the building has transformed the service.

*Graeme Forbes
National Library of Scotland*



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edinburgh libraries & information services agency

www.edinburghlibrariesagency.info

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Forthcoming Events

The Net Mender Exhibition
8th May-14th June

<http://www.spl.org.uk/events/index.html#events>

Douglas Robertson: artist-in-residence
Wed 2nd & Thur 3rd June, 11.00-17.00

<http://www.spl.org.uk/events/index.html#events>

Getting started at NLS
Thur 3rd June 18.00-19.30

<http://www.nls.uk/events/index.html>

New Books at the Scottish Poetry Library
Mon 7th June 18.00-19.30

<http://www.spl.org.uk/events/index.html#events>

Blackwell Book Quiz
Mon 7th June 18.00

<http://www.cityoflitterature.com/whats-on-results.aspx?sec=5&pid=23&item=1916>

CILIPS Annual Conference
Mon 7th – Wed 9th June GLASGOW

<http://www.slainte.org.uk/events/evntcalendarsummary.cfm>

Discovering family history at NLS
Tues 8th June 18.00-19.30

<http://www.nls.uk/events/index.html>

Nothing But The Poem
Thurs 10th June 18.00-19.30

<http://www.spl.org.uk/events/index.html#events>

Beyond Google
Fri 15th June 18.00-19.30

<http://www.nls.uk/events/index.html>

Scotland Lore & Legend
Sun 17th June

<http://www.cityoflitterature.com/whats-on-results.aspx?sec=5&pid=23&item=1979>

Blackwell Book Group
Mon 21st June

<http://www.cityoflitterature.com/whats-on-results.aspx?sec=5&pid=23&item=1932>

Women of the Old Town
Mon 21st June 19.30

<http://www.cityoflitterature.com/whats-on-results.aspx?sec=5&pid=23&item=1985>

'The Place-Name Debate'
Wed 30 June 18.00

<http://www.nls.uk/events/index.html>

CIIG visit to Telford College Library Construction Resources

Thurs 1st July

contact: Laurence.O'Rourke@ed-coll.ac.uk

Form and Function in the Late Medieval Bible

Mon 12th - Wed 14th July

http://www.hss.ed.ac.uk/chb/eventsarchive.htm#Forthcoming_Conferences

ARLIS UK & Ireland Arts Libraries Annual Conference
Wed 14th – Fri 16th July

The full programme will examine the future of art librarianship and will include presentations looking at the increasing use of social media, new projects concerning digital resources and collections, and artists' increasing use of archive and library material in their work.

<http://www.arlis.org.uk>

Material Cultures 2010,
16th-18th July

http://www.hss.ed.ac.uk/chb/eventsarchive.htm#Forthcoming_Conferences

Meet a Librarian

This is a new series of articles where local librarians describe their personal experiences in library work.

Thanks to Bronwen Brown of Edinburgh City Council Web and New Media Team for the suggestion.

Please contact the editor if you'd be interested in contributing.

Please describe your current post briefly.

I'm currently Council Websites Manager for the City of Edinburgh Council, based in the Communications Service. I have responsibility for the management and development of the Council website and corporate Intranet, an overview of web development and strategy in the Council, a remit to promote use of the web and encourage online use for Council business, manage web governance, online content and structure and web development across the Council.

What was your impression of library work before you went in to it?

After leaving university with an MA Hons in English Literature/Fine Art I started work in management with M&S but this really didn't suit me and I changed direction to a career in Librarianship. I got advice that having a year as an assistant was a good plan before attending a postgraduate course so I started my libraries career as an assistant in the Music Library in Edinburgh. I was just so excited and enthusiastic about doing this.

For me, my initial impressions about Librarianship were that it was all about learning and sharing knowledge, helping people and promoting and marketing Libraries to everyone. I felt it was completely worthwhile and important to people in their daily lives, and I still think that.

WANTED: contributions for TACIT

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How did you see your career in libraries developing at the outset?

I planned to be a Reference Librarian – to me this epitomized Public Librarianship, as you were a gatekeeper to a vast range of information and knowledge with an answer for nearly everything. At the time (late 1980s), this seemed absolutely the place to be in terms of range, weight and interest.

What changes have impacted on the trajectory of your career?

I actually became a school librarian, as this was somewhere I could study for my charter, and then moved on to be local studies librarian for a short time. As this was for a small authority I actually ended up managing reference services for the district, children's' events and promotion generally. It was a good way of learning about a range of public library areas in a short period of time. From there I joined the newly formed Community Information service in Edinburgh and stayed there for quite a number of years. In many ways, it fulfilled my expectations in offering a broad range of subject matter and providing me with many opportunities for marketing and promotion as we were developing a new service. We developed groundbreaking use of electronic community information, at one point having a touch screen service of 75 machines across the city in public locations such as shopping centres.

Then the web arrived and everything changed! The service developed further and ran the first Council website, which won a number of awards and made a real impact both in the city and in the UK public sector web community. Community information permeates all aspects of life and as such suited me down to the ground in offering a huge range of subject areas to work in. This didn't change when the web came along – it just expanded the work!

What skills did you never expect to employ in your job?

That's quite a tricky question. It's hard to look back now and think about which skills you never expected to use as it's sort of second nature now. I guess I never expected to be in such a strategic position dealing with people at all levels across the Council and outside in city organizations. Leadership skills are important for this work and I've had to learn these over the years. Strategic planning and delivery are skills you have to learn as well. I think promotion and marketing have also been essential in delivering web services both for working with people and for the services themselves. I think the most important thing I've learned is to be flexible and adaptable in my career – what I do and how I deliver it has completely changed since I started my career.

Do you feel that 'new' information skills such as Web 2.0 and Internet searching are different from 'traditional' information skills such as using book and journal resources? How are they similar and how are they different?

I think they are an extension of our 'traditional' skills, and make Librarians/Information Officers/Researchers and Archivists even more powerful people – at the centre of their communities. There is so much information out there and quality assurance is always a bit of an issue. Librarians in all sectors are getting out there and using the tools just as Edinburgh City Libraries are doing currently – they are a great example of putting Web2.0 and eResources into practice.

We have to do this to encourage different audiences to engage with their local libraries and services in new ways e.g. eBooks, eResources, virtual book groups etc. I believe it's a really exciting time for Libraries in all sectors with so many opportunities for growth and change.

What key information skills do you think you bring to your current post?

I'm still using the skills I used way back when in my school library. I organize and manage information, promote services, devise ways to encourage customers to repeat visit, educate them, and answer queries, learning from this feedback and improving what I offer, developing new resources and services. I might work on the web, but I'm still using all my information skills. All information starts as base data and has to be created, managed and organized - that is never going to change. What's interesting is that content created out on the web that's more free flowing – in social media for instance – is also being captured and organized after its creation to enable people to manage the flow and refine for areas of interest. This has opened up completely new areas of development for the Information sector, providing areas of growth and opportunity in the virtual world.

How much do you think that the presentation of information matters? (accessibility, ease of use, attractive layout, etc vs 'Content is King')

It's key! If you provide content poorly presented, designed and buried in a site you will lose customers and library members, perhaps forever! We need to present useful, usable content that our public will enjoy – indeed, which will make them want to keep coming back for more. Design is integral to this process but it must meet accessibility standards and usability best practice. We should lead by example, in providing the best web content we can. We've lots of colleagues already doing this which is great news for Librarianship and its future.

Sally Kerr

Edinburgh City Council Websites Manager



View from the West

Lomax Allwood is away this month.

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RAISING THE PROFILE

RMJM Knowledge Centre

RMJM is one of the world's largest architectural practices, with over 1,000 staff in 18 regional offices across the world. I joined the practice in 2004 as the Knowledge Centre Manager for the four UK offices - Edinburgh (group headquarters), Glasgow, London and Cambridge .

There are approximately 220 members of staff in the UK, of which 70% are architects. Staff from our international offices also occasionally use my services.

My everyday job is interesting and challenging. The requests I receive are wide and varied – from identifying legislation for mortuary design, to finding images and plans of specific buildings. I deal with enquiries for technical standards, Building

Regulations from various countries, downloading online OS CAD maps and much, much more.

When I first joined the firm my main priority was to update the aging library service, firstly by the creation on an online catalogue to replace the card system. I then reclassified the collection from CI/SfB to Uniclass, and reduced the collection to a manageable size. Now all staff have access to an online catalogue, which they also use for signing books out and in.

Journal subscriptions are managed centrally from the Edinburgh office using a specialist subscription agent. In the Edinburgh office there is a large collection of journals, some going back as far as 1956 when the company was founded. We hold all the major titles, such as the Architect Journal, Architectural Review, Detail, Building, and El Croquis. I use the RIBA Architectural Periodicals Index (API) for literature searches.

We subscribe to the IHS Construction Information Service and Specify-It which gives access to a wide variety of publications, reports, legislations, technical standards and trade literature pertinent to architectural design, engineering and practice management. RMJM also subscribe to Newsroom Plus via Dialog for tracking markets and answering research requests.

Each office has a collection of books, varying in size from a couple of hundred, to several thousand in the Edinburgh office. The area of expertise of each office dictates the strength of the book collection in each particular field.

Cambridge has the best collection of books on school and university design, and also sustainable building. Glasgow has a good collection of office and housing design books. The Edinburgh office has the largest collection on a wide variety of building types, architects, law, structural



engineering and technical literature, as well as a good collection on tall buildings.

The volume of trade literature and samples that arrive in an architects firm can be a challenge, and it can feel like a losing battle at times. Two of the offices choose not to have any trade literature collection, and rely on online sources, but inevitably architects send for samples and companies send literature on spec – so the pile starts growing again. Every now and then I have a massive clear out and only keep the most recent information from the past 3-4 years.

RMJM was founded in 1956 and therefore has a wealth of material of historical interest in its archives. Over the years I became more involved in dealing with the company's archiving. The initial demand was to find a solution for the archive storage problem as both the English and Scottish archive storage facilities were quite literally full.

The management considered that archives over 20 years old could be discarded. But instead of discarding a wealth of useful material I worked with the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments of

Scotland (RCAHMS) and English Heritage to find a home for the RMJM project archives.

I found it fascinating working with these bodies and am delighted that the collections are now in safe hands, and available for viewing by the public. I have been told that many of the plans and information have been viewed. Included in this archive were some of RMJM's most prominent buildings, including New Zealand House (the first tall building in London), the Commonwealth Institute with its parabolic roof, the Royal Commonwealth Pool in Edinburgh, The Falkirk Wheel, and many more. I also managed the outsourcing of storage and the retrieval of the company paper archives. We work with two companies, one in England, and one in Scotland, and we can now recall documents accurately and quickly. Having nearly sorted out the paper archives, I am now involved with the process for archiving digital records, which is more challenging when you consider the lifespan of the discs, the software revisions and hardware needed to read the information back, perhaps 20 years later.

I have been extremely lucky in the places I have worked since completing my Post Graduate DipLib at Aberystwyth. I have specialised in corporate and special libraries. Over my career I have worked at the Horniman Museum in South London and the Faculty of Advocates Library in Parliament Square, Edinburgh. I then became the Research Librarian/Library Manager for Hewlett-Packard/Agilent Technologies for 13 years. After a short stint with the City of Edinburgh Council working for the council-wide web development team as a contractor, I joined RMJM.

*Christine MacLeod
Knowledge Manager RMJM*

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