

Annual Report: April 2020-March 2021

Introduction

Welcome to our annual review for 2020-2021; this report covers the period from April 2020 to March 2021. 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 December 2019-February 2021
- Producing 29 Ebulletins for the period April 2020-March 2021
- Regularly adding events, resources and new features to the website¹
- Participating in some 22 meetings, courses, workshops and conferences.²

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 – 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 Juliet Pirez for being the counter-signatories for The Network's bank account.

John Vincent
August 2021

¹ See: www.seapn.org.uk.

² Training courses, workshops and conferences have, of course, been curtailed since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreaks.

Membership, contacts and enquiries

Organisational members at March 2021

There are 87 organisational members.

Here are the new joiners and leavers:

Joiners

None.

Leavers

Redbridge

Individual members

At March 2021, The Network had 6 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); CILIP; City of Sanctuary; Libraries Connected; and Share The Vision.

Membership of JISCMail lists

The following lists are open to anybody:

List	2020-21	2019-20
LAC [people working with looked-after children]	225	242
Learning Disability	167	167
LGBTQ [people working with LGBTs]	296	283
Network Ebulletin [combining WTYL & Newsletter subscribers]	561	580
Older people [people working with older people]	157	168
Travellers [people working with Travellers]	148	156

The following are primarily for Network members only:

List	2020-21	2019-20
Network Newsletter	268	288
The Network [for circulation of general information and enquiries]	188	209

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

List	2020-21	2019-20
Prisons	153	156

In addition, The Network manages the Reading Sight list (formerly Six Steps):

List	2020-21	2019-20
Six Steps	185	187

Enquiries

These include enquiries made on the email lists The Network coordinates (eg Prisons):

April 2020-March 2021 45³

The Network website statistics

Here are our 'headline' web statistics:

- 4418 people made 4914 visits
- 94.7% of visitors were new, 5.3% returning
- The top three countries where people visited from were the UK, US and China.

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.

³ The range of enquiries is wide – to give a taste of them, some examples are included as Appendix B. Four enquiries were from students, and another 2 were asking for job or project information to be circulated.

The work of The Network, 2019-2020 – Report by the Networker

I worked some 705.75 hours for the Network between April 2020 and March 2021. This is an outline of what that involved:

Activities	Hours 2020-21	% 2020-21	Hours 2019-20	% 2019-20
Preparation, delivery and follow-up to training courses [self-financing]	7.75	1.1%	42.25	4.4%
Organising training day for SWRLS	-	-	15.25	1.6%
Organising training day for CILIP SW	-	-	33.25	3.4%
STV: scanning for STV Bulletin	-	-	-	-
STV: prep of modules for community libraries, etc	-	-	0.75	0.1%
Libraries of Sanctuary resource pack etc	27.50	3.9%	116.50	12.1%
Birmingham Music Project	-	-	68.50	7.1%
Birmingham Virtual Library	1.50	0.2%	-	-
Birmingham LoS application	25.25	3.6%	-	-
<i>Externally-funded work</i>	<i>62.00</i>	<i>8.8%</i>	<i>276.50</i>	<i>28.7%</i>
Managing The Network, including new members; adding to JISMAIL lists (2.75); filing, producing Annual Report, etc (21.00); accounts (27.00); maintaining our website (12.00)	62.75	8.9%	71.00	7.4%
Emails	223.00	31.6%	185.50	19.2%
Work on Newsletters & Ebulletins	242.25	34.3%	228.00	23.7%
Work on Ashgate LGBT book*	0.75	0.1%	7.5	0.8%
Work on LGBT History Month	9.25	1.3%	1.75	0.2%
Writing chapter for <i>LGBTQ librarianship in the 21st century</i>	-	-	0.25	<1%
Writing book for Facet series	2.50	0.4%	-	--
Other writing	10.50	1.5%	1.50	0.2%
Other activities (eg attending meetings)	42.75	6.0%	69.75	7.2%
STV Board meetings	7.00	1.0%	5.00	0.5%
Enquiries	6.25	0.9%	12.25	1.3%
Responding to reports etc	3.75	0.5%	5.75	0.6%
Work on 'New Arrivals' (post-WTYL) + Libraries of Sanctuary	-	-	16.75	1.7%
Member of judging panel for CILIP Libraries Change Lives Award (and follow-up with CILIP re: redesigning awards)	-	-	15.25	1.6%
Work with CILIP (eg on new strategy)	5.75	0.8%	20.25	2.1%
CILIP LGBTQ+ Network Steering Group	17.75	2.5%	33.25	3.4%
CILIP Benevolent Fund Board meetings	9.50	1.3%	7.00	0.7%
Trustee of the Jodi Awards	-	-	6.75	0.7%
<i>Paid for from subscriptions, income from courses, etc</i>	<i>643.75</i>	<i>91.1%</i>	<i>687.50</i>	<i>71.3%</i>
TOTAL	705.75	c100%	964.00	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 has been commissioned by Facet Publishing to edit and write for a new series on libraries and social justice. The first title, *Libraries and Sanctuary: supporting refugees and other new arrivals* [working title] is due to be completed by December 2021.

- Endorsed “A Just and Green Cultural Recovery”⁴ for Julie’s Bicycle, 30 June 2020
- Supported the development of “Paperchains”: “When the history of the 2020 lockdown is written, it shouldn’t be just the usual voices that document it. We have created Paperchains to bring attention to those with experience of prison, armed services or homelessness, and their families.”⁵
- Supported “Pride in Education” Conference⁶, 27 June 2020, with logo.

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

- Attended Pink News “conversation” seminar on LGBTQ+ issues at work (March 2021)
- Attended Stockport LGBTQ+ History Month event (February 2021)
- Attended Norfolk LGBTQ+ History Month event (February 2021)
- Attended Group for Education in Museums LGBTQ+ History Month “Case Studies Live” seminar (February 2021)
- Attended London Metropolitan Archives LGBTQ+ History Club events (February, March 2021)
- Attended Queer Heritage symposium (January 2021)
- Attended London Metropolitan Archives LGBTQ+ Conference (December 2020)
- Attended Libraries Connected “Local Cultural Education Partnerships and Libraries” seminar (December 2020)
- Attended CILIP Conference (November 2020)
- Attended SWRLS AGM and Meeting (November 2020)
- Attended LGBTQ+ History Month launch event (November 2020)
- Attended pre-meeting and then meeting of Birmingham Libraries Community Managers (October 2020)
- Meeting with Tina Stainton and Binni Brynolf re: LGBTQ+ recruitment etc (October 2020)
- Attended Universities of Sanctuary Conference (October 2020)
- Attended Migration Network North-West event (October 2020)
- Attended LGBTQ+ History Month event (September 2020)
- Attended meetings with CILIP and CDEG to discuss “Changing Lives” strategy (July 2020, January 2021)
- Attended CDEG Committee meetings (June, October 2020, February 2021)
- Attended “Pride in Education – LGBT+ migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum” conference session (June 2020)

CILIP LGBTQ+ Steering Group/Network

- Attended event (March 2021)
- Attended AGM (February 2021)
- Attended meetings (July, August, September (x2), October, November 2020)

⁴ See: <http://juliesbicycle.com/act/a-just-green-cultural-recovery/>.

⁵ See: <https://www.paperchains.org/>.

⁶ See: https://d4953ad5-9e27-497d-9eb7-31dff27fe985.filesusr.com/ugd/8cbcad_29060dfaf94e49cfaf32adf4e5d6ac99.pdf.

Share The Vision Board

John Vincent is an Observer.

- Attended meetings (September, December 2020, February, March 2021)

CILIP Benevolent Fund

John Vincent is a trustee.

- Attended meetings (April, June, September, October 2020, February 2021)

Jodi Mattes Trust

John Vincent is a trustee.

- No Board meetings

Support for students, researchers, etc

- Circulated request for info from Betsy Furber about mapping LGBTQ+ projects (and her concerns that this could attract danger) (March 2021)
- Circulated request for information from Nathalie Gassner about services and media provided by prison library services in the UK (and the US and Germany) (Jan 2021)
- Circulated request for info from Catherine Rankin for her research into Library services to victims of abuse" (Oct 2020)
- Circulated request for info from Alice Stringer for her MA dissertation on the experiences of LGBTQ+ people working in libraries (June 2020)
- Circulated questionnaire for (and sent some responses to) Elise Collins for her MA dissertation, "Towards a Standard for describing and indexing LGBT+ Archive Materials" (May/June 2020)

Formal responses made by the Network

- Responded to survey on membership of Social Europe mailing list) (March 2021)
- ARA Diversity Resource Survey (February 2021)
- British Library collections and services survey (January 2021)
- Commented for CDEG on draft illustrations for the Summer Reading Challenge (January 2021)
- Prisoners' Education Trust survey about priorities (November 2020)
- MARCH Network Year 2 survey of members (October 2020)
- Commented on draft CDEG Committee meeting minutes (October 2020)
- Commented on draft CILIP LGBTQ+ Steering Group documents (October 2020)
- Chartered Management Institute's diversity research survey (September 2020)
- SWRLS future directions survey (June 2020)
- Commented on draft CILIP COVID-19 Workforce Survey (April 2020)
- Commented on CILIP Member Network proposals for CDEG (April 2020)

Publications – The Network’s own

- *The Network Newsletter*, issues 226-240
- *The Network Ebulletin*, numbers 296-324.

Publications – articles, blogs, books, reports etc

- John Vincent “Welcoming new arrivals to the UK and to libraries: what are the latest developments?”, *Focus on International Library and Information Work*, 51 (2), 2020, pp4-12⁷
- John Vincent and Amanda Wilk “The importance of context”, *Open Shelf*, July 2020⁸
- John Vincent. *Libraries of Sanctuary resource pack*. City of Sanctuary, 2020⁹
- John Vincent and Barry Clark “Libraries of Sanctuary”, *Alexandria: The Journal of National and International Library and Information Issues*, 30 (1), Apr 2020, pp5-15

Courses and other events (April 2020-March 2021)

1. Our own open courses

- None.

2. Other organisations’ open courses/Lectures

- Talk to CILIP NE AGM on Libraries of Sanctuary (March 2021)

3. In-house courses and talks

- None.

Appendix A: Meetings with key contacts

These included:

Peter Baker (Facet Publishing); Dawn Beaumont (Birmingham Library Service); Katherine Findlay (SWRLS); Jan Holden (Norfolk Library & Information Service); Sarah Mears (Libraries Connected); Linda Monk (Birmingham Library Service); Yvonne Morris (CILIP); Jan Paterson (Birmingham Library Service)

⁷ See: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cilip.org.uk/resource/collection/0DA88322-0241-45BF-9800-092F114F8A94/Focus_51-2.pdf.

⁸ See: <https://open-shelf.ca/200706-the-importance-of-context/>.

⁹ See: <https://libraries.cityofsanctuary.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/157/2020/05/COS-Library-resource-pack-low-res-website-version-13-5-20.pdf>.

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:

- Request for suggestions of musicians to include in a library service blogpost to celebrate LGBTQ+ History Month (Feb 2021)
- Enquiry re: City of Sanctuary activities in Ireland (Jan 2021)
- Suggestions of adult learn-to-read books for a prison (Jan 2021)
- Examples of co-curation in museums (Dec 2020)
- Examples – if any – of assessment tools for evaluating a library's collection for its diversity (Nov 2020)
- Examples of library services that have developed loanable bags for people living with dementia and their carers, tailored to the needs of people with visual impairments (Oct 2020)
- Enquiry about the appropriate terms to use for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller people (Oct 2020)

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. 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.