

Summer 2012

CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN



The Journal of the
Librarians' Christian Fellowship

CONTENTS INCLUDE

- *OLYMPIC LEGACY*
- *LIBRARIANS AND DISCIPLES IN A TIME OF TROUBLE*
 - *CELEBRATING KING JAMES*
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●THURSDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2012: VISIT TO HODDER AND STOUGHTON

338 Euston Road, London, NW1.
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●SATURDAY 6 OCTOBER 2012: ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

Redcliffe Anglican/Methodist Church Centre, Bristol. Speaker: **Robert Hicks**, *Creative Publishing*, on *Lost Letters and Early Writings from the First Century – from a publisher's point of view.* Details: p. 6.

●SATURDAY 20 APRIL 2013: ANNUAL CONFERENCE BEYOND LIBRARIANSHIP”

Methodist Central Hall, Warwick Lane, Coventry. Speakers: Prof. Donald G. Davis, Jr., Heather Lewis. Details: p. 6.

●SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER 2013: ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

New Road Baptist Church, Bonn Square, Oxford. Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Ward on C.S. Lewis. Details: p. 7.

PRAYER NOTES FOR SUMMER 2012

PLEASE PRAY FOR

●A positive response to the planned postal ballot on changes suggested by LCF's review group.

●Our forthcoming activities including the visit to *Hodder and Stoughton* and the annual public lecture.

●The work of our friends at *Transform Work UK* and for the family and friends of their former Director, Tom Stevens, who died recently.

●Members and past speakers who are taking up new roles – e.g. Eddie Olliffe and Canon Pete Wilcox.

●Library and information staff in an era of reductions in spending, cutbacks, re-organisations, redundancies and other challenges.

●The Christian communications media – including book publishers, bookshops, magazines and newspapers, and radio stations.

●The work of *Regent's Park College*, Oxford, and its plans for developing its unique collection of Baptist historical resources.

●Give thanks for the continuing influence of the *King James Bible* and the *Book of Common Prayer*.



LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

CHRISTIANS IN LIBRARY, INFORMATION AND ARCHIVE WORK

*An organisation 'in liaison' with the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals.
Affiliated to: Christian Research Association; Christians at Work; Evangelical Alliance; Transform Work
UK; Universities' & Colleges' Christian Fellowship.
Web Site: www.librarianscf.org.uk*

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THE FIRST WORD

What can we leave as a legacy to future generations entering the library and information professions? MARGARET KEELING draws inspiration from a forthcoming major sporting event

OLYMPIC LEGACY

The Olympic Games is nearly here, buildings in place, teams being selected, the race for gold under way. As I write the Olympic torch is on its way from Greece to travel through the country. However, the success of the bid depended as much on its legacy as the actual Games. The 'vision' is much wider than the buildings including sustainable social, and economic growth. But how can you measure the success of *'demonstrating what can be achieved through the power of sport'*? As we know in professional terms it's extremely difficult to quantify inspirational change in hard measures.

Another interesting take on the idea of 'legacy' was the recent election of the London Mayor. Arguments for electing the two main candidates were strongly linked to their legacies while in office - a promise for the future based on past achievements

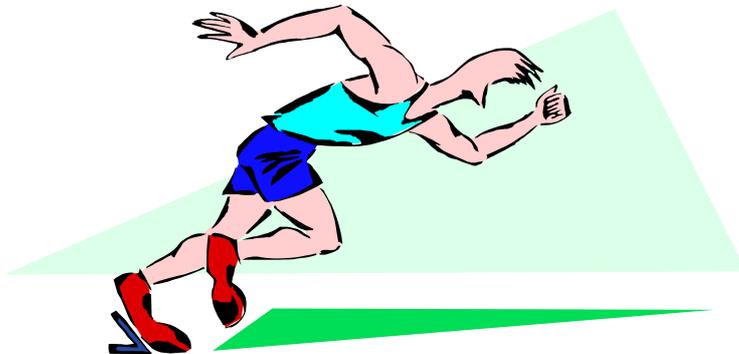
We are aware of 'legacy systems' in technology and computing— not always a good thing. Old systems continue to be used – not necessarily the best or most relevant - but because they seem to be the pragmatic alternative in terms of cost or effort.

I also know that a past legacy can bring present problems as I struggle with the 'legacy' of dormant weed seeds from the previous owners' neglect – something which will continue to occupy me for many a season!

At its best a the Olympic legacy is not only gaining from past contributions, but also a spur for future action. We recently had a most inspirational Annual Conference with excellent speakers. But what do I take from that, and what in practical terms is its legacy for us in LCF in the coming days?

In a contribution to ***Day by Day with God*** Ali Stibbe comments that '*leaders leave a legacy... leaving a legacy is about leaving behind an ultimate contribution, whatever size or shape that contribution might be*'¹ It may simply be our influence and example in small areas which becomes a seed for the future.

What are we doing now which becomes our legacy as a group of Christians in Library and Information work to people entering our profession? What could we bring in terms of Christian values, support, mentoring, prayer, engagement with current issues. Is it inspirational? Should it be measurable? To alter the words of the Olympic vision how can we demonstrate '*what can be achieved through the inspiration and the power of God*'?



D. Margaret Keeling, BA, MA, MCLIP, PhD, was elected as President of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* at the annual general meeting on Saturday 2 April 2011. She worked until her retirement as Head of Services for Libraries, Culture and Adult Community Learning for *Essex County Council*.

¹ Ali Stibbe, 'Leadership' *Day by Day with God* Jan-April 2012 (p.97)

NEWS

LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER



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Web site www.librarianscf.org.uk

VISIT TO HODDER AND STOUGHTON

We have arranged a visit to the offices of **Hodder and Stoughton** at **338 Euston Road, London, NW1 3BH** on **Thursday 6 September 2012**, from 2.00.p.m. Our host for the afternoon will be **Ian Metcalfe**, Director of Publishing at *Hodder Faith*, and the visit will give us an opportunity to learn more about this well known Christian publishing department and its place within the structures of a leading mainstream publishing company. If you would like to book a place or places on this visit, please let me know, and indicate whether you would wish to

join members of the LCF group beforehand for lunch, say from 12.00. noon. We may have to place an upper limit on numbers, so please book early!

ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

The Annual Lecture is to be held at the **Redcliffe Anglican/Methodist Church Centre, Prewett Street, Bristol**, on **Saturday 6 October 2012**, from 2.30.p.m. **Robert Hicks**, of *Creative Publishing*, will be speaking on *Lost Letters and Writings of the First Century – from a publisher's point of view*.

Please book the date and plan to join us in Bristol for this occasion.

NEXT YEAR'S EVENTS

Please book the date for next year's Annual Conference. We will be returning to the **Methodist Central Hall, Warwick Lane, Coventry** on **Saturday 20 April 2013**. The theme will be *Beyond Librarianship* and our speakers will be our Life Vice President Dr. **Donald G. Davis, Jr.**, Emeritus Professor of Library History at the *University of Texas at Austin* and **Heather Lewis**, Librarian, *HMP The Mount*, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire.

Heather's address will deal with such topics as redundancy, unemployment and using library skills outside the traditional library and information sectors while Donald will be speaking on the theme of Retirement.

2013 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the death of the famous apologist and novelist **C.S. Lewis** and our Annual Lecture will take a new look at the enduring influence and legacy of this noted Christian writer. Dr. **Michael Ward**, author of *Planet Narnia*, will be our guest speaker and the lecture will be held on **Saturday afternoon 19 October 2013** at the **New Road Baptist Church, Bonn Square, Oxford**.

REVIEW GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

As reported elsewhere in this issue, our recent annual general meeting included a positive discussion on the executive recommendations of LCF's Review Group, as published in the Spring 2012 issue of *Christian Librarian*.

LCF has always been committed to an evangelical understanding of the Christian faith, and there is no intention of changing this position. However, one of the conclusions of the Review Group was that the requirement that individual members should have to formally sign a doctrinal statement and membership declaration might have the effect of discouraging some people from joining the Fellowship.

The proposal, therefore, is that the doctrinal basis should be retained for the Fellowship as a whole but that the present Constitution should be amended so that only members of the executive committee will in future be required

to sign a formal doctrinal statement. This will be in preparation for the introduction of a new simplified Constitution, perhaps in 2013.

In order to bring about the suggested changes, we are required to carry out a postal ballot of all current members. We are hoping to do this later in the summer. Please watch out for your ballot paper and make sure that you cast your vote, so that your views can be reflected in the final decision.

We will also be using the ballot to determine members' views on other suggested changes including a name change – possibly to *Christians in Library and Information Services*, to reflect the wider field of information provision in which many LCF members and would be members are now employed.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

As in 2011, we are not including a printed membership directory as a supplement to the Summer issue of *Christian Librarian*.

In order to save on the high printing costs we have sent the 2012 directory out as an e-mail attachment to members and personal subscribers who are on the mailing list to receive our **E-Newsletter**. If you are on this list you should have received the directory during May. If you did not, or have encountered problems with the attachment, please contact our Web Site Manager, Mary Wood at mary@the-woods.org.uk

Members and subscribers who would like to receive a printed copy of the directory should get in touch with our Membership Secretary: Janice Paine, 22 Queensgate Gardens, 396 Upper Richmond Road, London, SW15 6JN. Tel. 020 8785 2174.

Have you remembered to pay your subscription for 2012? If your name does not appear in the directory, we have probably not received your payment this year. On the other hand, it is always possible that we have made a mistake. Either way, Janice will be pleased to hear from you!

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL NEWS

- If you listened to Aled Jones' **Good Morning Sunday** on BBC Radio Two on 4 March 2012, you will have heard my name at the beginning of the programme's "Sacred and Secular" slot in which listeners hear two pieces of music from 'sacred' and 'secular' sources which nevertheless have a common theme.

My suggestion featured in that morning's programme was that it should include two different songs with identical titles: "Somewhere Down the Road", included as the title tracks on recent albums by the Christian singer Amy Grant and the 'secular' folk singer Ralph McTell.

- **Peter Berry**, who has led several literary walking tours of Oxford for LCF members, continues

to lead similar tours on behalf of *Blackwell's* bookshop in Oxford.

During the summer months Peter will be offering his general literary tour on Tuesdays and Thursdays and following in the footsteps of Graham Greene, Dorothy L. Sayers and T.S. Eliot, among others.

The *Inklings Tour* (C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien and Charles Williams) takes place on Wednesday mornings. An innovation this year is a Friday afternoon *Olympics Tour*, following in the footsteps of university alumni who went on to become sporting greats.

Details are available from 01865 333606 or from e-mail oxford@blackwell.co.uk

- **Vicky Green**, archivist at *Southampton Central Library*, took part in a local BBC television programme *Titanic – Southampton Remembers* broadcast on 13 April 2012.

Although not an LCF member, Vicky has taken part in our activities in the past, including our visit to the *Church of England Records Centre* in Bermondsey a few years back.

The programme was presented by **Lord of the Rings** actor Bernard Hill and closed with words on the Titanic memorial in Southampton which are from the *Gospel of John*.

- After seven years as Business Manager for the Christian charity *CWR*, our associate member **Eddie Olliffe** has resigned in order to take up a freelance role helping the

Christian retail trade.

Eddie will continue to carry out work for *CWR Asia* helping to develop the ministry of *CWR* in the Asian book market. He will also be working part time for *CLC International (UK)*, a charity well known for its chain of Christian bookshops.

- We were sorry to hear that **Tom Stevens**, who led the work of *Transform Work UK* for many years, died on 13 May 2012 after being taken ill in late 2011.

Tom had recognised gifts in administration and leadership and had a successful thirty year career in the police before joining TWUK. Readers will wish to pray for Tom's family and friends and for the continuing work of TWUK.

- Last year's Conference speaker, the Rev. Dr. **Pete Wilcox**, has recently been announced as the next Dean of *Liverpool Cathedral*.

Pete will be installed at Liverpool in September having served for six years as Canon Chancellor of *Lichfield Cathedral*. Prior to that he served as priest in charge at *St. Paul's at the Crossing* in Walsall where he introduced a variety of initiatives to offer support and help to late night clubbers.

A WORLD WHERE IDEAS ARE FREE

More than one hundred people attended the award ceremony for the

Ultimate Christian Library Book at this year's *Christian Resources Exhibition* at the *Sandown Park Exhibition Centre*, Esher, Surrey, on Wednesday 9 May 2012.

The *Ultimate Christian Library Book* is sponsored by the *Christian Book Promotion Trust* and is linked to the *Speaking Volumes* scheme in which churches are encouraged to donate popular Christian books to their local public, school and prison libraries.

Introducing the ceremony CBPT's Chairman, Geoff Booker, explained that the Trust has been sponsoring book awards since 2000 and that the intention is to encourage Christian writing that is equal in quality to other writing and that will have a life changing impact on its readers.

Paula Renouf, Director of *Speaking Volumes*, explained that a shortlist had been drawn up from books submitted by publishers and that members of the public had been invited to vote for the winning titles via the CBPT's web site.

The winning books were announced by LCF subscriber Canon David Winter, the author of forty-one books of his own and the former head of religious broadcasting at the BBC.

The winning book in the adult category was Canon Andrew White's *Faith Under Fire* (Monarch, £8.99, ISBN 978-1854249623) while the winning children's title was Andrea Skevington's *Lion Classic Bible* (Lion, £12.99, ISBN 978-0745961064)

In his acceptance speech

Canon Andrew White, well known as the “*Vicar of Baghdad*”, explained that this was the second time that he had received a book award from the CBPT but he was especially glad to win this prize as his wife and adopted Iraqi daughter were present at the ceremony. He wished to dedicate his prize to the thousands of people whose faith is under fire in Iraq today. Despite the problems, he believes that his church in Iraq is the happiest church in the world!

The session continued with an interview with Andrew White and David Winter conducted by CBPT trustee (and LCF associate member) Eddie Olliffe.

Both are aware of life and death, but Andrew White said that the threat of death did not worry him as “*perfect love casts out fear*”.

David Winter acknowledged human mortality and said that his next book would be dealing with the subject of old age.

Questioned about changes in technology, David said that he had always been aware of the importance of new communications media since his early days in journalism and at the BBC. The difference now is that social networking sites and similar innovations provide for two way communications.

Andrew said that people had been aware of his ministry for some time but he now had 15,000 'friends' on *Facebook* which is encouraging when you are stuck in a war zone!

David said that words are crucial and asked his audience to pray that God would equip more

Christians to serve as writers. We should also pray that Christian books will get into library stocks and that “*there will continue to be libraries in a world where ideas are free*”.

After the awards ceremony, David Winter led a seminar based on his book ***The Highway Code for Retirement*** (CWR, £6.99, ISBN 978-1853456688). He pointed out that retirement is a comparatively modern invention and that the pattern of retirement is changing again, partly due to longer life expectancy. He, himself, has now retired three times from his various careers!

Many people find that there is a hole in their lives when work stops, and it is important not to let retirement take you by surprise. Retirement provides opportunities for further learning (for example, through the *University of the Third Age*) and for increased church involvement.

There is a mission field among retired people which the churches are only slowly discovering.

David closed by saying that, as life approaches its end, “*what comes next is the best of all*”.

TELLING THE STORY

This year's *Christian Resources Exhibition*, held at the *Sandown Park Exhibition Centre*, Esher, Surrey, from 8-11 May 2012, included displays from the usual wide variety of organisations providing resources for the contemporary Church.

I was pleased to accept an invitation to attend a lunchtime launch event for **The Story**, a new resource being promoted jointly by the publishers *Hodder and Stoughton*, *Inter-Varsity Press*, and *Zondervan* as “a whole new way to experience the Bible”.

The adult version of **The Story** (Hodder, £14.99, ISBN 978-1444702386) takes passages from the *New International Version* of the Bible and places them in chronological order with brief connecting passages. The end result is “*thirty-one thematic chapters to draw you into the grand unfolding story of the Bible as one sweeping narrative from Genesis to Revelation*”.

The main **Story** book is complemented by a DVD, teaching materials for small groups, and a Participants' guide.

There are also special editions of **The Story** for teenagers and children in various age groups.

This is all enhanced by a full range of on-line resources such as additional videos, Bible maps, sermon outlines and handouts.

You can obtain more information by visiting the web site www.ExperienceTheStory.co.uk

BIBLEFRESH AND BEYOND

2011's *Biblefresh* campaign appears to have been a significant success according to research carried out by the think tank *Theos* and presented at an evaluation meeting held in London on Tuesday 24 April 2012.

Biblefresh was an initiative carried out by the *Evangelical Alliance* and the *Bible Society* in co-operation with one hundred and twenty partner organisations including our own Fellowship. The intention behind the campaign was to re-ignite and re-enthuse the Church in its passion for the Bible and to increase confidence in the Scriptures among ordinary Christians.

A diverse range of activities were undertaken, including Bible reading programmes, special services, readathons, new web sites and photographic competitions. Participants organised public and outreach events in their local communities, often linking up with schools or public libraries. The overlap with the four hundredth anniversary celebrations of the **King James Bible** is thought to have been a key factor in the success of *Biblefresh* and helped to increase public awareness of the campaign.

How did *you* get involved in *Biblefresh* or the **King James Bible** anniversary, either in your library or in your church? Please send me your reports and we will include them in a future issue of **Christian Librarian**.

You can find more information about *Biblefresh* and the recent *Theos* research at <http://www.eauk.org/church/stories/biblefresh-report.cfm>

CHRISTIAN RESOURCES DIRECTORY

Many readers of this magazine will be familiar with the **UK Christian Resources Handook**, a major reference source which lists Christian organisations of all kinds. *Bible Society Resources*, the publishers of the most recent edition, tell me that they have no plans for producing another printed edition. However, the printed UKCRH is to be replaced by the on-line **Christian Resources Directory** which will eventually provide a similarly detailed guide to the Christian world.

The **Christian Resources Directory** is now available at <http://directory.biblesociety.org.uk/> It is not currently as comprehensive as its printed predecessor but it should become more complete as additional organisations ask to be included. Unlike earlier on-line versions of the UKCRH, the **Christian Resources Directory** is available to users free of charge. Organisations who wish to be included can choose to have a basic entry free of charge, or can have more details added on payment of a fee.

Although I am pleased to welcome this **Directory**, as a former reference librarian I do regret the trend towards making important information sources available only in electronic form. No doubt I am really a Luddite at heart. What do others think?

FAITH ON THE MARGINS

Is the Christian faith being marginalised in the United Kingdom today? Is there a case for saying that Christians are being persecuted, especially in the contemporary workplace? These questions have been raised by a number of recent incidents, not least the court ruling that it is unlawful for the Council in Bideford, Devon, to hold prayers as part of its official business meetings.

Former Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, looks at the role of religion in public life, and the important question of religious freedom, in his timely new book ***We Don't Do God: the marginalisation of public faith*** (Monarch, £7.99, ISBN 078-0857210202), co-written with his journalist son, Andrew Carey. Lord Carey raises the provocative question, "*How is it possible – in a country which has an established Church and a Queen who by tradition 'defends the faith' – that Christianity is being marginalised and even discriminated against by our twenty-first century society as a whole?*"

Is Lord Carey's analysis correct? Most readers of this magazine will be familiar with recent cases in which Christians have been dismissed or disciplined for wearing or displaying crosses, offering to pray for patients or clients, or advising clients to put their faith in God. This debate is likely to continue and Lord Carey's new book will almost certainly have an important part to play in clarifying the issues and inspiring further

discussion.

In the meantime a group of Christian members of Parliament and peers has called for changes in the law to ensure that the freedoms of believers in the UK are not eroded. The ***Clearing the Ground*** enquiry – which published its findings in February – cited fundamental problems with the 2010 ***Equality Act*** and failures of the ***Equality and Human Rights Commission***.

Carried out by *Christians in Parliament*, and facilitated by the *Evangelical Alliance*, the cross-party committee's report said that recent legislation has been responsible for generating, rather than reducing, social tensions. They called for changes in the law, more public education about religion in government, better guidance for local authorities and a review of the EHRC. The compilers were clear, however, that the present situation does not justify the claim that Christians are being 'persecuted' in the United Kingdom today.

Dr. Dave Landrum, Director of Advocacy at the *Evangelical Alliance*, comments, “*There is a problem with how our society understands and handles religious belief today. We need reforms to ensure that we have full space to live with integrity to our beliefs in all of our lives*”.

What do you think? Send me your views and we will continue the debate in these pages. You can download the ***Clearing the Ground*** report free of charge or order a copy from

<http://www.eauk.org/clearingtheground/>

THE LION AWAKES

Following recent Internet rumours that there is to be a fourth feature film based on C.S. Lewis's popular ***Chronicles of Narnia***, *Premier Christian Radio* carried out some investigations of its own and discovered that there *is* a new film in the pipeline.

However, the new film will not be the next instalment from Narnia but a biographical film based on C.S. Lewis himself, his life, his faith and his friendship with another major figure in twentieth century literature, J.R.R. Tolkien.

Wernher Pramschufer, the Australian executive producer of the planned film, ***The Lion Awakes***, was interviewed by John Pantry and Lizzie Crowe on *Premier's Inspirational Breakfast* on 12 April 2012.

You can find more information about the production at www.thelionawakes-themovie.com/

In the meantime, Lewis fans will be amused by a front cover advertisement in ***The Bookseller*** for 13 January 2012 where a bookshop customer is reputed to have asked, “*Do you have this children's book I've heard about? It's supposed to be very good. It's called 'Lionel Richie and the Wardrobe'* “. This comes from Jen Campbell's ***Weird Things Customers Say in Bookshops*** (Constable, £7.99, ISBN 978-1780334837).

NEW IN PAPERBACK AND HARDBACK

In an earlier issue of *Christian Librarian* I mentioned that Wendy Perriam's novel *Broken Places* might be of interest to LCF readers as it features a lead character who works in a public library and is also a member of an American church which preaches a version of the 'prosperity' gospel. The library sections of the book were based on my own library service in Wandsworth and the author's acknowledgements mention me as someone who had assisted in her research.

Broken Places has now appeared in a paperback version (Robert Hale, £8.99, ISBN 978-0709096252) along with a new short story collection in hardback, *'I'm on the Train'* (Robert Hale, £19.99, ISBN 978-0709091356).

Wendy tells me that the new collection has two stories of 'religious' interest: one set in *Westminster Cathedral* when the relics of St. Therese were on display there and the other about a young girl who learns about Catholicism from a kindly old couple and is befriended by the Archangel Michael!

CURRENT AWARENESS

- Frank Waller's *Epworth Press Archive Saved* provides an account of a project to preserve the archive of past publications produced by the *Methodist Publishing House* and its

Epworth Press imprint following the demise of the company two years ago.

(Past LCF speaker) Richard Ratcliffe, former archivist at the *Methodist Central Hall*, Westminster, approached the Superintendent Minister, the Rev. Martin Turner, to see if a new home might be provided for the book collection. Despite the lack of a budget or outside funding, a new library has been created in the Susanna Room in the basement of the Central Hall.

An approach was made to the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* and most of the cataloguing was carried out by volunteer librarians Janet White and Elizabeth Williams.

The collection is now available for researchers and visitors by arrangement with the Central Hall.

The article appears in the *Methodist Recorder* for 23 February 2012, p. 17.

- Jeremy Walker's *In Appreciation of the Evangelical Library* introduces the work of a major lending and reference collection dedicated to preserving "the best in the Reformed and puritan strain of evangelicalism".

The Library was established by "book nerd extraordinaire" Geoffrey Williams. Noted non-conformist preacher Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones took an interest in the collection and urged that it be established on a more formal basis in a central London location.

The Library was based for many years in Chiltern Street, London, but rising costs and a

deteriorating building, have recently prompted a move to the Bounds Green area of London.

The Library holds about 90,000 volumes and periodicals including many older works not readily available elsewhere.

The Library organises at least three lunchtime lectures each year and occasional study days on relevant topics.

The article appears in the ***Evangelical Times*** for April 2012, p. 5.

- Christians spend most of their time outside church, and of that time, most is spent in activities other than praying or reading the Bible.

Many churches are poor at supporting the lives of their members outside of Sunday worship. Yet, working life is a major area in which there can be issues and challenges for Christians.

Christian professional associations offer people working in the same field the chance to share their insights, concerns and skills with each other in the context of a shared Christian commitment.

Relevant groups include the *Association of Christian Law Firms*, the *Association of Christian Counsellors*, the *Social Work Christian Fellowship*, *Christians in Science*, the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*, *Christians in Housing* and *theMediaNet*. Brief introductions are provided to the work of each of these groups.

Mark Woods' *Christians at Work* appears in the ***Methodist Recorder*** for 31 May 2012, p. 19.

- Sandra Robinson's *Britain Celebrated the KJV. Or did it?* considers the impact of 2011's four hundredth anniversary celebrations of the ***King James Bible***.

The anniversary year attracted much media and public interest with even avowed secularists like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens acknowledging the contribution of the KJB to English language and literature.

The events of 2011 reflect a continuing respect for the Bible, but also a nostalgia for a literary and oral culture that now seems less prevalent. Renewed interest in the KJB may have been limited to a select, educated minority.

Research by the *King James Bible Trust* has identified a striking lack of interest in the Scriptures, even among those who profess to be Christians.

Religious traditions and values do not seem well served by our present digital and technological society. In an age of instant information via the Internet, there is a danger that our opinions will be shallow, a-historical and self-serving.

The article appears in the ***Church of England Newspaper***, 27 May 2012, p. 14.

- Alister McGrath's *Beyond Narnia: C.S. Lewis and the Defence of Faith* marks the sixtieth anniversary of the publication of ***Mere Christianity*** by considering the reasons for Lewis' enduring popularity as a Christian apologist.

Mere Christianity (Collins, £7.99, ISBN 978-0007461219)

brings together several series of talks on Christianity that Lewis gave for BBC radio during the 1940s. Prior to the talks Lewis had learned the art of speaking to non-academic audiences when he was invited to address wartime crews in the RAF.

McGrath admits that some of Lewis' arguments are showing their age, especially when he makes assumptions about the moral values of his times. Some of his arguments need to be adapted and re-phrased for our own generation. However, Lewis shows us that *“apologetics is at its best when it makes people wish that Christianity were true – by showing them its power to excite the imagination, to make sense of things, and to bring stability, security and meaning to life. The final step is to show people that it is true.”*

This article appears in ***Christianity*** for June 2012, pp. 26-27, 29, 31.

- In *There's No Place Quite Like Narnia*, Libby Purves suggests that there are risks in putting C.S. Lewis's popular series of children's stories on the stage or screen. Opponents object to Lewis as a *“Christian indoctrinator”* while fans resent any visual departure from the familiar Pauline Baynes illustrations.

Purves admits *“until this week I had not seen an adaptation that did not annoy me”*. However, the threesixty Theatre Company's current production of ***The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe***, staged in a big top tent in London's Kensington Gardens, soon had her

as hooked as when she had first read the book at the age of seven.

The play continues until 9 September 2012 and information can be obtained from the box office on 0844 8717693.

The review appears in ***The Times*** for 31 May 2012, p. 9.

- Fiction written by Christians for Christians has matured and developed beyond its embarrassing early years and now spans every fiction genre and style including historical, romance, suspense, visionary and young adult titles.

Books *“reflect life today, but without the despair that darkens modern literature”*.

Novels that marked the beginning of this movement included Catherine Marshall's 1967 title ***Christy*** and Janette Oke's ***Love Comes Softly*** in 1979.

The category exploded in the late 1980s with the publication of Frank Peretti's novels of spiritual warfare, ***This Present Darkness*** and ***Piercing the Darkness***. The phenomenal success of Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins' ***Left Behind*** series led to a number of mainstream publishers such as Simon and Schuster and Random House moving into the Christian fiction market.

Christian fiction is big business in the United States but is less successful in the United Kingdom where most of the popular writers are Americans. William P. Young's ***The Shack*** is unusual in that it seems to appeal to both men and women readers and is read by non-

Christians as well as Christians.

Popular writers of Christian fiction include Francine Rivers, author of *Redeeming Love*, and Karen Kingsbury, the author of fifty books with contemporary themes.

In the early years of the twentieth century writers like C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, G.K. Chesterton, Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh wrote fiction on Christian themes, but this was mainly for a mainstream market rather than a specialist Christian readership.

Amy Boucher Pye's *Saved in the Last Chapter?* appears in the *Church Times* for 11 May 2012, pp. 20-21.

- Raymond Chapman's *Marking the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Charles Dickens* explores links between the famous nineteenth century novelist and religion.

Although the Victorian age is regarded as a time in which religion was strong in personal and public life, it was also a period of religious doubt, dispute and division. Dickens was not a 'religious' novelist in the manner of Trollope, but neither was he a novelist of religious doubt like George Eliot or Thomas Hardy.

Dickens' clergymen are often guilty of hypocrisy and greed but his portrayals can be seen as exaggerations rather than as an unfair travesty of some of the evangelical preachers of his time.

Dickens' attitude to the Roman Catholic Church was virulent, even by the standards of the day.

His gospel was essentially a

"*social gospel*" and he was zealous for anything that could improve the lot of the most unfortunate members of society.

Dickens' attitude to the divinity of Christ is uncertain but at the end of his life he wrote, "*I commit my soul to the mercy of God, through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ*".

The article appears in the *Methodist Recorder* for 2 February 2012, pp. 12-13.

- Ann Benton's *Why Read Dickens?* suggests that Christians should read the novels of Charles Dickens because of the excellence of his characterisation, his compassion and his anger against the social injustice of his times.

Dickens' novels present people in all their diversity and peculiarities. In his stories "*you see all that is glorious about humankind, made in the image of God ... you also see fallen human nature in all its foul degradation*".

Dickens' novels can be seen as parables, or at least as moral fables. *Great Expectations* unpacks the theme of the deceitfulness of riches and the emptiness of materialistic ambitions. *Hard Times* can be seen as Dickens' condemnation of naturalism and its attempts to reduce the world to mere facts.

The article appears in *Evangelicals Now*, February 2012, p. 19.

- Philip Stone's *Book Sale Blessings* looks at the best selling religious books of 2011 as identified

by *Nielsen Bookscan*.

The value of book sales in the 'Religion' category is said to have risen by 8% since 2010 to a record £16.5 million. This may be attributed, in part, to the popularity of books arising from the four hundredth anniversary of the **King James Bible**. Chief among such titles was Melvyn Bragg's **The Book of Books** (Sceptre, £8.99, ISBN 978-1444705164).

The best-seller list, however, is topped by two 'anti-religious' works, Richard Dawkins' **The God Delusion** (Black Swan, £8.99, ISBN 978-0552773317) and Christopher Hitchens' **God is Not Great** (Atlantic, £9.99, ISBN 978-1843545743).

Possibly one of the most talked about books of the year was Rob Bell's controversial **Love Wins** (Collins, £8.99, ISBN 978-0007465057) on the topic of Heaven and Hell.

Religious titles still only account for 1% of all UK book sales, and recent bookshop closures suggest that any high street bookseller specialising solely in religious texts is likely to find life difficult.

This survey appears in **The Bookseller** for 16 March 2012, p.30.

- (Past LCF speaker) Tony Jasper looks at the controversy likely to arise from a planned ITV talent show to pick an actor to play Jesus in a new production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical **Jesus Christ Superstar**.

Although Lloyd Webber is sponsoring this project, his lyricist Tim Rice has described it as 'tasteless' and 'tacky'.

The author is aware of some five hundred plays in which Jesus has been portrayed on stage. Few of the texts, however, have come from recognisably Christian sources.

The New Jesus Controversy appears in the **Methodist Recorder** for 9 February 2012, p. 19.

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

Is the writing on the wall for the Christian communications media? Recent events would certainly support this conclusion. After an illustrious history of one hundred and fifty six years, the **Baptist Times** ceased publication in January 2012, having seen its circulation drop from 13,600 in 1980 to less than four thousand in 2011. Former editor John Capon points out that, in the early 1960s, there were twelve weekly Protestant newspapers in the UK but now only four remain.

Another long established denominational publishing enterprise came to an end a few years back with the demise of the *Methodist Publishing House* and its *Epworth Press* imprint.

Christian bookshops also seem to be becoming an endangered species. Most of the shops in the former SPCK chain ceased trading a few years back. Many of the *Wesley Owen* bookshops found new owners but,

since that time, all of the shops taken over by the *Living Oasis* chain have closed down. *Koorang*, the Australian company that took over some of the other *Wesley Owen* shops, have recently announced that all but one of these branches are to close.² This leaves the *Christian Literature Crusade* as the only remaining major religious chain in this country.

Christian book publishers are also facing difficult times. *Darton, Longman and Todd* were reported recently to be hovering on the brink of bankruptcy. However, they are now said to have pulled back from immediate disaster by paying their creditors (including the Archbishop of Canterbury) twenty five pence in the pound.

Of course, these tales of gloom and despondency are not the whole story. New outlets for Christian communications have emerged in recent years. The ***Baptist Times*** has been re-launched as an on-line service at www.baptisttimes.co.uk. Christian books can be ordered on-line from mainstream suppliers such as Amazon and from specialist Christian sites such as Eden. The decline of Christian bookshops *may* provide new opportunities for improving the supply of Christian books in mainstream bookshops and libraries. Christian radio stations, such as *Premier* and *United Christian Broadcasters*, have also emerged (though *Premier* has recently been facing a major cash crisis).

However, there is one inescapable conclusion. If we want the Christian communications media, especially the print media, to continue, then we have to support them. So: Support your local Christian bookshop. Take out a subscription to a Christian periodical. Send a donation to one of the Christian radio stations. The writing may be on the wall but the future is in our hands.

EBSCO PUBLISHING

The Librarians' Christian Fellowship has an electronic licensing relationship with *EBSCO Publishing*, "the world's most prolific aggregator of full text journals, magazines and other sources". The full texts of our two main publications - the ***Librarians' Christian Fellowship E-Newsletter*** and ***Christian Librarian*** - are available on *EBSCO Publishing's* databases. Subscribers are able to retrieve articles from our publications and the Fellowship will receive a small commission for each article

² See Lisa Campbell, *Wesley Owen a 'loss to the industry'*. In *The Bookseller*, 3 February 2012.

LIBRARIANS AND DISCIPLES IN A TIME OF TROUBLE

**DIANA GUTHRIE reports
from LCF's Annual
Conference held in the
Hughes Parry Hall,
London, on Saturday 28
April 2012**

As is our custom the Conference began with a brief time of worship, led by Louise Manners (LCF Chair), with Bible readings by LCF members which focused on trusting in God, even in difficult circumstances.

The Annual General Meeting, chaired by Margaret Keeling (LCF President), then followed. Points of interest were the prayers of thanksgiving for the lives of Norah Sayer and Ken Bakewell, the elections to the Committee (passed unanimously), and a motion to raise the subscription rate by £1.00 from January 2013 (also passed unanimously).

The final item on the agenda was a discussion of the Executive Recommendations of the LCF Review Group (published in the

Christian Librarian of Spring 2012). Gordon Harris summarised the work of the Review Group which had sprung out of the Committee's increasing concern about the LCF's declining and ageing membership. He emphasised that the LCF's aims and objectives remain as valid as ever, but that we cannot just remain where we are: our activities need to relate more closely to our objectives, with recruitment being more precisely focused and communications adapted to changing technologies. Such changes might mean a changed name, an updated constitution and a new structure for the Committee.

The Recommendations stirred up a lively discussion, much of which focused on the future mode of publication of the *Christian Librarian*: an online-only version would disadvantage members without computers, and not everyone wants to read everything on a screen; but the journal is comparatively expensive to produce, absorbing most of the subscription income; going entirely online would release resources for outreach.

The morning's proceedings continued with an inspirational talk, *Flourishing in the Workplace*, by **Michael Coveney**, of *Transform Work UK*, who had also chaired the Review Group's meetings. He gave a brief résumé

of his career, then plunged into an encouraging endorsement of embracing necessary change, based on his own experiences:

Faith grows in difficult conditions, which at present gives Christians ideal conditions for growing their faith. God loves to bless, and wants us to flourish in whatever we are doing, so that we can be a blessing to other people. Satisfaction comes from doing a good job in all aspects of our lives, not just in our paid work. He instanced Joseph and Daniel who both moved off from very difficult situations, with others working against them, to become men of enormous influence, a blessing to many others, all because they held on to their faith in God and did the best job they could.

Michael's keys to thriving at work: Remember who you are, no matter where you're placed. God wants us to be ambassadors, to have influence on other people.

Work hard and without complaint. People will notice and will judge God by what you're doing. There shouldn't be any division between your working life and your spiritual life.

Respect the boss, even if this is very difficult; always be prepared to help out.

Stand firm in your faith. Find opportunities to improve yourself; this will probably mean an investment of time, and possibly money. But the right skills,

experience and contacts can make a big difference to your career development.

Join with other Christians at work. Michael's organisation, *Transform Work UK*, encourages Christians to come together to pray for their workplace and the good of their organisation.

And finally, most people in library work are very busy, and the LCF needs to offer something they can't get elsewhere. Nowadays people will only choose to join a group of people they agree with, where they can believe in the cause.

In reply to questions and comments, he suggested doing voluntary work during a period of unemployment; it might give appropriate experience to add to a CV. Difficult bosses were a real problem, and sometimes it was necessary to admit defeat and take up an unappealing work alternative; but ultimately God is in overall control.

After lunch we gathered again to hear three speakers (all LCF members) on the theme of Discipleship and Ambition:

Gordon Harris (librarian/information officer turned life coach) showed us Bible verses on work and faith, working up to the question '*Who am I actually working for?*', and its answer '*It is the Lord Christ you are serving*' (Colossians 3: 24). Our true goal is to become the person God has

equipped us to become, whether it's in our career, our church or our free time.

John Wickenden

(biomedical information scientist) also focused on God's purpose for our lives, quoting John 10: 10, '*I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full* (abundantly)'. He thinks of his life as a '*gatekeeper ministry*', supplying information both in his professional life and in his church life. Only the Holy Spirit can supply the ability to develop the balance between work, church and family. He summed up the lessons he's learnt from his career as: Be informed. Be available. Be visible. Be supported. Be willing to change, because God changes us as we grow in faith, so we need to change what we can in our workplace to make it a better place for others as well as ourselves.

The final speaker, **Sara Batts** (law library services co-ordinator), recalled her father's advice to aim as high as possible, without trampling on other people in the process. For her, ambition means working to the best of your ability; if you have a God-given talent you should develop it, whilst always being aware that you must still rely on God. Younger workers know that jobs are no longer for life, and that they are responsible for their own professional development. The responsible

Christian must be a credible professional. It is good to take on a role that challenges you, especially if it means you can be 'salt and light' in your workplace (you might be the only Christian there). But the higher you go the more conscious you should become of your own weaknesses and of your responsibilities towards other people.

During the question time afterwards the relationship (or lack of it) between the workplace and the church was raised; the workplace is many people's mission field, as it's where God has asked them to spend the bulk of their waking life; workers need to be supported and prayed for. Michael Coveney also addressed the problem of motivating the unmotivated, saying that some people can be encouraged to seek work elsewhere by being told that their strengths aren't being used properly.

Richard Waller gave a warm vote of thanks to all who had contributed in some way to the Conference, and Margaret Keeling closed the day with prayer.

Diana Guthrie, MA, serves on the executive committee of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship as Southern Regional Representative.

**“SOMETHING TO
IRRITATE EVERYONE”**

**GRAHAM HEDGES reports
on a recent visit to the
offices of the *Church Times***

Ten members and friends of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* took part in a visit to the East London offices of the ***Church Times*** newspaper on Thursday 17 May 2012.

Our host for the visit was the Editor, Paul Handley, who described the history and present activities of the weekly newspaper and answered questions. Halfway through the session we broke off to go and buy lunch in the nearby Whitecross Street, which is famous for its wide variety of hot food vendors selling food from many ethnic backgrounds.

The ***Church Times*** moved into its present premises in Golden Lane, London, EC1, shortly after Easter, and we were the first group to be received in the new building. For many years the newspaper owned its own building in London's Portugal Street, but it has been based in rented accommodation since the sale of the original building in 1987.

The paper is coming up to its one hundredth and fiftieth anniversary and for many years was a family business run by members of the Palmer family. When Bernard Palmer retired as editor and proprietor the publication was bought

by the *Hymns Ancient and Modern* group, publishers of the famous Anglican hymn book.

The *Hymns Ancient and Modern* group have various other publishing interests including the book publishers *Canterbury Press* and *SCM Press*. They publish several other magazines – including ***Third Way*** and ***Crucible*** – and now run *Church House Publishing* for the *Church of England* and *St. Andrew Press* for the *Church of Scotland*.

The group is also responsible for the *Church House Bookshop* in Westminster. The group is a registered charity, and although the various departments are expected to make a profit, these are ploughed back into the charity at the end of each year.

The ***Church Times*** began as a mouthpiece for the High Church movement in the *Church of England* and, in its early years, campaigned against the Protestant voice in the established Church. Later it turned its attention to the Roman Catholics and then, in the fifties and sixties, campaigned against the liberals. However, Bernard Palmer realised that there was “*no future in unpleasantness*” and the newspaper now follows a middle course, reflecting the views of most sections of the Anglican communion. Paul Handley believes that it is important to hold the centre ground at a time when the Church is becoming more disparate and people are often reluctant to listen to the point of view of others.

This does not prevent some people from making unwarranted

assumptions about the newspaper's editorial stance. Some people assume that it is a liberal Catholic paper while others believe that it is anti-Evangelical. Some people still call it "*Jezebel's trumpet*" because of its perceived failure to defend the finer points of Anglo-Catholic doctrine. One former news editor suggested that the publication had "*something to irritate everyone*".

The newspaper is editorially independent of the *Church of England* and aims to be critical and supportive at the same time.

The newspaper aims to maintain a breadth of coverage and concerns itself not only with the *Church of England* but with the wider Christian scene and current issues such as climate change and immigration.

Paul Handley has been editor for sixteen or seventeen years, though he worked for the paper before becoming editor. There are about a dozen staff, some of them part-time. The circulation is around 23,000, and has been steady for the last year or two, though back in the 1960s and 1970s it could boast some 40,000 subscribers.

This is a difficult time for newspapers and, in the Christian field, the *Baptist Times* recently ceased publication in its printed form. Nobody in the newspaper industry feels that they are in control of their destiny. Questioned about the vision for the next five years, Paul said that '*survival*' was at the top of the list. However, he considers that it is a great privilege to be able to present different facets

of Christianity, and thinks that it would be sad if this was lost.

The *Church Times* and the *Hampshire Chronicle* were the last newspapers in Britain to use the traditional hot metal printing system. However, the CT has been on-line since 2000 and subscribers can consult reports and articles from this date on the web site. Many of the early printed volumes of the paper are falling to pieces and a commercial company has been awarded a contract to digitise these issues.

Each week the web site conducts a poll on a topic of current interest, and this usually attracts 150-200 voters, although the number can quadruple if the subject has anything to do with sex!

Paul Handley did not have any information about sales to libraries. When I was a reference librarian in Battersea my library was fortunate to receive not only the *Church Times* but also the *Methodist Recorder* and the Catholic weekly *The Universe*. However, my impression is that the church newspapers are not widely stocked in libraries (or, at any rate, public libraries) these days.

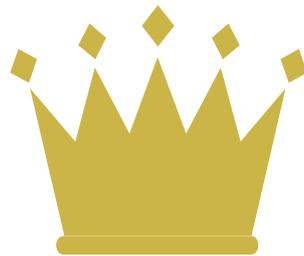
We left the Golden Lane building after an enjoyable extended lunch period, and we are grateful to Paul Handley for taking the time to tell us about his newspaper and its work.

Graham Hedges, *Hon. FCLIP, MCLIP*, is the Secretary of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*.

ANNUAL REPORT

Marking the four hundredth anniversary of the *King James Bible* was a major part of LCF's activities in 2011. LOUISE MANNERS reports on this and other aspects of the Fellowship's work in the past year

CELEBRATING KING JAMES



The Annual Report of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship during the year 2011-12 presented at the Annual General Meeting held in London on Saturday 28 April 2012.

Major events

The Annual Conference was held on Saturday 2 April 2011 at *Carrs Lane Church Centre*, Birmingham. The theme was '*2011: The Year of the Bible.*' The conference was arranged to mark the four hundredth anniversary of the ***King James Bible***. The speakers were the Rev. Dr. Rob Cotton, Network Manager of the *Bible Society* and *Evangelical Alliance* "Biblefresh" project, and the Rev. Dr. Pete Wilcox, Canon Chancellor at *Lichfield Cathedral*.

The Service of Thanksgiving was held on Tuesday 12 July 2011 as part of the CILIP *Umbrella* conference at the *University of Hertfordshire*. It was led by Gordon Harris with an address by the Bishop of Exeter, the Rt. Rev. Michael Langrish. CILIP's President Brian Hall also participated. The music group from *St. Mark's Church*, Colney Heath, led the music with gusto. The service attracted a good and enthusiastic attendance despite the 'clash' in timing with the conference exhibitors' reception.

The Annual Lecture at the *Reading International Solidarity Centre* featured Dave Roberts, speaker and writer, talking about "*Spirits in the Material World*", a Christian response to themes in recent fiction, especially Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* and Dan Brown's tomes. The lecture was timely because more fiction is being published on these themes. I have recently been trying to source fiction which does not feature vampires!

Visits

These continued with the theme of the four hundredth anniversary of the *King James Bible*.

On Tuesday 24 May 2011 we visited *All Hallows By the Tower Church*, London, for an exhibition of historic Bibles mounted by the *Museum of the Book*.

On Friday 2 September 2011 we visited Oxford following in the footsteps of the Oxford translators of the KJB. In the morning there was a visit to the *Bodleian Library* exhibition "*Manifold Greatness: Oxford and the Making of the King James Bible*". In the afternoon there was a walking tour of Oxford led by Peter Berry, tour guide for *Blackwell's Bookshop*.

On Wednesday 16 November 2011 four members of LCF (and one guest) attended the *Westminster Abbey* service to mark the conclusion of the KJB anniversary year. The preacher was the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Publications and Outside Publicity

Four issues of *Christian Librarian* and four issues of the *E-Newsletter* were published. The printed magazine included the texts of talks given at the Annual Conference, Service of Thanksgiving and Annual Lecture, plus articles on such subjects as Life after Librarianship (from LCF founder Elizabeth Barber), the *Celtic Christian Studies Library* on Lindisfarne, the national survey of religious archives, and the role of Christian professional groups. The "*Eye on the Profession*" series continued to monitor the

professional librarianship press and highlight issues likely to be of concern to Christians in library and information work.

The ***E-Newsletter*** covered such matters as the KJB anniversary, Christmas resources available on the Internet, and religious themes in the songs of Paul Simon. The LCF web site has continued to be maintained by Mary Wood though Mary is interested in finding a successor.

The article “*Contending for the Faith or Spoiling for a Fight?*” by Graham Hedges was also included on the web sites of *Transform Work UK* and *Christians at Work*. References to the work of LCF were included in such periodicals as ***CILIP Update***, ***Methodist Recorder***, ***Christian Marketplace***, ***Baptist Times***, and ***CWR Today***. The Service of Thanksgiving was mentioned on *Premier Christian Radio*.

Graham Hedges was invited to write an article on biblical reference sources for ***Refer***, journal of CILIP's *Information Services Group*, to mark the KJB anniversary, and later asked to review the ***Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible***.

Outside organisations

Our usual affiliations continued: CILIP, *Christian Research Association*, *Christians at Work*, *Evangelical Alliance*, *Transform Work UK*, *Universities' and Colleges' Christian Fellowship*. Members were encouraged to vote in the Christian Book Promotion Trust's poll to find the “*Ultimate Christian Library Book*”. Members were also encouraged to support *National Libraries Day* in February 2012.

Officers of the Fellowship

Margaret Keeling was elected as President of the Fellowship at our April 2011 Conference in succession to Gordon Harris, who became a Life Vice President. Kirsty Robinson was elected as a Vice-President, though she will be stepping down from this role this year due to other commitments. Eleanor Neil, currently living in New Zealand, was elected as our Overseas Secretary,

the first time we have had an Overseas Secretary living overseas. Philip Hayworth celebrates twenty years this year as our regional representative for the North of England. Thanks to Philip. Four meetings of the executive committee have been held since the last annual general meeting.

Library Assistance

The major achievement of the year has been the completion of the cataloguing of the *Epworth Collection*, the library of books from the former *Methodist Publishing House* and *Epworth Press*, at the *Westminster Central Hall*. This was carried out by volunteer librarians Janet White and Elizabeth Williams. Frank Waller, Assistant Visitor Services Manager, at the Central Hall, has written about the project in recent issues of ***Christian Librarian*** and the ***Methodist Recorder***.

Mary Barker (Library Assistance Manager) and Eleanor Neil (Overseas Secretary) have continued to deal with occasional enquiries from Christian organisations with an interest in library matters. Members are asked to help us in making known our willingness to help with Christian library projects.

There is some involvement in Christian library projects by individual members of the Fellowship. Arabella Wood is involved in cataloguing books at the *Evangelical Library*. Graham Hedges is helping the Information Team at the *Evangelical Alliance* and, when required, assisting visitors to the *Epworth Collection* at the *Westminster Central Hall*.

Review Group

The Review Group met to consider the future work and development of the Fellowship three times during the year, under the independent and inspiring chairmanship of Michael Coveney (*Transform Work UK*). (Members of the Review Group now know a lot more about model helicopters than they did before.) The recommendations of the group were considered by the executive committee at meetings in November 2011 and January 2012. A summary of the recommendations was included in the Spring issue of ***Christian Librarian*** and views are welcomed from the wider membership.

Many thanks to Michael Coveney and to members of the review group for all their hard work.

The need for recruitment is a major priority for the Fellowship. The assistance of existing members is requested in bringing the Fellowship to the notice of Christian friends and colleagues and encouraging them to join.

Farewells

We were sorry to hear of the deaths of two past and current members of the Fellowship, Professor Ken Bakewell and Norah Sayer, who died in March 2011 and November 2011 respectively.

Ken Bakewell was Life Vice President of the Fellowship and a former President, 1997-2002. He was Emeritus Professor of Information and Library Management at *Liverpool John Moores University* and a lay Reader in his local *Church of England* parish. Graham Hedges and Richard and Norma Waller represented the Fellowship at Ken's funeral at *St. Hilda's Church*, Liverpool, on 13 April 2011. Ken's involvement in LCF was mentioned in both the address given at the funeral service and in the obituary published in ***CILIP Update***, August 2011.

Norah Sayer was the widow of Gordon Sayer, Librarian of the *Evangelical Library*, and an LCF Vice-President, 1984-85. She was the mother of our member, and former committee member, Heather Lewis. Norah worked at the *Evangelical Library* for many years and had a special responsibility for the Library's local branch libraries. Members encouraged to give thanks for the lives of these past members and prayer is requested for their families and friends.

Louise Manners, *DipLib, MA, MCLIP*, was elected as Chair of the Executive committee of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* at the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 19 April 2008.

REVIEWS

GRAHAM HEDGES welcomes a work of mainstream biblical scholarship that steers a middle course between two extremes

LEGITIMATE QUESTIONS

THE OXFORD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE
Editor-in-Chief Michael D. Coogan
Oxford University Press, 2012, Hardback (2
volumes), Vol. 1, 600 p., Vol. 2, 578 p.,
£265.00, ISBN 978-0195377378



The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible is a major work which is described as “a single source for authoritative reference overviews of scholarship on some of the most important topics of study in the field of biblical studies”. Almost one hundred and fifty articles, ranging in length from five hundred to ten thousand words, are contributed by a hundred biblical scholars from academic institutions around the world.

The current work is intended as the first in a series of specialised reference works, each addressing a particular subject of interest within biblical studies. As well as being available in printed form, it is available on-line from the ***Oxford Digital Reference Shelf*** at www.oxford-

digitalreference.com/ It is intended that articles commissioned for this and other titles in the series will be included in ***Oxford Biblical Studies Online*** as they are produced.

The editors have interpreted the word “Bible” in broad terms and have included articles about apocryphal books as well as lost writings which are mentioned in ancient sources but have not survived into modern times. There are also contributions on biblical themes, specific genres found within the Bible, and aspects of the ancient world which throw light on the books of the Bible.

Many of the articles are devoted to individual books of the Bible, and include information on authorship and dating, structure, historical background, main themes, and the way in which books have been received and interpreted. Articles which are not directly based on books of the Bible cover such topics as Lost Gospels, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Didache, the Nag Hammadi Library, Prayer and Hymns in the Hebrew Bible, Rabbinic Literature, and the Septuagint and other ancient Greek translations.

There are articles on the development of the biblical canon and the history of the Bible in English translation. There are many maps and diagrams, covering such topics as the journeys of St. Paul and what Moses would have seen from Mount Nebo.

Inevitably, in a collection of essays by different scholars, from a variety of academic and religious backgrounds, the authors do not always agree. In general, though, the writers seem to represent the mainstream of contemporary biblical scholarship, avoiding the extremes of fundamentalism and the more sensational approaches to religious subjects found in the popular media. While the writer of the article on the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas acknowledges that some scholars are prepared to attribute an early date to this supposed collection of the sayings of Jesus, most are inclined to give the book a later date, written long after the New Testament gospels. Little encouragement is given to the more far fetched theories of Dan Brown and his readers!

I would like to have seen a greater acknowledgement of the contribution of scholars from the more conservative and evangelical end of the spectrum. I was surprised to find no references in the index to the pioneering work of Richard Burridge and N.T. Wright. The late F.F. Bruce, however, is mentioned as an example of a scholar who was prepared to defend the traditional Pauline authorship of the second epistle to the Thessalonians, an identification questioned by many scholars.

The arguments for and against traditional authorship are set out in

a number of articles. The assumed multiple authorship of the book of Isaiah is, we are told, “*one of the most widely accepted conclusions of critical biblical scholarship*”. Most scholars accept a dating for the book of Daniel much later than the Jewish exile in Babylon when the events are reported to have taken place. The writer of the book of Revelation is assumed to be a Palestinian Jew who fled to Asia Minor after the Jewish Revolt of 66-73 A.D, rather than the apostle John or the author of the fourth gospel. The writer on the epistle of James, however, is prepared to accept an early dating for the letter, in the period 46-62 A.D., and its authorship by James, the brother of Jesus.

Scholarly writings of this kind do raise legitimate questions for those of us who take a high view of the authority and reliability of the Scriptures. The writer on Exodus points out the logistical problems involved in believing that two or three million people spent forty years in the desert after their escape from Egypt. However, the article acknowledges that the tradition of an escape from Egypt is deeply rooted in the Bible, and suggests that a departure of Hebrew slaves from that country is not impossible, although perhaps on a smaller scale than a literal reading of Exodus might suggest.

Although this is described as a specialist source for biblical scholars (the index alone runs to ninety-three pages), I think that anyone with an interest in the Bible would enjoy browsing through it and picking up odd snippets of information. For example: did you know that the first recorded use of the word “*gospel*” appears in Homer where it means “*a reward for bearing good tidings*”? The notion that Jesus might have had a twin brother was first put forward in a Syrian text of the third or fourth century, not in a recent novel by Philip Pullman.

I am not a professional biblical scholar, but I have enjoyed my perusal of this ***Oxford Encyclopedia*** and would recommend it for large reference collections, university libraries, and specialist theological collections.

Graham Hedges, *Hon. FCLIP, MCLIP*, is the honorary Secretary of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* and worked until recently for the public library service in the *London Borough of Wandsworth*. This review was originally published in ***Refer***, the journal of CILIP's *Information Services Group*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Part 2, Spring 2012, and is reprinted by kind permission of the Editor.

PHILIP HAYWORTH finds much to commend in a new book on retirement and shares some of his own experiences of being “re-tyred”

THE HIGHWAY CODE FOR RETIREMENT

David Winter

CWR, 2012, £6.99, Pbk., 101p., ISBN 978-1853456688

When I came to examine this book I found it very positive and David Winter seems to cover everything that a person who has just retired, or is about to retire, would want to know.

When I started in the Gideons in South Wales, an old hand at Gideon work told us, “*If you get retired people in the movement, they spell it with a 'y' in the middle, because they go faster than anyone else*”. In fact, in one of the branches, the school placements were managed by a few retired folk, because the ordinary Gideons would not be able to get time off work to do the job. So I think David Winter would probably agree with me that “*retire*” should be spelt “*re-tyre*”.

I think the chapter on “*Planning for Retirement*” is very helpful. When my immediate boss and I were going to retire we went on a pre-retirement course that was organised by Bolton Corporation and it was a lady speaking to us about the *University of the Third Age* that prompted me to join it.

I like the summaries at the end of each chapter, “*Ten Commandments for Planning*”, etc. Right at the end David has the “*Ten Commandments (Final Version)*” This comes at the close of the chapter headed “*What's good about being retired?*”

The only deficiency is that the book does not have an index and there is no list of addresses of organisations, e.g. U3A, but then the contents give a good guide to the various aspects of retirement and anyone with any sense would either use the Internet or go to their local library to find out whether there are U3A or other organisations in their area.

The case studies are very good. I think I can say that retirement for me has been very rewarding. In fact my late wife admired the way I adjusted to my new way of life. I think that she would say that I was “**RE-TYRED**”.

I would definitely commend this book to anyone who is about to retire.

Philip Hayworth is the Northern Regional Representative for the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* and worked until his retirement as the Chief Cataloguer for the public library service in Bolton.

ARTICLES

Is the new RFID technology a major breakthrough for library services, or is it simply an excuse for more redundancies and job losses in a time of financial restraint? ROBERT FOSTER surveys the national and professional press

EYE ON THE PROFESSION

Self-Service Borrowing

The subject of self-service borrowing, or even self-service generally, is perhaps an unusual topic for a Christian publication. However, the appearance of library self-service machines has been picked up in recent months by local and even national newspapers. The stories focus on job cuts and large installation costs; they report on fund-holders defending their decisions whilst others express dismay and cynicism. Self-service machines aren't altogether new to libraries though. An LCF conference speaker, Diana Edmonds, was responsible for introducing them to Haringey Libraries six or seven years ago³, and some universities have had them longer still. So is self-service a good or bad thing, and what different opinions are there?

In contrast to the newspapers, the articles found in library journals and professional sources are almost entirely positive, and indicate that self-service installations have been highly successful. Firstly, they praise the technically impressive combination of touchscreens and radio-frequency identification (RFID) tagging. RFID is not the only system; there are also barcode-reading machines, as in a supermarket. But RFID is generally reckoned to be better for the library user, and is now the standard system. *The International Journal of Library and Information Science* said in 2011:

*"[The] RFID checkout system is user-friendly, highly intuitive and reduces queuing times."*⁴

The University Librarian at Middlesex, William Marsterson, said of the RFID set-up in his library:

³ Hyams, E 'Doing business for a social enterprise' *CILIP Update* February 2012, 18-19.

⁴ Mamdapur, G M N and Rajgoli, I U 'Implementing radio frequency identification technology in libraries : advantages and disadvantages' *JLLIS* 3(3) March 2011, 46-57

*“Patrons seem to like the stations and adapt quickly to them (at first the speed of transactions is so fast they don’t realise it has happened!)”*⁵

RFID or not, though, the success of self-service in libraries is widespread. In other environments too, such as a crowded airport check-in hall, market research has shown that intuitive self-service points can help decrease waiting times.⁶ Carefully implemented, self-service technology is good for coping with large numbers of people.

Secondly, with an RFID system, which most libraries are moving towards, there are a number of enhancements over and above borrowing. Most self-service systems now include a thermal paper printer to give you a receipt for the items you collect and return. Some have the add-on of a book-sorter, a mechanism which sends returned books on a conveyor-belt to rough-sorted trolleys. Another is the stock-checking device, which can either create inventories or locate mis-filed books, rather like a metal detector. Going further, the station or ‘kiosk’ functions can be expanded. Some libraries already have the facility to pay fines via the kiosk. In the February 2012 issue of *CILIP Update*, Jim Hopwood of vendors *Bibliotheca* describes how kiosks could be used to pay parking fees or council tax bills, and how smart shelving can identify which books are being most heavily used⁷. In theory our libraries could become multi-purpose and as a result more essential, as well as having more effective stock control - all through a development of the self-service platform.

Thirdly, desk staff can now be assigned different and more varied tasks. In an article for *SCONUL*, written in 2009, two librarians from *Cardiff University* noted how a self-service installation could make library work more rewarding:

*“We identified two existing areas where more library assistant time would be valuable: support for subject librarians in their liaison role ... along with increased involvement in managing reading lists. We also introduced the concept of roaming/floorwalking/roving, in the first instance as a new activity to support our readers in their use of the RFID system.”*⁸

Having self-service may also help to limit repetitive strain injuries to library staff. From this perspective, self-service would be a benefit to staff as well as borrower.

⁵ Quoted in: Ward, D M *The complete RFID handbook* New York, Neal-Schuman, 2007. p95

⁶ Gelderman, C J , Ghijsen P W T and van Diemen, R ‘Choosing self-service technologies or interpersonal services – the impact of situational factors and technology-related attitudes’ *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 18, 2011, 414-421.

⁷ Hopwood, J ‘Beyond RFID self-service’ *CILIP Update* February 2012, 22-23.

⁸ Davies, L and Roberts, L ‘Set your library staff free with RFID – a case study from Cardiff University’ *SCONUL Focus* 45 2009, 117-122.

Fourthly, and very usefully for the academic library trying to help students working full-time, self-service can be left on when the building has a skeleton staff or security-only presence. Thus a potentially crucial lending service is running when otherwise the building would be reference-only. In Denmark, they have used self-service to expand public library opening hours from twenty five to eighty hours per week.⁹

There are, though, some concerns about self-service. One is the cost. To set up a library for RFID, you need to 'tag' every book or loanable item. Secondly, you need a special gate: some libraries have found that building work is necessary as the transformers take up considerably more room than conventional library security gates. Thirdly, you must buy the kiosks. Then you will want to purchase and make use of the extra features. An installation across a university or public library region typically costs well into six figures.¹⁰ Devotees of the Kindle and e-reader will perhaps wonder if the spending is warranted for something which at the moment deals with printed matter and not much else.

A related matter is the connection of self-service with staff redundancies and post-cutting. In *CILIP Update* for October 2011, an otherwise positive article on self-service included this comment:

*"When we began training in this area we were able to argue self-service was about changing the role, not losing jobs. However, in the current climate of local authority, we find it's better to be honest and agree straight up that savings are a key driver."*¹¹

As indicated already, this is local community news. Links to the stories are available via <http://www.publiclibrariesnews.com/> and the picture is not pretty. It has even reached the national press. This is from the *Independent* in 2011:

*"Several bastions of social life are being de-humanised ... in 2009, Leicestershire County Council introduced automatic checkouts in sixteen of its libraries, aimed at saving tens of thousands of pounds, but also leading to nineteen redundancies. 'Lots of staff feared for their jobs because of cuts' one library assistant said at the time, 'but no-one dreamt they would be replaced by a machine'".*¹²

Academic library staff are in a less parlous position, although things may change if student numbers drop. In terms of public library jobs, the word crisis is not too strong.

⁹ Larsen, J H 'Self-service in unusual times: the "Open Libraries" are popular in Denmark – open 70 to 80 hours' *BUB Forum Bibliothek und Information* 2, 2011, 118-119 (abstract only seen)

¹⁰ Ffrench, A 'Self-service libraries aim to trim costs' *Oxford Times* Nov 20th 2010. Quotes figure of £600,000. Also: Wiltshire County Council £546,000 (www.wiltshire.gov.uk/artsheritageandlibrarieshome)

¹¹ Van Riel, R and Downes, A 'RFID : self-service – making it work' *CILIP Update* October 2011, 43-45

¹² Hancox, D 'How Britain became a self-service nation' *The Independent* March 15th 2011

There are also some technical limitations. In terms of security, anyone wanting to know how to circumvent an RFID system need only consult *Yahoo Answers*. There is also the need for basic maintenance (for example, refilling printer rolls or resetting 'crashed' kiosks). This means that some human presence is usually needed on the premises. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of security staff or even the proposed volunteer staff, there will be some core services which cannot be provided. Book-lending is one key service amongst several that users require. Having staff on the premises who can provide limited support (and are otherwise there to monitor the space) can be frustrating for users, and takes us backwards rather than forward.

Finally, market research shows that customers are particularly bothered by self-service generally if they feel forced to use it.¹³ It goes without saying that if someone can't make sense of a self-service machine, they either give up or feel their time is being wasted. Training consultants Rachel Van Riel and Anne Downes, in the October **Update** article referred to above, advise that in the best self-service installations:

*"there will always be a member of staff near the self-service ... ready to help or demonstrate the self-service and happy to chat about book choices with people who like a human contact."*¹⁴

This, though was the experience of a **Daily Telegraph** reporter:

*'I joined the queue at the librarian's desk. Once I'd reached the front, I handed over my books. "Sorry," said the librarian, "I can't take those. You have to borrow and return books using the self-service machine over there." She pointed to a second, even longer queue. I joined it. This queue moved sluggishly, because nobody knew how to use the self-service machine, except for the assistant stationed beside it.'*¹⁵

In fairness, the author was referring to a new library where everyone was getting used to the new set-up. Why, though, was self-service compulsory in a staffed service? Van Riel and Downes argue that we should do our best to encourage people to use self-service by layout and staff persuasion, because ultimately being able to use self-service will help the customer. But I wonder if it will be hard to persuade those weary of self-service. A piece of research on call-centres included the following comment:

"I don't know who is giving and who is receiving service any more. I ring to get a bank balance; I have to choose between various options, then

¹³ Reinders, M J, Dabholkar, P A and Frambach, R T 'Consequences of forcing customers to use technology-based self-service' *Journal of Service Research* 11 (2) November 2008, 107-123.

¹⁴ Op. cit

¹⁵ Deacon, M 'Self-service libraries can leave you long overdue' *The Telegraph* September 12th 2011

*another variety of options. If I choose the wrong option I have to start all over again.”*¹⁶

Self-service is unlikely to be a good experience for everyone.

So is self-service borrowing a service-enhancement, or a regressive step based on cost-cutting? Both are possible. Those students who study as well as work full-time, would probably struggle to study at all without some after-hours borrowing. Some people like self-service full stop, and it makes complete sense to them that they can do the issue and return for themselves while library staff get on with other tasks. Added to that, some cost-cutting is inevitable. As I write, I see in ***Public Library News*** that CILIP's policy unit is preparing guidance on how volunteer work might be managed. One imagines this will be contested by CILIP members, but perhaps it's an indication that the governing body itself had decided very reluctantly that a mixture of self-service, volunteers and some professional oversight really is the only way that some libraries will still be operating in a year's time.¹⁷ In the last financial year, twenty one public libraries were closed. (Source: CILIP) Equally, self-service can also cause some difficulty for people who would really welcome the person-to-person encounter and just prefer that way of doing transactions. At the moment, it is hard to know if self-service borrowing is the hero or the villain.

There is no dictionary definition that says a library must include a human intermediary to be a library: one of the joys of a library is that you can be left to get on with your research. Some small college libraries have had self-service borrowing with paper-issue for decades. One could argue that automated self-service borrowing is an extension of that. On the other hand, in a ***Library Management*** article written back in 1993, Ken Bakewell reflected with satisfaction on how a student survey of library staff had shown that a number of those entering the profession did so primarily because they wanted to work with people.¹⁸ If I have understood Professor Bakewell correctly, libraries and librarians should have something special to offer to people in all sorts of ways, and services can benefit if that is taken into account.

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¹⁶ Bolton, S C and Houlihan, M 'The (mis)representation of customer service' *Work, employment and society* 19(4), 694.

¹⁷ <http://www.publiclibrariesnews.com/> on Tuesday 15 May 2012.

¹⁸ Bakewell, K G B 'Motivation of library staff' *Library Management* 14(5) 1993, 18-19.

EMMA WALSH introduces the three libraries of *Regent's Park College*, Oxford, and outlines current projects to preserve and disseminate the College's unique resources covering Baptist history

OXFORD'S 'NARNIA' LIBRARIES

Regent's Park College has been described as the Narnia College of Oxford, as you could easily walk past the front door and have no idea what's behind it. But, if you press the silver button to your left, the door opens and you are drawn through the entry into a beautiful garden which at this time of the year has the last remnants of blossom gleaming brightly over garden beds filled with iris, tulips and budding roses. The wall in front of you is covered in an iridescent green Boston Ivy, which will turn a magnificent shade of red in the autumn as it does every year. And if you are lucky you will see Emmanuelle, the college tortoise, meander across the lawn in search of her favourite, strawberries. There is an air of peaceful tranquillity.

At Regent's we strive for all to be welcomed and accepted, for all to be treated justly and fairly, and for all to be cared for and encouraged so that they can each achieve the potential we see in them as they walk through the door. This desire emanates from a rich history and heritage which is firmly based in the Baptist tradition. A tradition which is also rooted firmly in a belief that all are equal, that the last shall be first (which is often counter cultural in Oxford), all are valued and that everyone has the right to their beliefs, and whilst Regent's foundations are outside Oxford they are not removed from Oxford.

Regent's Park College traces its roots back to the formation of the *London Baptist Education Society* in 1752 which led to the development of the *Stepney Academy* in East London, in 1810. The impetus for the creation for the Academy arose from the fact that only members of the Church of England were given places at ancient universities including Oxford. It wasn't until the ***Oxford University Act*** of 1854 that Baptists and other Dissenters were admitted to these ancient universities, although there are still positions today that people from outside of the Church of England are ineligible to hold. *Stepney Academy* then moved to a still very rural, Regent's Park in 1855, and then in 1927 it found a permanent home in Oxford, becoming a Permanent Private Hall of the University of Oxford in the 1957.

There are three libraries at Regent's all of which reflect its values, commitments, and foundations. The *College Library* is housed on the top floor of the College and has recently been repainted a deep red colour which along

with the old oak shelves has resulted in warm and noble space for the students and the collections. Hanging in the College Library is a number of intriguing paintings. There is one of John Bunyan, which is the only painting for which he is known to have posed. We have the only known painting of William Carey with hair, and on the landing outside the library we also have William Carey's deathbed.

The Library holds over 30,000 items which cover a variety of humanities subjects reflecting the student body with about 70% of the collection covering theology reflecting the College's foundations and continuing involvement in ministerial training. Currently the tranquillity that is felt in the garden in the Quad is not as present in the College Library with Finalists (third year students) cramming every last shred of information and knowledge from the last three years into their already full and exhausted brains in a final push before their exams.

The College also holds the *David Nicholls Collection* which is a small but significant collection of works focussing on Haitian and Caribbean theology, liberation theology and the interplay between theology and politics. It is a fascinating collection which reflects the rich and fascinating life and interests of its name sake David Nicholls.

And the third library held at Regent's Park College is the significant and internationally important *Angus Library and Archive* (The Angus).

The heart of the collection is the personal library of the Rev. Dr. Joseph Angus who was Principal from 1849 to 1893 and which was later catalogued and enlarged by Dr. George Pearce Gould, Principal 1896-1920. Since then The Angus has grown considerably and now also incorporates the former libraries and archives of, The *Baptist Missionary Society* (founded in 1792), The *Baptist Union of Great Britain* (founded in 1832) and The *Baptist Historical Society*. This has resulted in it becoming the most comprehensive collection worldwide for the Baptist denomination, comprising over 70,000 printed books, pamphlets, journals, church, association and denominational records, church histories, hymnbooks, manuscript letters and other artefacts from the late fifteenth century to the present day, with many items unique to The Angus.

The collection relates to the life and history of Baptists in Britain and the wider world. Alongside this unique insight into Baptist and nonconformist history there is a considerable amount of material from non-Baptist sources relating to issues and controversies in which Baptists were involved.

One of my favourite quotes is "*Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.*" Soren Kierkegaard.

This expresses my overarching desire and motivation when it comes to developing and protecting The Angus. It is incredibly important to preserve and protect history so we can learn from our experiences and develop a deeper understanding of who we are. If we only look back then we will never grow, and if we only look forward we run the risk of repeating old mistakes

and losing a sense of identity. It is when we have balance and dialogue between past, present and future that we have the best chance of making the greatest change.

It is this desire that led us to look at how we should manage the collection today and protect the collection for the future, whilst ensuring that it is available and known by all who would benefit from its holdings and history. This led us to investigate and develop a number of projects and funding proposals covering everything from conservation, and cataloguing to building works, excavation and renovation of the reading room and office space. We secured funding for a conservation project which will eventually result in each item in the library being assessed, cleaned and given minor repairs, with items of significance undergoing more comprehensive conservation and repair work. This is being started by a professional conservationist, and will be continued by the NADFAS team which has just taken started.

As wonderful as all this is, it is of little worth if The Angus is not known or used. With this in mind we decided to apply to the *Heritage Lottery Fund*. The decision to apply for HLF funding was not taken lightly and a number of issues were taken in to consideration before deciding to move forward with the application. One of which is a very pragmatic, if you look for institutional support for such projects these days, the HLF is the provider by which it is delivered.

We have already successfully submitted a Round One application and are now working towards Round Two which if successful will result in just under £500,000 being invested in The Angus project, titled '*Baptist history: the hidden treasure of a nation and beyond*'. With this project we aim to uncover and make the resources in the unique *Angus Library and Archive* more accessible to more people. It is essential that the collection moves from being partly catalogued to being fully catalogued if we are to both uncover this hidden history and make it more available for people to engage with. The project will provide opportunities for people to learn about both the important part Baptists played in our national history and beyond and their own, personal, Baptist heritage. We plan to do this by raising awareness of the collection and providing workshops and training sessions on Baptist history, conservation, archive protection, family history and church history.

At *Regent's Park College* we are working hard to live life forwards, whilst understanding it backwards. In looking at our past we can see a rich tradition and heritage which comes from a strong faith and a desire to have people be free to worship as they feel they should. This tradition continues with the on-going desire to help people discover themselves, their faith and their story in a way that has everlasting impact.

The Rev. **Emma Walsh** is the College Librarian of *Regent's Park College*, Oxford.

IAN ROBINSON celebrates the 350th Anniversary of the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* and chronicles the Prayer Book's contribution to Church, Society and the English language

LIBRARIAN'S DELIGHT – OR NIGHTMARE?



The Book of Common Prayer of 1662 is a librarian's delight (or nightmare depending on your mood) second only in bibliographical complication, in English, to the Bible of 1611. There have been more printings of the *Prayer Book* than any other English book but the Bible, though both were and are limited by the perpetual copyright of the two historic university presses and the King's printers. 1662 is the most recent authorised full revision of a book new in 1549.

Since 1662 there have been fairly minor changes (not counting differences in the names of reigning monarchs and their families, any change in which necessitated the replacement of at least two gatherings) like the discontinuance in 1859 of a service celebrating the deliverance from the 1605 Gunpowder Plot, but the book is much the same as it was in 1662; and since the eighteenth century it has also been, for no apparent reason, typographically frozen, so that it still uses Johnsonian spellings like *Catholick*, and has commas both ends of a parenthesis but no quotation marks.

The *Prayer Book* has been a main artery of the English language since Shakespeare's day. In all the versions down to the 1928 attempted revision, that was twice rejected by Parliament, it has been a solidly Protestant book, though there is very little in it that could not be prayed with a good conscience by any Christian. The great impact on English life was less Protestant doctrine (important as that is) than the involvement of the whole population in worship in their own language.

For during its first hundred years the **Prayer Book** (in various revisions) was the only form of English liturgy, and compulsory on Sundays for everybody. The great innovation in 1549, which still persists, was that congregations had to join in large portions of the service, in contrast to the medieval mass-goers who were first and foremost spectators of the elevated Host. So, much of the **Prayer Book** was much better known, by all sorts and conditions of men, than the Lord's Prayer or the National Anthem now is.

The reception in the early years was not always enthusiastic, and in fact the **Prayer Book** was the occasion of more than one rebellion, as well as of more than one war between England and Scotland; but by the time of the Commonwealth, when for a dozen years the **Prayer Book** was officially illegal, it had got such a hold that its re-introduction in 1660 was inevitable.

Even when toleration came in, the **Prayer Book** was for centuries one great unifying factor in the nation, and not only for regular churchgoers. Right down to the days of the Brontës, baptisms, weddings and funerals were church affairs, not chapel and not registry office. Anybody would recognise "*I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord*" and "*Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust*". The **Prayer Book** was universal and compulsory in the colleges, for prayers in public schools, in law courts and before government sessions local or national.

The **Prayer Book** occupies numbers of pages in the dictionaries of quotations fewer only than the Bible's—when you can tell the difference, because the Bible was made a common possession above all by the readings, quotations and glances in the **Prayer Book**.

The constitutive importance of the Prayer Book for English prose is less well known.

It is remarkable that there is no verse in the Prayer Book. Its prose is generally thought to be reliably good, though by the standards of modern journalism two words, often alliterating, are often used where one would do ("*devices and desires*", "*erred and strayed*", "*to have and to hold*"). Archbishop Cranmer, the presiding genius of the original 1549 book, is sometimes thought to have had an easy task because he was born into an age of great English prose. On the contrary, he virtually had to invent it! (To see how and why read my essay "*The Prose and Poetry of the Book of Common Prayer*" in Prudence Dailey's new collection of essays **The Book of Common Prayer: Past, Present and Future**. Good fluent English prose first became available in the 1549 book. When modern prose as we know it was generally established in the same decade as the 1662 **Book of Common Prayer**, by the

Restoration generation of the Royal Society and (as far as a general possession can be attributed to one man) John Dryden, the link with the Collects of the **Book of Common Prayer** was necessary and internal. Ever since, the **Prayer Book** has been a final guarantee of English prose. (For a full exposition of this matter I am afraid you will have to consult my book **Cranmer's Sentences**.)

And now? When the Church of England introduced the **Alternative Service Book 1980** it looked as if the **Prayer Book** might, with a little helping push or two, fade away,. When after twenty years the former was replaced, many of the Prayer Book forms were included as options in our contemporary **Common Worship**. In fact numbers of churches in England (not to mention Africa) still use 1662 exclusively. The form of the **Prayer Book** royal wedding last year (though to be sure it was 1928 not 1662), the most widely viewed religious ceremony in the history of the world, was not surprising to anyone except certain angry correspondents in the **Church Times**. Prayer Book Choral Evensong is broadcast weekly on Radio Three and can be heard almost any day in almost any cathedral of the Church of England. But there is no prospect that the **Book of Common Prayer** will regain the place in national life that gives it its name.

The **Prayer Book** has not been succeeded, however, by a different common prayer, even to the extent that the phrase is meaningful when only a minority prays, but by the loss of any idea that public prayer is uniform. The Prime Minister's assertion that we are still a Christian society is very controversial. When prayer was common the opinion was, as a historical or sociological observation, less challengeable.

Editions of the **Book of Common Prayer** currently in print: *Cambridge University Press* reset their ordinary 1662 pew edition a few years ago and also publish the **Prayer Book** in several bigger lectern and presentation editions. *Oxford University Press* has recently published the texts of the versions of 1662, 1549 and 1559 in one book, ed. Brian Cummings. The *Prayer Book Society* publishes in one volume the texts of 1549 and 1552. The 1559 **Elizabethan Prayer Book** is in print in a very handsome edition by John E. Booty, *University of Virginia Press*.

Ian Robinson is the editorial director of *The Brynmill Press Ltd.*, the author of books including **The Survival of English**, **Cranmer's Sentences** and **Who Killed the Bible?** and for some years was a trustee of the *Prayer Book Society*.