

Winter 2017

CLIS Christians in
Library and
Information
Services



CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN

CONTENTS INCLUDE

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- **ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 14 APRIL 2018.**

Salvation Army's *Regent Hall*, Oxford Street, London, from 10.30. a.m. Speakers: **Mark Jones**, *Lawyers' Christian Fellowship*, and **Malcolm Martin**, *Christian People's Alliance*. Details: p. 9.

- **CHRISTIAN WALKING LONDON TOUR: WEDNESDAY 23 MAY 2018**

Details: p. 10.

PRAYER NOTES FOR WINTER 2018

PLEASE PRAY FOR

- Forthcoming CLIS activities including our 2018 annual conference. Pray that there will be a good attendance at this and other events.

- Candidates willing to serve on our executive committee and in other roles.

- The work of the *Universities' and Colleges' Christian Fellowship* and especially for the current library and archives project.

- CLIS members in school and public libraries as highlighted in this issue.

- The work of the *Chaima Christian Institute* and the *Langham Partnership, UK and Ireland*.

- Staff and users of *Lambeth Palace Library* as they look forward to their new building in 2020.

- A good response to the book **A World of Difference** recently distributed to every primary school in the United Kingdom.



FOUNDED IN 1976 AS THE LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

*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.christianlis.org.uk*

**CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN: NEWSLETTER AND JOURNAL OF CHRISTIANS IN
LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES (ISSN 0309-4170) No. 77, Winter
2017. .**

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Printing: Concisely Supplies 4 Business, Chelmsford, Essex. CLIS Logo Design:
Megan Andersen. .

Views expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and not necessarily those
of CLIS as a whole.

CLIS minimum subscription for 2018: £30.00 Reduced rate for student, retired and
unemployed members/subscribers: £20.00.

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THE FIRST WORD

EDDIE OLLIFFE welcomes the season of Advent and looks forward to the coming of Christmas

ADVENT 2017

Christmas gets earlier and earlier every year. I am writing this in October and, already, some supermarkets have their displays out ready to be sold. It's still quite a long time until Christmas, and yet in the minds of the supermarkets, it's only 10 to 12 weeks. They have to move fast to get our money into their tills!

Advent is a short season. This year it runs from Sunday 3 December until Christmas Eve on the 24 December 2017. There are some people who will not think about Christmas until Advent begins. I say, '*Good for them!*'

Advent is traditionally a time of preparation for Christmas. In the *Celtic Daily Prayer*, Advent is always a full 40 days of preparation, matching the 40 days of fasting and prayer observed before Easter.

A candle may be chosen and lit every evening from the beginning of Advent. This candle may be dark blue, purple or white. Some families also have a '*Jesse Tree*'. This is a branch decorated with ornaments signifying characters in the genealogy of Jesus. It may also have ornaments signifying prophecies foretelling the coming of the Messiah.

I would encourage you, whether it's for a short time or for the longer period, to observe a period of Advent prior to Christmas. I'm sure it will help you.

The past Vicar of Holy Island (Lindisfarne), David Adam writes about the season:

*'I open the stable door
I kneel before the infant
I worship with the shepherds
I adore the Christ child
I give my love with Joseph and Mary
I wonder at 'The Word made flesh'
I am aware of the love of God
I sing glory with the Angels
I offer my gifts with the wise men
I receive the living Lord
I hold Him in my hands
I go on my way rejoicing
Glorifying and praising God'.*

As we move at a time of more and more merchandise and presents, let's be keenly aware that there is so much more for us in the spiritual world. I am always amazed that people who have so little (usually in the two-third world), often seem so wonderfully equipped spiritually, and still always give thanks to God, regardless of how little they have.

This is always something which I come back to again and again, recognising that **God loves you and me very much**. Let's always remember that, particularly at this time of Advent preparation.

'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'your God reigns'. Isaiah 52:7.

Eddie Olliffe is the President of *Christians in Library and Information Services* and a Trustee of the *Christian Book Promotion Trust*.

THE SECOND WORD

ROBERT FOSTER suggests that public and other libraries have a role to play beyond providing books and other media

GOING THE EXTRA MILE

On Friday 6 April 1883, at one its regular monthly meetings, the *Library Association* gathered at the *London Institution*, where a paper was delivered by George R. Humphery entitled: "*Librarians and the working classes - or can librarians assist the working classes to use their Saturday half-holiday profitably?*"* Humphery was the company secretary of *Frederick Braby and Sons*, a company which manufactured sheet metal, and he was also the librarian. Like certain other companies - *Broadwood*, the piano manufacturer, for example - Braby's had a general library for their employees, in the days when not everyone had access to a public library. However, what Humphery was addressing the assembled membership about were additional activities which the librarian might like to put on during the employees' half-day off. He gave some examples of what he had provided at Braby's, namely a visit to the Tower of London, a talk by Dean Stanley, and other visits to *Gray's Inn* and the *Corporation of London*. (It seems that talks and visits were the things librarians had a liking for even then.)

The title of Humphery's talk was recognisably Victorian in outlook, and the text reveals more of the same thinking, but looking past that for a moment, one can perceive that he was

thinking wider than the picture of a library as a collection of books. He obviously felt that librarians could help to spark interests by doing more than just providing books. It suggests to me that the concept of librarians doing added related activities is actually quite old. Public libraries in particular have been proactive in going the extra mile, with homework centres, job clubs, local history events and much more. Thinking about CLIS, we also have an event - the annual lecture - which is designed to have a broader appeal than just to the library world. I hope that we will be able to continue having an outward-looking event such as this.

I have never worked in a public library but I can remember once being part of a group of staff who were advised that we could no longer continue to provide certain non-core services. It was not without reason - there was insufficient funding to do these things justice. But the feeling among the staff was one of disappointment. We get to know those things that make a difference. Perhaps, given the present climate in some library sectors, you have had to scale down even what you consider to be core activities. Whilst we must hope and pray that this changes for the better, I am convinced that, even without realising it, you have still helped people in unexpected ways. And this aspect of service too is, I believe, serving God in the workplace.

*Monthly Notes of the *Library Association*, April 1883, Vol. 4 (4).

Robert Foster, BA, DipIM, MCLIP, is Chair of *Christians in Library and Information Services* and works as an Assistant Librarian at the *Royal College of Music*



CLIS NEWSLETTER

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OUT OF CIRCULATION

This Winter issue of **Christian Librarian** is likely to arrive later than usual as I was out of circulation for several weeks in October and November as a patient in the *King's College Hospital*, London, undergoing a second operation on my foot. The surgery seems to have gone well

but at the time of writing I am more or less housebound. Having encouraged our President to write about Advent and Christmas I hope this issue will arrive before 25 December! I will be grateful for prayers for a speedy recovery by CLIS members and readers.

UCCF ARCHIVES WORKING PARTY

Richard Waller writes: Elsewhere you can read about the fun we had on the working party at the *Universities' and Colleges' Christian Fellowship* HQ, in Oxford, at the start of November. We got the work perhaps half done, so a further session is needed to get the situation under control. UCCF has suggested one of two weeks in March, either week commencing **Monday 12 March** or **Monday 19 March 2018**. This issue is coming out before we are able to make a choice between the dates, but we are very willing to take expressions of interest. Please contact Richard Waller on 01942-205843 or e-mail randnwaller@blueyonder.co.uk and by all means express a preference, although we can't at this point agree to oblige you! UCCF will pay expenses

and provide accommodation and meals. In fact, they will look after us in a princely way. The work is interesting, the stuff we are finding is fascinating, and no experience of archive work is needed for the work we are doing. Do come!

NEXT YEAR'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Next year's annual conference has been arranged for **Saturday 14 April 2018** and will be held at the Salvation Army's *Regent Hall*, in Oxford Street, London.

Our morning speaker will be **Mark Jones**, chairman of the *Lawyers' Christian Fellowship*, who will speak on employment law and how this affects Christians in the workplace. This will be linked to the ***Speak Up*** booklet published by the *Evangelical Alliance* and the *Lawyers' Christian Fellowship*, which was written in part by Mark.

In the afternoon **Malcolm Martin**, Deputy Leader of the *Christian People's Alliance*, will speak on *What is Truth?* with reference to current debates about post-truth, alternative facts, and fake news. Please book the date now and plan to attend.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our annual general meeting is to be held on **Saturday 14 April 2018** at the *Regent Hall*, from 11.20. a.m., as part of the annual conference proceedings.

Please let me have any motions for discussion, or nominations for office, in writing not later than one calendar month before the annual general meeting.

Nominations are invited for the following executive committee positions: Publications Editor, Membership Secretary, Scottish Secretary, and Member Without Portfolio.

Each nomination needs a proposer and seconder and the candidate also needs to indicate his or her willingness to serve.

Some of our existing office holders may be planning to stand for re-election but we are always pleased to hear from others interested in serving on the executive committee. Please let me know if you are interested, or would like further information.

CHRISTIAN LONDON

Our Spring 2018 programme will continue with a walking tour of the City of London arranged for CLIS members and friends by *Christian Heritage London*. This will be held on **Wednesday afternoon 23 May 2018** and will visit places associated with notable Christians of the past including William Wilberforce, John Wesley, William Tyndale, Elizabeth Fry, John Newton and many others. Please watch this space for further details.

LIBRARIES WEEK

How did *you* get involved in this year's *Libraries Week*, held between 9-14 October 2017.

My modest contribution to the week including publishing a letter on libraries in the September/October 2017 issue of *idea*, the magazine of the *Evangelical Alliance*.

Along with our speaker, the Rev. Simon Carver, I took part in an interview with presenter Paul Hammond on *United Christian Broadcasters'* UCB1 station on Monday 9 October 2017. I wrote

an article on libraries for my church newsletter and also made a brief announcement during a morning church service.

Please let me know how *you* supported NLW, whether in your library or your church.

MIRACLE DAY

Readers will recall that at the time of the re-launch of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* as *Christians in Library and Information Services* in 2014 we held an appeal for donations to support the Library of the *Chaima Christian Institute* in Maridi, South Sudan. The CLIS executive committee has recently been able to send a further donation in support of the Library.

This donation was sent via the *Church Mission Society* who have acknowledged our gift and informed us that the recent past has been a time of surprising achievement for the Institute at a time of great difficulty in South Sudan. Despite ongoing turmoil in the country this past Spring around a hundred students in Maridi diocese collected certificates or diplomas during Chaima's graduation ceremony. This included a large outdoor

church service with prayers, praise and celebration and was a hugely encouraging day for the staff and students who called it a “*miracle day*”.

Please pray for the Institute, its staff, students and library at this very difficult time for the South Sudan where there is a continuation of the war for independence and fighting between the government and opposition groups in many town

AFRICAN VOICES

Many readers of this publication will already be familiar with the *Langham Partnership, UK and Ireland*, originally set up by the Rev. John Stott in 1969 and now working in more than seventy countries to equip, train and inspire the global church.

The *Langham Trust* is involved in training pastors, preparing scholars to teach in evangelical seminaries, and producing relevant Christian literature.

One of the organisation’s latest publishing projects is ***African Voices: towards African British Theologies***, (£14.99, ISBN 9781783683031), edited by Israel Olofinjana, and

published as part of the *Langham Global Library Series*.

This publication explores the significant presence of African Christianity in Britain and includes contributions from twelve scholarly African pastors engaged in ministry and theology in Britain. The book is described as “*a unique expression of theology from African Christians contextualising the gospel for a multi-cultural British society.*”

You can find more information about the *Langham Partnership* on the web site at www.uk.langham.org and the Rev. Israel Olofinjana can be contacted at israelolofinjana@yahoo.co.uk

INSPIRED STRIVING

After “*forty-five years of inspired striving*” our long standing Dublin subscriber **Louis Hemmings** has published what he intends to be his final booklet of poetry.

In early 2016 Louis took a seventy day rural writing retreat which gave birth to over three hundred poems some of which are included in this new publication.

How to Make Stubborn Pianos Sing True is a collection of twelve rhyming poems exploring themes as varied as cycling, boarding school, rural life, music, communion, weaving and stillbirth. Illustrations are provided by the multi-media designer **Katya Zhu**.

Louis can be contacted at 'Avonbeg', Newtownpark Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Ireland, E-mail louis@samovarbooks.com The booklet is priced at seven euros plus postage (1.35 EU worldwide) and Louis can accept payment by Paypal, cash or EU/UK cheque

You can also find information on the web site www.louishemmings.com

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Making a Difference was the theme of this year's *Christian Resources Together* retreat which attracted several hundred booksellers, publishers and writers to *The Hayes* conference centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire, between 11-12 September 2017.

Past CLIS speaker, Nick Page gave an opening address. Despite having written and

published seventy books, Nick felt that he had "*fallen into writing*" and was part of an "*imposter syndrome*". In a time of great social and technological change Christians often feel impotent when it comes to making a difference in society. Nick claimed, memorably, that the "*fastest growing denomination*" is "*Christians who no longer go to church*".

However, we need to see ourselves as children of God, loved and cherished by the Father. We should identify areas where we can make a contribution and "*aim to do the next good thing*". Ernest Hemingway's advice to write the "*truest sentence*" was quoted with approval.

Author Elizabeth George bore testimony to the potential of Christian books to change people's lives. She had been brought to faith by reading Hal Lindsey's controversial best-seller on biblical prophecy, ***The Late Great Planet Earth*** (Zondervan).

In a closing address master storyteller Bob Hartman spoke of the importance of writing "*Christian books that children want to read*".

An evening awards ceremony recognised the contribution of significant books,

publishers and booksellers. Rahil Patel's ***Found by Love*** (Instant Apostle), the testimony of a Hindu priest turned Christian, was announced as the Biography of the Year.

Carol Wallace's update of her ancestor's ***Ben-Hur*** (Lion Fiction) was acclaimed as the Christian fiction title of the year while Emma Willis' ***Diary of a Disciple*** (Scripture Union), a re-telling of the life of Jesus as told by Luke, was recognised as the children's and youth title of the year.

Risen, based on the story of a Roman officer investigating the resurrection of Christ, was announced as the DVD of the year.

Special awards were given to Clem Jackson, recently retired as editor of the book trade magazine ***Together***, and Steve and Mandy Briars, organisers of the retreat itself. Past CLIS speaker Penelope Wilcock, author of the ***Hawk and Dove*** series (Lion Fiction), received an award for her outstanding contribution to Christian publishing.

A panel discussion chaired by Clem Jackson, discussed such questions as "*why do we need so many Bibles?*" and the role of Christian fiction. A panel member from the *Association of Christian*

Writers assured would-be authors that it is "*never too late to start writing*".

The fiftieth anniversary of the *Christian Book Promotion Trust* was celebrated in the publisher's exhibition with the cutting of an anniversary cake by the present writer, in my role as a CBPT trustee.

CHRISTIAN HEROES

As mentioned above, 2017 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the *Christian Book Promotion Trust*, sponsors of the *Speaking Volumes* library scheme, and this milestone has been marked by the publication of a book on notable Christians of the past which has been sent free of charge to every primary school in the United Kingdom to mark *International School Library Month* in October.

A World of Difference has been written by the popular storyteller **Bob Hartman** and is aimed at children in the upper end of Key Stage 1 and lower KS2 and can be read in other curriculum areas beyond RE such as English and History. Twelve different characters' lives are explored,

explaining their achievements and how their Christian faith formed their conviction to create change. There are some well known people included such as Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Elizabeth Fry and William Wilberforce but also some lesser known figures including Harriet Tubman who led many slaves to freedom.

The book was formally launched at the *St. Ethelberga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace* in Bishopsgate, London, on Thursday 21 September 2017. Author Bob Hartman was on hand to sign copies of his book and to read a sample chapter. This featured the life and work of businessman and philanthropist Cecil Jackson-Cole who founded or co-founded many charities including *Oxfam*, *Action Aid* and the *Christian Book Promotion Trust* itself. Cecil Jackson-Cole is also credited as the first person to have started charity shops, now a familiar feature in most high streets.

Other participants in the evening included CBPT's Chair, Geoff Booker, and the *Speaking Volumes* director, Paula Renouf. Closing prayers were led by the Rt. Rev. Geoff Pearson, recently retired as the Bishop of Lancaster, and a member of the library scheme's management committee back in the 1980s. The evening also included a

powerpoint presentation featuring reminders of many CBPT activities over the years including exhibition stands and book award presentations.

The evening was well attended by past and present CBPT trustees and representatives from the book trade, education and Christian organisations.

The venue was originally the *Church of St. Ethelberga-the-Virgin Within Bishopsgate* but was severely damaged by an IRA bomb in 1993. After re-building and restoration it was re-opened as a centre designed to build relationships across divisions of conflict, culture and religion.

A World of Difference was published on CBPT's behalf by the publisher CWR, and a representative of the company took part in the evening. The book is now available through normal channels, price £5.99, ISBN 978-1782597643. Additional resources are available on-line at www.assemblies.org.uk and at www.stapleford-centre.org

Information about the *Christian Book Promotion Trust* and *Speaking Volumes* is available from Paula Renouf, 1, Bar Lane Cottages, Marton Road, Whittlesford, Cambridge, CB22 4PE, or from the web site:

www.speakingvolumes.org.uk, E-mail
info@speakingvolumes.org.uk .

WINNING STORIES

In our previous issue I reported that I had been involved in the first stage of judging entries in a short story writing competition launched in *idea*, the magazine of the *Evangelical Alliance*.

Entrants were invited to re-tell a Bible story or parable in no more than a thousand words, and the winners were announced in September.

The winning entry was written by Chris Greenhalgh from Glasgow and entitled *Yirmeyahu*. It re-told the story of the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah as Jerusalem faced destruction by the Babylonian armies.

Chris Greenhalgh entered no less than four stories in the competition and his other offerings included *Until the Day Breaks*, a re-telling of the *Song of Solomon*, which was my own favourite for the short list.

The competition also included a category for the under eighteens and the joint winners in this section were Amisadai

Monger and Hannah Mead with their respective stories *Mr. Milawai's Mercy* and *Resurrection of Hope*.

The final selection was made by Ann Clifford, who has a background in the theatre, and Jenny Muscat, from *Lion Hudson*.

You can read *Yirmeyahu* in the November/December 2017 issue of *idea*, which is also available on the Alliance's web site www.eauk.org/idea/nov-dec-2017-issuu.cfm

MAKING ALL THINGS NEW

Movement Day UK, the major international conference held at the *Westminster Central Hall* between 6-7 October 2017, began with a personal appearance by Adam and Eve, or to be more precise, the singers portraying our first ancestors in the forthcoming musical *Heaven on Earth*. This production is due to begin a nationwide arena tour of sixteen venues in December ending with performances at the *SSE Arena, Wembley*, from 9-12 May 2018. You can find more information on the web site www.heavenonearththemusical.co.uk

Movement Day UK attracted more than eight hundred

delegates to the Central Hall to consider “*a growing vision to see more kingdom transformation across cities and towns, socially, culturally, and spiritually*”.

In an opening address the Rev. Roger Sutton, head of the *Gather* network of local unity movements, stressed that God’s plan is to restore the world. This theme was echoed by other speakers, among them poet and theologian Gerard Kelly who suggested that God’s purpose is to transform people to co-operate in the transformation of society. The Book of Revelation promises a new Heaven and Earth. The Holy Spirit has not been given simply to make church worship more entertaining but to establish God’s kingdom on Earth.

Jayakumar Christian, from *World Vision*, reminded his audience of Jeremiah’s advice to the Jewish exiles in Babylon to work and pray for the peace and prosperity of the city in which they found themselves.

Dave Landrum and Abi Jarvis, from the *Evangelical Alliance*, introduced their organisation’s *Public Leadership* programme which aims to equip Christians for leadership positions in the workplace, the professions, politics, voluntary organisations, the media and other settings outside the home and church. The audience were reminded of

the contribution of William Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect in transforming the society of their day. Christians today, however, face a “*challenging and contradictory landscape*” of “*secularism and sexualism*” in which human rights legislation is often used against Christians.

More work is needed to establish a theological basis for engaging with power in society. Christians in public life should follow the example of Jesus but servant leadership is still leadership.

Delegates were asked to consider those in their churches who occupy positions of public leadership and what challenges they may be facing. I found this question very difficult to answer as, in my own church, there are rare opportunities to talk about the day to day activities of members outside the four walls of the church.

Christians who become involved in leadership in the public sphere often fear opposition from both the Church and the outside world, especially if the demands of their roles are likely to limit their involvement in church activities. There is a need for greater encouragement from the Church with opportunities given for leaders to talk about what they do.

Mark Greene, Executive Director of the *London Institute for Contemporary Christianity* (LICC), emphasised the importance of living the way of Jesus in the places where we find ourselves, including the workplace. This was followed by panel discussions on transforming our workplaces with contributions from Christians in roles ranging from senior police officers to a leading figure in the fashion industry.

Much of the final afternoon was given over to specialist “tracks” covering such areas as business, the arts, children, young people and families, local government and politics, unity movements, and the transformational church. The present writer attended the session on the media which began with advice on building relationships between the church and Christian organisations and the national and local media.

Other areas covered included sharing stories through the visual (such as videos), social media, and community radio stations. We were told that teenagers have largely given up listening to FM radio, and a new approach is needed which combines audio with visuals. Tim Waldron, from *Damaris Media*, explained his organisation’s work in promoting films like *Risen*, *Ben-Hur*, *Silence* and *The*

Shack, to the Christian community.

Finally, Ruth Gledhill, editor of the *Christian Today* web site, and Michael Binyon, a leader writer for *The Times*, speculated on the future of the media, especially newspapers. The old-fashioned media survive, and there is still an appetite for print. However, few people under the age of thirty buy a daily newspaper, preferring to obtain their news and information free of charge on-line. Print is likely to be around for some time to come but will probably become more expensive. However, attempts by newspapers to go completely digital have not been successful, as illustrated by the demise of *The Independent*.

The event ended with brief interviews with conference delegates who were asked to reflect on the messages that they would be taking back to their local churches and communities.

Other features of *Movement Day UK* included worship, performances by the *Springs Dance Company*, classical pianist Gracie Yeo and singer/songwriter Andy Flanagan, and an outdoor prayer event in Parliament Square.

NEW JERUSALEM

Plans have been announced for the next **Church Times Festival of Faith and Literature** which promises to provide a “feast of faith, poetry, literature, history, politics, music, comedy, and drama”.

Next year’s theme is *Building a New Jerusalem* and the event takes place at the *Bloxham School*, Oxfordshire, between **16-18 February 2018**. Speakers already confirmed include James Runcie, author of ***The Grandchester Mysteries***, Francis Spufford, author of ***Unapologetic*** and ***Golden Hill***, and Mark Oakley, Chancellor of *St. Paul’s Cathedral*. The programme will also include performances by the *Shakespeare Revue Company* and the *North Cotswold Chamber Choir*.

You can obtain more information by visiting www.bloxhamfaithandliterature.co.uk or by telephoning 0845 017 6965 during office hours.

Have any CLIS readers attended earlier festivals at Bloxham? Please send me your impressions and we will include them in a later issue.

CURRENT AWARENESS

- Sarah Meyrick’s article *A Trollopian Chapter Closes* marks the publication of the final novel in a recent trilogy on the *Church of England* by Catherine Fox.

Like its two predecessors, ***Realms of Glory*** (Marylebone House, £9.99, ISBN 978-1910674215) tells the story of the fictitious cathedral city of Lindchester and was originally serialised on the author’s blog. The novel is written in the style of an “*all-seeing Victorian novelist*”. However, many of the current issues and controversies affecting the church are highlighted, and the final novel is written against the backdrop of events in 2016 such as the Brexit vote and the American Presidential election.

Despite numerical decline Catherine is optimistic about the future prospects for the church. While the *Church of England* might disappear “*it wouldn’t mean the end of the Kingdom of God in this world, in this country. The Spirit would still be breaking in, in unexpected ways, working through the wrong people in the wrong ways*”.

The author is well qualified to write on church matters as she

is married to (our past speaker) the Rt. Rev. Pete Wilcox, recently appointed as Bishop of Sheffield.

There will be no further novels about Lindchester, and Catherine's current writing project is a sequel to her earlier young adult novel ***Wolf Tide***.

*The article appears in the **Church Times** for 15 September 2017, p. 21.*

- Press items covering this year's two hundredth anniversary of the death of Jane Austen included Michael Wheeler's article *Finding Jane* in the **Church Times** for 21 July 2017, pp. 21. The same issue includes Stephen Brown's *Pantomime Parsons to Zombie-Slayers* which considers portrayals of the clergy in screen adaptations of Jane Austen's works, p. 19.

- Articles in the **Bulletin of the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries**, Volume 24, Number 2, Summer 2017, include *Islamic Collections in Europe* (Humeyra Ceylan Izhar), *How a Proofreading Service Can Increase Library Engagement* (Rachel Champion) and a report of the *CILIP Conference, Manchester, 5-6 July 2017* (Helen Stocker).

There is a useful listing of

web sites in the theological field (including our own) and a poem contributed by ABTAPL/CLIS member Richard Johnson.

ABTAPL's Spring Conference and AGM is to be held at *St. Chad's College, Durham*, from **22 - 24 March 2018** and the conference organiser is Gudrun Warren, Librarian and Curator, at *Norwich Cathedral*.

Please let me know if you would like to read any of the articles mentioned in this feature.

EBSCO PUBLISHING

Christians in Library and Information Services 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 **E-Newsletter** and **Christian Librarian** - are available on *EBSCO Publishing's* databases. Subscribers are able to retrieve articles from our publications and CLIS will receive a small commission for each article.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

**News from the Membership Secretary:
Janice Paine, MCLIP, 22 Queensgate Gardens, 396
Upper Richmond Road, Putney, London, SW15 6JN.
Tel. 020 8785 2174**

A warm welcome to two new members. Also listed below are those who have renewed their membership since July. Please inform the Membership Secretary of any *changes of address, job etc.*

NEW MEMBERS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

LATE RENEWALS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

GRAHAM HEDGES reports on a visit to a “monument of fame” on the banks of the River Thames

ONE AFTERNOON IN LAMBETH

On Monday 11 September 2017 a small group of CLIS members visited the library of *Lambeth Palace* for a guided tour hosted by our member Sarah Etheridge who works in the library as an Assistant Librarian.

After an enjoyable lunch in the newly-built restaurant in the adjacent *Garden Museum* we were ready to begin our tour and to meet some of the library's staff who told us about their work.

Situated near the banks of the River Thames, *Lambeth Palace* has been the London home of the Archbishops of Canterbury for nearly eight hundred years. The *Lambeth Palace Library* was founded in 1610 by Archbishop Bancroft, who bequeathed his personal collection of books and manuscripts to form the nucleus of a free public library. This emphasis on free access has been maintained down to the present day and the collection is readily available to members of the public although visitors have to provide two forms of identification before being granted readers' tickets.

The Library has expanded over the years, with early support from King James I (who described the collection as a “*monument of fame*”) and Archbishop Abbot. It now contains some five thousand manuscripts including more than six hundred medieval manuscripts dating from the ninth century. There are over

200,000 printed books in the collection, including some 30,000 titles printed before 1700, and large quantities of archival material.

Lambeth Palace was confiscated during the Civil War and Commonwealth era, and many of the books were sent to Cambridge, but the collection was returned after the Restoration.

Some materials were acquired from monastic libraries, after the dissolution of the monasteries, and much more recently, in the 1990s, the library absorbed the collections of the former *Sion College*. Other acquisitions have included the *Fulham Papers* of the Bishops of London, and the archives of the *Mothers' Union*. Work has recently begun on the indexing of papers from the late Archbishop Robert Runcie.

The collection is now maintained by the *Church Commissioners* of the *Church of England*. *Lambeth Palace Library* is recognised as the main resource for the history of the *Church of England*. While the current emphasis is on acquiring materials on the history of the Anglican church the wide ranging collections have much to offer students of wider branches of history and other academic disciplines.

The Library holds many items of interest, among them a pamphlet on indulgences owned by King Henry VIII and addressed to Catherine of Aragon, Queen Elizabeth I's prayer book, and Archbishop Fisher's service book from the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. There is a manuscript draft of the Epistles from the *King James Bible* and the only surviving copy of the death warrant for Mary Queen of Scots.

There was something of a scandal in the 1970s when large numbers of books were found to be missing from the library, but many of these were recovered when the thief died in 2011.

Our afternoon tour took in the Marton Tower which provides room for storage, an archivist's office, and a conservation studio. We also visited the Great Hall which, at the time, was housing an exhibition to mark the five hundredth anniversary of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation.

Despite the impressive surroundings, the library accommodation is no longer considered to be adequate for current needs, and plans are underway for a new library building to be built in the grounds of *Lambeth Palace*. This will incorporate the main library along with a separate collection of *Church of England* records, currently housed in Bermondsey. This is expected to be completed in 2020.

Having completed our tour of the library Sarah took us on a brief tour of the wider palace though our exploration of the grounds had to be cut short by the onslaught of rain. We were, at least, able to see the site where the new building is to be erected.

Our thanks are due to Sarah and her colleagues for an enjoyable and informative afternoon. *Lambeth Palace* is located in Lambeth Palace Road, London, SE1 7JU, and you can find more information about the Library at www.lambethpalacelibrary.org

Graham Hedges, *MCLIP*, *Hon. FCLIP*, is Secretary of *Christians in Library and Information Services*.

Are films and faith compatible? DIANA GUTHRIE reports on the CLIS annual lecture held in St. Albans on Saturday 14 October 2017

GOD AND THE MOVIES



CLIS President Eddie Olliffe welcomed members and friends to *Dagnall Street Baptist Church* in St Albans for the CLIS Annual Lecture, which was given by Rev. Simon Carver, Senior Minister at the Church and a regular contributor to *Premier Christian Radio*, specialising in film reviews.

Simon is fascinated by films in general, not just those with a Christian theme, and his talk was illustrated with lots of clips from some of the most popular films of the last twenty or so years, plus a few from the earlier years of the film industry.

Are films and faith compatible? Is the film industry sympathetic to the Christian faith? Simon would argue that as Christian values can sell films, then Hollywood is happy to use them. He instanced Mel Gibson's ***The Passion of the Christ***, which sits in the top hundred most successful films of all time.

Pureflix (modelled on *Netflix*) produces films for the Christian market, partly to act as a bulwark against the values of the secular world. But Hollywood is not at war with Christianity; there are few openly atheist films – they don't sell well, as film-makers in the US don't want to alienate a large section of the film-watching public.

The Greatest Story Ever Told is probably the best of the early Biblical films, telling the story of Jesus. More recent re-tellings of Biblical episodes are less obviously '*preachy*' and delve much more deeply into the psychology of the characters. Simon believes that a film-maker doesn't have to be a Christian to give a Christian slant to a film; similarly, a film doesn't have to have a Christian theme to say something relevant to Christianity.

Turning to more secular material, Simon showed a series of clips from the ***Terminator*** films, each of which included the phrase '*come with me if you wanna live*'. There are lots of subtle references to the Saviour, and although the Terminator is a '*cyborg*', he has some Christ-like attributes, such as his willingness to be destroyed for the sake of humanity.

Many of the twentieth century super-heroes were created by Jewish artists and writers, and Superman was intended to be a Jewish-type hero, in the mould of King David or Judas Maccabaeus. The ***Superman*** comics were what first attracted Simon to the super-hero genre – the hero acted like Jesus in many ways. In fact, the makers of the ***Superman*** films seemed to connect not with Jesus but with Moses – the outsider who became a saviour. However, ***Superman Returns*** includes several references to the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, and there are visual allusions to Salvador Dali's *St John of the Cross* and to the *Pietà*. ***The Fast and the Furious*** franchise is one of the most popular film series of all time; *F&F6* ends with a prayer!

Many films use time travel as an essential ingredient to their plot. Time travel can help us think more deeply about our destiny and our place in God's plan, and science fiction can act as a lens to focus on what it means to be human; it makes us think about '*how we are how we are*'.

Film can also challenge our beliefs; a film such as ***Guardians of the Galaxy*** makes us wonder about the homogeneity of our own community. In films people usually get what they want, but in real life we sometimes have to choose doing the right thing rather than what we want; a clip from ***Love Actually*** exemplified this.

Simon ended his talk with some practical recommendations: if we want to use film clips ourselves, the best to use are the ones that have had an effect on us. The *Bible Society* has produced study material called *Reel Images* (still available on-line), and *Damaris Media* does something similar for contemporary films.

In reply to a comment about Christian values in ***Dr. Who***, Simon replied that ***Dr. Who*** plays with the idea of '*hardware*' (the body) and '*software*' (its mental and spiritual dimensions).

Where does the film ***Resurrection*** fit within genres? Simon felt that it had rather a clunky plot and became '*preachy*' in its second half.

Does Simon enjoy graphic novels? Simon replied that he'd never read one! But they've become a rich source of material for films that he has enjoyed.

Some of the ***Narnia*** films have departed from C. S. Lewis' novels; although the books are enormously popular, the films

have become progressively less so, though they remain some of the most popular Christian films; the filming of the remaining books in the series looks uncertain.

Wm Paul Young's novel ***The Shack*** was made into a film that was very popular in America, but didn't do well in the UK. The book has a more '*positive*' ending than the film, where the hero is unable to find his daughter's killer – why was this not resolved in the film? Simon: that situation reflects much of real life – '*bad things happen to good people*'.

Films sometimes change aspects of well-loved books: James Hilton's novel ***Random Harvest*** tells the story from the hero's point of view, whilst the film tells it from the heroine's.

What are the difficulties in using film clips in talks? There must be so many dangers of using the wrong clip, or the audience catching hold of the wrong points. Simon: Know the film! And be very careful which bits you use!

In addition to the film clip compilations mentioned in Simon's talk, a Christian website called *WingClips* provides film clips arranged by theme, which makes it very useful for group-work.

Diana Guthrie, MA, serves as treasurer on the executive committee of *Christians in Library and Information Services*

NORMA WALLER reports on return visits to the city of “dreaming spires” including a CLIS working party arranged to organise the archives of the Universities’ and Colleges’ Christian Fellowship

MORE DAYS IN OXFORD

Following on from our “*Four days in Oxford without flagging*” – at least not until we got home! – Richard and I have had five days in Oxford with a break and another five days with company.

We went back in August for a week, but this time we’d learnt our lesson and worked Wednesday to Friday with a weekend break and then worked again Monday and Tuesday. This time we were concentrating on cataloguing using *CollectorZ* and were helped by Tom, an Oxford graduate and the previous year’s Oxford Relay worker, whom Richard was able to train to do the subject cataloguing we are using at UCCF. This meant that I was the general assistant, a role that suited me very well. Happily for UCCF, at that stage Tom did not have a job, so he continued to go in every week and carry on the good work, though a great deal of his time was taken up with correcting an error. On the Saturday my nephew came to meet us and we had a rather wet walk in Christ Church Fields as well as a splendid lunch at the *St. Aldate’s Tavern*. When Stephen suggested it, we exclaimed, “*That’s opposite where we are working.*” On the Sunday we were refreshed by fellowship at a little church in Buckingham, which we discovered last year. Travelling home on Wednesday we felt tired, but by no means as exhausted as the

first time.

October saw a different project getting underway: sorting out a hundred years of archive material. This time we had company: Sylvia and Bob Allaway, Philip Hayworth and Janice Paine. What fun to be on working party again! We were also helped by a former UCCF Director's secretary, Julia Cameron, who is a walking authority on the history of IVF/UCCF. We found some real treasures, including a complete record of a CICCUM mission in 1911, records of the 1939 conference that would have set up the *International Fellowship of Evangelical Students* but for the war – and letters about L.C.F., of which some of you may know something!

As always, the folk at Blue Boar House welcomed us warmly and looked after us very well. For this last week they provided a buffet lunch and two different members of staff took us out for a meal each evening. We sampled five Oxford eating places, finishing up at the *Eagle and Child* on Friday. (Apply to Graham Hedges if you don't recognise the significance of this.)

We are hoping to go back next year and would love to have more helpers - there is still a great deal to do both in the library and on the archives. Ideally, a retired or perhaps student member of CLIS who could give regular help would be such a blessing.

Norma Waller, BA, DipLib, is a founder member of LCF/CLIS, a past committee member, and worked until her retirement as a School Librarian and Supply Teacher.

KAREN HANS looks at the current state and future prospects of school libraries with a sideways glance at the present and future of the public library service

FACTS MATTER

An Address to the seminar "The Future of the Library and Information Professions" held as part of the Annual Conference of Christians in Library and Information Services on Saturday 8 April 2017 in the Bertha Wright Room, Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham, B4 7SX.

I have been asked to speak about school libraries, the sector I am currently working in, but also to mention public libraries.

I started work in public libraries over thirty years ago and have also worked in the libraries of an engineering company, a property consultancy, a hospital and a University before spending the past seventeen years in school libraries, first a girls' church school and now a boys' local authority school with a library recognised as being outstanding due to my predecessor: both are comprehensives in South London. Along the way and in no particular order I've been made redundant a couple of times, worked in a London hotel, volunteered with Christian Missions in East and West Africa, married and been blessed with two children, been awarded two degrees and a CILIP Fellowship, served as a union rep, on the CILIP *School Libraries Group* committee and the LCF and CLIS committees.

As well as my short time many years ago working in public libraries I have been closely involved with public librarians in more recent years, especially children's librarians. For twelve years I lived in a very deprived ward in South East London, exactly the type of area that needed a local library to serve all in the community: from babies to the unemployed to the elderly and housebound. Sadly the purpose built library on the local authority housing estate was closed in the 1980s and the nearest hub library was moved further away. As a friendly but insular community with a strong local identity it was evident to me in the 2000s that services not available in the area would be unlikely to be sought out further a field by

many families, some of whom had lived for generations on the estate. I began to lobby for a branch library to be re-instated, however even in that relatively benevolent era of Labour government largesse I was unsuccessful in all but the most marginal gains : a local book award that ran for a year, books for toddlers and mums in the local park, a mini-library in the community centre that never really got off the ground (the Head of Library Services hoped I would voluntarily supervise a team of yet to be recruited volunteers whilst also juggling a part time school library job, two young children and considerable church responsibilities.)

Since then the situation has changed in that more public libraries have closed and others have been kept open by volunteers. As a school librarian I work in partnership with local public librarians and I have stood with them against cuts, redundancies and re-organisations in two different library authorities. Recent government figures show there are fewer than four thousand public libraries left in England, Scotland and Wales, the figure has been decreasing annually and the visitor figures have declined as a consequence. However nearly sixty per cent of the population holds a current library card; in the financial year 2014 to 2015, libraries in England received 224.6 million physical visits, more than visits to Premier League football games, the cinema, and the top ten UK tourist attractions combined. Libraries also received ninety-six million web-site visits in 2014 to 2015 - more than three every second. Local government in England spent under one per cent of their net expenditure on libraries - a small amount given the impact libraries have on their communities and the outcomes they help deliver. There are successful partnerships happening in volunteer and local authority run libraries, such as digital learning for older members of society. CILIP are working with government on the *Libraries Taskforce* which in December 2016 produced the report: ***Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021*** which says:

"Libraries can have a critical role in helping people to realise their potential, and especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. DCMS and the Taskforce are setting up a £4 million Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone innovation fund to pilot library service projects that provide people with opportunities that they might not have otherwise. We will see from these pilots which approaches are most successful, then encourage wider adoption and investment in them.

Strong local leadership of libraries, focused on meeting community needs, is vital. We will support this through nationally co-ordinated initiatives where these add value, for example by exploring whether a shared

national digital platform would improve library users' online experience."

Just over a year ago, the *Local Government Association* Chair warned that

"Even if councils stopped filling in potholes, maintaining parks, closed all children's centres, libraries, museums, leisure centres and turned off every street light they will not have saved enough money to plug the financial black hole they face by 2020."

In a House of Lords debate at the end of March 2017 there were calls for proper funding for core local library services perhaps from central government as local councils are so short on funds. Many peers recognised that in order for library services to be maintained and developed, service providers need reliable and adequate funds. Despite the peers specifically pointing out that project funding is not in any way the same thing, the government response was that projects are being well funded via arts council and lottery funding.

I am concerned that austerity measures will continue to erode our national public library offer. Public libraries are much more heavily used by ethnic minorities, the disabled etc. than other arts and cultural services and an eroded public library service disproportionately affects the poor and marginalised in society which as Christians God calls us to help. This is a challenge to me as I do not think volunteer led library services are the right way for society to go, but what if the alternative is no library service at all and an even greater fall in literacy and information literacy?

The use made of both public and school libraries is healthy, but funding is poor and staffing is increasingly by non-professionals. On-line services are popular and available in public libraries but generally unaffordable and marginal in school libraries. Public library services remain statutory, although this is often loosely interpreted by the powers that be. School libraries remain non-statutory and non-regulated. The statistics collected on public libraries and the reports written by government departments with input from CILIP are not yet mirrored in the schools sector although it is heartening that Nick Poole, CILIP CEO, is now engaging with the *Department for Education* and with teaching unions and that is the strongest ray of hope in a very unpromising situation. Currently we have no idea of how many schools have a library, how many of those libraries are staffed, how many of those staff are qualified, what their pay and status in the school is or what budget they are given (in too many cases this is a couple of hundred pounds a year if that and many

school library staff, like teachers, buy books and other resources from their own pockets.)

Nick Poole spoke to the CILIP *School Libraries Group* recently and this is a shortened version of his published speech:

"Chris Riddell [the Children's Laureate] and I are going to meet with Schools Minister Nick Gibb. We're going to talk to him about two things. The first is how we can work together with Government to build a nation of readers.

The second thing we're going to talk to Nick Gibb about is the school library of the future, "This is what a school librarian can do for you. Imagine if we had this in every corner of the country". We want the Government to be excited about what school libraries are today - to realise how far we've come since the libraries of their childhood.

I want to work with you to lead a fightback for school libraries and qualified librarians and information professionals in schools.

I think it is nothing less than a moral outrage that, in an age when our children are crying out for literacy and skills, when we need to equip them to build a better future for themselves, as a Nation we have under-invested in librarians and library services, particularly in the state-funded sector.

If we allow ourselves to neglect school library services, we risk generations of people who don't go on to use their public library, their college library, or the information services of their employer. In an age of propaganda, misinformation and a fundamental challenge to the idea of truth, we need to be able to say, proudly and strongly, that facts really do matter. Information literacy matters. Media literacy matters. And all of these principles stem from your work.

It doesn't matter how effectively you make the case for the impact of your work, if the head and governors you are making it to have no money they aren't making decisions based on value and impact.

*The economic case for school libraries and librarianship is incredibly strong. But in making our economic case, we need facts. This is why in a couple of weeks time we'll be looking at how we can improve the data about school library provision in the UK. This was one of the key recommendations from the **Beating Heart of the School** report, produced by the Libraries All Party Parliamentary Group.*

To my mind, parents should be outraged about the risks that low levels of literacy present to the life chances of their kids. In exactly the same way that the health and wellbeing lobby campaigned over obesity and school dinners, I think we need to be working with partners like the National Literacy Trust to highlight the mental and intellectual wellbeing

that stems from literacy."

As part of my recent World Book Day events I invited the school counsellor to jointly plan and present an assembly with me around the theme of reading and mental health. We highlighted two books, ***A Monster Calls*** which you may be aware of due to a recent film, about a boy whose mother is dying, also ***Hello Mum***, written from the perspective of a teenager who has died in a gang-related stabbing. The latter title has been heavily requested in the library since then, particularly by struggling readers. Deciding which books to promote to pupils is an interesting issue at times, when as a Christian my personal views differ from the *Carnegie Award* judges for example. This year I am very blessed to have a group of Christian gap year volunteers working with two small groups of more-able pupils to shadow the *Carnegie Awards*. Generally the pupils would be encouraged to read all the short listed titles and decide with discussion which book they think should win. Most years, however, at least one title is not appropriate for younger secondary school pupils. There is always some discussion about this amongst school librarians and many feel that children are exposed to such graphic material in other media and real life that it is unnecessary to cosset them. I navigate this by putting sensitive material in the adult fiction section of the library and not encouraging the pupils to read it, although allowing them to with parental agreement. It also gives an opportunity to discuss with pupils censorship, swearing, violence or sexual content in books.

When I worked in a church school I was mandated to provide Christian books and I also stocked Christian DVDs and magazines. Manga books are very popular in my current school so I have recently introduced the ***Manga Messiah*** series of books, I also carried over the idea of pupils interacting with an advent calendar from my previous post, as opening a window each day had been very popular with the girls' from non-Christian families. We stock a wide range of material in the library, as any public library would and the library should be a place where all pupils feel welcome and are safe from bullying. A very current and no doubt continuing issue in society and particularly in schools is that of children presenting with gender dysphoria (the condition of feeling one's emotional and psychological identity as male or female to be opposite to one's biological sex). Our local book award this year included ***George*** a book specifically written to normalise gender dysphoria. This award is a regular promotion to our twelve and thirteen year old pupils and in introducing this year's books I mentioned how I felt the writing style and the story in ***George*** were not as strong as the message that the author was intending to convey and had some discussion on these points with a

few of the boys who went on to read the book.

School libraries do so much for children in the realms of reading for pleasure (building empathy, imagination and confidence as well as literacy), in pastoral care (in the fiction and non-fiction books made available, the safe space provided by the library and the relationships built there with library staff and with pupils from other year groups) and in critical and information literacy (when school librarians are qualified with these skills and schools recognise their expertise and allow them time and status to be involved in lessons). A few years ago reading for pleasure was increasingly marginalised and many qualified librarians devoted time to information literacy in their schools as coursework and controlled assessments formed an increasing part of the curriculum and testing regime. CILIP have recently produced a badge saying "*Facts matter*" which I proudly wear on my school lanyard. As a Christian parent as well as a librarian I believe that critical literacy is vital and, contrary to popular stereotypes of Christians, we have nothing at all to fear from encouraging all children, teens and citizens to thoroughly examine facts (a very biblical idea) and not to fall for the first or loudest voice that they hear. Free speech and intellectual debate are apparently under assault in some of our universities and it is a pity we don't have an academic librarian speaking this afternoon to give a view on this.

Now that the tide has turned from coursework back to exams and Ofsted are more focused on reading for pleasure, many school library colleagues have also re-focused their time away from information literacy, due to the constant need to prove our worth to our schools. New government edicts mean that the wheel is constantly being re-invented in different sizes - currently many schools are dropping RE as a compulsory subject, which most pupils typically do very well in, due to the new RE curriculum being too broad to teach in the time available; at the same time the government are looking to bring in compulsory sex and relationships education and are taking away the parental right to withdraw children from these lessons. Teachers and senior leaders often have so little time for planning anything that is not going to be tested or inspected that the value librarians could add by being more involved in the curriculum or whole-school projects rarely happens, especially in schools where librarians are not qualified or are not recognised as professionals.

Sadly funding for schools is an issue you may be well aware of from the media. The government are trying to introduce a different funding formula for schools which will generally take money away from inner London schools and distribute it to others. This may not be unfair in

principle but the total pot available for London schools and others is not enough to fund an adequate level of teachers, support staff or resources. The government are trying to divide and rule the winners and losers in the new formula, but school heads and local MPs are speaking out in unison. All will be losers when increases in national insurance, pensions and other costs come into play soon for schools who have been cutting hard already for the past few years, efficiency savings have already been made. This article in the TES explains it very well: <https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-views/ive-tried-insulate-staff-pain-education-funding-cuts-come-september>

We are a missionary people called to spread God's kingdom and righteousness on earth: I think this can include political engagement around social justice concerns and I have been heavily involved in campaigning on local and national school issues for the past few years, this is complicated and restricted at times as I live and work in the same area. Public librarians have the same problem of not being allowed to speak out and campaign for their services and jobs to be saved. A recent anonymous article in the **Big Issue** told how they are expected to smile and serve their customers to the moment the library closes or is handed over to volunteers, without being able to say a word to warn or sympathise with those customers.

Moving from the Political to the personal my main hope is not in CILIP but in the living God who has been a help and comfort through difficult times this past year. As a Christian in the workplace, as in the rest of life, the journey has been tempestuous and is likely to continue so, however the message of our hymns and reading* this morning pointed through the storms to the ultimate place of rest - our home in heaven - of which we enjoy a foretaste when we rest in God's peace and assurance. The *Association of Christian Teachers* produces a helpful prayer diary if you would like to pray into the issues facing school staff, they have also supported *Pray for Schools Fortnight*, 7-21 May 2017. I for one would certainly covert your prayers.

**The Lord's my Shepherd, Amazing Grace*, Hebrews chapter 4

Karen Hans, BSc, MA, FCLIP, is School Librarian of the *Forest Hill School* and Prayer Secretary for *Christians in Library and Information Services*.

MAGGIE BARFIELD provides an over-view of the digital revolution of our times and introduces an innovative, interactive game from Scripture Union

JOURNEY TO ANCORA

An Address to the Annual Conference of Christians in Library and Information Services on Saturday 8 April 2017 in the Bertha Wright Room, Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham, B4 7SX.

The Digital Context

When I was ten I went to church three times on Sunday. We had an afternoon Sunday School – with a bus that drove round the streets and gathered children up, for the afternoon, delivering them back again later. My world was a few streets and, maybe three times a year, a coach trip to the seaside.

If I was ten today, what would it be like? In the UK, and increasingly in North America, I would be unlikely to go to church or Sunday School. I would think of myself as a citizen of the world. When I wrote my name, my address, the continent, the earth, the solar system, the universe – those places would be real and possible – one day I could go there...

So, where have all the children gone? Because they're not in our

churches. Why? Because of Sunday sports teams, shopping, changes in lifestyle. Because the church is in a state of flux?

So what has changed? Many would say the biggest, the most dramatic change in our lives has been the creation of the World Wide Web, now all of twenty-six years old.

Today, about 2.5 billion people will use the web. It's how I got here: event tickets, flights, hotel, e-mailing the team about doing this session. We use the web to go on holiday, make friends, shop, bank, gamble, express ourselves, e-mail, run businesses, find jobs, find a partner and search for information.

Just as a quick survey, how many devices have we got in the room, right now? Cell phones; tablet computers, mp3 players, laptops? Has anyone no devices of any kind? One device? Two devices? More than two? Technology is not only about the devices we use but also about how we *operate* in the digital realm.

Learning designer and futurist Marc Prensky clarified the distinction between '*digital natives*' (those born in the last twenty years or so) and '*digital immigrants*' (kind-of, most of us!)

Prensky says that '*digital natives*' ... *think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors* (Marc Prensky, ***Digital Natives Digital Immigrants***; 2001) They are ... "*native speakers*" of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet

Prensky's analysis has been challenged and many now prefer to define users of virtual media as: *digital inhabitants* - those who 'at home' in the digital world, and *digital visitors* - those who use digital media to '*do*' something but not as a reflex

Digital *inhabitants* – most of today's children - do just that – they *inhabit* digital spaces and places, just as they inhabit physical,

geographically solid spaces. They like

- receiving information really fast
- multi-tasking
- graphics more than text
- hypertext
- being networked
- instant gratification and frequent rewards
- and they prefer games to “*serious*” work These digital children *consume* media

US statistics (*Kaiser Family Foundation study, January 2010*) from 2010 for children aged 8-18 show

- They are using media for 7.38 hours per day, seven days a week
- They are using more than one medium or device at a time
- They consume 10.75 hours of media content in those 7.38 hours.
- *Every day.*

Those statistics were about 8-18 year olds but children are consuming media from birth. Parents download apps to keep children occupied while they do the weekly shop.

As children grow older, they are using different types of media and different devices – and their usage increases.

Digital media is as popular with girls as it is with boys. Both genders are using media – in different ways and for different purposes. But both boys *and* girls are digital inhabitants.

There is a difference in home Internet access and ownership across social groups, between lower- and higher-income families. But there is *less* of a gap for mobile devices. And the gap is closing. Rapidly.

20% of lower income children own a tablet computer – that’s an increase from 2% the year before; 63% higher income children have a tablet. It’s the fastest growth area for children’s media devices. (<https://www.common sense media.org/research/zero-to-eight-childrens-media-use-in-america-2013>)

What are they doing? *Common Sense Media* have researched US children aged 0-8. Their 2013 report shows that children are using mobile devices to play games, use apps, watch video, TV and movies, read books. (*US Zero-to-eight report, Common Sense Media, 2013*)

What devices? They are using smartphones, tablets, iPods. In two years, the number of children using mobile devices has doubled.

In those two years, the amount of time those children spend, has *tripled*. Just on mobile devices, the daily average in 2013 was one hour seven minutes.

Meanwhile, they’re not in church. Not cause-and-effect. It’s not that they are not coming to church *because* they’re too busy with their digital lives.

Two parallel situations.

- On the one hand, children are not in church or are drifting away.
- On the other hand, children are inhabiting digital places and are moving more-and-more into those spaces.

If we’re going to meet children where they are, *they are in the digital realm*. If we are going to join them in what they’re doing, they’re gaming, researching, sharing, watching videos, reading books...

Please understand this! I’m *not* saying digital is a substitute for spending time with children. I’m *not* saying it is *better* than ways we’re already doing. I’m *not* saying it’s some sort of magic answer to everything.

But I *am* suggesting that the fact that so many children are spending so much time on-line could be *an amazing opportunity* – one that only exists because digital media mean we all live in a connected world.

Guardians of Ancora

Scripture Union is an international movement of mission-minded people who introduce children to Jesus and help them grow in faith. And we've been doing that for a while – in fact, 2017 is our one hundred and fiftieth birthday! And we are still on that mission.

We're constantly asking, '*How do we get the good news to children who don't know anything about God, the Bible, church?*' So what should we do? We did research among UK parents, leaders and children. The answer was clear: 'Meet children where they are – mostly on-line. Meet them in what they're doing there – mostly gaming.'

Welcome to the world of Ancora! ***Guardians of Ancora*** is a game: an app. It's free to download and play. In the eighteen months since launch, we've seen more than 140,000 people playing, all around the world. We believe it is the world's most interactive on-line Bible experience for children.

It's high-quality, engaging gameplay that children will want to come back to again and again. We're working with a world-class games design company which specialises in games for children. That means we can be confident that it is a high quality and **safe** game: it complies with the best in rules and good practice.

It's a fully interactive experience – you will find that out, if you are brave enough, to try it out! And it can lead to genuine faith formation. The development is backed by extensive research and *Scripture Union's* experience of bringing the gospel alive to children. It's free to use – for

children, their friends and schoolmates, and for hundreds of thousands worldwide. And with a support web-site for adults, to help you get the most out of the game – in your work, home and church.

The Lore

The city of Ancora used to glow with the light of a thousand stories. Now these tales are gone and the Spire grows dim. But some still search for stories to re-light the Spire once more. They are called the *Guardians of Ancora!*

@ The O2

Guardians of Ancora was launched in July 2015 at *Boundless*, the Salvation Army one hundred and fiftieth anniversary celebration at the O2 Arena.

Guardians of Ancora is the only computer game that can claim it has '*played the O2 for a week!*' ***Guardians of Ancora*** is a totally innovative interactive app-experience; completely free to play ~ a game with Bible engagement and faith formation at its very heart.

Frank Rose Quote

From very early on, I've been inspired by this quote It's not a Christian thing – it's from Frank Rose, editor of ***Wired*** magazine. But what he says really resonates:

“... people with a story to tell are finding: that to tell it, they need not only to entertain their audience but to involve them, invite them in, let them immerse themselves.” Frank Rose, The Art of Immersion

I read that and I think: *Who are we, if we are not ‘people with a story to tell’?*

We’ve got the very *best* excuse to keep telling the greatest stories ever told. But the quote isn’t just about *telling* stories: Rose urges us to **‘involve’** the audience; **‘invite** them in, let them immerse themselves.’

And that’s what makes this such an important statement. Because, for hours, every day, children are in the digital realm. The digital environment is *perfect* for these three aspects: involving, inviting, immersing.

As people with a story to tell, we can be going where the children spend so much of their time - and joining them there, without them having to leave their chosen habitat.

Digital Inhabitants

Today’s children are digital inhabitants. They’re spending, on average, 2-3 hours every day in those digital spaces. So that’s where ***Guardians of Ancora*** goes.

In Ancora, you take on the role of a guardian. Your job is to help find the lost stories and bring them back to the city, bringing with them the light to brighten the world. (Of course, the lost stories are stories from the Bible.)

You find the stories by entering into a biblical environment, exploring, collecting, finding and watching what’s going on – becoming

part of the story. We've started with the heart of the big story, with the life of Jesus.

At the end of a Bible story or 'quest', you return to Ancora and then you can do all sorts of other things.

- You can read the story from the Bible.
- You can test your knowledge with a quiz.
- You can watch a video, do a personality quiz, or play the Bible quest again.
- You can reflect on the story and respond to it, in a feature we call the Creative hub – where you can draw, write, take photos, create prayers, share your creations with others – all in a safe manner.

Struggle

95% of UK children are not likely to be in church on Sunday. A dark-haired girl who took part in one of our regular research sessions with children, said this:

"I struggle with reading the Bible because it's so many words, and it's all really small writing."

What this quote doesn't capture, is the conversation that she had with our researcher, as she was leaving. This girl said she would love to play a game about the Bible because she's really interested in God and the Bible but *she doesn't know anyone she could ask about it* – there's *no one in her life* who could tell her.

Launch

Guardians of Ancora was launched at the beginning of July 2015, so it has now reached its second birthday.

Statistics from last week show:

- The game has been downloaded more than 140,000 times from the various app stores.
- It has been played more than 750,000 times.
- It is being played in one hundred and thirty two countries.

Formal research

Panel research with children from all backgrounds, who had not played the game before produced the following statements after two weeks' of play:

- "I believe Jesus did amazing things no one else could do" – increased by 4%
- "It's important to take time to understand what the Bible means to you" – increased by 7%
- "I want to be a friend of Jesus" – increased by 4%
- "I think about God and Jesus quite a lot" – increased by 4%
- "Although the Bible was written a long time ago, it says things about how to live right now" – increased by 13%
- "There are times when I have felt I was close to God" – no change
- "I would consider praying to God more in future" – decreased by 3%

How do adults react?

There are about two thousand 2,000 followers on *Facebook* (if you use *Facebook* and you haven't '*liked*' the page – please do so!). Social media is a great way to spread news about the game: the more people like and share, the greater the reach.

There are no age boundaries – we know there are people in their seventies playing – and pre-school children, too.

Adults do tend to struggle, sometimes, though – ***Guardians of Ancora*** is designed for children - and adults don't necessarily think in the same way or have a child's easy-going attitude. I've noticed how wary adults are of making mistakes and how they want to know exactly what is going to happen, before they play. Children simply don't do that – they just play – tap everything – try anything – see what happens. They have no fear. When you're playing ***Guardians of Ancora***, it really pays to *become like a child!*

Clubs in Schools

A few weeks after the app launched, we heard about it being used in schools clubs in Blackpool. Katy Finney from *Blackpool Schools and Youth Work* has pioneered these and they are now running all around the country. We're now providing a full set of club resources, free to download from the web-site www.guardiansofancora.com

Katy's experience is that she is reaching children through ***Guardians of Ancora*** clubs who would not normally attend her clubs or events. She has already run ten clubs (ten children per club, so one hundred children) and others are launching lunch-time and after school clubs all around the country.

These clubs are opportunities to reach '*new*' children, rather than the same children in a slightly different way. Katy has had the astonishing

experience of having waiting lists of children who want to join the clubs; and waiting lists of schools who want her team to go and run clubs!

What next, in ministry goals?

We are looking for much greater ministry reach: 140,000 sounds high but our ambitions are much greater. We are seeking new players, *especially* those who are not in contact with a church or faith community

We are also exploring introducing the game in other languages: ***Arwyr Ancora*** was launched in May at the *Urdd Eisteddfod*. ***Rojet nga Ankora*** is the version in Albanian for Kosova, and there is also a version in Serbian.

We are actively discussing versions in Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telegu: those languages would give us access to two hundred and fifty three million children in India. The other active possibilities are Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish and Portuguese. We can't say yet if these will come to pass – but this is a very exciting time to be working on the project!

Funding

For *Scripture Union*, there is no question that it is *one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken...* Free to play does not mean free to make: the number of noughts on every invoice is daunting!

We are so grateful to generous donors, particularly to the *Douglas Trust* which has supported us throughout; but also to thousands of supporters including two brothers who sent us £17.63 because they wanted other children to be able to play! We're always fundraising and the costs are steep – but the possible ministry reach is phenomenal.

How you can be part of it?

- Pray and please keep praying
- 'Like' on Facebook
- Sign up on www.guardiansofancora.com for news and information
- Tell people about it We can let you have leaflets etc,
- Get children playing
- You can play too: adults are allowed

Jesus says, 'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house' (Matthew 5:14,15, NIV).

In Philippians we're told to be 'pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life' (Philippians 2:15,16, NIV).

Imagine a child you know becoming that light in their community – in their home and school and church – and in their digital communities. Then imagine other children and children all over the world ...

Our dream and vision is that **Guardians of Ancora** will be a way to turn that imagination into reality. We'd love each of you to be part of the adventure and join us on the **Journey to Ancora!**

Maggie Barfield is the Product Developer for **Guardians of Ancora** and has worked for twenty years at *Scripture Union*, applying theological training and practical experience to all areas of publishing.