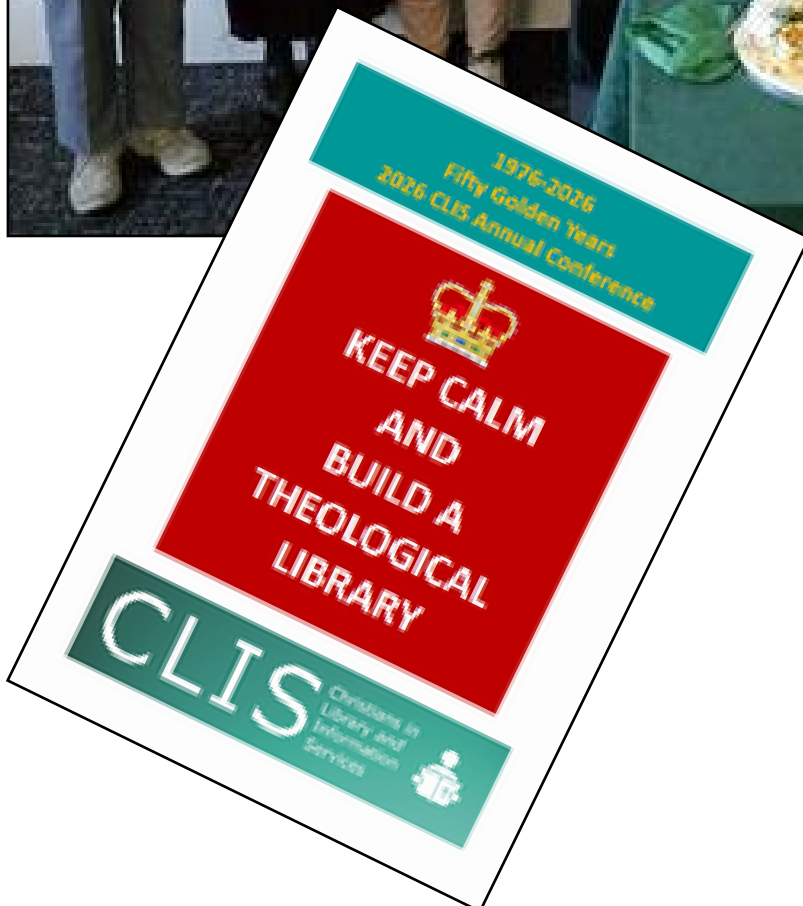


CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN

NO 92 SPECIAL GOLDEN JUBILEE HISTORY EDITION 2026

ISSN 0309 4170



1976-2026

**50 Golden Years
Witnessing &
Serving
in Libraries**



Christian Librarian no. 92 - Golden Jubilee History Edition, Summer 2026

ISSN 0309 4170

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This issue edited by Richard Waller

All pictures are taken from the CLIS archives held at the Evangelical Library

The content of this issue of CL have been compiled from two large PowerPoint presentations, the first compiled with the help of the late Graham Hedges to celebrate the change of name from LCF to CLIS in 2013 and shown at the 2013 Annual Conference. The second was compiled to be shown at the Golden Jubilee Conference in 2026 to celebrate our fifty years of service and witness.

It is in no sense a comprehensive history, more edited highlights, but is intended to bring to our minds all that, with God's help, we have achieved over our 50 years.

Cover picture:

Founder members who were at the first conference in 1976 who were also at the Golden Jubilee conference in April 2026

From left to right:

Janet White; Norma Waller, Shirley Shire; Richard Waller, Gordon Harris; Janice Paine; Freda Carey; John Wickenden

The 50th Birthday Cake!





A Message from Elizabeth Barber, Founder of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship Life Vice-President of CLIS

Looking back over my working life I can now see how much my experience in music retail has been enhanced by the years in librarianship that preceded it.

As a relatively new Christian, and librarian likewise, I was smitten with an idea which didn't seem to come from within me. I had been reading about fellowships composed of Christians in particular professions. Why not one for librarians? A hopeful letter sent to a professional magazine prompted a reply from a certain Richard Waller - who had been thinking along the same lines, though in a more informed way, for some time.

In 1976 came our inaugural meeting, held at London Bible College. I remember anxiously contributing verses from 2 Corinthians, chapter 4: treasure in jars of clay. I think there were sixteen "clay jars" present.

In 2026, libraries, librarianship, literature, tend not to wear the aspect they wore fifty years ago. But God's Word never changes and is still so sorely needed.

I've been thinking over the possibility of an organisation coming into being which would bind together Bible-believing Christians working in: public libraries; theological and Bible college libraries; bookshops with a Christian ethos; and bookshops without a Christian ethos.

The Lord knows - and perhaps we may find, as people of his Book, that we're being called to a variegated harvest-field.



A Message from Richard Waller President of CLIS First Secretary of LCF

When I look back on all that that our Fellowship has achieved, little did Elizabeth and I know as we set out so confidently that 50 years later we would be celebrating this Golden Jubilee! In that time CLIS has achieved a great deal, been a witness within the profession and a great help to many Christian organisations over the years.

This was not our doing, the glory must belong to God, who inspired us and led us in all sorts of unexpected directions from our first hazy thoughts of witness and outreach in our profession.

Those directions you will see in this pictorial reminiscence of 50 years of work and witness.

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve first LCF and then CLIS for these 50 years and I pray for the success of the new look Fellowship in the years to come.

The Beginnings : 1973-1976

The LCF started in 1976, right?

Well, not really, it started 3 years before that....

In the spring of 1973 this lady,
Elizabeth Barber, had an idea....



She was then deputy librarian at
Summertown Library in Oxford ,
and thought

**“If nurses can have a Christian
Fellowship, why not librarians?”**

Few pictures of Liz (as she was then
known) survive from that period and
none of them are very good!

But her idea was a very good one!



Here are copies of the letters from the LCF scrapbook,
carefully preserved by Graham (who else?)

It wasn't until March 1975 that the
library profession noticed us with
an article in the Assistant Librarian

So she
wrote to the
Christian
Graduate
magazine
which
published a
brief letter
in June 1973
and
followed it
up with
another one
in March
1974

But people started to respond and the very first person to join formally was John Andrews, in this letter dated March 1974. John was later president



**John Andrews, our first member,
and his letter to Liz**



The First Conference

The inaugural conference took place in January 1976 in London at the then London Bible College (now LST)

No pictures have survived, which is a pity. The conference was famous for the very long AGM at which every single clause of the constitution was debated and vote on!



This first Annual Conference is taken to be the date of the founding of the Fellowship

The People: the heart of the matter

CLIS would never have got anywhere without the people who gave their time and effort

**Above all,
Graham!**

**An incalculable
debt for all his
work of many
years**



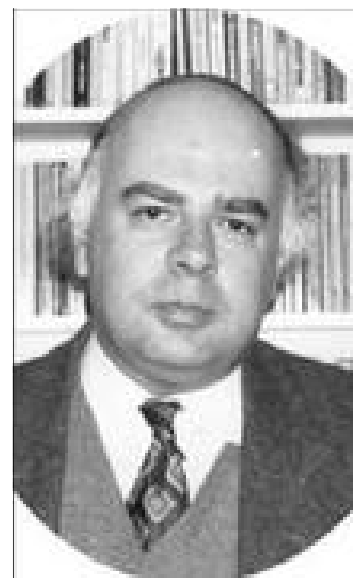
Graham was deservedly honoured for his service by the Library Association with an honorary Fellowship

**LCF/CLIS has
only ever had
two secretaries**

Richard 1976-80

*looking rather different
from today's president!*

Graham, 1980-2020



The Presidents



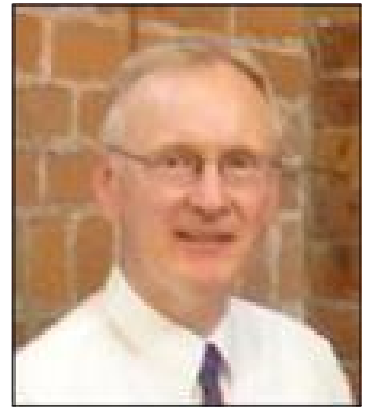
Philip Sewell



John Andrews



Ken Bakewell



Gordon Harris



Margaret Keeling



Eddie Olliffe



Richard Waller

A largely honorary post, the President has no executive power but a great deal of influence



We owe our first President, Philip Sewell, on the left here, a great deal - the most senior librarian in the UK at the time, his influence helped establish the Fellowship within the profession

The photo shows him handing over the presidency to John Andrews

The Chairman and Committee



**Elizabeth
Barber**



**Richard
Waller**



**Geoff
Warren**



**Kirsty
Robinson**



**Louise
Manners**



**Robert
Foster**

Day to day running of the Fellowship has always been in the hands of the Committee, at first called the Executive Committee, headed by the Chairman.

The Committee Chair has had a strong influence on how the Fellowship ran, even the powerful and strongminded Graham had to listen to them sometimes!

There have been six during the 50 years and they are shown opposite.



The photo above shows a committee meeting in 2001. More recently meetings have been on Zoom. Graham can't be seen on this one as he was taking the picture.

There are few other photos of the Committee and a lot of people served on it over the years, it would be impossible to list them for fear of missing someone out!

It was their work that made the Fellowship prosper.

Special Helpers

There were two people, both of whom have gone to be with the Lord, to whom LCF/CLIS owes a huge debt as they freely made their time and resources available to us and who had a big impact on our work and witness.

Betty Hedges



Graham's mother, Mrs. Betty Hedges, was his unpaid and competent assistant for many years. She helped with messages, parcels, packing up post and many other chores. All those involved on the committee got to know her very well and she always made us welcome when meetings were held in her home, providing an excellent lunch.

We made her our only honorary member in 2005 and here she is being awarded her certificate by Kirsty, the Chairman at the time.

Gospatrick (Gos) Home

Gos was a wealthy Christian businessman from an aristocratic Scottish family, the Homes.

It was Gos who owned and ran the Christian Resources Exhibition and he also had a number of other trade shows, including the Library & Information Show. As a Christian he was keen to see a witness within each trade show he ran and he invited us to run a stand at his own expense each year that he ran the show. This amounted to several thousand pounds worth of help over the years.



Annual Conferences



An apology!

There are just too many conference pictures to show even one from each!

A representative selection follows



Birmingham 1981

Our speaker, Bill Alison, City Librarian of Glasgow, prominent Trade Unionist and enthusiastic LCF member, with Philip Sewell



Members at Nottingham in 1982 (above) and London in 1991 (left)



1992 London

Richard Waller, Trevor Little (Irish Rep) and Gordon Harris—
speakers about the work of our
Committee for Overseas Library
Development



Above: 1993 Nottingham

Members pose just before lunch



Left: 2000 London

Speakers: left - David Smith
(Principal, Northumbria Bible Col-
lege) and right - David Cornish
(Library Association) with the
President Ken Bakewell

Right: 2009 Nottingham again!

Speakers: left - Andii Bow-
sher and right - Rhoda Floate
with the President Gordon
Harris





Left: 2011 Birmingham

Gordon Harris hands over the Presidency to Margaret Keeling (right), watched by Kirsty Robinson, Committee Chairman

Right: 2012 London

Back row; Gordon Harris, Michael Coveney, Sarah Batts & John Wickenden

Front row: President Margaret Keeling and Secretary Graham Hedges



..and then there was Covid...

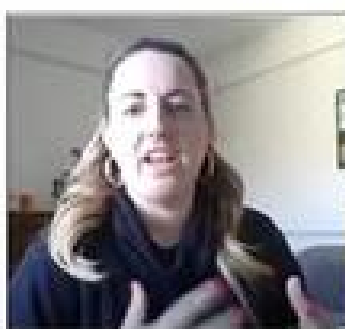
Online Conferences

After 2019 several meetings moved onto Zoom



2025

Online speakers: Gordon Giles and Pam Rhodes



2021

Online speakers: Louise Morse and Mark Woods



But things got back to normal eventually:



2022 London
Wesley Hotel,
Euston

Above: Members at the conference
Right: Speakers (L to R) Steve Bassett
of Lifewords; Eirwen Dorkins of
Christian satellite broadcaster Sat-7;
Sat-7 staff member



2022 London
Christian Medical Association
Library

Above: Conference attendees
Left: Speakers Robert Dimmick (left - Chris-
tian politician) and Benjamin Chang (right -
author and speaker) with the President
Richard Waller



Anniversaries & Occasions

London 1996

Conference delegates



20th Anniversary 1996



The President, John Andrews,
cuts the cake!

25th Anniversary 2001

London



The President, Ken Bakewell,
cuts another cake!

Alison McNabb,
the main
conference
speaker



30th Anniversary 2006

London 2006

The President, Gordon Harris,
cuts the cake,
supported by Kirsty and Graham





40th Anniversary



Our founder, Elizabeth Barber, cuts the cake supported by various founder members



2013 - The last Year of LCF



Lunchtime guided tour of the Coventry Central Library



April 2013 Coventry

The speakers:

Donald Davis and Heather Lewis with the president Margret Keeling





**Lunch at
the Mitre**

**Oxford Annual
Lecture in October**

**Bodleian Library visit -
Magical Books Exhibition**



**Lecture at the
Central Methodist Hall**



**Very last LCF event of all...
Some of our members were at
The CS Lewis Memorial Service at Westminster Abbey
22nd November 2013**

1976-2026

The 50th Golden Jubilee

Anniversary Conference

**The Wesley Hotel, Euston
18th April 2026**

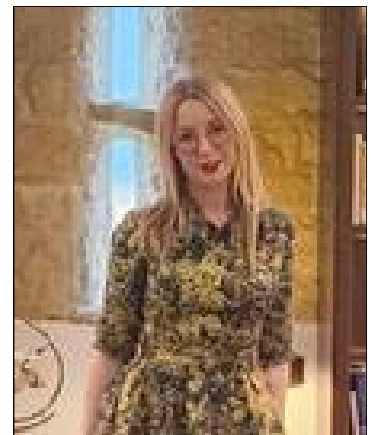
**21 members gathered to
celebrate!**

The theme was theological libraries, support of which has been a major part of our work since the Fellowship began.



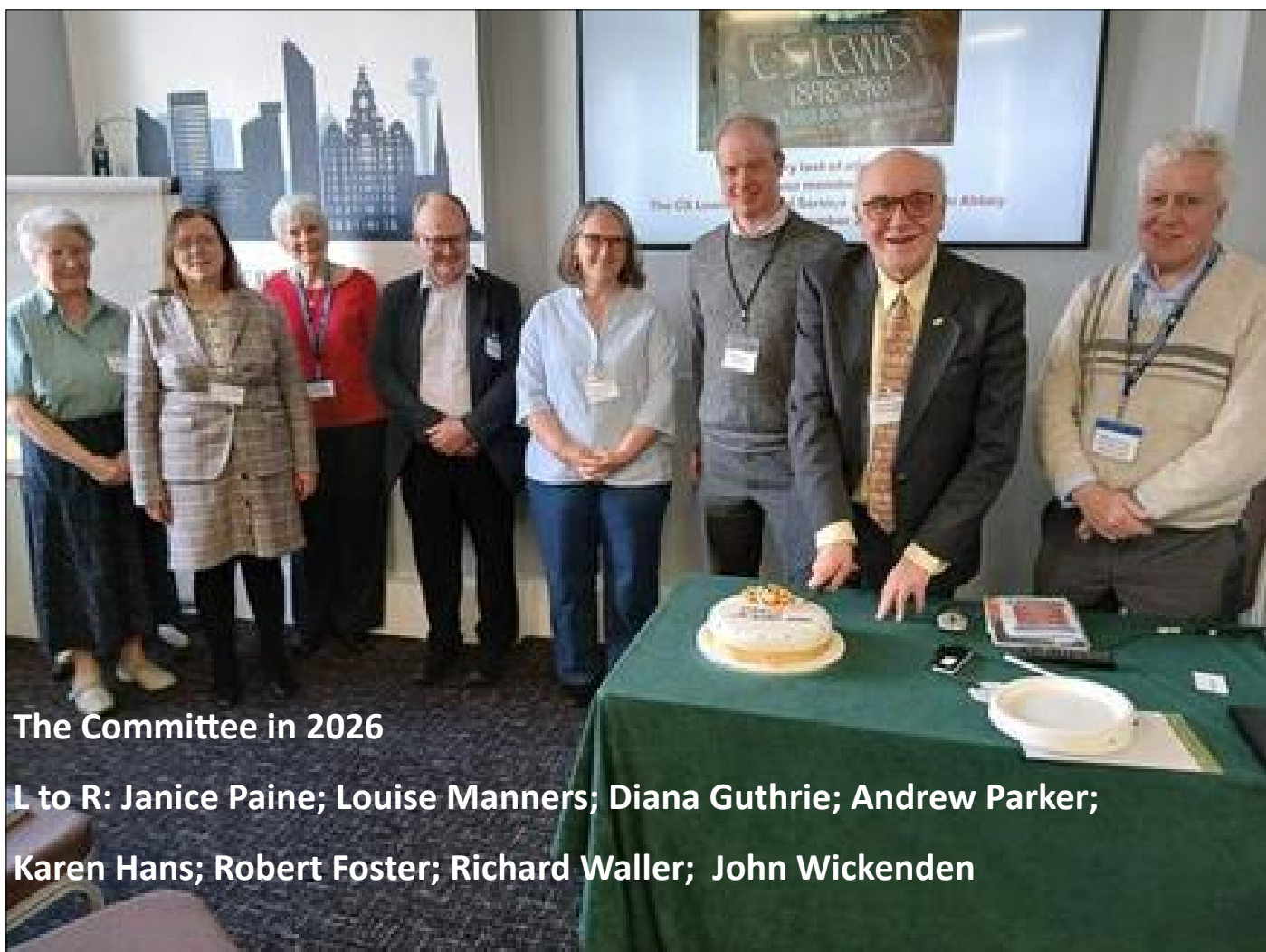
Freda Carey reflected on her many years of supporting theological education in Pakistan.

Rosslyn Johnston spoke of her challenges opening a brand new theological library at Yarnton Manor, Oxfordshire.



Below: The Conference attendees





The Committee in 2026

L to R: Janice Paine; Louise Manners; Diana Guthrie; Andrew Parker; Karen Hans; Robert Foster; Richard Waller; John Wickenden

By 2022 it was very evident that the Fellowship could not continue as it was as the membership was aging and there were few new members joining. The search was begun for a new way forward but nothing was found. The Committee reluctantly concluded that CLIS had to close at the end of 2026 and this was put to the members at the April AGM.

At the very last minute a rescue proposal was put forward by Winette Field and this was accepted by the AGM with the proviso that if it did not succeed in getting off the ground, the closure would be implemented. Despite this element of sadness the Conference was a great occasion.



The President puts the motion and the vote is taken



Those who made it right through!



30th
Anniversary
2006

Founder members who were at the 1976 conference who were also at two of the anniversary conferences!

50th
Anniversary
2026



Annual lectures

Alongside the Annual Conferences, held in the spring, were the Annual Lectures, which took place in the autumn, usually in October. This was a public event advertised to local churches and within the profession. A succession of speakers, some of them very well known, gave talks on a variety of topics



Our very first, in the October of 1976, our first activity after the organising conference in January that year was by the prominent Christian children's author Malcom Saville, famous for his Lone Pine series, and held at the Birmingham Central Library.

"Chasing the swift, sweet dream" was his title and he spoke of the role of children's authors, but also made a series of predictions about changes he could see in juvenile literature that meant wholesome books would find it difficult to get published. All the things he predicted have come to pass.

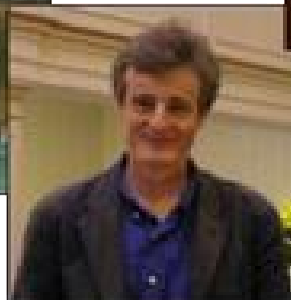
The best attended was a lecture by Professor F.F Bruce that was crowded to the doors with people wanting to hear the well-known theologian and Bible commentator. Unfortunately no one took a photo of the event!



John Gladwin
Guildford 2002



Keith White
Bath 2003



Stewart Henderson Oxford 2006



G. P. Taylor
York 2007



**Paul Burbridge and
Riding Lights Theatre Company
York 2016**

One of the funniest lectures was that by Paul Burbridge, if only for the wonderful introductory dialogue of an unhelpful reference librarian stonewalling an anxious reader!



**Right:
Gloucester 2023
Daniel Button flanked by Richard Waller and Robert Foster**

Visits during lectures

Most lectures were accompanied by a visit to some place of library or literary interest. A couple of examples are shown below.



Wycliffe Hall Library, Oxford



**Above: But the main point
was to go to the lecture**



**Left:
York
Minster
Library**

Publications

Right from the beginning the Fellowship has centred round our publications. For most members this was what kept them in touch and what made CLIS worth belonging to as they did not come to the meetings. This was the original intention, with the Conference and Annual Lecture as an extra to them for those who wanted them.

After the first few years we found our very able editor, Graham Hedges, who steered our publications programme right up to the time of this death in 2020.

There were two to start with, a quarterly Newsletter and an Annual Journal, the Christian Librarian, later merged into a three time yearly Christian Librarian. After Graham's death this rate could not be sustained and issues have been approximately annual.

LCF Newsletter

The first few issues were precisely what you might expect from a mid-1970s organisation, a typed newsletter.



By 1977 duplicating was no longer the crude affair it had been and the Newsletter appeared in this format for years.

The Christian Librarian



For some years we used an artist to do cover pictures and there was some great artwork.

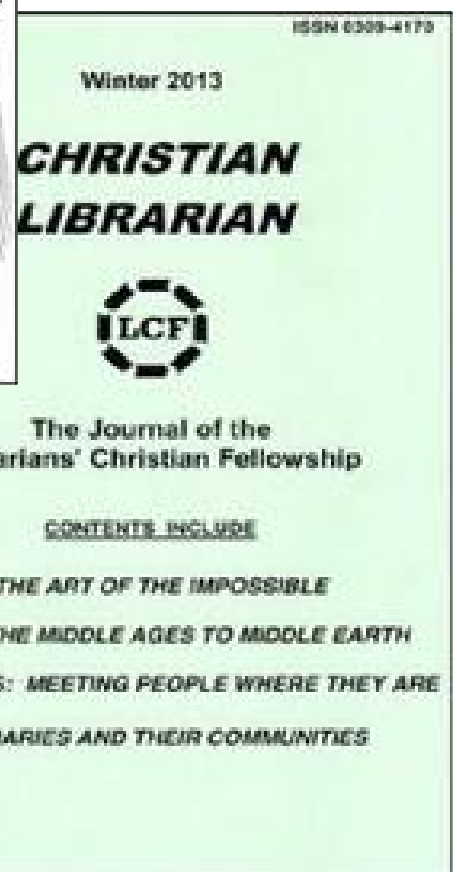
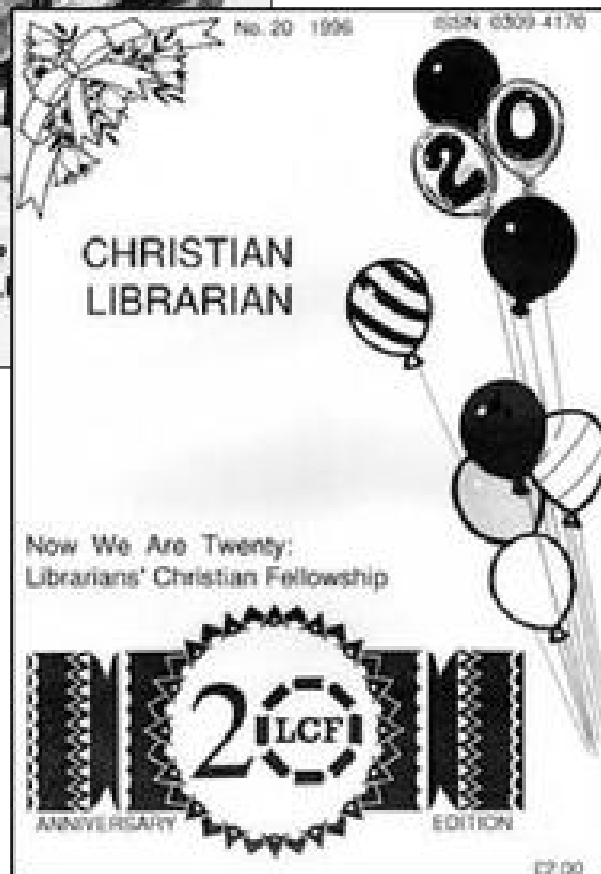
The CL then adopted the format familiar for

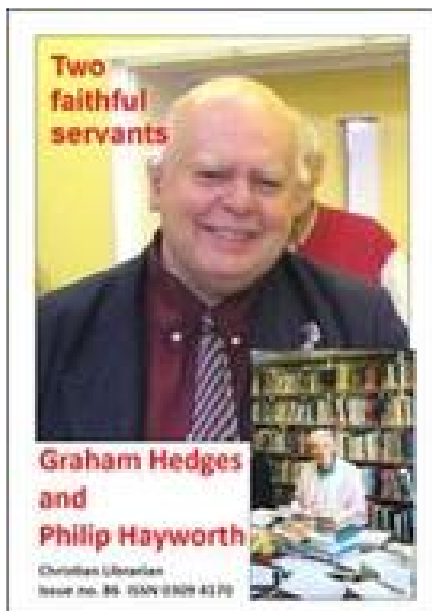
many years and seen far right in the last LCF issue in 2013.

By 2019 Graham was increasingly unwell and missed some meetings, previously unheard of, and his unexpected death during the early months of the pandemic (although it was unrelated to Covid) caused a serious crisis in production as the Committee could not easily take action.

In the early years most serious articles appeared in the annual journal, the Christian Librarian. This too was at first duplicated, then printed. Originally A4 it was fairly quickly reduced to A5 by Graham. At first it was painstakingly typed out and then the IT revolution brought word processing, which Graham embraced with enthusiasm, and many will remember his

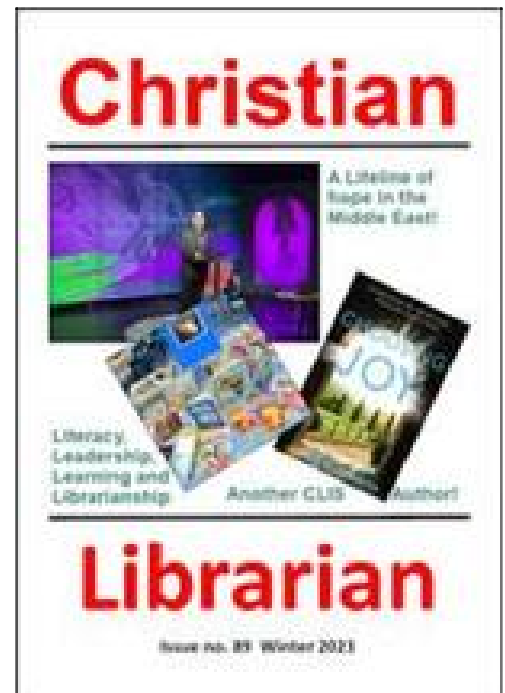
humorous comments about the new LCF member, Cannon Star-writer! It also enabled the merger of the CL with the Newsletter by allowing much more versatility.





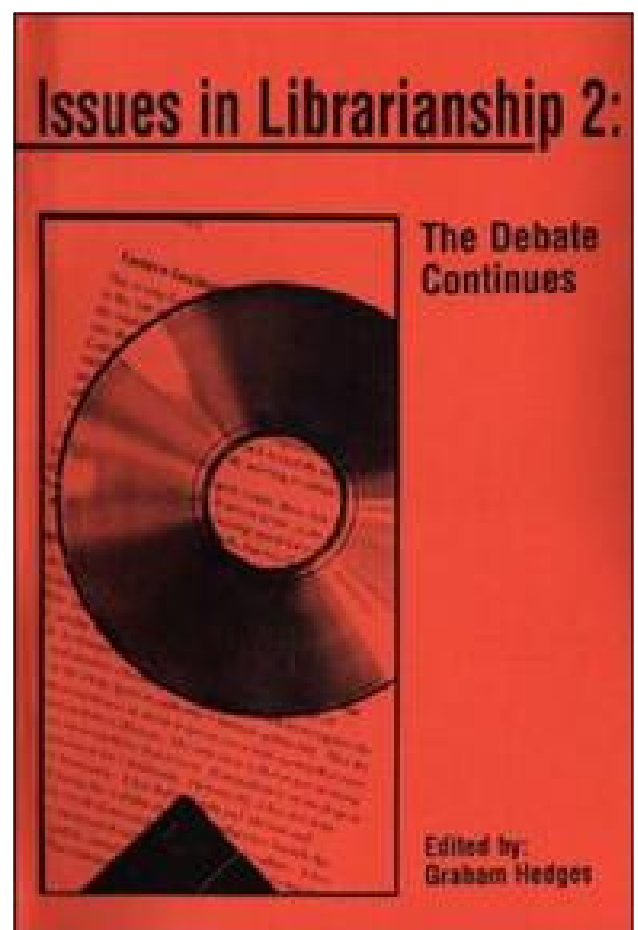
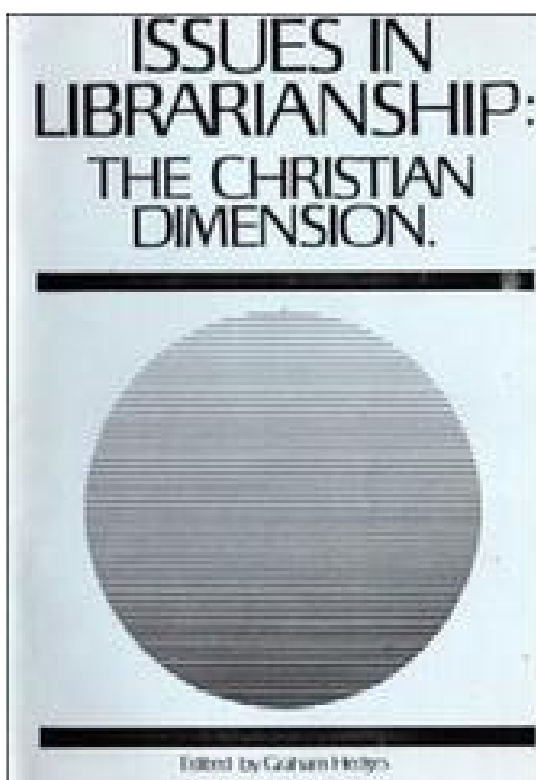
Despite the difficulties caused by the lockdown, urgent action was taken to inform members of Graham's death and to produce a tribute edition to him and another stalwart of the Fellowship, Philip Hayworth, a key figure in the library assistance programme. We also took the opportunity to branch out into colour photos and illustrations in future issues.

This history issue is the culmination of that process!



Issues in Librarianship

There were also two other publications that were produced in 1985 and 1996. These were two small books produced, in a format similar to the CL to keep costs down, that covered a range of topics within libraries and librarianship.



Library Assistance Programme

One aspect of our work was not even in our minds back in 1976, and this was what came to be called the Library Assistance Programme. This offered assistance to Christian organisations with library and information needs. This help might be advice, training of staff, grants of books or sometimes cash, or practical help where our members descended on a library and reorganised it for the owners.

Apart from our publications, this proved to be the most active part of our work from 1977 to the present day.

It started in 1977 when Norma Bates, now Norma Waller, was asked by a former member of her church youth group who was a student at the South Wales Bible College to come and help in the college library. From this small beginning a large work began.

Working Parties

Working parties were the most visible aspect of this work. They were also fun and many enduring friendships were made by those who helped in them.



**The first working party:
The South Wales Bible
College Library**

Compared to later efforts this was rather amateur and there was a huge learning curve!

The 3 working parties were chiefly memorable in the minds of those helping for the way we were snowed in at the third WP!



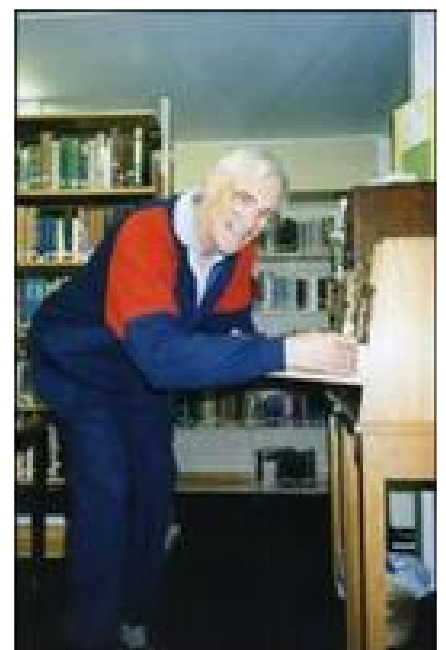
The longest working party: The Association of Christian Teachers Library at the Stapleford House Education Centre

This ran for 10 years!



The biggest working party: The Northumbria Bible College, Berwick-on-Tweed and the International Christian College, Glasgow

This project was complicated by the merger of the Northumbria Bible College with the Glasgow Bible College to form ICC, Glasgow, partway through our project. It was also the last project to involve catalogue cards—remember those?! On the right team leader Philip Hayworth files the final catalogue card!





Merging the two libraries in a new temporary home in 2000



The library in its final home, purpose built and fully computerised



Many friends were made during the various working parties. On the left in this photo of the five people who saw the NBC/ICC project right through the end, is Ethel, a member of the college staff, who was a key helper and still exchanges Christmas cards to this day!

The final working party: The UCCF/IFES Archive Project 2017-18



On a visit to Blue Boar House in 2016 as part of our 40th anniversary celebration, the University and Colleges Christian Fellowship, in many ways our parent organisation, asked for help to organise their chaotic archives. Archives are not what we do but we muddled through. Many of the documents made fascinating reading and some found themselves mentioned in the records from their University CU days!



Grant Making



Most of our grants were made in partnership with the Langham Trust, and consisted of providing finance to allow them to send gifts of theological books to small colleges in Africa. Many were trying to train pastors in very difficult circumstances with few resources. On the left is a typical set of shelves in such a small college library.

On the right, at the other extreme, we recently made a large grant to the Karl Kumm University in Nigeria, a new build being opened by one of the major evangelical denominations to provide general degree level education for their people, not just theology. Our grant made it possible for them to buy KOHA, the standard Nigerian University LMS. Here we see staff training taking place.

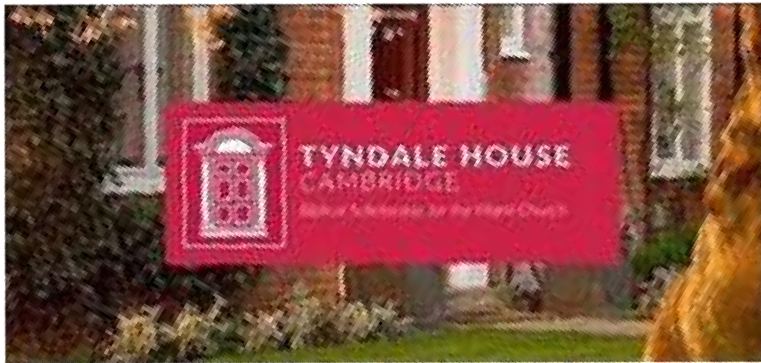


Christian Books in Public and School Libraries in the UK

We also promoted and made gifts to support the charity Faith in Print that aimed to get Christian books in UK public libraries. We also helped with advice on book selection in early days. John Andrews was involved in that and Graham Hedges was a strong supporter and advisor to them for many years.

Our Largest Grant: Tyndale House Library Cambridge

We gave £10,000 to Tyndale House, the Evangelical Biblical research library in Cambridge. This was to provide access to a large range of web based Biblical research resources to supplement their extensive print collections



Still ongoing: All Nations Christian College Library

The Library Assistance Programme was still on-going after all other work had stopped! At the beginning of the year our members helped the College Librarian do a stock take prior to a move of premises. Two of our members are shown below in the library.



Still more? The Biblical Creation Trust Library in Cambridge

The Trust would appreciate help cataloguing their scientific research library that they are setting up in Cambridge. Trust volunteers can be seen below at work.



Thanksgiving Services



Above you can see an early Service, 1981 in Margate, where Warwick Child, a member who moved from librarianship in Bedford to the Anglican ministry, led the service.

Right centre is the 1995 service at UMIST. By then a fringe event, they were still attended by the LA Presidents, who would do the Bible reading. Shown here second left is Joe Hendry, LA President, who chose his own Bible reading and selected a particularly denunciatory passage from Amos.

Bottom right is the Methodist singing group who

helped at several services, organised by our member Christine Gagan.

For over twenty years the Fellowship held thanksgiving services as an outreach at the Library Association conferences. At first these were part of the official programme as they were suggested by the then General Secretary of the LA, a fine Christian man called Keith Lawrey, who also wrote our official prayer, which is on the back page.

Later they became fringe events as there was no place for official recognition of Christianity within the LA.



IFLA Services

A spin-off from our thanksgiving services was the IFLA Service. Our late Vice-President Donald Davis (third left below) was an enthusiastic member of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions and promoted the holding of services wherever the conference was that year. They were well supported as many delegates were Christians. When they were in the UK we supported them directly.

The photograph comes from the Glasgow IFLA Conference. This was well attended, but the best attended one in the UK was at Brighton



The group below is of members who had helped at Northumbria Bible College working parties taking the opportunity for a reunion while we were in Glasgow.

Not all Services were uneventful!

The Moscow service in 1991 was disrupted by the unsuccessful coup d'état against Boris Yeltsin.



The venue involved crossing the line of tanks surrounding the Duma and those attending had to thread their way past them.

In China participants were warned that they would be arrested if they held an unauthorised religious event. Some still met privately in an hotel room.

Library & Information Show

We have already mentioned the generous help over many years from Gos Home, who enabled us to have an outreach stand at the Library & Information Show, for some years the premier opportunity for library suppliers to meet their potential customers.



Brighton 1989

It all started at the last LA Public Libraries Group trade show when we partnered with the Christian Book Promotion Trust and their 'Faith in Print' scheme (now 'Speaking Volumes')

From then on, as Gos took on management of the trade show, we regularly partnered with them and with the Christian Enquiry Agency



Left: the stand in 2000; above: 1999; below: 2003



Trips and Regional Events

The Fellowship has always actively encouraged the arranging of trips and events on both a local and national basis.

LCF Scotland



LCF Scotland showed the way in early years with an active programme of meetings. They held their own Annual Conference for many years and they were always worth travelling north to attend. The region owed its success to the hard work put in by John Dempster, the first regional representative, who went to a great deal of trouble to find Christians working in libraries and get them to join.

The conference photo on the left is of the second conference, held in 1977. John is on the right of the back row.

They have also had a regular programme of smaller meetings over the years.

Regional Events

Very few photos of regional meetings have made it into the archives. The only one we could locate was of John Barnes of Christians@Work at a London regional meeting in 1982. It is highly probable that this picture was taken by Graham Hedges, whose indefatigable photography is the foundation of this issue of CL!



Trips out

In complete contrast to the paucity of photos of events, the number of pictures of trips is very large. Some were one-off national events, some were organised by regions, others were associated with the Annual Lectures and a couple with the Annual Conference. There have been a great many over the years and they have been of very diverse character, as these examples show.

Below: An Oxford Walking Tour



Above: The Church Times



Right: Spurgeon's College Library



Below: The Kilns, Oxford (C.S. Lewis Centenary)



Above: Westminster Abbey Library



Seminar on Christian Books in the Public Library

There was one other major meeting held by LCF. This was the day long seminar on Christian Books in The Public Library. In the spring of 1979 members are seen relaxing in the gardens of Redcliffe College, then in London, which sloped down to the Thames.



Romances!

LCF Members at the 1996 wedding of
John Marrison and Glynis Alker

They met at the Northumbria Working Parties



Members at the 1979 wedding of
Richard Waller and Norma Bates

Richard proposed over a library table while cataloguing on a Liverpool Bible College Working Party!



...and that concludes our pictorial run through 50 years of LCF and CLIS.

It is our prayer that the new style CLIS that will take over from the end of the year will be as effective as we were in promoting our faith in the library and Information world

The CLIS Prayer

Father, we gather in gratitude for all the many gifts you have given us and particularly for our professional skills and interests and for the fulfilment that they provide.

We thank you also for your unconditional promise of eternal life. We recognise that, if we had to earn our place in the life beyond, none of us would be entitled to go. However, we understand that your gift of forgiveness for our faults and failings and our consequent transfer to the eternal life is your gift to us, dependent only on our wanting to accept that gift and to repent of our failure to walk in your footsteps. Forgive us, therefore, for doing those things that we should not, and for not doing those things that we should.

We ask also that you give us the sensitivity to recognise those dangerous times when, because of worry or distraction or self-centredness, we turn from your path: help us then to impose a discipline on our actions and speech so that we minimise the harm we cause and maximise the good.

Finally, Father, recognising that we best serve you by serving others, we ask that you give us wisdom in our professional decision-making, strength to fulfil our responsibilities to the best of our ability, and integrity in the performance of our duties conscious always of the needs of others.

All this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CLIS

Christians in
Library and
Information
Services

