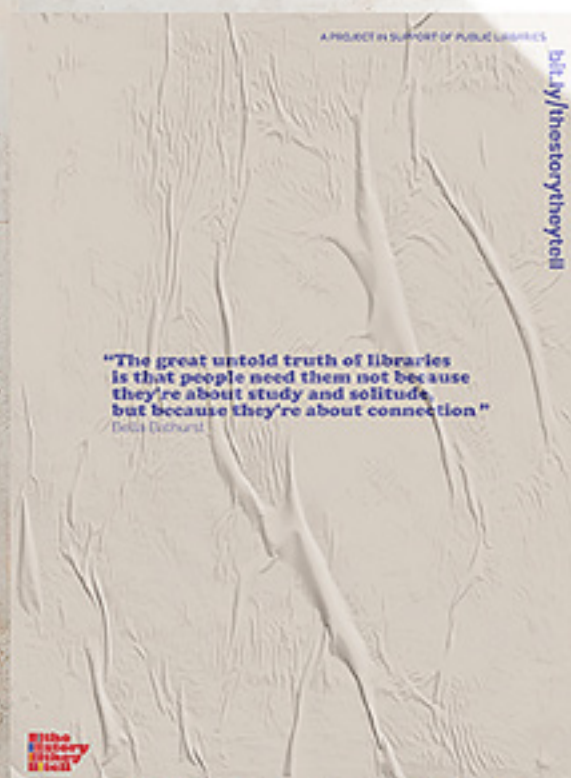
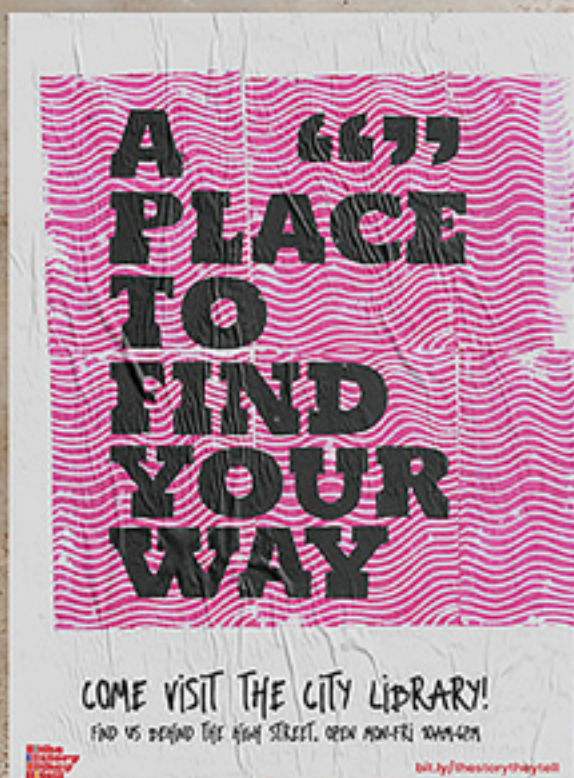


THE LIBRARY CAMPAIGN

SUPPORTING FRIENDS AND USERS OF LIBRARIES



SPRING 2022
No. 102



PRICE £2.00
ISSN 0266-6065

THE LIBRARY CAMPAIGN – AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

To advance the lifelong education of the public by the promotion, support, assistance and improvement of public libraries through the activities of friends and user groups.



The Library Campaign

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Registered charity (England & Wales) No. 1102634

THE LIBRARY CAMPAIGN

maintains a

FREE LIST

of local

FRIENDS AND USER GROUPS

with their contact details, on our website.

If you know of a new (or old!) group that is not on our list, please notify:

thelibrarycampaign@gmail.com



As usual, we've sent you an extra copy of this magazine. Please take the time to pass it on, or place it somewhere people will see it...

ELECTED OFFICERS

Laura Swaffield London

Andrew Coburn Essex

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Geoffrey Dron Bolton

Bob Goodrick London

The following organisations send representatives to attend steering group meetings:

Unison,

Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals (CILIP).

WHO'S WHO?

Quick guide to some of the many things relevant to libraries ...

1964 Act (Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964) says all local authorities have a statutory duty to provide a public library service, which must be 'comprehensive and efficient' and available to all who wish to use it. Libraries are NOT optional. It gives the Secretary of State power to enquire – and intervene – if standards fall short. These powers have barely been used.

ACE (Arts Council England) now has 'responsibility for supporting and developing libraries'. As yet unclear what that means in practice.

CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals): the professional body for librarians in all types of library.

CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy) collects figures on library performance and on user satisfaction.

MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government): the central government department responsible for local government. It provides most of local councils' funding. It does not determine how much of it is spent on libraries.

DCMS (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport): sets central government's policy on libraries (among other things), but does not fund them. It is headed by the Secretary of State, with one minister more directly responsible for libraries (among other things).

LGA (Local Government Association) lobbies on behalf of local government. Does some useful work on public libraries, but ultimately sides with councils, not library users.

MLA (Museums, Libraries & Archives Council): ACE's predecessor.

NLT (National Literacy Trust): charity 'dedicated to building a literate nation' – which includes promoting reading for pleasure. Huge source of information, campaigns and projects.

LIBRARIES CONNECTED (formerly Society of Chief Librarians) advises LGA on libraries. Does a lot of useful work, including research and resources, but tends to stick to 'quiet diplomacy'.

UNISON: the trade union for most public library staff. Good research and promotional materials.

TRA (The Reading Agency): charity to develop reading, especially via libraries. Dozens of projects to promote books, especially to key groups like children, reluctant readers, ethnic minorities etc.

Taskforce (the Leadership for Libraries Taskforce): set up and funded by the DCMS to lead development following the Sieghart report 2014.

Libraries can do anything, but ...

Sorry we're late!
Blame a combination of illness, waiting for government news and... er, our Calendar.

Our what? Well, we have long been amazed at the sheer quantity of bright ideas, and free material, available to library services – and Friends groups. Some fit in with national library campaigns such as World Book Day.

Some are national events for everyone. Others could be used at any time for an event or campaign.

JUNGLE

Sources include BookTrust and The Reading Agency, plus a host of one-topic organisations such as Safer Internet Day (their anytime resources are wonderful).

The problem is finding a way through this jungle. We thought we'd make a start with the Libraries Connected annual calendar (page 15). We've added details for each entry, highlighting those that offer free resources.

It took longer than we ever expected. Thus the January info reaches you too late to use – at least, until next year. Apologies! Meanwhile, info for June onwards is not yet available. So we'll be playing catch-up.

LEVELLING UP

Lesson: libraries are relevant to almost anything. But more could be done to co-ordinate the wealth of possibilities.

All this will be crucial when the government finally explains what 'levelling up' means. This is its key promise to its new 'Red Wall' constituencies. Elucidation was expected last July, then December, then January... We gave up waiting. Now, it seems, it will suddenly appear just after we go to print.

We will need to stress the message that levelling up is about supporting people, not just building things. Social infrastructure – like libraries – is the real key.



The government's offer will probably include a lot of different funds for councils to bid for. The Local Government Association has already (in its comments on last October's spending review) pointed out: 'For levelling up to be a success, the government needs to move away from a pattern of piecemeal and fragmented funding streams, many of which fund very similar activity...'

COMPETITIVE

'The competitive bidding process means that scarce council resources [are] diverted at a time when local capacity continues to be stretched by multiple pressures.'

This, of course, will affect libraries. Whether the label is high street revival or unemployment, IT access or early years education, libraries will be part of the answer. How will they negotiate this new bidding jungle?

Yes, libraries can do almost anything. That's their strength. But let's remember – they can't do everything.

PROBLEMS

A long-term trend has been for libraries to be handed extra tasks, from parking tickets to help with benefits. With no extra staffing or training. Increasingly, their clients include people who have mental health or other problems that other services no longer support.

As the article on violence (pp 8–10) shows, the pandemic has highlighted problems that have been building up for years. It's serious.

Libraries can't do everything.

THE LIBRARY CAMPAIGNER SPRING 2022, No.102

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Some annual events that libraries – or individual Friends groups – can latch on to, and often use to access free resources. January–May 2022.

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2022 will see a massive – though so far mysterious – UK-wide arts-and-technology festival. A central element will be the library-centred StoryTrails project.

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Kate Thompson found herself in the middle of a fight to save Bethnal Green library. Ironically, she was researching for her book on the wartime Bethnal Green library, which went underground and helped start a social revolution.

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Stephen Carlill had a thought-provoking experience when his Friends group decided to commemorate the Gypsy Holocaust.

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An abridged version of Helen Anderson's research report on 'How can graphic design be used to advocate for public libraries?'

32 JOIN US! The more TLC grows, the stronger we get.

What TLC has been doing ...

The past few months have been comparatively quiet. Not because things look good for the future – but so far 75% of library services have not had budget cuts. Local councils realised they were an essential resource while the pandemic played havoc with lives – and other council services.

Will this awareness inform their budgets for next year? These are being finalised right now... We're watching. We have given confidential advice to several people already concerned about their local service.

Contacts & campaigns

We continue to brief certain media, and the professional library organisations, including having regular meetings with CILIP and Libraries Connected.

We'll soon be meeting The Reading Agency to discuss how library users can get involved with the libraries bit of the nationwide Unboxed festival (see pp 21–22).

The media ask us for examples of active campaigns. These have been thin on the ground in the current limbo.

There's been a magnificent campaign in Glasgow: three libraries failed to re-open last year but have just done so after demonstrations and months of Saturday read-ins that finally attracted major coverage in The Scotsman. And then some extra funding. Result!

The only real equivalent in England was Essex, which we have covered in this magazine. They are still soldiering on, so when English media



Newsnight filming.

contacted us we got them national publicity – twice!

In August we were contacted by BBC's Newsnight for advice. We sent their economics editor some tailor-made briefings. He was interested in 'wider issues about the wellbeing of communities, levelling up and the implications of central government not funding councils properly'.

We directed him to the feature in our magazine no 101 (page 21) on the crucial role of social infrastructure – like libraries – to genuine levelling up.

This lead was duly followed up in the broadcast in September. We think the point needs to be hammered home when (or if?) the government's long-promised levelling up project gets going. So it was good to see it featured on such a high-profile TV programme.

And Newsnight filmed – inevitably! – Essex campaigners. They were well able to explain the

exact value of libraries. Watch them on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=417021626481759&ref=sharing>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=194697102749320&ref=sharing>

Triumph... at the time



In September, also, our long-standing relationship with the Daily Express bore surprising fruit. They contacted the new culture Secretary of State, Nadine Dorries.

These SoSs come and go rapidly. And they seldom have a word to say about libraries, which are left to the libraries minister. Nadine Dorries is different. She has said and done many things that TLC can only condemn. And we might query her logic in demanding more investment in libraries from local councils that her government has starved for 12 years.

But she came up with some very supportive quotes. And she is well known as a key Boris Johnson supporter, who 'has his ear'. In September, that was quite a coup. Very useful, we thought. But now, as we go to press, things could go one of two very different ways. Such is life.



Nadine Dorries said...

I want to thank libraries up and down the country for all they do... They are a lifeline to millions of people – particularly during Covid. They are there for those who don't have a computer at home, or can't afford wifi, or to buy books for their kids. Or for those who are lonely and need friendly support, libraries connect them with their communities.

If I have one mission as Culture Secretary, it's to open doors for those who need it the most. Libraries are the front line for that effort and I'll press councils hard to invest in libraries because of the enormous value they provide.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1503307/nadine-dorries-declares-war-councils-shut-libraries-mission-reopen-them>

The Bookseller



It was a busy September!

The Bookseller magazine, the backbone of the books world, dedicated a whole issue to libraries. They asked us for ideas on who to feature.

We also contributed an article on libraries post-pandemic. It was quite a lot of work, finding out which services were back in business and what they were doing.

One thing that emerged was a looming financial problem – e-book loans.

These, of course, rocketed during the pandemic. Physical book loans were getting back to near-normal where libraries re-opened. But e-book loans remained at high levels. As they cost far more to lend than print books, this is a big problem for the immediate future.

Zoom 3

We held another Zoom meeting in November. It was mostly an update, and a general swapping of notes. Much of the content is now in this issue of the magazine. Our guest speaker was our favourite librarian, Ian Anstice, who compiles Public Libraries News (www.publiclibrariesnews.com) – always well worth listening to!

You can catch all our Zooms by going to www.youtube.com and searching for 'The Library Campaign'.

The Story They Tell

We stayed in touch with Helen Anderson as she developed her research on publicising libraries. This included writing a letter of support for her MA presentation (our idea, not hers). It seems to have done some good!

Her website of resources is now live, and it's listed on our website.

Do give it a visit*. Hover over the pictures to see the stories behind them. Help yourself. And contribute your own material!

More details in this issue (pp 27–31). This includes an abridged version of her thesis, which analyses publicity problems and solutions. There is much more to be done...

* <https://thestorytheytell.wixsite.com/savepubliclibraries>

Tactics old and new

We sent evidence to the consultation on Hendon Library and its surroundings. Among other things, we pointed out that Barnet council has national as well as local responsibilities for such an iconic building.

We cover the Hendon saga in some detail in this issue (pp 11–14). Not only because it's an exemplary campaign with ideas that all can learn from. As we go to press, the planning application has been rubber-stamped. This is no surprise when it was the council's own plan. The campaign is coming up with several new approaches, not yet revealed. One worth watching.

Meanwhile, some of the council's tactics will be familiar to many campaigners – including unseemly speed, a mass of material to cope with, refusal to listen and a hard-to-find consultation that didn't offer the option of saving the library.

A new kind of threat

Hendon is also an example of a new trend that we are monitoring closely. We're used to individual library closure plans. But now it's sometimes about public libraries becoming entangled – to their detriment – in large 'regeneration' projects.

In Hendon, for instance, the library's destruction is just part of a huge development which is the equivalent of a giant Monty Python foot descending on an entire conservation area. The library's fate is almost an after-thought.

In Stockport, Cheshire, a Carnegie library is inconveniently placed. The service could be moved into failed retail premises in a nearby shopping centre that needs a boost. Or so the council thinks. The situation is currently fluid. Different political parties are taking different views and making busy use of the council's procedures. As always, there is much argument over the findings of a consultation.

But there's a new point to note. The council argues that government regeneration funding would be available for the shopping centre but not for the library.

Chapter and verse on this has not yet been forthcoming. If it really is a hard-and-fast ruling, it could be a built-in hazard in many government-funded levelling up projects.

Regeneration gone wrong

In Nottingham, we are involved in another sad regeneration story. The council has built a splendid new central library. It just needs fitting out.

This was to be funded by selling the old building. It's the kind of ingenuity councils have to employ, with core funding from government cut to the bone. But failed property deals, and the pandemic, have left the scheme high and dry. Time is drifting on. The stock – by far the largest in town – is in storage. Now the council says it needs to close three branches to save money...

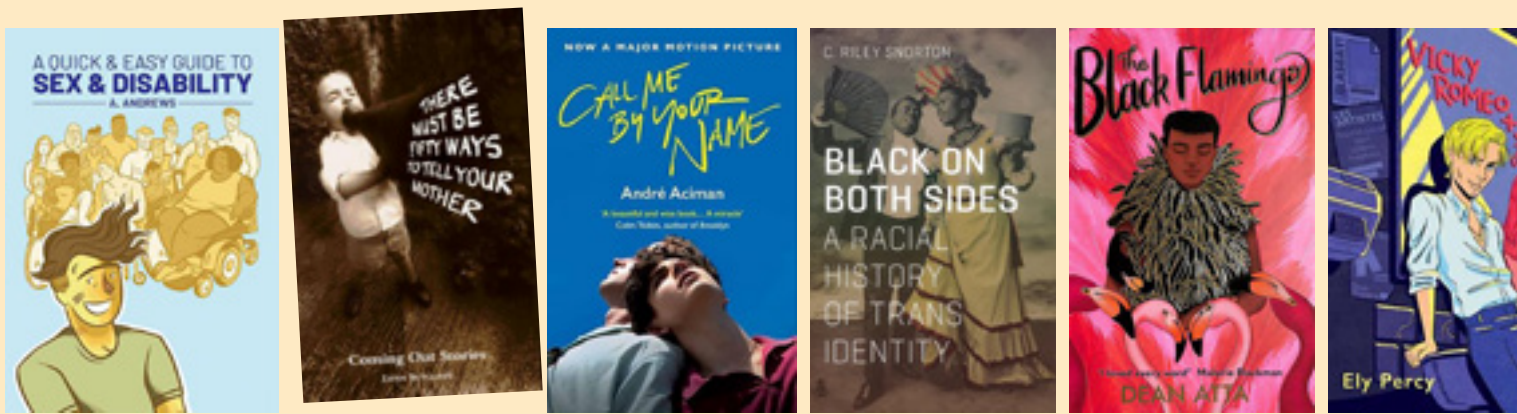
We are considering whether all this puts the council in breach of the 1964 Act. The head of service is kindly setting up a meeting with us in February. He says: 'I would welcome your national group's views and input, as I think it is important that we have an open conversation about what should be a "comprehensive and efficient" library service.'

Open conversation is always the best approach.

Finally

TLC is now on Instagram, to attract a younger audience to public libraries – and to us.





How LGBTQ+ is your library?

There are no queer books in a closed public library, says Isadore Auerbach-George

In the fight against library cuts and closures, there has already been some discussion about how marginalised groups might be disproportionately impacted. For example, if a local branch closes physically disabled people might find they need to travel further than is practical to reach a public library. One group that gets less discussion, however, is LGBTQ+ people.

LGBTQ+ people (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer / Questioning and others) have had many wins in the battle for equal treatment in British society, such as protection under the Equality Act 2010 and the right for same-gender couples to jointly adopt.

However, there are still hurdles to face, such as the evasiveness of the government's promised ban on conversion therapy and growing hostility in the 'debates' around the rights of trans Britons.

In fact, particularly over our treatment of transgender people, the UK has slipped down to no 11 out of 49 European countries on the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans & Intersex Association's ranking of LGBTQ+ rights. In 2005, the UK ranked no 1.

What does this have to do with libraries?

Research has shown that LGBTQ+ people in the UK often have unique needs within public libraries.

Many of these have been shaped by the years when local authorities operated under Section 28, where a culture of fear hampered the stocking of LGBTQ+ titles, especially any that could be seen as 'condoning' homosexuality.

Likely as a consequence, LGBTQ+ library patrons tend to seek not only books that represent and centre people like them, but also ones with particularly positive or uplifting narratives.

Further, there is a need for nuanced stock: a bisexual mother-of-three might not be particularly interested in a collection of stories about gay men, which might also be useless to a transgender teen looking for information on how to come out to their family.

Beyond stock, many LGBTQ+ people also have a need for reliable information, on everything from access to healthcare to their rights at work.

Although the internet has proved a massive boon for queer folks' access to information,

anxieties still pervade the community around the reliability and relevance of information found online. A pamphlet about a local support group found in the public library can be massively helpful to a struggling young person.

Given that a disproportionate number of Britain's homeless are LGBTQ+ – with familial rejection often cited as a key factor in becoming homeless – access to free library computers and internet, away from the familial gaze, can be a lifeline.

In order to access all of these resources, LGBTQ+ people need not only to be able to get to a public library that has made such an investment, but to be welcomed by staff who will not behave discriminately to them and who have an awareness of their rights and needs.

Even well-funded public libraries may have chosen not to prioritise LGBTQ+ rights within their service, but such priorities become almost impossible in a service gutted by austerity cuts.

Libraries with slashed budgets often face decreased access to independent publishers – who are usually the leaders in publishing nuanced and diverse LGBTQ+ materials – in favour





‘There is a need for nuanced stock: a bisexual mother-of-three might not be particularly interested in a collection of stories about gay men, which might also be useless to a transgender teen looking for information on how to come out to their family.’

of automatic supplier selection. Little time or professional training is given to stock selection.

As space is sold off for private profit, library footprints dwindle, leading to stock cuts. Collections perceived as more ‘niche’, such as LGBTQ+ books, are often the first to go. Yet even a few infrequent check-outs may have had a huge positive impact on readers.

Worse, without the staff investment to build long-term relationships with community groups, LGBTQ+ programming and outreach are also likely to suffer.

This may exacerbate the circular problem of fewer LGBTQ+ patrons visiting, and lower use of resources, leading to their removal.

Higher turnover of volunteers, who have less training and accountability than full-time employees, may also lead to more negative encounters between LGBTQ+ patrons and library staff. This again can further distrust amongst queer people about their local library’s ability to provide useful, up-to-date stock that they may read without judgement.

Things can be particularly tricky in areas where the management of ‘community’ libraries might be given to groups that not all perceive as equally welcoming, such as volunteers running libraries out of churches.

After years of working in public libraries - including a stint as a volunteer in a gutted service - I was alarmed by the poor state of LGBTQ+ provision I saw.

Most queer people I met had negative experiences in public libraries. Or, even if they lived in an area where the library had made excellent investments in stock and programming, they had no idea of this. They assumed they wouldn’t be welcome, based on previous experience.

But those who had been able to use their libraries, and found LGBTQ+-specific resources, gushed about how welcome it made them feel, the lifelines they provided. Particularly, older members of the LGBTQ+ community have discussed the phenomenon of ‘finding themselves’ in books, experiences in which the local public library acted as a space of freedom and exploration.

Austerity cuts have meant that any progress in these areas has been slashed.

In early 2020 I launched Book 28 Library, a group that advocates for the rights of LGBTQ+ patrons in public libraries. We also run our own queer lending library in the Outside Project Community Centre, located in Southwark near Borough tube station.

In all our work to promote LGBTQ+ rights in the library, cuts and closures have come up again and again as one of the most harmful forces against our mission.

I urge anyone who cares about public libraries, but who does not know a lot about LGBTQ+ rights, to educate themselves. Any queer people who don’t care about public libraries should do the same.

This is ultimately an issue of solidarity: together we are stronger.

INFORMATION

If you would like to look into research on LGBTQ+ library provision in the UK, I collected much of it in my Master’s dissertation, ‘How can the collection of an LGBTQ+ library best meet information needs?’. This can be found free and Open Access on www.hcommons.org.

If you are new to LGBTQ+ rights and would like a briefing on terminology or anything else, www.stonewall.org.uk or www.plfag.org are two great places to start.

If you are looking for support or information, the Switchboard LGBT+ Helpline can be reached at 0300 330 0630, 10am-10pm every day.

Book 28’s work can be found at www.book28.weebly.com, on Twitter @book28library, facebook.com/book28queerlibrary/ or Instagram @book28.library. We can be emailed at book28.library@gmail.com.

You can visit our lending library in the community centre at Unit 1, 52 Lant Street, London SE1 1RB, Thursdays 5:30-8:30pm or Saturdays 10am-1pm.



Libraries under attack: violence in public libraries

This year, UNISON plans a campaign to highlight – and do something about – the violence and abuse suffered by library staff. Sarah Pearce, UNISON national officer, explains.

People outside the library world are often surprised to learn that staff experience violence and abuse. On top of everything else...

For many in our public library service, the working day can be hugely pressurised. With cuts to local government funding, many face worrying times.

Hundreds of libraries have closed, job cuts are rife, staffing levels are at an all-time low. Library services are increasingly eager to use volunteers to take on much-loved and much-needed roles once carried out by paid staff.

Lone working has become par for the course. Many staff, often low-paid women, now find themselves on the front line – dealing with members of the public who themselves are hit hard by cuts across local services, and are also at their wits' end.

During the pandemic, library workers have been under immense strain. They have found themselves having to work while feeling scared and unsafe, and fearing that they may be taking the virus home to their loved ones.

As the public have become frustrated with lockdowns and restrictions, library staff have found themselves face to face with those looking for someone to vent their anger on.

This may come as a surprise to those knowing little about the day-to-day life of a library worker. But these occurrences are by no means a recent phenomenon brought on by a global pandemic.

Back in 2019, UNISON undertook important work looking into the prevalence of violence, abuse and harassment in our public library service. The results were shocking.

Given those deeply worrying findings, and how serious the impact on library workers, UNISON will this year undertake further work on violence in the workplace and mount a high-profile campaign.



This year's campaign will cover all workers across local government. However, we know that library workers are particularly vulnerable to violence, harassment and abuse, both physical and verbal. It cannot, and must never be, accepted as 'part of the job'.

Background

Libraries have been hit hard by local authority funding cuts, with councils seeing them as a soft target for budget reductions.

Nearly 800 have closed since 2010, with more than one in five (22%) in England, Scotland and Wales having been either shut or privatised.

Over the past decade there has been a ten-fold increase in the number of libraries now run by volunteers, from 21 to 227. More than 8,000 library workers have lost their jobs.

Opening hours are also being slashed, working time has been cut and staff have been asked to take on additional duties. Many libraries are being turned into 'community hubs', which house multiple council services under one roof.

Against this backdrop, UNISON has been receiving reports from library staff of violence, abuse and harassment at work.

To investigate the extent of these incidents, the union surveyed 1,299 UK library workers in June 2019. Half (51%) worked in a branch library. The rest (49%) worked in other locations, such as central or mobile libraries.

The survey also asked staff how effective employers were at protecting them, how supportive, and what training employees received on handling threatening situations.

Violence and threats

Staff report they or colleagues have suffered injuries from physical attacks, been spat at, and been subjected to serious threats on their lives.

- The vast majority (85%) said violence and abuse towards library workers had increased in recent years.
- Nearly a fifth (19%) had personally experienced violence but not needed medical attention.
- A small but significant number (4%) had been a victim of violence and needed medical assistance/first aid.
- More than a third (36%) had witnessed a colleague being a victim of violence.
- One in ten (11%) reported witnessing a colleague being attacked and requiring medical attention.
- Nearly a third (32%) had been physically threatened by people using libraries.
- Half (51%) had witnessed a colleague being physically threatened.

Examples include:

- A court convicted a member of the public for assaulting a library worker 'by beating'.
- A woman attacked a library customer services assistant with a hammer.
- A library employee was hit with a garden cane by a member of the public.

- A male member of the public threatened to follow an employee home and kill him, his wife and children.
- A library worker was threatened with being stabbed.

Quotes from library staff:

‘The severity of incidents or threats has increased (due) to knives, and most are drug or drink related.’

‘I’ve been assaulted at work... followed home, spat on and had police coming to my house to warn me of threats.’

‘I’ve been called every name under the sun, threatened outside work and had my car vandalised more than once by service users.’

Sarah Wilson (name has been changed), from the South West: ‘A customer threatened me with a cut-throat gesture after I’d asked him to leave.’

‘He was being aggressive and using the c-word. It went to court and he was ordered to pay damages, but nothing happened.’

Verbal abuse and harassment

Intimidation aimed at library staff, offensive language, spoken threats and verbal abuse, often racial, sexual or homophobic, are commonplace:

- More than four in five (82%) suffered personal verbal abuse.
- A similar number (80%) had witnessed colleagues suffering this abuse.

Examples include:

- Members of the public abused staff with the c-word.
- Managers suggested female staff wear wedding rings to deter library users who sexually harass them.
- A library worker reported they were touched inappropriately by library users ‘on many occasions’, and subjected to sexual remarks for three years.
- A member of the public with mental health issues was banned from libraries for racist abuse.

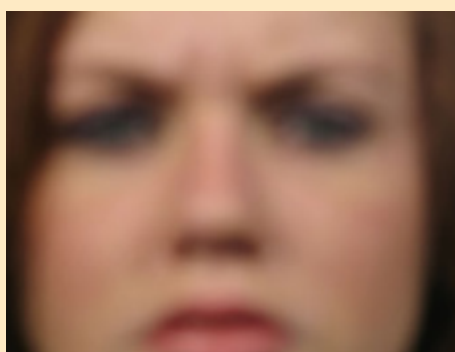
Quotes from library staff:

‘I’ve been spat at, seen a colleague assaulted and received torrents of homophobic abuse.’

‘We recently had a customer looking up skirts as staff walked upstairs and making them feel uncomfortable by constantly staring.’

‘In my many years’ service I’ve been subject to verbal abuse, physical abuse... and sexual advances.’

Case studies include:



John Harrison (name has been changed), from Scotland: ‘We were forced to evacuate the library when a gang of girls went on the rampage. They’d been reprimanded, so they tried to kick the doors in and stoned the building.’

‘I’ve also been spat at, had things thrown at me, and threatened with being stabbed when I tried to collect a 50p fine.’

Jess Cooper (name has been changed), from the South East: ‘A customer touched me inappropriately and aggressively. Ever since I’ve been on my guard, and even stopped bending down to avoid it happening again.’

‘He also highlighted the fact I wasn’t born in this country. This happened before when someone hurled racist abuse, and another refused to be served by me.’

Factors behind violence and abuse

An overwhelming majority (92%) of workers blamed this aggressive behaviour on a rise in the number of difficult or challenging people who are using libraries.

Cuts to library staffing levels (74%), increased staff workload (51%) and funding cuts (48%) were also given as reasons.

The individual comments provided by library workers who took part in the survey highlight how many have taken on a host of extra responsibilities.

This is in the wake of closures and cuts, which have led to multiple public services being housed under the same roof as libraries. Library staff now help members of the public apply for visas and Universal Credit, deal with housing queries and even collect parking fines.

Comments by staff also reveal many vulnerable people are turning to libraries for help and shelter. This is because of cuts to services such as mental health, drug addiction and homelessness.

Some individuals in need of help then take out their frustrations on library employees, who often have insufficient training to deal with their issues.

Staff also reported that as council jobs are axed, more council services were being delivered online. The library is now seen by the public as ‘one of the few places where customers can get help by speaking to someone face-to-face’. This leaves the library workforce to bear the brunt of complaints on a wide range of under-resourced council services.

To make the situation worse, staff report that all too frequently, library computers were not fit for purpose. Co-location of multiple council services under one library roof was proving to be a flash-point for aggression towards library staff.

A significant number (42%) said an increase in time spent working alone was a factor behind the violence and assaults, an issue which UNISON believes is a result of cutbacks and exposes staff to risk.

The report reveals that half (51%) of library workers do their job in isolation from others, with little or no supervision. More than one in ten (16%) work alone up to two days a week, and more than a third (35%) for more than two hours a day.

22% cited other factors, including a lack of security measures such as security staff, panic buttons and CCTV.

Quotes from library staff:

‘Having several services in one place means more people are in the building wanting to access support that might not be available that day. Disappointment can lead to aggressive behaviour towards library staff.’

‘Funding cuts to groups supporting people in the community, such as those with mental health and drug-related problems, are an issue.’

‘We now sell parking vouchers and accept payments for parking fines. The result has been an increase in people getting annoyed and violent.’

‘Council and government push to deliver as many services online [as possible], without allowing for customers who cannot engage with online, coupled with IT resources that are not fit for purpose and frequently crash.’

‘A lot of service users, particularly vulnerable users, cannot use the internet and have a high level of expectation of help from library staff, who are often under immense pressure, with fewer staff and resources.’

‘Many people come in angry and frustrated because they’ve been hanging on the telephone for lengthy periods trying to get through and failing.’

‘Most lone working happens after 5pm when only female staff are present. This seems

particularly dangerous on dark winter evenings. However, violence (or the threat of it) can, and has, erupted in broad daylight as well as in the evenings.'

'We haven't had access to any security for years. With cuts, the police presence... is almost invisible.'

Conclusion

It is clear from the survey results that library staff are facing unacceptable levels of violence, abuse and harassment at work. UNISON believes these alarming incidents must not be seen as 'part of the job'.

Library staff provide a vital public service at a time when local support generally has been cut to the core or axed altogether.

The result is that workers are being forced to deal directly with the impact of austerity on neighbourhoods and on the most vulnerable in society. Members of the public who would have once visited job clubs, youth clubs or day centres are now turning to libraries for help – and taking out their frustrations on staff.

While physical attacks represent the most serious form of violence, verbal abuse and

threats can also have long-term health effects, such as depression and anxiety. They can also lead to physical assault.

However, comments from library workers show many are accepting verbal abuse as part of the job.

UNISON believes that all verbal assaults should be monitored by managers, so that repeat offenders can be identified.

Training can help prevent physical and verbal abuse. It is not a substitute for security systems such as CCTV, security guards and panic buttons, but it is an essential part of any strategy for reducing work-related violence. Our report highlights the inadequacy of staff training.

Recommendations

UNISON is calling for:

- All employers to train library staff so they know (for example) where exits are, and how to calm down threatening people.
- Lone working to be eliminated.
- Employers to install security measures such as guards, CCTV, alarms and panic buttons.

- All employers to sign up to UNISON's violence at work charter. This includes a senior manager taking responsibility for implementing a written violence and aggression at work policy.
- The government to reinvest in local authority services and rebuild our public library service, so that staffing levels and resources are sufficient to ensure a safe working environment.



Keep an eye out for UNISON's campaign this year. Get involved with future surveys. If you think you can act as a case study for us, or have a story to tell, you can play your part – anonymously if you prefer. Get in touch with us at libraries@unison.co.uk.

Top of the trust tree

We've always known that libraries have a unique role as safe public spaces that people trust. The latest proof of this is pretty spectacular!

New research by IpsosMORI rates all the professions you can easily think of, on one crucial factor – do people trust them to tell the truth?

And librarians are at the top – trusted by 93% of Brits. (Well, nurses beat librarians by a single point, but we are happy to give way to them... together, these two even beat doctors in the trust stakes!)

The annual IpsosMORI Veracity Index is the longest-running poll on trust in professions in Britain. It has been asked consistently since 1983.

For all that, this is only the first year that librarians have been included at all.

We hope that's a sign of rising recognition that librarianship actually is a profession. Let's hope it filters through to certain decision-makers.

It's a massive - and deserved - vote of confidence in our libraries.

And in the professional librarians that make them what they are.

To quote Isobel Hunter of Libraries Connected: 'It's the people who put the libraryness in the libraries.'

The full report* paints a fascinating picture of changing social attitudes. It's the health and culture professions that line up as the top five: nurses, librarians, doctors, teachers and museum curators.

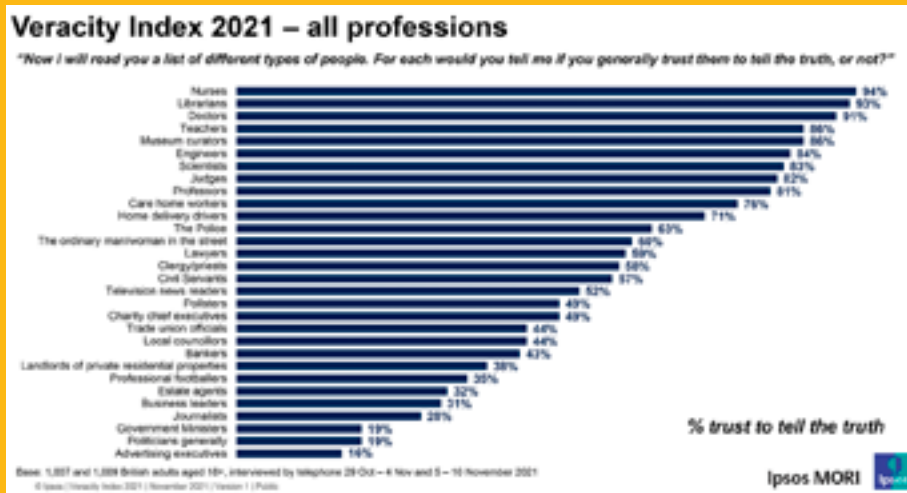
The five least trusted professions are advertising

executives, politicians, government ministers, journalists and business leaders.

It's little surprise these days to see politicians at the bottom at 19%, with only advertising executives scoring lower. This might have changed since the research was done in December...

* For the core list of 21 professions IpsosMORI interviewed a representative sample of 1,009 adults aged 18+ across Great Britain by telephone between 5 and 10 November 2021

<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/ipsos-mori-veracity-index-trust-police-drops-second-year-row>



Hendon's horrible 'hub'

Two couples got wind of ugly plans for Hendon – and its much-loved library. Within days, their Save Hendon campaign had hundreds of supporters. Gabbie Asher tells their story.

The campaign kicked off in January 2021, when Hendon residents were informed about a consultation on a Draft SPD (Supplementary Planning Document), the blueprint for a regeneration project in Hendon.

The gist of it seemed to be that hulking new student accommodation blocks would be crammed on to council-owned land, smack bang in the middle of both residential and civic areas of historic Hendon (rather than on the university's own footprint). Also, community buildings and homes were to be demolished to make room for these new blocks.

And our 100-year-old library building was to be taken away from us and leased to Middlesex University to house its Business School. Our library services were to be moved to the glass-fronted ground floor of one of the eyesore accommodation blocks.

Community

It was lockdown and we couldn't meet up in real life. So we started a tiny Facebook group, just for our street, so we could get our heads around the details of this consultation (this was the first of four consultations foisted upon us last year).

When I say 'us', I mean myself (I'm a TV script-writer), my husband Rick (graphic designer) and our neighbours/lovely friends - Hayley, a fine artist, and Brad Blitz, a university professor. The core team widened out a bit to include people from every background and walk of life. Within a couple of days of starting the Facebook group, we had accidentally gathered a few hundred members.

None of us are political activists or anything. We didn't have a clue what we were doing. But we profoundly believed the 'regeneration' plans for our neighbourhood were going to be disastrous for our community.

Community has become far more important to people around here (as I'm sure it has around the country) since Covid. This isn't just theoretical; so many fantastic local groups and organisations have sprung up as a result of Covid. There seems



Hendon Library

to be a real need to connect. People's values have shifted.

The loss of our beautiful, much-loved library was particularly galling. Apart from the obvious, the university has taken over all our civic buildings. This is the last one that the public have regular access to.

Having said that, the library services have been systematically dismantled over the past few years. It's now pretty unpleasant inside the library building, and most of the space has already been given to Middlesex University. We want it back!

The fact that all these changes were because of a university's plans made this really difficult for us. Many of us work directly for, or are connected to, higher education establishments. We didn't want to be fighting an academic institution. But we felt we had no choice.

Regeneration?

We aren't against regeneration at all, and love the potential of having the university situated here. We just wanted the plans scaled down, for many reasons that we later outlined in our online Planning Application Guide.

So we just stumbled along, feeling our way, trying to figure out what we were doing. We attended all the Zoom meetings for the SPD consultation and organised an open letter to the university. We felt that talking directly and honestly with our neighbour would be a great way forward.

The university agreed to meet us and we put together a diverse group from the community for the occasion. But nothing came of it. We couldn't help feeling it was just a PR exercise.

As we got louder and more people discovered we were organising a campaign, we found we were being approached by neighbours who were accountants, auditors, architects, lawyers, planning consultants etc.

We were also approached by various incredibly helpful people and groups who'd been through crushing experiences with Barnet Council (libraries, big developments etc).

We then put together information packs and template letters, spoke with planning consultants and desperately tried to spread the word, even though it was lockdown. Most people in Hendon knew nothing about the regeneration plans.

Consultation?

Then, just 36 hours after the SPD consultation deadline, we received letters notifying us that a second consultation had begun. This time it was about specific plans for what was called the 'Hendon Hub', which the SPD had been the blueprint for.

Clearly, our feedback on the SPD hadn't been considered when they were putting this Hendon Hub plan together, as we believed it would be. There hadn't been time.

We felt the plans had been created entirely for the benefit of the university, not for the community, even though we were being repeatedly told by Conservative councillors that it was a wonderful thing for us.

A whirlwind of activity followed – and continues. I started a petition to save the library. I can't stress enough how loved Hendon Library is around here. The pilfering of it from us is unforgivable. There's no doubt the library has become the symbol of our community in this battle. The petition made the front page of the local paper.



The promised new library



Site of the planned mega-development

Anyway, we produced and distributed leaflets, organised PR, friendly demos, lobbied councillors, attended more meetings, created more information packs, educated ourselves about planning laws and policies, set up social media accounts, meetings, online campaigns and a website. Meanwhile, my husband felt so passionately about what was happening he decided to take things a step further and challenge Barnet Council himself. To do this, he had to hire lawyers but as he couldn't afford the tens of thousands of pounds it costs to take a local council to task, the community wanted to offer what support they could.

We're not a super wealthy community so it hasn't been easy. We designed and are selling T-shirts, set up and organised a crowdfunder, did more leaflets, held Zooms and meet-ups etc etc.

In the meantime, even though residents against this development range in age from 14 to 104, and come from the most diverse ethnic, religious and financial backgrounds, we became aware we were being painted as a bunch of old, student-hating NIMBYs. This was absurd.

We also had a professional troll attacking us online for months, using various different online personas. We've no idea who was paying him. It all felt a bit hopeless. But you just have to keep going.

Opposition

We are lucky to have had great support from our local Conservative MP, Dr Matthew Offord, who wrote personally to every resident to express his serious concerns. Our Labour GLA member, Cllr Anne Clarke, has been endlessly supportive too. But in reality it hasn't made a jot of difference. Despite overwhelming opposition, the plans have been pushed through at breakneck pace.

In our powerlessness, we felt we had to try and think outside the box. And that's how Brad came up with the brilliant idea of using the UN's Aarhus Convention. We are so grateful to him.

We were also advised by planning experts to approach the Secretary of State to request a

call-in of the planning applications, so Brad has submitted that too.

12 months ago, when the first Hendon Hub consultation hit us, we could not have possibly foreseen our battle would take us to the United Nations, the Secretary of State's office etc. But here we are, because Barnet Council has repeatedly refused to listen to us and just keeps bulldozing ahead with its Middlesex University expansion plans at the expense of our community.

Soon after we started trying to make our voices heard in January, we realised how powerless we were. There seem to be small groups of passionate people fighting terrible development plans across the borough and the whole of the UK. The problem is these individual local groups are small and their members have jobs and families. We don't have the time or the expertise or the serious people power to take on a local council.

Gabby Asher is Chairman of The Burroughs Residents Association

UNUSUAL JR

Library campaigns sometimes resort to Judicial Review (see our full background on this: <https://librarycampaign.com/beyond-the-council/>).

Rick Lecoat took an unusual tack – using planning law. His case focuses on a single, narrow and strongly arguable point – that the SPD (Supplementary Planning Document) that underpins the Hendon Hub plans should, by virtue of its scope and the policies it contains, be treated as a DPD (Development Plan Document).

A DPD, by law, requires a far higher level of scrutiny than a SPD – up to and including being put before a Secretary of State. By treating its document as a SPD Barnet Council had arguably, whether intentionally or not, prevented the plans from receiving appropriate oversight and scrutiny from central government.

Thus the so-called SPD would be unlawful, and could no longer be used to support the various planning applications involved.

In October 2021 the legal team filed its request for a JR with the High Court.

What happened next was even more unusual than the JR itself! As a direct result, in December Barnet Council made the extraordinary statement that 'the SPD has been given no weight in the consideration' of the various planning applications.

Save Hendon say: 'What does this mean? It means that to try and cheekily bypass Rick Lecoat's legal challenge, Barnet Council have decided to disregard their own blueprint for the Hendon Hub that was created for one purpose: to give weight to planning applications for the Hendon Hub!

'Aside from this meaning that the SPD consultation was effectively a huge waste of taxpayers' money and time, it significantly weakens any Hendon Hub planning application approvals, making them far easier for us to challenge.

'This we will be doing in a number of ways. We will also be bringing myriad challenges and claims against the council through various official bodies.

'The legal team that Lecoat engaged, thanks to people's generous support, continue to offer advice and opportunities of challenge to both the development plans themselves and Barnet's attempts to evade proper legal scrutiny.'





NOW – THE UNITED NATIONS!

Save Hendon campaigner Brad Blitz just happens to be Professor of International Politics & Policy in the Department of Education, Practice & Society at the University College London Institute of Education; Visiting Professor at the Institute of Global Affairs at the London School of Economics; and Senior Fellow of the Global Migration Centre, Graduate Institute, Geneva.

So Save Hendon is also turning to the UN's Aarhus Convention. It has been widely used in environmental matters. Can it be applied to a planning application with clear implications for the environment, sustainability and so on? We'll see...

The UN says: 'The Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs empower people with the rights to access information, participate in decision-making in environmental matters and to seek justice.'

'They are the only legally binding global instruments on environmental democracy. Their powerful twin protections for the environment and human rights can help us respond to many challenges facing our world: from climate change and the loss of biodiversity, air and water pollution to poverty eradication and security.'

'They provide a solid framework for governments to engage the public effectively in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs.'

Details: <https://unece.org/environment-policy/public-participation/aarhus-convention/introduction>



How Save Hendon Group Grew

Even if you don't know a thing about Hendon, the Save Hendon group is worth a look, as an example of good practice.

It started as a modest Facebook group discussing neighbourhood issues.

When the hub plan was announced, it quickly expanded to take in 'anyone in Hendon who wishes to oppose Barnet Council and Middlesex University's latest development plans'.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/3701819566549833/permalink/4645987815466332>

This was rapidly followed by an attractive website, with plenty of pictures and explanations, and regular chatty updates. Plus a prominent invitation to join the mailing list – and a donate button.

Plus clear and detailed analyses of the council's bewildering range of different planning applications, so people could understand the issues and pick out their own views. All very clearly laid out, with different aspects of the campaign accessible with a single click: <https://www.savehendon.org>

To raise funds they have a range of T-shirts (some will interest many library campaigners; others are very local, including the unbeatable slogan NEW YORK HENDON PARIS MUNICH!)

<https://www.savehendon.org/merch>

There were well-attended demonstrations outside the council's meetings.

There is a petition, still open. <https://chnng.it/5FVptwjlCZ>





Mrs Angry points out a well-known planners' ploy, the misleading picture: 'This [official] illustration chooses to flood your view of [the planned hub] with some of the lovely listed buildings that are included in the conservation area: the Town Hall, the library, the Methodist church, all presented in a charming, helpfully smudged ink and watercolour image, with some of the new and most ugly blocks, tall and rigid, relentlessly out of character with the area, carefully hidden behind a sponged out blur of trees...'

SOCIAL MEDIA

It did not take long for Barnet's ace blogger, Mrs Angry, to add to the fun. For her excoriating account of the whole affair, see: <https://www.brokenbarnet.blogspot.com/2021/03/the-boulevard-of-broken-dreams.html>

Another local blogger and tweeter - the splendidly-named JK Howling of Hendon - gives details of the promised 'state of the art' new library, with lacerating sarcasm.

<https://hendonresidents.wixsite.com/website/post/read-the-room-barnet-council-planning-application-2>

Plus, of course, tweets - using campaigners' own names plus tags to attract more notice, such

as @SaveHendon, #HandsOffOurLibrary, #SaveOurCommunity, #stoptheHendonlandgrab.

This soon attracted new people, new pictures, lively comments and - importantly - extra publicity about important demerits of the hub plans and the council's consultation - for instance, that keeping the library intact was not given as one of the options...

People contributed news about other relevant doings at Barnet Council and Middlesex University.

Recently, tweets quickly highlighted unexpected news that during the Christmas 2021 holiday (29 December), the council had quietly



scheduled a planning meeting for early January... and then demanded that all the many who wanted to speak there should find each other and agree a rota to fill the very limited slots in 24 hours flat!

HENDON HISTORY

JK Howling points out: 'About 20 years ago, Hendon library was extensively refurbished - "for the 21st century". In a successful 2007 pitch to modernise Kensington Central Library, this refurb was cited as the gold standard because it had generated a 40% increase in Hendon Library's use and the building "inspired, excited and delighted its users and supported a sense of civic pride".'

Since then it has been systematically gutted, including the children's library. This is perhaps the worst insult of all. For this spacious and elegant interior was where the whole children's library movement was pioneered.

Starting as the first-ever 'children's librarian' in 1926 in the borough, then setting up in Hendon Library when it opened in 1929, Eileen Colwell (1904-2002) had had no training in this specialism.

There wasn't any. Of her time at college, she said later: 'In two years, there was one lecture on children's books - and I was the only person interested.'

She built up a collection from scratch, involved the children and introduced the idea of story-telling.

As her reputation spread, other boroughs copied her. The library became an international showplace. 'Visitors,' she said with some pride, 'always had Hendon on their list.'

She went on to pioneer stories on radio and TV in the 1960s, lectured, gained many awards, wrote books of stories, championed children's writers and helped set up the whole professional infrastructure for children's librarianship.

And now this...



The Universal Library Offers aim to connect communities, improve wellbeing and promote equality through learning, literacy and cultural activity.



Libraries Connected

Health and Wellbeing

Healthier, Happier, Connected

To support the health and wellbeing of local people and communities through services that inform, engage and connect.



Culture and Creativity

Explore, Create, Participate

To enable local communities to access and participate in a variety of quality and diverse arts and cultural experiences through local libraries.

Information and Digital

Inform, Inspire, Innovate

To ensure local communities have access to quality information and digital services, to learn new skills and to feel safe online.



Universal Library Offers Calendar 2022



Reading

Engage, Imagine, Discover

To build a literate and confident society by developing, delivering and promoting creative reading activities in libraries.

Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise

To ensure that every library service provides a nurturing, accessible, reading and learning environment to blind and partially sighted people.



Children's Promise

To inspire children and young people to read for pleasure and to provide them with activities to support their education and wellbeing.

JANUARY

64 Million Artists January Challenge
27: Holocaust Memorial Day
30-6 Feb: National Storytelling Week

FEBRUARY

LGBTQ History Month
1: Chinese New Year
3: Harry Potter Night
7-13 Children's Mental Health Week
8: Safer Internet Day
21: Mother Language Day

MARCH

Women's History Month
3: World Book Day
11-20: British Science Week
21-27: Shakespeare Week
March - October: Unboxed Festival

APRIL

29 Mar-4: World Autism Awareness Week
2: International Children's Book Day
23: World Book Night

MAY

Local and Community History Month
16-22: Dementia Action Week
Pyjamarama

JUNE

1-7: National Volunteer Week
2-5 Platinum Jubilee
5: World Environment Day
6-19: Hi Vis Libraries Fortnight
7-12: Carers Week
9: Empathy Day

JUNE

15-21: Loneliness Awareness Week
20-26: Refugee Week
22: Windrush Day

JULY - AUGUST

Jul-Sep: Summer Reading Challenge
4-10 Jul: Health Information Week
12 Aug: International Youth Day

SEPTEMBER

8: International Literacy Day
13: Roald Dahl Day
24-30: Banned Books Week
30-2 Oct: Fun Palaces Weekend

OCTOBER

Black History Month
National Poetry Day
3-9: Libraries Week
10: World Mental Health Day
18: Anti Slavery Day
Family Learning Festival
Get Online Week

NOVEMBER

November, Men's Health Awareness Month
International Games Week

DECEMBER

3: International Day of people with disabilities
10: Human Rights Day
18: International Migrants Day

MORE IDEAS: Pick your own themes from these lists of 2022 anniversaries:

<https://guild.co/blog/community-national-awareness-days-2022>

<https://www.history.org.uk/primary/resource/9676/historical-anniversaries-calendar>

JANUARY

64 MILLIONS ARTISTS CHALLENGE

<https://64millionartists.com/our-work/creative-libraries>

<https://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge>

64 Million Artists, set up in 2014, is very on message with the new focus by ACE (Arts Council for England) on developing creativity in everybody. It has produced reports for ACE: Everyday Creativity (2016) and Cultural Democracy (2018).

It offers tailored projects to help organisations to develop creativity in their staff and their clients, including at Gateshead & Cumbria library services.

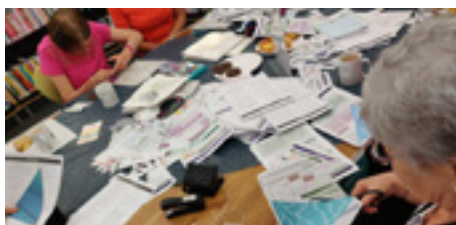
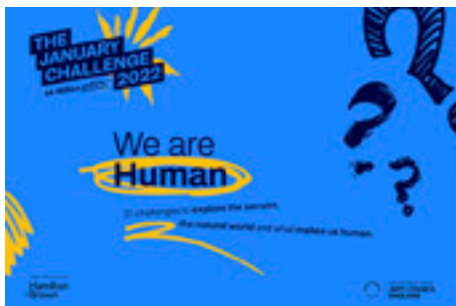
The January Challenge is different – free and available to everyone. It is ‘31 days of fun, quick and free creative challenges to kickstart your year’. In 2021 more than 50,000 people took part.

You sign up to receive a daily email. Or you can follow on social media using the hashtag #TheJanuaryChallenge on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and share responses to the challenges.

This year, there are three programmes:

We are Human – explore the senses, the natural world and what makes us human. **We are Culture** – explore our identities, cultures and communities. **We are Connected** – explore what happens when we create together.

There is a free Champions Pack for organisations that want all the material in advance, so they can direct some activities. Worth having beyond January!



JANUARY 27

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

<https://www.hmd.org.uk>

Holocaust Memorial Day is on 27 January (the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp).

It is promoted by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT). This international day remembers the 6m Jews murdered during the Holocaust, the millions of others killed by the Nazis and the more recent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

HMDT adds: ‘Even in the UK, prejudice and the language of hatred must be challenged by us all.’

The website is a massive treasure chest of information, ideas and free resources. They include lots of ideas on how to run events (including online) such as group art, a book club, a remembrance ceremony, a poetry reading (with suggested poems) or even a cook-along (with recipe cards). Plus podcasts, videos, factsheets and a wealth of personal stories.

The theme for 2022 is One Day.



JANUARY

NATIONAL STORYTELLING WEEK

<https://www.sfs.org.uk/national-storytelling-week>

<https://www.sfs.org.uk/resources/factsheets>



National Storytelling week is run by the Society for Storytelling, founded in 1993 ‘to support and promote storytelling in England and Wales’. In 2022 the Week runs 29 Jan – 5 February.

The focus is on children, with schools’ resource packs for four age groups. They include advice by professionals on how to tell stories, with video and audio to illustrate. Free, but donation appreciated.

The website has a register of professional storytellers, a list of events and clubs, and heaps of fact sheets for anyone who wants to improve their storytelling skills.



FEBRUARY

LGBTQ HISTORY MONTH

<https://lgbtplushistorymonth.co.uk>
<http://voicesandvisibility.org.uk/>
<https://www.outingthepast.com>
<https://www.outingthepast.com/theatreblog/burnley-films>
<http://www.schools-out.org.uk>

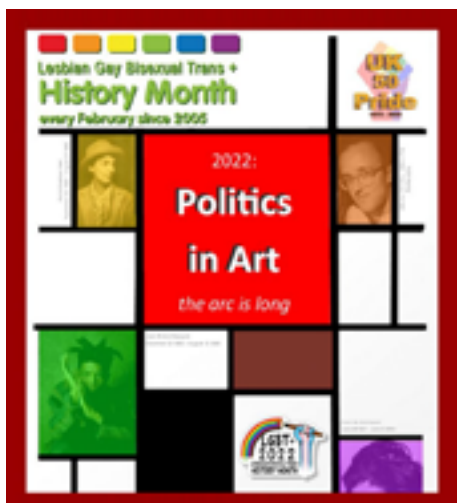
LGBTQ History Month began in 2005. 2022 sees the 50th anniversary of the UK's first Pride March in 1972. Art is the theme for 2022. It features five artists who used their talents for 'political' ends.

There is a poster and individual fact sheets.

A related theme is 'Voices and Visibility', highlighting hidden figures from history. A pretty amazing wall chart can be downloaded free, and there are notes explaining various items on the chart. Other resources, such as badges, need to be bought.

Another history resource called OUTing the Past has a list of presenters, and details of LGBTQ Month festivals at major museums – live or online. You can also see a play about a famous meeting held at Burnley Central Library in 1971, re-staged in 2020 in the same library.

Material for young people and schools is available at Schools Out.



FEBRUARY 3

HARRY POTTER NIGHT

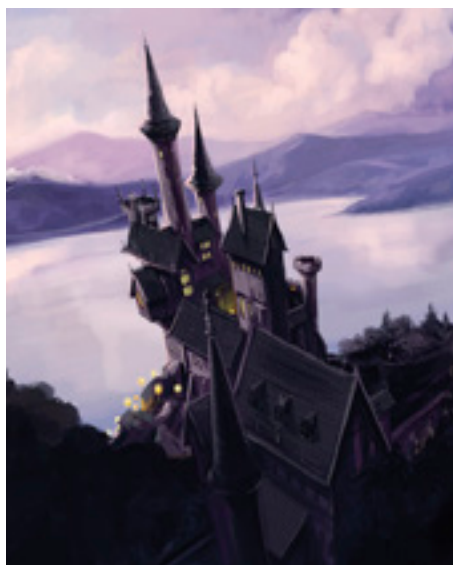
<https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/discover/harry-potter/harry-potter-book-night-2022>



Started in 2014 by Potter publishers Bloomsbury, Harry Potter Book Night takes the theme 'Magical Journeys' for 2022 (3 February).

The website has an event kit with ideas for decorating, dressing up and recipes, plus activities, games and quizzes. You can download posters, invites and certificates and a virtual background for online events. Content aims to be suitable for 'readers of all ages, lifelong superfans to young readers just beginning their magical Harry Potter journey'.

Register by 3 February to get downloads and news bulletins. Follow using using #HarryPotterBookNight on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.



FEBRUARY

CHINESE NEW YEAR

<https://chinesenewyear.net>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/chinese-new-year-teaching-resources/zmcvf82>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/55981199>
<https://chinesenewyear.net/zodiac/tiger/>

The Chinese New Year (or Spring Festival or Lunar Festival) uses the lunar calendar, so dates are different each year. This year it officially starts on Tuesday 1 February, and culminates with the Lantern Festival on February 15. 2022 is the Year of the Tiger.

Common themes in normal years are: the lucky colour red (red decorations, red envelopes with money given out), fireworks and the launch of lanterns into the sky on the 15th day.

Online you can explore the zodiac and many stories, traditions and ideas for anything from decorations to desserts. The BBC website gives basic information in videos (aimed at schools). The Newsround video includes a find-your-animal clicker and instructions for making dumplings...

FEBRUARY

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

<https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk>
<https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk>

Children's Mental Health Week (7–13 February) began in 2015. It is run by the charity Place2Be, which supplies counselling and mental health support in schools.

This year's theme is Growing Together: 'growing emotionally and finding ways to help each other grow... We will be encouraging children (and adults) to consider how they have grown and how they can help others to grow.'

Free resources at primary and secondary level include publicity guides, slides, and activities and fundraising ideas, such as a Dress to Express event.



FEBRUARY 8

SAFER INTERNET DAY

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2022/educational-resources>

Safer Internet Day (8 February) is run by Childnet International, Internet Watch Foundation and South West Grid for Learning, co-ordinated by the UK Safer Internet Centre.



Its theme for 2022 is 'All fun and games? Exploring respect and relationships online.'

It says: 'Platforms where [young people] can play games, interact with others and take part in "live" experiences such as video streaming play an important and positive role, particularly during lockdowns.'

'However, emerging safety issues [include] the lack of respect individuals display towards each other, groups ganging up against other groups, and the sense that it is easy to "get away" with negative behaviour such as meanness, bullying and swearing.'

The website has much advice tailored to helping kids as young as three, plus free Safer Internet Day activity and publicity ideas.

FEBRUARY 21

INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

<https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/motherlanguageday>

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/mother-language-day>

International Mother Language Day (21 February) was created by UNESCO (United Nations Education, Science & Cultural Organisation) in 1999 'to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism'.

The 2022 theme is 'Using technology for multilingual learning: challenges and opportunities: the potential role of technology to advance multilingual education and support quality teaching and learning for all'.

Lots of information on the websites, but nothing much to support a DIY event...

MARCH

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

<https://www.internationalwomensday.com/Resources>

<https://www.internationalwomensday.com/Library-Displays>



The key event is International Women's Day (8 March), first celebrated in 1911. It is 'not country, group or organisation specific'.

The 2022 theme is 'Break the Bias' in workplaces. Resources include videos, social cards and selfie cards to use with a special IWD pose, poster templates, Zoom backgrounds, hashtags and lots of information – with a section of ideas for libraries, including book lists.



MARCH 3

WORLD BOOK DAY

<https://www.worldbookday.com/resources>

<https://www.worldbookday.com/about-us/world-book-day-wales>



World Book Day (3 March) is celebrating its 25th anniversary: it was created by UNESCO in 1995 and is marked in over 100 countries. It began in the UK in 1997 and is now a charity sponsored by National Book Tokens.

The focus is to encourage children and young people to read for pleasure. Participants get a £1 book token, with new collections of £1 books every year funded by publishers (also available in Braille, large print and audio).

The website has masses of resources including bookmarks, bunting, book lists, a book club, storytelling on video, activity packs, games and quizzes, discussion guides, tips for schools and parents... Dressing up days are becoming popular.



MARCH

BRITISH SCIENCE WEEK

<https://www.britishtscienceweek.org>



British Science Week 2022 (11–20 March) is run by the British Science Association and supported by UK Research & Innovation, the agency that brings together the seven research councils, Innovate UK and Research England.

The theme for 2022 is ‘Growth’. This can be anything from plants and animals to buildings, population or economic growth, or personal growth.

The huge 2022 output (available all year) includes activity packs for three age groups, ‘the community’ and families at home, plus marketing materials, advice on organising the Week – and a Smashing Stereotypes campaign, with loads of stories about people in science and engineering.



MARCH

SHAKESPEARE WEEK

<https://www.shakespeareweek.org.uk>

CRAFT BUNDLE (4-7 years)



Shakespeare Week (21–27 March) is organised by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, to give primary school children ‘a great first encounter with Shakespeare – his characters, stories and language’.

The website has hundreds of free resources (available all year, many just as much fun for adults). They are aimed at teachers, families at home or ‘organisations’ – who get support if they register to hold an event.

They include BBC videos, online or live Covid-safe workshops, storytellings, craft ideas, games, quizzes and much more, on aspects of Shakespeare’s works and lifetime – ranging from baking, dancing and sport to language and design.



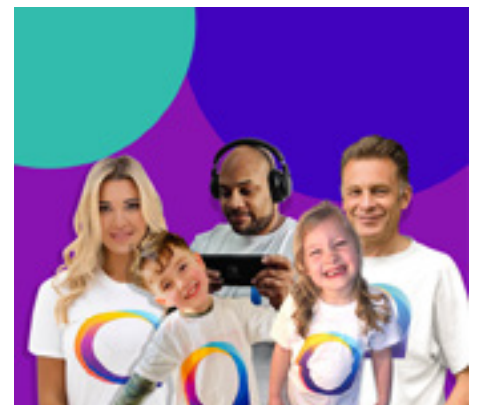
APRIL

WORLD AUTISM ACCEPTANCE WEEK

<https://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/raise-money/world-autism-acceptance-week-2022>

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/light-it-blue>

World Autism Acceptance (formerly Awareness) Week (28 March–3 April) is run by the National Autistic Society. It suggests that people fundraise. The website has lots of information on autism.



APRIL 2

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S BOOK DAY

<https://www.ibby.org/awards-activities/activities/international-childrens-book-day>

<https://www.ibby.org.uk>

Since 1967, on or around Hans Christian Andersen’s birthday, 2 April, ICBD has been run by IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) ‘to inspire a love of reading and to call attention to children’s books’.

This year it is hosted by Canada, which has produced a poem-poster. IBBY has a UK branch.



APRIL 23

WORLD BOOK NIGHT

<https://worldbooknight.org>
<https://readingagency.org.uk/hub>



World Book Night (23 April – UNESCO’s International Day of the Book and Shakespeare’s probable birth and death dates). It began in the UK in 2011, and is now run by The Reading Agency charity. It is the equivalent of World Book Day, for adults.

The core is a list of books, chosen annually, distributed free to be given away by ‘organisations... that can reach people who don’t regularly read for pleasure or have access to books’.

The idea is ‘something for everyone, including fiction, non-fiction and books aimed at teens and young adults’. All are also available as e-books, audiobooks or both.

Resources for libraries will be available soon, with an activity toolkit, ideas for events, booklists, images, banners and Twitter cards.

TRA also has a toolkit to support libraries etc to host their own author Q&As, panel discussions and readings. Plus the TRA at home hub.

This has ideas, activities and challenges from all TRA’s programmes to download.



MAY

LOCAL & COMMUNITY HISTORY MONTH

<https://www.history.org.uk/historian/resource/1567/local-and-community-history-month>
<https://www.history.org.uk/primary/resource/9676/historical-anniversaries-calendar>

Run by the Historical Association, Local & Community History Month (1–31 May) aims to increase awareness of local history, with local groups organising events.

The website promises poster templates and information around April. It has a very useful calendar of 2022 anniversaries, but most of its information, podcasts and publications are members-only or for sale.



MAY

DEMANTIA ACTION WEEK

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-involved/dementia-action-week>



Led by the Alzheimer’s Society, Dementia Action Week (16–22 May) usually includes a campaign on a specific theme. Last year it was about care homes. No news yet about 2022.

Meanwhile the website has case histories and a huge range of information and practical tools, many for free download.

MAY

PYJAMARAMA

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/pyjamarama>

Pyjamarama is an event when schools and nurseries spend a day in pyjamas to help raise money for the BookTrust charity ‘so every child can experience the benefits of a bedtime story’. No details yet about 2022, which will be its fourth year. But expect a huge supply of advice and activities, plus posters, poster templates, worksheets, labels, certificates and badges. The examples shown are from the 2021 campaign, to indicate the quality and range on offer.



JUNE 5

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

<https://www.worldenvironmentday.global>
<https://wedocs.unep.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/35114/MPNKM.pdf>
<https://www.unep.org/resources>

World Environment Day (5 June), held annually since 1974, is the United Nations’ principal vehicle for encouraging environmental awareness and action. It now promotes the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

It is used as a ‘brand’ by numerous events.

The 2022 theme is ‘Only One Earth’ – living sustainably in harmony with nature. A grim but brief downloadable report sets out the issues.

Sign up to get UK-specific ‘news, events, updates and milestones on WED and environmental updates’.

The UN Environment Programme – 50 years old this year – has lots of downloadable information, some in poster form.

Full STEAM ahead!

First mooted as the Festival of Brexit, re-branded as Festival UK, it's now called 'Unboxed – Creativity in the UK ... a groundbreaking celebration of all our creativity taking place across the UK in 2022'. Whatever that means, we're glad that libraries will play a part.

What's it all about? Begun under Theresa May, the festival idea has endured a somewhat cynical welcome given the disastrous cultural effects of Brexit, the government's mixed record in supporting the arts – especially during the pandemic, and the unhappy history of the Millennium Dome.

A basic theme is 'cross-sector innovation' – bringing together arts, science and technology. At the moment, there is little to see beyond some pretty excitable descriptions. Details are being

kept under wraps until the first project is launched in March.

But we do know that TRA (The Reading Agency) has a major role in one of them. Called StoryTrails, it's about 'creative and innovative story-telling'.

Another hopeful sign: Martin Green, Unboxed's chief creative officer, was the head of ceremonies for the 2012 London Olympics – a huge success.

TRA has done well to survive the labyrinthine bidding process. In September 2020, an open call invited 'new and unexpected partnerships' to

apply for paid workshops to develop ideas for mass participation projects. They got 299 applications from 3,000 professionals in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM).

More than 500 organisations and individuals were picked and grouped into 30 teams. These



Martin Green

What is StoryTrails?

TRA promises to tell us more in February, when the work gets through teething problems caused by the enduring pandemic. Meanwhile, we can but quote the official write-up...

StoryTrails is a deep dive into our collective history. It's a magical immersion in the lost and untold stories that shaped our towns, cities and communities – and a chance to start a conversation about who we are now, and where we're going next.

We're transforming the streets, squares, cinemas and libraries of 15 UK towns and cities into gateways to our past. Through these gateways, you can explore some of the extraordinary hidden histories that changed where we live and who we are.

Local communities will be asked to contribute forgotten and unheard stories that made these places what they are today. And, using state-of-the-art technology, we'll re-tell them for you in 2022. We have recruited and trained 50 creatives to work in augmented and virtual reality and 3D software.

Each StoryTrail is a journey through time and space. Your journey will begin in the local library at the StoryTrails Portal. After being immersed in a virtual map of your town enhanced by 3D imagery and audio, you'll head out into the streets – guided by a free AR app, moving at your own pace and in your own time.

Using a mix of augmented and virtual reality experiences that remix the BFI and BBC archives, you'll experience history where it actually happened, bringing the physical and digital worlds together. These moments will re-tell the story of each place and its people, bringing together our national archives and new 3D 'selfies' of people and places to create the world's first 'spatial archive'.

It will culminate with a film by David Olusoga: exploring our history, considering our lives today and starting new conversations about where we might go next.

Professor Olusoga said: 'By enabling 50 diverse creative voices to create compelling stories that combine past, present and future through the magic of immersive technologies, we'll be mapping a new path for creativity in this country. StoryTrails will set the public's imagination alight with experiences that use the poetry of history to inspire a new vision of our future.'



spent four months refining their ideas with experts in a 'purpose-built online creative studio'. Finally in February 2021, just 10 were chosen.

Karen Napier, TRA's chief executive, says: 'As a charity we are thrilled to see the power of reading as an integral part of the collaboration with STEAM organisations, inspiring future generations and connecting communities through the proven power of reading.'



Karen Napier

'New technologies will spotlight the inspiring work of libraries as centres of innovation and their role in supporting the building of a diverse creative workforce in the UK. We hope that StoryTrails will provide both regular users and new visitors with an opportunity to engage with their libraries as crucial hubs for sharing stories and then hearing them back in new and exciting ways.'

TRA will organise the libraries part of StoryTrails. It has plenty of partners. The overall project is led by StoryFutures Academy (run by Royal Holloway, University of London and the National Film & Television School). Delivery partners include the BFI (British Film Institute), TV presenter and university professor David Olusoga, and technology and event specialists.

Martin Green insists that Unboxed is the UK's 'biggest and most ambitious public creative programme to date... an unprecedented and timely opportunity for people to come together and take part in awe-inspiring projects that speak to who we are and explore the ideas that will define our futures.'

It will also be open to international audiences, via the British Council, the BBC and the Royal Society of Arts.

WHEN & WHERE?

StoryTrails starts in July, ends in September 2022, visiting in turn:

Omagh	Swansea
Dundee	Newport
Dumfries	Bristol
Blackpool	Swindon
Bradford	Slough
Sheffield	Lambeth
Lincoln	Lewisham
Wolverhampton	

FIND OUT MORE (and get on the mailing list!)

<http://unboxed2022.uk/>

<https://unboxed2022.uk/storytrails>

PLUS...

<https://www.instagram.com/StoryTrailsProject/>

<https://www.facebook.com/StoryTrailsProject/>

THE NINE OTHER PROJECTS

- **About Us** (in Paisley, Derry-Londonderry, Caernarfon, Luton, Hull) – a touring light and vision journey through time and space, from the Big Bang to the present day, exploring the earth's history and people's connections to one another.
- **PolliNations** (in Edinburgh, Birmingham) – a pop-up forest garden that celebrates the global origins of the UK's plants and population through immersive installations, live music, talks and performances.
- **Dandelion** (across Scotland, with music and food festivals in Glasgow and Inverness) – 100,000 children and young people will take part in the largest community growing experiment ever undertaken in Scotland, with live events to explore the science of future growth.
- **GALWAD** (Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Swansea, TV and online) – a story from our future using film and TV, creative technology, live performance and the talents of Welsh communities, inviting audiences to explore the moral dilemmas and possibilities of our future.
- **Tour de Moon** (Leicester, Newcastle, Southampton and satellite locations in England) – a festival of ideas inspired by the moon, held on a festival site created for young people and families.
- **Our Place in Space** (Derry-Londonderry, Belfast, Divis and Black Mountain, Cambridge and Ulster Transport Museum) – a 10km scale-model sculpture trail of the solar system, which can be experienced physically, or in augmented reality from any location.
- **See Monster** (Weston-super-Mare) – a decommissioned North Sea offshore platform transformed into a public art installation.
- **Dreamachine** (Edinburgh, Cardiff, London, Belfast) – an artwork seen with your eyes closed that explores the potential of the human mind in a new kind of collective experience.
- **Green Space, Dark Skies** (online) – celebrating the UK landscape to connect people with nature using a new lighting technology experienced online.



Libraries at war... then and now

A new book tells the amazing story of the underground library in war-torn London. It was one part of a social revolution – which still needs to be fought for today.



THE BOOK

Libraries create writers! And here's a book as wrapped up with libraries as it could be...

Due out in February 2022 is *The Little Wartime Library* by Kate Thompson, published by Hodder & Stoughton. It's a novel inspired by the true story of the underground shelter library created in wartime Bethnal Green.

As she researched her book (in the library service archives, of course), Kate found out that the (above ground) Bethnal Green library would reach its centenary year in 2022.

Then, as she reached deadline in early 2021, she found it was under present-day threat – and got involved with the campaign to save it.

The campaign succeeded brilliantly, as we reported last March (see story opposite).

And Kate was so inspired by the stories she unearthed about that wartime library that she started a whole new project – interviewing 100 present-day librarians!

Each chapter of the book starts with a quote from a librarian she has interviewed.

The hardback version, which comes out on 17 February, will include an article about the real

underground library, and the fight to save it.

The paperback version, which comes out in September 2022, will include the same article, plus an article about the 100 library workers she will have interviewed by then.

She will spend all of September 2022 visiting libraries up and down the country to talk about the book and her research, leading up to Libraries Week in October.

'So much of it,' says Kate, 'does feel like serendipity – the library's future coming under threat as I was immersed in its past, chancing upon its centenary as I was researching.'

'It was strange... I was writing about the influence, agility and creativity of wartime librarians and their pioneering scheme that worked on the basis that if people can't get to books, you take books to the people.'

'Then, 80 years on, when people couldn't get to the library again – this time not because of bombs, but because of the pandemic – the council responded, not with imagination like their wartime predecessors, but by proposing to close the library.'

'The parallels between the two felt uncomfortably close, yet the two responses could not have been more different...'

'A historian friend, Louise Raw, told me about the campaign and asked if I would get on board. I said yes, of course, I would be more than happy to help.'

'I had already signed the petition. I added my signature to a letter to the mayor, did the usual tweeting and social media to raise awareness, made a video for the campaign, then wrote a piece which I pitched to the Guardian, which fortunately they liked enough to run...'

'I am pitching another article to Guardian G2 section about the research and interviews I have done, which hopefully will get picked up around February.'

'I am now involved in planning the Bethnal Green People's Festival – to celebrate the library's centenary and prove to the powers that be that we love that library too much to see it reduced to a shadow of its former self.'



THE WRITER

Kate Thompson explains how research into a wartime tragedy led her to discover an amazing story that still resonates today.

I found out about the wartime library in the best way, by one of the original users telling me about it.

A lovely lady called Pat Spicer, who is 92 and was born in Bethnal Green, used to shelter in the underground when she was a child.

I am on the board of the Stairway to Heaven Trust, which raised the funds for a memorial to the 173 people crushed to death on the steps down to the tube in 1943.

Pat knew lots of people who were killed that day. I got to know her through attending the memorial to the disaster at St John's church.

I interviewed Pat and she told me about the underground library. I was instantly absorbed and captivated by the idea, especially when she told me: 'I used to go to the little underground library and I borrowed Milly-Molly-Mandy. It sparked a life long love of reading that lasted my whole life. I didn't worry about the bombs when I had my head buried in a book.'

I was so intrigued by what Pat told me that I went along to Tower Hamlets Local History &

Library Archives. Sure enough, Pat was right.

There were photos of the underground library and written memories by the librarians who helped to set it up.

The idea of a child learning to read, and falling in love with libraries and books through using a library set up and run over railway tracks, made me realise the magic and transformative power of that library.

I also love the idea of reading underground down in a tunnel, with all natural light and noise obscured. Does it somehow sharpen the imagination, make the act of reading more intimate?

I am fascinated by the worlds beneath our feet. The idea of a many-layered, self-governing, subterranean community, with such sophisticated and advanced facilities for 1941, is to me both astonishing and magical.

I then realised, from looking in the archives, that October 2022 marked the library's centenary. So I decided to interview 100 library workers to mark that significant milestone.

It was also a great way of researching the book by understanding what motivates librarians (especially there is so much misconception around their roles) and the passion and hard work they pour into their jobs.

I've got to know a fair few librarians over the years through doing talks about my books. I have stayed in touch with them, so I interviewed a lot that way. You interview one librarian, they know five more and put you in touch.

I ran appeals on Twitter and Facebook (this always yields good results, especially Twitter).

CILIP has been massively helpful, especially after I took part in one of their presidential debates. People got in touch then, and then again after they featured me in their newsletter.

I also got in touch with CILIP's retired librarians branch and Libraries Connected (their president, Carol Stump, was really helpful).

It has truly been an eye opening experience. Eighty interviews down (20 to go), my respect for the frontline work librarians do is absolute!

FOLLOW KATE

www.katethompsonmedia.co.uk

www.facebook.com/KateThompsonAuthor/
[instagram – kate.thompson1974](https://www.instagram.com/kate.thompson1974)

Twitter – @katethompson380

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/mar/03/bethnal-green-library-win-war-pandemic-closure>



THE FIGHT IN 2021

This is how The Library Campaign's website told the story in March 2021.

Saved – for now, anyway. That's the great news from Tower Hamlets, east London, where a determined campaign led the council last week (4 March) to scrap its library cuts. There will be a 'review' in 18 months. Planning to meet any future challenge starts now...

TLC talked to Glyn Robbins, one of the main organisers of the public campaign. All the local unions – Unison, Unite, GMB – backed the campaign. But public support is vital, Glyn says. A campaign can be dismissed by politicians as self-interested workers 'just defending their jobs'. Showing that libraries are vital to communities makes that much harder. Also vital was a clear, simple and united message – just leave the libraries alone.

Here's a tip: start early! Steady opposition began as soon as preliminary plans were aired last November. They included closing two (out of eight) libraries, running down two others, sacking 35 staff (one-fifth of the total) and reducing hours, to save £1m (from a budget of £4.4m). A further £600,000 was somehow to be saved through 'online provision'.

By March, concessions had whittled down the projected saving to just £365,000. And it was obvious that the damage to services – and the council's reputation – wasn't worth such a small sum.

The campaign proper began in January. An online open-to-all meeting attracted 200 people. The speakers included Glyn plus long-time campaigners (and TLC allies) Alan Gibbons and Alan Wylie.

Then everyone piled in.

► The pandemic was a constant theme. 'You shouldn't close libraries ever, but certainly not now!'

► Children, with help from the scouts, made a powerful video about their need for libraries.

► An online petition collected 2,300 signatures (Glyn says signatures from outside the borough were valuable, telling the council that 'other people are watching you'.)

► Social media spread this and other messages. Seeing all the likes and re-tweets were really encouraging, says Glyn – 'you can't run a campaign these days without social media'.

Among the celebs who signalled their support were Alex Wheatle, Malorie Blackman, Michael Rosen, Stella Duffy, Patrick Gale, Kate Hudson and Vaseem Khan.

► The local paper covered the story, of course.

► Local author Kate Thompson got an article into the Guardian. Fortuitously, she is just now publishing a book on how the local library (evacuated underground) helped East Enders survive the blitz...

► Another local author, Jackie Lees, printed and distributed (with help!) 2,500 leaflets about her own local library, Cubitt Town, where she researched her book on Bob Dylan.

► A powerful letter was sent to the mayor by Michael Rosen and local authors Kate, Louise Raw and Sarah Wise, plus professors at Birkbeck College and local university Queen Mary's. The names, says Glyn, were collected via personal contacts. It helps to have experienced local campaigners who have built up such contacts.

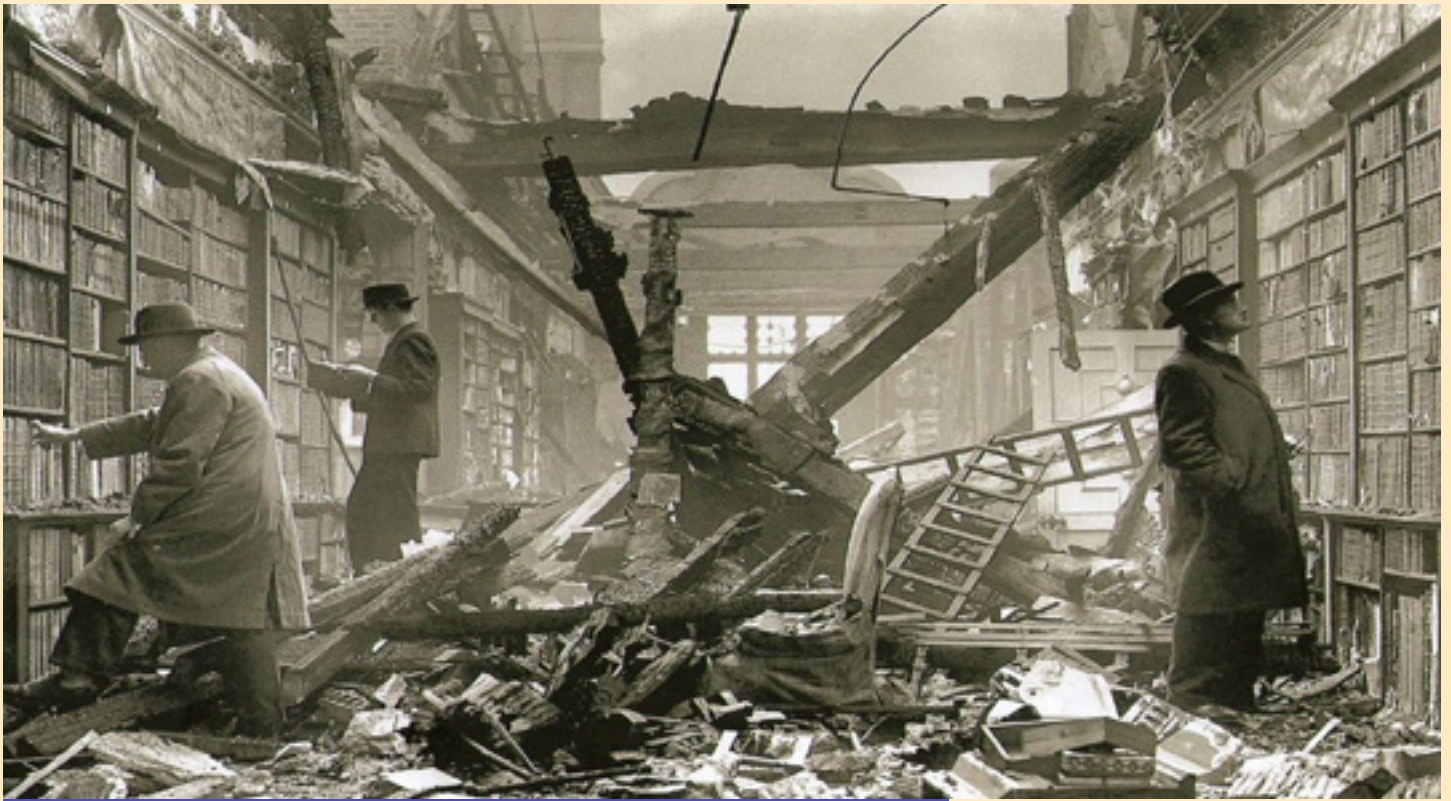
► A local MP, Apsana Begum, helped. Another did not...

► Apart from opposition councillors, a dozen from the ruling Labour party voiced their unease behind the scenes. An uncomfortable split developed...

It helps, says Glyn, that this area has 'a strong political counter-culture' built on events such as scandals surrounding former mayor Lutfur Rahman and before that George Galloway's Respect campaign.

'It was all fairly well planned and co-ordinated. All the pieces worked together,' says Glyn. 'It created a momentum, pushed the council on to the defensive, wore them down. "They didn't seem to understand the wellspring from which all these feelings came.'

Well, they do now.



THE UNDERGROUND LIBRARY

Kate Thompson tells how East Enders – including the local council – ‘defied all laws and rules’ to create something of lasting value.

Bethnal Green’s library opened in October 1922. ‘The council is handing down to future generations a legacy of knowledge and sweeping away the misery and poverty of the past,’ said the mayor in his opening speech.

Less than 20 years later, a high explosive bomb smashed through the roof at five minutes before closing time. It was the first night of the blitz.

Borough librarian George F Vale and his deputy Stanley Snaith pulled a tarpaulin over the shattered glass dome roof. Soon they were planning a pioneering social experiment that would transform the lives of East Enders.

Bethnal Green Underground was a half-completed stop on the Central line when war broke out. From September 1939 it had been locked up and left to the rats. Just one week after the blitz began in September 1940, East Enders defied Churchill’s orders not to shelter in tube stations and claimed their right to safety. At 78 feet below ground, it was one of the few safe places in the area.

In December 1940, Bethnal Green Borough Council leased the station from the London Passenger Transport Board for £510 per annum.

Over the next year it became a fully functioning subterranean community. A shelter ticket reserved you one of the metal triple bunks

(less hospitable to lice). On one fiery blitz night, a record 7,000 people slept down there.

The facilities were extraordinary. A 300-seat theatre hosted opera, ballet and wartime weddings, a café served hot pies and bacon sandwiches. There was a doctor and a WVS-staffed nursery. And from October 1941 there was a library...

A grant of £50 had been approved by the council. ‘The Borough Surveyor was quickly on the job,’ wrote librarian Stanley Snaith. ‘All last summer, the caverns echoed to the din of hammers and saws. The result was a triumph.’

In the spring of 1942 he wrote in *Library Review*: ‘Libraries in converted shops, in village halls, in mobile vans, are common enough. But libraries in tube shelters are something new under the sun.’

‘When Londoners, undergoing the heaviest bombardment in history defied all laws and rules by taking possession of the tube, it was quickly evident that a new social situation was in being.’

The library was open from 5.30pm to 8pm every evening and loaned out 4,000 volumes of carefully chosen stock. Romance sat alongside literary classics, children’s books, poetry and plays.

Stanley wrote of his patrons: ‘Each dusk sees the first contingent making its way down to the bowels of the earth. The well and the ill, the old

▲ **Keep calm and carry on? They did it a different way in Bethnal Green...**

and the young, they come trooping down, carrying carpet bags, parcels, bedding in sheets or drab sacking – here a docker, there an undersized lad with an Atlas load improbably poised on his head, playing prieroux chevalier to a crippled mother – rough people, nice people, typical East Enders.’

Striking a (perhaps surprising) modern note, he added: ‘In the library the youngsters are vocally busy with their book-selection, but why should they not chatter to their heart’s content?’

Horror came one night in March 1943: 173 people were crushed to death on the steps going down to the shelter, when a mother carrying a baby tripped.

ARP wardens worked alongside housewives and Boy Scouts to save the injured. They were piled into anything with wheels and rushed to hospital. It took more than 60 police, rescue workers and volunteers three long hours to pull out all the bodies and injured people.

Authorities moved quickly, washing down the steps and ordering witnesses to say nothing. One of the war’s biggest civilian disasters was hushed up under the Official Secrets Act by a government desperate to avoid news of the scandal falling into enemy hands.

The enforced silence just compounded the survivors’ feelings of guilt. Rescuers’ hair turned grey overnight. Whole families had been torn apart.

Over the years I have interviewed many survivors, including the young doctor who was on duty that night at the hospital. Six months before her death aged 102, Dr Joan Martin MBE, told me: 'I was haunted by vivid nightmares of people being trampled to death, every single night for 73 years.'

Yet the existence of George and Stanley's underground library, built over the boarded-up tracks of the westbound tunnel, was little short of magic.

At the outset of war, The President of the Library Association, the grandly named Arundell Esdaile, wrote in *The Library Association Record*: 'Patriotism is not enough. The right reading of books is one of the chief ways of maintaining, and even enlarging, the culture of the mind which knows no frontiers.'

'And, after all, is it not on behalf of that culture that we are fighting to destroy that barbarism?'

One year later when the blitz broke out, he wrote: 'Librarians are alive to the conditions and are adapting themselves to the exigencies of the moment.'

He was right. Libraries boomed, and it could be argued that the democratisation of libraries took place in wartime. A Mass Observation survey showed that a new generation of working-class readers enrolled in public libraries during the war.

By 1942, Manchester Library recorded a record-breaking issue of over 5m volumes. Areas like Barnes and Swindon, which had no public library service at all prior to the war, rapidly opened one.

Small libraries were formed in shelters, hospitals and prisoner of war camps. St Pancras Borough Council launched the first travelling library van, which promised 'A Library to your Door'.

'Reading became, for many, the supreme relaxation,' wrote George Vale back in Bethnal Green.

Seventy-six years from the end of WW2, I see library workers reacting with the same resourcefulness, imagination and flexibility as their wartime predecessors.

Libraries are places of learning and escape, offering solace, sanctuary and trustworthy information, which in a conspiracy-theory age makes them more relevant than ever.

A library is unique. It's the only public space you can go from cradle to grave that is free, safe and democratic. Never have we needed or valued our libraries more.

Silence or sabotage?

Stephen Carlill, chair of the Friends of Carnegie Library, Herne Hill, on publicising the Gipsy Holocaust

In January each year for the past several years, the Friends of the Carnegie Library in Herne Hill, south London, have commemorated the Holocaust by choosing a relevant book for the author talk that we put on each month in conjunction with Lambeth Libraries.

In previous Januarys, we had commemorated specifically the Jewish Holocaust. This year our committee, Jews and gentiles alike, took the view that we should commemorate the Gipsy Holocaust. Doing so proved to be quite a task, but in the end very worthwhile.

How many Gipsies were murdered is a matter for speculation. Records of Gipsy populations before the Second World War were patchy, and it is not possible to come up with reliable estimates of the number slaughtered. But it was at least hundreds of thousands, and more likely millions.

These were men, women and children who were killed in the same ways and in the same places as the Jewish and other victims. Yet there seems to be little public awareness of this.

Finding a suitable book was surprisingly difficult. We wanted a work of fiction closely tied to what actually happened. With help from the Wiener Holocaust Library and the Families, Friends and Travellers Organisation, we finally identified two candidates:

- *Leaves in a Holocaust Wind*, by Bob Dawson, a gripping story with two young protagonists who survive against all the odds. Despite terrible things happening to them and their extended families, they never lose hope.



- *Settela's Last Road*, by Janna Eliot, an imaginative reconstruction of how a nine-year old Sinti girl would have experienced what was happening to her and her family. It ends with them in Auschwitz, waiting to enter what she thinks is a shower.

Both are very well-written but we eventually chose *Leaves...* because of its element of hope.

I belong to the public libraries in five London boroughs. None of them had a copy of *Leaves...* and only one had a copy of *Settela's Last Road*.

Other books about the Gipsy Holocaust are similarly absent. No doubt this is a reflection of that lack of awareness.

My impression that the Gipsy Holocaust is barely noticed was reinforced when I contacted Bob Dawson, the author of *Leaves...* His book has been out for five years, but this was the first time he had been invited to give an author talk.

The talk turned out to be excellent, giving some attention to the book but presenting a comprehensive, illustrated account of the Gipsy Holocaust. It was recorded, and you can find the recording by Googling 'Carnegie Library Facebook'.

The talk was on Zoom, and bookings for it on Eventbrite. Someone somehow arranged for emails to go to everyone who had booked, saying that the event had been cancelled. The emails purported to be from Zoom, and look genuine.

The miscreant or miscreants obviously object to the Gipsy Holocaust being publicised. But who they are and how they did it is a mystery.

Perhaps inevitably, there have been suggestions that Israel's Defence Ministry/ Ministry of Strategic Affairs was involved in an attempt to maintain that the Holocaust was a uniquely Jewish experience, justifying their conduct in the West Bank and Gaza. But there is absolutely no evidence to support this, and we may reasonably doubt whether they would be concerned about a suburban public library and its Facebook page.

In any event, at least one of these books – and preferably both – should surely be in every public library.



A tool for campaigners

In January 2021 TLC's website published an exasperated piece about 'The Great Library Publicity Disaster'.¹ We were immediately contacted by Helen Anderson, a librarian and MA graphic design student. She was researching graphic design as a publicity tool for libraries. We were able to give the project some help. Helen ended up creating a website where everyone can swap publicity ideas and posters. It's now on TLC's website. It already has a whole gallery of material.² It's there for you to take anything you can use! And to contribute your own creations to share...

WHAT TLC SAID IN JANUARY 2021

JAWS DROPPED recently when the BBC innocently announced a wonderful new scheme³ – to provide schoolkids with just ONE free e-book per week (the same book for everyone).

Yet any child (or adult) can contact their public library and get any number of free e-books – plus audio-books, e-comics, a massive choice of reference works, worldwide newspapers and magazines, and usually a lot more.

Three-quarters of services ran huge extra online programmes during the last lockdown, with anything from rhymetimes for toddlers to coding clubs and kids' reading groups. And no doubt are doing so again.

THE BBC DIDN'T KNOW

The BBC just didn't know. Lottie Begg (Public Library Apparel) tracked down – of all things – the BBC's 'Family & Education News' department. They were grateful to find out...

That's Library Campaign gripe no 1. Why on earth is our 'national' library service so useless at publicising the most basic facts about what libraries do? If a BBC specialist department doesn't know, how is Joe Public to find out?

There's always grand talk about 'advocacy'. There's a government department, and a national Libraries Taskforce, and the Arts Council, and a number of national library bodies... but they have never put their heads together and mounted a single, sustained publicity campaign.

We see the result in steadily falling use of library services by people who would love them – and endless library cuts and closures.



THERE'S NO WEBSITE

This leads us to Library Campaign gripe no 2. There is no single, attractive, user-friendly, national libraries website to find out what libraries offer. Wales can do it – and in two languages!⁴

For years, England has laboured mightily to produce the same kind of thing – grandly called the 'single digital portal'.

Nothing yet.

The project has now landed with the British Library, last heard from last August. Plus,

confusingly, news of one of the government's go-to companies, DXW, apparently now doing much the same thing.

Projects have come and gone. Nick Poole of CILIP can name 'at least three, going back 22 years to the People's Network Discover Service'.

Partial attempts are more numerous than that. TLC can't untangle it all in one news story.

Nick explains: 'Each [project] founded on the fragmented nature of the public library sector, and an unwillingness to take a single common action. That hasn't changed.'

Well, it should.

LOCKDOWN – WHAT A WASTE!

Thousands of people – somehow – found their way to local online services during the first lockdown. Usage rocketed, despite mostly poor local publicity. If only there had been an easy way for people to get the info...

Ian Anstice of Public Libraries News⁵ says:



HOW TO USE THE STORY THEY TELL

The website is here: <https://thestorytheytell.wixsite.com/savepubliclibraries>

You can participate in the project by sharing and downloading the posters from the gallery. Perhaps you are a supporter of libraries and want to copy one of the posters.

Perhaps you work in a library and are short on time and money for producing promotional posters and could use some help. You are also invited to contribute your own material. Contributions are welcome from anyone.

Maybe you are, or have been, campaigning for a library and want to share your posters to reach a wider audience? The heart and the skills behind the posters on show deserve a wider audience.

Maybe you work in a library and want to showcase your work? Tell us what your library has to offer.

Maybe you have only been to a library once, and want to share your experience? It can be a picture, drawn, painted, a written story... it can be a scribble, it can be highly detailed... the point is, if it is in support of public libraries and you are willing to share it, we would love to display it.

Send your work to thestorytheytell@gmail.com including some background about the work or the cause you would like to showcase, and we will be sure to credit you.

If you're on social media, tag @thestorytheytell to any image you use and we'll be sure to give you a mention – we would love to see where the posters are being used.

‘There is a widespread acceptance that we do not need another report or more research. We just need a website with stuff on it.

‘The fact that we have had nothing during the lockdown... should and does cause great anger.

‘Let’s get this done before other services, other agencies, take other things off us that should so obviously be within our sphere.’

TLC agrees!

Notes

1 <https://librarycampaign.com/2021/01>

2 <https://thestorytheytell.wixsite.com/savepubliclibraries>

3 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-55692137>

4 <https://libraries.wales> and <https://llyfrgelloedd.cymru>

5 www.publiclibrariesnews.com



WHY A WEBSITE?

Helen Anderson explains how an academic research project led her to create a very practical tool for library campaigners.

When I started my final graphic design MA project in January 2021, I had a vague notion of doing something about libraries, but had little idea where it would end up.

This should have perhaps panicked me more than it did. Yet with no preconceptions to worry about, the process led quite naturally to the outcome – a project in support of public libraries.

KEY ISSUES

Over eight months, alongside desk research, I became involved with the public library community through social media ethnography, interviews, surveys of staff and users and observational photography.

This approach enabled me to understand key issues surrounding public library advocacy.

Then I created The Story They Tell – a website that empowers users, encourages participation and showcases stories about public libraries and their locations.

I am under no illusion that graphic design can ‘save’ public libraries. If that was the case, perhaps libraries would be on more solid ground than they currently find themselves.

Collectively, though, an ongoing gallery of posters that anyone can contribute to, and which people can use physically and digitally, can help strengthen the position of public libraries.

It can demonstrate diverse perspectives, serve as an ongoing record of why public libraries matter, highlight what is lost when libraries close, provide valuable resources for those working in them and those defending them and underline how important the physical and digital space is.

The site was designed with a target audience in mind: those who work in, support and campaign for the survival of public libraries. Let’s face it, this encompasses a large cross section of people.

This desire to not exclude anyone was driven by a recurring feature of my research, that public libraries serve a multitude of functions to a variety of people.

Public libraries can mean anything to anyone. There is no single way of looking at them.

It must be remembered that each contribution sits within the context of a larger project. When viewed as a whole, the gallery will present an accurate, holistic and evolving picture of public libraries in the UK.

WHY POSTERS?

You may wonder ‘why posters?’ When it comes down to it, posters are well suited to advocacy. Anyone can produce a poster, and they have the potential to exert enormous impact to both literate and non literate viewers.

Historically, posters have communicated new and alternative ideas using traditional materials, much like public libraries. This makes them an appropriate medium to communicate stories about public libraries.

There is also huge variety in how a poster can look. The only limit is people’s imaginations.

The initial collection of posters in the gallery demonstrates how broad public library advocacy can be. There are posters used for library protests, posters highlighting services and posters illustrating the holistic effect of libraries, using answers from my surveys of library staff and users.

We have also had contributions from people featuring photography and a Twitter thread about the benefits of stock weeding.

Producing posters myself, I was keen to use various methods to reflect the analogue and digital benefits of public libraries. Some were created using a mix of materials withdrawn from libraries – there is something serendipitous about repurposing discarded library materials to advocate for public libraries.

So, what now? If you’ll permit me a moment of indulgence, I passed my MA with a distinction last September. More importantly, this is just the beginning of The Story They Tell.

For a project to have any chance of instigating real change, a long-term collective approach is needed. We need your help to grow The Story They Tell.

ADVOCACY

The designer Jonathon Barnbrook stresses that when it comes to graphic design and advocacy ‘the question isn’t: “Has anything changed because of a piece of work I’ve done?” It doesn’t work like that. You have to say your message and hope it gets through and changes some points of view.’ (cited in Long 2019).

In the case of The Story They Tell, the message is clear. Public libraries matter to people. With your contributions, hopefully we can convince more people of this.

Reference: Long, Molly, 2019: Protest by design: the creatives performing acts of political sedition, Design Week, 14 October. Available at: www.designweek.co.uk/issues/14-20-october-2019/protest-by-design/ accessed 6 March 2021]

Saving libraries by design ... and sharing

This is an abridged version of Helen's research report on 'How can graphic design be used to advocate for public libraries?' A key finding is that the inclusive nature of libraries means that advocating for them should be inclusive too. Everyone can contribute! The report has been edited to highlight the sections on libraries. If anyone is interested in discussing the research further, including its analysis of relevant trends in graphic design, get in touch via thestorytheytell@gmail.com

STARTING POINT

How can graphic design be used to inform and enhance the perception of public libraries, to counter further closures and reductions in funding?

There is no one clear answer. This is in part because situations vary across the UK, and in part because graphic design advocacy is an evolving area.

Equally, whilst there are various reasons why public libraries are important, many of these are hard to quantify. As public libraries' offerings are intertwined further with social, economic and cultural issues, this is unlikely to change.

Caught up as they are in these wider concerns, it is little wonder that public libraries need effective advocacy.

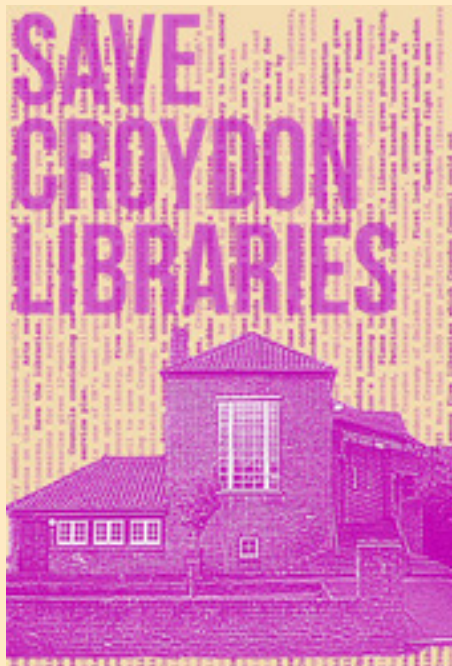
Although visuals exist supporting public libraries, these are created mostly on an ad hoc basis for specific campaigns or with documentation in mind.

The broader theme of public library advocacy can be found either in industry reports or in non-fiction books featuring well-known authors. Informative though they are, it does leave open the question whether anyone beyond the library world is being addressed.

I used interviews, surveys and observational photography, whilst social media accounts were used to conduct research into how people advocate for public libraries.

Social media have been invaluable in deepening my knowledge of the issues public libraries face and the context in which they are situated. It also enabled me to connect with campaigners across the UK.

Through these connections and due to lockdown, I was able to attend meetings that ordinarily I could not have attended, including a Library Campaign Zoom meeting.



What is striking is how much discrepancy there is across different regions, as well as between more seasoned campaigners and people new to saving public libraries – despite their collective goal.

Social media also led to a form of participant observation through my partnerships with Save Croydon Libraries and TLC (The Library Campaign). These in turn enabled me to prototype poster ideas.

CONVERSATIONS

Talking to Laura Swaffield, chair of TLC (The Library Campaign), the frustration about public libraries' lack of efficient publicity (local and national) was apparent.

In her view, it is difficult for people who use libraries regularly to find out the extent of their services – so those who do not use them would struggle.

Laura believes that one stumbling block to effective advocacy for public libraries is that they

can be absolutely anything to anyone.

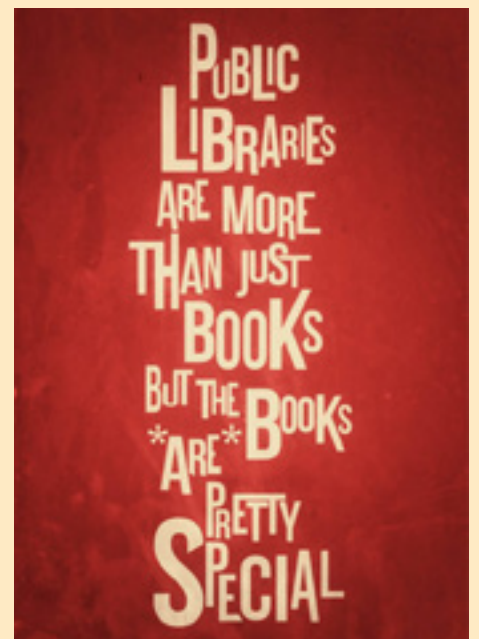
This is challenging to convey.

Also mentioned by campaigner Alan Wylie and librarian Luke Burton, this multiplicity of roles remained an intriguing fixture throughout my research.

Laura invited me to pitch the project at TLC's Zoom meeting about library publicity [May 2021¹]. She is keen to help develop and publicise the project.

Alan Wylie campaigns on a local and national level for public libraries, alongside working in libraries and being the workforce rep on the DCMS (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport) Libraries Taskforce.

From his answers, one gets a real sense that many of the problems public libraries face are far from new. Elaborating on the stealth cuts which Laura and I discussed, Alan explained how language disguises cuts and closures, citing 'volunteer-led' and 'community' libraries as being particularly misleading terms.



“From the commencement of this Act it shall be the duty of the Secretary of State to superintend, and promote the improvement of, the public library service provided by local authorities in England and Wales, and to secure the proper discharge by local authorities of the functions in relation to libraries conferred on them as library authorities by or under this Act.”

The 1964 Public Libraries and Museum Act ensures you have a legal right to public libraries. Don't let anyone take it away.

Lack of awareness at all levels exacerbates such problems. In Alan's opinion, decision-makers only really take note when there is a noticeable and 'vigorous public campaign which threatens their council/parliamentary seats/votes'.

One wonders, then, what could happen if there was an ongoing public campaign voicing support for public libraries?

In contrast to Laura and Alan, Ian Anstice, librarian and editor of *Public Libraries News*², provided answers that appeared less partisan, reflecting the journalistic intentions of his blog.

Ian had assumed that someone else would already be writing such a blog – yet again evidence of a critical issue in my research, that public libraries miss opportunities when it comes to raising awareness and promotion.

Arguably the belief that 'our worth should be self-evident' is not enough. With so much competing for our attention, a sustained form of advocacy could prove valuable in mitigating cuts and proposed closures.

Luke Burton, Service Manager at Newcastle Libraries, was a great help in understanding how public libraries can work with decision-makers.

Describing how his team champion their cause with the local council, Luke described how, rather than simply saying 'this is what we do', they outline how the library can assist with the broader issues councils face.

The difference makes a huge impact, positioning the libraries as invaluable resources for the community. Again, this exemplifies the need for increased awareness amongst decision-makers.

REFERENCES

1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnFptREPM4o>

2 <http://www.publiclibrariesnews.com>

THE SURVEY

My questionnaire had 14 replies from library staff and 48 from users.

People could perhaps have been more honest in their replies (for example, one who admitted that they believed libraries are irrelevant!).

Answers differed in length and tone. Yet trends are identifiable. These include an appreciation of the physical space, which contributes to a sense of nostalgia; how the physical and digital space complement each other; and the empowerment gained from public libraries.

Awareness of the lack of promotion was striking, particularly amongst the staff. This may be due to their relationship with their local authority, which can impact marketing.

Also notable was criticism of both the government and local authorities. Their joint lack of awareness puts a limit on the extent of the services offered and affects staff morale.

Although the survey of library staff indicated the holistic benefits of a public library, several users, though supportive of public libraries, felt they had no use for them at this time.

This corroborated the views of librarians Luke Burton and Allie Morgan. The latter argued that 'it's those who don't need the place [library] to survive that we now need to make aware'.

ADVOCACY PROBLEMS

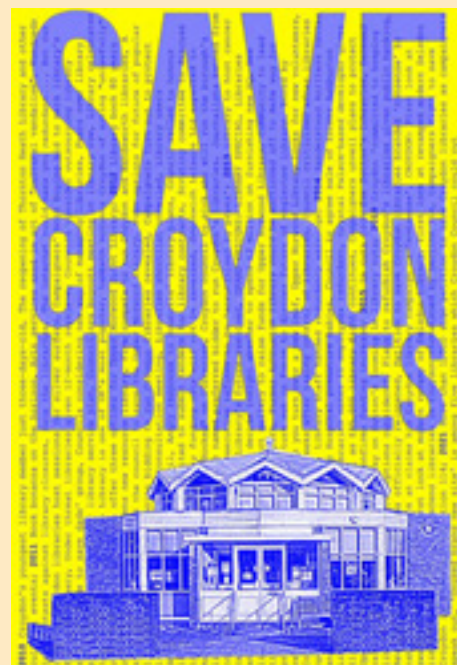
Ironically for a service centred around providing free and open access to information, public libraries tend to have a problem when it comes to advocating for themselves.

One significant factor is that marketing is not a prerequisite for library roles. This can perhaps be traced to an underlying tension between public libraries and traditional ideas of marketing, the libraries' open access ethos being at odds with a consumer society.

Lack of training in marketing would also account for varying standards of publicity and advocacy. It is also dependent on the relationship between the library and its local authority.

This relationship is significant; decision-makers are a group where increased awareness is needed. As the decision-makers control budgets, it cannot be overlooked.

Even on a national scale, there are problems. Campaigns promoting public libraries run only for a set period, much to the chagrin of The Library Campaign. This project proposes that there is a need for a sustained form of advocacy rather than a campaign – an ongoing demonstration of public libraries' value.



LIBRARIES' ROLE

Advocacy reports by the Carnegie UK Trust and Libraries Connected describe comprehensively how the remit of public libraries in the UK has grown.

Initially conceived in the 19th century as a way for the working class to spend their newfound leisure time, they have evolved with societal, cultural, and technological changes.

They have become places where people can get business advice, apply for Universal Credit, attend homework classes, hire tools and much more – almost to the point that the concept of the 'public library' evades definition.

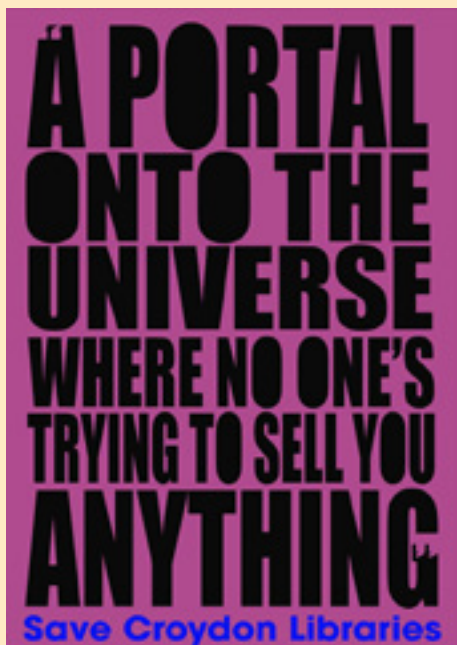
This multiplicity of roles and adaptability ensures their continued relevance. Whilst this is a unique selling point, it does unfortunately make it difficult to describe what public libraries do.

Discussing action areas which public libraries need to focus on coming out of the pandemic, the Carnegie UK Trust proposes effective advocacy as one such area, in order to increase knowledge of 'the breadth and depth of library services' offer'.

This is important. Confusion over what a library and (by extension) trained library staff provide makes it easier for closures to be proposed and actioned – never mind the impact of those 'stealth cuts' such as reduced hours and self-service opening, both of which limit footfall.

This overall lack of awareness was pointed out throughout my research.

Luke Burton pointed out a wider misconception – that public libraries are only there for people who cannot afford books, computers or wifi, although 'we also have a role to play in the lives of so many other people'.



The physical space is often devalued in the context of stereotypical ideas of a library, technological developments and the way public libraries have adapted during the Covid-19 pandemic.

They have risen to the challenge of being physically closed with an array of remote, telephone and digital offerings, prompting suggestions that perhaps the physical space is not necessary.

Yet it is an extremely important part of public libraries' offer.

Arguments such as 'you can get everything online' are rendered null when one factors in the fact that 7m people in the UK have no internet access at home and 9m people are unable to use the internet independently.

This is a huge oversight. Not only does it ignore digital and economic inequalities, but it also ignores – significantly – the key role public libraries play as a piece of social infrastructure, a shared physical environment that encourages social interaction, whether people are aware of it or not.

They are one of the few indoor spaces that anyone can freely access.

Unlike commercial environments, no agenda or expectations are placed upon the user.

Sociologist Eric Klinenberg* explains the importance of such spaces, arguing that they can alleviate problems such as 'social isolation, crime, education, health, polarisation and climate change' by encouraging people from different walks of life to be together in one place.

This is important. Although technology increases our connectivity, there is no substitute for physically being around other people to make

us feel accepted and that we belong – something the pandemic years have arguably taught us all.

REFERENCE

* Klinenberg, Eric, 2018: *Palaces for the People: how to build a more equal and united society*. London: The Bodley Head.

POSTER POWER?

Speaking on behalf of the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, archivist Emily Sulzer attests to the power of protest and political posters.

Emily sees technology as supporting the printed poster, arguing that as people curate their online worlds, encountering a poster physically can have a greater impact than the digital equivalent.

When asked how graphics can rise above today's visual 'noise', Emily recommended: 'Be succinct, be confrontational and try to direct your viewer to ask a question that they have not asked before.'

'Succinct' and 'confrontational' are not words one might associate with public libraries. However, in the context of my research, a more proactive form of advocacy would prove to be beneficial.

Anne H Berry, Professor of Graphic Design at Cleveland State University, agreed with Emily's advice to rise above the noise. Anne believes that collaboration is another means of achieving connection, believing that a range of contributors leads to community investment and mass appeal.

Anne asserted that technology is helpful when a subject is likely to evolve, and in disseminating the themes of a project to a broader audience.

PROTOTYPE POSTERS

Physical posters are widely regarded as the traditional form of graphic design advocacy.

I began making posters as a way of remedying this. Basing them initially on survey responses, I shared the results via the project's social media accounts to see if they prompted any engagement.

Save Croydon Libraries contacted me. Keen to partner with artists and designers, they were fighting the potential closure of 40% of their library services.

This was encouraging. Aware that there needed to be substance behind any visuals that were created for this project, I jumped at the opportunity.

Working with Save Croydon Libraries brought me into contact with other groups campaigning for public libraries on social media, providing me with an audience to test and refine ideas.

THE WEBSITE

It is challenging to convey that a public library can mean anything to anyone, yet this unique quality is not something to shy away from.

Encouraging participation from all library users will go some way to help update perceptions and bridge the discrepancies between the hyperlocal, regional, and national – particularly in terms of resources.

Making the platform open to anyone will help navigate the multiplicity of roles public libraries have, as a variety of perspectives will be represented.

This inclusive approach would embrace amateur and professional created content and may result in vastly different submissions.

Consider The People's Graphic Design Archive*. This community-based, crowd-sourced archive wants to challenge the mainstream notion of what graphic design is.

It welcomes input from all people, challenging the accepted notion of what 'graphic design' is, yet ensuring that diverse cultures and interests are represented.

My own involvement with public library staff, users and campaigners began in the 'discover' phase of this project, helping to shape its direction and identify an appropriate outcome.

Maintaining this connection, in particular the relationship with The Library Campaign, is paramount.

The Story They Tell needs to be viewed not as a fixed entity, but as an ongoing endeavour. One that creates an infrastructure to house a repository of posters reflecting both the past and present and – crucially – helping to support the future of public libraries.

REFERENCE

* eyeondesign.aiga.org/the-peoples-graphic-design-archive-is-rethinking-how-we-talk-about-design-history



