

Learning in Libraries



June 2011

No 10

Welcome to this issue of **Learning in Libraries** - our newsletter for learning providers and partners - keeping you informed about learning initiatives and events in Hertfordshire's libraries and archives.

Changes to lifelong learning in libraries

Fiona McDonald, Development Librarian: Lifelong Learning writes

From 4 July 2011, responsibility for various aspects of learning in libraries will change. **Skills for Life** will be managed by the Stock and Reader Development team and responsibility for **Family Learning** will move to the Young People's Services team. The programme of **IT taster sessions** will be managed by the People's Network and Digital Inclusion team. Editing this newsletter will be shared on a rota basis between the Senior Librarians responsible for these teams. The contact details for these Senior Librarians are as follows:

- ◆ **Skills for Life:** Emma Bannister- Senior Librarian, Stock
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Six Book Challenge launch on World Book Day 2011

Beverley Small, Lifelong Learning and Local Studies Librarian, Watford and Three Rivers writes

There was a buzz of anticipation in the room at Watford Central Library on World Book Day waiting for Lucy Cavendish to start. ESOL and literacy learners from West Herts College were there with their tutors. Having been to the college to visit some of the classes, I knew that this would be the first time that some of them had been to an author talk. I also knew that they were not all keen to be there, so Lucy had her work to do.

She began by telling us a little about her new Quick Read "Jack and Jill", what it was about and the main characters, but without giving away the ending. She then read us the first chapter and by the end many people in the room wanted to find out what happened next. She went on to tell us about her career in journalism interviewing celebrities, and how she manages her own work/life balance with four children. She admitted to having to lock herself away to write. The audience had a great many questions for her, and afterwards, were still crowding round her for more information.

“I loved the event. That was a first time for me and I would like to come back to take part in any other ones”

One literacy student came up to me at the end and told me that she had really not wanted to come along, but that she had thoroughly enjoyed the evening and now desperately wanted to read the “Jack and Jill”. She was delighted when Lucy offered to give up her own copy of the book.

Sue Bloomfield then took the stage to explain the Six Book Challenge and told everyone how they can take part at libraries in Hertfordshire. A Reading Agency initiative, the annual Six Book Challenge invites adult learners to read six books and to record their achievements in a reading diary. This is the fourth year for the Challenge in Hertfordshire. Quick Reads like Lucy’s are ideal books for those who want to take part in the Challenge as they are fast-paced and relatively easy to read. Hertfordshire libraries have books from entry level to level 4 and above, to suit people at different levels.



Author Lucy Cavendish at Watford Central Library

In the weeks following the launch, a total of 73 people signed up for the Challenge in libraries across Hertfordshire and so far, 12 people have finished all six books and will be entered in to the national prize draw. More than 65% of participants this year are members of ESOL classes. A more detailed report will appear in the next edition

Adult Learners’ Week 14 – 20 May 2011

Fiona McDonald, Development Librarian: Lifelong Learning writes

Adult Learners’ Week is a great opportunity to promote library learning services to partners, library users and the wider public. This year, the programme was organised by the Lifelong Learning and Local Studies Librarians. One aim was to publicise our **IT taster sessions**; a key part of our learning provision on offer throughout the year. In addition to numerous taster session promotions, events included a lecture on Tudor writing at HALS, an introduction to scrap booking at Buntingford Library and an Introduction to Online Shopping at Croxley Green and Oxhey Libraries.

Long term memory of an elephant, short term memory of a goldfish

Beverley Small, Lifelong Learning & Local Studies Librarian, Watford and Three Rivers writes

Jason Cook was the speaker at the Watford Quick Reads Book Group in Adult Learners Week. Jason is a local author who has dyslexia; he did not do well at school, was unable to hold down a job and ended up in prison. In prison, he was asked to write his life story as part of a Step Programme, and this has set him off on a whole new road. He still struggles with spelling and memory problems, but the more he reads the more he improves.

After the talk the audience joined in a discussion about the way dyslexia can vary from person to person, and the impact it can have. Jason remarked that he can recite huge

amounts of information by heart, but will forget a simple instruction given to him earlier in the day. The whole evening was an enlightening glimpse into the world of people with dyslexia, and the problems they can face.

Jason, and his colleagues John and Simon, are now working on a film project called “The Devils’s Dandruff” with Jason doing the creative writing.

www.thewayforwardproductions.co.uk

The talk was followed by the Watford Quick Reads Book Group discussing “Trouble on the Heath” by Terry Jones.

Adult Learners Week awards

Fiona McDonald, Development Librarian: Lifelong Learning writes

Libraries were delighted to have winners in two of the five categories at the Adult Learner Awards in May. Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service (HAFLS) held its Adult Learner Awards at County Hall to coincide with Adult Learners Week. Around 75 people attended the event which included displays of learners’ work, information stalls from provider organisations and a buffet.

Our ICT category winner is in his 80s and began his learning journey with a **Getting Started with Computers** taster session at Goff’s Oak Library and followed this with four further sessions. He now says ‘With your help I have developed quite good computer skills and my emails number well over one hundred’. His tutor says ‘He was an extremely enthusiastic and inquisitive learner and it is his enquiring mind that has meant he has embraced ICT so naturally. His amazing achievement shows that age is no barrier to learning’.



Our winner in the Overcoming Challenges category is a full time carer who has dyslexia. When she came to her first computer taster session at Oxhey Library she said ‘I have dyslexia and feel so stupid at times. I have lost all of my friends as many have moved away over the years and I have been unable to write to them. I care for my husband who has Parkinson’s disease and does not go out much. At the moment I feel that there is nothing in life for me but I want to change this if I can, although I feel that it might be too late’. She attended 4 library ICT taster sessions and a group ICT session in Adult Learners Week 2010. Her tutor referred her to local literacy courses, the Quick Reads book group run by the library and local IT courses. She is now an active member of the Oxhey Quick Reads book group and has gained new skills and found the confidence to use email, Facebook and Skype to

keep in contact with her daughter in Australia. She is an avid reader of books and magazines, and does crosswords every week.

Hoddesdon Heritage Weekend 2011

Jane Toyne, Lifelong Learning and Local Studies Librarian, East Herts and Broxbourne writes ..

On Saturday 30 April, Hoddesdon Library participated in the second Hoddesdon Heritage Weekend. This event was held in partnership with Broxbourne Borough Council, Broxbourne Arts Forum, Lea Valley U3A, Lowewood Museum and the local bookshop. It was an opportunity for the Library to promote its local studies collections, online resources and the 'Our Broxbourne' community archives website. The library had 3 activities during the day: a family history help desk, local history displays and the 'Our Broxbourne' website.

Members of the Lea Valley U3A Family History Group ran a family history help desk. They helped people with various enquiries ranging from how to get started with genealogy to locating an elusive ancestor.



Many people were interested in the displays and borrowed some of the titles available. We were able to promote library family history resources including access to Ancestry, Herts Names Online and books. The foyer area was bustling with people looking at the various displays. It was an opportunity to bring out some lesser seen items from our collection including newspapers from the 1960s and 1970s which were a big hit. Lowewood Museum loaned a display of photographs of Hoddesdon's past.

The 'Our Broxbourne' Community Archives table was where people could find out more about the website and share memories of the Borough by contributing experiences and photographs online. We had 5 contributions on the day, including a photograph of Park Lane in Broxbourne. Lots of people were interested in the website and took away a handout on how to use and add memories.

It was very much an inter-generational event as parents and grandparents showed their children buildings, etc that they remembered in Hoddesdon. Over 200 people attended and following this success, the working group has decided to make this an annual event.

Computer taster sessions in libraries

Sue Bloomfield, Development Librarian for Lifelong learning writes

We are pleased to report that we will continue to offer our range of taster sessions, introducing learners to IT and the internet, following a successful bid for funding from Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service. The funding originates from the Skills Funding Agency whose policy is that adult learners pay towards the cost of their courses. We are therefore introducing a charge of £5.00 per session for all learners from 1 September 2011, except for people with disabilities or people on low income in receipt of benefits.

This edition of Learning in Libraries was edited by Lifelong Learning Development Librarians Fiona McDonald and Sue Bloomfield. The next issue will appear in the autumn term.

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