

Social Inclusion Team Report

June 2010

The Social Inclusion team makes an important contribution to supporting the priorities of the City Council through a range of initiatives designed to break down barriers and improve access to Library services. Our work is varied, ranging from helping to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers to developing library services to those who are no longer able to leave their homes. Much of what we do focuses on learning which is delivered through talks, advice, provision of information and awareness raising. It encompasses all ages and levels of ability.

The following examples covering 2009-2010 give you a flavour of the work we do and the people we reach.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Wells Road Centre – the Patients Library continues to be delivered through a mixture of ward rounds and other initiatives. Key developments that have taken place this year include:

- Relocation of the Library to a larger space at the Centre, enabling the Library Manager to engage more effectively with the patients.
- Patients have been encouraged to become more involved with the Library by assisting with tasks on a volunteer basis.
- Links with the community have been strengthened through escorted visits to Sherwood and Central libraries.
- A volunteer's pack is being created in conjunction with the Occupational Therapists to help volunteers gain some basic work skills.
- Continued promotion of the Library through regular contributions to the Wells Road Newsletter.

Mental Health Awareness Week was supported through displays in all libraries and a *Living Library* event organised at the Central Library in partnership with Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust and the Books, Reading and Learning Team.

Using volunteers to be our 'books', visitors to the event could take out a 'book' and have a chat with them about their experiences of mental health.



"Took some courage to come. Hopefully worthwhile for the future"

"Fantastic. I feel less alone. One step for the future"

Library Development Workers

Our Library Development Workers provide an important role to engage and respond to needs within the BME communities, with a particular focus on refugees and asylum seekers, new arrivals and Asian communities. The following is a selection of their work over the last year.

Services to Refugees, Asylum Seekers and New Arrivals

- **Conversation Groups for English learners**

An important development over the last year has been the establishment of 2 flourishing weekly conversation groups at Hyson Green and Meadows Libraries. Using the model of the successful group run at Nottingham Central Library, people from all over the world come to practise and improve their English, engage in social interaction and learn about their new community.

Topics of conversation covered in the groups are diverse and reflect a variety of subjects of interest to those who attend. Past topics have included religion, using public transport to get around Nottingham and “pancake day”.

Working with volunteers has been crucial to help sustain the conversation groups. All the groups are keenly supported by volunteers who bring in a new dimension and often lead the topic of discussion that week.

Partnership working is integral to help members of the group develop their awareness of Nottingham and its community. Working with the University of Nottingham's Biological Sciences Department and OPAL Project (Open Air Laboratories), Hyson Green Conversation Group went on a trip to Sherwood Pines and Sherwood Forest. The response was very enthusiastic as for some it was the first time they had seen the British countryside.

The success of this trip led to an application to the Forestry Commission for a grant to allow further trips to take place in early 2010. The application was successful and we have taken all three library conversation groups on trips to Clumber Park, the Peak District and Sherwood Pines.

“The trip was very enjoyable and learnable. I could know Robin Hood’s history practically. I saw a big old tree, it’s a historical tree and that place is a historical place. It was a memorable day in my life. If the group had not arranged the trip it is not possible for me to visit and know about this place. So I am happy and proud to join in” (K - Bangladesh)



- **Language Café**

The Language Cafe project started as a pilot as part of the *Learning Revolution* events in October 2009. Based on an informal learning approach, volunteers with foreign language skills were invited to teach their languages to members of the public for one afternoon. All those involved found it to be a very positive and unique experience and were keen to turn it into a regular activity in the library. After further planning we were able to launch the Language Café as a weekly fixture in Central Library. The launch event, which was supported by the Big Learning Weekend funding, was attended by over 60 people, with 20 different languages being exchanged on the day. It now has a regular group of participants every Saturday, with new people joining all the time.



- **ESOL Tours of Community Libraries**

Since December 2009, we've been working directly with all the major ESOL providers (including Castle College, NCN, South Notts and Refugee Forum) to offer tours of libraries for new ESOL students. So far 91 new English Gateway students have attended the tours and 56 of these people (61.5% of all those who have attended) have become library members as a direct result.

- **Refugee Week Family Event**

A family event at Nottingham Central Library for Refugee Week 2009 brought together refugee families and the general public in an extravaganza of activity.

A locally based Angolan Dance Company performed music and dance, the Refugee Forum Women's Group ran a fashion show, a lecturer from Nottingham Trent University offered puppet making workshops and artists from Long Journey Home provided art and craft activities. Refreshments were provided by the Congolese Community Association and the Nottingham Arabic Association served traditional Arabic tea and coffee. The informality of the day along with the opportunity to meet other people and to share experiences was extremely valuable to all who came to the event.



"I'd never been to the Central Library before and it's great that you have such events"
Refugee lady – to member of staff

- **Citizenship Test support**

Initially as a one off event during the *Learning Revolution*, a taster session to provide Citizenship Test support to individuals in the City was run. Following on from the success of this, we continued to work again with British Red

Cross and Nottingham Refugee Forum to offer weekly sessions at Central Library.

Services to Asian Communities

- **Reading Groups**

Working with volunteers from the community we have successfully established a Bengali reading group. The Urdu and Gujarati reading groups are going from strength to strength while the Punjabi and Hindi groups continue to meet regularly. The average attendance of these groups is 12 people.

- **Computer Learning for the Asian Community**

As part of the *Learning Revolution* we successfully ran a computer drop-in help session on learning how to use a computer and accessing the Internet for non-English speaking people. This was in partnership with Co-Operative Community Action who provided Asian language speaking tutors to facilitate the day. 20 people attended the popular session.

- **Cultural celebrations**

We continue to celebrate key cultural events and festivals with exhibitions, talks and activities. An Eid party at Meadows Library was attended by over 50 adults and children, while a launch of an exhibition, produced by Gujarat Samaj, to celebrate 50 years of the foundation of the Gujarat State was held at Central Library.

Home Library Service

The Home Library Service, operated in partnership with WRVS, serves approximately 300 customers who are unable to visit their local library because they have restricted mobility.

Current developments include:

- a newsletter which goes to each person 3 times a year, which highlights new titles in Large Print and Spoken Word with reviews, recommended reads and library news.
- A poster campaign in community libraries to generate awareness of the service
- **Asian Home Library Service** – an important initiative currently being undertaken to extend the Home Library Service to the Asian community. At present, we are piloting the service following the successful recruitment of volunteers, with relevant Asian language skills, as well as recipients of the service. A media and poster

campaign to promote the service more widely to potential users will take place over the next few months.

Services for People with Visual Impairment

The Social Inclusion and Books Reading and Learning teams continue to engage with visually impaired readers through the *Listening Chain* readers group. Members get together every 3 months to discuss and share their views on the books they have listened to. The group currently has 8 avid readers.

The Prison Library Service

The work that takes place at Nottingham Prison is varied, ranging from the Big Book Share for fathers in conjunction with the Children's team and volunteers to supporting writing and art-based activities. A regular newsletter has also been launched over the last year and this promotes, amongst other things, new books to the prisoners and staff. Major changes have been taking place at the prison (which is becoming a Community Prison) including the building of a new library which will run in tandem with the existing library. Much of the last year has been spent in planning for the enhanced services that will be developed.

Nottingham's Heritage

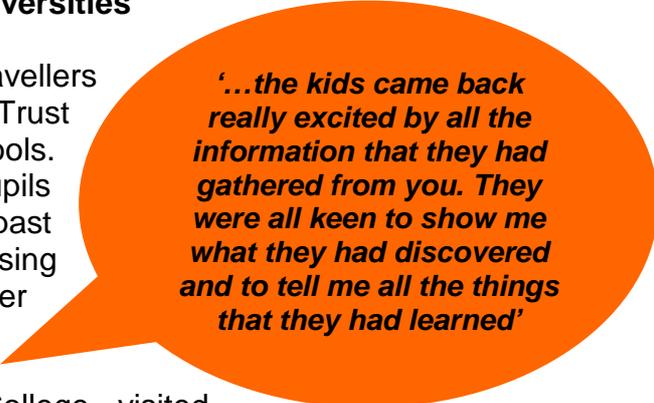
Local Studies makes a significant contribution to fostering and promoting community identity by preserving and providing access to our written and pictorial heritage.

Local Studies provides opportunities for informal learning by engaging with the community through tours, events and family history learning to name but a few.

- **Schools, Colleges and Universities**

Now in its 3rd year, the Tram Travellers project is run by Groundwork Trust working with local primary schools. Local Studies engages with the pupils to investigate and compare the past and present tram systems. Using maps, photographs and other documents the tram is brought alive for the students.

"Access" students from Castle College, visited



'...the kids came back really excited by all the information that they had gathered from you. They were all keen to show me what they had discovered and to tell me all the things that they had learned'

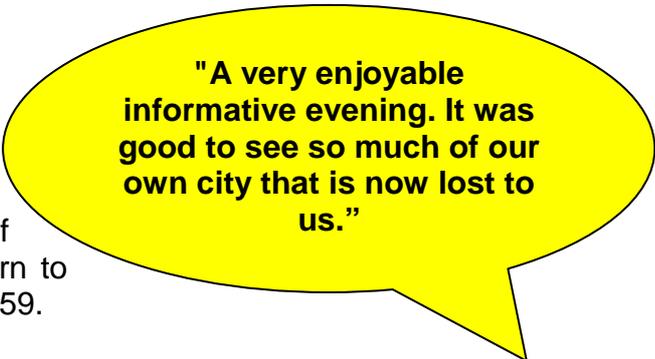
the Library with many of them subsequently choosing to base one of their course work projects on Nottingham.

Local Studies continues to build on its relationship with the Universities and their History departments. Students are given a detailed tour of the collection followed by discussions on how the collection can support their individual projects.

- **Events**

An important role of Local Studies is to promote and raise awareness of Nottingham's heritage. Events and activities are staged throughout the year, using authors, speakers, and working with partners.

Working with MACE (Media Archive for Central England), "*What a Life*" screened rarely seen archive films of Nottingham in the 1950s. One of the most popular films was of the reception of Nottingham Forest in their triumphal return to Nottingham after winning the FA cup in 1959.



"A very enjoyable informative evening. It was good to see so much of our own city that is now lost to us."

- **'Shooting History: discovering your inner Spielberg'**

As part of the *Learning Revolution*, a series of filmmaking workshops were set up in conjunction with the Broadway Cinema. The aim was to open up informal learning opportunities for both individuals and local history groups who were interested in documenting the 'community history of tomorrow'. Funding enabled us to extend the workshops into November and offer earlier participants the chance to work on the creation of a short film on the history of the Broadway cinema. Over the course of the 4 workshops the tutors covered some of the theory of filmmaking, basic camera operation, developing a narrative, shooting techniques and editing. The group doing the actual filming had a great time using some of Broadway's high spec equipment filming both interior and exterior scenes. One of the legacies of these workshops is the potential to develop an ongoing relationship with the Broadway in terms of community work and to tap into their expertise and facilities with any future film-related activities.

The Italian Connection

With funding from the Big Lottery and support from the MLA, we have been able to undertake a fascinating oral history project with the Italian community in Nottingham. This was part of the U.K. wide educational project *Their Past Your Future*. Our initiative focused on the experiences of several people in the

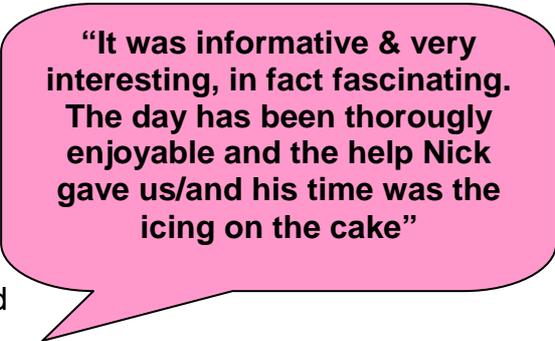


1950s onwards when difficult economic conditions in Italy led many Italians to seek a better life in England. Interviews were undertaken with members of the community, the recordings transcribed and extracts entered onto a newly-created website. A book, *'The Italian Connection: Living memories from Nottingham's Italian community'* was produced, bringing together under key themes selections from the transcripts, photographs and other documentary material. The project was a partnership with the Italian organisations Basilicata Region Association and Patronato ACLI and also with the City Council Regional and International team and the Educational Improvement Partnership for St. Ann's and Sneinton. It was important to create an historical record of this significant part of the life of Nottingham before the passing of the years made such an initiative more difficult or impossible. Doing so in an inter-generational way, with the participation of local pupils, staff and volunteers was especially rewarding.

- **Exploring Family History**

People's curiosity and passion to delve into their family history has created an important element of local studies work. Developments over the year include:

- Continuing to run our popular *Absolute beginners* family history courses. Run over 3 sessions attendees find out how they can trace their ancestors using resources in the Local Studies collection. 2 courses have been run this year, with further courses scheduled for 2010 to meet the ever growing waiting list.
- A Family History group has been established as a result of the *Absolute Beginners* courses. This meets every other month on a Saturday morning. This is designed for participants to come along and discuss their current research with staff and other group members.
- A 1 day course on *House & Place history* took place in the spring of 2010. This was not just aimed at family history researchers, but at anyone with an interest in finding out more about a building or place. Using a particular area of the Meadows we used maps, electoral registers, photos & census returns to arrive at a picture of how the area has changed over the past 200 years.
- As part of the *Learning Revolution* a hugely successful event took place with leading genealogist Dr Nick Barratt, from the BBC's *'Who Do You Think You Are?'* providing an informative and interesting talk. An 'Ask the Experts' session and tour of Local Studies Library rounded off an extremely fascinating day.



"It was informative & very interesting, in fact fascinating. The day has been thoroughly enjoyable and the help Nick gave us/and his time was the icing on the cake"

African and Caribbean Services

The Social Inclusion Team, work alongside other library development teams to promote and develop services to the African and Caribbean communities.

Working with the Books, Reading and Learning Team we are promoting collections in libraries through posters and bookmarks. This is in response to comments from a focus group meeting we held the previous year.

- **Black History Month**

A range of activities took place during the month to raise awareness and celebrate Black History Month.

St Ann's Library hosted an extravaganza of activity working in partnership with ACNA. This included sessions on African Caribbean drumming, poetry, crafts and local stories of old St Ann's

Nottingham Central Library, working with Nottingham Castle, held a '*Discover Your Stories*' event on tracing your family history. The day ranged from a guest speaker talking about the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, a talk by a leading expert from Solihull on how to trace your African and Caribbean family history and a film produced by MACE on Nottingham's Black experience. Nottingham Castle working with their '*From de Sunshine to de Snow*' group provided a myriad of craft activities and exhibitions. The day was thoroughly appreciated by everyone and plans are underway to host a similar event in October 2010.



Meadows Library held a thrilling and inspiring event on traditional African and Caribbean tales, with people then producing their own stories. This was led by the poet Clive Dennis Cole.

Positive Images

The Social Inclusion Team continues to co-ordinate innovative and exciting learning opportunities in art and crafts from around the world by bringing people together to celebrate and raise awareness of different cultures, to promote a greater understanding of people who may be different from ourselves but with whom we share a common community and to increase awareness of libraries and the arts to Black and Minority Ethnic communities as well as the wider community. In partnership with Nottingham Castle Museum funding was secured from the Arts Council, Meadows Alive (Big Lottery fundng), HMP Nottingham and



Nottingham City Council to enable a programme of activity to be delivered in October and November.

Workshops included stained glass, chinese brush painting, felt making, lantern making using willow, graffiti art, textiles, African and Caribbean drumming, mask making and textile collage.

'a whole new world opened up to me. More workshops in chinese brush painting please'

'it's good to do something different; I didn't fancy it at first but it was really good and made me get inside my head; it was hard to get going but really interesting...'