

Profile: Christine Bailey



As the current Chair of the JISC Committee on Content and Services (JCCS), Chris has a hidden but considerable influence on the daily life of most members of UKSG. This committee takes the ultimate decisions on what electronic content is offered to the community, agrees budgets and oversees projects and development work aimed at bringing improved solutions and services to libraries. When she became Chair at the beginning of 2002, the JISC committees and Executive had just been restructured after the Follett Review, creating six new committees and new teams formed for Development, Collections and Policy & Planning. This was a crucial time for JCCS and Chris started with a new structure and new teams to tackle the increasingly difficult content negotiations. JCCS has agreed that these need to be supported by expert, and properly supported working groups which can engage with the community, not by a high-level committee. JCCS has also agreed that some types of negotiations and service delivery could be outsourced, others could be central. The recent announcements of deals with Content Complete and CHEST (part of EduServ) are examples of how these partnerships are developing, with JISC themselves handling content that is either challenging or delivered through the JISC Data Centres, and Content Complete or CHEST handling data that is mature and/or delivered by the producer. JISC is now looking at the challenges faced by new financial models, for example those with e-books. It also

looks at niche but important resources which are produced within the community and which need support to sustain them – one good example is the British Education Index at Leeds University Library. Here the Collections Team developed a business plan with Leeds, and they are now working with a commercial partner. JISC is also developing innovative partnership models with publishers, for example, the publisher provides the content, JISC provides the marketplace (acting as a loose consortium) and a funding model based on low-risk cost recovery at a price the community is comfortable with. In general this is low risk for JISC because they have already consulted the market and established the need for the publisher's products.

In real life, Chris is the Director of Library Services at the University of Glasgow. Although born in the Wirral, she studied History and Philosophy at the University of Dundee and, apart from a brief sojourn south of the Border, has never left Scotland. She started her library career with an evening job on the library counter at Dundee, where she met her husband, Steve. Her friends say she only became a librarian because she loved to read, but Chris denies this, saying that it was always the reference side that appealed. Her first job in 1976 as a SCONUL trainee at Ninewells Hospital in Dundee certainly reinforced that, with the opportunity to work with scientific information and interact with the doctors. "I have a problem ..." was something she increasingly heard. However,

her most challenging problem during the traineeship was cataloguing a blood-curdling collection of forensic slides “through gritted teeth”, as Chris said.

Having already decided to stay in Scotland, Chris studied for her library diploma at Strathclyde University, but was then offered her first job in the College of Further Education in Oxford. After eighteen months, she decided to move back and worked as a cataloguer at the Andersonian Library, quickly moving into the reference area. Since then she has always been involved with users. This was an exciting time for users with CD-ROM networking making resources generally available to users, and becoming ‘Gatekeepers to Knowledge’ instead of sitting in a cupboard doing complex searching on Dialog.

After 12 years at the Andersonian, with Steve working as an economist at Glasgow Caledonian University, Chris decided she wanted a real change. Typically, she thought big, and chose to take a job exchange with Graham Staffin at the University of Windsor, Ontario. The local gossips were thrilled that “Mrs Bailey has moved to Canada and Mr Bailey has moved a wild guy in instead”. Although Chris found the work not as developmental as she would have liked – she was doing more teaching than learning – she was introduced into the North American culture. This provided new and different reference tools, a different focus and the opportunity to contribute towards the implementation of a different library management system. Coming back to Scotland in 1991, she moved to the University of Glasgow as Principal Assistant Librarian under the direction of Henry Heaney who was then University Librarian. Chris, leading a team of six science-based subject librarians, had her first experience of management. Glasgow was in the process of moving from a library-based model to a more proactive, liaison-focused support model. This was a real challenge. Some years later, Chris

was offered the opportunity to be seconded to CURL. For two and a half years, she networked, got to grips with policy issues, worked with Peter Fox and Clive Field and started to influence policy. Going to the Competition Commission with SCONUL’s Toby Bainton to discuss the Elsevier merger and working with ARL really opened her eyes.

Chris returned as Acting Director in August 2001, following the retirements of Henry Heaney and Andrew Wale, was confirmed as Director in May 2002, and was promptly deeply involved with JISC as the member nominated by the Scottish Funding Council. Chris’s latest challenge is the current review of JISC strategy, with new policy drivers, new communities to serve (like sixth-form colleges) and the need to comprehensively review collection strategies. The recent £10 million from the Funding Council Comprehensive Spending Review for digitising materials has been used to fund a small number of large scale and exciting projects like the digitisation of 3000 hours of the ITN Archive including film from the 1930s and 40s.

Chris does have some spare time - hard as it is to believe – and she spends this with Steve at their small house on the west coast of Scotland overlooking Skye. They do a lot of walking and at 50 Chris took up the new hobby of sea-kayaking. Steve wasn’t to be left behind, and is now known to kayak to Plockton for the Sunday papers. (He has capsized, she hasn’t – so far.) Always a voracious reader, Chris is eclectic, reading novels, biography and for relaxation, crime and science fiction. Those of you that know Chris will know about her wonderful jewellery (especially your Editors) and will not be surprised that another hobby is looking out for new jewellery designers in Glasgow and around Scotland. But above all, she is really relishing her work both at Glasgow and with JISC – the best bit being the opportunity to make new friends and influence people.