

Profile: Tony Kidd



At the 24th NASIG conference in Asheville, North Carolina (www.nasig.org) Dan Tonkery and Bev Acreman caught up with Tony Kidd, Chair of the UKSG (www.uksg.org) and Assistant Director, Financial and Corporate Services, at the Library of the University of Glasgow, Scotland. Tony was there to give NASIG members a big welcome and hello from fellow serialists in the UK. The two library organizations have been exchanging senior leaders at their conferences for many years.

The new Chair of UKSG filled us in on his early background, the development of his very successful library career, and why he wants to make a difference in his new role as Chair.

Tony was born and raised along with two younger brothers in St Andrews where his father was a prominent professor in Ancient Greek at the University. His entire youth was spent in a classic academic environment, enjoying the benefits and privileges of academic life, where he took advantage of a variety of educational pursuits. As early as 13 – amazing to relate – Tony was dreaming of becoming a cataloguer at the British Museum.

Knowing that he wanted to leave St Andrews and attend college away from home, Tony was soon off to Caius College at Cambridge University where he studied economics. During the summers while in college, he was fortunate enough to work at St Andrews University library as an intern, moving the collections and other library activities. During this time he met and worked with Derek

Law, known to many throughout the library community, then just starting his career at St Andrews. Tony enjoyed the library environment and that experience left a permanent mark on him.

He worked in the insurance industry for a very short time after graduation, but he soon answered the call back to libraries. Tony accepted a graduate trainee position in the library at Southampton University where he met his wife Sue, a teacher.

Following his experience in the library at both St Andrews and Southampton, it was off to Sheffield Library School where he studied a Social Science information course.

After graduation from Library School, Tony returned to Southampton University and began his

Tony at NASIG in his first official role as UKSG Chair, with Rick Anderson (incoming Chair of NASIG) and Jill Emery (outgoing Chair of NASIG)



first professional librarian job as a cataloguer. In a short time he accepted a new assignment in Special Collections, working on the Parkes Library Collection. Rev Dr James William Parkes had amassed a wide collection of papers, writings and incunabula going back centuries, which featured the relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish communities. After three years at Southampton, Tony moved to Aston University in the centre of the country to become monograph acquisitions librarian. Tony and Sue's daughter (they also have a son) was born right in the middle of this transfer so they actually had no address to register her at! This minor hiccup aside, Tony spent seven years at Aston during a difficult period of library- and university-wide funding cuts and no Librarian for some time before the arrival of Lynne Brindley (now Dame Lynne Brindley, head of the British Library). Tony moved to the University of Glasgow in 1987 as head of Acquisitions and has remained there ever since in a variety of positions, despite it being almost Dickensian in the early days and initially very bureaucratic and hierarchical, though things have changed dramatically in 20 years. During his tenure at Glasgow he has had the opportunity of a work placement at Iowa State University for a year – an offer he jumped to accept since his own father had taken them as children on placements to University of Texas at Austin, and Princeton, and he wanted his children to experience the same thing. He remembers his time at Iowa fondly and remains in touch with many people he worked with there. On his return to Glasgow his role had changed – to his chagrin at the time – to the unknown world of serials and away from his beloved books, but happily his arrival in the department was in advance of the online revolution in the mid nineties. When the library collections began to shift from print to electronic, he was eager to take advantage of all the opportunities that arose. Thus Glasgow was one of the early adopters of initiatives such as Veronica and Gopher – do you remember them? – and remains to this day a leader in initiatives such as SHEDL (Scottish Higher Educational Digital Library) which aims to provide universal access to journal

content for all higher education institutions in Scotland. Tony has been very active in serials library initiatives and is a big supporter of library standards. He has devoted much of his time and energy in the industry serving on boards such as COUNTER, the JISC Journals Working Group and other UK national committees. First elected to the UKSG committee in 1992, Tony worked in various positions, most recently as its Secretary before being elected Chair in 2009. He sees the Group leading the way in adapting to the changing environment in a difficult climate and he aims to ensure that the UKSG remains relevant to a global scholarly community and not based around increasingly artificial differentiators such as journals or books. The UKSG's place (and strength) in this is to bring the right people together to network and resolve issues in a collegial, not confrontational, manner.

Outside the library and scholarly information community, Tony enjoys hill walking (140 out of 290 Munros completed – see <http://walking.visit-scotland.com/munros/>) and playing what sounds like frankly alarming squash matches with a buddy he has played against weekly since he first arrived in Glasgow back in 1987. His biggest commitment and pleasure are his family – his daughter Helen is a Primary School Teacher, his son Alastair a Social Worker – and his local church where he plays a leading role in the organization.

We welcome Tony as the new Chair and look forward to working with him.

Tony at home in beautiful but chilly Scotland

