

Beyond the Horizon 2023 Programme

1pm- 1:10pm Welcome by the Chair of the Conference, Dr Biddy Casselden from Northumbria University

1:10pm- 1:35pm Short paper – “The library as a space for wellbeing: “a never failing spring in the desert”” (Teesside University) by Frances Porritt, Academic Librarian & Hazel Wright, Wellbeing Services Co-ordinator

The places and spaces where we spend most of our time can have a profound effect on our wellbeing and sense of belonging. Therefore it would make sense to design our environments to be supportive and nurturing of our overall wellbeing. This is not limited to the physical and aesthetic design or look of the environment, but the services and facilities delivered within it and the configuration of the spaces. At Teesside we have recently set up a Library Wellbeing group of staff who will be working with students to co-create spaces and activities delivered in the library to develop the library as a place that nurtures a sense of belonging and wellbeing. An academic library is a place where you will often find high levels of anxiety and stress. Designing the environment and services and activities within it, to calm and help focus, thus relieving anxiety, will help tackle this issue. Our talk will also discuss findings from qualitative research we plan to do with students using the library outside of the standard hours, as we are aware there can be a change in the atmosphere of the place at different times during the day.

1:35pm- 2pm Short paper – “Wellbeing Programme at Rosemary Murray Library” (Murray Edwards College, Cambridge) by Kirstie Preest, Librarian, Tutor and Fellow

Murray Edwards College is a women only college in the Cambridge University collegiate system. The pastoral role of the college library has played a large part in supporting student wellbeing for many years. The library first began delivering wellbeing sessions a decade ago as a method of bringing relief to students facing intense pressure during exam terms but has since evolved into a dedicated year-round programme. From tea breaks, puzzles and colouring books through to walks, craft, yoga sessions and a pop-up nail bar there is something to help every student relax and take time away from studying. Although the COVID pandemic and the closure of many services threatened the programme it also helped to highlight the importance of wellbeing. Since the return to full in-person services students have consistently praised the library focus on pastoral care and the wellbeing programme is loved by all library users. This presentation will explore the evolution of the well-programme, how it used ethnographic research to make the library a comforting and comfortable space, how the programme moved to online delivery and impact on student wellbeing.

2pm- 2:20pm Lightning Talks - Abby Barker & Helen Lawrence followed by combined Q&A

“The Travelling Reading Chair!” (Barnsley College), Abby Barker, Librarian

We have purchased an armchair that will visit all of our campus buildings to allow staff to model reading to students, with the aim that it increases reading for pleasure, which in turn has a positive effect on wellbeing. The project started in February 2023 and I'd like to introduce the idea and how the project is progressing so far.

“One Year of Reading for Wellbeing: what we have learned” (Reading for Wellbeing project, Durham County Council), Helen Lawrence, Community Reading Facilitator

I would like to present to the conference some findings from the first year of the Reading For Wellbeing project in County Durham: what have we learned about how reading helps people with chronic mental and physical conditions? What has worked and what hasn't as we have got to know our participants and their communities better? And what can Libraries and Library Managers learn from the insights and conversations we have had with people who won't or can't use Libraries? Official evaluation data for January – November 2022 has not yet been released but if I have this by May I will share some statistics. I really want to focus on the people who have engaged with the project and share some of their stories, focusing on what our project has been able to show colleagues in Public Health, Libraries and community organisations about the positive impact on overall wellbeing when people cultivate a regular reading habit.

This lightning talk provides an update on the 'Reading for Wellbeing' project which was presented as a short paper at our 2022 conference. A recording of the presentation is available [here](#).

15-minute comfort break

2:35pm – 3pm Short paper – “Wellbeing Collection Development: a shared resource” (University of Exeter Library) Eleanor Ann Lund, Library Management System Trainer

I would like to give a shorter presentation of two I have given to NAG and AGI in the past 6 months. It is about my experiences developing wellbeing collections as a bi/disabled/ND librarian, sharing some of the selection approaches I have adopted personally, and promoting a potential shared resource to be hosted on the NAG website, to help libraries develop these collections. Currently this resource is a categorised title list with usage from 3 institutions, and I hope to encourage more institutions to share their lists. Longer-term this will hopefully become a collectively developed best practice document.

3pm – 3:20pm Lightning Talks - Jackie Dunn & Hilary Hallas followed by combined Q&A

“It's never too late at 58 (to find your dream job)” (Philip Robinson library, Newcastle University) Jackie Dunn, Senior Outreach Assistant

My career had plateaued I felt my job could bring me nothing new and I was marking time till retirement, I even thought of cancelling my CILIP membership. Then my dream job was advertised, I took the plunge and applied. In December 2022 my dream came true when I was appointed senior outreach assistant. I would like to talk about the above with an overview of my new role and how it has improved my mental health and wellbeing.

“We all need a friend” (British Library) Hilary Hallas, Health & Wellbeing Manager

We have lots going on at the British Library but our most recent initiative on the wellbeing front is the addition of a Peer Buddies group. This was following a suggestion made by a relatively new member of staff at one of our wellbeing drop in sessions. We like to follow up on ideas and this was an easy quick win. We now have a team of 16 individuals who act as a "sounding board" or just an ear for anyone who needs someone to speak to in an informal way.

3:20pm – 3:45pm Short paper – “Generative AI: meeting the challenges and embracing the opportunities for student learning” (Newcastle University) by Emily Dott, Academic Liaison Librarian (Computing and Engineering) & Terry Charlton, Learning Enhancement and Technology Team Manager

Although AI technology is nothing new, there have been well discussed and significant developments in the last 6 months in generative AI which are raising very challenging questions for universities about academic integrity, the future of assessment and impact on research. This presentation will share how the Liaison team and Learning and Teaching Development Service at Newcastle University are collaborating with colleagues across the organisation to shape the University approach to AI within the academic domain. Developing guidance for students and academics while firmly framing the conversation around information literacy and the growing need for AI literacy while the boundaries and capability of the technology shifts around us at an unprecedented pace. This work is at a very early stage and changing almost daily and the talk hopes to begin a conversation around approaches being taken in other institutions and libraries.

3:45pm – 4:00pm Conference Close by Dr Biddy Casselden (incl. 5 minutes ‘buffer’ time)