



Memories from the EAHIL Conference “Inspiring, involving, informing”, 9-13 July 2018, Cardiff, Wales

First Timers Reception

Once upon a time a young health librarian was looking around to meet new colleagues and friends at an EAHIL meeting ... this can be the beginning of a telling story but, if you add a special venue, and a group of European Health Librarians, this is for sure the First Timer Participant Reception of the annual EAHIL Conference. For the first timer participants the special venue of the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama (in Welsh: *Coleg Brenhinol Cerdd a Drama Cymru*) had the atmosphere of a fairy tale.

The wooden terrace embraced the first timers, creating a sense of being part of a group with special and common interests. With its three theatres - the Richard Burton Theatre, the Bute Theatre, and the Caird Studio - the College welcomed all the conference sessions and social activities, whilst the landscaped gardens and parkland of the Bute Park (in Welsh: *Parc Bute*) served as a backdrop.

The Jon Reynolds trio band's live piano music, and its jazz notes, warmly welcomed old and new friends and then a glass of sparkling wine gently contributed to cheer the conversation up.

Music was the *fil rouge* of the night, and opened our minds into different aspects of our mission, like a shining crystal sphere to the sun-light. Welcoming people are just like that: Inspiring, Involving and naturally Informing.



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The Welcome reception and the Gala dinner

We held our **Welcome Reception** in the Main Hall of the National Museum Cardiff, the flagship building of Amguedda Cymru – National Museum Wales in the city's civic centre.

The location was the impressive Main Hall with its' 85 foot dome, a large space to fill. It was good to have this space available as we were also joined by guests from The Reading Agency celebrating the Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia in Wales launch which took place in the Richard Burton Theatre in the RWCMD at the end of the first day of the conference.

The range of canapés offered the chance to showcase a traditional Welsh delicacy to our European guests – laverbread – a type of pureed seaweed.



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Our **Gala dinner** was held in another of our civic centre buildings. The magnificent Edwardian City Hall. Delegates ascended grand staircases to a champagne reception accompanied by Sam Hickman harpist, before moving to the Assembly Rooms with its ornate decor for the gala dinner.

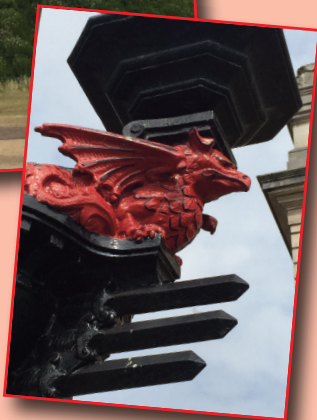
The after dinner entertainment included live music and dancing performed and led by “Pentrefest” an organisation which runs traditional music events. They taught us some traditional social dances that would be danced in Northern Europe. These seemed to get more complex as the night wore on! We danced ourselves exhausted, and only finally left when security officials came to lock up for the night!

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Walking tour of Cardiff

Our morning stroll through Cardiff’s majestic Civic Centre and Castle Quarter started at the steps of the National Museum of Wales. We were welcomed there by Paul, our friendly guide with a recital of the Welsh national anthem and a brief introduction to the Welsh language, spelling and pronunciation. Some practicing by the group followed on our short walk to City Hall with its debating chamber, assembly room and the impressive marble clad “Hall of Heroes”, representing 2000 years of history in Wales. We learnt that many renowned personalities from British history are of Celtic origin: St. Patrick, William Wallace, Henry VII, to name only a few, and even the dragon Smaug might be inspired by Welsh dragons. We continued to Cardiff Castle. On the way Paul eloquently gave us insights into the long history of the capital of Wales: From the “Roman fortress on the river Taff” to the Norman castle mound and the busy industrial port from where the famous Welsh “steamless cole” and iron were shipped in the 19th century. Cardiff is a “city of arcades”. Our tour therefore continued through Castle Arcade with its cozy little shops, cafes and restaurants, sheltered from Cardiff’s typical “liquid sunshine”, which we admittedly did not get to know during the sunny conference week, and down St. Marys Street, one of the main



shopping streets to Cardiff’s busy Indoor Market. Next we stopped at the impressive Millennium Stadium. The tour ended at 800 years old St John the Baptists Church where one has to step down to enter.

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St Fagans National Museum of History

Some EAHIL 2018 participants have visited the St Fagans National Museum of History which was established in July 1st, 1948 and was the UK's first national open-air museum, also considered one of the top attractions for visitors to Wales.

The starting point was at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama on Thursday, July 12th at 09:30 am.

On arrival at St Fagans, one of the Museum Curators gave the attendees a talk about the history of the museum by especially introducing the historic medical collections.

After the talk, participants had some free time to explore the site, the Castle and the amazing garden.

One of the interesting points was to meet Dewi Jones the weaver at St Fagans who discussed Welsh wools and yarns and did a weaving demonstration. Something not to miss at St Fagans was to explore the 50 original historic buildings from across Wales which have been removed



from their original sites and rebuilt at St Fagans in addition to The Red House, a working

Bake house which sells yummy Welsh Cakes, the Gwalia Stores which dates to the 1920s, rows of terraced houses complete with items and furniture from the twenties to the present day, as well as a workman's institute with its very own library.

Attendees had the chance to browse the souvenirs' shop and to enjoy the café.

The bus left promptly at 12:00 and the ending point was back to the College in time for lunch at 12:30 pm.

As an overall note, the visit to St Fagans the National Museum of History, Cardiff was amazing and everything was very well organized.

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The beauty of Cardiff from the two wheels perspective

On the 12th of July took place a guided bike ride around Cardiff Bay to take in the sights and experience including riding across the Cardiff Bay Barrage. Thirteen lucky participants of the EAHIL Conference took part in an enjoyable event organized by Sustrans .

We departed from Bute Park to undertake the 10-mile tour which was mainly along traffic-free paths and quiet roads and completely flat. The route was suitable for novice cyclists as we traveled at a leisurely pace and stopped at interesting places along the way. The sights included the Principality Rugby Stadium, the Welsh Assembly building and Cardiff Barrage overlooking the Bristol Channel and Cardiff Bay.

The weather was really favorable, and everybody was enthusiastic about this active way of sightseeing. The bike tour was such a brilliant idea! We have seen the beauty of Cardiff and also get to know to ride a bike - for most of us - on the wrong side of a road... During this 2 hours ride, we were admiring the views, discussing, and get to know each other. The fact is that we also gained energy for the rest days of the EAHIL Conference! We definitely recommend organizing bike tours during future EAHIL events.

It was also an opportunity to talk about Polish cycling project for libraries called Bicycool Library started in 2010 in Łódź. It is a bike ride for the book and bike lovers, including librarians, who usually organize the event. Now Bicycool Library event is continuing organized between 1st of May and 30th of September in near 200 places in Poland, and it gathers over 12 000 participants each year. During each event group of people take a bike ride through the city, town or village and spend time together on various activities connected with cycling and reading. From 2012 Bicycool Library events took place also in other countries like Romania, Ukraine, England, USA, Nepal.

Tim John, Sustrans

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ⁱ Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle. Sustrans work includes connecting people and places, creating livable neighborhoods, transforming the school run and delivering a happier, healthier commute. You can find out more at www.sustrans.org.uk. The bike tour map is by Tim John

ⁱⁱ For more information about Bicycool Library event contact Paulina Milewska at paulina.milewska@umed.lodz.pl. Polish website: www.odjazdowybibliotekarz.pl

Group photo taken by Kristine Chapman.



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