Oxford Health
NHS Foundation Trust

Library Newsletter

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Why Libraries? Why Librarians?



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How do I write about a career as a Professional Librarian spanning nearly 40 years without boring you all to tears! I am reminded about a display I once did when I was School Librarian just down the road from the Warneford at St Michael's Primary School in Marston Road.

This was a joy of a job and the first day in post I was asked who I was by a year 5 pupil. When I replied "the new Librarian" he replied "cool". First and last time! My main task was to set up the school library and instill a joy of reading from reception to Year 6. No mean task in a multi-ethnic school where English was often a second language.

I ran weekly storytimes for the youngest children and often brought my puppy Bonnie, a cocker spaniel with me. I ran Book Clubs for the older children and shadowed the Carnegie Greenaway Awards with a cross-ability group named the Library Mouse (after the picture book). I was embedded in the life of the school and accompanied Year 5 on their residentials to Yenworthy Lodge in Devon. At St Michael's, I was told off by an OFSTED inspector for removing the Library Tree from our Library as this was what I used to teach how the information section was organised – Dewey. Following the OFSTED inspection, they recommended a new library be created in the computer room. Win!

Challenging and difficult times lay ahead as Library Manager at Abingdon & Witney College with a brand spanking new library and Library Management System but I had to set this up for our three sites prior to opening to the new cohort of students in September. The college had no electronic resources at the time and I developed the online offering using Shibboleth authentication.

This experience stood me in good stead in my role of Library and Information Services Manager at the newly independent UKCEH where we had to rebrand the Service for our Scientists and Researchers. We brought in a new Library Management System which I again configured across sites. I had a large Scientific Archive at Lancaster University which I visited regularly. Sound glamorous? I took receipt of the large soil collection of Cranfield University and three of us had to shelve the large and heavy boxes! How to classify soils – there's a challenge!

I was privileged to be Area Librarian for Deeside, North Kincardine and Westill in Aberdeenshire for six years. I travelled from the coast at Newtonhill inland to Ballater visiting my six libraries in a little Bedford Rascal van, accompanied my redoubtable Westie Mac. At our weekly book selection meetings, Mac went touring the other areas of Aberdeenshire Library and Information Service, visiting places I have yet to go.

I started my career as a School Librarian at St. Margaret's High School in Airdrie where I ran a whole-school information skills programme for all pupils. Sadly, my Dad died a few months into my appointment and the Headmaster asked me if there was anything he could do. I am indebted to the late Rector, Derek Fowles and to Father Halavage for teaching me to sail on Strathclyde Park Lock.

And finally to Oxford Health…the library Team is one of the best Teams I have ever worked within. I love the job of Outreach Librarian and going out and training staff and clinicians across the Trust. I am a people person and libraries bring empowerment, engagement and literacy to everyone: clinicians, practitioners and patients alike. Librarians bring the joy of reading.

Librarians are under threat like never before. At the recent American Library Association conference, armed guards were on the door. Please watch the film "Librarians" currently available on BBC iPlayer Storyville.

As I move on to my next chapter, I hope to be a regional judge for the Carnegie Greenaway Book Awards, will continue to sail with the Sea Scouts at Clifton Hampden and Burcot and walk my stubborn Dandie Dinmont Terrier, Rollo – when he feels like it, of course!

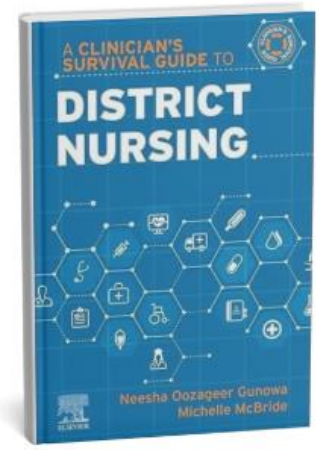
Goodbye and Good Luck to you all.

…Keep Reading!

OHFT staff books.

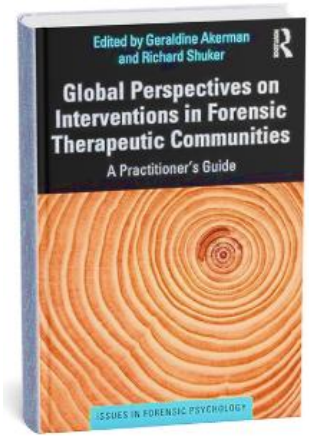
The library is keen to add to stock any books which are authored by, or have contributions from, OHFT staff. Please let us know at library.enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk if you have any work due to be published.

Titles we have purchased for the library with Trust authors/contributors are:



A clinician's survival guide to district nursing / editors Neesha Oozageer Gunowa, Michelle McBride. 2025.

Available at Warneford and Littlemore libraries, shelfmark **WA164**



Global perspectives on interventions in forensic therapeutic communities: a practitioner's guide / edited by Geraldine Akerman and Richard Shuker. 2022.

Available at Littlemore library shelfmark **WM585**

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