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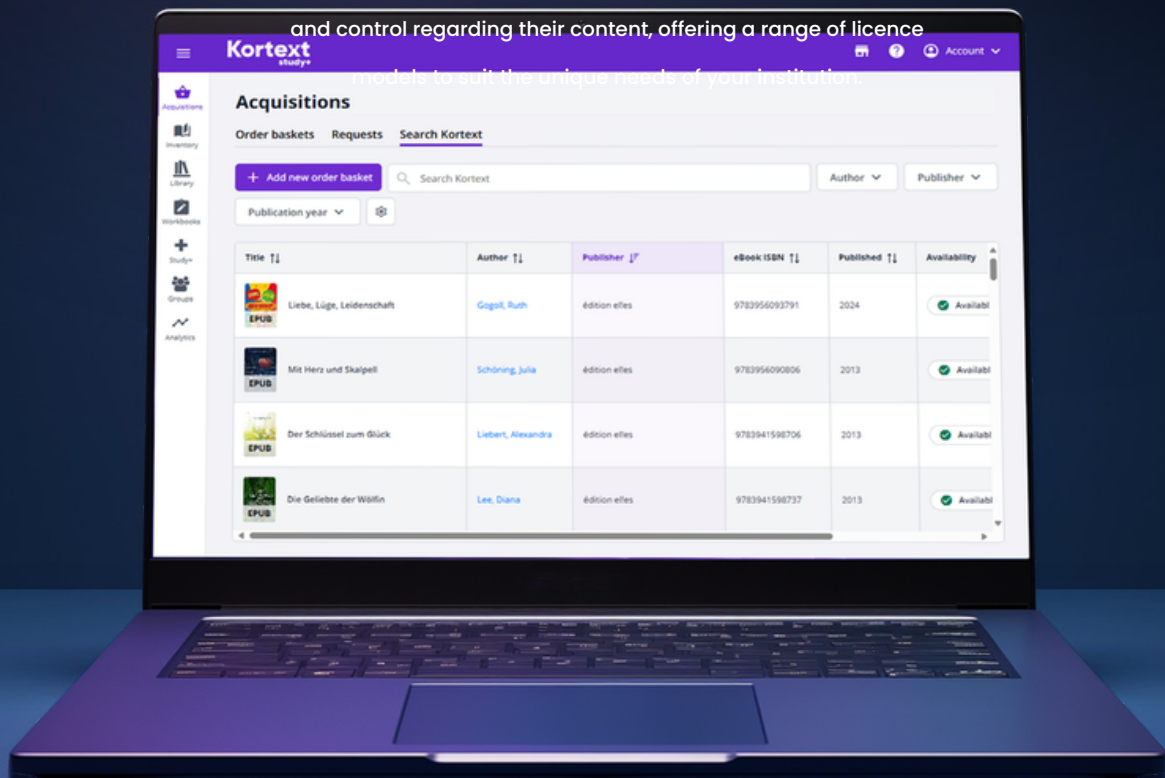
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#MERCIAN26

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Schedule

0940	Mercian Chair's Welcome
0950	Platinum Sponsor Session 1
1000	Keynote
1100	Break and Sponsors
1130	Sessions
1300	Lunch and Sponsors
1400	Sessions
1500	Break, Sponsors and Posters
1535	Platinum Sponsor Session 2
1545	Plenary: From What is To What If - What would you do on Monday if...
1620	Conference Closing Summary
1630	Conference Closes



Welcome

As always, we have an excellent programme exploring a wide range of topics connected to this year's theme, "I can't do any more with less." Through presentations, discussions and posters, colleagues will examine the theme from different perspectives and within a variety of contexts. We are delighted to welcome both experienced and first-time speakers and poster presenters, representing libraries from across the Mercian Collaboration.

The theme for Mercian 26 reflects the reality facing many academic libraries across the sector: tightening budgets, reduced staff capacity, and continually evolving user expectations. Libraries are increasingly expected to deliver more services, more innovation and more engagement, often with fewer resources. We hope today provides space to learn from colleagues across the region and above all, that you leave with practical, collaborative and sustainable ideas that will help libraries maintain and enhance their services without overstretching staff and resources.

In keeping with the conference theme, we are delighted to welcome Anne-Lise Harding, Strategic Training Lead at the House of Commons Library, as our keynote speaker. In her session, "Navigating the 'less' to deliver more," Anne-Lise will explore how libraries can thrive when resources are scarce. She will share strategies for high-impact advocacy, demonstrating how to articulate and evidence the value of libraries to a range of audiences. Her keynote will encourage us to view uncertainty not simply as a challenge, but as an opportunity for innovation, leadership and increased visibility.

While the overall structure of the programme will be familiar to regular Mercian attendees, we are particularly pleased that this year's schedule includes dedicated time to showcase the excellent posters submitted by colleagues across the Collaboration.

Welcome

Mercian 26 is made possible through the generous support of our sponsors and supporters, enabling us to offer the conference free of charge to delegates. Please take the opportunity to visit our exhibitors throughout the day and learn more about the products and services they offer, as well as their latest initiatives and enhancements.

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My sincere thanks to the members of the Mercian Conference Group, whose hard work and commitment throughout the year have made today's event possible. If you are interested in getting involved in planning Mercian 27, please do speak to one of the Conference Group members during the day.

I would also like to thank all our speakers and poster presenters for sharing their expertise and experiences. Thank you to De Montfort University for hosting the conference and providing excellent facilities, as well as to all our sponsors and supporters for their valuable contribution.

Finally, thank you for being here. The Mercian Conference is your conference. It brings together library, information, archives and special collections colleagues from member institutions across the East and West Midlands to share ideas, learn from one another and strengthen our professional community.

We hope you have an enjoyable, welcoming and inclusive experience today. Take the opportunity to learn, reflect, make new connections and perhaps leave inspired to think about familiar challenges in different ways.

Enjoy the conference.

Steve Bull
Mercian Conference Group Chair
Mercian 26



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Our programme of events, workshops and community activities supports professionals at every career stage, from students and early-career practitioners to experienced leaders. CILIP Midlands champions the value of libraries and information services, promotes professional excellence and provides a welcoming regional community where members can build connections, develop their careers, and help shape the future of the profession.

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 - Bloomsbury Fashion Business Cases
 - Fashion Photography Archive
 - Bloomsbury Fashion Video Archive
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Sessions

Beg, Steal or Borrow? Finding Ways and Means to Transform the University of Buckingham's Library Service

Malcolm Meaden-Pratt & Rachel Pollard
University of Buckingham

Changing Institutional Amnesia: How Reshaping Special Collections Can Foster Collaboration, Increase Engagement, and Spearhead Research

Angus Harker & Natalie Bevan
University of Warwick

Data Analytics in Collections Management

Cristiana Ilie
University of Warwick

Diversifying Children's Literature Then and Now: Progress Toward a More Inclusive School Experience Collection at Birmingham Newman University Library

Adele Champken
Birmingham Newman University



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Impactful Intervention: Transitioning from 1-to-1 Support to Group Support

Selina Lock & Merinne Whitton
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Knowing Me, Knowing You: Examining the Library Induction Process for Academic Staff

Beth Gomm
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‘Now’s Not the Moment for a Press’: Relaunching (Maybe) a University Press Amidst Financial Tensions

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Han-Na Cha & Helen Hawksworth
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Step into the Spotlight: Illuminating Every Team

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Sustainable and Collaborative Solutions to Showcasing Your Resources

Nicola Dennis
Aston University





Sessions

Sustainable Service Growth Through Workforce Development

Deborah Munro & Kerry Bonehill
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When Less Forces Change: A Phoenix Approach to Rebuilding Research Support from Restructure Ashes

Joanne Marsh & Michelle Mayer
Coventry University

Plenary

From What is To What If - What would you do on Monday if...

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Workshops

Demystifying User Experience (UX)

Claire Browne & Emma Hibbert

University of Birmingham & Loughborough University

Do More... or Do What Matters? Designing Library Support for Partnerships

Chantelle Wilcox & Jane Faux

Birmingham Newman University

Encouraging Engagement with Reading Lists - A Roundtable Discussion

Brittany Moster Bergonzi

University College Birmingham



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Abstracts-

Listed alphabetically

Beg, Steal or Borrow? Finding Ways and Means to Transform the University of Buckingham's Library Service

Malcolm Meaden-Pratt & Rachel Pollard
The University of Buckingham

This talk is about the slow and difficult journey that the library service at Buckingham has travelled between 2022 and today. It is an overview of the plans to create a modern library service at Buckingham and the many twists and turns on that journey. It advocates slow perseverance and small wins. The overview will touch on 'Fundraising', shmoozing grandees and VCs and building alliances with senior staff, faculty and students. It will argue for internal library budgetary reallocation of resources. It will suggest that involving the library in campus events and activities brings wider rewards. It is not intended to be a perfect case study or lecture upon best practice, but merely an overview of what we tried and what did or didn't work. This is a positive library story in difficult times.



Changing Institutional Amnesia: How Reshaping Special Collections Can Foster Collaboration, Increase Engagement, and Spearhead Research

Angus Harker & Natalie Bevan
University of Warwick

The University of Warwick Library's Special Collections are small but significant, containing approximately 17,000 items with dates ranging from the 1500s to the 20th century. There has been hitherto limited attention given to them. Provenance information has been lost to time, whilst stewardship has ebbed and flowed at the whim of individuals. Over the past year, the Library ran a scoping project to review some of our legacy records in the Library Management System and investigated how we could enhance and develop the bibliographic metadata and provenance information in our Special Collections. We used this project to assess the impact of improvements to records upon the catalogue and the wider campus community.

Since finishing the project, we have seen consistent momentum built through promotion and word-of-mouth. We have conducted introductions to Special Collections to several postgraduate students, and have highlighted books to academics, professional staff, students, and alumni, through our various social media channels. To cement the lasting impact of our efforts, what originally began as two individuals leading a scoping project has resulted in a collaborative Special Collections Taskforce, comprising of representatives of three separate teams within the Library.

The lessons learnt are relevant to colleagues in the sector because, firstly, it is clear how fundamental metadata work is to establish an



informed awareness of what we have. The importance of recording and rediscovery is vital to the life blood of a collection, what might be local has become more important than ever, from both a practical and a sustainable perspective, and through the work of this project, along with some of the accompanying engagement activities, we can demonstrate how colleagues working with special collections could start to think outside the library and into the wider academic community.

Data Analytics in Collections Management

Cristiana Ilie

University of Warwick

Academic libraries are increasingly expected to balance financial sustainability, collection stewardship, user demand, and long-term preservation. In this environment, data analytics has become a critical tool for supporting evidence-based collections management and strategic decision making.

This session will share how the University of Warwick Library has developed a suite of dashboards and data analytics tools to transform large-scale collections data into actionable insight. The presentation will demonstrate how analytics can support a range of collection management activities, including shared print initiatives, collection assessment, retention and preservation decisions, subscription reviews, and operational planning.

Attendees will gain practical examples of how analytics can move libraries beyond reporting towards proactive, strategic decision making.



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Diversifying Children's Literature Then and Now: Progress Toward a More Inclusive School Experience Collection at Birmingham Newman University Library

Adele Champken
Birmingham Newman University

This presentation explores how Birmingham Newman University Library has reviewed its School Experience Collection — especially children's literature — to better reflect diverse voices, using creativity, collaboration, and existing resources.

It begins by exploring why representation in children's books matters, tracing the evolution of diversity over the past century and highlighting key writers and scholars who have shaped the conversation.

The session then moves to practical action: re-theming and reorganising stock, enhancing discoverability, using digital platforms in innovative ways, and embedding inclusive promotion into everyday teaching and library practice.

Delegates can expect to leave with realistic and transferable ideas for refreshing collections, improving engagement, and supporting inclusive pedagogy within their own institutions; plus the confidence that positive changes do not require significant funding, and can make a real impact and a lasting difference.



Do More... or Do What Matters? Designing Library Support for Partnerships

Chantelle Wilcox & Jane Faux
Birmingham Newman University

As partnership provision expands, academic libraries are increasingly required to support students beyond their core campus - often with limited additional resource. This interactive workshop begins with a short case study introduction, showing Birmingham Newman University's journey from a narrow focus on e-resource access to a broader, more strategic approach to supporting UK franchise partnerships.

An interactive workshop will then allow participants to audit their own provision and take part in a hands-on exercise to design a scalable service model for off-campus students - working within real-world constraint

Encouraging Engagement with Reading Lists - A Roundtable Discussion

Brittany Moster Bergonzi
University College Birmingham

The University College Birmingham Library's Reading List Project is a four-phase research project that seeks to gather student and staff voices about their experiences with reading lists with a goal to improve reading list engagement across the university. This summer marks a



crucial point in our research as we assess survey, focus group and interview responses from HE students and staff and decide how to disseminate our findings in practical and actionable ways.

Drawing from the findings of the UCB Library's Reading List Project to date, this roundtable discussion will provide a constructive space to discuss thoughts, experiences and practices (both successful and unsuccessful) around encouraging lecturer engagement with reading lists. While this discussion may not produce neatly packaged answers, it will encourage collaborative thinking to address this long-standing and widespread challenge.

From What is To What If - What would you do on Monday if...

Lux Gagos

University of Nottingham

Embracing Rob Hopkins' idea of falling in love with the future through time traveling, the closing plenary session opens the discussion into re-imagining how services could work if we allow ourselves to rethink the whole system by asking a simple question:

“What would we do on Monday, if we were allowing ourselves to act as we think is best for libraries?”

Using storytelling (time traveling) as a problem solving method, this interactive session aims at liberating the way we think about our possibilities and imagine stories that haven't been told yet because we simply didn't allowed them to be. A future that we can fall in love with,



and reflect on how this could help create new narratives for university libraries, drawing on the cumulated unleashed expertise of the participants in a discussion where the only forbidden sentence is "it is what is and there is nothing we can do about it".

Impactful Intervention: Transitioning from 1to1 support to group support

Selina Lock & Merinne Whitton
University of Leicester

The library's Research Services Team have been supporting the university's Doctor of Clinical Psychology course for almost 13 years. In that time, the course has undergone significant expansion. The number of 1-2-1 consultations provided to DClinPsy students almost doubled in one year (from 30 in 2023-2024 to 57 in 2024-25), necessitating a change of approach. After consultation with course convenors, a new package of support was negotiated for 2025-26, prioritising group sessions and on-demand resources to reduce the demand for individual support. This approach has resulted in a more manageable workload for staff, and a significant reduction in 1-2-1 appointments.

This presentation will seek to illustrate a sustainable solution to the problem of increased demand for specialist support, maintaining a valued service without straining capacity. The aim is not necessarily to reduce support but to maximise efficiency of delivery.

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Knowing me, Knowing you: Examining the Library Induction Process for Academic Staff

Beth Gomm

University of Worcester

In September 2025, library staff at the University of Worcester (UW) sought to examine current library induction processes for academic staff. To this end, two surveys were sent to academic staff at UW and library staff working in UK universities respectively. This talk will discuss the findings of this study and opportunities for improving engagement from both new and long-standing academics.

Reflections One Year into Piloting Peer Study Groups: Is This a Model of Engaging and Providing Peer Support to Masters and Distance Learners?

Han-Na Cha & Helen Hawksworth

University of Birmingham

A recurring theme in postgraduate taught (PGT) student feedback at the University of Birmingham is a perceived lack of student community, particularly among online and distance learners. In response, the Academic Skills Centre (ASC) has piloted adapted action learning set models in two contexts to explore whether peer-to-peer coaching can provide a scalable, low-resource means of enhancing student support and connection. The first pilot, developed with the School of History and



Cultures, was implemented within an online distance-learning Master's programme and generated positive feedback alongside increased student engagement. The second pilot, offered centrally by the ASC, brings together PGT students from across disciplines to discuss dissertation challenges, foster peer support, and encourage ongoing interaction. This presentation evaluates both initiatives, considering their effectiveness across online and in-person settings, their potential to enhance belonging and learning, and the role of centralised academic skills services in addressing wider institutional priorities.

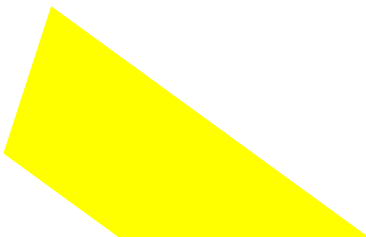
Step into the Spotlight: Illuminating Every Team

Sarah Coulbeck & Georgina Young
University of Nottingham

Operating with specialist functional teams across multiple sites, the University of Nottingham Libraries has knowledge experts, but also knowledge silos. Knowing that collaboration is key to success, we ensure no one is left in the dark...

Enter 'Libraries Spotlight Sessions', a monthly opportunity for a team to share their ways of working, pertinent updates, or recent achievements. Spotlights are practical, engaging, and genuinely helpful monthly sessions that enable us to efficiently share knowledge, experiences, and best practices.

The past two years have seen significant flux in the department. Spotlights have been a way to help us overcome difficulties around these changes, giving us a stronger sense of community and support, and strengthening our culture of peer learning at no financial cost.





Students' Perceptions of Information Literacy: Insights from the Development of a Student-Informed Framework

Andy Calvert & Rhiannon Taylor
University of Warwick

In response to a rapidly evolving information environment, the University of Warwick Library is developing a new framework for information literacy shaped through an embedded user experience (UX) approach. Central to this work is a series of student workshops and focus groups, delivered in collaboration with the Library's UX team, to test and refine our draft framework, which will both support embedded teaching and student's own self-directed development of their skills.

This session foregrounds the UX research outputs, demonstrating how participatory methods enabled students to critique the framework's language, relevance, and alignment with their own practices. We will share the findings of this work, which reveal how students interpret and prioritise information skills, illustrating how student insight can inform more meaningful, accessible approaches to information literacy. Attendees will also gain some insights into applying UX methods to develop student-centred frameworks and services in academic libraries.



Sustainable and Collaborative Solutions to Showcasing Your Resources

Nicola Dennis
Aston University

Library teams face continuing pressure to deliver high quality support with less resource and at the same time a heightened need to demonstrate value and impact of collections within the curriculum. This is placing increasing pressure on library teams to continually market and promote the subject databases and collections to the University community. This presentation explores how Information Literacy (IL) provision can be reframed to reduce staff workload while maintaining impact, through collaboration, targeted delivery and supplier partnerships. By repositioning publishers and content providers as active contributors rather than passive stakeholders, library staff can extend their reach through supplier led webinars; pre-packaged promotional content and collaborative publisher days, reducing the workload but maintaining impact. In parallel, embedding targeted IL content within reading lists and virtual learning environments offers a low-effort, reusable method aligned to specific modules and assessments.



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Sustainable Service Growth Through Workforce Development

Deborah Munro & Kerry Bonehill
Aston University

This session explores how Aston Library and Learning Services has embedded staff development into everyday practice to support both individual growth and service enhancement. By broadening roles and creating informal opportunities for collaboration, the approach has increased staff fulfilment whilst enabling the expansion of services. Kerry Bonehill will discuss the lived experience from a Library Assistant perspective highlighting the practical impact of this people focused approach.

“Now’s Not the Moment for a Press’: Relaunching (Maybe) a University Press Amidst Financial Tensions

Dr Gaz J Johnson
University of Warwick

University of Warwick Press is one a handful of regional library-run open-access academic publishing initiatives, hosting community-led journals alongside a modest monograph publishing programme. Yet, where there might have once been a will there was rarely the resource to fully realise its ambitions. Thankfully, thanks to a modest resource injection the past twelve-months has seen titanic efforts to conduct a strategic review aiming to find ways of turning the little press which couldn’t, into a



publishing giant that can...maybe! As his project concludes, Warwick's Press Manager will share his conclusions and insights into aspects such as satisfying the bottom line without giving up your ideological underpinnings, the joys of ethnographic stakeholder engagements and candid insights into overcoming virtual institutional invisibility too. Hence, if you've wondered quite what it might be like to (re)create a publishing initiative in an era of sectoral financial paucity – this might be the talk for you!

Demystifying User Experience (UX)

Claire Browne & Emma Hibbert

University of Birmingham & Loughborough University

What does UX really mean, and why does it matter? This workshop offers a practical introduction to User Experience, exploring the principles and methods that are low cost, easy and useful to use. Participants will gain a clearer understanding of UX and discover how to apply user-led thinking to everyday library challenges.



When Less Forces Change: A Phoenix Approach to Rebuilding Research Support from Restructure Ashes

Joanne Marsh & Michelle Mayer
Coventry University

Following a restructure in 2024/5 the Open Research Scholarly Publications Team at Coventry University was reduced from 5.75 FTE to 1.75 FTE with some support from the Senior Library Assistant pool within the library. With fewer staff and limited capacity, continuing regular resource-intensive classroom training sessions was no longer sustainable. The challenge was to maintain meaningful research support while working within tighter constraints; refocusing effort on high-value, existing opportunities, working closely with other departments in the university that support research to ensure the Library's guidance remained visible, relevant, and impactful. Rather than stretching capacity further, we embraced a model of intentional focus and strategic reduction—doing fewer activities but delivering them where they matter most.

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Poster Displays

#Mercian26 will again be hosting posters submitted by Mercian members as part of the day's activities and knowledge sharing. The posters will show off a range of innovative projects from across the member institutions in an exciting visual way.



Posters A-I

A Place for Everyone

Kit Brant & Jo Cheadle
University of Birmingham

From Books to Clinical Skills: Repurposing Library Systems to Support Clinical Education

Kevin Yiu
University of Birmingham

From Evidence to Impact: Why Libraries Belong in EDI Charter Mark Work

Hilary Johnson
Open University

I Thought the Library Only had Serious Books

Ann Stairmand-Jackson
Birmingham City University



Posters I-L

Improving Our NDE Homepage Through Student-Led UX

Uchechukwu Aghedo

Birmingham City University

Increasing Student Engagement with Library-Led Dissertation Support

Tracey Lowe, Vandana Sharma & Colin Rogers

Nottingham Trent University

Library Community Development in an Academic Setting

Luke Potter

University of Birmingham

Library Staff and Student Perceptions of Library Anxiety in Academic Libraries - a case study.

Emily Bygrave

Birmingham City University



Posters M-T

Mediated Deposit – doing less ... by doing more? Introducing Mediated Deposit for Research Outputs at the University of Birmingham.

Rosalind MacLachlan and Sarah Fogg
University of Birmingham

Not Just Sitting Ducks: Using Playful Outreach to Bring the Library to Students

Jessica Element
University College Birmingham

Optimising Information Literacy Support to Meet Rapid Growth

Giada Zanella
Aston University

The Cost of Neuroinclusion in Academic Libraries

Hazel Gahagan & Lucy Giuliano
University of Derby



Posters T-S

The Migration of an Institutional Repository: Collaboration as a Necessary Condition for Success

Martin Wakenshaw
University of Derby

Service Improvement Groups

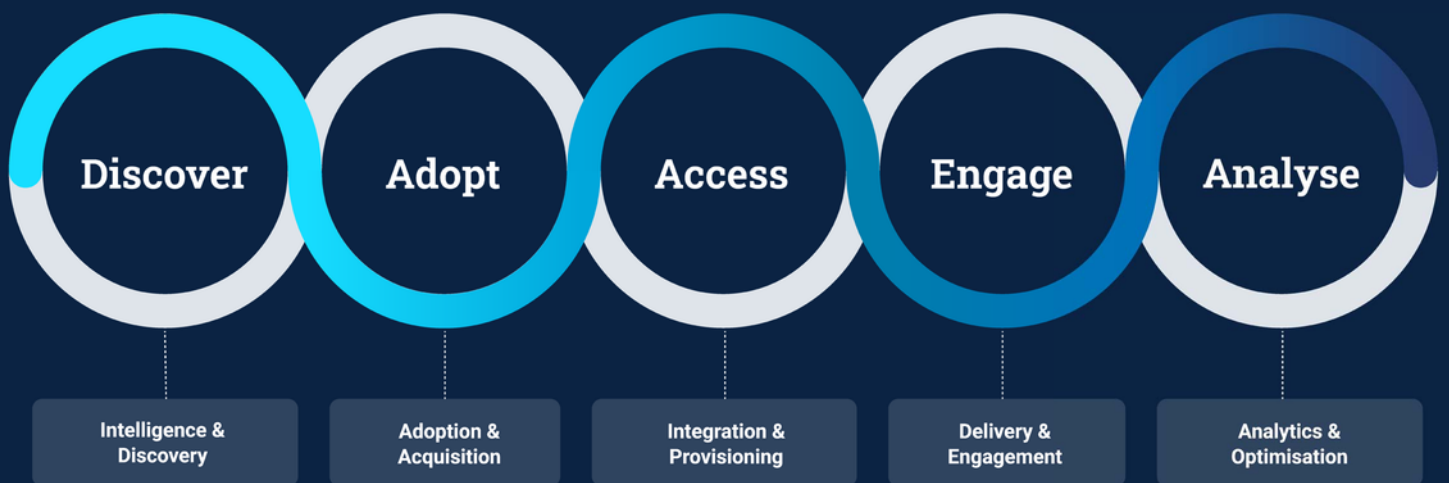
Beth Howell and Alexandra Mladenovic
University of Birmingham

Staff-Led Wellbeing: Doing More with Less

Mercedes Malloy
Birmingham City University



From Discovery to Impact: One Integrated Solution



get.vitalsource.com

Meet your Keynote



Anne-Lise Harding (She/Elle)

Strategic Training Lead

House of Commons Library

Anne-Lise Harding is a highly experienced, chartered library leader and the Strategic Training Lead at the House of Commons Library. In her role, she oversees the quality and impact of training provided to Members of Parliament, their staff and the wider parliamentary workforce. Her work focuses on information literacy, democratic engagement and strengthening Parliament's resilience to misinformation and disinformation. She is the creator and lead on the House of Commons Library's Good Information Toolkit.

She is Co-Chair of the CILIP Information Literacy Group, a committee providing national leadership, advocacy and expertise in this field. She is also a non-executive director at Full Fact, contributing her expertise to the UK's independent fact-checking charity and advising on training strategy.

Her professional interests include information literacy, education to information, advocacy and leadership. She recently co-authored a chapter on informed society and representative democracy in *The Ideas-Informed Society* (Emerald Publishing).



Meet your Speakers

Brittany Moster Bergonzi (She/Her)

Academic Librarian

University College Birmingham

Brittany is the Academic Librarian for Health, Social Work and the College of Food at University College Birmingham. She is co-lead for the UCB Library's Reading List Project, which investigates staff and student experiences with Talis reading lists. Brittany has a background in teaching and research, and she served as the editorial assistant for the journal *Modernist Cultures* while completing her PhD on modernist magazine editorship at the University of Birmingham. She continues to cultivate her love of literature by putting on character voices while reading to her two young sons.



Kerry Bonehill

Collections Librarian for Serials

Aston University

Kerry Bonehill is a Library Assistant within Aston University's User Services team. She leads the institution-wide book club and has introduced new initiatives such as Share Your Shelf, helping to foster a culture of reading across the University. Kerry has also made a significant contribution to the growth of Aston's social media presence and is recognised for delivering excellent customer service.





Claire Browne

User Experience Manager

University of Birmingham

Claire is User Experience Manager for Libraries and Learning Resources at the University of Birmingham, and currently has responsibility for service development, UX projects and the student collaboration initiative Library Shaper programme. She has over ten years as a UX librarian with a background in customer support roles. Claire is also chair of the events planning group for CSGUK Libraries.



Andy Calvert (He/Him)

Research & Academic Support Librarian

University of Warwick

Andy Calvert is currently a Research & Academic Support Librarian at the University of Warwick, co-leading on information literacy in the team and supporting departments in the Faculty of Arts. Andy is also a current Fellow of the Warwick International HE Academy. Starting his career in museums and public libraries, he has been working in academic subject librarianship for 18 years, providing information literacy training and research support to students at all levels across a range of arts and humanities disciplines.



Han-Na Cha (She/Her)

Academic Skills Advisor

University of Birmingham

Han-Na Cha is an Academic Skills Advisor at the University of Birmingham, with a focus on student success. She supports undergraduate and postgraduate taught students with academic skills and writing in 1:1s; workshops and embedded skills sessions. She also helps to train students to run PASS sessions and has recently qualified as a coach.

Adele Champken

Academic Service Librarian

Birmingham Newman University

Adele Champken studied Librarianship at Loughborough University in the 1980s, beginning a long and varied career. Her first role in Doncaster involved the computerization of South Yorkshire Libraries. In the 1990s, she moved into law librarianship, managing the Birmingham Law Society Library and later working at several Birmingham law firms. In 2009, she joined Aston University as an Information Specialist supporting law students. For the past 14 years, as an Academic Service Librarian at Birmingham Newman University, she has supported teacher education students. She remains passionate about her career, recently exploring the diversification of children's literature as a particularly rewarding area.





Your first, best step toward a linked data future for libraries

Does your library speak linked data?

Help people find their way to your library's resources from more online locations. With OCLC Meridian®, your catalog can immediately speak the language of organizations that use linked data. Scientific research, government information, museum collections, genealogies, digital humanities, economic data—if they use linked data, you'll find new connections and create your own.

Find out more about the future of library cataloging at [oclc.org/linked-data-merician26](https://oclc.org/linked-data-meridian26)



Sarah Coulbeck (She/Her)

Learning Development Librarian

University of Nottingham

A Learning Development Librarian at The University of Nottingham, Sarah has spent her career teaching information skills. Following completion of the MA Librarianship at The University of Sheffield in 2008, she became a school librarian with a focus on developing and delivering an information literacy curriculum to students aged six to eighteen years. She then moved to a Further Education college, coaching students on the skills they would need for their futures, before moving up to Higher Education and starting her current role in 2023.

Nicola Dennis (She/Her)

Information Specialist

Aston University

Nicola has worked in academic libraries for over 20 years. She primarily supports business subjects as an Information Specialist at Aston University. Recently, Nicola has been involved in projects reviewing student study habits and researching engagement and usage of eTextbooks.



Lux Gagos (They/Them)

Customer Service Advisor

University of Nottingham

Lux Gagos is a project coordinator and team leader with more than 25 years of experience delivering cultural, educational and operational projects across industrial settings, creative and cultural industry, and community settings.

A multidisciplinary artist, Lux explores storytelling, from comic books to photography including sound design and stop motion animation.

As a researcher they focus on the power of stories to form worldviews, connecting ideas from different fields and using them to challenge assumptions and showing how we need to imagine a politics of ending things to face challenges, such as climate change, otherwise difficult to apprehend.

Beth Gomm (She/Her)

Academic Liaison Librarian

University of Worcester

Beth Gomm has worked as an academic liaison librarian at the University of Worcester for the last five years, having previously worked in NHS and public libraries. She now supports both students and staff across schools within health, science and the environment. This includes delivering teaching sessions and working collaboratively with academic staff to support the student experience.



Angus Harker

Senior Digitisation Assistant

University of Warwick

Angus Harker has been a Senior Digitisation Assistant for the University of Warwick Library and Archives since October 2025. His role involves digitising various archival documents in the Modern Records Centre that has been selected for a plethora of purposes, from outreach and engagement to producing preservation copies. He has also co-lead on a Special Collections Scoping Project developed from his time as a Master's student at Warwick, building and consolidating the metadata of existing Special Collections records.

Helen Hawksworth (She/Her)

Writing Advisor

University of Birmingham

Helen Hawksworth is the Writing Skills Advisor for the Academic Skills Team at the University of Birmingham, supporting students via appointments, workshops and embedded lectures. Prior to this she worked in academic skills development at the University of Wolverhampton. Her academic background is in English Literature and she completed her PhD at the University of Birmingham. During her doctoral studies she worked with English Literature undergraduates to help them develop their academic writing, which she greatly preferred to teaching them English Literature. She currently has particular responsibilities for, and interest in, supporting postgraduate taught students.



CILIP

MIDLANDS

WHO WE ARE

CILIP Midlands is CILIP's regional member network for the West and East Midlands, run by volunteers. It is your local gateway to professional development, community, and support, whether you're just starting out or well into your career.

WHAT WE OFFER

- In-person & online events for professional development and networking
- Opportunities to meet local professionals from across sectors
- Access to bursaries and awards
- A channel to share your views with CILIP

WANT TO VOLUNTEER WITH US?

Volunteering with CILIP Midlands is a great way to:

- Gain skills in finance, events, advocacy, and social media, which you may not get to explore in your day job
- Build your leadership and influencing abilities as part of a committee
- Create strong cross sector connections

To find out more about any positions available, please contact chair.midlands@cilip.org.uk



Emma Hibbert (She/Her)

Student Experience and Accessibility Librarian

Loughborough University

Emma Hibbert is the Student Experience and Accessibility Librarian at Loughborough University Library, where she leads initiatives that promote equitable access to library services and foster student engagement. Her work integrates principles of universal design, accessibility advocacy, and user experience to support the academic success of all library users.

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Cristiana Ilie

Collections Management Officer

University of Warwick

Cristiana Ilie is Collections Management Officer at University of Warwick Library, responsible for the review, evaluation and operational management of print collections and electronic resources. She designs and implements approaches to understanding academic needs and supporting research and education across all faculties and disciplines. Using data analytics, she informs strategic planning and evidence-based decision-making. Cristiana also leads the Collections Management team, ensuring the delivery of an efficient and effective service and providing accurate, timely and responsive access to resources.



Dr Gaz J Johnson

Press Manager, University of Warwick Press

University of Warwick

‘Dr Gaz’ has been involved in libraries and academic publishing within an open-access context for the past few decades. While he’s also worked across the region in varied roles including Library Manager and as the Mercian Collaboration’s Executive Officer, for the past decade he’s mostly been based at Warwick. Following years as Managing Editor-in-Chief of the Exchanges research journal he returned to the library-space last year to head up a strategic review project focused on the institution’s university press. His doctorate is situated within the culture, media and communications space, examining power-dynamics and tensions within the scholarly publishing landscape.

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Selina Lock (She/Her)

Research Services Consultant (Researcher Development)

University of Leicester

Selina Lock has worked at the David Wilson Library, University of Leicester for twenty-six years. She started as the Science Librarian before moving in to the Library Research Services Team. She oversees the Library Researcher Development offering and has become a specialist in systematic review support over the last thirteen years. She is a co-author in a number of systematic and scoping review publications, and is currently the Chair of the University Disabled Staff Forum.

Joanne Marsh (She/Her)

Head of Open Research and Scholarly Publications
Coventry University

Joanne Marsh is Head of Open Research and Scholarly Publications team at Coventry University. She joined the university on a project to develop an open access research repository and now leads a small team to support researchers and PGRs with Open Access, RDM, Metrics and publishing via the CU Open Press. Prior to working at Coventry, she worked for the Higher Education Academy.

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Michelle Mayer (She/Her)

Open Research and Scholarly Publications Officer
Coventry University

Michelle is Open Research and Scholarly Publications Officer at Coventry University. Following undergraduate and postgraduate studies at the university, she joined the team thirteen years ago, and provides support for RDM, Open Access, Open Journal Systems and Open Monograph Press, and occasionally reviews CU Professional Services ethics applications.



Malcolm Meaden-Pratt

Head of Library Service

University of Buckingham

Malcolm Meaden-Pratt is one of the two Heads of Library Service at the University of Buckingham. He is the Law and Business Librarian. He has had previous subject librarian roles within the sector.

Deborah Munro

Deputy Director of Library and Learning Services

Aston University

Deborah Munro is Deputy Director of Library and Learning Services at Aston University, with responsibility for frontline services, content provision, and digital transformation initiatives. She also co-chairs the Mercian EDIA Core Group.

Rachel Pollard

Head of Library Service

University of Buckingham

Rachel Pollard is one of the two Heads of Library Service at the University of Buckingham. She is the also supports teaching and training with the Faculty of Medicine. She previously worked with Elsevier copyediting and preparing academic articles for publication.



Rhiannon Taylor

Research & Academic Support Librarian

University of Warwick

Rhiannon Taylor is a Research and Academic Support Librarian at the University of Warwick Library. She is a Chartered Librarian with over 15 years' experience in higher education libraries. Her role focuses on information literacy teaching and engagement across Sociology, Warwick Business School and Warwick Global Academy. She is a member of the team co-ordinating the University's successful Academic Integrity Celebration Month.

Rhiannon is also part of the Library's Information Literacy working group, which recently developed a new Information Literacy framework and evaluated it with students through user experience (UX) work. Together with Andy Calvert, she will share insights into students' perceptions of information literacy from this UX work.

Merinne Whitton (She/Her)

Research Services Consultant (Research Metrics)

University of Leicester

Merinne Whitton has worked in libraries for 18 years, supporting medicine and health. She is currently a Research Services Consultant at the University of Leicester's David Wilson Library, specialising in research metrics, and has recently begun supporting the systematic review service.

Chantelle Wilcox (She/Her)

Library Digital Services Officer
Birmingham Newman University

As the Library Digital Services Officer at Birmingham Newman University, Chantelle specialises in developing and supporting key library systems. She enjoys solving technical problems, streamlining workflows, and improving systems to enhance the user experience. She is passionate about making information simpler and easier to use.

Georgina Young (She/Her)

Senior Library Adviser
University of Nottingham

Since 2023 Georgina has been a Senior Library Adviser in the Metadata team at the University of Nottingham. Prior to this she worked in Customer Services across different library sites while completing her MA in Libraries and Information Services Management at the University of Sheffield. She was part of an EDI workstream focusing on staff experience for those with neurodiverse conditions, and has been a member of the Training & Development Group since 2022



Mercian Collaboration Activities & Groups

The Collaboration operates several special interest groups and communities of practice, which largely have been instigated by demand from within the membership and guided by the Mercian Board's insight.

Each of the groups benefit from representation drawn from across the member organisations, along with support from a Steering Group sponsor. Each group considers the challenges within the individual thematic areas they address in differing ways.

More information on all the Mercian groups is available here:

<https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/activities/activities-groups/>

Conference Group (CG)

The Mercian Conference Group (CG) is responsible for defining, planning and delivering all aspects of the Collaboration's annual conference.

The group's activities, direction and contributions are overseen by the group's Chair, as guided by input from the Mercian Collaboration Steering Group, and supported by the Executive Officer. The Committee reports and is responsible to the Mercian Directors, via the Mercian Collaboration's Steering Group and Group Sponsor (Sue Ackermann). The group is currently chaired by Steve Bull (University of Birmingham).

Group membership is open to library staff from Mercian Collaboration member institutions, with agreement of their respective Directors.



Staff Development Group (MSDG)

The Mercian Staff Development Group (MSDG) is a core group of the Collaboration, whose committee comprises representatives drawn from each of the member libraries. The MSDG's remit is to organise an annual programme of development and training events, alongside visits and other activities, for library staff within member institutions that aim to provide:

- Opportunities for staff at all levels to share knowledge, exchange ideas, experiences and good practice.
- A programme of staff development events throughout each year: including learning exchanges, workshops and library tours/visits.
- Strategic and operational approaches to the delivery of staff development.
- Advice and consultation to the Mercian Collaboration Directors Board on staff development issues.

Contact your local MSDG representative for more information on forthcoming events or to host a staff development event.

The Deputies & Senior Staff Group (D&SSG)

The Deputies & Senior Staff Group (D&SSG) is a forum for staff who have senior operational and strategic responsibilities within Mercian member libraries. Membership is open to Deputies or members of the senior management team i.e. at the level immediately below the director/head of library services. In a converged service, this may be third tier.

Representation is voluntary and more than one person from each institution can participate should they wish. People who are also members of SCONUL deputies groups are welcome.





Marketing & Communications Group

The Marketing & Communications Group is one of the Collaboration's special interest subgroups. Group members have a particular interests in the marketing, promotion and reputational enhancement of academic libraries to staff, students and the wider community. Membership is largely self-selected by individuals rather than operating a representational model (e.g. like the MSDG).

Group membership is open to all staff working in member libraries with an interest in marketing, promotion, advocacy or communications in any capacity.

Mercian Copyright Group

The Mercian Copyright Group (MCG) is a network of library staff with a responsibility for copyright guidance and advocacy at their institutions.

Copyright and related issues, are complex even for the specialists in the field, and being able to share knowledge and develop best practice is a crucial part of supporting teaching and research active colleagues, and especially in developing fields.

The Group aims to act as a regional community of best practice, sharing effective techniques and methods, and offering new opportunities to work collectively across the 'Midlands Engine' and Mercian membership region.



Mercian Disability Forum

The Mercian Disability Forum (MDF) is a special interest group of the Mercian Collaboration and comprises library professionals working within member institutions with an interest in, or responsibility for, supporting disabled students.

Membership is representational and largely self-selected by individuals within membership organisations

Mercian Metadata Forum

The Mercian Metadata Group is one of the Collaboration's special interest group and, as the name suggests, the group members have a particular interest in and around the creation and management of metadata.

Like most of the other SIGs, membership is representational and largely self-selected by individuals within membership organisations.

Library Systems & Technologies Group

The Mercian Library Systems and Technologies Group aims to be a community of practice of staff responsible for implementing and managing various systems within the digital library ecosystem.

Group members will discuss issues from a multi-system perspective, comparing solutions and approaches, and will draw upon each other's experience in managing operational issues and introducing change.

The group also maintains a JISC mail discussion group.

Meet the Conference Group



Steve Bull

Chair
*University of
Birmingham*



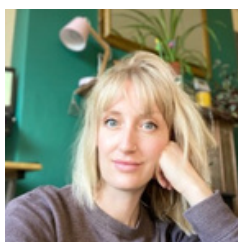
Sue Ackermann

Steering Group
Sponsor
*University of
Nottingham*



Andy Calvert

Communications and
Programme Co-ordinator
University of Warwick



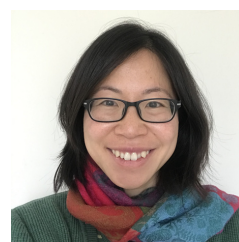
Kat Halliday

Communications and
Programme Co-ordinator
Loughborough University



Emma Hibbert

Conference Enhancement
Loughborough University



Han-Na Cha

Conference Enhancement
University of Birmingham



Brittany Moster

Conference Enhancement
*University College
Birmingham*



Lisa Dale

Venue Coordinator
*University College
Birmingham*



Clare Towle

Speaker Liaison
University of Derby

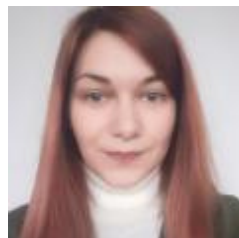
Meet the Conference Group



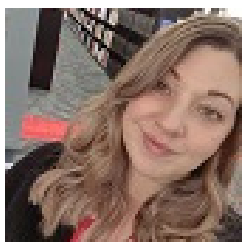
Lynn Goodhew
Speaker Liaison
Coventry University



Giada Zanella
Delegate Liaison
Aston University



Cristiana Ilie
Delegate Liaison
University of Warwick



Jodie Heap
Sponsorship Co-ordinator
Keele University



Kim Hepburn-Woods
Sponsorship Co-ordinator
University of Nottingham



Fergus McErlean
Sponsorship Co-ordinator
University of Birmingham



Matt Cunningham
MSDG Representative
[ex officio]

Join the Group!

Why not become a member of this rewarding working group yourself next year?

Email us at

MercianConference@gmail.com
if you are interested.



merciancollaboration.org.uk