



## NEWSLETTER 3:DECEMBER2016

Welcome to the third edition of our Newsletter; the second was the interview with Gillian Norton, hope you didn't miss it! We begin with an article by Colm O'Reilly from libraries on the outreach work he does with homeless people and the charity SPEAR; FANTASTIC! Read on to find out what's been happening in the Branch.

### The Power of Reading

We all need a little help sometimes, the chance for a bit of peace and contemplation in an otherwise hectic world, and sometimes it can come from the most unexpected of places. Working as a Librarian with Richmond Library Service, I've come to realise that great literature, carefully chosen, can help us understand our lives and make changes to how we feel about ourselves and our relationships with others.

Richmond Libraries and SPEAR (a homeless charity doing incredible work in the local area) have teamed up to deliver a weekly 'shared reading' group for homeless people living within the borough. During each session we read aloud a short story or extract from a novel, as well as a related piece of poetry. The literature acts as a catalyst for examining our own feelings and emotions, or alternatively as a much-needed respite from them. Sessions are friendly, informal and calm (nobody is under any pressure to read or contribute – just listening is fine, and there's the obligatory tea, fruit and biscuits to be had too!), and are an excellent way of building a sense of belonging and camaraderie. The sessions also act as a useful gateway to other services available free of charge through our libraries, from access to books, audiobooks and digital materials to IT advice, community events and job clubs. We run similar shared reading groups for dementia sufferers too, in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society, as well as providing books and support for a large number of customer-led reading groups taking place in all of our libraries and beyond. Phew!

As it's almost Christmas I thought I'd share some of my favourite festive books, all of which, of course, are available to borrow from your local library.

**A Child's Christmas in Wales**, *Dylan Thomas*

**A Christmas Carol and Other Christmas Writings**, *Charles Dickens*

**Christmas Days: 12 stories and 12 feasts for 12 days**, *Jeanette Winterson*

**The Adventure of the Christmas Pudding**, *Agatha Christie*

**Hercule Poirot's Christmas**, *Agatha Christie*

**The Mistletoe Murder and Other Stories**, *P.D. James*

**The Mistletoe Bride & Other Haunting Tales**, *Kate Mosse*

**The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**, *C.S. Lewis*

**The Snowman**, *Raymond Briggs*

**The Gift of the Magi and Other Stories**, *O. Henry*

## SSA

The first meeting of the Sickness working group made up of Union representatives from both councils, management representatives and HR was held early in the month. The group will meet every two months; **please feel free to let us know of any issues about sickness so they can be raised at these meetings.** Unison agreement on adopting the Wandsworth model was dependent upon a moratorium on the full application of the policy whilst statistics are examined, exemptions established and triggers reviewed. New locations within the SSA have yet to be decided. If you are based in Wandsworth then you should receive Inner London Weighting (amounting to approx. £1600 per annum). If you have any issues about this please contact us for support.

## AfC (Achieving for Children)

Informal meetings have taken place with Windsor and Maidenhead Borough to transfer their children's services to AfC. The transfer will bring £35,000,000 to AfC coffers. We are receiving a large number of consultation documents from AfC who are reorganising throughout prior to the new financial year. Unfortunately there will be a number of redundancies although AfC is attempting to minimise the impact on front-line staff.

## Schools and RuTC.

Colleges across the country are suffering huge cutbacks in funding. Recruiting new students at the college has not been as successful as hoped for and as a result funding for RuTC is further affected. There have already been cuts to curriculum offers and consequent cuts to support staff and lecturers' jobs. Inevitably there will be more cuts to staff and curriculum offers when funding is reduced further for 2017/18. We await further news on the new build.

The new MAT Richmond West Schools (RWST) was established on November 1<sup>st</sup> but only Twickenham and Hampton Academies have joined thus far; Waldegrave, Teddington and Nelson Primary will join them next year. No reason has been given for this delay.

It has come to our attention that a meeting was held at AfC where several local authority primary schools were presented with the possibility of becoming part of the new MAT Every Child, Every Day Academy Trust. We have not heard about any of these schools wishing to take the MAT option. With the Government announcement that schools will face cuts of £3billion by 2020, the situation in schools can only get worse.

At the last Branch Committee Meeting we had a visit from **Nick Turnbull** from region, a local organiser who has been working on recruitment in privatised health care companies. He is now working on recruitment in ISS (predominantly a school meals provider in the borough). He offered us help in recruiting. He commented that some branches are reluctant to recruit private contractors. We assured him that we do not have objections here. Nick added that there is a regional and national forum for ISS employees, the same issues are everywhere. He will map areas and try for stewards.



If anyone would like to submit articles for the next Newsletter please send to [maggie.fordham@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:maggie.fordham@richmond.gov.uk) We wish you all a Happy Christmas and a great new year!