Continuing from the last edition of the Bulletin here is the next in our series of "a day in the life of…" a member of the Libraries for Nursing Committee feature and a profile of one of our new committee members.

A day in the Life of Phillip Barlow

What Kind of Day Has It Been?

As a Senior Library Assistant at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, my job covers both the world of the NHS and the world of Higher Education, because the library is part of Imperial College London's library service. As a consequence, unless something special is planned, my day will involve coming into contact with students and staff of both the college and the NHS.

The small size of the library by necessity means that my day tends to be structured around staffing the issue desk. This is done on a rota basis; whomever is due to be on first will have the added responsibilities of checking the book drop, the suggestion/comment boxes and the general email inbox, sorting out enquiries that have come in between those that can be answered straight away and those that should be forwarded to someone else. Additionally, if the day is one where one or more of the training rooms have been booked, I will be on hand for any assistance that may be required. This period of the day will also see me checking my own email and answering any enquiries that have come direct to me – the vast majority of these are usually requests for NHS Athens accounts to be

renewed. This is actually a three point task, as not only will I renew the Athens account, but also the user's library membership and their access to Imperial College's network. On the first day of the month there will also be a number of reports generated by the library system containing statistics regarding the number of NHS users registered and number of items borrowed by NHS users over the previous month which I then collate, and which are then included on the SCONUL returns. Although I know that in this modern "green" age we are supposed to avoid unnecessary printing of paper, I find it much easier to print all of these out rather than reading them from the screen.

On any particular day, I may well have at least one training session scheduled. In order to ensure that my day is not overrun by training and I have time for everything else, I try to schedule training sessions between 10.00am and 4.00pm. This is usually fine for workshop type sessions that I have come up with myself, and that people book places on, but if someone has requested their own session, whether it is a group or 1-2-1 session, then I have to negotiate a time that I am available and that is convenient for them. For group sessions that involve just a presentation, there is not a huge amount of setting up that needs doing, merely the laptop and projector, so I will use the half-hour or so that I give myself to run through, checking both that I'm comfortable with what I am going to say, but also that the PowerPoint, which will usually be quite animation and audio heavy, is working as I want it. For those sessions that are hands on, much more time is required, as all of the laptops (we

have no fixed computers in our training rooms) are set up and are working properly.

While I may be called upon to do anything at any point during the day, I prefer to leave book selection and purchase, which is the other major element of my role, to the afternoon. I enjoy this as, provided I am not scheduled to be on the issue desk, it allows me to sit back with some music on and a cup of tea and, armed with a highlighter or a marker pen, go through the various catalogues that have arrived either by email or through the post, and cross-reference anything that catches my eye with the library catalogue, checking whether it would be a new edition or a brand new title. Once I have gone through everything, I will then add any selections I have made to the spread sheet that I keep of all the new books I plan to purchase. At the same time I will transfer some from this spread sheet to the one listing the books that should be purchased immediately, which is on a shared drive accessible to everyone.

This is a flavour of some of the regular things that happen during my day. There will be days when everything I have mentioned will occur, and days when none of it occurs, because I have been in a meeting that has lasted half a day, or I have had to devise a new training session that someone has asked for, or been away at an all-day training event. There is the regular stuff, but there are also the kinds of wild card things that always crop up. What kind of day has it been? Hard, but certainly not dull.