

THE KITTIWAKE TRUST MULTILINGUAL LIBRARY

NEWSLETTER NO 1 APRIL 2020



Welcome to the long-awaited newsletter from the Kittiwake Trust Multilingual Library.

It's coming up to 4½ years since the library opened and it's close to the anniversary of our Patron, David Crystal's visit to open it officially on 28 April 2016. His talk is still available on YouTube - see [David Crystal 280416 MLL](#).

Last summer we acquired a new unit in Eldon Garden which we are calling The Crystal Room in his honour.



Professor David Crystal

“When people are far from home, they can find home in a book in their own language.”

Amina Marix Evans



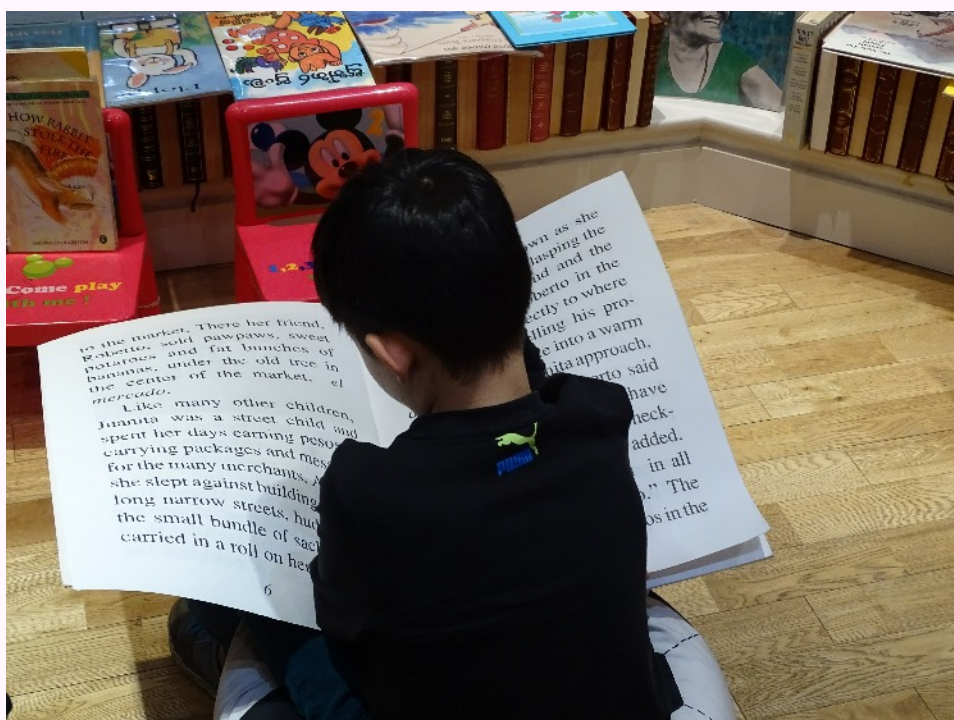
Just before we had to close, we had signed up member number 1252 - Not that all the memberships are still active, since we cater for a moving population, but it does mean that 1252 people have found us and liked the project enough to want to be part of it.

Our current stock is almost 15,000 books catalogued – with a whole lot more still waiting to be processed. We generally have a team of around 20 people volunteering with us - again a floating population - but we are always open to new volunteers who are serious about helping us build this unique project.

We are aiming to have more activities for children during school holidays and half terms and would like once again to put on some talks about local history and other topics. Of course, in the current situation all our plans are on hold, but we hope to be able to launch some new projects later in the the year.

We have plenty of other ideas on how to develop our beloved Multilingual Library, and we are currently working on prioritising them.

Amina was born in the UK and speaks two languages



WHAT'S GOING ON ?

Our volunteers come from over 15 countries and speak 20 languages.

We have books in 101 languages and counting. We also hold information about various language classes in the city and close by.

Members who registered with us four years ago or earlier may wish to consider visiting to renew their membership. You can sign up for gift aid if you are a UK tax payer. Please get in touch and we can send you the form so that we can claim a percentage of your membership fee from the tax office at no extra cost to you.

We are always on the look out for more volunteers to help run the library. Please ask for details or email us for an application form.

All memberships paid for this year will be extended by 12 months

All loans are automatically extended until we are open again

All classes and events are on hold until we open again

CLASSES AND EVENTS IN VERB - LIBRARY ANNEXE, TWO DOORS DOWN

French classes Tuesdays 10:30-12:30pm
 Wednesdays 10:30-12:45pm and 6:00-7:30pm

English conversation Tuesdays 4:00-6:00pm

Japanese conversation group fortnightly on Friday evenings at 6:00pm

Arabic activities for children are held on Sundays.

Migration and Justice Forum meetings monthly on Saturdays at 3:00

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What I have learned from the library - Cristina Peligra

Since moving to Newcastle, the Multilingual Library has become part of my everyday life. I been a volunteer library assistant for over three years, a time in which I have learned a lot and have grown personally and professionally thanks to this experience and the support and advice from the other volunteers. From library management to event planning, from team working to expanding my understanding of the local history, the skills I have developed and the knowledge I have gained through my time in the library are simply invaluable.

And the keyword here is indeed knowledge. Libraries are often called sanctuaries or temples of knowledge. In fact they are a safe space for learning, exploring, freeing your imagination, through reading.

If I now ask myself whether my own approach to reading has changed through these years as a library volunteer and whether I now consider myself a better reader, the answer to both questions is simply yes. However, I feel I need to add more on what this means for me.

What does it mean to have become a better reader? Do I read more? Sincerely, I'd say no. It depends on how tired I am after work, what the plans are for the evening, etc. It is quality, not quantity.

Have I become a world literature expert? Well, as Socrates said, one is wise if they know they know nothing. There would always be new books coming to the library, new stories to hear, something new to learn and new ways to be challenged.



When I say I consider myself a better reader now thanks to my experience in the library, it is because I have learned humbleness, to change my mind and perspective through reading and discussing my opinions with my colleagues and the library's members and visitors. I learned to accept advice, to respect the thoughts and beliefs of others and treasure them, even if I do not agree with them. Reading has become a way of improving myself as a person, an opportunity for self-reflection and self-criticism.

This is exactly what I hope everyone will experience in the Multilingual Library, my library, my second home for many months. I hope that everyone will be able to see that a library is not just made up of books, shelves and walls, but of the people who read those books and their emotions, and that it is by accepting and respecting others' views and embracing difference that we can become better people.

Cristina was born in Italy and speaks five languages

My Experience of Volunteering in the Multilingual Library - Mayur Chauhan

Prior to my retirement, I had decided that I wanted to volunteer. I had worked in the medical profession for 37 years. My interests were in nature, reading and working with people from all walks of life and different countries.

I heard about the Kittiwake Trust multilingual library from the local authority and my first impression was that it was a unique place, providing a valuable resource of information, knowledge, entertainment, inspiration and support to individuals whose main language is not English.

I have now been volunteering at the library once a week for the last 12 months. I have met so many lovely people who have such interesting lives. My work in the library is very simple. It involves opening the library, cataloguing and shelving books, interacting with members of the library and the general public. Since starting, I have also helped with the library's window display showcasing festivals such as Diwali and Ganesh Chaturthi (Lord Ganesh's birthday).

Most people who come to the library are surprised that such a place exists and by the range of books that are available in different languages. Some individuals have commented that they were not aware of the library's existence but are delighted that they have found it.



I am a bit surprised to find that there are not many university students who use the library for their education since this is an invaluable resource. I also wonder how the library advertises its existence. Having met individuals who are fluent in up to 4 different languages, I am a bit disappointed in myself since I only speak two languages including English. I admire people who are fluent in multiple languages, but I console myself saying that "it is never too late to start learning again".

My other volunteering experience is working for Northumberland Wildlife Trust and the West End Refugee Services.

I am so glad that I found this library and would encourage others to volunteer.

Mayur was born in Kenya but came to UK as a child and considers England as his home. He speaks two languages

AFTERWORD

Sadly, in common with other libraries, we have had to close down temporarily due to the coronavirus.

We will follow guidelines about when it will be safe to open again. Over the next few weeks we will be working on making a new website which we hope will help you to keep in touch with the library and give some useful information about languages.

Please be assured that if you have taken a new membership or renewed your membership this year, we will extend it by a year.

We want to thank all our volunteers for their dedication and support. We will be keeping in contact during the time we are closed to be sure everyone is safe and fully informed about the situation - pointing them to information in their own languages where necessary.

Finally we would like to thank Mo, who took on the task of acting as library manager for the past six months, for all her work and for at last getting this newsletter off the ground.

We welcome Catherine Warner to the team.
She will take on the job of Library Manager when we open again



*We add to this map as we get new volunteers. If you worked with us and don't see your home marked, please let us know so we can add you.
Thanks to Marran for her impeccable stitching of the title!*