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Rumo(u)rs from Paddington

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OK, so the running circuits at lunch time around the Serpentine Lake in Hyde Park have evolved into something more ambitious. I have applied to run the London Marathon (http://www.london-marathon.co.uk/) in April. Now, there's always a chance that I won't get selected. They ask two questions on the application form: how old are you and what is your best previous marathon completion time? I can inform you that on both counts I fall into the “less than likely” categories! But I need to train “just in case” my name comes up in December, so I have been running to work. Whilst doing this, I have discovered running is much, much nicer than being on the tube (“subway”), so even if I don’t get picked I’ve found an enjoyable alternative way of getting to work in the mornings. But I am looking for someone to run with so if any of you are interested, email me <daryl@xrefer.com>.

Enough of marathons and onto libraries. Let me update you on what is happening in the library world this side of the Atlantic....

English women’s writing has received a huge boost with the opening of the Chawton House Library (http://www.chawton.org/). Housed in an Elizabethan mansion that once belonged to Jane Austen’s brother, the reference library will house 9,000 books and aims to provide access to the texts within an appropriate contextual setting, that of a seventeenth/eighteenth-century country house and working farm.

The first quarter report of a Laser Foundation funded feasibility study on eBooks in public libraries is now available. Among its aims is to evaluate three different eBook formats. You can access the report at http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/dis/disresearch/e-booksinpubliclib/. Linda Berube, <linda.berube@cambridgeshire.gov.uk> who visited us in Paddington recently, is involved with this project. In fact, on catching up with Linda, I realized that she is always involved in lots of projects. A living example of true multi-tasking!!

I have learnt that the Idea Store, part of Tower Hamlets flagship library project (due to be completed in 2005) has received funding of £80k to include a state-of-the-art Learning Lab (http://www.ideastore.co.uk). I look forward to visiting it!

A “ground breaking new service” which brings together information about all public libraries in London has been launched. “What’s in London Libraries” (Will) allows simultaneous searching of library catalogues, community information databases and a range of museum and archive collections. So far eighteen of the thirty-three catalogues are connected and the rest, I am told, should be available by spring (http://www.londonlibraries.org.uk/wilf).

BioMed Central, the innovative independent publishing house run by the ever-energetic Vitex Tracz (<vitex@cursei.co.uk>) has signed an arrangement with JISC, whereby JISC is funding a fifteen-month membership of BioMed Central for all U.K. universities.

NetSkills (http://www.netskills.ac.uk/workshops/forthcoming.html) has a full schedule of workshops running throughout the U.K. from October 2003 to March 2004. Many of these workshops will count towards the NetSkills/BTEC Professional Development Certificate in both Web Development and e-Learning.

Good to see that the U.K. Serials Group (http://www.uksg.org/events/awards04.asp) has announced details of its International Research Awards Programme for 2004. Two separate £1,000 awards are available to any individual currently registered at a higher education institution or in employment and undertaking formal pre-qualification study (full- or part-time). In both cases, the piece of work being undertaken must form part of the requirements for the course or of the formal pre-qualification study.

The National Archives of the U.K. has announced the launch of a new archive of U.K. Central Government Websites http://www.pro.gov.uk/webarchive/.

The Internet Resources Newsletter — Issue 109 (http://www.hw.ac.uk/libwww/irn/irn109/irn109.html) — edited by Roddy MacLeod, Heriot-Watt University is now available.

I am pleased to announce that Liz Hart, Audio Visual Services Librarian at the London Borough of Enfield Libraries has been made an Honorary Member of the International Association of Music Libraries — well done, Liz!

Paul Harwood, formerly Managing Director of Swets Blackwell has left to work at Content Complete Ltd., a new company he has set up jointly with former Swets College Albert Prior. I wish them luck. Their collective bundle of experience will serve them well, I am sure!

I am also pleased to announce that xrefer has launched version two of xreferplus, its reference service to libraries. This new version incorporates a range of conversion tables and its “Research Mapper,” a new information visualization tool. A public version of the mapper can be found at http://www.xrefer.com/research.

Hopefully, I will have caught up with many of you at the Charleston Conference. Looking forward to it.