

Welcome - Andrew Green

- 1 Good afternoon. My name's Andrew Green and I'm the Honorary President of CILIP Cymru. It's my perfectly pleasurable job to welcome you all to Cardiff to Celtic Connections III.

Prynhawn da i chi i gyd. Hoffwn i fel Llywydd Mygedol CILIP Cymru estyn croeso cynnes iawn i chi i Gwylwm Celtaidd 2006. Dyma'r tro cyntaf i Celtic Connections ddod i Gymru, ond feleich bod chi'n gwylbod, mae'n siwr, hon yw'r drydedd yn y gyfres o gynadleddau sydd yn symud, fel yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol, o le i le, yn yr achos hwn ar draws y byd Celtaidd. Yn y gorffennol gallech fod wedi dweud bod ein gynhadledd ni llawer yn y wlypach na'r Eisteddfod - a dw i'n gobeithio bod digon o wsgia chwrrw ar gael yn y Thistle i ni i gyd - ond wrth gwrs mae'r Eisteddfod wedi cofleidio alcohol erbyn hyn.

A specially warm welcome to those of you who've come from Scotland and Ireland. I gather there are also a few from that other country across the border.

- 2 I must be just one of an ageing group of veterans of the first and second Celtic Connections conferences, in Peebles and Killarney. Peebles in 1996 I remember for that vast Hydro hotel, in which you could get lost for days, the whisky 'tasting' (tasting turned out to be a euphemism) and the reckless gambling we were encouraged to indulge in. Killarney in 2002 was memorable for its immense hospitality and the warmth of its welcome.
- 3 I hope you'll find that Cardiff matches up well to its predecessors. As a city, Cardiff might be called a late developer. In the early nineteenth century it was no more than a small town, but by 1890 it had become the biggest coal-exporting port in the world. Only in 1955 did it become the official capital of Wales. Arguably only in the last few years, with the coming of the National Assembly, has it become to look like a capital.
- 4 If you haven't been here for a long time you'll find it greatly changed - and on the whole for the better. The Bay area is unrecognisable from ten or fifteen years ago, and the city centre too now looks very different, with the Millennium Stadium a new landmark. Cardiff has one of the best-planned civic centres of any city in the British Isles - it's just a few minutes' walk away from here. It includes the National Museum of Wales, where the reception will be on Thursday evening. On Wednesday we'll be welcomed in the National Assembly in the Bay. I hope you'll soon feel at home here. You might even leave with a few words of the Welsh language, or if not then the that language peculiar to Cardiffians, Keerdif.
- 5 This hotel, the Thistle, has a personal significance for me, because it was here - in the room next door, in fact, that my wife Carys and I held our wedding reception twenty-six years ago. Not everything went to plan. On the way

from the register office we got lost, and out of the first car to arrive at the foot of the red carpet stepped, to great applause, Carys's eighty year old grandparents. This conference, though, will go to plan, I hope, and will result in more than one marriage of minds.

- 6 Like all good conferences Celtic Connections offers an impressive official programme, a number of fringe events, and of course the chance to mingle and meet with colleagues, especially from other countries. In the programme of talks and discussions we'll be getting to grips with matters of crucial and topical importance for our profession, like the role of library services in today's democracies, showing that what we do has demonstrable value, and operating in an increasingly electronic world. The organisers have assembled what I hope you agree is an impressive array of speakers from both sides of the Atlantic: I'm sure they will stimulate reactions that will spill over into the discussions and the informal talk outside this room.
- 7 So, without more delay, I'll now hand over to our first chair, Michael Gorman, President of the American Library Association, who's going to introduce the first session of the conference's first theme, 'Libraries in a democratic society'. We're delighted to welcome you, Michael, to Celtic Connections.
- 8 Although he's lived in the United States since 1977 Michael Gorman comes originally from Witney on Oxfordshire. From 1966 to 1977 he worked in the British Library, mainly on bibliographical matters, and he's kept a strong interest in metadata ever since. He was the first editor of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (1978) and their revision in 1988. He's also, though, been concerned with the fundamentals of our professional beliefs: in 2000 the ALA published his book 'Our enduring values', a statement of the values he believes should lie at the core of our practice. Back in his native land Michael was made an Honorary Fellow of CILIP last year. Michael: croeso cynnes iawn i Gwlwm Celtaidd.