



Glasgow in April

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Andrew Barker, Liverpool John Moores University

Question: why would anyone want to go to Glasgow in April?

Answer: for the 41st UKSG Annual Conference!

Glasgow is, for my money, one of those cities, like Liverpool and Newcastle, which have a tough exterior, but a warm and welcoming heart. Given that the readers of 'Rough Guides' recently crowned it the [world's friendliest city](#), I am clearly not alone in my thinking. This year, from 9 – 11 April, Glasgow welcomes UKSG for our 41st Annual Conference and Exhibition, and I for one cannot wait.

Over the last six or seven years, Glasgow has been one of three stop-off points for UKSG's annual conference (with Harrogate and Bournemouth), and it is my personal favourite. It is a fantastic city, a city that has been through very tough times, but a city that is re-creating itself as a cultural destination, and a city with the beautiful River Clyde at its centre. Glasgow is a wonderful venue for a city break, with attractions such as [Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum](#), and the [Gallery of Modern Art](#), it also makes for a superb conference venue.

It is on the banks of the River Clyde where we will convene for this year's conference at the Scottish Event Campus (SEC). I will be there, for what will be my eighth UKSG conference, so why should you go?

UKSG's conference has something for everyone in our sector – be you a librarian, a publisher or a vendor; it has the widest range of speakers and events of any conference that I have ever attended. I always take pleasure in encouraging library colleagues to attend. Without exception, they come away amazed – and plain shattered – by the events on offer over the three days. So many people have told me that the UKSG conference is much bigger than they had anticipated, that it has the widest range of speakers and it has given them more pause for thought than any conference they have been to before.

So, if you are new to the conference, where to begin? The obvious place to start is the justifiably famous exhibition area. Librarians, you know the publishing reps that you see through the year. The ones you want to meet to talk about EBA or DDA, or just to catch up on their latest deals. Well, they will all be there, *in one room*. While if you are a publisher, all the librarians you meet throughout the year will be there, looking for new deals and ideas to help them spend their money effectively (those that still have any money, of course). That we are all together, at one conference, for three days and three nights, is what makes the UKSG annual conference so special.

My contention is that UKSG is unique exactly because it brings all parts of our community together. We are all in the same room during the day in the exhibition hall, and we all in the same room of an

evening. Laughing over the difficult quiz questions on the Monday night, dancing at the conference dinner on the Tuesday night, and then drinking late night scotch in a quiet hotel bar after the conference dinner (though that might just be me). It is in those moments that relationships are forged that help us to push on with our projects and to lead innovations in the sector, whether it be discussing a new approach to buying textbooks or a different approach to open access, the UKSG conference is where ideas ferment and relationships are forged.

So, whether you have never been to the UKSG conference, or you are someone who has not been to the conference for a few years, what can you expect to find in Glasgow between 9 and 11 April 2018 beyond the exhibition area and the social events?

Plenaries will be plentiful, with the focus being on experiences. This year Liam Earney of Jisc and Anna Lunden of the National Library of Sweden will be talking about their experiences of negotiations relating to advancing the transition to open access. Chris Hale from Universities UK will be speaking on the oh so topical subject of the policies and challenges facing HE, and with the many discussion points around HE, its funding and its future, this is surely one not to miss – whether you be librarian, publisher or vendor.

As I say above, the beauty of UKSG is the breadth of what is on offer. Truly, there is something for everyone: from plenaries on policy and strategy, to breakout sessions and lightning talks led by practitioners, and covering a breadth of subjects. Subjects covered in the breakouts and lightning talks include user experience in libraries (presented by Matt Borg of Ex Libris) and advice on ways to better interact with researchers (a nod here to my Liverpool John Moores colleague, Katherine Stephan who is presenting a lightning talk on ‘Creating communities with Research Cafes: how libraries can connect the University’).

If you are thinking of attending, get a move on, as the last day for bookings is Friday 16th March. To book (and you really should at least consider it, if you are reading this editorial), visit the [online booking page](#) on UKSG’s website. Alternatively, if you have already booked and you want some more ideas to help you get the best out of the conference, then UKSG can help you, as back in 2016, your UKSG eNews editors asked a few experienced conference goers for top tips on getting the best out of the conference, their ideas and suggestions are [here](#).

One final point about Glasgow, it is fair to say that the last time UKSG visited Glasgow in 2015, it didn’t stop raining once in three days, so pack for rain. Then again, back in 2012, the sun beat down on Glasgow for the duration of the conference, so pack for sunshine. That is the beautiful thing about Glasgow; you never quite know what you are going to get.

Whatever the weather, enjoy the conference.



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