



*Association internationale des bibliothèques, archives et centres de documentation musicaux (AIBM)*

*International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML)*

*Internationale Vereinigung der Musikbibliotheken, Musikarchive und Musikdokumentationszentren (IVMB)*

## United Kingdom & Ireland, report 2011

This year has been lively for the UK and Ireland branch, with a fair number of activities which have challenged our professional lives; but there have been many things to celebrate, too.

Issues related to the worldwide financial situation have featured large in the UK and Ireland branch's agenda this year. After the general election in the UK in May 2010, an emergency budget the following month made immediate cuts to public spending. One of the consequences of this was that in July it was announced that the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (that is, the civil service department responsible for libraries within the Department of Culture, Media and Sport) would be abolished completely. Then in the budget of 20 October further cuts to public spending were announced, amounting to reductions of about 25% over 4 years. Hence all libraries that receive public funding have had difficulties of varying degrees to face. Some small branch libraries have been closed completely whilst the proposal to close others has sometimes been met by vociferous local support which challenges the right of local authorities to cut core services which they have a statutory obligation to provide. Inevitably therefore, there have been musical casualties, including the ExploreMusic service at Gateshead which last year received one of the branch's Excellence Awards. Sadly there are other challenging situations which the branch is aware of and which we are attempting to assist with. Our line is that of course it is reasonable when state resources are short that music services may not be regarded as immune, but any cuts should be proportionate, and no music service should be cut completely. Consequently the branch is offering all possible assistance to suggest practical solutions in order to maintain an acceptable level of service.

Happily, there are other events which it gives more pleasure to report. We have a lively courses and education programme which is ever more essential in providing professional support not available from other sources. Plans for the immediate future include making the distance-learning, music librarianship module at the University of Wales at Aberystwyth free standing – that is, independent of any other courses. This would maximise its appeal, and potentially make it available on an international basis.

Another achievement this year was the publication, just before its demise, of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's Guidance on Public Performance Licences, which established that it was not necessary to take out a licence to cover individuals listening to audio materials in a library via PCs from the internet. This position was reached after lengthy discussions with representatives of the rights-holders organisations, and we are grateful to them for their willingness to meet to do so.

Discussions continue too about the future of Encore!, our national catalogue of performing sets material, and we have hopes of enlisting the support of local authorities in maintaining and updating this finding aid which is at the centre of lending services for this type of material. Another project which is just concluding is a scoping study to research the location of musician's letters within the UK and Ireland, as a preliminary to fuller cataloguing and raising awareness.



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This project has been funded by the Music Libraries Trust, a body of charitable status set up by the branch to support suitable professional needs and purposes.

Of course a major element in the branch's activities this year – and undoubtedly one of its highlights – has been the planning and preparation for this year's conference in Dublin. This was ably overseen by a committee chaired by Antony Gordon, amongst whom the contribution of the home team in Dublin was absolutely essential. We can't thank Roy Stanley, Catherine Ferris and their colleagues enough for what they have done.

Indeed, there has been no shortage of other promising developments in Ireland in other fields too. Within the last year, the revived national branch of RILM has concentrated on clearing the backlog of Irish records for books and theses with the assistance of the MLT. In addition, the Irish branch of RISM is working closely with colleagues in the UK and Switzerland to develop its own web interface. And Music PAL (a cross-sector access scheme involving 33 music collections throughout Ireland) is making good progress – see [www.library.ie/pal/music-pal](http://www.library.ie/pal/music-pal).

This year a number of people stood down from official posts within the branch, key amongst whom is Geoff Thomason, who has been our General Secretary for over 5 years. We thank him too for his loyal service and support over that period, and are delighted that Catherine Ferris has agreed to take over.

Membership (December 2010): 232, of which 117 were institutional (68 national, 49 international) and 115 personal (66 national, 49 international)

Publications: *Brio*, ed. Katharine Hogg; *Newsletter*, ed. Anna Pensaert (both two issues p.a.)

Website: [www.iaml-uk-irl.org](http://www.iaml-uk-irl.org); webmaster Antony Gordon

*Richard Chesser*  
*President, IAML (UK and Ireland)*