Scotland hosted the 22th meeting on April 20th and 21st, in Edinburgh.

The meeting was attended by the following participants:
Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Scotland, Switzerland and Tenerife.

A PROFITABLE AND ENJOYABLE MEETING

ETL works harder each year. For one and a half days, members from countries all around Europe shared experiences, thoughts and challenges:

- The first part of the meeting was, as usual, the short reports from each country. Despite some difficulties, toy libraries still are a strong reality in Europe with the national associations searching for new ways to operate and raise awareness for the importance of these spaces for childhood and communities;
- Small presentations were developed on 2 special themes: partnership between toy libraries and book libraries and profitable toy libraries;
- Small group discussions on “How will toy libraries look like in 10 years? New ways to stay attractive” were held and the results will be shared in the next pages.

We received also two video messages from ITLA’s Board: one from the President, Monica Juarez, and one from the Conference Organizer, Monica Stach, inviting everybody to the 15th International Toy Library Conference that will be held between 9th-15th July 2019 in South Africa.

More than 20 members attended the meeting in Edinburgh
HOW WILL TOY LIBRARIES LOOK LIKE IN 10 YEARS?
NEW AVENUES TO STAY ATTRACTIVE

This was the main theme discussed in 5 small groups in ETL’s meeting in Scotland.

Toy libraries felt in recent years a decrease in the number of volunteers, in the funding for this spaces and, overall, a decreased in the importance communities give to Play. So the exercise of thinking how Toy Libraries will be in 10 years was a challenge to ETL members but one thing is for sure: toy libraries are an important resource all across Europe, not only for children but for families and elderly.

Having an optimistic way of thinking, in 10 years an ideal scenario would be to have official support from States, what implies to start nowadays to improve the way toy libraries promote their work and a task of advocacy involving several partners committed to toy libraries and play.

More paid staff, more resources, a better cooperation with libraries and the inclusion of technologies as a play material are some questions that ETL members would like to see in 10 years.

Also, the professional qualification was an issue reflected on: to have an international certification would be a way to help on toy libraries’ recognition and a way to improve the service’s quality.

At last, another idea was the need to take toy libraries out of the four wall, meaning, to have activities outside the space, involving the community and other stakeholders.

Other thoughts more connected to new avenues to stay attractive, can be summed up as follows:

- Be prepared to think about change;
- Be open to new ideas and ways;
- Combine different services and functions;
- Embrace technologies and other play types;
- Emphasize the ecological aspect;
- Crowd funding;
- More different activities;
- Cooperation with other players.

We believe, the promotion of Toy Libraries’ benefits as a way to collect support from Governments is crucial in all these matters and surely will be an ETL’s line of work in the next years.
When I started with the idea to work with this project in 1995, I did not think to continue for such a long time."

Renate Fuchs

The next ETL meeting will take place in Portugal on March 23-24th.

It will be the return of ETL to a country that already hosted ETL meetings and for the first time ETL members will participate in the national conference on play activity that will be held on 25th March in Lisbon.

A REFRESH ON ETL MEDIA PRESENCE AND DOCUMENTS

As planned, the new ETL flyer was presented and accepted by members. It compiles information presenting the group and is a way to introduce ETL’s work nationally.

The group’s website was also renewed and now you can see some highlights along the year, the new purposes, an updated members’ list with contacts and the documentation for toy libraries, as well as a media section with the movies presented in Leiden in 2017.

Take a look at https://etlgroup.wixsite.com/europeantoylibraries

---

NEXT MEETING: PORTUGAL

ETL Members in Edinburgh

Discussion

Meeting in 2019

Date: March 23rd –24th

Location: Portugal
SOCIAL PROGRAMME

The group had the chance, as usual, to experience the country’s culture and also to get to know the Museum of Childhood, the first museum in the world dedicated to the history of childhood. It displays toys and games from across the generations and also explores other aspects of growing up, from schooldays and clubs to clothing, health and holidays. It also has an interactive space, with dedicated zones focusing on memories of life at home, in school and at play.

We thank all the people who helped to organize this meeting and the social programme for such a wonderful time spent in Scotland.

ETL HISTORY AND MEMBERS

The Group of European Toy Libraries (ETL) was founded in 1996 during the 7th International Conference on Toy Libraries in Zurich (Switzerland).

ETL is committed to the beliefs that play, playthings and playful interaction are essential to optimal education, physical, psychological, social and cultural development. It has as current members the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Cyprus, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tenerife and Turkey.

ETL works in cooperation with the International Toy Libraries Association (ITLA).

NEW MEMBER: ALI PER GIOCARE (ITALY)

ETL welcomes the members of ALI per Giocare (Italian Association of Ludobuses and Toy Libraries). We were very happy to get to know other initiatives in the country and we expect to see members from Italy in the next few years!