# THEWORD

# LIBRARY OF BIRMINGHAM IS ON TARGET!

Since construction work began on the Library of Birmingham in January 2010, progress has been remarkable.

Passers by on Centenary Square have watched through the viewing window as the stunning new building, designed by internationally renowned architects Mecanoo, has started to take shape.

Council Leader Mike Whitby says, 'I know that many people share our excitement, after several years of careful planning, to see the Library of Birmingham rising out of the ground. Construction is on target and within budget. The majestic scale of the new building can now be seen – it really will be a 'people's palace' when it opens in two years' time.'



# 'FLYTHROUGH' VIDEO OFFERS FIRST LOOK INSIDE



A computer-generated video tour of the new library is now available online.

This 'flythrough', produced by architects Mecanoo, gives the clearest vision yet of what the building will offer on completion in 2013. Its release follows

the first interior images which were made public in December 2010. You can see the flythrough at www.libraryofbirmingham.com.

The detailed design of the interior spaces is progressing while the Council continues to encourage the public to

have their say on what they want from their new library. Last summer, 160 young people shared their views and ideas for the new youth zone and in December, more than 240 members of the public commented on how they would like to use the garden terraces.

Details of what people have told us and how this is helping shape the new library will be available at www.birminghambeheard.org.uk.



#### A MOVING EXPERIENCE

Moving one of Europe's largest libraries to a new home is a hugely complex task and will be a major exercise.

Specialist move contractors Nexus, appointed in 2010, are working closely with Library & Archive Services on the detailed planning. Among the library's extensive library and archive collections are millions of items needing cleaning, conservation and very special care to transport safely and securely. These include the city's unique archives, photographs, rare printed materials and other valuable, and in some cases fragile, resources. Many of the collections are of international significance.

At the same time, a major transformation of Library & Archive Services is underway. With books and reading remaining at the heart of the library offer, the new-look service will open up access to the library's extensive resources and collections in new and exciting ways with the help of new technologies. There will be much greater collaboration with the community and partners, including The REP, enabling a broader programme of events, activities and performances appealing to a wider range of audiences.

To enable all of this work to take place, services in Central Library will be reconfigured and prioritised from July 2011.

Brian Gambles, Library of Birmingham Project Director explains, 'Central Library will remain open during this transitional period, however the top three floors of the library will be closed to the public so that we can prepare for

the move. Services will be reconfigured on the remaining floors. It will still be possible to borrow books, use computers and study spaces, get help with general enquiries, business and learning, and visit the children's and music libraries, but there may be limited access to some resources. We hope that our regular visitors will bear with us during the transition and will do all we can to minimise inconvenience, including extending the availability of services on-line over the next two years. It will all be worth it when the Library of Birmingham opens in 2013!'

Look out for details of the transitional opening arrangements over the next few months. Full information will be available at www.libraryofbirmingham.com.

# THE REP MOVES **OFF-SITE**

Renovation of The REP is an integral part of the Library of Birmingham project, and the theatre closed its doors in January to make way for work on new back-of-house facilities and a restoration of the original facade.

But theatre fans needn't worry - you will still be able to enjoy a fabulous programme of performances from The REP at venues across the city during this time.



For full programme details and tickets visit www.birmingham-rep.co.uk.

# LIBRARY CONTINUES TO BOOST LOCAL ECONOMY



Celebrating success: some of the first 25 apprentices recruited thanks to the Library of Birmingham construction.

In these tough economic times, the construction of the Library of Birmingham is great news for local employment.

Working closely with the City Council's Employment Access Team and the National Skills Academy for Construction, Carillion are ensuring that the 250 new jobs created during the course of the building project, including 75 apprenticeships, go to local people. Efforts to ensure local workers in disadvantaged circumstances, such as redundancy and prolonged unemployment, have access to the job opportunities available are proving

successful and so far 32 skilled staff have been recruited in this way.

Carillion are committed to raising the construction skills of the local workforce through NVQ training. Sinead Mackenzie, Carillion's employment & training manager for the Library of Birmingham says: 'We offer all our trainees and apprentices working on the Library of Birmingham construction site the opportunity to qualify to the next levels of their particular trade. The skills they develop on the project will help their long-term future employment prospects.'

## BUILDING THE LIBRARY OF BIRMINGHAM: A LOOK AHEAD

During the second year of construction, the new building will really take shape. The main frame will be completed in summer 2011, and installation of the glazed façade and metal filigree frieze is expected to be underway by the Autumn, for completion in early 2012.

Preparations are being made to move the historic Shakespeare Memorial Room in early 2012 to its new home in the golden rotunda at the very top of the new building. Construction and fit-out work is scheduled for completion in spring 2013, ready for a summer opening.



# MEET THE NEXT FACES

The Library of Birmingham is for and about people, and the power to change lives.

To help spread the word, we are recruiting real people from the city and region to become the Faces of the Library of Birmingham. Our first group of faces were revealed in May 2010 and we're pleased to introduce our next faces, pictured opposite.

Each of our new faces has a fascinating story to tell about the difference libraries have made in their lives – from dance teacher-turned-author, Jayn, who researched her first novel in Central Library, to performing artist and young dad Andre, who used the Library's business service to help develop his career and now brings his baby daughter to the children's library.

Discover more about all our faces and find out how you can apply to be one of our next faces at rewritingthebook.com.



## EXPLORE THE LIBRARY OF BIRMINGHAM BEFORE IT OPENS!

As work continues to re-design Library & Archive Services in the run up to 2013, a new tool has been developed to help employees and the public experience the new building – in the virtual world.

Using 'Second Life' technology and with funding from the West Midlands Regional Improvement & Efficiency Partnership, a Virtual Library of Birmingham has been created that lets you 'walk' around the building, find out about plans for each area and share your comments and ideas.

Tom Epps, Development Manager for the library service says, 'This has already proved an invaluable tool in helping us explore in more depth the building's possibilities, how customers will use it and how this affects the service delivery.

We now want the public to start engaging with the virtual building in the same way.'

Special sessions to introduce the public to the Virtual Library of Birmingham are planned for Community Libraries across the city in spring 2011.

Look out for details on www.libraryofbirmingham.com.

# GOVERNMENT ENDORSES THE LIBRARY OF BIRMINGHAM



Prime Minister David Cameron and the Culture Secretary Ed Vaizey both gave their whole-hearted endorsement to the Library of Birmingham when they visited the construction site last Autumn.

The Prime Minister's visit coincided with the Council's announcement of plans to create a Library of Birmingham Development Trust. An independent charity, the new Trust will raise funds to complement the Council's investment in the project. Its trustees will be drawn from leaders of the community who have a commitment to cultural services.

Council Leader Mike Whitby said, "Birmingham is proud to be leading the

way in the provision of library services through the Trust, enabling greater financial resources than would be available through statutory funding alone. It is a dramatic example of the UK Government's Big Society vision and will be rooted in and led by the community, working in partnership with us to ensure world class resources."

The Trust will support and enhance the Council's investment in services, programmes and capital development through philanthropy, commercial income and social enterprise.

## GRAND DESIGN FINDS FAVOUR WITH McCLOUD

One of Britain's best-known urban thinkers has admitted he's a big fan of the Library of Birmingham, because it's true to the city's industrial and architectural heritage.

Kevin McCloud took time out to visit the Library of Birmingham site when he was in town for his Grand Designs Live show last Autumn.

Commenting on the design of the new library, created by Francine Houben

from architects Mecanoo, Kevin said, "To me, Francine has used the scale and the vernacular, which I have always associated with Birmingham, of heroic, solid and well-crafted buildings. Birmingham is a great and powerful symbol of where we came from. The Industrial Revolution began here. You don't become a great international city by simply saying that you are one. You need to be true to your history, your origins and your roots, and the new library is certainly in keeping with everything that is Birmingham."



# WHAT'S ON

MEET BEST SELLING NOVELIST, KATIE FFORDE

Tuesday 22 March, 7.00pm - 8.30pm

Birmingham Library Theatre, Central Library, Birmingham

Free tickets for this event can be booked via the Birmingham Box Office on 0121 303 2323 or at

www.birminghamboxoffice.com or in person at Central Library reception.

Katie Fforde is Chair of the Romantic Novelists' Association. She lives in rural Gloucestershire with her husband Desmond, their daughter Briony, Briony's partner, Steve and their baby, Otis. Katie is a self confessed twitter addict and admits to using it as an emotional crutch as well as a research tool. Summer of Love is Katie's seventeenth novel. To find out more about Katie Fforde visit her website at www.katiefforde.com or follow her on twitter @KatieFforde.

For more details about this and other author events at the Library Theatre, please contact

nikki.bi@birmingham.gov.uk or find us on Facebook at 'Birmingham Reads'.

Join our free email list to receive updates on future events by sending an email to

reader.development@birmingham.gov.uk

#### GIGGLEFEST

19-26 February 2011 (half term week)

Gigglefest is Birmingham's Comedy Festival for Kids held in Centre for the Child, Birmingham Central Library. All events are free and include performances and workshops on stand-up comedy, comic book art, puppet theatre, improv/physical theatre, poetry and much more. This year we will be welcoming a host of fabulous children's artists, entertainers and performers including James Campbell, John Hegley, CBBC's Dan and Jeff, Patrick Monahan, Barbara Nice, Murray Lachlan Young, and Janice Phayre and Friends. For full details of these and other free events visit birmingham.gov.uk/libraries





