

Blog Post on CILT International Convention in Montreal (8th - 11th May 2016)

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My day to day work at a small planning and transport consultancy in Gloucester, Harris Ethical, varies enormously but I have gravitated towards developing schemes to promote sustainable transport often through producing travel plans and focusing on behaviour change programmes. I am relatively new to the industry, having only graduated a couple of years ago, and have constantly been seeking out a network that would support continuous learning.

The broad appeal and range of programmes and platforms for engagement that CILT offered really appealed to me and the CILT convention, held in Montreal, was my first glimpse of the institution in action. As a recently registered affiliate member, it was fortunate to be given the opportunity, especially as a young professional, to travel to another continent to gain first hand experience of how CILT operated and what the institution could offer to an aspiring transport planner. I was not disappointed.

The convention brought together fellow peers, of a similar age, who worked in transport and logistics, to converse and share ideas on the array of projects and schemes that they were engaged with presently. This was both informative and inspiring and developed into an opportunity to socialise and collectively understand what CILT represented in relation to our future career paths.

The Young Professionals Session was superb in encouraging each individual to evaluate their characteristics and perceived skill base against the type of work they were preoccupied with in the workplace as part of a wider review into the role of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Not only, therefore, were we learning about others experiences and how people approached different situations, we were reflecting on our own individual qualities and future progression.

The opportunity to acquire knowledge and information from across a range of different experts and professionals, from different countries, across their respective study areas, was invaluable and really highlighted the importance and potential for interdisciplinary work. It was interesting to listen to presentations on topics that I was unfamiliar with, such as those concerning logistics and supply chain management, whilst immediately seeing the 'links' and integration with key travel planning concepts and aspirations around inter-modality.

I took best practice arrangements from North American that could inspire ideas in the UK and within my workplace; from looking into more innovative use of data collection methods around locating 'transit' needs based on a case study in Toronto, to appreciating the role and function of different stages of a supply chain and delivering products in great quantities, securely and on time around the world.

Montreal provided the perfect backdrop to the convention. The walking tour around the 'downtown' provided a welcomed break and the chance to explore the operational and physical infrastructure in place to support the movement of pedestrians, cyclists and public transportation. A guided bus tour of Montreal's extensive port facility was a major highlight because of its sheer scale and organisation as well as its fundamental role in continuing to shape the interests of the city and its inhabitants. This was in the context of the wide range of presentations by large companies such as Canadian National Railway and the Montreal Port Authority which really contextualised the whole convention.

Overall, the CILT convention helped to share ideas, celebrate achievements and fashion debates around the transport and logistics industries whilst providing a fascinating glimpse of how these themes are relevant across the host continent and internationally. The CILT, for me, should not just be an annual event, but a support system and platform for interaction with fellow professionals throughout the year. This was just a good start.