Peter Lor's 2nd library ABC, part 2: DEF

D is for <u>Delft</u>, a historic little city (city status since 1246) in the Netherlands, near The Hague. It is wellknown for its association with the painter, Johannes Vermeer, with "Delft blue" pottery, and with the city's renowned University of Technology. After the 2019 IFLA Congress I spent a morning in Delft, to admire the internationally acclaimed public library, called DOK. You will find brilliant photographs and an account of the concept, on the site of the architect, Aat Vos. Unfortunately in his write-up, Vos, assuming that he was the first to imagine a modern library, trotted out silly library/librarian stereotypes. Nevertheless, it is a striking design, which promotes community participation. The use of some old-fashioned items of furniture promotes Dutch "gezelligheid"*. One feature that caught my eye was this staircase, with movable words with which visitors may create poems.



*Gezelligheid: almost untranslatable Dutch word meaning, roughly, conviviality.

Lis for the Ellen van Rensburg Public Library,

Groot Brak (Great Brak River), a small coastal town about 400 km east of Cape Town. It is a coastal holiday destination and many visitors settle there when they retire. The library serves these users as well as the surrounding farming community and villages. The library is named after a local high school student, who loved visiting the library. On her way to the library on her bicycle, she had to cross a busy road. One day, she was fatally hit by a car on her way to the library. Her grief-stricken parents donated a plot of land for the erection of a new, more accessible library, now named after her. The library serves around 2600 residents and vacationing visitors. As my photo shows, the library building has become far too small and is awfully cramped, but the librarian and her staff are very friendly and helpful, and the library has a warm "vibe".



reasure chest. In the historic heart of Florence you will find the Oblate Library (Biblioteca delle Oblate), a free public library and a tourist-friendly cultural and multimedia centre. It takes its name from the Convent of the Oblate, built at the end of the 14th century, for a secular order of women who devoted themselves to taking care of the sick. The library occupies part of the convent complex, which over the centuries retained much of its Florentine Gothic character, and is today an important heritage site. I was fascinated to see how a contemporary library has been designed to fit into this historical setting and yet provide the full range of services of a modern public library.

It is also a tourist attraction. From its second floor you can have a brilliant view of the Duomo. This should be a library picture, but I love Italian roofscapes and I could not resist choosing this one.



Photos: Peter Lor 2019(2), 2016