



## Cambridge Library Group Events for your diary

- 5th January, Friday. Twelfth Night Party at CUP Bookshop. Drinks and canapés: 6 pm start.
- 25th January, Thursday. John van Wyhe on Darwin Online. CRASSH, Mill Lane. 5.30 for 6 pm.
- 6th February, Tuesday. Allen Packwood, archivist. Churchill Archives: talk and exhibition. 5.30 pm (College bar) – 6 pm (Archives).
- 21st February, Wednesday. Penny Price, calligrapher. Lloyd Room, Christ's College. 5.30 for 6 pm.
- 15th March, Thursday. John Bowman on James Duff Brown and Sarah Squire, President of Hughes Hall.

## Plans for the new Central Library in Cambridge

As 2006 draws to a close, the staff at Cambridge Central Library are contemplating a fifteen month closure of the building, which is due to be refurbished as part of the Grand Arcade redevelopment. Staff will be moving to several of the City Branches and to the library at Bar Hill to facilitate a devolved service with extra opening hours at each of these branches. For the first time ever, a city library in Cambridge will have Sunday opening: Milton Road library will be open for 4 hours every Sunday afternoon, from 12 to 4.

For several years staff in the service have been consulting with customers, partners and stakeholders to ascertain what they would like to see in the new library. Our vision is to have a different mood for each of the three floors. The first floor will house fiction, the Children's Library, and an area for those who want to choose up-to-date material quickly and easily. It will be exciting and vibrant!

The second floor will have a more traditional feel, with non-fiction interfiled with reference material, the more academic journals and plenty of study spaces. The third floor will house the Café, all the audio-visual materials, the Learning Centre and a new suite of exhibition galleries and meeting rooms. These will be available for hire and we hope to offer an exciting programme for all ages and stages.

For some time we have been struggling with a library that is no longer fit for purpose and that looks tired and rather sad (not to mention our totally inadequate heating and non-existent cooling system). When we re-open in 2008, the Central Library will have state of the art library equipment allowing full self-service in a beautiful and comfortable new building in the centre of Cambridge.

Sue Williamson

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## How to be a medieval librarian

Dr Lovatt invited us to imagine how different the circumstances were for librarians 500 years ago. They were all male and celibate and in Holy Orders. Among the terms and conditions of the job were: being on one year contracts subject to satisfactory performance, (probably) doubling as Chaplain or Dean, and being required to say masses for the souls of library benefactors. The librarian's income was about twice a manual worker's salary, offset by living and keeping in College.

Books were scarce before the invention of printing. Handwritten and costly items, they were stored in chests with three different locks and three keyholders, all of whom had to be present at their opening and closing. New College Oxford (1380s) was the first to include a library building at its foundation, and this was copied by King's and Queens' in Cambridge.

These early libraries had no purchasing budgets and relied on donations from Fellows and other benefactors. Acquisitions were recorded in order of receipt in often beautifully

handwritten inventories.

The speaker handed out a plan of the library in Peterhouse, begun 1431, and explained that libraries were normally built on the first floor to prevent damp, over the kitchens for the rising warmth (but with fire risk), and far from the street to reduce noise. The peninsular bookshelves were projected at right angles between the windows for light, and desks were placed under the windows and in odd corners where space and light was available.

It is interesting for librarians in the universities and colleges of today to learn that Fellows could take out quantities of books for a year, with an annual census day when all books had to be returned and the inventory checked. In these early years books were also chained to lecterns (which we may want to introduce again): if there were multiple copies, the finest example was chained.

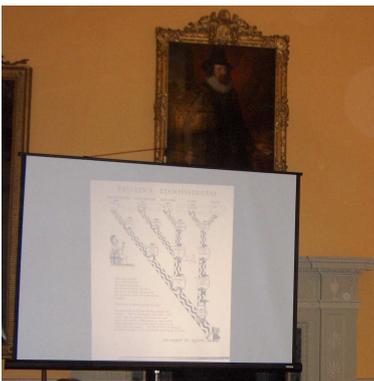
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## Sir Nicholas Barrington: Cambridge Family trees

Sir Nicholas's raconteur style showed that he has had a lot of experience entertaining people; in his life in the British diplomatic service he often surprised famous people by telling them how they are related to each other. He demonstrated how the history of Afghanistan, for instance, could be understood by examining the family tree of the country's former royal family.

Now that he is retired, Sir Nicholas is an Honorary Fellow of Clare College and a trustee of the India and Iran Trust. He stressed that, since you can never tell which part of the world would become important in the future, it is important that British people understand other parts of the world. When Sir Nicholas worked in Afghanistan, nobody thought that world attention would be focussed on it so soon.

Family trees described included those of Margaret Beaufort, who founded St John's College and Christ's College, and Lady Elizabeth De Clare, who founded Clare College. There was much intermarriage between the Darwins, Huxleys, Keynes' and Cornfords. One day Sir Nicholas hopes to draw a huge matrix displaying all the links. He showed that the array of famous people which arose from comparatively few families was astonishing. The range included authors, diplomats, historians and scientists as well as more modern roles such as feminists, campaigners for single parent families, and the Bragg family, who were involved in film and television. Several of these were members of the Fabian society. Three members of the Keynes family - Sir Richard, Rodger and Simon - are current Cambridge Professors. Several scientists and government aides in the families became masters of colleges on retirement.



After the talk a discussion followed about whether these family members prospered by nature, nurture or even nepotism. Sir Nicholas was keen to point out that although connections might have helped some people to get their first job, one could not rise to the position of President of the Royal Society by influence alone. Several of the founders of the Cambridge branches had come from comparatively humble origins, such as the Thompson family who had won Nobel prizes in three successive generations. Many of the wives and daughters had been educated at Newnham, and it was having an educated mother, as well as living in a suitable environment, that brought success to these Cambridge children. The Library at Newnham was particularly good, because women educated there had to be compensated for not being allowed to use the University Library. The staff at Trinity were thanked for allowing us to use the palatial surroundings of the Old Combination Room, which made the evening even more special, and Sir Nicholas was thanked for his informative talk. As I left it was good to hear the librarians around me still debating and buzzing with ideas as we walked home.

Anna Martin

## How disaster plans make a difference

Emma [McKenzie] Dadson, Director and Priority User Service Manager of Harwell Document Restoration Services, offered a compelling portrayal of how a well-formulated disaster plan might make the difference.

Crisis may concentrate the mind. Yet to have designed beforehand a collectively familiar disaster plan - an institutionally shared procedure to implement - could yield the critical edge wherein to make a timely judgement call in an emergency. Like an agenda for presence of mind, a good plan establishes robust systems and gives strong guidelines, as distinct from explicit instructions. It allows flexibility, in not being too prescriptive. The disaster plan contains comprehensive contact lists: insurers, suppliers, current numbers for internal works management and maintenance contractors, and conservational and emergency salvage expertise. Emma Dadson's talk repeatedly instanced how immediacy in action and the implementation of salvage operations conceived with

foresight, achieved damage limitation, priority rescue, and business continuity.

Whether envisioning a great rising of the Cam or roofing contractors pouring bitumen down a rain pipe, the frequency of flood risk reminds professional librarians that rescue response within hours, instead of days, may preclude page edges blooming with mould spore. Removing priceless manuscripts and valued books before loss adjusters move in, or prior to a scene-of-crime officer's cordoning, may prevent days of salvage becoming weeks and allow hours of air-drying rather than months of conservation work.

The Cambridge Library Group was most fortunate to enjoy such an adroitly presented talk. The evening proved both a concise and persuasive sampler of the intensive training workshops E. Dadson has so often given in academic venues.

Karen Lubarr

## Annual General Meeting

(Continued from page 1)

After the business of the Annual General Meeting, Erica MacDonald, librarian of Peterhouse, told us about the recent building works, about the major benefaction of Mr. Gunn from China which had made the works possible, and about the ingenuity of the architects in squeezing as much space as possible into the new library gallery.

We were then invited to walk around the library, and admire its tranquil atmosphere and the imperceptible blending of the old and the new rooms. We saw the huge slate panel, lettered by the Cardozo Kindersley workshop, with the words Gunn Gallery in gold, and Chinese characters each side in green. In glass cases were beautiful examples of precious china, also given by Mr Gunn, including a crouching cat which was to be used as a pillow. Erica said these china items were the most valuable articles in the library, to be saved first in case of fire. What about the undergraduate set texts, some of us wondered privately. Bring back the chained library for those.

***At the October meeting, a thank you was given to Anne Hughes, Jillian Wilkinson and Sarah Preston for their work as Cambridge Library Group Committee members.***

## Launches and nibbles

In addition to the monthly meetings, Cambridge Library Group members have been invited to celebrate the launches of *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland* (CUP), and of the newly-refurbished library at Anglia Ruskin University's Cambridge Campus.

*Cambridge University Press*

*The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland* was introduced at a book launch in CUP Bookshop. The project started twelve years ago, and developed into the an impressive three volume set. Editor Peter Hoare thanked all contributors and editors.

Campus Librarian Roddie Shepherd opened the event at Anglia Ruskin University. He talked about how the library refurbishment project became possible and how it was implemented. The ARU Library received a £1 million grant from the East of England Development Agency to re-develop their facilities. The library has been re-arranged according to zones (group study, silent study). At the entrance, there

*Anglia Ruskin University Library refurbishment*

are four self-issue stations, a new refreshments area, and a large plasma screen displaying library messages. The library provides 250 computers, wireless internet for laptop use, photocopiers and printers on each floor. The book stock holds around 170,000 items. A new MetaLib Digital Library provides an integrated web interface for consulting the library catalogue and for searching across electronic databases, e-journals and over 25,000 e-books. The "e-shelf" function allows users to save a customised list of electronic resources. In term time, the library will be open from 08.30 am until midnight. It was a very interesting event and a good opportunity to meet the Anglia Ruskin Library subject staff, tour the facilities and see which services are being offered to students.

Kate Arhel, Anna Pensaert



*Candace Guite presents Anne Hughes with her thank you present: a hamper full of delicacies made from the Cambridge Library Group Recipe Book.*