

Issue 17

March 2013

CLG Reflections



Events for your diary

10th April— Visit to the AmyCespa Recycling Centre, Waterbeach

9th May— A talk by Rebecca Watts about the Butler Project, St John's College

9th May— A talk by the author Jenn Ashworth, English Faculty

Inside this issue:

Editorial—AGM & New Committee Members	1
University Library Map Department	2
Roots, Branches & Llama Biscuits	2
Cambridge University Press Museum	4
Festive Gathering and Quiz at Newnham College	5
Christmas Shopping event at Heffers and Twelfth Night Party at CUP Bookshop	6
Visit to the Squire Law Library	6

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AGM & New Committee Members

Welcome to Issue 17 of *Reflections*! My apologies for the lateness of this issue, which was supposed to go out in February (oops...)

In this issue you can read reports of our events so far this year, including our AGM where we welcomed two new committee members: Kirsten Southard and Liam Sims. We have sadly had to say goodbye to two longstanding committee members: Lesley Read and Katie Birkwood, both of whom have contributed an enormous amount to the Group. Katie's Membership Secretary role has been taken over by Liam Sims.

Thanks to all our members who contributed reports for this issue of *Reflections*. If you would like to write a report for future issues we would love to hear from you, please drop me an email at aj390@cam.ac.uk. Photos are always very welcome as well!

Annie Johnson



Cambridge Library Group members at the AGM

Visit to the UL Map Department, 21st September 2012

A very dreary, wet Friday evening was brightened up by the first CLG visit of the academic year (and my first trip with the group!). After the wonderful refreshments, we were very kindly introduced to the Map Department of the University Library by Head Librarian, Anne Taylor, and Deputy Head, Andrew Alexander. Andrew gave a masterfully succinct summation of each item in the exhibition, which was very helpful in understanding the breadth of their map collection. The exhibited items themselves ranged from sixteenth century technicolour maps of Cambridge, to aerial maps used as decoys for the enemy in World War Two, to interesting modern map paraphernalia. It was a sheer delight!

My personal favourite was Abraham Ortelius' map, *Islandia* (ca. 1596), depicting Iceland itself, but also the hazardous beasties that were imagined to live off the coast. Each unusual monster was marked by a letter, which led the reader to an index with descriptions of their fearsome attributes. I was disappointed I didn't get time to read through the entire page!

The Soviet Military map of Cambridge, dating from 1989 (!), was equally fascinating. Areas of industrial or military interest were highlighted, along with vulnerable points, such as bridges. It really demonstrated the importance of mapmaking in a broader context.

Despite the fact that I was an MPhil student in Cambridge and spent half my time in the University Library, I had never dared to enter the Map Department. Now I'll certainly be going back to chart my next holiday!

Thank you to the committee and to Anne and Andrew for a brilliant evening. I look forward to the next CLG event!

Kirsten Southard, Library Graduate Trainee at Newnham College Library

Roots, Branches and Llama Biscuits

I joined the Cambridge Library Group too late for last month's visit the University Library Maps department tour and then noted, with trepidation, that the first meeting I could attend was the AGM with an accompanying talk on restructuring the Cambridgeshire Libraries and Archives service. Good grief, what had I let myself in for. Thoughts of previous interminable AGMs crossed my mind, but within minutes, and as I settled into a cup of wine and a llama biscuit, I realised this group knows how to do things.

In actuality the AGM was breezy and brief (just how they should be) with lovely refreshments and being new to both Cambridge and libraries it was largely an opportunity for me to chat with some interesting people. Within ten minutes of arriving I had already been signed up to cover the events of the evening for this blog. The AGM completed, we swapped rooms for Sue Williamson's talk: "Cambridgeshire Libraries, Archives and Information Service 2010-11: an examination of a root and branch library restructure". Sue is the Libraries Operation Manager for Cambridgeshire and was well placed to guide us through their approach to the very important, sometimes painful, process of dealing with the financial reality that many of us find ourselves in these days.

In Austerity Land it is inevitable that to some degree or another cut backs will be asked for, economies will need to be made. Often small trimmings can be made here or there, maybe a few people might retire, perhaps a few posts might not be filled, but when the cut in budget that you are asked to make nears 50% small measures cease to make any sense. It is then that two dreaded terms appear; restructure and streamlining. So often these can lead to loss of services, loss of expertise and a bad deal for the library user.

Sue's talk covered in fascinating detail the progress that was made in Cambridgeshire in a relatively short span of a year and a half. The changes here show that with proper project management, clear aims and a commitment to two-way communication with users, restructure can actually result in a more joined up service for library users and a more efficient administration behind the scenes. In a telling note at the end of her talk Sue said that at one point there was a very real chance of thirteen of the counties libraries closing, in the end none did. As the title implied, the restructure really did seem to touch every level of staffing, from senior management to one hour a week, small contracts. However, the key seems to have been that they took a phased approach to this and had a rationalised structure to move into. In some areas new frontline permanent posts were actually created by cutting down on temporary contracts.

Services were maintained, but obviously affected by the restructuring, but again it seems that they were able to review and rationalise aspects of the delivery. Using management information and consultations with local communities, the library opening hours were reviewed and a standardised approach was created, enabling libraries to stay open when their users need them. Mobile libraries were cut from 7 to 4, with a reduced frequency of stops, but all the stops were maintained. New approaches to library stock rotation and its distribution amongst Library Access Points were also implemented.



Photograph by Annie Johnson

There was more detail in the talk than I could possibly cover in this article. Hopefully some of these examples illustrate the points that Sue was making. Sue ended the talk looking to the future and what was yet to be achieved and this was encouraging in what it revealed about their approach:

“We have provided a base core offer that we can afford... and opportunity for communities to take this and build it with us”.

Let's hope that there are better financial times around the corner for libraries and if that is the case then it seems that Cambridgeshire have a rational, stable core around which can be built the services and delivery that users need and want there to be. I look forward to seeing them grow.

Tom Sykes, Graduate Trainee at the Classics Faculty Library

Visit to Cambridge University Press Museum 8th November 2013

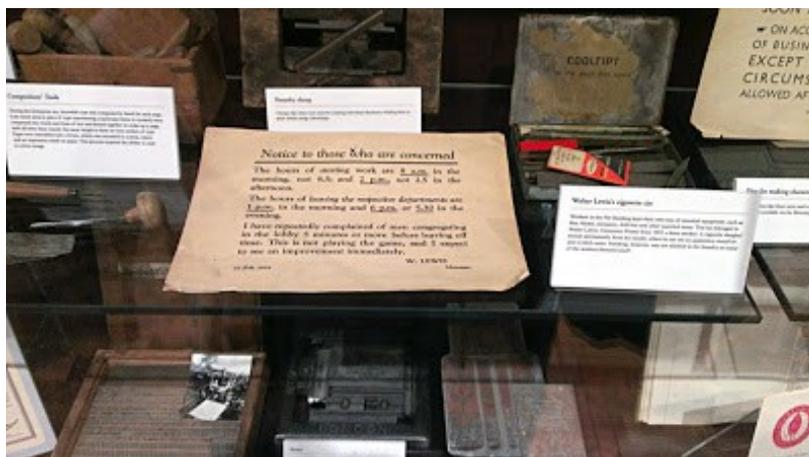
On Thursday 8th November, members of the Library Group headed to the recently opened Museum within Cambridge University Press' vast Edinburgh Building. The space is not usually open to the public, so the opportunity to visit was a real treat. We were led through the Press' labyrinth of corridors towards the Museum. The space that greeted us was inviting and attractive; its layout, furnishing and lighting created the feeling of a high-quality exhibition space, and the exhibits within the cases immediately sparked our curiosity. Before exploring their contents however, we sat down to an enjoyable talk by Ros Grooms, the University Press Project Archivist.

Ros began by telling us about the Press' history: the University was given the right to appoint printers in 1534 by Letters Patent of Henry VIII (this document is held in the Archives); however it was not until 1584 following the appointment of Thomas Thomas as University Printer that printing really got underway (against a backdrop of fierce resistance from the Stationers' Company in London). The site of Thomas' press was opposite Great St Mary's church, on what is now the Senate House lawn, meaning that the current CUP bookshop is virtually situated on the same spot as the University's first press! We were told about the fascinating development of the Press over the centuries, with an array of illustrations taken from the archive. One particularly fascinating episode occurred in 1877, when the Press declined the proposal to publish what went on to become the Oxford English Dictionary. In a surprisingly informal letter, Furnivall (one of the founders of the new dictionary) confidently promised great profit from the project; however he sought a great outlay from the Press and admitted considerable delay before their investment would be returned - given the tone and demands of this initial proposition, the Press' decision to decline the venture is perhaps not such a surprise!



Ros also talked to us about the creation of the Museum. The Museum showcases the Press' history and highlights its achievements and activity. It was envisaged that a key use of the exhibition would be for staff to show visitors to the Press. Given that a visitor's time to view material may be limited, it was decided to organise the material thematically so that each case could be viewed and understood independently. These themes include the Press' early religious printing, some of its most notable works such as Newton's Principia, its international activity, historic printing equipment, John Baskerville's 1763 folio Bible, and material relating to staff activities and social events. In relation to this latter theme, it was very interesting to learn about the oral history archive, a project currently in its early stages. This has involved interviewing long-serving staff in order to record experiences and memories of working at the Press. Ros told us that this has given new insights and different perspectives on events that are often found recorded in the archive.

For example, some of the interviews have described the nervous excitement that was felt during the preparations for The Queen's visit to officially open the new Edinburgh Building in May 1981. These per-



sonal accounts will offer a valuable new dimension to the Press' archive.

A wonderful evening was had by all, and our thanks go to Ros and others at the Press who made the visit possible and so enjoyable.

Sarah Fletcher, Assistant Librarian at St Catharine's College Library.

Festive Gathering and Quiz at Newnham

On 11th December, hardy CLG members braved the sub-zero temperatures to meet at Newnham College for the annual Festive Gathering. As always, Jilian Wilkinson provided an amazing spread of food and drink (and this was despite not being able to attend the party herself!) and for our entertainment, Kevin Symonds had put together a Christmas themed quiz.

I spent a very enjoyable evening catching up with other members of the group, with a glass of wine and some delicious food, making a stab at questions such as 'who turned on the Christmas lights in Cambridge this year?' (I still haven't found anyone who knew the answer to that one!)

Thank you to everyone who came to the event, and to Newnham College for hosting us.

Annie Johnson, Senior Library Assistant at Homerton College Library

Christmas Shopping Event at Heffers & Twelfth Night Party at CUP Bookshop

Christmas time for CLG members has become synonymous with highly enjoyable events at the Heffers and Cambridge University Press bookshops. This year was no exception, with delicious food, wine, and friendly staff at both shops. There was also the all-important task of buying last-minute gifts, then spending the Christmas money burning a hole in my pocket at the start of January (that didn't last long...!)

Many thanks to everyone at Heffers and the CUP bookshop, and to all the CLG members who came to the events.

Annie Johnson, Senior Library Assistant at Homerton College Library

Visit to the Squire Law Library, 12th February 2013

As I approached the law faculty building I felt I should have my passport and some luggage with me! The building reminded me of Stansted airport!! More of that later!

Kathy, Hazel and Kay were on hand to guide members to the important nibbles and drink area prior to the start of the visit and to complete a quiz on the cost of legal books and papers. Prizes an added incentive!

David Wills (Squire Law Librarian) gave a short history of the law library within the University of Cambridge. Law has been a discipline at Cambridge for 770 years. However until the late C19th there was no large distinct legal collection of material with the exception of the collection held within the main university library. A bequest from Rebecca Flower-Squire established the Squire Law in 1904. Initially with 8,000 books, by 1935 the collection had doubled in size, leading to law library number two, in the Cockerell Building from 1935 - 1995. The current Squire Law library is part of the Faculty of Law on the central Sedgwick Site. Designed by Sir Norman Foster (architect responsible for Stansted Airport, Millennium Bridge, Gherkin among others), the building opened in October 1995 with an official royal opening in March 1996. Since the opening there have been a number of additions, glass screens around the library the F.W.Maitland legal history room and the Freshfields legal training skills room.

Then to the tour. The Library is located on three floors and is for reference use only. The Library currently holds over 180,000 volumes and 2,000 + serial titles. The classification scheme used was created at the Squire.

An informative and enjoyable visit, well supported by CLG members. Thank you to all the Squire Library staff who helped make this a very interesting event.

Jo Milton, Collection Development Manager at Cambridge University Medical Library

Congratulations to Catherine Sutherland, Suzan Griffiths & Alexandra Saunders, who won prizes in the quiz!