



### 2009 events for your diary

- Our increasingly renowned Twelfth Night Party at the CUP bookshop.  
6th January, 6:00-7:30 pm
- *Calligraphy workshop* with Penny Price, Bennett Room, Clare College.  
17th January, 9:30 am-4:00 pm.  
Contact Candace Guite: cjeg2@cam.ac.uk
- Dr. John Cardwell & Dr. Sarah Preston: *'Archives and Official Publications of the RCS Library'*.  
27th January, 5pm for 5:30, University Library

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## London visit part I: Parliamentary Archives

It was with a mixture of excitement and eager anticipation that our group were privileged to be conducted along the corridors of the Corridors of Power, when we visited the Parliamentary Archives on July 3<sup>rd</sup>.

We were not disappointed, for although we did not see the 6.5 miles of archives, housed in the tower part of the Houses of Parliament, we viewed a selection of interesting documents, which ranged from fragments of a gravestone used as evidence in a Peerage claim in 1845, to Charles I's Naseby letters written in cipher, to the more recent Freedom of Information Act, printed on goatskin, as were all the Acts of Parliament we later saw in which must be the most important room in the country. This room was stacked from floor to ceiling with rolled Acts of Parliament from tiny divorce acts to huge taxation acts about a foot in diameter.

Our guide gave us an interesting Powerpoint presentation on the history of the archive which houses the records of the House of Lords from 1497 and the House of Commons from 1547, although much of the latter's were lost in the fire in 1834, which destroyed the old Parliament building.

The archive was formally established after World War II in 1946 and contains Original Acts of Parliament; Parliamentary Journals from 1497 (including the records of the Gunpowder Plot); Parliamentary Papers (including the death warrant of Charles I);

Peerage Papers; Judicial Papers; plans of roads, railways, and other public utilities, and collections of personal political papers such as those of Lloyd George and Bonar Law.

One of the biggest surprises was that humble family historians may use the archives to further their research, and only need to book beforehand, using items such as divorce acts, from the time when divorce was expensive and difficult to obtain, petitions such as that against the Slave Trade, Protestation returns and witness statements to the many committees which planned the roads, docks and utilities of the country, the latter being very useful sources as they give names, occupations and addresses.

Of personal interest was the banner that was unfurled from the Ladies' Gallery of the House of Commons in 1908 by Suffragettes. It is humbling to think this was 100 years ago and that they still had 10 years to go before the vote was won for women. Nine women and two men were fined and/or imprisoned that day.

Finally we were given an explanation of the archive's conservation and digitisation projects, which are ongoing, and their outreach projects, such as the website [www.parliament.uk/archives](http://www.parliament.uk/archives), and talks, exhibitions and visits such as ours - which was most enjoyable.

*Sue Slack*

## AGM 2009 and Second Life at Schlumberger

The programme for the 14 October meeting was packed with events: after a very brief AGM we were treated to two Second Life presentations, a talk on DSpace@Cambridge and a tour around the Schlumberger Cambridge Research Library. Not only was the host venue ultramodern in design (that interesting building next to M11) but the main topic of each presentation was the future.

There were no technical hiccups and it was possible to get connected to the McMaster University in Hamilton (Ontario, Canada) and 'walk around' their library in Second Life; another virtual experience was provided by our hosts. I learned that it is very difficult to land in Second Life but, on the plus side, bumping into the walls/trees/other people was no problem at all and 'if you are not into gaming it's a much steeper learning curve' - that was an encouraging thought ...

*Continued on p.3*

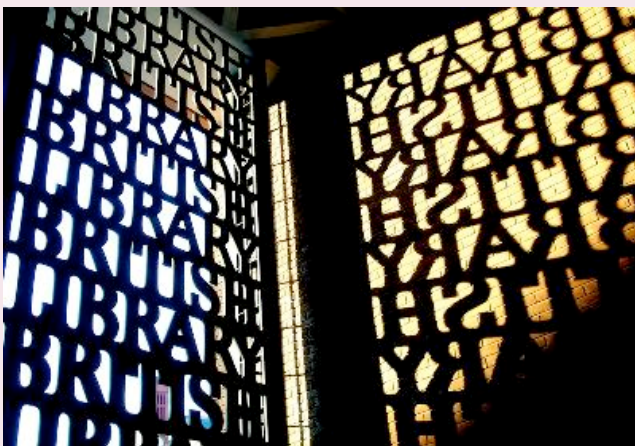
## London visit part II: British Library

The second part of our London trip was a visit to the British Library. I had been looking forward to this, as I had visited the old British Museum Library several times, but had somehow missed all the librarian's tours to the new library. After our morning trip to Westminster we decided to have lunch at the British Library before congregating for our tour at 2.45pm. Most of us ate our sandwiches in the piazza outside the building. Surprisingly, we did have some library orientated conversations over lunch. We all admired the architecture of the British Library, and the fact that the piazza was so user friendly. It had a small-scale feel to it, unlike the large blank areas that you



find in so many semi-public places nowadays. We had a little time to look round the shop before meeting up with our tour guide for the day. He was a Queens alumnus wearing his college jacket and tie and he took great delight in emphasising all the Cambridge connections to the British Library throughout the tour.

We started off in the foyer where we were told about the history of the building and the architect Colin St. John Wilson (another Cambridge man). We learnt about the history of the collection from its earliest beginnings to its move to the largest public building constructed in the UK during the 20th century. We started off being shown a large stamp collection (part of eight million philatelic items) - a good reminder that the British Library does not just contain books. We then went to see the architect's model of the British Library. The limited amount of space above ground was compensated for by the four large floors below ground. The architect's idea of designing the building in the shape of a cruise ship became very clear when looking at the model.



We were taken through the membership rooms and shown how to enrol in the library and then taken through the behind-the-scenes area. We were shown the process of requesting a book right through to its arriving on your desk in a reading room. The books were transported on railway-like tracks and somehow the scene from Indiana Jones came to mind - with the mining trolley disappearing into the cavernous depths of the mine. The classmark system was explained and we were told that the only criterion that they use is size.

We were taken up through various departments to a viewing point where we could look down on three humanities reading rooms. They were quite busy and it felt rather strange to see everyone working so hard below us. We were shown the King's Collection (George III), and the Klencke Atlas, the largest book in the collection at over six feet in height.

The tour was brought to a hurried end. I would have liked to have spent more time looking round the library, but, like many of the people in the tour, I had to run for the last train back to Cambridge on my cheap day return ticket. Typically, the 4.15 train was cancelled and so I had a quick rush to Liverpool St (choosing my tube line carefully, as most of them showed delays), and managed to get the 4.28 train back to Cambridge.

*Rhona Watson*

For more information about the British Library, visit [www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk)

## AGM 2009 *continued*

Elin Stangeland from DSpace@Cambridge gave us a short overview of the Open Access movement and its practical implementations in the University of Cambridge. The most interesting examples for me were how individual members and/or departments can deposit their works in the institutional repository. A variety of digital objects can be stored including books, articles, working papers, theses, images, audio and video files. The main purpose of repositories is to preserve scientific output and to provide a free and unrestricted online access to it. Clare Aitken showed us around the newly refurbished library which has only a few bookshelves and where journals are placed outside of the library – just opposite the cafeteria. There were more surprises including the ‘coffee corner’ that was established as a result of a managerial comment ‘to get people into the library we need coffee’. There scientists can discuss highly complicated matters (including latest football matches results) sitting in the comfy chairs, drinking coffee and scribbling their *genius* ideas on the whiteboards. It was a really pleasant evening with excellent refreshments provided by the Schlumberger Centre and on this note I’m going to teleport!

*Natasha Pivnenko, Judge Business School Library*

## ‘Beg, borrow or steal’: Tessa Webber and late medieval library provision

The first event in the CLG calendar for 2008-9, Dr Webber’s talk was a fascinating introduction to the subject of books in the early university. The venue was the impressive Old Library at Gonville and Caius, one of the oldest institutions of the university. Founded as Gonville Hall in 1348, the college has a rich history, not least in terms of its medieval library, a subject upon which Dr Webber was able to draw.

Book provision is, in the modern age, an easy task. But methods of finding books to stock those medieval libraries which preceded, or in some cases, still exist alongside our own college libraries were not always so simple, at a time when books were expensive and time-consuming to produce. There were great differences in the provision of books between colleges and the university as an institution in the medieval period. Cambridge did not have a ‘university library’ until the first decades of the 15th century, the earliest surviving catalogue listing 122 books in 1424, about half the figure of most college libraries. Access was limited and borrowing forbidden, so it was often up to individuals to find their own sources of books by a wide range of means.

The library of Gonville Hall was well stocked in the medieval period, and an impressive 131 manuscripts residing there today are known to have been part of the medieval institution. Dr Webber showed us some of these manuscripts to highlight the evidence of individual and institutional ownership. Many books were acquired second-hand at this time, exemplified by a 12th century volume of theology made professionally in northern France or possibly England, and originally owned by a monastery or cathedral.

By the 15th century it was in the possession of John Thompson, fellow of Gonville Hall, to which it was bequeathed in the 1430s. Another fine example is a 13th century book of civil law made in southern France and beautifully illuminated.

A note on a flyleaf shows the volume was in the temporary possession (that is, to return to an institution upon the death) of a Thomas de Kele, and the book was certainly in Cambridge by the late 14th century. Not only were books bought second-hand, but also copied out by those who needed them and could not afford to buy.

Books were so highly valued that they were accepted as security for loans, either of money or more books, with the university acting as a pawnbroker, keeping the book locked away until the pledge was fulfilled. Those unable to fulfil the terms of the agreement would find their book sold on the second-hand market. With no planned institutional provision of books, donations were the primary source of books for medieval libraries in Cambridge, which were often attracted by the prestige of an institution. It also meant that the subjects covered were dependent upon the interests of the donors; Trinity Hall specialised in law because that was the primary interest of its founder, Bishop Bateman, who supplied his foundation with books.

Not only were books given to assist students in their studies, but also to ensure prayers for the soul of the benefactor, as exemplified by a medieval label pinned to a weighty tome on display.

We thank Dr Webber for her fascinating lecture, made all the more interesting by the manuscripts on show, which gave a tangible sense of just how scholars of the medieval university fulfilled their need for books at a time when little thought was given to ensuring institutional book provision for all.

*Liam Sims  
Ex-Graduate Trainee, Trinity College Library*



*Caius Old Library*

## 'Books behind bars': Cherith Durrant and HMP Littlehey

Following on from the visit to HMP Littlehey by some members during the summer, Cherith Durrant gave us some very interesting insights into life as a prison librarian at the November meeting. She began by showing how Littlehey fits into the hierarchy of prisons, being a 'Category C', which is described as 'offenders who cannot be trusted in open conditions, but who do not have the ability or resources to make determined effort of escape'. Of the 726 prisoners at Littlehey, all of whom are male adults, 74% are sex offenders. 62% are serving a sentence of over 4 years and 9% are serving life sentences.

Cherith described how she came to work at Littlehey, and some of the challenges she experienced whilst finding out what was expected of her, and the rather stricter-than-usual rules and regulations that apply to prison libraries. Some of these were referred to in the report of the visit to Littlehey in the last issue of *CLG Reflections*. She also told us more about the Library Orderlies – prisoners who are allocated to the Library as assistants for a period of time - also mentioned in that article.

The Library Association guidelines (1997) describe the objectives for prison libraries as including 'encouraging the reading habit' and providing resources for 'recreation/pleasure activity' as well as for 'information, education, training guidance, rehabilitation and therapy'. The selection of magazines and newspapers give some idea of the range that needs to be covered to achieve this, including such titles as Top Gear, BBC Good Food, Jewish Chronicle, National Geographic, Men's Health, India Today, Gramophone, Pink Paper, Farmers Weekly, Pagan Times – to name but a few. Amongst the top ten most frequently loaned books are 'Muscle Mechanics' at number one, 'Harry Potter' at numbers three, five and nine and Classic British Steam Engines at number four. The second most popular is the Collins English Dictionary – always much in demand, as prisoners are restricted as to what they can purchase and possess while in prison.

Why do they do it? According to Ayub Khan, Head of Warwickshire Libraries (Strategy), non-readers are more likely to commit a crime and be sent to prison, and once released they are more likely to re-offend. Half of all offenders leaving prison can be described as 'non-readers'. It is therefore important that the prison library 'feels like' a public library, so that if offenders do make use of the library while they are serving their sentence, they (and their families) will be encouraged to use their local public library when they are released. Many offenders do use the library while serving their sentence - 84% of Littlehey's population are Library members. Between April and October 2008, the library at Littlehey issued over 16,000 items. Of these, 33% were fiction books, 37% were non-fiction books, 20% were CDs and 3.5% were games. Whilst some of these may be considered 'high-risk items in terms of the likelihood to go missing, the September 2008 stock-take showed that only 2% of stock had been lost, the highest part of that being non-fiction books.

Cherith concluded by talking about some of the projects that they are currently developing or have plans to develop in the future. Already they have begun regular visits to wing-bound prisoners, and have facilities to make recordings under the 'Storybook Dad's' scheme, which allows Fathers to read and record stories which can be sent home, so that their children don't miss out on a bed-time story from Dad. There are also plans to set up a prison reading group, and Cherith is investigating the possibility of the library orderlies being able to gain a qualification as a result of their work in the library.

There are many challenges that lie ahead – especially as a new Young Offenders Institution is due to open on the same site by this time next year. But with Cherith's commitment and enthusiasm, Littlehey Library is in very good hands!

*Brenda Mead*



*Cherith Durrant*