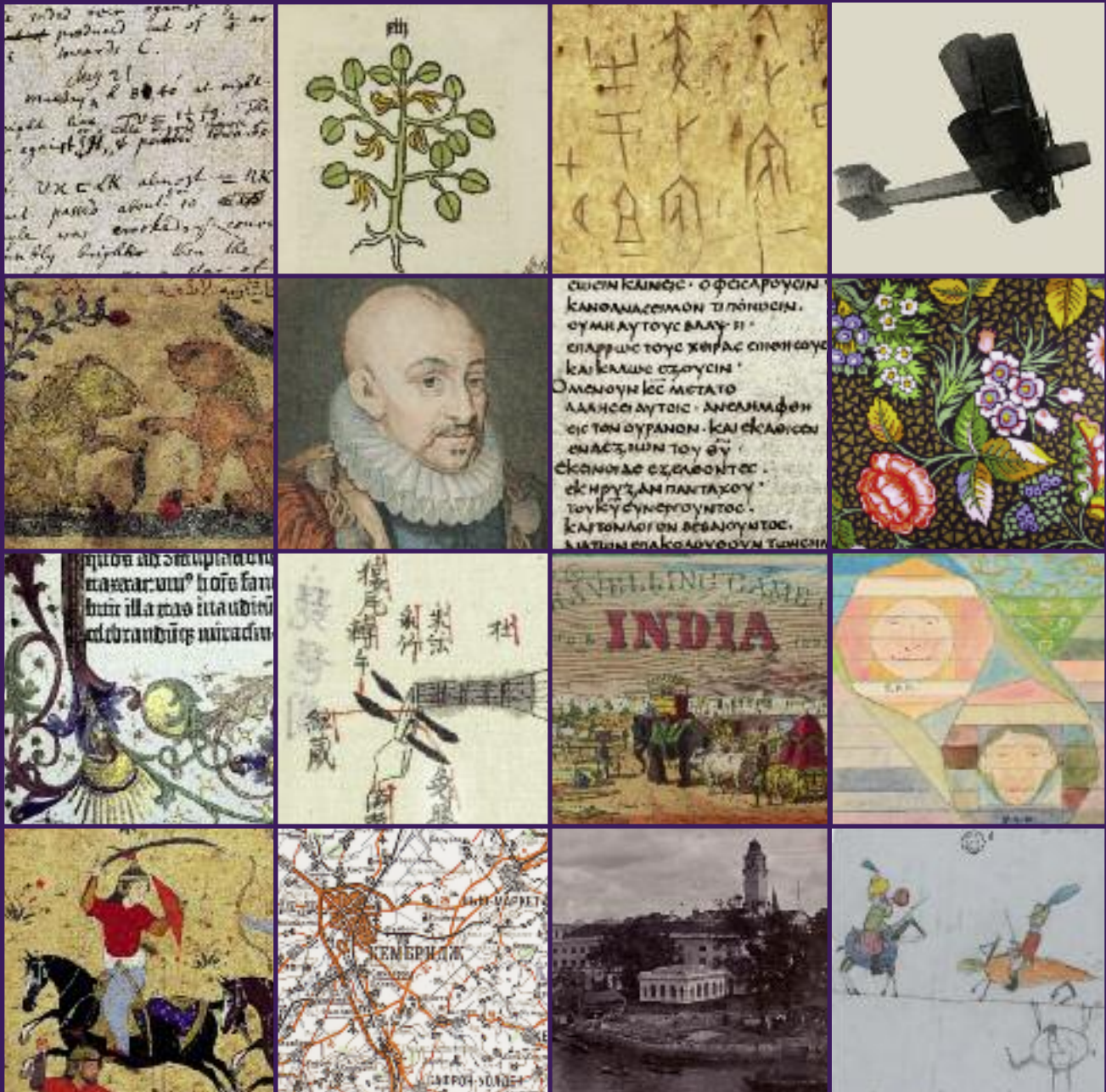


# A journey around the world mind







Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's design for the East Elevation of the University Library



**Anne Jarvis**  
University Librarian

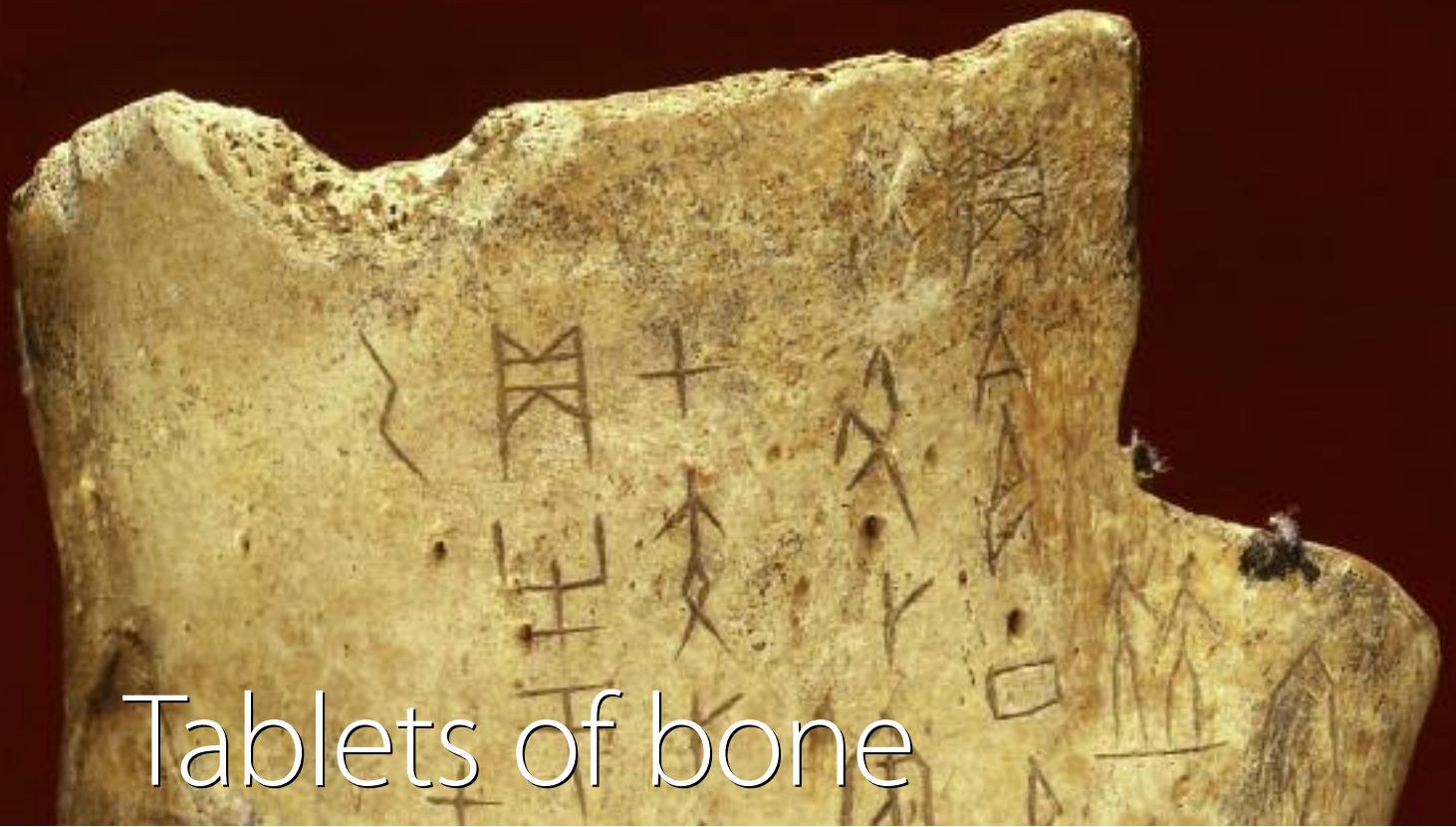
Over the course of six centuries the University Library's collections have grown from a few dozen volumes on a handful of subjects into an extraordinary accumulation of several million books, maps, manuscripts and journals, augmented by an ever-increasing range of electronic resources. They cover every conceivable aspect of human endeavour, across three thousand years and in over two thousand languages. From its beginnings as an asset for a tiny community of theologians and canon lawyers in the medieval university, the Library's mission has expanded to serve the international scholarly community and now, through its digitisation projects, to reach new audiences across the world.

The Library keeps evolving. In recent years we have been given the magnificent Montaigne Library of Gilbert de Botton and purchased the important archive of the war poet Siegfried Sassoon, following a campaign to save the papers from possible dispersal. Even the greatest collections, though, count for little unless they can be discovered and explored.

So while we conserve this unique cultural heritage for the future, we are simultaneously finding new ways to share it with the present generation by building a digital library. Anyone with an internet connection and a desire for knowledge can view letters written by Moses Maimonides, Newton's autograph propositions on elliptic motion, or sketchbooks from Darwin's voyage of the *Beagle*. Through the digital library, communities of readers around the globe can help create a richer understanding of the material held in our care.

Great collections are brought to life by great people – students and scholars, and visitors to the Library past, present and future. We hope this book brings the Library to you wherever you are, and we welcome those of you who visit us in Cambridge and those who join us in a virtual journey around the world mind.





# Tablets of bone



The cover (an incised Imperial dragon) from *Yu bi Baita shan wu ji (Five views of White Dagoba Hill)*: 1773. Jade books were reserved for the exclusive use of the Emperor of China.

The soothsayer who painstakingly carved inscriptions on the oracle bones over 3,000 years ago could never have predicted their fate. Once used to divine the future, now these earliest known specimens of Chinese writing are consulted by scholars from all over the world who are seeking answers to questions about China's past.

The bequest of Lionel Charles Hopkins (1854–1952), the 800 Chinese oracle bones dating from 1400 to 1200 BC, are by far the oldest items in the Library. Heat was applied to hollows chiselled out on the reverse of specially prepared ox scapulae and turtle shells and this produced characteristic cracks. The cracks were then interpreted as answers to questions that had been posed of the ancestral spirits. Exactly how this was done was obviously kept secret by the diviners themselves, but it is known that questions were posed in both positive and negative form, so as to ensure that the answer was correct. For instance: is it going to rain tomorrow? Is it not going to rain tomorrow? – the

same answer to both questions would be incorrect.

The texts provide rare insights into what concerned people most; in an agrarian society engaged in frequent wars with neighbouring tribes they would be interested in such matters as the weather, the failure of crops, hunting and military expeditions. It was believed that the deceased ancestors could influence the outcome of events. If something went wrong, this was because the ancestral spirits were displeased, so they would be asked through the medium of the oracle bones what sacrifice could be made to placate them.

## Chronicling strange lands and interesting times

The ancient oracle bones are just a part of one of the most outstanding Chinese collections outside China. It includes about 100,000 volumes of printed books, the earliest of which date from the 12th century AD, with rarities such as the unique *Illustrated chronicle*



The only known copy of *Zhu yao xi wen* (Proclamation on the extermination of demons), a publication of 1861, at the height of the Taiping Rebellion, which cost over 10 million lives.



*Fo shuo da cheng guan xiang man na luo jing zhu e qu jing* (a Buddhist text, translated into Chinese from Sanskrit). The oldest printed book in the Library: 1107.

of strange lands (*I yu tu zhi*) (c.1489); pamphlets and ephemera relating to the mid-19th century Taiping insurrection (most of those in China were subsequently destroyed); a set of the *Imperial encyclopaedia* (*Qin ding Gu jin tu shu ji cheng*), deposited on loan by the China Society of London; microfilms of nearly 3,000 rare titles from the National Library of China in Beijing; and two of the 11,095 fascicles (volumes) which originally constituted the encyclopaedic work *Yongle da dian*, salvaged from the fire in Beijing which in 1900 destroyed most of what then remained of the sole surviving copy.

These and other rare items, such as the gigantic examination papers from the Chinese civil service, some as big as a baby's blanket and which must have daunted many a candidate, or the only complete bound set in the UK of *Renmin Ribao* (the *People's Daily* newspaper) from 1946 to the present, which therefore dates back to before the establishment of the People's Republic of China, offer fascinating

glimpses into everyday life in China over the centuries.

Thanks to a generous donation, the Aoi Pavilion was constructed to ensure that these and other East Asian materials could be kept in one place for the first time, with 180,000 books on open access. This ease of accessibility attracts many scholars from all over the world, including China.

The Chinese collections continue to grow and to embrace the digital age. One of the biggest single benefactions in the history of the Library occurred in 2009 when Premier Wen Jiabao of the People's Republic of China visited the University during its 800th Anniversary celebrations and donated 200,000 Chinese electronic books. This has more than doubled the size of the Library's Chinese monographs collection, which is now the largest in Europe.



A Chinese oracle bone of about 1200 BC.





# 'Prettifying the past'

“ The Sassoon Archive that has been acquired by the University Library is of the greatest importance, nationally and internationally. As a memoirist and as a poet, Sassoon occupies a unique place in the history of writing in English – someone who combines writerly, political and social significance to an exceptional degree.

**Sir Andrew Motion**  
Poet



'Look up, and swear by the green of the spring that you'll never forget', wrote Siegfried Sassoon (1886–1967), one of the leading poets of the First World War, in his 1919 poem 'Aftermath'. It is never that simple. In much of his subsequent writing, memory – and his recalling in written form of those memories – was to be a strange mix of 'fictionalized reality' and 'essayized autobiography', a complex amalgam of documentation, recollection and fiction.

Famous for his powerful poems that so graphically depicted the horrors of the 'war to end all wars', in the decades following the Armistice Sassoon wrote two prose trilogies. The first was the lightly fictionalised 'memoirs' of George Sherston, a fox-hunting, steeple-chasing young man who goes to war as an infantry officer with the 'Royal Flintshire Fusiliers'. In contrast it could be argued that the second, the 'real autobiography' focussing on Sassoon's inward and literary existence rather than his 'outdoor' life of horses

and soldiering, veers towards the fictional, at times concealing or omitting the truth.

The relationship between George Sherston and Siegfried Sassoon is handled playfully by the writer himself: when, in the second trilogy, he touches briefly on his horse-racing exploits, Sassoon simply invites his readers to imagine that 'George has been somehow mysteriously embodied in his author'. But the inclusion of transcripts from his diaries in the Sherston books undermines their claim to be read as novels, while the downplaying of family tensions and the omission of any mention of Sassoon's romantic life lend a fictional quality to the autobiographies.

## **Copious illustration**

Throughout both trilogies, the documented, the remembered and the imagined are inextricably tangled, as Sassoon weaves fiction around life, and life around fictions. This 'prettifying



Frontispiece in a volume of notes and drafts relating to *The old century*, Sassoon's memoir of childhood.



A decorated copy of a poem first printed in the Heinemann edition of *Vigils*, 1935.



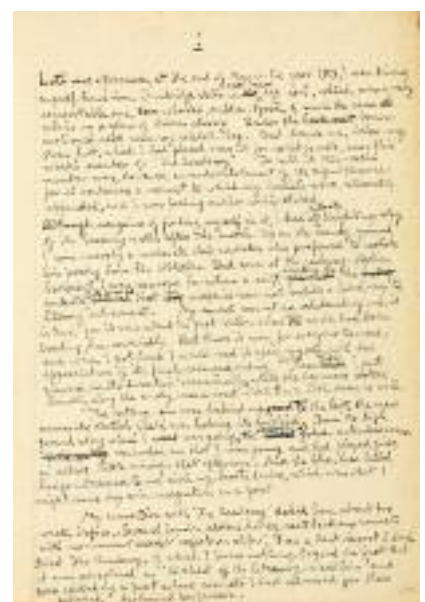
A decoration in a diary kept by Sassoon during the Second World War.

the past' is also apparent in a more literal sense. The young Sassoon 'believed in copious illustration, however incongruous' and his taste for artistic decoration continued throughout his life as numerous examples in the Library's collection reveal. Some of Sassoon's own drawings adorn his working notebooks, and others, equally elaborate, illustrate fair copies of his verse that he wrote out specially as gifts to friends.

In his memoir of childhood, *The old century and seven more years*, Sassoon suggested that to resuscitate his earlier existence in words was to imbue past life 'with saturations of subsequent experience'. He himself painted two frontispieces for this first volume of 'real' autobiography, which he entitled 'Sillifying the Future' and 'Prettifying the Past'. Under the second illustration, in faint pencil, he wrote: 'Was I really like that? And does it matter if I was?' This tension between life as he was living it and recollections of his former self lay behind much of Sassoon's writing, and

memory – sensuously evoked but stringently selected – is central to his literary achievements. As a dedicated diarist and preserver of correspondence, Sassoon could draw on a documentary archive of first-hand sources for the reconstruction of his personal story.

Sassoon studied law and history at Clare College Cambridge from 1905 to 1907. Although he left without a degree, he was made an honorary fellow in 1953. In 2009 the Library augmented its already rich holdings of books and manuscripts by Sassoon with the acquisition of a magnificent collection of his personal journals and drafts of his autobiographies. This makes Cambridge the foremost international centre for research into Sassoon's life and work, and ensures that when this chronicler of past conflicts asks the question 'Have you forgotten yet?' the answer can be a resonant 'no'.



A draft of the opening chapter of *The weald of youth*, the second of Sassoon's 'real' autobiographies.



καὶ καλῶς ἐξοῦσιν·  
ΟΜΕΝΟΥΝ ΚΣ ΜΕΤΑΤΟ  
ΛΑΛΗΣΕΙ ΔΥΤΟΙΣ· ΑΝΕΛΗΜΦΘΗ  
ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΝ· ΚΑΙ ΕΚΑΘΙΣΕΝ  
ΕΝ ΔΕΞΙΩΝ ΤΟΥ ΘΥ·  
ΕΚΗΝΟΙ ΔΕ ΕΞΕΛΘΟΝΤΕΣ·  
ΕΚΗΡΥΞΑΝ ΠΑΝΤΑΧΟΥ·  
ΤΟΥ ΚΥ ΣΥΝΕΡΓΟΥΝΤΟΣ·  
ΚΑΙ ΤΟΝ ΛΟΓΟΝ ΒΕΒΑΙΟΥΝΤΟΣ·  
ΔΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΕΠΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΟΥΝ ΤΩΝ ΣΗΜΙΩΝ·  
ΑΜΗΝ·  
ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΡΚΟΝ  
ΕΤΕΛΕΣΘΗ·  
ΑΡΧΕΤΑΙ ΠΡΑΞΙΣ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΩΝ·

ET BENE HABEBUNT·  
ET DNS QUI DEO· POSTQUA  
LOCUTUS ES· ASSUMPTUS E  
IN CAELUM· ET SEDIT  
AD EXTRASD·  
I CIAUT PROTECTI·  
PRAEDICABERUNT UBIQ·  
DNO COOPERANTE·  
ET SERMONEM CONFIRMANTE  
SEQUENTIB· SIGNIS·  
AMEN·  
EUANGELIUM SECND MARCV  
EXPLICIT·  
INCIPIUNT ACTYS APTOLORVM·

# 'Better hidden than published'

“ This Library is one of the gems of the civilised world: it houses treasure troves of great and rare manuscripts; it restores and conserves damaged pages with immaculate care; it opens its vast and ever increasing collections to all who love books. It serves the written form of language, from the most humdrum to the most intriguingly arcane, with unsurpassed dedication.



**Dame Joan Bakewell**  
Writer and broadcaster

When Théodore de Bèze (normally known by the Latin form of his name, Beza) sent his 'dangerous' gift to the University of Cambridge in 1581, his accompanying letter advised that it was 'better hidden than published'. It was one of the earliest texts of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in Greek and Latin, and it differed significantly in places from the accepted version. The French reformer suspected its 'corrupt' text was the work of early heretics, and feared its influence.

If Beza hoped that this volume would be safely lost to view in its new home, he entrusted it to the wrong institution: even half a millennium ago the Library supported the dissemination of knowledge and believed that intellectual access to its treasures should not be denied. Within 50 years of the University's gracious acceptance of the gift, the Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis was the focus of intense interest, which has continued to the present day. What was it about this deviant manuscript that had so alarmed Beza? Written in

majuscule (capital) letters in about the year 400, some 406 out of the original 534 parchment leaves (most of the four Gospels and Acts) have survived, with the Greek text on the left page (verso) and a Latin version of it on the right (recto).

Uncertainty and debate surrounds the Codex Bezae's place of origin. What is indisputable is that the extensive manuscript was frequently corrected and annotated. Every corrector but the earliest one worked principally on the Greek text. There are numerous variations in the text of the Gospels, particularly Mark and Luke, and of Acts. These involve the addition or omission of words, sentences and even whole incidents. The additions are most conspicuous in Acts, which is nearly a tenth longer than the standard text.

Not surprisingly, the question of whether the Codex Bezae preserves the original authentic text or is a hopelessly corrupt version of the Gospels and Acts has been the subject of endless





Codex Bezae: opening with the Greek text on the verso and the Latin on the recto. The text is Luke 6, 1–9, and the hole is a flaw in the parchment, already there when the scribe wrote the page.

scholarly debate over the centuries, and no doubt will be into the future. All would agree, though, that the Codex Bezae offers more substantial variation from the normal text of the New Testament than any other surviving manuscript.

### An impure witness

To some extent Beza's wishes might appear to have been fulfilled in that today the original manuscript is usually hidden from view: animal skin is a strong and durable substance but it cannot be expected to survive for 1,500 years unscathed. The metallic-based ink which the scribes used has released an acid which has slowly eaten through the fine parchment, weakening it. The very fineness leads to the pages curling sharply as soon as the pressure that keeps the volumes safely closed and preserved in their dark green boxes is released. However, the existence of an excellent published facsimile and of microfilm copies already means that the benefactor's apparent intentions have been thwarted. The Library is also

digitising the entire manuscript and will make it available online. This will not only make it much more widely accessible but will reduce the need to handle the original.

The Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis may not be the oldest, nor the most beautiful, and certainly not the most pure witness to the New Testament, but there can be few other manuscripts in existence about which more has been written. It is one of the most intriguing manuscripts of antiquity.



Codex Bezae.



# Nomadic journeys



From a 16th-century Persian treatise on astrology by al-Zayhaqi al-Kashifi.

Many manuscripts in the Library reached this oasis of scholarly calm via long and often nomadic routes, and it is a curious coincidence that some of the Islamic materials had particularly eventful journeys.

## Dictionaries...

When Abraham Whelock became University Librarian in 1629, he found that although hopes were high, funds were low, and the organisation chaotic. For 30 years previously the Library had hardly acquired any books of consequence, and its Islamic collection (Whelock's special area of interest) was negligible. Whelock, a man of modest and nervous disposition but a good scholar and passionately committed to the Library, set about change. His abilities won him a reputation in the learned world beyond Cambridge and the friendship especially of Sir Henry Spelman and Sir Thomas Adams, on whom he prevailed to establish the University's first lectureships in Anglo-Saxon and Arabic, the latter being given to Whelock.

Whelock's skilful custodianship not only gave the Library a certain respectable status in the world of scholarship but also attracted to it donations of books it was too impoverished to buy. But it was, inevitably, to the procuring of Islamic books that Whelock first addressed himself.

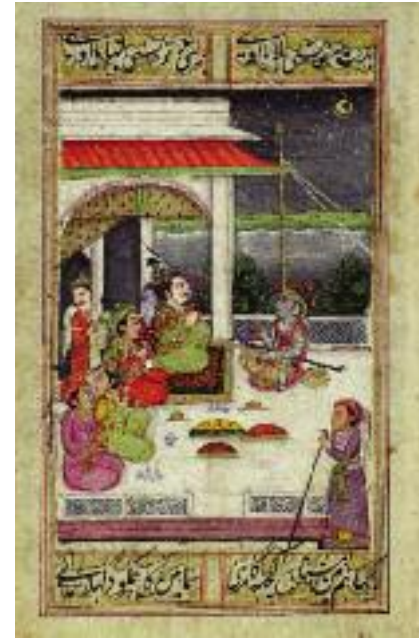
In 1631 Whelock obtained from William Bedwell a Qur'an, having shrewdly informed him that Bedwell's old college, Trinity, already possessed one. Bedwell had spent much of his life compiling the first Arabic-Latin lexicon in nine volumes – consisting of nearly 4,000 leaves of paper and numerous slips of addenda. When Bedwell died in 1632, he bequeathed the manuscript lexicon to the Library, along with a fount of Arabic type imported from Leiden for its printing. However, Whelock had a considerable struggle to obtain them from Bedwell's son-in-law, who saw them as commercial assets. The lexicon was never published!



Detail: The combat of Afrasiyab and KayKhrusraw, from the 16th- or early 17th-century Persian manuscript *Shahnamah* (*Book of Kings*) of Firdawsi.



A page from a Qur'an in Kufic script written in the 9th or 10th century in Iraq or North Africa.



Late 18th-century Urdu manuscript of Mir Hasan's poem 'Sihr ul-bayân' ('Enchanting story').

### ...and daggers

Another significant gift of manuscripts also arrived by a circuitous route, delayed this time by the inconvenience of an assassination. The Duke of Buckingham, elected Chancellor of the University in 1626, secretly bought a library of Islamic manuscripts from the widow of Thomas Erpenius, professor of Oriental languages at the University of Leiden. Buckingham's avowed intention was to donate the collection to the University Library, but his politically motivated murder in 1628 held up matters somewhat. It took four years before Richard Holdsworth, Master of Emmanuel College (himself a significant benefactor), personally managed to persuade the Duchess to fulfil her late husband's promise. Erpenius' library numbered 87 volumes and included some of the oldest surviving Islamic manuscripts in Malay. Others were in Arabic, Coptic, Javanese, Hebrew, Syriac and Persian. One of the most important Persian manuscripts of this collection is the second half of a commentary of the Qur'an in old Persian alongside the

Arabic text. This is the oldest Persian manuscript held in the Library.

Today the range of Islamic manuscripts in the Library's safekeeping is considerable: as well as the beautifully illuminated Qur'ans, there are historical texts such as al-Ya'qubi's *History of the world since Adam*, which was long believed to be a unique copy; Persian manuscripts of poetry; a medical treatise

in Arabic consisting of translations of Hippocrates and Galen, with commentaries from the 13th century; and texts of Islamic theology, sciences and arts. Assembled together, they demonstrate that early Oriental scholars were long ago making intellectual connections with other cultures, connections that were lost sight of in the intervening 'desert' years, and which can only now be painstakingly rebuilt.



The opening surah of the Qur'an: a magnificent copy, probably c.1600.





# Generations of knowledge

“ Countless times, while pursuing my research in Cambridge University Library, I have stumbled on a crucial source, two books away on the shelf from the one I had set out to consult. There is no greater luxury for the scholar than a great open-stack library.



**Lisa Jardine**  
Professor of Renaissance Studies, Queen Mary, University of London

Every book. Every periodical. Every printed map. Every piece of sheet music. Throughout its history, the Library has depended on purchases, donations and bequests – and, since 1662, on being one of Britain’s libraries of ‘legal deposit’ entitled to claim a copy of every item published in the UK and Ireland. At first, this was part of legislation intended for the control and censorship of the press. Then, in 1710, the *Act for the Encouragement of Learning by Vesting the Copies of Printed Books in the Authors or Purchasers of such Copies During the Times Therein Mentioned* confirmed the Library’s status. It gave publishers copyright protection on certain conditions – one being that they had to send copies of their books to a number of privileged libraries, Cambridge among them.

The Act initially was only partly successful. Resentful publishers either ignored it or devised ingenious methods of evading their obligations, while the University deemed many of the books unsuitable for its learned shelves. It was

not until well into the 19th century that the Library began seriously to embrace its responsibilities as a repository of national literature. Today Cambridge University Library takes its special role as a legal deposit library (previously called a copyright library) very seriously indeed: it forms part of the national published archive. Many libraries regard the printed text as a replaceable item: they keep multiple copies of the latest editions of books and dispose of superseded editions. Cambridge generally keeps only one copy of each edition and aims to preserve it for ever. In addition, for many publishers it represents their own archives; at times they approach the Library to refer to copies of their own publications which they no longer have.

Uniquely among the six legal deposit libraries, Cambridge stores two million of its books (about a quarter of its collections) in open-access stacks, allowing readers the facility of browsing among works on related subjects. It is therefore one of the largest open-access libraries in the world. Users of all kinds,

Legal deposit intake of the 1920s; these shelves contain mainly novels, stored in the Library tower in their original dust jackets.



From Catherine Sinclair, *Picture letters* (Edinburgh 1864), received under legal deposit.



Most copies of this 1936 book were destroyed in a warehouse fire: this is one of only two copies known to exist with its original dust jacket.

from Cambridge, from other parts of Britain, and from other countries, have repeatedly expressed their appreciation for the ways in which easy access to the shelves has helped their work.

The Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 brought electronic publications and other non-print material into the scope of the previous legislation. However in spite of all the predictions of the death of the book, the increasing availability of electronic resources is not yet being matched by any significant decrease in traditional paper publishing. Each year, nearly two miles of extra shelving has to be provided for the 100,000 books received by the Library, not to mention the 120,000 issues of serial titles and thousands of maps and other documents. That represents about the same distance as a visitor would travel in a taxi from Cambridge railway station to the Library itself.

This puts immense pressure on restricted resources, but the legal deposit collection, which represents

about two-thirds of the annual intake, is one of the Library's greatest strengths. In the 21st century, it continues to fulfil its obligation to receive, catalogue, store and make available the widest possible coverage of material in conditions suitable not only for preservation, but also for the benefit of its users, both present and future.



The Library makes extensive use of mobile stacks to maximise its storage capacity; each of these stacks contains several tons of books but can be moved easily thanks to sophisticated gearing.





# Munificentia Regia 1715

“ The special collections of the UL are an extraordinary treasure trove and when I first encountered them as a research student and later as a Research Fellow, I discovered gems of information that transformed knowledge and my own approaches to it.

**Dr David Starkey**  
Historian



The identity of the man whose collection, more than anything else, transformed the University Library into a true working library for study and research, is hidden behind an elaborate royal bookplate. 1715 was the date of one of the greatest benefactions in the Library's history, when King George I repaid the University's loyalty during the year of the Jacobite rising by presenting it with the library of the late Bishop of Ely, John Moore, who had died in 1714. The University's address of thanks was appropriately fulsome: the donation enhanced the Library's collections in a spectacular way.

*'The noble Collection of Books & Manuscripts gatherd in many Years by the Great Industry & Accurate Judgement of the late Bp of Ely, tho' in itself exceeding valuable, is upon no account so Welcome to Yr University, as it is a Testimony of Yr Royal Favour; the Memory of w<sup>ch</sup> will be constantly preserv'd by this Ample Benefaction, worthy to bear the Title of the Donor, & to be for ever styled the Royal Library.'*

Moore's vast collection of books dated back to his undergraduate years, but little is known about how and when he acquired them. Certain themes are discernible however, medicine being one. As early as 1663 he wrote his name (and the price) on the flyleaf of William Harvey's *Exercitationes de generatione animalium* (Amsterdam 1651). Law was another interest, and there are also remarkable examples of early English printing including over 40 Caxtons, some of them unique. The Library's previously sparse coverage of comparatively recent publications was highlighted by the fact that books such as Newton's *Principia mathematica* (London 1687) and *Opticks* (London 1704), Halley's *Miscellanea curiosa* (London 1705–7), Boyle's *Sceptical chymist* (Oxford 1680), and John Wallis's *Opera* (Oxford 1657) were only now received for the first time.

Arguably the greatest treasures in the Royal Library, though, are the notable early manuscripts, many with stunning illuminations. Those from the 8th



Detail: Book of Cerne: frontispiece of the Gospel of St Mark, with his symbol the lion.



Book of Deer: frontispiece of the Gospel of St John.



An ear inspection, from *Le gouvernement de corps domme*, an early 15th-century manuscript that belonged to King Henry VII.

and 9th centuries include the earliest English text of Caedmon's Hymn in Bede's *Ecclesiastical history of the English people*, the Book of Cerne, with its technically amateurish yet markedly intellectual images and bold, fancifully formed capital letters; and the Book of Deer, only 'discovered' in the 1860s by the then University Librarian, the 'lynx-eyed' Henry Bradshaw.

However even in the 1970s the strange charm of its illuminated pages was castigated by an editor of the Gaelic notes as being 'of the most grotesque and barbarous crudeness'. Nothing could be further from the truth: the decorations belong to a well-defined Insular tradition of figurative art that can be related to ornament and calligraphy.

In fact the ingenuity of its design and sophisticated physical construction makes it reasonable to suspect that, far from being crude, the Book of Deer reflects richly decorated Insular Gospel books of around 800 AD, now lost.

**'Grotesque and barbarous crudeness'**

The Book of Deer contains parts of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and the whole of John. Its diminutive scale (15.4cm by 10.7cm) and the inclusion after St Mark of a litany for the visitation of the sick, link it to an interesting Irish series of private pocket Gospel books.

The importance of the Gaelic notes added to the book in the north-east of Scotland in the 12th century has been widely recognised, and the manuscript's significance in linguistic and social history long appreciated.



The 12th-century Winchester Pontifical, showing Mass for a bishop on the day of his consecration.

# 'An ocean of truth'

Is. Newton  
Anno 1682

Aug 19  
Saturday at 1<sup>h</sup> 20' P.M. Noct. A, f, R  
in a right line. fR was = to twice fG &  
tayle pointed to E in y<sup>e</sup> Beavrs no  
& was about 6 degrees long reaching

Aug 20  
Sunday at 9<sup>h</sup> 20' before midnight fB =  
SH. If = IS = 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  Sf = 3 $\frac{1}{2}$  fg.  
tayle ended over against y<sup>e</sup> middle of  
& out of produced cut of  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{5}$  of C  
towards C.

Aug 21  
Monday at 8<sup>h</sup> 40' at night RTV  
a right line. TV = 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  fg. The tayle  
over against H, & pointed towards B.

“ A library is a basic facility in a research operation. It's the way that you see what other people have done so that you can build upon the foundation that's been laid by other investigators. Libraries, of course, are not what they used to be – they're not merely collections of books and other documents. Increasingly, they're the means of electronic access to the knowledge of the world.

**Dr Gordon E Moore**  
Founder of the Intel Corporation



Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727) was the greatest natural philosopher of his age – and perhaps of any age – but the workings of such an extraordinary mind are difficult to unravel. Newton consistently concealed his methods until they had produced definite results, and he hid his assumptions from investigation by others until they had proved themselves trustworthy. One of Newton's younger contemporaries, the Swiss mathematician Johann Bernoulli, once ruefully remarked that Newton's methods were so startlingly original that on their own they were enough to identify him, 'as a lion can be recognised from his footprint'. Such 'lion's footprints', the most concrete traces of Newton at work, can be found in his manuscripts, books and papers. These tell a far more complicated and remarkable story than the easy tale of genius.

Although widely known for his law of universal gravitation, Newton's scientific and intellectual interests were vast, and this range of creative thinking is reflected in the Macclesfield Collection. The 950

manuscript notebooks, letters and bundles of unbound papers in this collection document the writings of Newton and his associates on gravitation, fluxions (calculus), the *Principia*, mathematics, optics, astronomy and other subjects. They provide compelling insights into Newton's thinking. Yet until the Library was able to purchase the Collection from the Earl of Macclesfield in 2000, after a highly successful fundraising campaign, little of this revealing material had been published, and access to it had been severely restricted because one of the most important and valuable collections of scientific papers in Britain had been in private hands.

Even before the acquisition of the Macclesfield Collection, the Library held by far the largest group of Newton's scientific papers, chiefly in the Portsmouth Collection, which had been presented by the fifth Earl of Portsmouth in 1872 to join manuscripts of Newton's lectures as Lucasian Professor and records of his Cambridge career.





Newton's record of observations of the comet of 1682, now known as Halley's Comet, written on a scrap of paper perhaps torn from a letter.



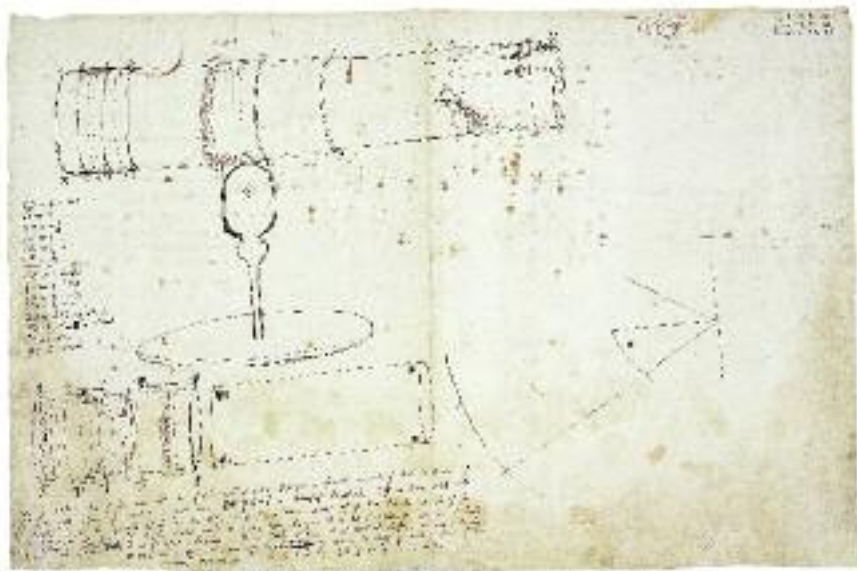
Newton's experiment with a bodkin pressed behind his eye.



Letter from Newton to Robert Boyle (28 February 1679) about the nature of the aether and the possible mechanical causes of the behaviour of light.

The Macclesfield and Portsmouth Collections are closely interrelated. Material on some topics, such as the dispute with Leibniz over priority in the invention of the infinitesimal calculus, is spread over both collections and, in some cases, replies to letters in one collection are to be found in the other. Now the two major sections of the Isaac Newton archive, separated following his death, are reunited in Cambridge for the benefit of scholars and the public, and many of the documents have already been digitised and made accessible to everyone via the internet.

It is said that Newton once remarked, 'I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me'. All those who have the chance to study the 'lion's footprints' and the development of Newton's scientific theories through the collections at the Library would probably want to disagree.



Drawing by Newton of his reflecting telescope and its parts.





# 'This humane peregrination'

“ The University Library has a hugely impressive collection of books for those researching into all aspects of the early modern period. Thanks to Gilbert de Botton's passionate interest in Montaigne, this has now been considerably enhanced, especially in the area of French vernacular literature. As a result, future generations of Montaigne scholars will be able to benefit from his interest by consulting this magnificent collection in its new home in the University Library.

**Philip Ford**  
Professor of French and Neo-Latin Literature,  
University of Cambridge



It is a library within a library, an outstanding collection of a scholar's books collected by a scholar. Some 450 years ago, Michel de Montaigne (1533–92) annotated his beloved books as he read them in pursuit of the ideas that would become his celebrated *Essais*. In the 20th century, Gilbert de Botton (1935–2000), financier and Montaigne scholar, used characteristic yellow post-it notes to mark significant passages in his collection of books by and about the French writer he once described as 'a most unstuffy great'.

In 1571, on his 38th birthday, Montaigne retired from public life and subsequently spent most of his days in his library – 'there is my seate, that is my throne' – a circular room on the third floor of a tower at his château. Above him, quotations from his favourite works were inscribed on the rafters, whilst around him were some 1,000 volumes of both ancient and modern writers. It was here that the first two books of his *Essais* took shape over the

next decade. 'Sometimes I muse and rave,' he wrote, 'and walking up and downe I endite and enregister these my humours, these my conceits.'

Curiously, the subject of the 'musings and ravings' of this quiet recluse, this private contemplative, was the man himself; Montaigne famously declared, 'I am myself the matter of my book'. Montaigne seeks to communicate with others, to share something of what it is to be human. His words resonate down the centuries as he writes on education, friendship, sexuality, death, and the New World, all interspersed with the minutiae of his life. For Montaigne, the term 'essais' referred to a process of assaying, of putting things (and particularly the self) to the test.

## 'The best munition'

In 2007 Cambridge received as a gift the Montaigne Library of Gilbert de Botton. De Botton's remarkable collection of books connected with Montaigne, his life and times, stemmed



Colour aquatint portrait of Montaigne by Pierre-Michel Alix (1792).



Montaigne's copy of Lucretius' *De rerum natura* (Paris & Lyons 1563), with his annotations.



Montaigne's copy of Aimoin de Fleury's chronicle of the Franks (Paris 1567), with his signature.

from his desire to recreate Montaigne's library – either by buying the writer's own copies, where available, or other copies of works known to have belonged to or been read by him. It includes ten of Montaigne's personal copies (around 100 are known to have survived), some of which are signed by Montaigne himself.

The jewel of the collection is Montaigne's own heavily annotated copy of Lucretius' *De rerum natura* (1563), a key text for the *Essais*. The Lucretius, whose ownership by Montaigne was confirmed as recently as 1989, gives a remarkable insight into the way the scholar worked. It has his extensive Latin annotations on the eight flyleaves, keyed to pages in the text, and passages highlighted by vertical pen-strokes in the margins. The faded annotations in this and other books demonstrate in vivid detail how Montaigne seems to hold conversations with the authors he quotes from, at times appearing to go off at a tangent, and sometimes

using passages to make quite different points from those they had intended.

Books were, for Montaigne, 'the best munition I have found in this humane peregrination'. Today scholars can browse amongst Montaigne's 'companions', as Montaigne himself once browsed. The elegant room within the Rare Books Department has been specially designed to house the Montaigne Library at Cambridge and offers a very personal, very individual place for quiet study and reflection. Its vibrant contents are not museum pieces but working tools to foster creative thinking: it is clear, not least from the fading annotations that have been painstakingly transcribed – and the yellow post-its – that these are books that have been read and used. Montaigne would have approved.



Napoleon's copy of the *Essais* (Paris 1608), from his library on St Helena. The binding is decorated with a crowned initial 'N' and bees, one of Napoleon's symbols.





# Silver threads on crimson velvet

“ Cambridge University Library, with its open shelves and its profound riches in manuscripts and rare books, encourages boundary-crossing, conversation, and lateral connections. It has made my interdisciplinary work possible.



**Dame Gillian Beer**  
Emerita King Edward VII  
Professor of  
English Literature,  
University of Cambridge

The sense of tactile pleasure upon opening a book, whether it be a brand new one, a well-loved copy, or one that has been sitting on the Library’s shelves waiting patiently for its time to come, is something that will never be gained from turning on a computer. When that book is bound in soft crimson velvet embroidered with silken threads or encased in smooth morocco with gold tooling, and printed on fine parchment or heavy vellum, the epithet of bibliophile or book-lover can be all the more easily understood.

Such beautiful volumes were bequeathed to the Library by Samuel Sandars in 1894. Sandars, a member of Trinity College, was the greatest benefactor of his time. He had been wooed by two University Librarians, Henry Bradshaw and Francis Jenkinson, and much of his collecting taste had been moulded by their advice: he added 203 incunabula (books printed during the 15th century) to the Library’s collection. Throughout his life he gave money, manuscripts and printed books,

and when he died he left 1,500 valuable items as well as a further sum of money to be spent on ‘rare English books’. The Sandars Readership in Bibliography, instituted in 1895 and continuing today in the annual series of Sandars Lectures, is an enduring monument to his generosity.



Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De officiis* (Mainz 1465).  
The first printed edition of a classical text.  
Copy printed on vellum.



John Udall, *Certaine sermons* (London 1596). Contemporary crimson velvet binding, embroidered in silver thread and silks with the arms of Elizabeth I.



Page from a French translation of Virgil's *Eclogues* (Paris 1516), printed on vellum and evidently designed to look as much like a manuscript as possible.



Sisto Poncello da Caravonica, *Le sacre historie del'Antico Testamento* (Padua 1569). Dedication copy to Cosimo de Medici (1519–74), Grand Duke of Tuscany, whose arms – featuring the ducal crown and the collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece – are painted on the black morocco binding.

Sandars's gift not only enriched the Library with exquisite examples of rare books and illuminated manuscripts, but also had an additional and long-lasting impact. For the first few centuries of its existence, the Library lacked its present pre-eminence in the minds of visitors and alumni. In the eyes of tourists searching for grandeur, its buildings were unimpressive while, with a few notable exceptions, many alumni who considered bequeathing their libraries tended to think first of their colleges. Sandars's decision to leave the cream of his collection to the University Library changed that habit. Where Sandars led, others followed, and by the beginning of the 20th century, the tradition of giving to the Library was firmly established.

Early 12th-century manuscript of Rabanus Maurus, 'De laudibus sanctae crucis', showing the third figured poem in the series, 'Salve sancta salus Christi', with the words 'Salus crux' highlighted in the form of a cross.







# 'In haste and great excitement'



A Judeo-Arabic letter of recommendation, in autograph, written for a friend by Moses Maimonides (1138–1204), a leading figure of the medieval Jewish world.

Solomon Schechter's great excitement was justified. In 1896 the widowed twin Scottish sisters, Mrs Agnes Lewis and Mrs Margaret Gibson, gave the University's Reader in Talmudic Literature some ancient scraps of paper they had purchased. These proved to be just some of the 140,000 fragments of Hebrew and Jewish literature and documents from the Ben Ezra Synagogue, founded in Fustat (or Old Cairo) in the 11th century. Schechter realised he had an astounding bibliographical discovery on his hands. On 13 May 1896 he wrote to the sisters 'in haste and great excitement', urging them to initial secrecy, for 'the fragment I took with me represents a piece of the original Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus. It is the first time that such a thing was discovered.'

Encouraged, recommended and financed by the Master of St John's College, Charles Taylor, Schechter spent the following winter in Cairo negotiating over interminable cups of coffee and cigarettes with the Chief Rabbi. He finally obtained permission to examine

and then to remove to Cambridge what became the unique Genizah Collection.

The officials of the Ben Ezra Synagogue had followed the widespread Jewish custom of not destroying texts on which the name of God or sections of the scripture were recorded. Instead, such materials were consigned to a *genizah*, or storage place, where they would disintegrate through natural processes or from which they could be taken for burial in a communal cemetery. In this particular case, however, a wide variety of everyday texts and writings were also deposited and the result is a fascinating collection of information ranging across every aspect of life in the Mediterranean area, spanning 13 centuries, and written in a dozen languages and dialects including Arabic.

## The sacred and the mundane

The containers that transported the fragile fragments back to the University Library held a cornucopia of scholarly riches. The Genizah Collection has revealed tantalising insights into both





The Damascus Document, containing part of the religious ideology of the Dead Sea sect.



An Arabic tale of a lioness and a lion cub, with accompanying illustration, from about the 14th century.

ordinary daily life a thousand years ago, and important clues for answering profound religious, ideological and historical questions. Children's school books and school reports, dowry lists and wedding contracts, early cheques from the 12th century with the familiar wording 'I promise to pay the bearer...'; verses of the only known medieval woman poet writing in Hebrew, legal papers and musical notations have all been recovered from the Cairo *genizah*. Many lost Hebrew books and priceless sacred texts have been resurrected from the fragments including the original Hebrew version of the Wisdom of Ben Sira or Ecclesiasticus, a work dating back to the 2nd century BC, and the Damascus Document (or Zadokite Fragment), the first and fullest version of one of the Dead Sea sect's major religious tracts, which came to light 50 years before the Scrolls made their sensational impact on Jewish and Christian history. Famous personalities appear among the tattered texts, not just as distinguished authors but as writers of personal letters, creditors

requesting the payment of debts, and travellers waiting for a fair wind to begin their voyage.

Over the last hundred years, through active programmes of conservation, research and, increasingly, digitisation, these 'torn and stained testimonies to bygone ages' have led to exciting discoveries about Jewish religious,

communal and personal life, Hebrew and Arab culture, settlement in the land of Israel, and relations with Muslims and Christians from as early as the 9th and 10th centuries.

Much still remains to be done and no doubt as the work of the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit proceeds, yet more secrets will be unfurled.



A child's Hebrew alphabetical exercise book from about the 10th century.





# Behind the shelves

“ I remember wonderful

days spent in the University Library – reading in the stacks when I was particularly interested in medieval Jewish life in southern France, and also having extraordinary conversations in the Tea Room when I allowed myself a break. Even though I go there rarely now, the smell of the place still brings back those glorious days spent working, thinking, and sometimes just gazing at the beautiful ceiling in the Reading Room.



**Baroness Neuberger DBE**

To the user or visitor, what makes a great library are the strength and breadth of the collections – manuscript, print and, increasingly in the 21st century, electronic – and the quality and speed of the service provided by the staff.

What the user sees is just the tip of the iceberg. To ensure that all runs smoothly on the surface, the University Library employs many staff who work ‘behind the shelves’, helping to manage the collections and integrate traditional and emerging formats.

- About 500 books and the same number of journal issues arrive on average every working day, either under legal deposit legislation or by purchase from all corners of the globe.
- It took the Library 500 years to acquire its first million books; 75 years to acquire the next 5 million and now it is adding books at the rate of a million every 8–10 years.

- There are over 100 miles (160 km) of occupied shelves – enough to stretch from Cambridge to Brighton, or half way from New York to Boston.
- As well as all its traditional books and magazines, the Library provides access to 60,000 electronic journals.
- Around 200,000 of the rarer and more precious items are fetched every year from closed stacks to the various reading rooms for readers’ use. The average time a reader has to wait is about 18 minutes – much less than in many large libraries where 12–24 hours can be the norm.
- The service is increasingly 24/7, with over 70,000 hits on the Library’s website every day, 365 days a year.
- The Library is in all senses a world resource. Its users come from every continent, and many plan their visits to the UK so that they can spend weeks at a time working among the



A letter from the Macclesfield Collection before and after conservation.

collections. The catalogues can be consulted via the internet from any computer anywhere in the world. More and more parts of the collections are being digitised, so that users can have access to them without having to travel to Cambridge.

- The Library is committed to sharing its treasures through its own Exhibition Centre and loans to other institutions – items have recently been on view in exhibitions in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Bruges, Berlin, Magdeburg, Mannheim, Nancy, Tokyo, Melbourne and Canberra, as well as London and other UK venues.
- The Friends of the University Library foster contacts between the Library and those interested in its collections, its history, its current activities and its future. They also raise funds for the purchase of significant additions to the Library's collections, and for the conservation of those collections.

### Conserving wisdom

Some of the Library's contents were written several thousand years ago, some much more recently, but in many cases the paper is of poor quality; some have suffered from ill treatment before they came to Cambridge; and some have suffered from heavy use by present-day readers. The Library employs a team of conservators whose role is to ensure that the collections assembled in the past and used today will still be available to scholars in the future.


The Macclesfield Collection of scientific papers, which was bought in 2000, is a good example of the work undertaken by the Library's conservators. The collection consists of a wide range of materials including bound items and notebooks, items pasted into 'guardbooks', loose single leaves, drawings and printed items. The bound volumes of letters (whose writers include Sir Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle, John Flamsteed, and Edmond Halley) contained some of the most important material and were in the worst condition.

The original structures, format and binding provided no suitable support or protection for the letters that had been pasted into them, and so they had to be removed and treated according to individual needs. Each letter was then pasted onto sheets of special paper and these were sewn and bound into volumes. The papers had frequently been folded, leading to lines of weakness; in some cases, the iron gall ink had burnt into the paper and caused it to tear. This damage has now been repaired and the collection can be safely used by scholars.



The bound volumes.





# 'A man of enlarged curiosity'

“ The first trip I took when making ‘Life on Earth’ was in Darwin’s footsteps to the Galapagos, to film the tortoises that inspired *Origin of species*. Darwin’s influence permeates our entire culture and the repository of his letters at the University Library provides a remarkably detailed insight into how he arrived at his theories. They are of immeasurable value to modern biological study – I know of no pleasure deeper than that which comes from contemplating the natural world and trying to understand it.

**Sir David Attenborough**  
Naturalist and broadcaster



Charles Darwin (1809–82), the man who gave his name to the theory of evolution through the mechanism he called ‘natural selection’, remains a global phenomenon in the impact of his thought. Some 200 years after his birth, and 150 years after the publication of *On the origin of species*, his theories continue to shape the way we see the world and the place of human beings within it. The Library houses the world’s major collection of his private papers from childhood through school days and adolescence, to the writing of *Origin* and beyond; they are a fascinating window onto his scientific development and a record of a lifetime’s achievement.

Darwin came up to Cambridge at 18, thinking that he might become a clergyman. Of greatest importance at Cambridge was his friendship and study with the botanist John Stevens Henslow – ‘I owe more than I can express to this excellent man’ – and the geologist Adam Sedgwick. Through Henslow came the introduction to Captain Robert FitzRoy, who invited Darwin to accompany him

on his second hydrographical voyage to South America on board HMS *Beagle*. Darwin’s father was persuaded to let him go by Josiah Wedgwood, Darwin’s uncle, who argued ‘looking upon him as a man of enlarged curiosity, it affords him such an opportunity of seeing men and things as happens to few’. Among the Darwin papers are notes and lists of specimens from the five years of the *Beagle* voyage. These are brought to life by the plant, animal and mineral specimens themselves, many of which are now in the collections of the Cambridge University Museum of Zoology, Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, and the University Herbarium.

‘No half famished wretch ever swallowed food more eagerly than I do letters’ Darwin wrote home during his journey around the world. One of the most significant categories of material in the archive, alongside experiment notes and theoretical notebooks, is correspondence, with more than 8,000 of the 15,000 letters Darwin is known to have written or received. Far from being

Detail: Darwin made several of these composite geological cross-sections of the Andes while in South America with HMS *Beagle*. This one runs west to east through the Portillo range, Chile.



Charles Darwin in 1839 (pencil sketch by George Richmond).



A page from the manuscript of *On the origin of species*, reused by one of Darwin's children who drew 'Battle of the fruits and vegetables' on the back. Only 36 pages of the original manuscript survive.

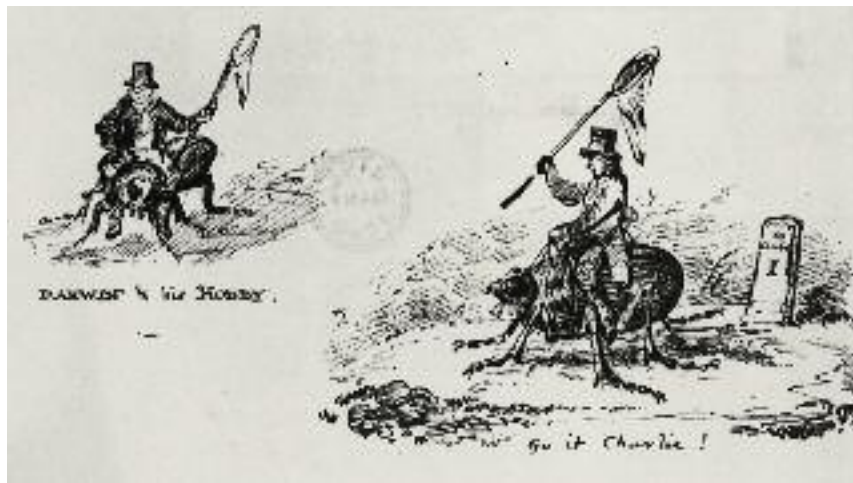
the solitary figure of popular imagination, his papers reveal a man who worked surrounded by family and in constant touch with fellow naturalists of many nationalities and from all walks of life, including gardeners, army officers, diamond prospectors and pigeon fanciers.

The letters are vital to a full understanding of Darwin's life and the Library is host to the Darwin Correspondence Project, which is researching and publishing Darwin's surviving letters, both in a print edition and online. The Project reunites letters in the Library with others from collections around the world, and is the leading history of science undertaking of its kind. The letters, exchanged with nearly 2,000 correspondents, are not only an invaluable insight into Darwin's mind, but also offer an engaging and accessible route into his published writings. A generous grant from The Bonita Trust in the bicentenary year of Darwin's birth has supported an education officer and a programme to

develop educational materials for schools and colleges on 'Darwin and Gender'.

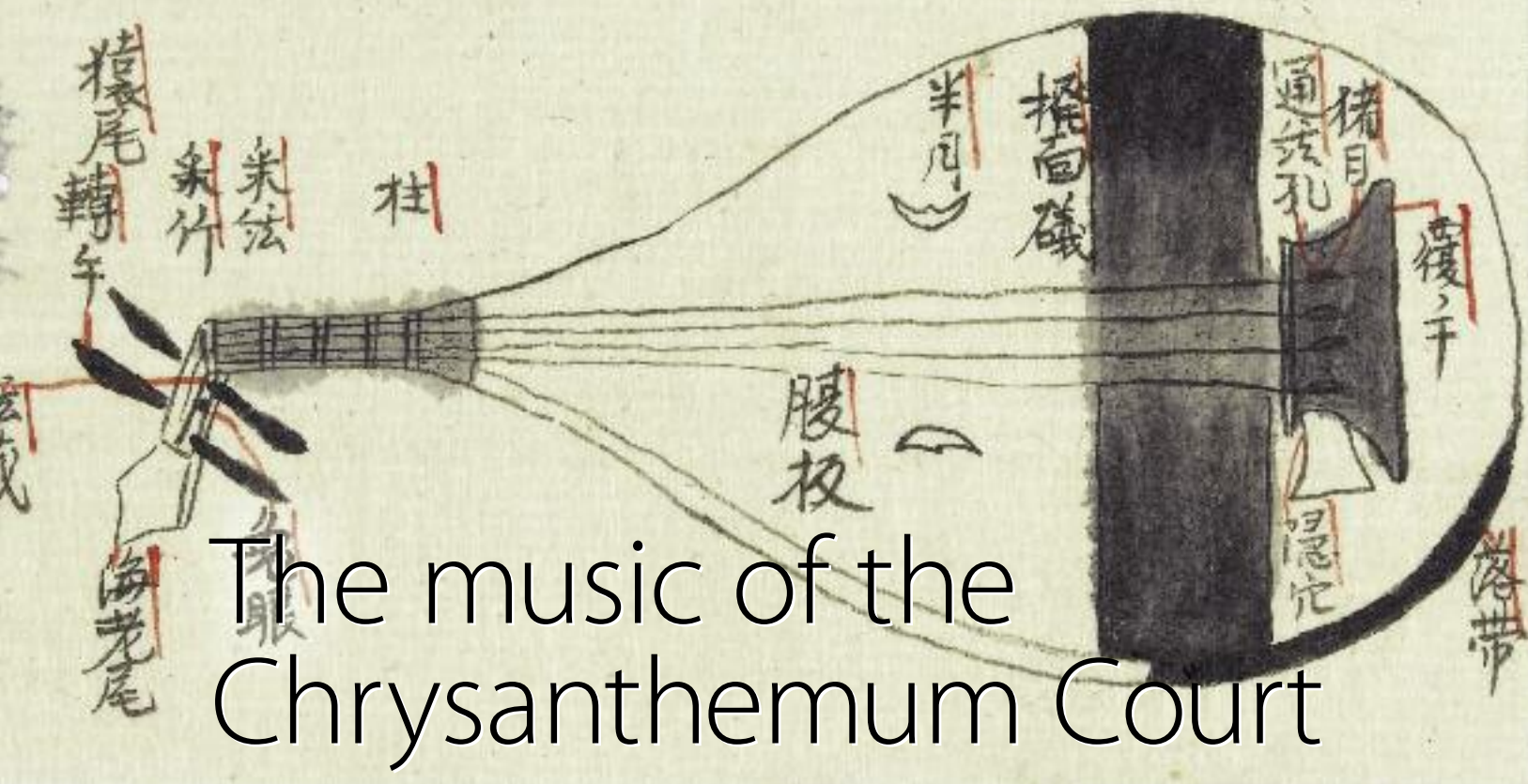
Associated collections contribute to a fuller understanding of this remarkable scientist. The 'Darwin Library', which includes many of Darwin's own collection of reference works, illustrates his encompassing reading in natural science, most of the books, periodicals and pamphlets that he studied bearing

his marginal notes. One of the artists aboard the *Beagle*, Conrad Martens, kept several sketchbooks filled with finely detailed pencil drawings and watercolours of the voyage, and two are also preserved in the Library. Cataloguing projects continue and, in collaboration with international partner institutions, the Library is planning to make available online digital images of many items in the Darwin collections.



A sketch of Darwin beetleing while a Cambridge undergraduate.





# The music of the Chrysanthemum Court

“ I have said on many occasions over the years that if I hadn't been a musician, I would have probably been an archaeologist, a museum curator, or a librarian, as I feel strongly that the preservation of our rich cultural heritage must be maintained at all costs for future generations.

**Bill Wyman**  
Former bass player with The Rolling Stones



Ancient paper scrolls of Japanese music, fragile as flower petals, curled up in fragrant cedarwood boxes, and delicate manuscripts with exquisitely drawn characters and musical instruments, neatly protected by traditional indigo-coloured cloth bindings and secured with bone pegs... these are part of one of the most exotic gifts to the Library: Laurence Picken's collection on the musics of Asia, which he presented in 1976.

The archetypal Cambridge polymath, Picken was the Assistant Director of Research in Zoology at the University, a speaker of several Near and Far Eastern languages, and driven by a lifelong and extraordinary passion for music and musical instruments. His friendship in the late 1930s and 1940s with Paul Hirsch, the refugee German banker who had brought his already famous music collection to Cambridge, prompted Picken to embark on his initial collecting enterprise: 18th-century music treatises including examples from the works of J S Bach before the first publication of *Das*

*wohltemperierte Klavier* in 1800. Then a British Council scientific mission to China in 1944 led him to study Chinese, explore Chinese art and music, and learn to play the *qin* (board zither).

His fascination with the old music of China inspired Picken to track down the repertory of music from the Tang dynasty that had crossed the sea to survive in Japan, where musicians had devised a written musical notation to enable them to preserve and play it. Picken unearthed these musical materials mainly from the collections of the royal and noble households of Japan, now deposited in libraries in Tokyo and Kyoto. He acquired microfilms of over 70 important manuscripts, which he had printed and bound.

Picken added to his collection when he acquired 62 original *gagaku* manuscripts of old Japanese music; these came from the *Kikutei*, the musicians of the 'Chrysanthemum Pavilion', one of the noble houses in Kyoto. This unsung treasure trove includes one of the

A *biwa* (lute) from *Dako toyo sho* (*How to use the dako*) by Ryuhan, high priest of the Daijōin Temple, 1792.



Notational lines showing the sliding vocal ornament, from the *saibara* song *Anato*, from a book entitled *On-asobi* (*Enjoying music*), first performed in 864, copied in 1778.



Some items from the Picken collection, showing the traditional Japanese indigo bindings, the ivory pegs and the cedarwood boxed scrolls.

earliest known scrolls of music for the *biwa* (Japanese lute), dated 1566, but notating music of perhaps three or four centuries earlier.

and modern, it is not surprising that many of them are still awaiting interpretation, both musically and linguistically. Until then, the written

notations will ensure that even an element as transient as sound is safely, if for the time being silently, preserved.

### Music, ancient and modern

Picken saw music very much as a live art, and as a musicologist he followed a forward-thinking 'performance-based approach' to the musics of other cultures. Consequently, when he first turned his attention to the music of Turkey, in 1951, it was natural that he should learn to play the Turkish *kunan* (plucked zither) and the *baglama* (lute), while collecting instruments and gathering information on Turkish folk music for what would later be his monumental work on *The folk instruments of Turkey* (Oxford 1975).

During his visits to China, Japan and Turkey over many years, Picken acquired a great range of printed matter, scores and books on the music of these and many Asian countries, all now accessible in the Library. However as the Picken collection includes materials in numerous different languages, ancient



Two pieces (*Bato* and *Chogeishi*) from *So sofu* (*To play the koto [zither]*).



With piety herte in english for tendinge  
 This olde stoye in latyn that I fynde  
 Of quene anelida & fals azeyte  
 That elde that all can frete and byte  
 As it hath freten many anoble stoye  
 Hath nygh deuoured out of my memozy

# The birth of the book



The first edition of Lactantius' works, printed in Subiaco, Italy, by Conrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz (October 1465).

A beautifully illuminated book from the first Italian press, set up in the mountainside monastery at Subiaco, a few miles from Rome. A unique copy of a poem by Chaucer, printed by William Caxton in Westminster around 1477. The first illustrated work issued by a Dutch printer – a delightful assortment of animal fables. These are just some of the treasures from the Library's celebrated collection of nearly 4,700 *incunabula* – books produced during the 15th century on the earliest European printing presses and named after the Latin word for 'swaddling clothes'.

### Useful and beautiful

As with many nurslings, the infancy of printing was one of incremental developments. The 'cradle' of European printing was Mainz and from here the technology spread to other cities in Germany, and thence to Italy and elsewhere in Europe. Early incunabula replicated manuscripts: whilst the text was printed, the typeface was based on handwritten letterforms, and any illustrations were drawn in by hand. As

the technology gathered momentum, such illustrations were replaced with printed woodcuts, which might have had colour added later, again by hand.

Although many incunabula are very beautiful, they were meant to be used. In the first herbal ever to be printed, the *Herbarius latinus* produced at Mainz by Peter Schöffer in 1484, each plant is described in alphabetical order according to its Latin name and illustrated with a charming woodcut. The Library's copy has been delicately coloured by hand, assiduously consulted, and has annotations by a succession of readers from the 16th century to the 18th.

Unlike manuscripts, incunabula are not unique in the true sense of the word. What makes them fascinating, though, is the history of specific copies – where they were decorated, bound and sold, and who owned them and when. This provides valuable insights into a broader picture of trade and education. Every book has a story to tell of a journey made through space and time: for instance, 18th-century annotations



*Dialogus creaturarum moralisatus* (Gouda, 3 June 1480), an adaptation of the old bestiaries and the first illustrated book issued by a Dutch printer. The Library's collection is especially rich in incunabula from the Low Countries.



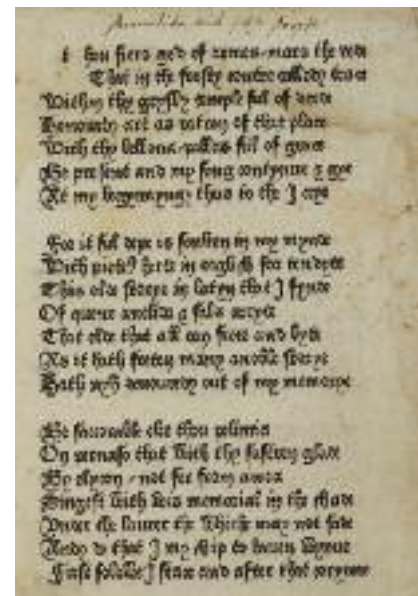
*Aristolochia longa* or long-rooted birthwort, from the *Herbarius latinus* (Mainz 1484). Fortunately the pristine colours of the illustrations have been preserved because, as is usual with most books, the herbal has been kept closed when not in use.

in Polish suggest that the Mainz herbal travelled east before returning to Germany in the 1800s.

Although some of the Library's incunabula have been in Cambridge since the 15th century, others have a much more colourful history. One such intriguing example is a well-thumbed Book of Hours, given to the Library in 1715 by George I. Printed in Westminster by Wynkyn de Worde, the state of the borders indicates that this is the first of the recorded editions, c.1493. Several handwritten inscriptions bear witness to a number of illustrious owners including Catherine Parr, the future consort of Henry VIII, who wrote poignantly to her uncle William Parr: 'oncle wan you do on thys loke I pray you reme[m]ber wo wrete thys in your bo[ke] your louuyinge nys'.

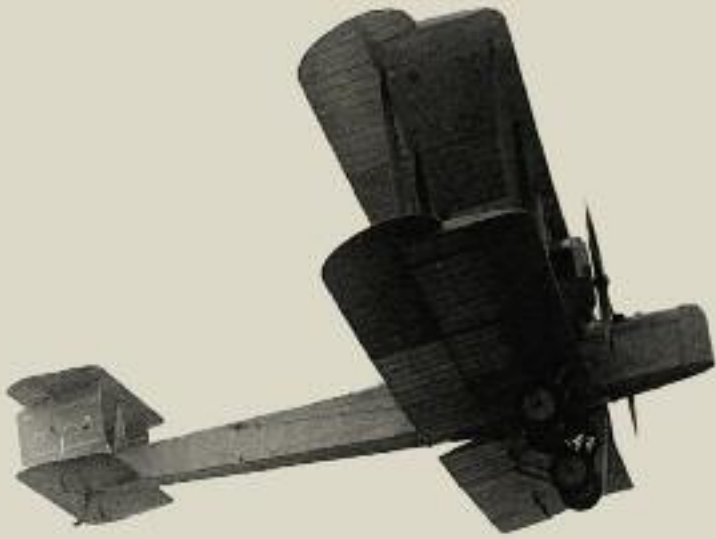
Henry Bradshaw, the University Librarian from 1867 to 1886, added greatly to the Library's collection of early books and was a pioneer in the field of incunabula studies. He published no book, but shared his knowledge generously with other

researchers in the field. His ideas continue to provide firm guidance to the curators involved in the Library's Incunabula Cataloguing Project, who are making detailed descriptions of the incunabula available online, and sharing discoveries with scholars worldwide through a regularly updated blog. Bradshaw once summed up his method in a letter: 'Arrange your facts vigorously and get them plainly before you, and let them speak for themselves, which they will always do.' The incunabula in the Library certainly do that.



Geoffrey Chaucer, *Queen Anelida and the false Arcyte*, printed by William Caxton (Westminster c.1477). One of the Library's unique Caxton quartos.





# 'Occasional glimpses of the sun. Still climbing.'



Britannia surveys with satisfaction a summary of almost 14,000 artillery pieces produced or repaired at the Elswick and Openshaw works of Sir W G Armstrong, Whitworth & Co Ltd during the First World War.

Two former RAF officers, Captain John Alcock and Lieutenant Arthur Whitten Brown, set off from St John's, Newfoundland, in a converted First World War bomber, a Vickers Vimy, at 4pm GMT on 14 June 1919.

Despite thick cloud and sleet and only 'occasional glimpses of the sun' (as detailed in Brown's navigation log), some 16 hours and 1,900 miles later they crash-landed in an Irish bog. They had just completed the first non-stop transatlantic flight.

Documents relating to that flight form part of the vast Vickers plc company archive held by the Library. As well as papers, production reports, and legal and accounting records, the Vickers collection includes materials such as photographic negatives and cinefilm. It has only been comparatively recently that the value of such business archives has been recognised. From ocean liners to airliners, from machine guns to highest quality steels, in many ways the story of this company over the last 150 years reflects important aspects of

the history of the UK. Formerly stored in the head office of Vickers plc at Millbank, London, the records chart the rise and post-war metamorphosis of what was once one of the largest armaments companies in the world.

Vickers had its origins in early 19th-century Sheffield. At the beginning of the 20th century the family-owned steelworks was producing high quality steel castings, but as the shadows over Europe darkened before the First World War, it expanded into other areas including military equipment. Vickers built the first British submarine and airship, and among the wide variety of planes it developed was the Vickers Vimy which made that successful flight across the Atlantic the year after peace was declared.

The company had a voracious appetite for expansion and was heavily involved in the rearmament programme of the British forces in the lead up to the Second World War. The archive provides fascinating insights into the work of

The Vickers Vimy taking off from Newfoundland at the start of Alcock and Brown's non-stop transatlantic flight.



The Vickers-Saunders 'Valentia' flying-boat of 1921 was the product of a short-lived association between Vickers and the Isle of Wight concern S E Saunders & Co, and never entered full-scale production. This blueprint survives in the Vickers archive.

some of Britain's most talented engineers and designers such as Sir Barnes Wallis, designer of the Wellington bomber and inventor of the 'Dambuster' bouncing bomb, and Reginald Mitchell, whose brilliant early work on prize-winning Supermarine seaplanes culminated in his creation of the Battle-of-Britain-winning Spitfire.

After the Second World War, Vickers was responsible for the production of the first British nuclear submarine, the Valiant 'V'- bomber, and the Viscount and VC10 airliners. When it moved to Millbank Tower in 1963, the company had four main areas of manufacture: aircraft, steel, shipbuilding and general engineering. Upon leaving the Millbank premises in the 1980s, the company turned to Cambridge as a suitable home for its historical records.

Other business archives held by the Library have comparable significance. They include records of the Far Eastern trading firm Jardine, Matheson & Co, which were transferred from Hong Kong

in 1935 and form perhaps the largest single accumulation of company papers relating to commerce in the Far East during the 19th and early 20th centuries; a substantial body of archives of an insurance company founded in 1782, Phoenix Assurance, together with records of a number of its subsidiary companies; and the archives of the more local Cambridge Scientific Instrument

Company. The latter collection charts the history of this nationally important precision engineering concern between 1877 and 1971, and includes letter-books of the founding partner Horace Darwin (youngest son of the naturalist), whose practical genius for technological problem-solving propelled the company to prominence in an era of rapid advances in science and industry.



This trademark of the Hongkong Fire Insurance Company Ltd, managed by Jardine, Matheson & Co, decorates a policy issued in 1874 insuring the premises of the Club Lusitano in Hong Kong for \$30,000.





# 'Where I learnt so much'

“ I have the happiest memories of the University Library from two periods of my life. First as an undergraduate, doing most of my studies in the Reading Room; and more recently through a specialist interest in colour printing. In the superb Waddleton Collection the Library possesses one of the world's best collections of books with colour plates, and working among them is a joy.

**Bamber Gascoigne**  
Historian and broadcaster



A great library provides its users not just with texts and information, but also delights the senses and the spirit by displaying the craft of the men and women who have embodied those texts in beautiful creations. Many benefactors have ensured that the skills of the best calligraphers, printers, illustrators and binders are represented in the collections.

## The fine art of printing

One such benefactor was John Dreyfus, whose fondness for Cambridge led him 'to ensure that my own collection eventually goes to the Cambridge University Library, where I learnt so much about typography while I was an undergraduate'. His bequest, made through the Friends of Cambridge University Library, enhanced the Library's holdings of some of the finest printing of the 20th century. Dreyfus was a noted British typographer – he rose to become the Assistant University Printer at Cambridge University Press before succeeding Stanley Morison (designer of the Times New Roman font) as typographical adviser to the Monotype

Corporation. By upbringing a cosmopolitan figure, Dreyfus built up a library that reveals his close contacts with typography and fine printing in the USA, France, Germany and elsewhere. He knew the great typographers of his time, and many of the books from his collection contain personal inscriptions from the authors. His gift spans modern guides for printers, and works on typography and book design, as well as works by earlier printers such as Baskerville.

Dreyfus's collection includes many examples from American and continental private presses, which often have limited print runs. Traditionally, books of this genre are both difficult to define and infinitely variable: many private press books are printed on hand-made paper with hand presses, while others use desk-top publishing; some are sumptuous and obviously expensive volumes, beautifully bound and illustrated, while others are unpretentious pamphlets or even single sheets. They range in size from the large folio to the miniature.



Detail: The cover of *Rappaccini's daughter: reflections on Hawthorne by Edgar Allan Poe, Anthony Trollope and Henry James* (Allen Press, Greenbrae, California 1991?), one of an edition of 115 copies.



Woman operating a book-folding machine, from T MacKellar's *The American printer: a manual of typography* (Philadelphia 1887).



Chechen and Lezghin hunters, from T de Pauly's *Description ethnographique des peuples de la Russie* (St Petersburg 1862).

What is common to all is their intrinsic individuality, which can be appreciated only by seeing them – books such as these are communicating far more than the words they contain.

### Beauty brought to book

The kingfisher hues of natural history books compete with shimmering volumes on textiles, jewellery, ceramics, furniture and architecture. A catalogue of brightly decorated floor-tiles may be discovered alongside gift-books with coloured engravings. An illuminated breviary can be found next to a chapbook of Tom Thumb, probably once sold by a pedlar. Bibliophile and benefactor, Norman Waddleton's aim was simple yet ambitious: to 'assemble and record all books having colour-printed illustrations or decorations up to 1893', a date when major changes occurred to the process of printing in colour.

Early woodcuts, wood-engravings, intaglio printing from copper or steel plates, and chromolithography –

the Waddleton Collection contains stunning examples from all four methods of printing used to produce colour illustrations from the late 15th century to the late 19th. Norman Waddleton's dazzling collection is a true testimony to the beauty of the book.



The station at Orizaba, from *Album del ferrocarril mexicano* (Mexico 1877).





# 'Issued daily, shells permitting'

“ The rich Commonwealth collections at Cambridge University Library are a window into the life, history and heritage of the countries of the Commonwealth, which make up such an important part of the world and its people. When I use these collections I appreciate the importance of great libraries such as this one in preserving the memory of mankind.



**YBhg Tan Sri Dato' Seri Ahmad Sarji bin Abdul Hamid**  
Chief Secretary to the Government of Malaysia 1990–6

The idiosyncratic nature of a library can be its great strength, and of all the collections in the University Library, perhaps this most accurately describes that of the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS), assembled over nearly 140 years. Not only does it offer one of the largest assortments of books on a European empire, including the magnificent Cobham Collection of materials on Cyprus, but also ephemera, official papers, illustrations of all sorts, photographs, private papers, diaries and even artefacts. Anti-convict petitions, emigration pamphlets, information on the many Imperial exhibitions and timetables for the Canadian Pacific Railway jostle with great illustrated travel works like William J Burchell's *Travels in the interior of southern Africa*. Rare newspapers include the *Jamaica Gazette* of 1788 and the only known surviving copy of the *Royal Gold Coast Gazette and Commercial Advertiser of 1822–1823*, a paper founded by Sir Charles McCarthy during his ill-fated governorship of the Gold Coast settlements. Most valuably, there is an almost complete run of *The*

*Mafeking Mail*, 'issued daily, shells permitting', throughout the Boer War siege in 1899–1900; the price of one shilling a week was, cannily, payable in advance.

The visual materials in this astonishing collection range from the extremely valuable to the humble. In the former category is George French Angas's volume of 60 stunning colour plates in *The New Zealanders illustrated*, while the latter includes a wonderful collection of early 20th-century picture postcards of Zanzibar, Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, the Seychelles and Mauritius. The role played by women in the colonial era is not neglected: consider Mrs Tawse Jollie's articles on the 'Back of beyond in Rhodesia' and 'Some humours of housekeeping in Rhodesia' and the spectacular panorama of Simla in the 1860s by Lady Elizabeth Tennant. And then there are the extraordinary artefacts: a feather from the crown of the Zulu king Cetshwayo, an 18th-century pocket globe, a south Pacific musical instrument, a slave shackle,



The Mafeking Mail of 27 November 1899.



One of a set of postcards of about 1900 showing scenes in Khartoum, issued by Sudan Government Railways and Steamers.

and even a statue of the Virgin Mary that survived the 1902 eruption of Mount Pelée, Martinique.

**Breathing life into ‘a dead thing’**

With over 300,000 printed items and 100,000 photographs, by the late 1980s this giant ‘cuckoo’ had outgrown its original home at the Royal Commonwealth Society. Severe financial pressures led to a report condemning it as ‘a dead thing’ and advising that it should be sold off. After a public outcry and successful fundraising appeal to save it for the nation, the RCS collection came

to the University Library in 1993. It offers an almost unrivalled resource for scholars pursuing global studies, but is also consulted by many others, including relatives of POWs using the British Association of Malaysia and Singapore archives to verify pension applications, and teachers of history, citizenship and related courses.

One challenge is how to respond to the increasing number of requests from all over the world. The collection is far too big for open access, and many fragile items are in danger of gradual

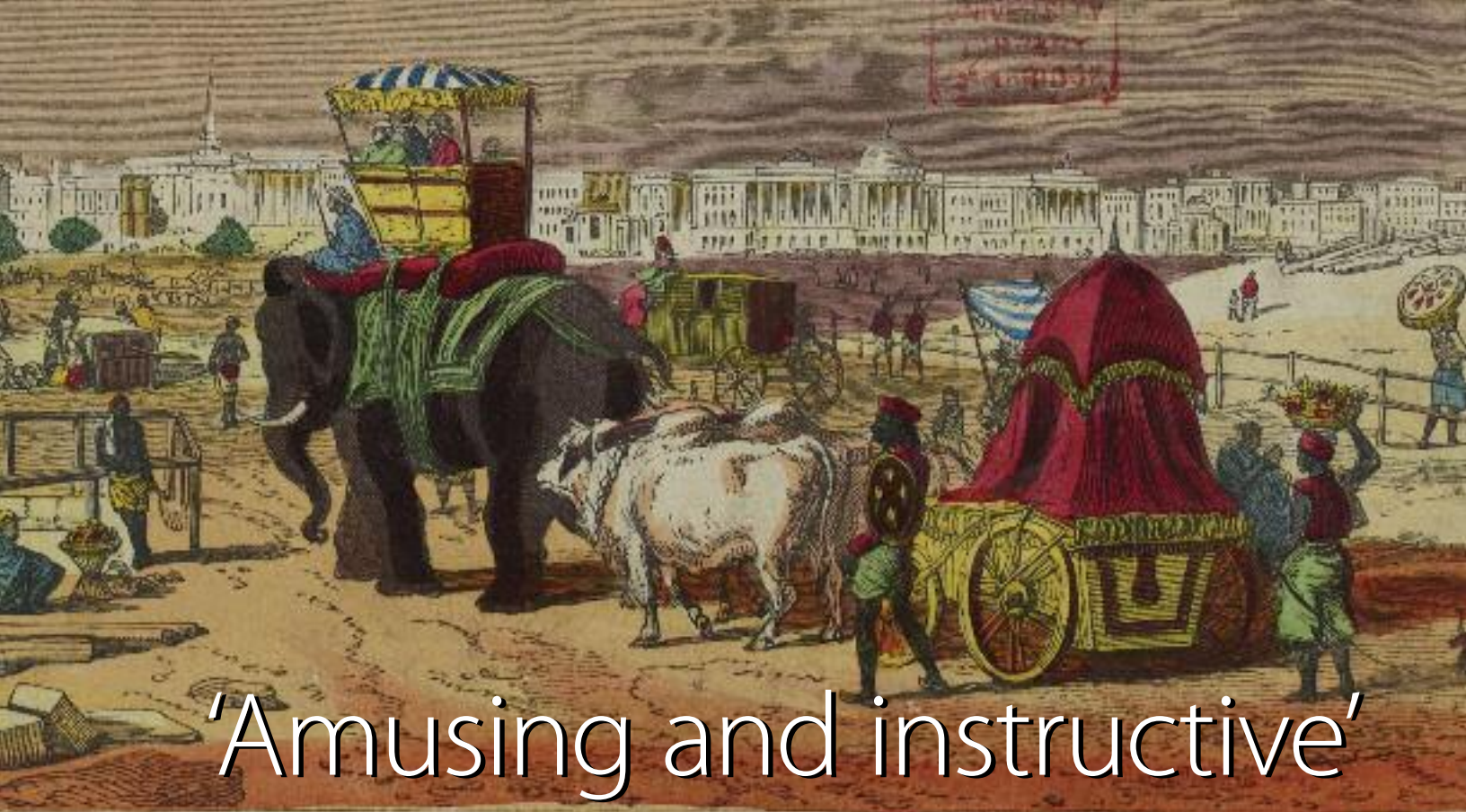
deterioration. Many of the archive collections have been catalogued and can be consulted via the internet. Sometimes this has led to enquiries being received the day after items are first catalogued.

The RCS library has survived bombing, fire, flood, theft, endemic financial crises, and the threat that it would be broken up and sold off. Securely housed in the University Library, it will now survive for many more years as a vast and vital resource for the study of European imperialism.

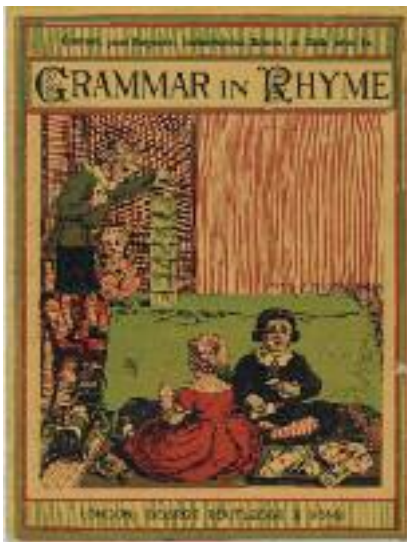


A panoramic view of the Singapore River, taken in the 1920s.





# 'Amusing and instructive'



*Grammar in rhyme* (London 1868).

It is the stuff of fairytales: a treasure trove locked up in the forbidding tower that dominates the Cambridge cityscape. Hidden-away gems include *A travelling game of India designed to afford instruction and amusement in the home circle*, published in 1858, complete with map and paper cards. On another shelf, *Conversations with little geologists on the six days of creation illustrated with a geological chart* (1878) attempts to summarise Darwin's ideas, reconcile them with Christianity, and convey them in a format suitable for children by means of a colourful diagram of geological periods linked to the verses in Genesis.

These are just two of the 200,000 novels, pamphlets, school textbooks, calendars, games, timetables, trade catalogues and other ephemera acquired by legal deposit during the 19th and 20th centuries. They were stored in the Library's Tower, being considered unsuitable for inclusion in the 'primary catalogue' of an academic library. However, 19th-century everyday

ephemera is now an important resource for 21st-century research, and a generous donation for the Tower Project has enabled a team of experts to sort through and catalogue the goldmine of materials.

Many of the books in the Tower were published for children; they evoke powerful images of the life of a Victorian child around the turn of the century. 'Every kind of pan is safe when used by a good clean cook, but unfortunately cooks are often ignorant and not clean' admonishes *Food and home cookery* (1883), a guide for the teaching of domestic sciences to girls, which comes complete with lesson plans. It is not until Lesson 4, having learned amongst other things how to keep metal kitchen utensils clean ('Why ought a cook never to use soap?'), which saucepans are best, and how to light fires ('It is wasteful and wicked to throw cinders into the ashpit'), that the girls actually start cooking. Other educational texts include *Grammar in rhyme* (1868).





*Wild Bill the whirlwind of the West* (London 1891).



*Nursery rhymes ABC* (London 1894).

For the grand sum of six old pence – or double that price (one shilling) for ‘An Indestructible Edition on Cloth’ – the young reader is presented with catchy rhymes about grammatical terms such as: ‘How things are done, the ADVERBS tell, As, “slowly”, “quickly”, “ill” or “well”’.

Even for Victorian children, though, life could not be all work and no play. The ‘penny dreadfuls’, such as ‘The boys’ first rate pocket library’, on cheap paper with flimsy covers, promises to be ‘Full of Glorious Fun! Adventures! Explorations! And Exploits!’ The opening chapter titles of *Wild Bill the whirlwind of the West* by Buffalo Bill (1891) do not, however, appear to offer a great deal of merriment, if ‘The death-camp in the snow’ and ‘The treacherous guide’ are an accurate indication of their contents. More expensive books, such as the elegant copy of *Undine* illustrated by Arthur Rackham (1909), told an equally tragic tale. It was as well then, that books of bedtime rhymes such as the

delightful pop-up book *Cot* (1895) were available. The book transforms into a highly decorative cardboard cot with a gauzy pale-blue drapery, pretty ‘eiderdown’ cover and ‘sheets’ comprising traditional nursery rhymes, designed to lull the Victorian child into tranquil slumber at the end of the day.

The Tower is truly a child’s garden of delight – and more. Like the travelling game of India, many of the books are both amusing and instructive and provide a record of an entire social history. Through the Tower Project, such materials are being made more visible to scholars, and offer a golden key to unlocking facets of the past.



*A travelling game of India* designed to afford instruction and amusement in the home circle (London 1858).





# A spotlight on Footlights

“ The desultory pleasure of browsing the University Library, indulging a passion for wandering through stacks of unknown treasures and marvelling at the ocean of knowledge that lay undiscovered before me was one of the most gratifying experiences of my University days. If you think the internet has the answers and nobody needs libraries any more, just visit the UL and see how libraries still stand as civilisation’s greatest monuments.



**Stephen Fry**  
Writer, actor  
and comedian

Documents and ephemera, letters and accounts – not to mention 750 years’ worth of records, reports and royal charters – the University Archives are one of the less well-known parts of the Library’s holdings. They include information on University societies, and recently the spotlight was focused on the Footlights Dramatic Club, renowned for its witty revues which have featured so many subsequently famous actors and comedians.

An astonishing accumulation of memorabilia, the Footlights archive was amassed by Dr Harry Porter, for decades a prominent figure in the society. It includes an almost complete collection of production records (everything from posters to photographs, and scripts to set designs) for Footlights performances, as well as newspaper reviews, committee minutes and accounts. Dr Porter added to the primary sources with his own and others’ historical research material: photocopies and notes of related records elsewhere, and news cuttings.

The Footlights material came to the Library following his death in 2003.

The archives date back to the first production of the Footlights Dramatic Club in May Week 1883, when a group of undergraduates put on a musical comedy – a burlesque – called *Orlando Furioso* by William Barnes Rhodes. Footlights’ early shows were existing musical comedies and farces, but, in 1892, the Club began its since unbroken tradition of presenting an original show for May Week, composed of an eclectic mix of burlesque, comedy sketches, satire, songs and instrumental music. Since the 1950s, it has been usual to follow the Cambridge run with performances in London, the South East and the Midlands, at the Edinburgh Festival and occasionally overseas. The archives document it all.

## Star materials

One of the fascinations of the Footlights collection is the way it records the ‘first entrances’ of many of the great names of the British media –

Some of the cast of the 1964 review doing silly things on the Backs ('Goodie' Graeme Garden is second from the right).



Griff Rhys Jones, Geoffrey McGivern and Clive Anderson in the 1974 review 'Chox'.

actors, writers, satirists and comedians who have become famous internationally. Down the decades the cast lists have included Jonathan Miller, David Frost, Peter Cook, Clive James, 'Pythons' John Cleese, Graham Chapman and Eric Idle, and Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie. Women first appeared in a production in 1932 and again in 1957. From 1959 they were regular players, and were accorded full Club membership in 1964. Eleanor Bron, Miriam Margolyes, Germaine Greer and Emma Thompson have all featured in productions.

The collection has already been catalogued and the records can be searched on the Library's Janus archive webserver. These invaluable materials are proving as popular with students of theatre and comedy history, as with TV production companies.



Germaine Greer (at the back) and Eric Idle (second from left) in the 1965 review 'My girl Herbert'.



John Cleese in the 1963 review 'Cambridge Circus'.





# Maps of war

“ The Cambridge University Library is an essential resource for someone with diverse interests such as myself. I use its journals for current research in planetary sciences, its map collections as an historical source (for example to help locate HMS *Beagle*, my spacecraft’s antecedent, on the Essex marshes) and its comprehensive newspaper archives in connection with the public understanding of science.



**Colin Pillinger**  
Professor of Planetary Science, Open University, and leader of the *Beagle 2* project

‘In the Spring of 1958 I was commanding a Field Survey Detachment which was carrying out sheet-by-sheet rapid revision of old one-inch maps of southern Johore prior to operations designed to clear the last groups of terrorists from southern Malaya. Apart from our own explorations we were working closely with the local police, the SAS, and the intelligence rooms of the brigades of the Gurkha Division who would be doing the fighting. One day I heard that the police had ambushed and killed a terrorist courier a little way from our camp and when I spoke to a friendly police officer about it he said that they had found some maps in his knapsack. He showed them to me and when he saw my interest allowed me to keep them. I think that, as they may be unique, the UL might be a good permanent home for them – if you are willing to have them.’

The Library responded to Tony Baggs’s letter of April 2004 with a swift ‘yes’. The collection of the Map Department

comprises more than 1.2 million map sheets and over 32,000 atlases and books. These include printed and manuscript maps, charts and topographic views, plus atlases and gazetteers from the 16th century to the present. However, as this is probably the best collection of modern maps in the British Isles that is available to the general public, the Department is keen to ensure that its collection includes not only rare and obscure items from the past, but also more recent maps which may be significant in their own right. Tony Baggs’s gift of the Malayan maps falls into this latter category. Although the paper is poor, the printing quality is remarkably good. A question-mark hangs over where they were printed: they are certainly beyond the resources of the jungle camps in which the ‘terrorists’ lived.

These are not the only unusual military maps in the Map Department: others include John Luffman’s *A map intended to illustrate the threatened invasion of England by Bonaparte* (1803), trench



1:500,000 scale Soviet General Staff map of East Anglia, published in 1985 and clearly indicating the many military and civilian airfields.

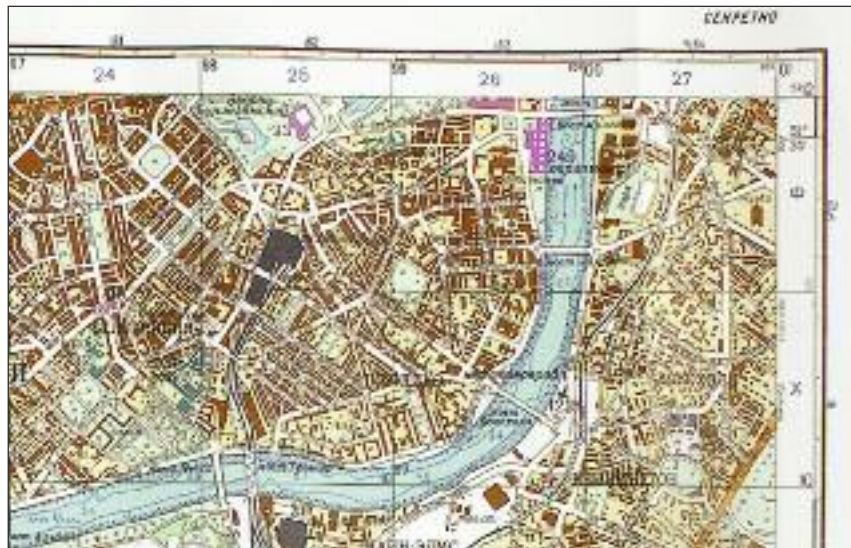


One of the four maps of part of Malaya presented to the Library by Tony Baggs. The Pahang River, the country's main river, flows east to the South China Sea.



A map intended to illustrate the threatened invasion of England by Bonaparte (London 1803). The borders show plans of 18 'ports of the enemy'. Also shown are the distances between these and British ports.

maps from the First World War, and many more-recent maps donated by the Ministry of Defence, such as those produced during the conflict in the Falkland Islands. Most chillingly, the collection includes a fascinating series of Soviet military maps that have been purchased on a continuing basis since the demise of the Soviet Union. The Soviet military machine seems to have mapped most of the world during a period spanning the Cold War. Its maps of the UK are extraordinary detailed: the cartographers even marked which roads were wide enough and which bridges high enough to allow tanks access. Every building of strategic importance was accurately shown (even those such as naval dockyards that had been deliberately omitted from Ordnance Survey maps), and some 80 town plans were produced. What makes the familiar so strange is that place names and other words are printed in the Cyrillic script. Phonetic pronunciations are given – Норидж (Noridzh) for Norwich for instance – so that the invading Soviet soldier



Extract from 1:25,000 Soviet General Staff map of London published in 1985; the Houses of Parliament, the Treasury and Buckingham Palace are marked in the top right in purple to indicate their significance. Секретно means Secret.

could check that he had arrived at the right destination. Most of the maps are labelled 'Top secret'. Now they are regularly consulted by students of military history and others who are seeking to chart the reach of one of the world's former superpowers.





# 'In the beginning'



A palimpsest being imaged using ultraviolet light.

Occasionally the Library receives new books from the publisher before they are officially published; sometimes it has to wait rather longer – in one case, nearly half a millennium. When Arthur William Young, a graduate of Trinity College, made his generous gift of 150 Bibles in 1933, the Annual Report noted that 'many of these are books which the Library had long given up hope of acquiring.'

His gift included many valuable and unusual Bibles, but perhaps the most outstanding was the Gutenberg Bible, the first substantial book printed in Europe from movable metal type. Only 48 copies of this edition survive. Printed anonymously at Mainz about 1455 by the 'inventor' of printing in Western Europe, Johann Gutenberg, along with Johann Fust and Peter Schöffer, this monumental work represents a remarkable advance in technology. Ultimately it revolutionised the whole nature of scholarship, and indeed society, as 'mass' printing opened up the possibility of literacy for the 'masses'.

## **Beyond the shelves**

Some 500 centuries later, technology's inexorable advance continues and the repeated explosions of the information revolution have transformed the traditional landscape of the Library in ways that are reminiscent of some of the wildest science fiction stored in the Library's Tower.

The Library now extends far beyond its shelves as it serves up electronic resources to readers based almost anywhere. It provides access to vast virtual holdings of electronically published articles and books, and through its own repository and digital library makes unique collections available to all. DSpace@Cambridge is the repository for research publications and data, capturing, storing, disseminating and preserving digital materials created in any part of the University. The 'journey around the world mind' has entered a virtual phase as the Library's digitisation programme enables international scholars to work interactively with the collections, not



Gutenberg Bible: Jerome's Epistle. This particular copy is notable for markings made in a Strassburg printing house around 1469, when it was used as copy for a later edition – an exceptionally rare document of early printing practices.

only accessing them without ever travelling to Cambridge, but annotating and transcribing materials, feeding back research and sharing their findings with virtual communities of scholars around the globe.

Modern technology is also uncovering ancient secrets. Among the Library's treasures are several palimpsests, where the precious parchments have been scraped clean and re-used for later writings. Some of these have caused much speculation and even controversy among scholars who have struggled to make out the faint under-texts. State-of-the-art technology, such as ultraviolet and infrared imaging, is enabling researchers to delve through the layers to read what really lies beneath without damaging the fragile manuscripts. New texts are being uncovered and previous theories are being confirmed or overturned. Another beguiling project uses technology similar to the blue screens used by the cinema industry. The shapes of fragments from the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collection

are digitally 'cut out' and matched against a database of hundreds of thousands of images from collections around the world. This process is enabling scholars to assemble the fragments into digital 'jigsaws' of the original manuscripts.

If technology offers exciting opportunities, it also poses tough challenges, particularly when it becomes a victim of its own rapid advances. In many ways, digital files are far more vulnerable than the physical materials on the Library's shelves and need more careful management if they are to remain accessible. The Library has several digital preservation projects underway and is also working in partnership with other institutions in the UK and abroad to address this challenge. Without such work, it is salutary to contemplate that in another 500 years (indeed in another 15!) today's digital resources may be totally inaccessible to the readers of the future.



Minute fragments from the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collection which have to be extracted from a melinex pocket, correctly oriented with tweezers, photographed and then painstakingly turned over for a second shot.



## Some significant dates in the Library's history

### c.1278

Nigel de Thornton gives the University land on which the Schools (the first University buildings) would be built

### 1416

Two wills contain the first mention of a University Library

### c.1420–1438

Building of the western range of the Schools with the Library in its upper storey

### 1424

The Library's first catalogue (now in the University Archives)

### 1473

The Library's second catalogue, listing 330 volumes

### c.1475

Completion of the eastern range of the Schools, with Library above, at the expense of Thomas Rotherham, Archbishop of York

### 1574

Notable gifts from Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Sir Nicholas Bacon

### 1581

Theodore Beza sends from Geneva his 5th-century manuscript of the Gospels and Acts in Greek and Latin, now famous as the Codex Bezae

### 1632

The Duchess of Buckingham presents the collection of Arabic and other manuscripts formed by Thomas Erpenius of Leiden

### 1647

Lambeth Palace Library granted to Cambridge (but returned after the Restoration)

### 1664

The library of Richard Holdsworth, Master of Emmanuel College, containing 10,000 volumes, adjudged to the University

### 1710

The Library's privilege of legal deposit confirmed under the Copyright Act

### 1715

King George I presents the renowned library of John Moore, Bishop of Ely, subsequently known as the Royal Library

### 1867

The distinguished collector and scholar Henry Bradshaw appointed Librarian

### 1894

Death of Samuel Sandars, one of the Library's greatest benefactors

### 1898

Arrival of the Taylor-Schechter fragments from the Cairo *genizah*

### 1933

The bequest of A W Young, including a copy of the Gutenberg Bible

### 1934

Move of the Library from the Old Schools site to its present building designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott

### 1993

Acquisition of the collections of the Royal Commonwealth Society after a public appeal

### 2000

Purchase of the Macclesfield Collection of scientific papers, including manuscripts by Sir Isaac Newton

### 2003

New Legal Deposit Libraries Act extends legal deposit to include electronic materials

### 2003

DSpace@Cambridge established as the institutional repository of the University of Cambridge for digital content of a scholarly or heritage nature

### 2005

Completion of the Greensleeves Project to convert the three million printed slips in the guardbook catalogue into online records

### 2007

Gift of The Montaigne Library of Gilbert de Botton

### 2009

Donation of 200,000 Chinese electronic books by Premier Wen Jiabao of the People's Republic of China

### 2009

Purchase of the Siegfried Sassoon Archive after a public fundraising appeal

### 2010

Completion of the final stage of the main Library's current building programme

### 2010

Launch of the 'new digital library' initiative

## Acknowledgments

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Photograph of Sir David Attenborough by Cliff Kent, courtesy of Rex Features; Photograph of Dame Gillian Beer by Michael Cameron; Photograph of Stephen Fry by Johnny Boylan; Photograph of Sir Andrew Motion by Antonio Olmos; Photograph of Baroness Neuberger by Derek Tamea.

Quotations and photographs from the Siegfried Sassoon Archive courtesy of the Trustees of G T Sassoon Deceased.



## Benefactors of Cambridge University Library

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William Young, Trinity College • **1935** Jardine, Matheson & Co Ltd • **1936** Sir Joseph Larmor, Lucasian Professor of Mathematics • **1936** Karl Pearson, King's College • **1936** Arthur William Young, Trinity College • **1938** Olga Schnitzler • **1941** Philip Henry George Gosse, Fellow Commoner of Trinity College • **1942** The Darwin Family • **1942** The Pilgrim Trust • **1944** Franck Thomas Arnold, Trinity College • **1946** Robert Edward Hart, Pembroke College • **1947** Stanley Baldwin, first Earl Baldwin of Bewdley • **1952** Lionel Charles Hopkins • **1954** The Pilgrim Trust • **1955** C K Mill • **1955** Frank Ricardo, Trinity College • **1960** Maud, Viscountess Templewood • **1964** Francis Puryer White, Fellow of St John's College • **1964** Sir Harold Williams, Christ's College • **1968** Sir Allen Lane • **1975** Nora, Lady Barlow • **1978** John Patrick William Ehrman, Trinity College • **1980** Pamela, Lady Butterfield • **1988** The Andrew W Mellon Foundation • 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