St John’s College Library
Annual Report 2016-17

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A copy of this Annual Report is sent to the Domestic Bursar’s Office to form part of the College’s Register of Public Benefits.

Compiled by the Librarian’s Secretary, Angela McKenzie, with many thanks to the Librarian, Dr Mark Nicholls and the Projects Assistant, Rebecca Watts, for proof-reading and advice, and the Biographical Assistant, Paul Everest, for cover design.

All photographs throughout the Report were taken by Library staff.

St John’s College is a registered charity, number 1137428.
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The Librarian’s Annual Report

Our Departmental Aim is to provide a modern, efficient and welcoming Library service for all members of the College, and for all others with valid reasons to make use of the College’s library and archival collections and facilities, so enabling the College to fulfil its statutory and strategic aims.

Looking Back, and to the Future

In this first section of the Annual Report, I take the opportunity to look back over twelve months, highlighting a few of the achievements and developments seen in this busy College department. Briefly, however, I also wish to reflect on the future. Much of what we do in the Library, and indeed in the College, takes its cue from aspirations expressed in strategic plans, annual targets set as departmental goals, and through Staff Development Reviews, Appeal literature and other official documentation. We see and respond to a mix of targets established through the familiar annual cycle, but also to aspirations expressed in longer-term planning, across three- or five-year horizons. In the Library, since 2005, our Strategic Plan has done what it can to look forward over five years. Beyond that, the crystal ball inevitably gets very cloudy. What we have never quite managed is to complement this five-year plan with equivalent five-year budgeting. In financial matters, most of our efforts go towards preparing, securing approval for and then living within accurate annual forecasts. Over the next year, my colleagues and I will be attempting to create and then maintain a five-year financial plan, predicting future costs, and income, as best we may. Beyond perhaps the second year, such exercises become indicative, subject to changes wrought by the unexpected. Yet if attempted consistently they are nonetheless helpful, both to a head of department and also to the College Council.

Planning of this sort requires us to guess at the future nature of library provision within one larger Cambridge College. That prediction must take into account many factors, several of them beyond the Library’s control: technological change, new methods of teaching in the Faculties and Departments, the willingness of publishers to make available affordable and up-to-date electronic substitutes for the paper book and journal, and the parallel aspirations of a University Library increasingly absorbing within one overall service the hitherto independent Faculty and Departmental libraries. It calls on us to see ourselves as part of a greater whole, at once dependent on and independent of University-wide and even national initiatives. This year, to take one example, we have resolved along with most other Cambridge libraries to adopt the new Alma Housekeeping system. But the decisive decision was taken fifteen years ago when we bought into the system that Alma replaces, thereby achieving good value for money but ceding a measure of autonomy over our service at St John’s to the University Library. So all we can do here is try our best. I hope to share a few of these forecasts in future issues of this Report.
**Staffing**

Chloe Beswick, Graduate Trainee for 2016-17, continued in the tradition of highly motivated recent graduates who have learnt their trade here while offering our Library marvellous commitment and first-rate service. We wish her well in her studies towards a professional qualification. Chloe’s successor is Alice Read, who as is now customary reflects on her initial impressions of the department in the staff section that follows. Coming as it does in August each year, our Library Away Day permits the new Trainee to absorb the current priorities, through relaxed and informative conversation with colleagues.

Following a long period of relative stability, this has been a year of comings and goings among our Library staff. In the spring, the Library Assistant, Adam Crothers, moved to the Old Library to work with the Sub-Librarian on our special collections. He takes on some challenging cataloguing work, on the Douglas Adams collection among many other interesting tasks, but is principally charged with the duty of making materials available in and supervising the Rare Books Reading Room.

Catherine Ascough, who joins us from the Social and Political Sciences Library, is our new Library Assistant, and we wish her every success in this role. One of our part-time Projects Assistants, Sam Lewsey, left us in July to take up her ‘dream job’ with the National Trust at Belton House – while always sorry to lose good staff, one cannot be too disappointed when people move on full of enthusiasm for the next step in their careers. Recruitment to this vacancy will follow in the autumn.

Library Cleaners Nicole Reid and (after nearly ten years of service) John Holt, decided to retire this year. They are both hard acts to follow, giving the Library sterling service and commitment, despite everything our readers could throw at them. Sandra Aleksiejutė has been recruited to fill John’s post, and Catherine Shanahan replaces Nicole. Janet Chow, the Academic Services Librarian, has stepped forward to take up the role of Library First Aider, working in this capacity with the Archivist, Tracy Deakin.

One or two of our younger readers occasionally imagine that librarians are tethered to the Issue Desk, all hours of the day and night, living only to process books. So I take a pleasant opportunity to note the success of our staff in their ‘sidelines’, complementary careers and hobbies. Adam Crothers and our part-time Projects Assistant, Rebecca Watts, have published highly-regarded collections of poetry this year. Sam Lewsey continues to run astonishing distances – a marathon is a mere jog round the block to her – and to do so at astonishing speeds. The Biographical Assistant Paul Everest’s wonderful photography graces not only this publication but
also the cover and inside pages of The Eagle. May these and all other such ventures prosper through the years to come.

As he has now done for ten years, Chris Krupa continues to volunteer on Thursdays in the Old Library. We are always pleased to see Chris, and I thank him for the work that he has done and is doing for us. Our former Information Services Graduate Trainee, Ellie Swire, generously volunteers regularly in the Archive Centre, alongside her job at Magdalene College. Tracy Deakin also maintains an impressive list of dedicated volunteers, who have made significant contributions to sorting and listing papers in the collection. As I noted last year, volunteering is today an important stepping stone to work in the wider Information and Heritage sectors, and whenever the pool of talent is deep, as it is in Cambridge, there are benefits for all involved.

Cataloguing and Collection Development

In these pages I have had so many reasons to thank Johnians for their support, over the years, and happily I can now do so once again. The generosity of Dr Michael Neiditch (1968), who has pledged crucial financial support to the development of our core undergraduate collections, of Professor Charles Kittel (1936), whose gift from 1997 continues to sustain the acquisition of a books in a variety of subjects, and of Dr Terence Denman (1978), who has again given us wonderfully eclectic collections of topical books and DVDs, ranging from film studies to sporting and military history, stands alongside the sustained support for our Adopt a Book and Sponsor a Shelf schemes, which continue to attract the most generous and welcome backing of Johnians eager to sustain collections in subjects dear to their hearts. Those who have given through these Schemes during the course of the year are listed in an Appendix to this Report. Our Collection Development Policy reminds us that the collection of books by or about members of the College has always been a core ambition, and in that regard it is cheering to take in as gifts, each year, so many examples of Johnian scholarship and creativity, across so many fields of study. Every donation, in whatever form, is reported to the Library and Records Committee.

Janet Chow has sought and received particularly valuable advice this year from the College’s Directors of Studies. Their help is crucial in developing the core collections, focusing as these do on texts essential to the various Tripos subjects. Janet’s engagement, and the friendly commitment of expert Fellows, ensures that we spend budgets wisely, giving due measure to every subject and to as many undergraduates as we possibly can, particularly to those in the earliest years of their Cambridge careers.

Reader Services

The Sub-Librarian Kathryn McKee, Janet Chow, Tracy Deakin and I have worked closely with the College’s Maintenance Department to ensure that fabric and furniture remain both smart and durable. Janet is taking forward improvements in low-energy, effective lighting throughout the Working Library. Kathryn has sourced and overseen the laying of a handsome, durable central carpet in the Upper Library. Tracy has secured an ideal intercom entry system to allow visitors to the Archive Centre to be received in a suitably professional manner. The College has approved
in principle plans to refurbish the Entrance Lobby off Chapel Court, and we are considering plans to develop a more user-friendly Issue Desk during the next year or two.

In the Lent Term, Janet conducted a detailed Working Library Reader Survey – a quadrennial exercise required by our Strategic Plan. Under her stewardship and care, the design and promulgation of the questionnaire, analysis of returns, and subsequent action planning have been models for the efficient pursuit of such surveys. We have learnt many interesting lessons and have agreed plans to take forward certain actions with the support of the Library and Records Committee and the Council. I am delighted to note that Janet intends to publish details of her process in a professional journal.

The Old Library

Kathryn McKee supplies later in these pages her account of a year in our Old Library. For six months Kathryn was effectively the sole presence there, and her excellent time-management skills were put to the test in this busy and demanding role. During that time she was particularly grateful for the support of colleagues, and for the regular presence of our Volunteer Chris Krupa. The appointment of Adam Crothers as Special Collections Assistant has allowed Kathryn to pick up speed when taking forward some longstanding initiatives, including the planned new catalogue of medieval manuscripts, and she has sustained through the year a particularly important project to catalogue, scan and conserve some rare early Chinese books in the Collection, supported by the College’s Annual Fund.

Archives

This has been a year in which the new Archive Centre in the School of Pythagoras has really found its feet, building up reader and visitor numbers, fine-tuning the environmental control of the building, and seeing splendid advances in conservation and online cataloguing projects. Progress is due principally to the sustained commitment and fine work of the Archivist, Tracy Deakin. I especially applaud the developments in cataloguing. Thanks to Tracy and her predecessor, Malcolm Underwood, we have remarkably helpful listings and detailed information for much of the Archive. But only now are we in a position to put useful information before a world-wide readership through the website using market-leading AtoM software. Cataloguing of archival materials is an art: while some collections are adequately described through a ‘top level’ approach, others, for example files of correspondence, benefit from more labour-intensive item-by-item descriptions. Here Tracy brings her experience to bear to decide what is right for the box of papers or folder of maps and plans in front of her. Capturing all this progress, a bid
for Accreditation from the National Archives, recognising achievement of the highest professional standards in an Archive, was submitted in the summer. We shall know the outcome of this bid in October or November.

**Biographical Office**

The Biographical Librarian, Fiona Colbert, and the Biographical Assistant, Paul Everest, also summarise the recent work of their Office later in this Report. Thanks to their consistency and rigour in checking facts, we can assert a great deal about the 43,000+ men and women who have been or who are now Johnians, with as much confidence as the historical record ever allows. The fact that our College owes so much to the support of its alumni body – and I write not only of material support but also of encouragement, expert guidance, and the well-placed voice – confirms the value of this Office’s work. Today, however, the storage of personal data, especially on the living, carries with it many responsibilities. Under the current Data Protection Act, and more emphatically under UK legislation following the forthcoming EU General Data Protection Regulation, we need to declare a valid reason for holding such data, document how we hold it, and confirm what we do with it. That done, we must thereafter honour what we say we do. The Biographical Office takes its responsibilities as a data processor very seriously, and both Fiona and Paul will be involved this year in the preparation of all necessary statements and the implementation of our agreed processes.

The Biographical Office handles many requests for information every year, and correspondents remind me regularly that the service it offers is hugely appreciated. The occasional very kind donation, for example one received this year from Mr. A. V. Yearsley by way of thanks for information on his uncle Claude Yearsley (Matric. 1903), expresses these sentiments, but notes and words of thanks are also received from so many.

**Exhibitions**

The Library Exhibition Area has again been put to good use this year. A display to mark the quincentenary of admission of the College’s first students, running through the second half of 2016, was followed by ‘A Day in the Life of a Johnian’, a display about diaries in the collection and the Johnians who kept them, which ran from January to April 2017. We have again hosted a successful Student Art and Photography Competition, with some entries eventually featuring in *The Eagle* 2017, and for the first time the Exhibition Area also displayed entries in a well-received Photography Competition for the staff.

In accordance with our commitment to outreach, the Upper Library was open to visitors during the Open Cambridge Weekend, and during the University Science Festival and its arts and humanities equivalent the Festival of Ideas. Again we must thank our colleagues in the College’s Communications Office, particularly the Press, Publicity and Communities Officer Shelley Hughes, for developing some of these displays, and for assisting with publicity and staffing.
In the School of Pythagoras, the Archivist has staged well-received displays of records and photographs relating to the Gardeners, the Porters and the Catering staff, and latterly a literally glittering exhibition of College silver.

**Security and Safety**

All risk assessments in the Department are updated annually in compliance with College policy. Fire-evacuation exercises were conducted in the Library during the Michaelmas Term 2016 and the Lent Term 2017. I have again followed the custom of reviewing the Library Disaster Response Plan and the parallel plan for the Archive Centre every September.

**A Shared Responsibility**

Progress in a College is impossible without the assistance of friends and colleagues outside the department. We work particularly closely with IT and the Communications Office, and I am also particularly grateful this year to the Development Office and to the Housekeeping, Maintenance, Porters, and Tutorial Departments for all that they have done to further our shared aims. Again I must thank the College Council’s Library and Records Committee and the Council, for their guidance, their scrutiny of what we do, but above all for their encouragement and endorsement of Library initiatives.

Finally, it is a pleasure to thank the Librarian’s Secretary Angela McKenzie for overseeing the assembly of this Report, and the Biographical Assistant Paul Everest for his photography and for the very nice cover design.

Mark Nicholls
Staff Reports

The Library Staff Away Day, Madingley Hall 2017

From left to right: Mark Nicholls, Catherine Ascough, Rebecca Watts, Janet Chow, Kathryn McKee, Angela McKenzie, Chris Krupa, Adam Crothers, Fiona Colbert, Alice Read and Paul Everest
(Absent: Tracy Deakin, Sam Lewsey and Sandra Aleksiejute)

Catherine Ascough – Library Assistant

Having started as Library Assistant just before the summer vacation in June (I think a very lucky, if not the luckiest time to start a job in an academic setting) I have spent the summer getting to grips with all manner of tasks which fall under my radar. This includes cataloguing, processing and labelling new books; stock checking; recording journals received (which included one amusing twenty-minute phone call to America trying to explain that St John’s College doesn’t have a street number . . . ); shelving; planning a training programme for the new undergraduates; ordering and cataloguing DVDs for the AV Room, and creating a new procedure for cataloguing DVDs to RDA standard. I have also been spending some time with Tracy at the School of Pythagoras where I have a couple of projects currently on the go, which adds to the variety of my week.

Whilst a little apprehensive of the number of questions when the students arrive for the new academic year, I am looking forward to seeing the library in ‘full bloom’ and seeing what the next year brings.

I’ve also adopted an inflatable flamingo which was found in the Library, who has found a temporary home above my desk.
Janet Chow – Academic Services Librarian

Last year was both rewarding and challenging. I was invited in February 2017 to give a presentation at a conference organised by the Royal Library of Belgium and State Archives. The theme of my presentation was the role played by library user surveys in enabling academic libraries to improve their decision making in meeting users’ needs.

The conference was well attended by more than 200 delegates from France, Holland, and elsewhere in Belgium. Besides the presentation, I prepared an academic paper for publication in the conference proceedings. The paper was subsequently submitted to an academic library journal, and has since been accepted for publication in *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*. During my stay in Brussels, I took the opportunity to visit the Royal Library, State Archives, and University of Louvain as part of my personal development.

While I was preparing the Brussels presentation and paper, I also embarked on re-designing the Working Library User Survey, which was last administered in 2013. I was keen to use a more sophisticated online survey tool, called Qualtrics, to distribute the survey across the whole College academic community. Mastering the technical aspects of Qualtrics was challenging, but very satisfying. I am delighted that the survey achieved an amazingly high response rate – 47% (541) of College Fellows and students completed it – an increase of 6% over the 2013 survey. A summary of the main survey results and follow-up actions are presented elsewhere in this Report.

After stepping down as the College representative on the ‘e-books@Cambridge Advisory Group’ last May, I was nominated as the Treasurer of the Cambridge College Libraries Forum (CCLF) in March. I feel honoured to be able to represent St John’s College on this committee and to contribute to wider issues affecting College libraries.

Over the past two years I have been spending one day a week supporting the Archivist in the School of Pythagoras. I have greatly appreciated the opportunity to work in Pythagoras, and have relished the opportunity to learn about archival work. However, as a result of the need to implement the recommendations from the 2017 Library User Survey, it is necessary for me to focus all of my time going forward on the Working Library and thus, reluctantly, to relinquish my weekly Pythagoras experience.
Fiona Colbert – Biographical Librarian

This year my husband and I moved house, leaving what had been our first home together 22 years ago. The move came around the end of the period covered by this Annual Report, and now I think back on the working year I can identify tasks I’ve performed, people I’ve helped, and the usual work commitments, but one of the thoughts I have is how something important has happened for me, but every day I deal with key details of other people’s lives – the significant life events of Johnians in the present day and the, sometimes distant, past.

It may be news of a current student winning a prize for their academic excellence, or being awarded a Blue for their sporting achievements; a Fellow being honoured for their ground-breaking research; two Johnians getting married; someone having a baby; a Johnian excitedly informing me his granddaughter has been offered a place at the College; a recent graduate securing a job; someone publishing their first book, or winning a prestigious prize; a Johnian who has lived abroad for many years now returning to the UK; a career change; new activities embarked upon during retirement; ill health leading to a move to a nursing home; or learning of someone’s death and helping their next of kin with details to prepare a eulogy. The retrospective recording of events from the lives of Johnians from many decades or centuries ago adds further interest to the mix.

I wondered if my house move would be an appropriate subject to bring up in this brief report, but it seems relevant: I am privileged to get to know details of the lives of members of the College, and we are all the same in terms of our lives being made up of significant events interspersed with everyday activities.

Adam Crothers – Special Collections Assistant

Those who have closely read the last four editions of the Annual Report – and there’s no excuse for not having done so, other than being too busy with my reasonably priced and in some senses award-winning book Several Deer – will understand, and share, my relief and excitement at being in a new role in the Library. I was running out of report fodder as Library Assistant, and am now a Special Collections Assistant laden with Fresh Anecdotes and Profound Insights. Presumably. Let’s see.

While life in the Rare Books Reading Room is outwardly quieter than life at the Issue Desk, it would be wrong to suggest that the pace of labour, here at the threshold between the Working Library and the
Old, is any slower. There are, I’ve been learning, farther extremes. On one end is the work of cataloguing, spending hours per day pushing towards the completion of a long-term project: in the Working Library it was rare to have the opportunity to focus on single tasks for such stretches. On the other end: surprising urgency. The week in which I installed and uninstalled three Upper Library exhibitions stands out; so does the afternoon of getting a surprising and wholly unwelcome physical workout racing between the Reading Room and the manuscripts store so that, if that day’s reader didn’t make it through his ambitious reading list (he didn’t), he at least wouldn’t be able to say (he wasn’t) that it was my fault. My quotidian Working Library tasks of labelling and shelving, while of course essential, were rarely time-sensitive in quite the same way.

Where the Working Library’s priority is to contribute efficiently to the daily life of the College and of people, mostly Johnians, who use the building regularly, in the Old Library we often deal with first-time or infrequent visitors to St John’s or indeed to Cambridge. Although an appendage of the Working Library in terms of physical access, we are in some senses, I suppose, more public-facing; an invaluable asset unique to St John’s, we have global cultural reach. Making some small contribution is a joy.

Tracy Deakin – Archivist

It’s hard to believe that the School of Pythagoras has been open for three years now. A lot has happened in those three years.

The building continues to prove popular and I am regularly asked to give tours to College members and members of the public.

In the spring I hosted the first UK AtoM Camp which saw archivists from the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, South Africa, Canada and the USA visit St John’s to learn more about AtoM from its designers Artefactual. As a result of this camp I have organised the UK Users’ Group for AtoM and I hosted the first group meeting in September.

Just before May Week I hosted a one-day workshop/tour based on Lady Margaret and the College for Madingley Hall and the Institute of Continuing Education.
Paul Everest – Biographical Assistant

I’ve written so many of these now that each one gets that little bit harder – I’m sure if I were to set them all side by side, they’d be embarrassingly similar, yet it’s difficult to avoid repetition having been here so long. Biographical work is so intricate and varied at its base level, that it is difficult to extract a worthy summary without making it sound repetitive and overly broad. Every Johnian is different, and we record such a level of detail that it’s truly difficult to convey here or even in the main report later on, because as soon as you mention one thing, another occurs, then another and another, and then you’re babbling like a fool about a niche area that overlaps many others!

Suffice to say, this year has been like any other, yet completely its own – I’ve successfully traced and contacted numerous missing Johnians, input frightening amounts of data, researched dead ends and connected dots that may have otherwise remained adrift, scanned thousands of names to find Johnians, dropped projects, picked others up, taken inordinate amounts of photos around College – it sets the mind awhirl. Most of you will have received your copy of The Eagle by now, and this year they were misguided kind enough to interview me, so you can always read more there, if you’re so inclined…

John Holt – Library Cleaner (part-time)

After nine and a half years cleaning the Library I decided to leave the College to allow myself more time for travel and leisure. Throughout this time I have strived to keep the top three floors safe for users and also to manage the recycling. I am a qualified First Aider and attended a re-qualification course this year.

During the year I have carried out the following tasks to maintain the working environment of the Library:

- Carried out book cleaning to sixty-two shelves on the Second Floor Penrose, this leaves just seventy-two shelves of books to clean on this floor.
- Checked external fire doors monthly and cleared away pigeon muck on door steps.
- Put away kick steps after annual inspection.
- Left out boxes of toilet supplies on Fridays in exam term.
- Weeded out ten damaged wooden chairs and nine very dirty swivel chairs for disposal.
- Descaled the kettle and coffeemaker.
During the summer break I carried out many other tasks such as hoovering chairs, cleaning the inside of lamp shades and the top of bookshelves, descaling the taps and toilets on the mezzanine and ground floor, washing down toilet walls and cleaning air vents.

Kathryn McKee – Sub-Librarian and Special Collections Librarian

It's been a busy and varied year, but I shall focus on some medieval highlights. Two of our most spectacular illuminated manuscripts spent the latter part of 2016 at the Fitzwilliam Museum, in similarly exalted company, in their Colour exhibition, which has to be the most informative and beautiful exhibition I've ever explored.

A three-day conference towards the end of the exhibition’s run brought together a remarkable array of practitioners in diverse fields to consider the art and science of making manuscripts. Art historians, chemists, conservators and spectroscopy experts mingled with librarians, scholars, and calligraphers to share new discoveries and techniques, pool their knowledge, and explore ideas for future lines of research.

Chemists who wondered why certain pigments suddenly disappeared from a location at a specific date could be enlightened by historians – trade routes were disrupted by war or plague. Manuscripts affected by that hiatus in supply could then be dated more accurately.

Art historians who judged on aesthetic grounds that illustrations were in two different hands received confirmation when scientific analyses showed very different use of materials.

It was an amazingly productive and exciting meeting and a lot was learned by all. Once Colour had closed, our manuscripts stayed on at the Fitzwilliam to spend a couple of days undergoing pigment analysis, which I observed with utter fascination. Infra-red photography, X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy, optical microscopy, and XRF scanning (and yes I do now have some idea what they all do!) were used to identify the individual pigments and techniques used in the making of these manuscripts. Full analysis of the results will take time, so we wait to see what new evidence about the history of the manuscripts may be revealed. It was a privilege to spend so much time with these two precious books. I'm grateful to colleagues at the Fitzwilliam’s MINIARE project for providing this opportunity.
Angela McKenzie – Secretary to the Librarian, Tutor and Head of Information Services and Systems and Telephone Liaison Officer

It has been a busy year for me in my role as Secretary to Dr Nicholls with his work on various library-related committees in the wider University as well as his involvement in an increasing number of College and College Library-related matters. It stands to reason that the busier he gets the busier I get.

I particularly enjoy helping to organise meetings in College, liaising with staff from other departments. For this it is a great help having worked at the College for seventeen years in different departments because I generally know who to contact about what.

As you will see under the Exhibition section in this Report, the inaugural Staff Photography Competition was held this year and organising that as well as the Student Art and Photography Competition has been fun – reminding me of my days working as a Learning Support Assistant in a local infant school when my own children were small. Admittedly I was given free rein back then and so the displays of children’s work were more colourful and decorative than the College displays tend to be. Perhaps a sky-blue pink zigzag border is the way forward in the Exhibition Area!

It has also been an interesting year assisting Dr Nicholls and the generous benefactor who supports the ongoing Loaned Art Project in College. Several more pieces of artwork have arrived in College and locations found for them. Arrangements need to be made for the College carpenters to hang paintings and place other artwork and then finally labelling needs to take place. The newly appointed Honorary Keeper of Contemporary Works of Art, Mr Geoffrey Parton from the Marlborough Gallery, London, has been very helpful assisting with this project and his expert eye is much appreciated.

Also through Mr Parton’s connection with the College, the late artist R. B. Kitaj’s family gifted a 2007 portrait of Ludwig Wittgenstein to the College and it is now hanging in the Working Library foyer. Following this very generous gift, the College will shortly be receiving a further exciting donation of a set of R. B. Kitaj prints (illustrations of book covers). Much consideration has gone into deciding which prints should be the first to be framed and hung in College. Although once hung it is planned that other prints will take their place in rotation.

So all in all – quite a busy and interesting year.
Alice Read – Graduate Trainee

I’ll admit that certain aspects of library work took me by surprise – the spiders, for example. How is it that life has led me to this particular moment, crouched by a shelf in the College Archive, peering down at an enormous spider snared in an insect trap? Have I, too, been lured by the books only to find myself sentenced to some strange life in the stacks?

Happily, this is not the case. Life as a Graduate Trainee does mean getting involved in all sorts of varied and interesting tasks – and although this includes monthly pest management, it thankfully extends far beyond it. I’ve learnt how to use library software such as our circulation system; got to grips with searching the College and University catalogues; answered and failed to answer varied reader queries; monitored light levels in the Old Library; hunted down hundred-year-old texts in the Archive; updated social media accounts; laminated posters; checked reading lists; shelved books – and plenty more.

Learning to catalogue books has been one of my favourite experiences: it feels somewhat like learning a new language, complete with the strange symbols and seemingly arbitrary rules, but the more you practise the easier it gets. Attending cataloguing training sessions has really helped me iron out the details, and I’m looking forward to attending many other classes on different topics over this year. Cataloguing aside, other fascinating library tasks include those sent my way by the Biographical Office, which have me unearthing information on Johnians past and present before entering it into a surprisingly intricate database. I also spend one day a week organising material in the Archives. I’m currently writing hand lists for some lovely old photos – my favourite so far is a snap of College cat Nero, who roamed St John’s in the 1940s.

Starting my traineeship in August has meant I’ve had time to cram in all sorts of knowledge before the undergraduates arrive, but I’m excited to see what the new academic year will bring. Although term hasn’t started yet, I’ve already learnt that the students of St John’s can be as diverse, brilliant (and frequently perplexing) as the many books on our shelves. I hope they will make the most of their library. I also hope that they will bring their own pens – but I don’t want to set my expectations too high.
Rebecca Watts – Projects Assistant (part-time)

It’s been a busy and unpredictable year, both in the Library and in my extra-curricular life as a writer. Fellow Library poet Adam Crothers’s move into the Old Library back in March sadly left me with no one to talk poetry to when I should be working. Worse, it left the post of Library Assistant vacant for several weeks, meaning one less body between me and the endless stream of students desirous of a pen/stapler.

In between assisting with these complex enquiries I have coordinated the department’s application for Archive Accreditation, overseen the administration of the Sponsor a Shelf scheme, assisted my erstwhile other half, Sam Lewsey, to bring the Eagle Scanning Project to completion (we thought it would never end!), catalogued the Engledow Collection, made significant headway in weeding and reboxing the Goody Collection, helped Janet with the acquisition of new books for the Working Library and for the Old Library’s Wordsworth and Butler Collections, catalogued donated volumes, designed a new range of Library postcards, and stock-checked approximately 50,000 volumes in the borrowable collections.

That’s just in the afternoons; in the mornings I’ve worked at home, attempting to write as well as to keep on top of the increasing administration that accompanies a freelance creative career. It’s been a daily challenge to switch my brain between poetry mode and Library mode, and I’m looking forward to trialling a new working pattern (two and a half days, instead of five half-days), in the coming year.
Staff Training

Staff this year have undertaken required statutory training in Prevent, in Data Protection, Fire Safety, and use of ladders. First Aiders have also updated skills and the Telephone Liaison Officer has received further technical training. Training has been provided in the new iDiscover catalogue, introduced in libraries across the University. Staff have attended a variety of events and courses relevant to the specialisms of their jobs, wherever possible taking advantage of free or low-cost local training.

Following the implementation of the open-source AtoM system for cataloguing in the Archives, St John’s Archives hosted the first ever UK AtoM Camp, bringing together users of the system from across the world, together with its Canadian developers for a three-day exploration of the use and future direction of the system. Three staff from St John’s were able to attend the event free. In January, the Archivist, Sub-Librarian, and our ISS Graduate Trainee from 2015-16, Ellie Swire, also hosted and gave presentations to the Cambridge Archivists Group on our AtoM implementation.

In other contributions to wider professional development, the Academic Services Librarian gave a paper at an international conference in Belgium focusing on library users; locally, the Special Collections Librarian delivered a training course on using special collections materials in exhibitions for Librarians in Training. The Library also hosted visits from participants in the Penumbra Shadowing Scheme, and provided tours for other Cambridge library staff undertaking professional qualifications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff member</th>
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<th>Provider</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Librarian</td>
<td>Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dignity at Work refresher</td>
<td>SJC</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mental health awareness</td>
<td>SJC</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GDPR (Data Protection) training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-Librarian/Special Collections Librarian</td>
<td>iDiscover training</td>
<td>CUL</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Impact: new audiences for historic collections</td>
<td>HLF</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Manuscripts in the Making: arts and science (3-day conference)</td>
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<td>Bindings workshop</td>
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<td>AtoM Camp (2 days)</td>
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<td>Academic Services Librarian</td>
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<td>CUL</td>
<td>free</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alma roadshow</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visits to the Royal Library of Belgium and State Archives, the Library of CEGESOMA and the Université catholique de Louvain</td>
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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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<th>Cost</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Archivist</td>
<td>'Inside the user's mind': studying users' digital practices and needs in archives and libraries</td>
<td>RLB</td>
<td></td>
<td>(speaker at conference, so free)</td>
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<td>AtoM Camp (1 day)</td>
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<td>Librarian's Secretary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mental health awareness</td>
<td>SJC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projects Assistant (SL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projects Assistant (RW)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Special Collections Lecture (Chawton House Library)</td>
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<td>Introduction to medieval palaeography</td>
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<td>L@C</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iDiscover training</td>
<td>CUL</td>
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<td>Web authoring</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E-books for librarians</td>
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<td>free</td>
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<td>Fire training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Specialist catalogue training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Making libraries accessible to disabled people</td>
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<td></td>
<td>TELI description for manuscripts cataloguing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Software skills for librarians</td>
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<td>Designing visuals for public engagement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ladder training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Oxford/Cambridge conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Collections Assistant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cataloguing rare books</td>
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<td>Part-time Cleaner (JH)</td>
<td>First Aid training</td>
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### Annual Report 2016-17

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<td></td>
<td>Fire training</td>
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<td>Ladder training</td>
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<td>AMARC</td>
<td>Association for Manuscripts and Archives in Research Collections</td>
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<td>Artefactual</td>
<td>Artefactual (developers of AtoM archive management system)</td>
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<td>Cambridge College Libraries Forum</td>
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<td>CU</td>
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<td>UIS</td>
<td>Cambridge University Information Service</td>
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Kathryn McKee  
Sub-Librarian
**User Induction**

A Library presentation was held for all first-year undergraduates in the Lecture Theatre in the Old Divinity School on the Saturday afternoon before the start of the Michaelmas Term, 2016. This session aimed to deliver key information to all new students including Library rules and how the Library can best support them during their studies at St John’s. As expected, the session was packed out with many attentive new students.

Subsequently, Library tours were arranged for all new undergraduates over a three-day period, from Monday to Wednesday during the first week of term. About 180 new undergraduates were arranged by subject group, with Library staff each taking three or four groups of students at staggered times. The thirty-minute tour covered both the Working Library and the Old Library. Students were afforded opportunities to familiarise themselves with the layout of the Library, the facilities and resources available, and in particular, the location of materials related to their own subjects. Library staff also demonstrated how to borrow and renew items using the self-issue machine, and explained fire procedure and the security system.

For the first time, in the coming Michaelmas Term 2017, Library staff will hold structured training sessions in the Library Seminar Room. Half-hour sessions will build on the induction tours that students attended during first week – or give an induction to those who missed the tour. These will cover topics such as searching the catalogue, which libraries they can use, how to recommend books, basic copyright and plagiarism, and where to go if they need help. Later in the term more detailed fifteen-minute sessions will run on topics such as using the University Library, finding journal articles, and referencing. The aim of these sessions is to provide a bite-sized option for learning about important topics. The final aim will be to host more informal training in the form of a Christmas themed ‘party’ with Library staff and students invited, as well as including handouts about accessing resources away from Cambridge.

Depending on the success and feedback of the programme in Michaelmas Term, more sessions will be planned for the following terms.

Janet Chow  
Academic Services Librarian

Catherine Ascough  
Library Assistant
The Working Library

In Lent Term 2017, the quadrennial Working Library User Survey was conducted to gather users’ views on Library resources, services and facilities. The survey questionnaire was modified from the 2013 version with a new section aimed at collecting users’ views on the Library collections. The survey was conducted using a more sophisticated online survey tool called Qualtrics. A total of 1142 email invitations were sent out to undergraduates, postgraduates, and Fellows. College Researchers, Teaching Associates, and non-Library users were also invited to participate in the survey for the first time. An impressive 47% (541) of those invited completed the survey, an increase of 6% over the 2013 survey. A sincere ‘thank you’ to all students and staff who participated in the survey.

Among the key findings were the following:

i) A small number of the respondents (13%) claimed they were non-users. Their main reasons for not using the Working Library services were 1) the resources available at other work/study places were sufficient for their needs; 2) more convenient to access another library; 3) confined work to own office in the department; 4) no need to access library resources.

ii) It is encouraging to note that 79% of the respondents regarded the Library book stock as either ‘excellent’ or ‘adequate’; 10% of respondents commented that the book stock was ‘inadequate’.

iii) Over one-half of respondents (65%) expressed difficulty in finding a workspace at some time. One reason was that their preferred area was too noisy to work in. The area in which respondents experienced most noise was the Mezzanine Floor, Garden Wing, where there is a communal table.

iv) Library users were highly satisfied with the provision of wireless and printing facilities.

v) It is reassuring to note that respondents were highly satisfied with the quality of services offered by the Working Library staff (between 83% and 93% of respondents were highly satisfied with all the services provided).

vi) Despite the popularity of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, Library users overwhelmingly preferred more conventional methods of being kept informed of Library news, such as notices posted in the Library and email.
vii) Two aspects, however, drew some dissatisfaction: first, respondents found some areas of the Library either too warm or too cold to work in; second, lighting in some parts of the Library was considered insufficient, especially on the Mezzanine Floor and in the Periodicals Area.

Based on these findings, the following decisions and actions have since been taken:

In acknowledging the need to improve parts of the Library book stock, invitations were sent to all Directors of Studies, other teaching Fellows and College Teaching Associates to review the current book collections in their respective subjects. These invitations were well received and since June 2017 I have been systematically arranging meetings with the Directors of Studies and College Teaching Associates. Every effort has been made to ensure essential and up-to-date textbooks are stocked, and previously weaker collections strengthened. The long-term strategy is to continue to cultivate a still closer liaison with Directors of Studies for their suggestions on the purchase of books for the Library, and to develop stronger links with other teaching Fellows and College Teaching Associates for their advice on purchasing suitable titles for the Library collections.

Further changes to current practice include extending the use of the current ‘Desk in use’ slips system across all three terms to enable those who wish to work and study in the Library to find a space of their choice. Students will be able to reserve a desk space for up to two hours, provided they sign and date the ‘desk in use’ slips when vacating their desk space. As presently, vacated desks will be cleared by Library staff after two hours. Further, to minimise the noise levels on the Mezzanine Floor, the Garden Wing room will be converted into a ‘Silent Study Room’ thus providing a completely quiet area for those who prefer to work and study in an environment with no noise.

Library users expressed a preference for conventional methods – rather than social media – as a means of being kept informed in regard to Library news. Accordingly, a termly Library newsletter will be introduced in Michaelmas Term. It will feature news of all developments, acquisitions, services and facilities. The newsletter will be sent to users via email and posted in the Library. It will also be archived on the Library website.

In order to better regulate the temperature in the Library, the heating will be turned off during summer and switched on continuously in winter months. Faulty windows in the Computer Room on the Third Floor will be replaced so that they can be opened and closed properly. New energy-saving lighting has already been installed on the Ground Floor and in the periodical area – thus giving better light. New lighting will also be fitted above the bookcases outside the Biographical Office on the Mezzanine Floor. We are indebted to the Maintenance Department for their
continuous support in carrying out quality improvements to the Library’s physical environment.

News of non-survey-related events includes the following. Easter Term brought challenges to colleagues in the Working Library as Adam Crothers, our Library Assistant, commenced his new post as Special Collections Assistant in the Old Library. With the busy exam term to cope with, the Working Library was one member of staff short. I am truly grateful to those colleagues who helped cover Adam’s duties to ensure the smooth operation of the Working Library. We came through the busy Easter Term without compromising the high standard of services we try to offer Library users.

Other events included the completion of a full stock check during summer 2017. Thanks go to a team of dedicated colleagues (especially Rebecca who led the team comprising Catherine and Alice) in the Working Library, who checked c. 120,000 books. The stock check exercise enables us to identify all missing items across the entire Library, and to replace such items, where appropriate. It also enables us to locate misplaced items, and re-shelve them in the correct locations.

Continuous improvement of the services of the Library is of paramount importance to ensure the Working Library operates effectively and efficiently. The IT Department moved its Helpdesk from Forecourt into the Library Periodicals Area in September 2017. This relocation of the IT Helpdesk provides Library users with a seamless ‘one-stop’ information and help service. Students and staff can henceforth access professional help from Library staff and computing experts at the same time.

Janet Chow
Academic Services Librarian
The number of Library users and visitors accessing the Library is recorded throughout the year by an electronic counter positioned next to the Library entrance. Statistics show that there has been an overall increase in visits to the Library, from 147,628 visits in 2015-16 to 150,287 visits in 2016-17. Figure 1 below shows the pattern of Library visits in the last three years. Besides the obvious fact that users frequent the Library more during term time, of all three terms, Easter Term stands out as the busiest. It is, of course, when examinations take place. There was a very slight decrease in visits to the Library in Easter Term 2016-17 (42,137), compared with visits in Easter Term 2015-16 (42,290). It is interesting to note a significant increase in visits during Easter Vacation in 2016-17 (13,682) compared to 2015-16 (10,621). This may be because students chose to stay in College and use the Library to study and revise in preparation for exams.

In order to gather a snapshot of Library usage during the busiest period of a term, statistics are collected in week five during term time to provide a more typical picture of Library usage. Examples of such statistics include Library entries, and numbers of books issued by staff/self-check machine. Figure 2 below shows the number of entries during week five across the three terms. The reading of the number of staffed hours entries in week five was taken at 7pm Monday to Friday when the Issue Desk was closed (except in Easter Term when staffed hours were changed to end at 5pm); whereas the reading of the number of unstaffed hours entries was taken at 9am Monday to Friday. One can see from Figure 2 that the pattern of Library entries during staffed hours and unstaffed hours in Michaelmas and Lent Terms was very similar. However, there were significant high numbers of entries outside staffed hours during Easter Term compared with the other two terms. Understandably, Easter Term was the busiest, with examinations, and students revising in the Library until quite late.
The self-issue machine, installed in 2012, continues to be popular among College members. As shown in Figure 3 below, the overwhelming majority of items were issued through the self-issue machine during week five. The self-issue machine is particularly convenient to College members outside staffed hours. Users can issue or return items outside staffed hours, and this evidently appeals to a high number of College members. Unsurprisingly, more items were issued through the self-issue machine in Michaelmas Term at the start of the year; whereas the machine was least used during Easter Term, when most users were preparing for exams.
Annual Circulation

Library borrowing levels, based on frequency counts of items borrowed, has dropped 6% to 17,464 in 2016-17 compared with 2015-16. Although it is difficult to identify a clear cause (or causes) for the drop, there are at least three possible reasons. First, students may have chosen to borrow more items from their Faculty Libraries/University Library; secondly, they may have been inclined to use books more for reference purposes only; thirdly, the availability and usage of electronic books continues to increase, demonstrating a trend towards a growing usage of electronic resources more generally.

Figure 1. Library borrowing: annual circulation

Given that the overall circulation figures fell, it is to be expected that many individual subjects saw a decline in borrowing compared with previous years. For 2016-17, the three most borrowed subjects were English, History and Economics. English remained the most heavily borrowed subject – from 1869 (2015-16) to 1657 (2016-17). In second place was History (1576), followed by Economics (1291) (see Figure 2). Other subjects experiencing falls in borrowing in 2016-17 included Geography, Music, Medicine, Art and Architecture, Theology, Maths, MML and Philosophy.

Subjects maintaining a steady increase, compared with the previous year, were Archaeology, Law, Linguistics, Physical Sciences and Classics. The borrowing figures for Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Veterinary Medicine and Education remained low, as relatively few students read these subjects.
Figure 2. Circulation of books by subject area in 2015-16/2016-17

Janet Chow
Academic Services Librarian
Audio-Visual Room

The AV Room is flourishing with over 2100 items to its name comprising over 700 CDs and over 1400 DVDs. The generous contribution of donations from Dr Terence Denman (PhD 1985) and input from the Library Assistant have allowed the collection to remain up to date, while supporting the academic studies of College members. Happily the shelving crisis mentioned in last year’s Report has not yet materialised. However as the collection grows, some reshuffling of shelf space is on the horizon.

The most borrowed film for the past academic year was The Martian, closely followed by Tangled, Spotlight, and Four Weddings and a Funeral. Initially The Martian was thought to have lost out on the title to Four Weddings and a Funeral by almost double the loans, but further inspection showed a glitch in the system had enhanced the borrowing figures so Four Weddings and a Funeral had to be demoted to joint second place.

Seminar Room

The Seminar Room has been well used again this year, logging over 1900 hours of booked use, and hosting teaching, study sessions, staff meetings, interviews, and even a board gaming session. The room was not bookable as usual during Easter Term to ensure fair use of the space.

It is envisaged that the Seminar Room will provide a home for the majority of sessions for the new training programme for undergraduates starting in Michaelmas Term. It remains to be seen whether undergraduates will flood the room in the excitement of learning about resources, or leave the Library Assistant presenting to an empty room.

Catherine Ascough
Library Assistant
The Old Library

Statistics

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<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
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<tr>
<td>Readers consulting special collections material</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>374</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visitors taking a tour of the Old Library *</td>
<td>1036</td>
<td>1124</td>
<td>1296</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letters filed</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-mail responses to enquiries</td>
<td>1160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reproductions of special collections material processed outside College</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Onsite professional photography ***</td>
<td>4 ½ days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reproductions of special collections material processed in house **</td>
<td>874</td>
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<td>Permissions granted to reproduce special collections material in published works</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of special collections material in connection with biographical work</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
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</table>

* Does not include visitors at public open days or pre-booked group visits and classes
** Includes reproductions of material to answer biographical enquiries
*** Where professional photography is required, wherever possible we arrange for a photographer to come on site rather than taking fragile and precious items elsewhere. Two days of this were the digitisation phase of the Chinese books project.

The overall fall in reader numbers reflects a drop in readers from within the UK, which is in part accounted for by one particularly regular reader moving away from Cambridge. There appears to be both an absolute and relative rise in readers from overseas. Reader numbers from North America have increased every year over the last five years, and reader numbers from Europe, although fluctuating, reached their highest level in five years in 2016-17.

The number of students consulting the collections has also risen steadily every year for the last five years, from sixty in 2012-13 to ninety-four in 2016-17, suggesting
that more students, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, are being encouraged to work from original sources. This is most welcome.

The rise in the number of reproductions is partially explained by a single request for scans of all photographs taken by a particular photographer to enable his estate to catalogue his work fully. Without this request, the figure would still have risen by 18% on previous years. The facility to scan from microfilm has enabled us to fulfil more requests in-house. The purchase of an overhead scanner in July 2017 increases our reprographic capabilities still further.

We continue to monitor the use of the medieval (and the most precious post-medieval) manuscripts stored in the controlled environment store. 120 unique items were used in some way in the course of the year. 107 were consulted in the Reading Room a total of 146 times. Three went on loan for exhibition, and fifteen were put on display within the Old Library a total of twenty-two times, for public exhibitions, visiting groups, and educational sessions. Fifteen were photographed in-house a total of twenty-one times (Note: this figure counts only new photography; where a simple reading copy of the text is required, reproductions are supplied from microfilm rather than the original manuscript). Seven manuscripts were used in teaching. As would be expected, a significant proportion of Library use is of the unique material in our collections. Such use statistics are beneficial in informing decisions on conservation, potential digitisation, loan requests, etc.

**Purchases**

This year’s additions to our collections, all purchased using the Noel Marshall Fund, have included a number of small, but interesting ephemeral items, including most pleasingly the first known printed set of rules for the College Cricket Club. Significant pieces have been added to our Abolitionist collections: Musgrave’s letter is clear evidence of the influence Thomas Clarkson’s campaign had upon a local businessman, while a charming playbill from Grantham shows how popular entertainment was used to convey a political message. Christopher Ness’s work on the Antichrist is a rare title by a notable Puritan, which complements our collections of his own and other related works.


Copy of the Eagle Vol. LVIII no. 251, April 1958, heavily annotated by R.T. Evans. £40. Purchased from Patrick Hall.


Printed rules of the St John’s College Cricket Club, c. 1870. £225. Purchased from Christopher Saunders Books, February 2017. (To be put with Cricket Club records in the College Archives.)


A statement regarding the Union … (Cambridge, 1817). £85. Purchased from Jarndyce Antiquarian Booksellers.


**Donations**

Philippa Goodrich  
Three framed photographs: St John’s freshmen 1912; St John’s honour men 1915; Harold Goodrich’s rooms in St John’s.

John Titford (BA 1967)  
Manuscript power of attorney 1763 signed by John Newcome.

Sir Percy Cradock (Hon. Fellow)  
Bequest of photographs, medals, and papers.

Arthur Robinson  
Photograph album of John James Robinson (BA 1894) containing shots of St John’s, sporting teams, and College life.

**Visits and Classes**

*Adult group visits*  
Groningen Summer Academy (Aug. 2016)  
Ben Sira conference (Sep. 2016)  
Display of manuscripts for Richard Beadle’s retirement conference (Sep. 2016)  
Australians Studying Abroad (Oct. 2016)  
Food Services Management Group (Oct. 2016)  
Visit of the Colombian Ambassador (Oct. 2016)  
Borderer’s Event (Oct. 2016)  
Comberton Antiquarian Society (Nov. 2016)  
Head Porters Association (Feb. 2017)  
Lady Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology to see MS N.24 (Feb. 2017)  
Dominican friars with Dr Linehan (Mar. 2017)  
Group from Nagoya University (Mar. 2017)  
Santander UNATE [the Spanish equivalent of U3A] (Mar. 2017)  
Two tours for College staff (May 2017)  
Privacy and Law conference with the Librarian (July 2017)  
Veterinary Invertebrate Society with Dr Williams (July 2017)

Relevant displays of material were arranged for most of these groups. The Special Collections Librarian also gave an illustrated talk on the history and treasures of the Library to the Comberton Antiquarian Society in October 2016.

*Juvenile groups and educational sessions*  
Abolition of the slave trade summer school (Aug. 2016)  
St John’s College School two year-one classes (Nov. 2016)  
Beavers group with Tom Kirk (Nov. 2016)  
Sixty French sixth-form students with Professor Tombs (Feb. 2017)  
Abolition of the slave trade year-eight class from Chesterton Community College (May 2017)
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Bishop’s Stortford School year ten with the Librarian (June 2017)
Abolition of the slave trade year-eight class from St Faith’s School (June 2017)
The Tudors two year-five classes from Milton Road School (July 2017)
Raising aspirations session for looked-after children (July 2017)

Fewer formal school visits were arranged during the Michaelmas and Lent Terms this year, whilst the Special Collections Librarian was the only full-time member of staff in the Old Library.

University teaching
English MPhil introduction to manuscripts class with Dr da Rold (Oct. 2016)
English MPhil palaeography class with Dr da Rold (Nov. 2016)
English first-year class on nineteenth-century poetry with Dr Hall (Nov. 2016)
History of architecture supervisions in the Upper Library (Feb. 2017)
Third-year undergraduate class from York University on Bible illumination (Feb. 2017)

Events

The Upper Library was open for Open Cambridge on the Friday and Saturday afternoons, with an exhibition on 500 years of student life at St John’s, attracting 558 visitors.

The Upper Library was open for the Festival of Ideas on Saturday 29 October with an exhibition on Johnian involvement in political movements over the centuries, attracting 436 visitors, a good total considering that the event was omitted from the printed Festival programme.

For the Science Festival an exhibition Under the knife at St John’s: a medical history of disease and dissection attracted 650 visitors in six hours.

The Upper Library was open with a display of treasures for graduands and their families following Congregation.

The Upper Library was used for receptions prior to the Michaelmas Entertainment in 2016, and the Cripps Feast and the Port Latin Feast in 2017.

An Upper Library book – Salomon de Caus Les raisons des forces mouvantes … – was put on display to accompany a tour for attendees at a College Donor Day in May 2017.

Preservation

The majority of our share of the Conservation Consortium’s time this year has been devoted to the Chinese books project (see separate Projects report). Repairs were also completed on five early printed books, needing a variety of treatment. In addition, the Conservation Consortium prepared full condition reports for the three
medieval manuscripts which were loaned for exhibition, and made custom cradles for the two openings of MS B.18 displayed.

Rehousing and de-metalling of new collections of personal papers is ongoing in tandem with their cataloguing.

The Upper Library was re-carpeted in July 2017, replacing the natural fibre matting fitted in 1995, which was showing serious signs of wear. The new carpet is entirely synthetic, and fully meets environmental guidelines for historic buildings. Conservation advice now strongly recommends the avoidance of natural fibres, which can hold significant quantities of dust and are more prone to harbour pests. The new carpet will be easier to maintain, will be quieter and safer for visitors, and should provide a better environment for the books. It looks nice too!

Tobit Curteis Associates continue to monitor environmental conditions in the Lower Library. Several different insulation options are currently being trialled on a section of the north wall of the Lower Library and will be fully assessed once a year’s worth of before and after data are available for all treatments. Overall conditions in the Lower Library have remained stable at satisfactory levels throughout 2016-17. The Maintenance Department continues to fine-tune the environmental controls in the Manuscripts Store to maintain optimum stability in both temperature and humidity. The temperature control is now excellent in all conditions. They are working to achieve a comparable level of control for relative humidity in the hottest weather, when it still shows some fluctuation.

No new infestations of bread beetle larvae were observed in any Upper Library books this year. Climatic conditions were once again unfavourable for hatching. Annual checks will be continued, as eggs can lie dormant for many years.

Exhibitions in the Library Exhibition Area

Michaelmas Term
Opening the Great Gate: the changing face of First Court. An exhibition marking the admission of the first students in 1516, curated by Felicity French, 2015-16 Graduate Trainee.

Christmas Vacation
Inaugural Staff Photography Competition 2016, curated by Angela McKenzie, Librarian’s Secretary.

Whilst curating the annual Student Art and Photography Competition, various members of staff had asked if there was a similar competition for staff. After discussion with Dr Nicholls and the Domestic Bursar, permission was sought from College Council for a trial competition. It was agreed that a Staff Photography Competition would be held at the end of 2016. A theme of ‘Celebration’ was chosen
Annual Report 2016-17

by Dr Nicholls, to be interpreted as the staff members wished. Although there was only quite a small number of entries, the quality and diversity of the pictures was very good.

A display of the entries was put up in the Exhibition Area of the Library in December and early January and Fellows, staff, junior members and visitors were encouraged to visit the exhibition.

Three retired members of staff judged the competition anonymously: Maggie Hartley (College Nurse), Mike Finch (Deputy Superintendent of Buildings) and Sheila Smith (Senior Tutor’s Assistant). The winner, who was presented with a cheque for £100, was Fay Page (Student Services Officer) with her photograph of Graduation Day and the second prize of a cheque for £50 was won by Paul Everest (Biographical Assistant) with his photograph of a cascade of champagne glasses.

It was decided that the competition had been a success and should be repeated again in 2017 with a new theme and three different judges.
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Lent Term
A day in the life of a Johnian: the private lives of Johnians – at College, at home, at work, and abroad – as revealed by their diaries, curated by the Special Collections Librarian.

Easter Term
Student Art and Photography competition, curated by the Librarian’s Secretary.

These are two of the winning photographs from eighty entries in three photographic categories. However, we don’t seem to have so many budding sculptors amongst the junior members. Perhaps next year there will be an outstanding sculpture to illustrate this report.

Summer Vacation
Exploring land, sea, and stars: Johnians and their maps, curated by Chloe Beswick, 2016-17 Graduate Trainee.
Loans

It has been an extremely busy period for loans, both locally and internationally. Every loan is couriered to and from each venue, with a library representative condition-checking each item on arrival and departure, and ensuring that all security and environmental conditions are appropriate. We are grateful to conservation staff at the University Library for their generous assistance in supervising our loan to the Walters and Ringling Museums whilst overseeing their own manuscript, and to the Conservation Consortium for preparing full condition reports for the medieval manuscripts.


The first edition (1516) of Thomas More’s Utopia was lent to the Victoria and Albert Museum for their exhibition You say you want a revolution running in London from 10 October 2016 to 26 February 2017. The exhibition received almost 244,000 visitors, was critically acclaimed in the press, and engendered a huge audience response.

Manuscript B.18 Psalterium triplex was loaned to the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore for their exhibition A feast for the senses: art and experience in medieval Europe, running from 15 October 2015 to 8 January 2017, and transferring to the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Florida from 4 February to 30 April 2017.

Benedetto da Mantova’s Trattato utileissimo del beneficio di Gesu Kristo crocifisso, verso i christianian, 1543 (O.51) and a Haggadah, 1561 (Tt.2.23) were lent to the Fitzwilliam Museum for their exhibition Madonnas and miracles running from 7 March to 4 June 2017.

To follow up on last year, the Tate reported that the Painting with light exhibition running from 11 May to 25 September 2016, in which two of Samuel Butler’s earliest photographs were displayed, received over 49,000 visitors and was critically well received with positive reviews in the UK and abroad.

Planning is now underway for the loan of the College’s portrait of Matthew Prior to an exhibition in Versailles from October 2017, transferring to New York in 2018.

Cataloguing

Cataloguing of the Cedric Price Collection was completed in December 2016. Percy Cradock’s papers were also fully catalogued during the course of the year. New
purchases and donations of individual items are typically catalogued on or shortly after their accession.

Full reports on the cataloguing of the Engledow and Douglas Adams papers may be found in the Library Projects section of this Report, together with information on work on our early Chinese printed book collections.

**Staffing**

Dr Adam Crothers, formerly Library Assistant in the Working Library with some part-time duties in the Old Library, was appointed to the new post of Special Collections Assistant from 20 March 2017. This role covers a broad range of responsibilities, including invigilation of the Rare Books Reading Room, assisting readers, answering face-to-face and remote enquiries, fulfilling reprographic orders, contributing to conservation and outreach activities, and cataloguing. The first priority under the last heading is to complete the full description of the Douglas Adams Papers, on which excellent progress is being made.

Chris Krupa continues to volunteer one day a week, cataloguing personal papers and ephemeral collections. This year he has been compiling more detailed descriptions for parts of existing collections which were not previously catalogued to item level, including some letters of T.R. Glover, Lyn Newman, and Cedric Price, and listing a press-cuttings collection.

**Media**

An interview with Francesca Vella, Research Fellow of the College, was filmed by the BBC in the Upper Library in December 2016.

Rebecca Shercliff, postgraduate student at St John’s, was filmed in the Upper Library and using special collections by the Communications Office for a feature on her PhD research for the College website in January 2017.

The Judge Institute filmed in the Upper Library in March 2017.

Photographer Sara Rawlinson took photographs in the Upper Library in June and July 2017 as part of a large photographic study of old libraries in Cambridge, to be exhibited at Michaelhouse in October 2017.

Kathryn McKee
Special Collections Librarian
The Biographical Office

General Overview

This office builds on the work of former Masters, Fellows, and members of staff who have diligently kept records or proactively researched information about the lives of Johnians. In many cases our Library is the main repository of information concerning those people, bringing together full details of their family, education, career, and achievements.

The table below offers an insight into the volume of biographical information received and some of the work undertaken in another busy and varied year for the office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biographical material received</td>
<td>4290</td>
<td>4188</td>
<td>4279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographical Archive consulted</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items filed in Biographical Archive</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emails and letters sent</td>
<td>3751</td>
<td>2913</td>
<td>2891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive research</td>
<td>2813</td>
<td>2739</td>
<td>2800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the majority of this work is carried out by the two full-time members of staff in this office, the data inputting and checking work on records for students who have recently joined us has only been possible due to the work of one of the Library Projects Assistants, Sam Lewsey. Sam has now moved on to pastures new and, with her role currently vacant, this side of our work has slowed considerably. The Library Graduate Trainee 2016-17, Chloe Beswick, undertook several biographical tasks during her year with us, including data entry – particularly relating to student involvement in clubs and societies – responding to a wide range of enquiries, and conducting research.

Some key areas of the office’s work over the last year are outlined below. Please note that throughout this section of the Annual Report dates in brackets after names refer to the year they were admitted to membership of the College.

Biographical Enquiries

The number given above for emails and letters sent regarding biographical work (3751) includes correspondence related to enquiries, and is indicative of the amount of work which goes into not only recording information about Johnians, but also answering questions relating to them. Sometimes an enquiry about one member of the College will involve lengthy correspondence, with the person coming back to us several times asking follow-up questions – often relating to that same individual but sometimes about other members of the same family, contemporaries, or colleagues. The nature of such queries depends on the context of the enquiry, such as whether is it genealogical research or for an academic publication. We therefore do not record every single question we are asked as a separate enquiry – if we did, the figures shown below would be far higher; one enquiry might result in ten follow-up questions, often asking what life was like in the College at the time that person was
here, or seeking advice on further sources or organisations which may be able to
help them.

Whilst it is interesting and enjoyable work, it is necessary to prevent ourselves from
undertaking people’s research for them – something which is difficult to resist at
times, especially when we can see gaps in our own records which we know might be
filled by checking a certain source. Sometimes it is worthwhile pursuing an issue in
order to add to the information the College holds, or because the task has thrown
up discrepancies which it would be useful to clear up at this end. By providing a
service answering enquiries our records are, in turn, enriched when those who have
contacted us share their research.

The pattern of enquiries completed this year is shown below, along with the
previous two years’ figures for comparison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Century</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sixteenth</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventeenth</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighteenth</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nineteenth</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twentieth</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenty-First</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than one century/Other</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>437</strong></td>
<td><strong>407</strong></td>
<td><strong>411</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enquiries dealt with in the last year included ones relating to the following Johnians:

- Samuel Purchas (1594), for whom the College’s Purchas Society (for Geographers and Land Economists) is named. A geographical editor and compiler, and Church of England Clergyman, who was no traveller himself but collected oral and written accounts of travels in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

- George Baker (1674), whose benefaction led to the Baker Exhibitions. Brother of the well-known antiquary Thomas Baker (1674), the eminent historian who left a collection of about forty manuscript volumes which included biographical notes on College members – but despite that, we do not have a great deal of information on his brother!

- Theodore Savory (1915), one of the world’s foremost authorities on arachnids (it is of note that another Johnian, Martin Lister (1655), was the first arachnologist).
When information has been requested on several hundred Johnians over the course of the year it is difficult to select ones of particular interest, and the three above are simply included in order to indicate the span of centuries and subjects.

In addition to the many requests for biographical information on individuals, data relating to the following areas has been provided over the last year:

- Johnians who spent the war years as code-breakers at Bletchley Park
- Various ‘firsts’ and significant dates relating to Johnians (including a revision of a document detailing key information pertaining to women in the College, as the College’s first female Director of Education and Senior Tutor was appointed this year)
- Johnian Rectors of Therfield
- Johnian Fellows of the Royal Society since its foundation in 1660
- Johnian Astronomers
- Historical examples of students and Fellows with disabilities (for the University’s Disability Resource Centre, in connection with Disability History Month)
- Scholars who escaped Nazi Germany to come to Cambridge
- Johnian participants in University Challenge.

It is always possible more information will be found to add to what we know about individuals, and this is also the case when dealing with topics like some of those listed above. The work the office does sometimes results in lists which may require further revision in due course, or which are known to be a work in progress. For example, the work undertaken on checking names and numbers of Johnian Fellows of the Royal Society resulted in the following statistics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Johnians who have been, or are, Fellows of the Royal Society (FRS)</th>
<th>309</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Current Johnians</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deceased Johnians</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current or former Fellows of the College who have been, or are, FRS</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Current Fellows</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Former Fellows (i.e. have either left the Fellowship or are deceased)</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current or former Honorary Fellows of the College who have been, or are, FRS</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Current Honorary Fellows</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Former Honorary Fellows (i.e. deceased)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters of the College who have been, or are, FRS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Johnians who are FRS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This work is a good starting point, but it is not complete. The research was conducted in response to a tight deadline, and whilst we would like to produce thorough and accurate information we have to satisfy ourselves with doing the best we can in the time allowed, in the knowledge it can be developed further in the future if possible or when necessary. Checking the entire list of Fellows of the Royal Society – some 400 pages long – is clearly not a task we can undertake, so consulting sources readily available was the initial aim, and when the information is provided to
people it is made clear it is approximate, with ‘at least’ 309 members of the College having been Fellows (the actual number definitely being well in excess of that).

**Honours and Learned Societies**

The Biographical Assistant is responsible for going through the Queen’s New Year and Birthday Honours lists checking for Johnians. He also monitors announcements by the country’s foremost learned societies and organisations for news of elections to fellowships and prizes awarded. This information is passed on to the Master, who writes to congratulate them all—often prompting a surprised and delighted response. The College’s Communications Office is also informed, so that they can publicise these achievements on the College website and via social media.

The list below highlights that Johnians continue to be represented among the most respected of professional bodies, and receive some of the most important honours. It does not reflect the full extent of Johnian achievement this year, and the Biographical Office records any awards we are made aware of—these are simply the key ones checked as a matter of course.

- 1 Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath (KCB)
- 1 Knight Bachelor
- 1 Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB)
- 1 Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE)
- 2 Officers of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)
- 4 Members of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)
- 1 Fellowship of the Royal Society (FRS)
- 1 Royal Society Award (Gabor Medal)
- 3 Fellows of the British Academy (FBA)
- 1 Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences (FMedSci)
- 2 Fellows of the Royal Academy of Engineering (FREng)
- 2 Fellows of the Royal Society of Chemistry (FRSC)
- 1 Queen’s Counsel (QC)

**Missing Johnians**

Most years we endeavour to locate alumni with whom we have lost contact—‘missing’ Johnians—ahead of the year’s reunion events in June and September. As the invitations are dealt with by the Assistant to the Fellows’ Steward, using data from the Development Office’s database, this is an inter-departmental affair, and requires starting work quite some way in advance of the events themselves in order to leave plenty of time for response. This can be as straightforward as typing a name into Google then firing off a quick email, or it could be trying that name with any number of potential leads we have on record to try to make the connection. We have managed to trace people via their schools (sometimes even primary level education), birthplace, and the subject they studied.

While the Johnian dinners are the driver for this research, there are clear benefits to increasing the level of alumni participation by reconnecting them with St John’s, most obviously in terms of the Development Office and their fundraising endeavours, but
also in a wider alumni relations sense – this kind of work regularly sees us not only reconnecting Johnians with their College, but also with each other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Years invited</th>
<th>Total number of missing Johnians</th>
<th>Found: deceased</th>
<th>Found: contacted with response</th>
<th>Found: contacted without response</th>
<th>% of those contacted now reconnected with St John’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September Events</td>
<td>1967 1997 1998</td>
<td>82 1 23 21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td></td>
<td>195 8 60 45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of a total of 195 missing alumni from the eight years invited back in 2017, the Biographical Assistant successfully identified or contacted 113 and, from that, sixty Johnians will now be in receipt of publications, mailings and invitations who previously were not. The figures given in the table and pie chart highlight the ongoing value of this task; replicated year on year, we are bringing a substantial number of Johnians back to the fold, some after many decades.

It is very pleasing to receive positive comments from people we have ‘found’ and some examples of these may be read in the Feedback section of this Annual Report.

![Missing Johnians Pie Chart]

**Deceased Johnians**

The Biographical Librarian is the central point of contact for recording the death of members of the College. She informs those in College, the University, and others as necessary, supplying the Master with information about the deceased and contact details for their next of kin so that he may write a letter of condolence, and gathering together biographical information for the College’s records. It is not
unusual for friends or family to contact her to ask for information in order to prepare a notice of death for the press, a eulogy, an obituary, or even sometimes for them to consult her on matters such as the appropriate wording on a gravestone.

It was reported last year that the College was trialling a return to the inclusion of obituaries in The Eagle. This proved successful, so the Biographical Librarian continues to supply information to Colin Greenhalgh (1960), the Obituaries Editor, in order to enable him to write brief tributes for publication. Although the Biographical Database holds a great deal of information on members of the College, it is often the case that on someone’s death we find out more about them – through talking to family members or reading obituaries. A lot of time is spent updating records after a death and checking discrepancies between dates and positions mentioned in obituaries and what we already had on record. It is not a simple case of extracting the data we had up to the point where someone died and assuming that will be sufficient to draw on, so a good deal of work goes on behind the scenes before it comes to the point of the Obituaries Editor using the information to produce a fitting tribute.

The Biographical Office continues to encourage Johnians to supply information regarding their career, family, and any significant achievements.

Fiona Colbert
Biographical Librarian

Paul Everest
Biographical Assistant
The College Archive

Statistics

Research Visits: Eighty-seven visitors consulted material from the Archive Collection from April 2016 until the end of August 2017. Researchers looked at material from a variety of collections: Lady Margaret Beaufort’s papers, the Council Minutes, maps and documents related to College estates, tutorial files from the nineteenth century and items related to the College’s clubs and societies.

Tours and Exhibitions: Forty-one tours have been organised for individuals and groups from inside the College and outside the St John’s community. Participants of the tours were the Blue Badge Guides, local history groups and community groups. Eight exhibitions have been advertised and displayed in the Reading Room cases from April 2016 to the end of August 2017: topics have included the May Ball, the Fire of London, College Staff (porters, gardeners and kitchen) and the College silver.

Number of letters filed 2016-17: 5

Number of e-mail responses to enquiries 2016-17: 375
Preservation

Repairs to Archive Collection items undertaken by the Conservation Consortium:
• SJAR/3/1/8/4 and SJAR/3/1/8/7: Porters’ Address Books
• SJAR/3/3/3/4: Bakehouse accounts

Preservation priorities: The survey of the conservation needs is ongoing and will commence again in 2018. The Special Collections Librarian and Archivist are working together to schedule material from both collections for preservation.

Reboxing of archival material: All archive material has now been re-housed in suitable archive grade boxes.

Exhibitions and Visits

This year marked the launch of some popular College staff exhibitions. Three of these exhibitions were held over the course of the academic year with the intention of encouraging more College staff to visit the Archive Centre. Departments featured in 2016-17 were the Porters, the Gardeners and Catering. The exhibitions will continue in the Lent Term 2018.

Additionally over the Long Vacation and for Michaelmas Term the Archive will play host to an exhibition on the College silver.
Set of three ornate embossed caddies in the original shagreen case; engraved with the College arms and inscribed: Coll: Div: Johan: Cant. Trevor Wheler Bar’1770.

Donations

The Archive Centre has received a number of items from Johnians and members of the public for the College’s archival collections during 2016-17:

- Peter Jackson: booklet on Runciman family (local vets)
- Mrs McLaren: Hungarian ball programme
- Deborah Garrod: memorial card
- Judy Bushby: photographs

Events

The Archivist hosted the first UK AtoM Camp in College in early May. This was an international event organised by Artefactual (the company responsible for the development of the AtoM cataloguing software). Archivists attended from all over the UK, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, South Africa, the US and Canada.

The Archivist welcomed members of the UK AtoM Users’ Group in College in September for the group’s inaugural meeting.

Significant Developments

The Archive Centre will have its TNA Accreditation visit on 16 October. Following the validation visit we will find out if we have been successful in our application.

Tracy Deakin
College Archivist
Library Projects

Eagle Scanning Project

In May 2017 the Library announced the completion of the Eagle scanning project, the aim of which was to create text-searchable electronic scans of every past issue of the College magazine and make these accessible from anywhere in the world. This significant achievement was the culmination of several years’ work carried out by Projects Assistants Sam and Rebecca, who scanned and processed every printed issue of the Eagle and prepared the electronic documents for use on the College website.

All past issues of the Eagle – dating from its inception in 1858 through to the current issue – are now available in PDF format, and fully text-searchable, via the Library webpage http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/eagle-scanning-project. In addition to exploring individual issues of the magazine, researchers can access PDFs of various sections of the magazine (Articles, Obituaries, etc.), grouped by decade.

Scans were uploaded to the website in batches as they became available, and statistics from the website show that the resource has already served numerous researchers and other interested parties. Over the last year the project pages and PDFs have been visited a total of 4334 times, with traffic spread fairly evenly across all decades of the magazine and between 6% and 10% of visitors coming from outside Cambridge.

Sponsor a Shelf Scheme

Since the launch of this scheme in spring 2015, a total of 68 donors have generously contributed more than £25,000 to the provision of new printed books for use by current students. In 2016-17 shelves were sponsored in physics, chemistry, biochemistry, classics and classical archaeology, private international law, modern history, British history and politics since 1980, economics and social sciences. Books were adopted in history, history of art, political economy, medicine, engineering, mathematics, geology, linguistics and languages, Victorian literature, history, music, plant biology and computer science. Gifts from donors who did not specify a particular subject area were applied to priority acquisitions, as identified by Directors of Studies and reading lists circulated by the University’s faculties and departments.

Despite increased access to e-books and other online resources, printed books remain by far the most commonly used resource among our
students, and annual circulation figures remain high. With this in view, we are extremely grateful to all our donors for boosting the Library’s acquisitions budget and enabling us to maintain and expand the collections across the full range of subjects studied by our undergraduates.

Goody Collection

One of the Library’s significant recent acquisitions of personal papers is the Goody Collection, consisting of approximately thirty linear metres of boxed material and three full filing cabinets relating to distinguished anthropologist and late Fellow of the College Professor Sir Jack Goody (1919-2015). The collection consists mainly of printed and handwritten papers (working papers, notes, manuscripts, typescripts, correspondence, reports and offprints), as well as a small quantity of maps, microfilms and index cards.

With any collection of this size, the work required to make it accessible has to be undertaken in stages. Our first priority has been to transfer the collection into archival boxes – a big job, given the extent of material and the fact it is stored offsite, over in the Old Divinity School. In the process we have carefully weeded out duplicates and photocopies of published material, and also made an effort to physically straighten out the papers, many of which bear the marks of a frenetic owner with more inspired ideas than he had space to file them in (as Nietzsche put it: ‘one must have chaos within oneself to give birth to a dancing star’). Once the reboxing phase is complete, we will conduct a more in-depth survey of the material, with a view to devising a system of organisation for the collection.

Engledow Collection

Agriculturalist Sir Frank Engledow (1890-1985) is best known for his discoveries concerning wheat genetics and yield, and for the important role he played in the development of global food production policy after the Second World War. He also had a distinguished career in the Territorial Army, serving in the Middle East and India during the First World War, and continued to travel extensively throughout his life, to gather information and present his findings on a broad range of agricultural subjects.

For some time the Library has held a small collection of notebooks kept by Engledow during his travels in Africa and Asia. In 2014, Engledow’s
daughter presented to the Library seven further boxes of material, containing a fascinating assortment of correspondence, photographs, maps, artefacts and other memorabilia relating mainly to Engledow’s non-academic activities, as well as copies of printed publications by or collected by Engledow.

After reboxing the new material I worked through the entire collection (now eleven boxes), cataloguing it to item level. The variety among the boxes was striking: public information leaflets issued during the Second World War, personal invitations to royal dinners and events, a photographic print showing aviator Louis Bleriot and his plane following the first successful flight across the English Channel, and an Indian tea caddy all sit alongside one another, building a picture of Engledow’s personal interests as well as his professional activities. The complete catalogue is available online at https://janus.lib.cam.ac.uk/.

Postcards

Responding to requests from visitors during special exhibitions and open days, we decided it was time to refresh our range of Library postcards in order to showcase some of the most popular items from our Special Collections (not least the Upper Library itself). Inspired by the wonderful photography in the Library Treasures book, I had lots of fun selecting a new batch of six images that highlights the scope and significance, as well as the beauty, of the Old Library’s holdings.

The new postcards can be purchased from the Library Issue Desk. Plans are also afoot for a Library Christmas card, featuring a delightful (if not wholly reverential) Nativity scene from one of our medieval manuscripts.

Working Library Stock Check

Every two years, during the long vacation, we undertake a full survey of the Working Library stock. Since 2013 this process has been aided by the 3M Digital Library Assistant – a handheld electronic device that reads the barcode information linked to the RFID security tag on each item and converts this information into a text file, which we can then run through software that checks the scanned barcodes against those listed in the catalogue database. The software helpfully generates reports for each batch of information processed, highlighting missing and mis-shelved items. As with all technology, there are limitations: if volumes are packed tightly on a shelf, or
very slim, the DLA does not consistently detect the tags; if enthusiastic Library staff scan more than 3000 items in one go, the software refuses to process the text file and we have to scan that batch again.

Despite the resulting frustrations and setbacks, over the course of the summer Alice, Catherine and I scanned 87,808 items. Of these, fewer than 200 items were identified as mis-shelved – not bad considering the margin for user error in a large and busy College library! In the coming weeks we will manually check the 3000 or so items identified as missing – many of which will in fact be on the shelves, simply having been missed by the DLA scanner.

I will also be continuing the related project of manually checking (that is, armed with a very long list and a pencil) the 17,000 volumes in the basement that still go under the old three-number classification system and that therefore cannot be checked digitally. I hope my colleagues will come looking for me if I haven’t resurfaced by Christmas.

Rebecca Watts
Projects Assistant

Douglas Adams Collection

The Douglas Adams papers have been a fixture of the Annual Report for rather longer than anybody might have expected or hoped. Changes in staffing have only added to the difficulties posed by the scale of the collection, and by its disorder: in the form in which it arrived at the Library, the collection, gathered from various locations, did not give the lie to Adams's reputation for questionable organisational skills, nor, more soberly, to the impact an unexpected and premature death such as his can have upon even the trivial matter of filing. Happily the project is, at time of writing, nearing completion, and the expectation is that – even if discrete sequences of Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy scripts, fan mail, undergraduate essays, concert programmes and notebooks (to name just a few categories) are not quite representative of the lateral, circumnavigatory and reiterative movements of the writer's mind – an artificially uncluttered version of the papers will be of significant value to researchers. There is the exciting prospect of future donations of related material filling in some gaps.

Adam Crothers
Special Collections Assistant

Chinese Printed Books Project

The Library successfully bid for a grant from the College’s Annual Fund to widen access to its collection of early Chinese printed books. The grant covered conservation (full paper conservation of the two oldest and most fragile volumes, which had suffered from being bound in inappropriate western bindings and were in a condition which made handling difficult, plus reboxing and minor repairs to the full collection), cataloguing, full digitisation of the two oldest volumes, selective
photography of all volumes, and the development of web resources to provide information about the collections. The Conservation Consortium disbound and repaired our seventeenth-century works, and these were digitised whilst disbound. Access to high-resolution digital images will be provided via the Cambridge University Digital Library as well as through the College website, maximising exposure for the volumes. Custom webpages are being designed to give further information about the books, with links to catalogue records and related material online.

It is hoped that publicity for the material may encourage scholars to contact us with further relevant information and conduct new research on these very little-studied books.

I am grateful to a number of people for their assistance with this project: the Cambridge Colleges Conservation Consortium and their colleagues at the Bodleian Library who advised on specialist techniques for binding Chinese works; Zheng Cheng, who prepared an initial handlist of the books, with advice from Dr McDermott and Charles Aylmer; Carl Impey for photography; Huw Jones from the CUDL, and Louise Hanzlik, the College’s web editor, for technical assistance; and Janet Chow for assisting with translation.

**Pigment Analysis**

In January 2017, the MINIARE project at the Fitzwilliam Museum undertook pigment analysis of two of our finest medieval psalters, K.26 and K.30, using an array of non-invasive techniques: infra-red photography, X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy, optical microscopy, and XRF scanning. We await full analysis of the results, and are hoping to learn significant new information about the making of these manuscripts.

**Medieval Manuscripts Catalogue**

This year we have embarked on the first phase of a long-term project to produce a complete new catalogue of the medieval manuscripts collection, made possible due to the generous support of Brian Fenwick-Smith (BA 1959). After informative discussion with the Keeper of Manuscripts at the University Library, and consulting the best examples of newly published manuscript catalogues, a template for records has been formulated that should be flexible enough to cover the diversity of items within the collection, whilst meeting recognised modern standards for manuscript description. Potential contributors have been identified for an initial selection of manuscripts, and the first contributions have now been commissioned.

Kathryn McKee
Special Collections Librarian
Social Media

A little over a decade ago, social media was not perceived as particularly relevant in the context of libraries – but as time has passed, its usage has broadly become standard practice. As in many other academic libraries, staff at St John's College have embraced the use of social media in order to promote services, share resources, relay important news, and engage with our users.

According to the Office of National Statistics, this year 96% of 18–24 year olds described social networking as their most common internet activity. This suggests that social media is an excellent tool for communicating with our main target demographic – the students – and especially with our new undergraduates. To this end, the Library manages accounts on the two most popular social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter.

Twitter

Tweeting continues to be an excellent method for disseminating useful information to students, staff and visitors – and with over 1000 followers we can be sure that our voice is being heard. Library staff tweet regularly about upcoming exhibitions, workshops and events, whilst also keeping students up to date when it comes to loan periods, staffed hours, maintenance work and more. We aim to write tweets in a friendly and welcoming tone, whilst staying focused on information that is directly relevant to library visitors.

The Library Twitter account as of September 2017

Many of our most popular tweets pertain to events such as Open Cambridge or the Festival of Ideas – visitors often enjoy tagging us in their own photos of these occasions. Twitter is also a great platform for linking to the Library’s blog posts, such as the regular Special Collections Spotlight which features discussion of fascinating texts from the Old Library.

Our Twitter account, @StJohnsLibCam, often works collaboratively with others to circulate news. Our updates are frequently retweeted by other college and faculty libraries, as well as Cambridge organisations, bookstores, alumni, and so on. The members of the St John's College Communications Office are also quick to lend a hand when it comes to broadcasting Library news.

A word cloud featuring the most used terms in library tweets, created using www.tweetstats.com

**Facebook**

Whilst the Library's Facebook page doesn’t see nearly as much traffic as its Twitter counterpart, its followers have grown steadily over the past academic year to almost 100. Although this is only a tenth of our Twitter audience, it could be argued that our Facebook likes come mainly from students whereas our Twitter account is often followed by related institutions.

![Graph illustrating cumulative Facebook page likes, from September 2016 to September 2017](image)

Our tweets are often concurrently posted as Facebook posts, which has the advantage of making them equally brief and to-the-point. That said, the lack of a character limit on Facebook gives us the room to write updates which are potentially more personal and friendly in tone. New students will be encouraged to follow our social media accounts at the start of the Michaelmas Term, and we hope that our audience will continue to grow steadily in the future.

Alice Read
Library Graduate Trainee 2017-18
Environmental Monitoring and Control

The life expectancy of any library’s collection is greatly affected by the environment in which it is kept. Problems with temperature and humidity, for example, could damage paper and encourage mould, whilst high levels of light radiation can fade inks and cause yellowing. Tracking changes in the Library’s conditions allows us to respond to such issues before they cause undue harm, which is far more economical than repairing or replacing individual items. As the saying goes, ‘an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure’.

Since the Projects Assistant Sam Lewsey has left us, responsibility for environmental monitoring within the Working Library has fallen to two new staff: the Library Assistant and Graduate Trainee. These tasks provide a much-needed break from our computer screens and give us the chance to poke our heads in some lesser-seen locations, such as the Old Divinity School, Master’s Lodge, and other mysterious private rooms.

Temperature and Humidity

As in previous years, the Library continues to use devices known as Tiny Tags to record data on environmental conditions. These are configured to take readings at ten-minute intervals which determine the maximum and minimum temperatures and relative humidity of each location. This data is collected once every other week and recorded so as to enable comparison with previous months and years.

Five tags are situated within the Working Library: two on the First and Third Floors and three in the Basement. Another tag occupies our basement storage area in the Old Divinity School and the final tag resides in the Master’s Lodge. On the whole, temperature and humidity remain stable across the tag locations, although certain areas tend to be hotter or more humid than others. For example, the Third Floor tag achieves the greatest maximum temperatures, which can be seen in the data visualisation below.

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Data of maximum temperature readings (°C) converted to representational colours. Higher temperatures across the range appear as orange, whilst lower maximum temperatures display as blue.
Light Readings

Light readings are taken every week in the Old Library, with the purpose of flagging up any worrying trends or sustained changes which indicate the need to replace or alter current protective materials. The method is simple, although the equipment is sophisticated – a small handheld device is positioned in set locations around the Old Library, and a couple of button presses supply the readings for visible light (LUX) and UV levels, which are then recorded in a spreadsheet.

Effective monitoring and the use of protective fixtures help us to preserve the many valuable items in the Old Library’s collection. UV filters and blinds are installed over many of the Old Library’s windows to prevent UV rays from reaching the bookshelves.

Display cases containing sensitive items are covered when not in use, and the most fragile materials are stored in the Lower Library’s Manuscripts Cabinet. We hope that our systematic monitoring of the Library’s environment will continue to ensure that both the borrowable and special collections are well preserved and a pleasure for readers to use.
The School of Pythagoras Archive Centre

Thanks to the thick stone walls and the state-of-the-art ventilation unit, the environmental conditions within the Archive Centre have remained consistently within desirable parameters.

Pest management has been undertaken admirably by the Library Graduate Trainees and we’ve only ever discovered the odd wood-louse and many, many spiders.

Alice Read  Catherine Ascough
Graduate Trainee  Library Assistant
Green Initiatives

In the Library we try to be as environmentally friendly as we can, working on the premise that if everyone does a little towards this aim, the collective result can be quite impressive.

Recycling bins

All the Library recycling bins now accept plastic, aluminium, paper and cardboard, which resulted in approximately 55% more recycling by students. Unfortunately much of this recycled material is of poor quality, with food waste and part-full drinks containers left in the bins. Additionally some material is just left on desks or in rubbish bins, instead of being put in the recycling bins. This creates more work for the cleaning staff who then need to sort through the bins.

We recycled on average twenty-two sacks of mixed recycling from the Library per month – that is over 250 sacks a year – plus forty-five sacks of mixed recycling from the Archive Centre in the year.

Composting

At the suggestion of Paul from the Biographical Office, for the last few months we have been saving all our compostable items like teabags, coffee grounds, apple cores and so on into a compost caddy rather than putting it in the general waste. Paul then takes it to our Head Gardener’s compost heap in the Master’s garden. It is nice to know that in years to come our efforts will help fertilise the College gardens at no cost or inconvenience to ourselves.

Batteries

We recycled three boxes of batteries from the Library in the year.

Printer cartridges

The Library is the collection point for used printer cartridges in the College and we recycled a large boxful every two months.

Mobile phones

As a result of Angela McKenzie’s additional role as College Telephone Liaison Officer she has been able to collect and recycle forty-six mobile phones this year including twenty of the earlier iPhone models from staff, both personal and work issue. Many of these are handed over because they have become outdated as technology advances. Once again the Redwings Horse Charity received a visit from
Angela to hand over the old phones for them to recycle to raise funds for their work.

**Plastic milk bottle tops**

For a number of years Angela McKenzie has been collecting plastic milk bottle tops from various departments around College and now that she is based in the Library this has become the collecting point. At least five carrier bags of these tops have been donated to the Air Ambulance Service to raise funds for the service.

**Belongings**

We were staggered to see how much personal stuff was left behind in the Library at the end of the academic year. Several reminders were sent to junior members to collect their belongings and to check nothing of theirs was in the lost property. However we were left with enough items for the Graduate Trainee to create this impressive display in the Library foyer. None of us could understand how it was possible to forget something such as a cosy blanket or a saucepan! There were many amused glances over the couple of weeks the display remained up, and a few items were reclaimed as a result.

Once dismantled we recycled as much as possible. Angela took home all the mugs (twenty) and ran them through her dishwasher, discarding damaged and stained ones, and then took the rest, along with a few other saleable items, to the East Anglia Children’s Hospice Shop for them to sell. We deposited blankets, clothes, gloves, saucepans and other items in the British Heart Foundation Collecting bin in College. Nothing that could be reused by someone was wasted.

John Holt
Library Cleaner (part-time)

Angela McKenzie
Telephone Liaison Officer
Feedback

Once again the true appreciation felt for the efforts that the Library and Archive staff go to in order to fulfil the expectations of Fellows, students, and other Cambridge academics, as well as visiting overseas academics and members of the public, can be seen in the following selection of comments and messages sent to us this year.

Comments received by the Biographical Office

General

- I’m very grateful to you. You’re better than any record office.
- Fiona Colbert should really have the credit – she keeps me on the straight and narrow.
- All your efforts are very much appreciated; you have information I haven’t managed to find anywhere else.
- You are a marvel!
- I cannot adequately express how grateful I am to you, Fiona. You are the most helpful person I have dealt with during my research.
- I am astounded that you had picked this up already and linked the announcement to your records – very efficient.
- Fantastic! Thanks for such a speedy reply. I am greatly indebted to you.
- I am amazed you have been able to provide such detailed information by return. I was expecting it to be much more difficult than this!
- I have spent years researching my family and in a short space of time you have answered questions I thought would be forever a mystery, and opened up a whole new avenue to pursue. I cannot thank you enough, Fiona!
- What a lovely email to receive! You are such a nice person. It has indeed been a difficult time for me, but hearing from people like you does make it easier. I was also deeply touched to receive a letter from the Master.
- [My relative] was a very private, modest yet brilliant man. Hence, I am so delighted to know he will have his due place as a Johnian! Your kindness and helpfulness has been so uplifting and I enjoyed our conversation!
- Thank you so much for the information, and also for the photographs. It provides many more answers than I had thought possible. My mother will also be very pleased. I suspect she will be particularly touched to see the photographs. Thank you once again for taking all this trouble for us.
- I am impressed by the efficiency of your record-keeping.

Missing Johnians

- I am delighted to hear that I am somewhere on a list of ‘missing’ Johnians! I had never considered myself missing – though it does make it sound intriguingly as though I left on a mission to explore South America and have suddenly re-surfaced.
- Thank you for getting in touch. Your detective work is indeed correct and I would like to renew my contact with what is going on at the college.
- Thank you for making contact. Always such a pleasure to hear from my alma mater!
• I am very happy to re-connect with St John’s and actually didn’t realise that I had ‘gone missing’. I do apologise.
• Had a wonderful time at the College, and my studies at Cambridge University greatly contributed to where I am now.
• Thank you very much for your message. Of course, I’d love to remain in contact with St John’s and the blessed years I spent there.
• I hadn’t intended to disconnect so am very glad you’ve got in touch.
• Many thanks for getting in touch! Glad to report I am not missing.

Messages received by Special Collections

• Just to say, thank you so much for making my research into Cecil Beaton’s papers so easy today. It was fascinating and invaluable.
• A rather hasty note to say how much we all enjoyed our visit to the Old Library last week. It was such a treat to be able to see artefacts at such close quarters which relate so closely to all that we have been learning about this term. Many thanks for setting everything up for us so carefully.
• Thank you so much for all your help earlier – the students were absolutely enthralled, and two insisted I dropped them off at the Admissions Office on their way out, largely on the basis of their visit to the Old Library as far as I could gather!
• One of the most telling moments was seeing a handwritten letter written by him in 1891 to a friend to discuss a matter on inorganic chemistry. Now I understand why my parents always emphasised education growing up.
• Thank you so much for the comprehensive and prompt response. The guidance you give is invaluable.
• Thank you for making the images possible and obtaining the necessary permissions; it made my job a lot easier.
• I am just emailing you to thank you for allowing the students to visit the exhibition and see the wonderful collection of historical sources you have on show! The students really enjoyed visiting St John’s and having the opportunity to be immersed in the history of the college. The students wrote this to me regarding the trip: ‘Thank you for the trip. It was very helpful for history and the library was huge!’, ‘I want to study there!’ and ‘Thank you, I want to go there again!’
• Thank you for making my recent visit to St John’s College Library so productive. I found everything I expected and a bit more.
• Thank you very much indeed. I’m very excited to be able to show the picture, it is incredibly useful to the argument I am making.
• Just a word of thanks for permitting a very successful visit by the French party today. Of course, they were hugely impressed, even astonished (and envious), and both enjoyed and learned from the visit.
• Thank you so much for your swift reply and speedy research into the records, I do appreciate it.
• Many thanks for your incredibly helpful email and possible ideas.
• Thank you for the immense amount of work you have put into my query.
• You are great! Your good work has avoided that trip to Cambridge and given me just what I wanted.
• I wanted to thank you once again for kindly welcoming our group to St John’s College Old Library earlier in October and for generously sharing your time and knowledge with them. I am pleased to report that the tour was a great success and the group particularly appreciated having the rare privilege of accessing so many wonderful libraries and being able to view their outstanding collections up close.

• Thank you very much. The download worked perfectly, and the copy looks great. This was a big help, and much appreciated.

Comments on Archive Exhibitions/Research Visits/Tours/Online Material

• I’m not sure if you get much feedback – but I really love these mailings! Many thanks.
• This is lovely. It is especially sweet that the Steward responsible for some of these draconian restrictions is Glyn Daniel, a noted bon viveur in later life!
• This is brilliant! Looking forward to viewing in more detail later. Congratulations!
• Thanks for yr help, Tracy. The building is very impressive.
• Now that I’ve returned to the States and have begun sorting through all the materials I collected during my research trip, I want to thank you again for your assistance with my project. I believe that the texts that I photographed at John’s will prove invaluable to my ongoing research.
• Thanks. Great idea to have a virtual exhibition. It actually led me to the John Crook letters from WW2 which I hadn’t seen before. What an amazing generation Fellows like Prof. Crook, Professor Hinde and Professor Sir Harry Hinsley came from. They spent their youth in very difficult times. It was a privilege to meet them.
• Many thanks for allowing me access to the College Archive and providing the documents this morning. Not only did they confirm the occupancy of … by those I am interested in but the leases detailed much about the way farming was being conducted at that time. This was far more information than I had hoped for. It was privilege to visit your fine and historic building.

Comments from the Visitors Book in the Library

| Brilliant exhibition on the History of Medicine (Cambridge) | Cool! (USA) | Very pretty. Steeped in history! (Ireland) |
| Starting a diary today! (Essex) | Wonderful history & atmosphere here (USA) |
| Copy of 12th Century Josephus. Excellent. (Plymouth) | Thank you Kathryn for the insight into this breath-taking Library (Australia) |
| Wonderful!!!! (Italy) | Very inspiring to see and to reflect on 1982 when women were allowed. Thank you. (Manchester) | Adam gave a wonderful tour of the Library. Thank you. (Oxford) |
Appendix  Donors to Sponsor a Shelf Scheme

We are most grateful to the following donors for their generous support of this scheme in 2016 and 2017:

Bill Ball FIMechE (Mechanical Engineering)
Patrick Field (Linguistics and Languages)
Dr Peter Hacking (Medicine)
Christopher Joseph (Historical and Human Geography)
John R. Morris (Engineering)
Nicholas Wood (British History and Politics from 1980 onwards)
Paul Cockerham FSA (Art History)
Richard Tomlinson (Classical Archaeology and Classics)
Sir Douglas Wass (Pure Mathematics)
Garth Lindrup (Private International Law)
David M. Wright (Geology and Earth Sciences)
Alan Daniels, in memoriam Reginald W. Daniels (Economics and Social Sciences)
Keith Dyke (Biochemistry)
Dr John H. W. Shaw (Victorian Poetry)
Julian Davies (History)
Tazim Jaffer (Physics)
Ian and Fumiyo Boulton (Chemistry)
Hugh M. F. Barnes-Yallowley (Political Economy)
Christopher Sinclair-Stevenson (History of Modern France)
Irene Vest, in memoriam Michael John Vest
Kirsten Paige (Music)
David Nicholls CB CMG (French Literature)
I. E. M. Hughes (German Studies)
Barry Sealey
Isobel Smyth (Plant Biology)
Greg Lowden (Modern History)
Barbara Goodman, in memoriam Henry Goodman (Computer Science)
One anonymous donor