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## **EDITORIAL**

Conferences are great places to network and to learn about new topics or to consolidate what you know. They are good for personal development and enable you to bring back new ideas to your work place. If you have not attended a conference before, then the Cambridge Libraries Conference held in January is the place to start. In this issue Catherine Ascough reports on how she got involved in helping to organise the last one and

encourages people to join the organising committee for future conferences.

William Hale explains how he got involved in running a major conference in Cambridge this year for the Rare Book and Special Collections Group. There is a lot of work that goes into a successful conference. Beth Sherwood shares her reflections on attending an international conference organised by SLA in America. It sounds like it was fun, tiring and intellectually stimulating. Finally we end with the update on people within the library community and their various moves.

## **CAMBRIDGE LIBRARIES CONFERENCE**

On January 11th 2018 around 150 librarians and library staff, from across Cambridge, gathered at the Judge Business School for the annual Cambridge Libraries Conference. This was my third Cambridge Libraries Conference, however this year I had an insight into just how much work goes into the organisation behind the scenes as I was on the committee. It was a rewarding opportunity to be part of a day which, judging by how fast the tickets go, is widely anticipated around Cambridge.

Planning for the Conference usually starts over the summer – and one of the first jobs for the committee is to decide on the theme. It needs to be something original, broad enough that speakers can cover a range of topics, catchy, and above all interesting to the library community.

After discussing many suggestions, we decided on 'Breakthrough the Library' as it could be approached from many angles and perspectives.

Within the committee we all volunteered to take on separate roles, such as organising the catering, speaker liaison, sponsor liaison, and the all-important chair people. I volunteered to organise the lightning talks and posters. For anyone who has not been to the conference before, these are a chance for anyone from any library across Cambridge to give a five-minute presentation or create a poster on a project or event from their Library over the past year, which fits in with the Conference theme. I had always found it a really enjoyable part of the day, particularly because it is an opportunity for anyone, from senior management to graduate trainees, to present to their colleagues.

Aside from giving me an exciting sneak preview of the talks and speakers, being on the committee gave me the opportunity to network across the Cambridge library community, put faces to names, and find solutions for IT problems that I didn't know existed! It is an experience I would definitely recommend to anyone looking to get involved in the Cambridge library community, and plans are underway for the next Conference in January 2019. Keep an eye out for emails about signing up, volunteering, and lightning talks and posters, and I'll look forward to seeing many of you there again!

*Catherine Ascough*

*Library Assistant, St John's College*

## **RARE BOOK AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS GROUP'S ANNUAL STUDY CONFERENCE**

Two years ago, I was asked to devise the programme for the Rare Book and Special Collections Group's annual study conference in 2018, to be held at a venue in Cambridge. It would be a chance to showcase Cambridge's libraries and collections, and to explore a theme of my choice related to special collections in libraries. Thankfully I wouldn't have to worry too much about the administrative side of the conference; booking accommodation and handling the delegates would be the preserve of my co-organiser, Lucy Evans of the British Library, who has been organising conferences for the RBSCG for ten years and claims to enjoy it. I would have to come up with the theme, book the speakers and draw up a timetable.

I decided on the theme for the conference almost at once. Libraries with special collections of any kind are making strenuous efforts to bring those collections to new audiences, and to break down barriers between teaching and research by using them as educational tools. So the conference would be called "The Library as Classroom" and would focus on what seemed like the topic of the

moment: in crude terms, as I tended to express it in conversation, “using our stuff to teach”.

I was co-opted onto the RBSCG committee for the planning period. They were broadly supportive of my idea but had a few reservations. Would the conference be too focussed on the university sector, and thus of limited appeal to the Group as a whole? Given the theme, I thought an academic emphasis was more-or-less inevitable, but I tried to broaden the range by asking people from the museums sector, those who had worked with hard-to-reach constituencies, and also those who had made special collection materials available online in an educational context. More generally, I was keen to get as many people involved as possible. We thought of a Pecha Kucha session, in which participants talk to presentations of 20 slides, each shown for 20 seconds. This format was all the rage a few years ago but seemed to me to be more trouble than it was worth. Instead we invited interest from delegates in giving lightning talks of five minutes each, with two minutes for questions. We allotted a slot of one hour for this, and planned to select six or so from the offers we got.

Lucy and I investigated a number of options for the venue, and decided early on on Downing College, which blended neo-classical splendour with modern comforts, and offered a suitably-sized lecture hall in the form of the

Howard Theatre, as well as an efficient and helpful conferences department.

The programme took shape gradually over a period of eighteen months. I followed the same format as previous years, which meant finding speakers for 13 slots spread over three days. My first invitee was Siobhan Britton of the University of Brighton, whose blog-post on using special collection material for teaching art students had caught Lucy's eye. Other early recruits were Tabitha Tuckett of UCL who would speak on the Connected Curriculum initiative there, and Sarah Mahurter of the University of the Arts whose talk on "Archival Pedagogics" would focus on using archives and special collections as creative teaching tools. Jessica Gardner, newly arrived as University Librarian, kindly agreed to provide the keynote address.

I was keen to get speakers from the other side of the issue desk as well, and so asked Simon Eliot of the Institute of English Studies to talk about the London Rare Books School and his teaching of the MA in the History of the Book. This made a good pair with Jason Scott-Warren and Andrew Zurcher of the Centre for Material Texts in Cambridge, who spoke jointly on the pleasures and perils of "Teaching the Early Modern Material Text". The rare category of schools with important early book collections was covered by the librarian of Shrewsbury School, whose

library, famous for its early bindings, dates from the late sixteenth century. Less favoured schools were represented by Sally Stafford of the Darwin Correspondence Project at the University Library, and Anna Lobbenberg of the British Library, who spoke on their respective online educational tools using special collections materials. Speakers from the museum sector were Nicola Pickering, Teaching Fellow in Museum Studies at the University of Reading, and Rachel Sinfield from the Fitzwilliam. Niveen Kassem of the University of Newcastle would speak on a timely project which used photographs from the Gertrude Bell archive in outreach with local Syrian communities. Some of these speakers I found myself; others were suggested by members of the Committee.

All but one of the slots were filled by Easter this year; I then had to organise them into a coherent timetable. Some previous conferences had had themed days; this seemed too restrictive, but we started on the first afternoon with papers dealing generally with teaching and learning using rare materials, then spent the following morning hearing about particular audiences and materials, with the final morning stepping out of the classroom and hearing about work in the wider community and the digital realm. The lightning talks, we hoped, would then provide a lively conclusion.

There was also the question of visits, an essential part of the established format for the RBSCG conferences. Of course, Cambridge is not short of impressive libraries with special collections, and the chief difficulty would be choosing from among the riches. Since they were all within walking distance, we would not have to worry about laying on transport, and we could offer visits to pairs of college libraries within easy reach of each other. We also offered a tour of the University Library, combined with a visit to our Historical Printing Room, an obvious pedagogical destination, and a display of Darwin-related material. To further widen the choice available, we decided to try a sort of “open house” event on the final afternoon, in which other libraries would open their doors to delegates on a drop-in basis.

A couple of weeks before the conference I travelled down to London to finalise a few things with Lucy. Most importantly, we needed to decide on the lightning talks. We had planned for six in an hour; in the event we received only eight offers, and so, rather than disappoint two hopefuls, we decided to squeeze them all in. Also finalised on this visit was the vastly more difficult question of dinner menus – easily the most awesome responsibility of the whole conference preparation process.

Once this was done my contribution to the conference was just about finished. I chaired the first session, introducing the speakers and taking questions, but after that my role was largely to upload the speakers' presentations to the conference AV system and make sure that the tea breaks didn't overrun. My number one nightmare scenario, of a speaker failing to turn up, did not materialise, and neither did number two, a catastrophic failure of the AV equipment, thanks largely to Downing College's efficient technical support service. The quality of the papers was uniformly high and the reactions overwhelmingly positive. The lightning talks overran a little, but as it was the last session on the Friday only lunch was delayed. With the benefit of hindsight, I think having questions after each talk was unnecessary, but the talks were nonetheless an effective end to the conference, giving people a chance to participate without the stress of preparing a full-length paper.

Now the warm glow of a successful conference has largely faded, I ask myself what advice I would give the novice conference organiser. Choose a good theme would



certainly be my first piece of advice – I was lucky enough to come up with a theme that was both timely and of interest to a wide constituency. Cast your net widely when looking for speakers and try to get people from outside your sector who will look at the theme from a different angle. Use your contacts and your contacts' contacts and don't be afraid to ask for, and take, advice. And don't overload your programme – conferences should be stimulating, but not exhausting!

*William Hale  
Rare Books Specialist  
University Library*

## **POSTCARDS FROM MARYLAND – REFLECTIONS OF AN SLA EUROPE ECCA**

This June, I went to Baltimore, Maryland, for the Special Libraries Association Conference & INFO-EXPO. I attended the conference thanks to the immense kindness of the SLA Europe Chapter and the SLA Academic Division, who sent me as one of two recipients of this year's Early Career Conference Award.



We flew out on the Friday evening and thanks to East-West jet-lag I woke up early and took the MARC train into Washington DC on a pilgrimage to see the Library of Congress in all its marbled glory. A particular highlight was the Letters to Lyrics exhibit, capitalising on the popularity of Hamilton, which displayed some of Hamilton's writings and letters to and from the Schuyler Sisters, and linked each to their corresponding songs from the musical.



On Sunday afternoon we got our first experience of SLA at the First-Timers Orientation.

The orientation was a really good way to begin the conference as we got to meet other first-timers and find out where they were coming from, and their hopes for the

conference. It was also a good chance to meet some SLA fellows, who were the most helpful and enthusiastic conference attendees I have ever met.

I also got my own stack of ribbons (little strips of colourful ribbon that you attach to your name badge), one for being a student, a first timer and one from SLA Europe. I'd not come across ribbons before attending SLA, and I can see why British conferences haven't joined in on it, but really

liked that they helped start conversations and that people made a bee-line for me as soon as they spotted the yellow student ribbon. It also meant CityLIS got a lot of free advertising!



On Sunday evening we had an SLA Europe dinner where I got to meet a few more of the SLA Europe crowd. I'd not been to an SLA Europe event so it was a good chance to meet a number of people in person before the conference kicked-off properly.

On Monday morning my SLA conference began in true SLA style at 7:30am with the Academic Division Board Meeting and breakfast. A really nice thing about SLA is that you can essentially turn up to whatever's on the schedule. You have to pre-book tickets for some events, but even division board meetings are open to first-timers and people who are just there because they're interested. Attending the board meeting was a really good way to meet more of the academic division and to hear about their work over the past year and the plans ahead.

Glad for the coffee and friendly faces, at 9am I speed-walked to my first session: Optimizing Library Services for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder, delivered by Lesley Farmer and Kim Bloedel. The session took us

through a really thorough description of ASD and its manifestations in adults, and covered a lot of very specific actions for improving library environments and services.

Dr Carla Hayden, the 14th and current Librarian of Congress, delivered the first keynote. This was a real highlight of SLA for me. Dr Hayden spoke on her efforts to open up the LoC and how she originally got into librarianship as a career. Hearing the Librarian of Congress talk about her own persistence in getting to where she is and the knockbacks along the way was really valuable for us as new professionals.

We then had lunch in the INFO-EXPO, which was the part of SLA that I made the least use out of because it wasn't that relevant to my role, although I got a lot of free stuff (shout out to Springer Nature in particular for the water-bottle).

On Monday afternoon I mostly learnt about Blockchain. I went to two sessions: The New Kid on the Block: How Blockchain is Shaking up the Legal and Financial Services Global Neighborhood and The ABCs of Emerging Tech in Info Pro Work: AI, Blockchain, and More. One of the great pieces of advice I was given by Kevin Adams, all-round SLA celebrity and fellow, was to go to some things outside of what I already know about, and seeing as Blockchain is the thing I'm most often asked about when I tell people my masters is in Information Science, I figured I'd take the opportunity to learn what it actually is.

On Tuesday I attended sessions on Data Management, Data Analysis, and Visualization using Excel, and Adding Web Archiving To Your Skill Set: What You Need To Know. Again, neither of these were particularly relevant to my current role, although the second session was hugely interesting! This was also the day I learnt the true value of a life-skill much used at SLA but not at all used at UK conferences. At SLA if you're in a session and the session turns out to be not-relevant, YOU LEAVE. You pick up your backpack and you walk out of the door. No one apologises. No one stays and scrolls aimlessly through Twitter. At SLA you're not here for time-wasting, you get up and you go to a more useful session (or you go get a Starbucks).



Wednesday was the final conference day. I went to two very different sessions in the morning: Using Taxonomy to Drive Personalization: Aligning User Interests and Content, and Oh, the Places an MLIS Will Take You! Speed Dating with Job Possibilities. The MLIS Speed Dating with Job Possibilities was my favourite session of the conference. It was a really simple premise, with speakers sharing their career paths and how they got to where they are now, but it was so good to hear! We had a lot of time

for questions at the end, and it ended up being a really honest and valuable group discussion about how we move on and up from a LIS degree.

### *Post-conference reflections*

I'm really glad I went. I said in my pre-conference interview that I was excited to have my horizons broadened. And they really were. I came away with a



much greater appreciation for the sheer breadth and variety of information work. I got to talk to people about their careers in legal firms, academic libraries, military libraries, and competitive intelligence.

If you're on the fence about applying for the ECCA I'd really recommend it. SLA is so different from UK conferences, but still smaller than ALA, and it's a really good way to see how American information work is also really different. It was also such a good opportunity to grow in confidence, both personally and professionally, and an experience that really changed the way I look at my career and future.

*Beth Sherwood*

*Campaigns Officer, Tyndale House*

*Adapted from Blogpost available at <https://bethshers.wordpress.com/>*

## **PEOPLE**

The UL warmly welcomed **Kirsty Allen** to the post of Chief Operating Officer (COO). She is the first incumbent to the post. She was formerly Principal Assistant Registry and Head of the Registry's Office.

Development and Friends bid farewell to **Kim Greed**. **Jennifer Broadway** has taken over as Friends Coordinator. **Amy Glover** has replaced **Lorraine Coulson** as the new Learning and Development Coordinator.

Collections and Academic Liaison welcomed **Irene Fabry-Tehranchi** – their new Collection Development and Academic Liaison Librarian. **Clare Shortman** from English Cataloguing left to take up a post in Norwich. **George Robinson** has joined Legal Deposit. **Izabela Gabrysiak** has been seconded to Periodicals and they bid farewell to **Kate O'Neil**. At the end of his secondment, **Simon Barlow** has taken up a permanent post in Materials Processing.

Special Collections bid farewell to **Dennis Duncan** (Munby Fellow). Manuscripts has a new Assistant Archivist – **Sally Kent**. **Nadia Vidro** (Genizah Research Associate) and **Magdalen Connolly** (Research Assistant) have joined the Genizah Unit.

Conservation bid farewell to **Lucy Cheng** (Exhibitions Conservator) and to **Faye Humphreys** (Book and Paper Conservator).

Digital Content Unit bid farewell to **Stephen Allwright** (Digitisation Technician). Polonsky bid farewell to **Lee Pretlove** (Digital Preservation Specialist – Outreach and Training).

**Bethan Portlock** has been seconded to take up the post of Programme Coordinator in LMS.

Digital services bid farewell to **Wojciech Giel**. **Zhipeng Shan** is now Senior Technical Specialist and **John Norcott** has joined the team, also as Senior Technical Specialist.

Human Resources welcomed **Natalie Deighton** (HR Service manager). **Lesley Milne** has moved to the Secretariat as Operations Coordinator.

**Clair Castle** has been seconded to the Office of Scholarly Communication as Research Data Coordinator and **Elena Varela Fuentes** has taken up the post of Open Access Deposit Coordinator.

**Madeline Harrigan** and **Holly Pines** have joined the Reader Services Desk.

The Reference Department bid farewell to **Naomi Woodburn** who has moved on to the role of Deputy

Librarian at the Radzinowicz (Criminology) Library. **David Chapman** has now joined the department.

Building Services bid farewell to **Calvin Kemp** and **Joe Mills**. **Thomas Horner**, **Danny Bowran** and **Adrian Bunton** have joined as Building Services Assistants.

**Larissa Erzinclioglu** has been seconded to LSF Ingest and Collection Logistics, and has taken up the post of Senior Library Assistant. They bid farewell to **Katrina Dring**. **Alina Wanitzek** has joined the team.

Long serving members of the UL – **Graham Willis** (Building Services), **Rosemary Rumbleow** (Library Office) and **Allan Shaw** (Collection Care) have retired. They will be missed and we wish them the very best in their retirement.

**Charlotte Smith** takes on the role of Deputy Librarian (Research) at the Engineering Library, a role that she is job sharing with **Kirsten Lamb**. Prior to this, Charlotte worked at the Modern Languages Library, before freelancing for two years as a proofreader and copy-editor. She is very excited to be re-joining the Cambridge Libraries community and relishes the chance to provide research support services here in Cambridge.

**Laura Moss** is the new History of Art Librarian at the Faculty of Architecture and History of Art. Laura joins us

from the Library and Learning Resources Centre at Hills Road Sixth Form College.

**Katie McElvanney** joined the MML Library in May as Senior Library Assistant with responsibility for looking after the Slavonic and Linguistics collections. Katie comes to Cambridge from the British Library, where she was working within the Slavonic team and where she was involved in putting together last year's excellent exhibition on the Russian Revolution.

**Diana Caulfied**, Senior Library Assistant at the Fitzwilliam Museum Reference Library, is going on maternity leave on 1st October. We wish her well and in the meantime, until additional cover is in place, the library will be staffed Tuesdays pm and Wednesdays all day by Diana's colleague **Barbara Burstein**.

**Jo Shortt Butler** was poached by Corpus' Taylor Library from the Divinity Library at the beginning of 2018, and was replaced by **Alice Harrison** in April, working 20 hours per week at the Divinity Library, in term time only.

Two new shared posts have been created across the Divinity Faculty Library, the Casimir Lewy Library (Philosophy) and the English Faculty Library, with **Katherine Burchell**, who joins us from the LSF team, and **Sam Roberts**, splitting their time between the three libraries.

The English Faculty Library said goodbye to two longstanding members of its team, **Geoff Shipp**, and **Waltraud West**, both of whom have very deservedly retired after 14 and 19 years respectively. We are all missing them terribly. **Bethany Sherwood** also left the English Faculty Library in August to take up a post as Campaigns Officer at Tyndale House, and will be replaced in October by **Caitlin Carr**, an alumna of the Faculty, who graduated in 2018 and brings with her an extensive knowledge of the Cambridge student experience, which we hope to exploit in full.

**Daniele Campello Dos Santos** has started as Library Information Supervisor at the Department of Psychology.

**Sam Coleman** has started at the Haddon following Simon Barlow's move to the UL. Thanks and farewell to **Nathan Wright** who helped out at the Haddon over the last year during Simon's secondment.

Colleges have bid farewell to two long-serving Librarians this summer: **Lesley Read** at Robinson and **Patricia Aske** at Pembroke. They will be much missed by their Colleges and the wider library community. We wish both of them a very happy retirement.

**Genny Grim** is the new Librarian at Pembroke. **Judith Brown**, formerly Library Information Supervisor at the

Department of Psychology, and fresh from a three-month secondment at the UL to research the future library and information needs of the School of Biological Sciences, takes over at Robinson.

At Girton, **Tilda Watson** (who previously held the combined roles of Archives and Library Assistant) is now focussing solely on the Archive in her new role as Archives Assistant, combining this with her new post of part-time College Archivist at Magdalene College. Girton welcomes **Gosia Drozdowska**, who has taken on the role of afternoon Library Assistant.

**Suzan Griffiths** has joined the team at Churchill College to work on their retrospective cataloguing project.

We congratulate **Meg Westbury**, Librarian of Wolfson, on achieving Fellowship in the HEA.

**Pauline Kiesow** has been appointed Library Assistant at St Catharine's College. Pauline is completing a PhD in early modern European history at Trinity Hall, where she previously worked as Student Library Assistant.

The usual changeover of Graduate Trainees has taken place over the summer. We wish all the departing trainees well in their future careers. Details of trainees and all their activities may be found at <http://www.catalog.group.cam.ac.uk/>.

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of **CULIB** will be entitled “Language and Libraries”. This theme could include language material in your library used to support teaching and learning, computer languages you might use to provide services, how to avoid library jargon in communications or even the range of languages spoken by the staff in your libraries. Anything really with a link to language. If you would like to contribute an article, please contact the **CULIB** editors. The deadline for submission is 31 January 2019.

Cambridge University Libraries information bulletin (**CULIB**) is distributed free, twice a year, to libraries within the University and its Colleges, and to others on request. **CULIB** is edited by Kathryn McKee [km10007@cam.ac.uk](mailto:km10007@cam.ac.uk) at St John’s College Library, Mary Kattuman [mpk1000@cam.ac.uk](mailto:mpk1000@cam.ac.uk) at the University Library, Lyn Bailey [lkb24@cam.ac.uk](mailto:lkb24@cam.ac.uk) at the Classics Faculty Library, Lindsay Jones [lj311@cam.ac.uk](mailto:lj311@cam.ac.uk) at the University Library and Fiona Mossman [fam50@cam.ac.uk](mailto:fam50@cam.ac.uk) at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Library. Lindsay and Fiona produce the online version of **CULIB**. The editors may be contacted at [ucam-culib@lists.cam.ac.uk](mailto:ucam-culib@lists.cam.ac.uk).