



Cambridge Library Group

Events for your diary

- 18th April, Peter Hoare: The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain Project, Wolfson College, 5.30 for 6.00 pm.
- 20-21th April: York weekend.
- 7th May: Opening reception for the children's art work from Sri Lanka, Borders Bookshop, 6.00–7.30 pm.
- 29th June: Visit to Norwich Cathedral Library and Millennium Library.
- 11th July: Garden Party at St. Chad's, Grange Road, 6.00-7.30 pm

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Penny Price: Working with original tools and materials in Manuscript reproduction.

The Lloyd Room at Christ's College was alive with colour and richness on 21st February as Penny Price enthralled a large and appreciative audience of members and guests with her vivid descriptions of the medieval techniques she employed in preparing a reproduction of a page from the Metz Pontifical for the 2005 Cambridge Illuminations exhibition. Penny's final manuscript, together with two preparatory leaves, was generously loaned by the Fitzwilliam Museum for the talk and samples of her inks, pigments and tools were also on display.

Penny used slides of her work on the Metz reproduction (slides commissioned by the Fitzwilliam) to illustrate the many stages involved in manuscript production. She makes almost all the inks and paints that she uses and this is invariably very time-consuming. Other materials, such as vellum, are either obtained from a rapidly decreasing number of specialist outlets or are commissioned for specific purposes, often from commercial firms who seem delighted to be asked to use their manufacturing expertise to solve medieval problems.

Penny estimates that the approximately 200 hours she spent on the reproduction would

originally have been shared between about a dozen people and her descriptions of medieval working conditions (which must have resembled car production lines) certainly dispelled any romantic views of manuscript production being a leisurely and peaceful activity undertaken by solitary scribes in the privacy of their cells.

After the talk, the audience was able to look at examples of Penny's work at close quarters and further manuscripts, from East and West, were also on view in a special exhibition in Christ's Old Library which was visited by many members. The Library Group is very grateful to Penny and to Christ's College Library for a most interesting evening that was illuminating in every way.

Ann Keith,
Christ's
College



Penny Price showing some tools and materials

Visit to The Churchill Archives Centre

On a cold February evening a large group of CLG members warmed up in the bar at Churchill College before being welcomed in the Jack Colville Hall by Allen Packwood, Director of the Churchill Archives Centre.

Mr Packwood spoke of the range of Churchill's written work and quoted from his early novel *Savrola* and from *The Dream*, a late piece and an imagined conversation with his father. Churchill's written legacy is part and parcel of his political legacy.

The archive of Churchill's papers consists of 2,500 boxes containing 1 million items, ranging from personal and official correspondence and school reports to drafts of notes. It took 5 archivists 5 years to catalogue the collections. The remit of the archives centre extends to personal papers of other politicians within the Churchill era including Bevan, Thatcher, Kinnock and Enoch Powell and to military papers and naval papers, especially of admirals. It contains a total of 570 collections of private papers covering the

history of the Churchill era and after, documenting all those fields of public life in which Sir Winston Churchill himself played a personal role or took a personal interest. There are also collections of scientific papers of individuals with links to the College including Sir John Crockcroft, Frank Whittle and Bondi. The centre is self funded, has a staff of 12 and includes a conservation workshop. Their website can be found on <http://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/>

After the talk, the group visited the two public exhibition rooms and the strong rooms and viewed a fascinating exhibition, put out by Sophie Bridges and Caroline Herbert, which included photographs, facsimiles of correspondence and examples of document conservation work. Many thanks to all the archives staff who did all the preparation and stayed to explain the exhibits and centre.

Suzan Griffiths,
St Catherine's College

Putting Charles Darwin online



Dr John van Wyhe, Darwin historian at the University of Cambridge, gave us a fascinating insight into the story of how he founded *Darwin Online* and demonstrated how it can be used. *Darwin Online* provides Darwin's complete publications, many handwritten manuscripts and the largest Darwin bibliography and manuscript catalogue ever published. There are also over 180 ancillary texts, from reference works, reviews, obituaries and more.

The Balfour & Newton Libraries, Department of Zoology, offered some copies of Darwin's works for digitizing. As the Librarian of the Balfour Library, I was very keen to see how books "looked" online and was interested to hear Dr van Wyhe explain how the whole project came to fruition. Dr van Wyhe described how he was inspired to make all of Darwin's works accessible in one place when his own efforts to research Darwin at a

university library in Singapore proved to be very difficult. He could only find one of Darwin's books and a web search turned up an incomplete set of electronic works that were missing large quantities of relevant information.

Darwin Online provides one single contents page for all of the types of works included on the website. There are also introductory pages for each type of work, which lead readers to the individual works available - to the text or images, or both side by side. It is also possible to view the actual bindings, which is of value to scholars, booksellers and librarians alike. The format is very user-friendly and allows readers to browse items and to go off at tangents, so they can really explore the works in depth. Alternatively, readers can retrieve a specific work quickly by using the search facility. We were given a useful tip on how to jump quickly to a desired text by selecting 'Ctrl F' and then type a word from the title. We were also shown a non-academic entry gateway, which describes Darwin's major works in a more simplistic way.

Dr van Wyhe explained how usage statistics show the search terminology used to arrive at the website, how long people stay, and count how many of them visit it. He described the huge interest that was shown by the press and the public in the website when *Darwin Online* was first launched. Within the first 24 hours, 400 million people around the world had been told about the website and 4 million actually visited it at a rate of 40 clicks per second. 24 million people have accessed the website to date; there are 25,000 clicks every day.

Dr van Wyhe was asked about *Darwin Online*'s role in the controversial evolutionary debate. He explained how the website can be linked to from many different sources and from completely different angles. It will obviously be used by people on both sides of the debate. Dr van Wyhe suggested that because *Darwin Online* does not make reference to this debate at all, perhaps this is why no one has commented negatively about it in that respect. Dr van Wyhe was also asked about the future goals for *Darwin Online*. He referred to the MP3 files that can be downloaded from the website. These files consist of a computer-generated voice reading Darwin's works aloud. It is hoped that in future more will become available and that some will be read by one of Darwin's ancestors. These files will be of particular use to disabled readers.

Another goal is to gather book reviews of Darwin's works on the website, because it would be good to be able to understand contemporary reactions to Darwin's works when they were first published.

Appeal for volunteers

Would you like to read aloud one of Darwin's works? Darwin online is looking for volunteers to participate in Audio Darwin.

***Website: http://darwin-online.org.uk/audio_darwin.html
Contact: Dr John van Wyhe***

Dr van Wyhe concluded that readers (academic and non-academic) value very highly the free access to cultural and academic materials that *Darwin Online* provides. Scholars will always have to consult the originals, but they would otherwise be difficult to locate and use; now everyone will be able to see them virtually, to begin with.

I was struck by Dr van Wyhe's sheer enthusiasm for Darwin, his works, and how he believes they should be made accessible for everybody. His efforts should be commended and if you have a look at the testimonies posted on the website, you will see how many people have done so already.

Hughes Hall

On 15 March CLG members gathered at Hughes Hall for two enjoyable talks. The president of Hughes Hall Mrs Sarah Squire welcomed us and gave a brief but fascinating introduction to the history of Cambridge's oldest graduate college. Hughes Hall was founded in 1885 as The Cambridge Training College for Women, with a student body of just fourteen. The original accommodation was in two cottages in Newnham. It was named after the first president, Elizabeth Hughes (a graduate of Newnham College) who faced the challenge of setting up the college. Although this was a time of advances in educational opportunities for women there was still a great deal of prejudice about women's training. Hughes successfully established the college and new buildings were erected on the present site in 1895. Hughes Hall has gone from strength to strength and achieved full college status in the University in 2006.

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James Duff Brown and library classification

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The second speaker for the evening was Dr John Bowman, Programme Director for Library and Information Studies at UCL, who was awarded the CILIP Library History Prize for 2006 for his work on classification in British public libraries. The subject of his talk was 'James Duff Brown and library classification'. Brown was an innovative Scottish librarian who, as well as making significant contributions to the development of classification schemes, was responsible for the first open access public library. Born in 1862, James Duff Brown began his library career at the Mitchell Library in Glasgow and later moved to Clerkenwell Public Library. By 1886 there were 125 public libraries in the UK. At this time most were closed access, with books organised using a "numerical in main classes" system, which involved broad subject sections and running numbers. Brown and Henry Quinn wrote an article deploring this system and subsequently produced a scheme which divided classes numerically into sub-sections and sub-sub-sections. This scheme was intended for use in open access libraries, Brown having been impressed by the open access libraries he had visited in America in 1888. In 1894 he reorganised Clerkenwell Library according to his new scheme and made it the first open access library in the UK.

Brown's major achievement was his "Subject Classification", published in 1906. This used letters for main classes and numbers for subdivisions. It worked in the opposite way to the Dewey Decimal Classification which, as an "aspect classification", places different aspects of the same subject

in different areas (such as classifying rabbits in zoology, farming and cookery). Brown's Subject Classification placed all aspects of subjects in the same place, leading to some rather strange classifications, such as music being a sub-section of physics (under acoustics). A major strength of this scheme was the "categorical tables" which provided a way of combining different aspects of a subject.

The use of the Subject Classification spread around the country, with almost 50 libraries adopting it by the late 1930s. The use of Dewey was also spreading rapidly, with 376 libraries using it by 1932. In 1950 the British National Bibliography began publication and used Dewey. After this many libraries switched to Dewey, with Bournemouth thought to be the last library using Brown's scheme in the 1960s. Despite the fact that Dewey is now used almost universally in British public libraries, Brown's contribution to classification remains evident through the continued use of his scheme by some local studies collections. The "categorical tables" allow for place to be given priority as a subject and for specific topics to be added, making the scheme well suited to this kind of collection.

Alice Hine, Divinity

Twelfth Night Party at the Cambridge University Press bookshop



Candace Guite and Chantal Aubin at CUP bookshop

This year I made a new year's resolution to buy fewer books, so it may not have seemed like the best of ideas to go, on a cold, wet, winter evening, to the Cambridge University Press bookshop so early in the year. It seemed like too good an opportunity to miss though - a bookshop, a party, free food and drink, and a CLG event all at the same time! Undaunted by the posters glaring at me from every wall and window telling me that upstairs hundreds of books could be purchased for only two pounds, I was determined to pass the evening without buying anything, though I cheated, having brought no money with me...

In what is becoming an annual event, the staff of the Cambridge University Press bookshop hosted the CLG's Twelfth Night party on the fifth of January this year. Fifty of our members were serenaded with soft classical music (barely audible above the buzz of voices) and treated to wine and very fine canapés, served by Mikey Roberts and Mark Hancock.

CUP hosts Chantal Aubin and Emma Beddoe welcomed us and told us something of the history of the bookshop, but they mostly left their guests to mingle, relax, and browse the shelves. For over an hour we chatted informally (it was refreshing not to have to talk library business), enjoyed the food and drink, and admired the rooms where Tennyson gave readings 150 years ago, and where Thackeray used to lunch. But this weight of tradition - a bookshop has traded on this site for longer than any other in the UK - never intimidated. The bookshop (and the staff need to be thanked for this too) is a relaxing, bright, and spacious place, a perfect location for celebrating the final day of Christmas (though, admittedly, we were a day off!).

Going back into the night, listening to librarians praise the bookshop and its staff, it occurred to me that the reason why the bookshop has been trading since 1581 may not merely be because Cambridge is the kind of place where people give up books for the New Year. It may also have something to do with the fact that Cambridge University Press, by giving us more food than we could eat, a choice of juices and wines (and cheap books!) in a warm place while the rain fell on the cobbles outside, proved themselves to be very astute businesspeople. But perhaps I'm being too cynical - many thanks are due to CUP, and I look forward, as I'm sure many do, to the continuation of this annual tradition.

Colin Higgins, Christ's College