

# FRIENDS OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE LIBRARY NEWSLETTER, January-February 2019



## A word of welcome...

### From John Wagstaff, College Librarian

Dear Library Friends: Welcome to our latest Newsletter! Christmas seems a long time ago now, and the new term is already well under way. This means not only the return of a busy reading room in our Working Library, with hardly any seats available for use by late afternoon; but also the re-opening of the Old Library to visitors on

Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. If you haven't made a New Year's resolution, why not resolve to visit Cambridge in the next few weeks?

In other news: the College has a new set of postcards, available from the Porters' Lodge, that features beautiful images of the Great Gate and Master's Lodge.

If you would like a set (there are four in total), do contact us and we can send some along.

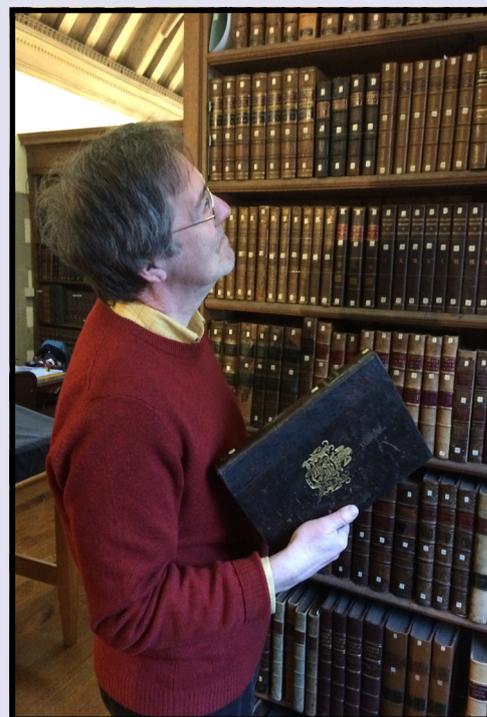
Finally: if you have any ideas for a Library Friends' outing, do contact me via e-mail at [djw210@cam.ac.uk](mailto:djw210@cam.ac.uk). And remember that you can stay in touch with us via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and our blog (just click the link at <http://christstreasures.blogspot.com/>)

## Finding out about Cambridge book bindings

Virtually all of the books in our Old Library collections are bound hardbacks. The majority have what we might term "workaday" bindings, with many bound in brown leather of some sort (usually calf), a few in parchment, and at least two (about which we've written before) in wood. A very large number include "tooling" on front and back boards. Tooling is a form of decoration, at its simplest often occurring as a rectangle of double lines scored into the leather, on front and back covers of a book, but also to be seen in the use of decorative stamps, frequently of stylised plants such as leaves or flowers. It can be "blind" — meaning that just the indentation of the stamps and scoring is visible — or "gold", in which the lines/stamps are filled in with gold leaf.

We recently received a visit from Dr David Pearson, who is carrying out a project to identify book bindings in Cambridge libraries that were actually made in Cambridge. This isn't an easy task, because bookbinders hardly ever signed their work — we learned from David that printers were at the top of the book-production hierarchy, and bookbinders firmly at the bottom, even though at their best they could produce high-quality artisanal work.

David found several items of interest during his visit to us, and plans a return visit soon. In the meantime, you can find out more about his project (including some pictures of "tooling") at <https://specialcollections-blog.lib.cam.ac.uk/?p=16768>. You can also find a handy guide to bookbindings at <https://www.abebooks.co.uk/books/rarebooks/collecting-guide/understanding-rare-books/understanding-bindings.shtml>



*Dr David Pearson among our Old Library bookstacks. Who knows what hidden examples of the work of Cambridge binders they may hold?*

## Cambridge Science Festival — come and see us!

As in previous years, we are pleased to be participating in the Cambridge Science Festival this spring. This year the festival runs from the 11th to the 24th of March, and on Friday and Saturday 22 and 23 March the Old Library will be open from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. so that our visitors — including, we hope, some of our Old Library Friends — can take a look at our “Secrets of Life” exhibition. This year the festival brochure, which you can find at the link:

[https://www.sciencefestival.cam.ac.uk/system/files/csf\\_programme\\_online\\_0.pdf](https://www.sciencefestival.cam.ac.uk/system/files/csf_programme_online_0.pdf),

has as its cover image the *Geological Map of Anglesey*, made by Darwin’s mentor John Stephens Henslow in 1822.



As previously announced, in addition to opening the Old Library during the festival we are also **sponsoring a talk**, by **Dr Gareth Rees** of the Scott Polar Research Institute on the **12th of March at 6 pm**. Entitled “Measuring Nature’s Colours: Hunting for Answers with Darwin and Drones”, it promises to be a popular event, so if you wish to come, please sign up using the Eventbrite link at <https://tinyurl.com/Rees-talk-Mar2019>; or, if you are unable to use that link, contact us at [library@christs.cam.ac.uk](mailto:library@christs.cam.ac.uk) and we will be happy to help. We already have quite a few people registered, so please do not assume that there will be tickets available at the door if you arrive without one.

### The “Sandars Lectures”

This year’s prestigious Sandars Lectures, entitled “The medieval manuscript and its digital image”, are being presented by Dr William Noel, Director of the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, and Director of the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscripts Studies at the University of Pennsylvania Libraries. The lecture series will explore the relationship between manuscript pages and digital images, and between physical collections and digital ones, in addition to examining the importance of interfaces in shaping audience and inquiry. There will be three lectures, as follows:

**Monday 11 March:** Collections  
**Tuesday 12 March:** Interfaces  
**Wednesday 13 March:** Tools



Dr William Noel will present this year’s Sandars Lectures at Corpus Christi College in March

All lectures take place from **5 to 6pm** in the McCrum Lecture Theatre, **Corpus Christi College**, Cambridge, CB2 3QN. This is a free event, with seats offered on a first come-first served basis (prior reservation is not possible). Many distinguished book historians and bibliographers have presented ideas in the Sandars Lectures series since its foundation in 1895, including several associated with Christ’s College, such as current Fellow Professor Jim Secord.

**We would love to hear from you!** If you would like to send us comments about this *Newsletter*, arrange a visit to the College Library, sponsor a book, make a donation, or simply share some memories, please contact us at [library@christs.cam.ac.uk](mailto:library@christs.cam.ac.uk); by telephone at 01223-334950; or by post at Christ’s College Library, St Andrew’s Street, Cambridge CB2 3BU.