

FRIENDS OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE LIBRARY NEWSLETTER, January-April 2020



A word of welcome...

From John Wagstaff, College Librarian

First of all, an apology to all our library Friends for the delay in producing this issue of the Newsletter. Lent was a very busy time for the library, because we were one Library Team member short. However, I'm delighted to report that our new Assistant Librarian, Dr Amy Bowles, joined us on 1 April, so there is no excuse for further delaying the newsletter's production. More about Amy over the page.

It would be tempting to subtitle this Newsletter "The Covid19

edition" (I'm not going to...), and it's certainly true that the library's work has been severely impacted by the virus, as have operations within the College in general. Like so many others I am currently working from home; and both the Old Library and the College's Working Library have been closed and inaccessible to all since 20 March. We are all (mainly successfully, I think) adjusting to this "new normal", which is also having a heavy impact on Christ's students. Final-year students in particular are wondering about

their examinations. As library staff we are finding it hard that we will probably not be able to provide our usual high levels of service in Easter Term; what we can, or cannot, do will very much be dictated by when we can access the library once more.

However, the Library Team is meanwhile (and as usual) making the best of things, and we are managing to stay in touch with each other, including sharing "virtual" tea breaks, by making use of some of today's collaborative technology. O brave new world...

I hope you enjoy this Newsletter. Do keep in touch!

Honouring Arthur Peck

Not many people—even among our Friends, we suspect—know that the main study room of the College's Working Library is officially called the "Arthur Peck" Reading Room. Arthur Leslie Peck (1902-74) was a College man *par excellence*, and in addition to serving as Christ's College's librarian from 1945-61 he busied himself in other areas such as the College gardens. He was, moreover, an enthusiastic morris dancer (being, in fact, a founder member of the Cambridge Morris Group), and following his funeral in the College chapel there was a performance—on the lawn of First Court, no less—by some of the Cambridge men.



Peck was also, it seems, noted for inventing new words, and for joining pairs of words together to produce a new meaning. He regularly sent poems to his friends in College at Christmas, and some of these survive among

the large mass of material in the Lower Old Library known as the "Fellows' Papers" collection.

Professor Geoffrey Martin, Honorary Keeper of the College Archives, recently donated a photograph of Peck, whom he had known well, to the library (see the illustration at left). It has been installed in the Reading Room along with a brass plaque that records the gift and honours Peck the librarian. We have also taken the opportunity to move the original (1970s?) "Arthur Peck Reading Room" sign near the library's entrance door to a better position.

Staff changes

On 1 April we were delighted to welcome Dr Amy Bowles to our team. Amy replaces Samantha (“Sam”) Hughes, who has left us for a new job elsewhere in Cambridge. Amy writes:

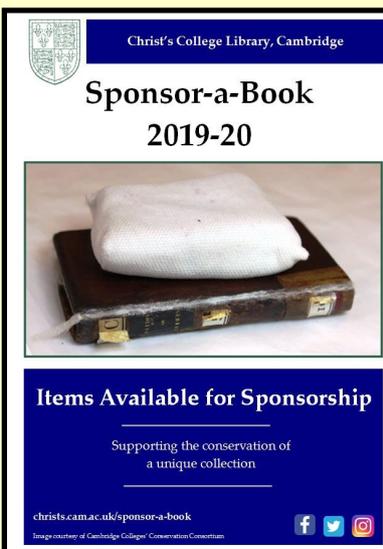
I am thrilled to be joining the library team at Christ’s College. I finished my degree in Library and Information Studies at University College London last year, and I have most recently been working at the British Library as a manuscripts cataloguer and researcher. I am also very happy to be returning to Cambridge, where I previously completed a PhD in English at Girton College. For my doctorate I studied the manuscripts of an early modern scribe named Ralph Crane, who copied works by Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Francis Bacon, and many others. My work looked in particular at the material qualities of Crane’s books, such as their paper, decoration, and bindings. I am delighted to have the chance to work with the rich collections of historic material Christ’s holds in the Old Library, as well as helping to maintain the high levels of service of the Working Library. I am looking forward to meeting many of the library’s Friends in the future!



Dr Amy Bowles is the newest member of the library team at Christ’s. Welcome, Amy!

“Sponsor a Book” scheme being relaunched

Some of our long-time Friends will remember that in recent years the library has run a “Sponsor a Book” scheme, whereby we list a selection of books from the Old Library that are in need of conservation treatment. We didn’t run the scheme in 2018-19, because—thanks to our generous Friends—we actually had a backlog of items from previous years to deal with, and wanted to get these done before sending any more material to our colleagues at the Cambridge Colleges Conservation Consortium. We’re pleased to announce, however, that we will be launching our 2019-20 brochure sometime later this year, and we will of course ensure that everyone on our Friends mailing list sees a copy then.



Our “Sponsor a Book” programme has been running since 2013-14. The front cover of our new brochure for 2019-20 (still in production) is shown here. 2017-18 was a particularly successful year for the programme; we hope to repeat that success in the coming year.

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; by telephone at 01223-334950; or by post at Christ’s College Library, St Andrew’s Street, Cambridge CB2 3BU.