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2021 brought with it a new set of challenges for Cambridge University Libraries. Over the last year, our staff worked tirelessly to provide services to students, staff and readers as the pandemic evolved, continued to support research excellence through exciting new projects, and found innovative ways to share our collections with the world. We owe our Friends a huge thank you for your support, loyalty, and understanding through these extraordinary times.

This year, we’ve successfully run our first digital events alongside some (long-awaited!) in-person ones with Dr Seb Falk and Scott Mandelbrote. We have lots planned for the year ahead too, and our next exhibition opens in the with a Friends Preview in January, and a tour of the exhibition and Collection Care Studio in February. You can find out more information on page 18. We look forward to seeing you again soon, whether that’s in-person or online.

Along with information about some of the major purchases the Friends have supported this year, there are lots of interesting articles highlighting some of the fantastic collections and work taking place at the Library: Dr Kristin Williams on our forthcoming exhibition Samurai: History & Legend; Jacky Cox on the history of the University Library grounds; and Liam Sims discussing William Morris in the library collections. You can also see some of the important work undertaken in our Conservation & Collection Care department too. I hope you enjoy reading.

The Cambridge University Libraries Annual Report will be published online in the new year at lib.cam.ac.uk/AR20-21. A link will be sent via the e-newsletter once the report is live.

On behalf of all us at the University Library, we thank you again for your support, and wish you all the best for Christmas and the new year.

With all best wishes,

Heather Booton
Membership Manager, Cambridge University Libraries
This year, the Friends of Cambridge University Library contributed towards the acquisition of an important text by Isaac Newton - part of a notebook kept by his amanuensis, collaborator, friend, and roommate at Trinity College, John Wickins. The text was believed to be lost, but has now been purchased for the Library with the generosity of the Friends, along with support from Friends of National Libraries, the Murray Family, and Cliff Webb.

The longest example of Newton’s writing to be found in the past 50 years, the text records a University ‘disputation’ in which Newton as a student was required to debate a theological topic – in this case, the compatibility of God’s perfect foreknowledge with human free will. The text was identified by Scott Mandelbrote when the notebook came up for auction this year, with additional research by former Munby Fellow Anke Timmermann of Type & Forme.

John Wickins may not be a household name, but he played an important role in the mathematician’s life and career, copying up his notes, turning their rooms into a laboratory and acting as his unpaid assistant. They worked together on Newton’s third telescope (the ‘Newton-Wickins’ telescope) built 1671-72, the telescope he had by him when he was writing the four Lucasian lectures which appeared in Newton’s Opticks.

Cambridge University Library holds the preeminent collection of scientific and mathematical papers of Sir Isaac Newton. The notebook of John Wickins is a fine complement to this collection, adding significantly to our understanding of Newton and his writings and casting new light on other manuscripts in the Library.

Friends were invited to a talk by Scott Mandelbrote in November this year followed by drinks in the Ghost Words exhibition to celebrate the acquisition.
Colliding Worlds: Art & Science

An oil painting commissioned especially for Cambridge University Library’s *The Rising Tide: Women at Cambridge* exhibition in 2019 has been jointly purchased for the Library by the Friends and Art Fund UK.

The painting by artist Caroline Walker depicts scientists working on lung stem cell research at the Wellcome Trust/Cancer Research UK Gurdon Institute in Cambridge, and reflects Walker’s wider work exploring paintings of women at work. Walker spent time shadowing scientists at the Gurdon Institute, taking photographs and then working with the images in her studio to create a scene which captures the busy environment of a working laboratory.

The painting was part of a series of historic and newly-commissioned portraiture that captured the incredible achievements and fascinating stories of women at Cambridge over centuries for the exhibition.

The painting will soon be rehung in the University Library, itself a laboratory for research, ideas, and curiosity. Walker’s piece is a testament to the productive relationship between arts and science, reflected in the work and collections of the Library and the wider University.

Once the painting has been installed, we look forward to inviting Friends into the building for a special event to mark the acquisition. Keep an eye on our e-newsletter for further details.

*‘Researching Lung Development, Gurdon Institute, 2019’ by Caroline Walker. Oil on linen, 175 x 240 cm.*
Samurai: History & Legend

Dr Kristin Williams, Head of Japanese and Korean Section

*Samurai: History and Legend* explores the historic roots and the literary image of the samurai in manuscripts and woodblock-printed books from Japan. This exhibition of treasures from the University Library’s collection of rare Japanese books has been a long time coming. It will open in January 2022, nearly two years after the spring 2020 opening that was originally planned. This will be the first major public exhibition based on the collection, more than 100 years after most of the Library’s historic Japanese books and manuscripts arrived in 1911 and 1912.

The samurai is an image of Japan that is familiar to many in the United Kingdom. I hope that the exhibition will inspire visitors to broaden their understanding of Japanese history and culture—starting with the samurai but not ending there. I want to encourage visitors to question their assumptions about Japan while they explore and examine the rare books and objects in the exhibition. We may think of weaponry and armour when we think of samurai, but there was more to the story. Especially in the later centuries of the samurai, they were not necessarily fighting but rather identified as a social class with certain expectations for literacy, learning, and the practice of certain skills and arts.

The UL has thousands of titles and many more volumes of Japanese rare books and manuscripts, so it was difficult to choose less than sixty for this exhibition. The exhibition includes highlights from our lavishly illustrated Japanese books from the 17th to 19th centuries, such as volumes of the Hokusai Manga and a colourful miniature book showing cats in costume. It also includes some of the older and rarer items in our historic collections: early documents related to Kōfukuji Temple in Nara, Japan, and a manuscript of the Lotus Sutra copied out in gold.

The exhibition highlights a few historical periods and characters and follows them through multiple genres and centuries. Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159–1189), is one character we focused on as an example of a historical figure who became a legend. His story grew far beyond the basic facts of his life as it evolved over the centuries, through ballads, tales, theatre, popular literature, and board games. A few pages of history became hundreds of pages of novels and many scenes in popular theatre.
Many of the Japanese books came to Cambridge with the collection of William George Aston (1841-1911). Among those were books Aston received from Sir Ernest Mason Satow (1843-1929). Aston and Satow went to Japan in the 1860s and learned the Japanese language to support the British diplomatic mission in Japan. They became serious scholars of Japanese culture, and they were among the first to introduce Japanese literature and history to an English-speaking audience. The margins of their books show traces of their attempts to learn the language and history. I’m inspired to think of the devotion and hard work it must have taken to be some of the first English speakers ever to become fluent in Japanese.

By translating classics of Japanese literature and introducing Japanese history in English, they brought the world a bit closer together. We are thankful today to have some of the books they collected for their research as the foundation of the Cambridge Japanese collections.

Samurai: History & Legend opens in January 2022 in the Milstein Exhibition Centre at the University Library with a Friends Preview on Friday 21 January 2021.
The appearance in mid-April of food trucks in front of the University Library is only the most recent innovative use of the grounds in a crisis. During World War II, the need to keep people fed and the need to keep people safe also had an impact on our outdoor space.

While the Tea Room had been popular since its opening in 1934, WWII resulted in staff shortages and restrictions on lighting, necessitating a reduction in Library opening hours. Early on, it became impossible to maintain the Tea Room’s lunchtime service. Customers dwindled to staff consuming coffee and biscuits midmorning; unsurprisingly, the venture ran at a loss. For nourishment, the staff at least could look beyond the library walls. The government’s 1941 ‘Dig for Victory’ campaign, which encouraged people to grow their own food at a time of rationing, saw domestic gardens across the country given over to fruit and vegetable growing.
Public parks and other large open spaces were also transformed. The Library grounds were no different; the lawns to the west of the Library (now occupied by the staff carpark) were turned into allotments for staff. Such was their popularity in the face of continued rationing in peacetime, they continued in use until 1950.

As early as 1938, library administrators were thinking about precautions against air-raids, gas attacks and building collapse in the event of war, and planning for emergency evacuation. By September 1939, they reported that ‘a trench capable of holding some 120 people has been dug on the lawn on the west side of the Library … equipped with seats, gas curtains, picks, shovels, hurricane lamps and matches. It has a splinter-proof headcover and the entrances are sandbagged’. A memorandum of 6 September cautioned that ‘in the event of a warning being sounded during Library hours there must not be an unseemly rush for the trenches by the staff’.

The lived experience of hostilities revealed Cambridge not to be a target. Fire-watchers remained on duty throughout the War in case of accidental outbreak, but no use was ever made of the trench shelters. Indeed, by January 1943 the Library Secretary, H.C. Stanford, reported ‘they have caved in … the woodwork is in some places overgrown with a blanket of fungus and everywhere needs a coat of creosote; the entrances are crumbling and better ventilation is called for’. Even in pristine condition they would have proved too flimsy. Blitz bombing had demonstrated the greater protection afforded by the ground floor of a solidly constructed building, such as the iron framed UL itself. Stanford recommended they be filled in.

Over the last 85 years, the University Library’s seven-acre site has been laid to lawn, just like the precincts of a College, dug up and laid to lawn again. Lockdown saw wildflowers blur the precision of traditional landscaped gardening, and disruption to the norms of Library life has prompted enduring change this time. In November last year, staff from across the Library planted bulbs around the trees at the front of the building to create opportunities for a greater diversity of flora and fauna.
The Darwin Archive contains a wide variety of loose sheet papers, often in diverse formats and frequently found in specific combinations. Letters are kept together with drawings and envelopes are found with dried botanical specimens. This presents a challenge for conservators in how best to safely store these items together whilst providing easy access for readers.

Fasciculing is a technique developed at the Bodleian Library in the 1980s. It is a method of storing loose, single, or double sheet papers in pamphlet-style bindings made up of blank, archival quality paper sheets. Paper guards are added between each page to compensate for the depth of the items attached, meaning there is no uneven bulk or gaping of the fascicule cover.

The fascicules can be modified to suit each inserted item; if the item is thicker additional compensating guards can be added to achieve the correct thickness. Loose papers can be attached using a hinge of Japanese paper and wheat starch paste onto the pages of the fascicule.

In DAR 166, DAR 176, DAR 177 and DAR 178, there were several extremely fragile letters which, due to poor storage conditions prior to coming into the University Library, were severely degraded by damp, mould, and insects. The first step was to piece together and align the loose fragments of letters followed by applying a lining sheet to provide the strength and flexibility lost by the original paper sheet.

Iron gall writing ink widely used in the 19th century corrodes in the presence of moisture, so a remoistenable lining paper reactivated with ethanol was chosen to reduce the amount of moisture introduced during treatment. Several different weights of remoistenable tissue were made up using Japanese fibre tissues, to allow for use on the different weights of letters requiring treatment. The adhesive was then activated with ethanol on the vacuum table, fixing the lining paper to the letter. The most fragile letters, requiring further support and protection, were encapsulated in an archival polyester sleeve using the ultrasonic weld.

Our Conservation and Collections Care team have been hard at work throughout 2021, undertaking vital work on items across Cambridge University Libraries including fragile letters and plant specimens in the Darwin Archive.
Lining a fragmented letter from DAR 166 on the vacuum table. Ethanol swabs are used to reactivate the remoistenable repair tissue. Ethanol is then drawn through the letter into the table, meaning the moisture is in contact with the letter for as little time as possible.

Once conservation treatment was complete, the letters and plant specimens could be hinged into their fascicules. New pages were added by cutting to size sheets of a handmade white laid paper, piercing sewing holes and sewing using a linen thread coated with beeswax.

A Japanese tissue and wheat starch paste were used to apply a hinge directly to the left edge of the more robust lined letters. The hinges on the encapsulated letters and specimens were pasted into the fascicules using a mixture of wheat starch paste and EVA.

The conservation and fasciculing of these damaged letters and specimens have made them accessible for readers and able to be safely digitised for the first time.
2021 marks 130 years since the founding of William Morris’s Kelmscott Press. The University Library is lucky to hold extensive collections relating to William Morris, one of the most influential cultural thinkers and makers in Victorian Britain, including books from his workshop and typographical equipment in its Historical Printing Room collections.

Morris was born in 1834 and was strongly influenced by medievalism during his time at Oxford University in the 1850s. As part of the Birmingham Set (a group at Oxford who played a significant part in the Arts & Crafts movement) Morris met Edward Burne-Jones and other individuals with interests in the visual arts with whom he would go on to work. He went on to become known for his furniture, stained glass, wallpaper and – towards the end of his life – book production.

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, printing books was a job done entirely by hand using presses little changed in their design for centuries. But with increasing mechanisation, book production prioritised efficiency and speed over beauty. In 1891 Morris rented a cottage near Kelmscott House and set up three printing presses. His approach to printing and publishing embodied his reverence for traditional materials and craftsmanship as a way of fighting back against the forces of industrialisation and mass production. From 1891 to 1896 Morris’s press produced some fifty-three titles, in an estimated 22,000 copies, from slim volumes to huge folios.

As a collector of medieval manuscripts and early printed books, Morris was influenced by the great attention paid by their creators to lettering, type, sign, imagery and binding. One of the most interesting copies of a Kelmscott book held at the University Library is a set of proof sheets of the edition of the Old English epic poem Beowulf (1895), presented to the Library in 1904 and now fully digitised on the Cambridge Digital Library. The text derived from oral tradition, telling the tale of Beowulf, a mythical warrior hero who slayed the monster Grendel by tearing
off its arm, dispatching Grendel’s vengeful mother, and finally, much later and advanced in years, being killed by a dragon.

Its handmade paper was made of linen rags and bound with vellum, and Morris commissioned a new font for his edition of Beowulf called Troy, which was used in conjunction with another font called Chaucer. The ink, specially commissioned from a German manufacturer, was so thick on the page that the workers at the Kelmscott Press threatened to strike in protest.

Morris was assisted in his translation by a Christ’s College scholar of Anglo Saxon, Alfred Wyatt, Morris versifying Wyatt’s literal account. The proofs – whose decorative borders and initials show Morris’s medieval inspiration – bear extensive annotations and corrections in Morris’s hand, along with smudges, thumb prints and even a ring of what appears to have been a tea cup.

The proofs had been in the possession of Robert Proctor, a bibliographer at the British Museum who worked extensively on early printed books. Proctor met Morris in 1894 and was both an avid collector of Kelmscott books and nurtured interests in areas in which Morris chose to publish.

He even served as an executor of Morris’s estate. Tragically Proctor never returned from a walking holiday in the Austrian Alps in 1903 and in the following year, his mother presented the proofs to the Library in memory both of her son and of Morris, as shown by her inscription and Proctor’s bookplate inside.

The typographical equipment pictured below is part of a collection of Kelmscott material acquired by Cambridge University Press in 1940 and since deposited with us. These include the punches and matrices for his Troy, Chaucer and Golden types, and cases of type for each face. We also hold two of the wood and brass paper moulds made specially for Morris’s use, and a small stock of his ‘Flower’ paper. These sit alongside extensive typographical collections held by the Library, including the eighteenth-century punches for John Baskerville’s type, the Brook type from the Eragny Press, and punches for Eric Gill’s Perpetua and Joanna types.

One hundred and thirty years after the foundation of Kelmscott Press, interest in Morris’ ‘typographical adventure’, as he called it, remains high. Collectors still seek out his books and libraries continue to acquire them, to tell the story of one man’s campaign to bring beauty back to the world of book production.
Acceptance in Lieu & Cultural Gifts

Over the last couple of years, we've been pleased to acquire a number of important items via the UK Government's Acceptance in Lieu and Cultural Gifts Schemes, including The Stephen Hawking Archive, and two leaves from the autograph manuscript of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.

The Acceptance in Lieu Scheme allows taxpayers to transfer important works of art, heritage objects, and cultural artefacts into public ownership, while paying Inheritance Tax. Not only will an offer in lieu normally be of greater financial benefit to the owner than an open market sale that entails payment of tax, but it also ensures that assets of national importance are preserved, in the UK, for the public benefit.

The Cultural Gifts Scheme enables UK taxpayers to donate important heritage objects, including manuscripts and archives, for the benefit of the public and the nation, while receiving a tax reduction based on a percentage of the value of the gift.

It is also possible to offer these items conditional on them being allocated to a particular institution – including Cambridge University Library. You may have assumed that these schemes are only relevant to you if you own a Rembrandt, but this actually isn’t so. The Schemes actively welcome more modest offers, so long as they involve objects of ‘preeminent national importance’, on the grounds of national, scientific, historic or artistic interest. Archives and manuscripts are often accepted. Rare books can be, though they need to be books which are objects of study in their own right – so you could offer a collection of eighteenth-century pamphlets, or the annotated proofs of an important novel, but not a working library of modern books.

Both schemes ensure owners of important objects and collections will be able to see their objects placed in appropriate institutions during their lifetime to be held in perpetuity for the public to enjoy. We’d be very pleased to talk to you about potential donations of items or collections; do get in touch at friends@lib.cam.ac.uk.
Ways to Support Us

Friend of Friend
Growing the Friends is key to ensuring our long-term sustainability, and it is often through word of mouth that others are encouraged to join. If you know someone who would be interested in joining the Friends, let us know and you are welcome to bring them along to one of our events as a guest. You can also purchase gift memberships (or last-minute Christmas presents!) that can be sent either to yourself or to the recipient.

Become a Patron
Our Patrons group support some of the most crucial work at the University Library. Patrons have previously funded activities including the conservation of a medieval manuscript, cataloguing and digitisation of important scientific archives, and public exhibitions. If you have an idea you’d like to talk to us about, get in touch and we can work with you on a project you're interested in.

Leave a Legacy
You can support the important role the University Library plays in preserving and sharing our nation's heritage by leaving a gift in your will and securing the future of the University Library. We have ambitious plans to develop the Library in the coming years as a global institution and curator of knowledge and culture. However small or large, your gift will make a difference for generations to come.

Make a Donation
The University Library wouldn’t exist as it does today without the generosity of our Friends. Donations to the Friends support our own activities along with providing assistance to the University Library.

You can donate online or via cheque made out to "University of Cambridge" and posted to University Library, West Road, Cambridge, CB3 9DR.
Upcoming Events

We have an exciting year ahead planned with exhibition previews, tours, talks and visits! The best way to stay in the loop about our events programme is to sign up to our monthly e-newsletter list, by emailing friends@lib.cam.ac.uk. You can also find our event listings at www.lib.cam.ac.uk/friends/friends-events.

Our Friends are also invited to enjoy our public programme of events and exhibitions, which you can find online at www.lib.cam.ac.uk/whats-on.

Please note that the events below reflect our current plans. However, at present, we do not know how the following months may unfold, and how current University and government guidance will reflect the changing context. With this in mind, we may need to amend or cancel in-person events should the coronavirus situation develop. Any changes will be communicated to you as soon as possible. We thank you for your understanding.

Library Choir's Christmas Carols

Weds 15 & Fri 17 December 2022, 12PM
Online & In-Person

We are delighted that Cambridge University Libraries Choir, led by conductor (and Rare Books Librarian) Will Hale will be going ahead in-person this year! The short performance will be held outside on the steps of the University Library, weather-permitting, on Wednesday 15 and Friday 17 December at 12PM. The choir are fundraising this year for Addenbrookes Charitable Trust. If you are in Cambridge, please do stop by for some carols and festive cheer.

For those who can’t make this year, we will be sharing a recording of the performance via our Friends mailing list.

FREE / No RSVP required

▲ “God Rest You, Merry Gentlemen” from Husk’s Songs of the Nativity (M250.c.85.41)
Friends Preview
Samurai: History & Legend

Fri 21 January 2022, 4-7PM
Milstein Exhibition Centre

Be the first to see our latest exhibition! On Friday 21 January 2022, Friends are invited to an exclusive preview of our latest exhibition, Samurai: History & Legend, before it opens to the public. The exhibition will open at 4PM with drinks served at 5PM. There won’t be speeches this time, but our curatorial and exhibition team will be on hand to talk about the exhibition and answer any questions.

FREE
RSVP by emailing friends@lib.cam.ac.uk or calling 07510 926164.

Lives and Legends of the Samurai

Weds 9 February 2022, 11AM - 1PM
Milstein Exhibition Centre

Join Head of Japanese Collections and exhibition curator, Dr Kristin Williams, and Exhibitions Conservator, Rachel Sawicki, for this tour of Samurai: History and Legend and the Conservation & Collection Care Studio. Discover the samurai and their world through the incredible Japanese collections of the University Library and beyond, and hear about some of the special conservation techniques needed to display these objects. The tour will be followed by refreshments with Rachel & Kristin.

Tickets are £5 and can be booked online at https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/friends/friends-events