



BRASENOSE COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



Brazen Nose October 2010

Library report

This library has been even more popular than ever this year. Fortunately pressure on reader places was somewhat alleviated by being able to use the Old Cloisters (formerly known as HCR) as a library reading room. While it took a little while for people to get used to the somewhat stark room set up of simple tables and chairs, it soon became popular with those wishing to spread out a little more than the desks in the Main library permit. The relaxed seating area was also a popular feature. Having had taster of the additional space many students are already looking forward to the time when the Old Cloisters will become a fully integrated part of the BNC library.

Earlier in the year we appointed our first JCR library representative and we are currently seeking a graduate library representative. This is an exciting new move and will engender improved communication between students and library staff. With the library expansion on the horizon it is crucial that we fully understand the needs and changing study patterns of our members. Historically an undergraduate library, with ever increasing numbers of graduates we have to be sure to address their needs too and we look forward to this challenge. In Michaelmas we also sought our first subject library representatives and envisage a fruitful relationship to benefit all parties.

We have been liaising successfully with Schools and Publications Officer, Dr Joe Organ, in order to extend our reach in communicating library information to our Members. Dr Organ has taken over editorial responsibility for the BNC webpages and together we have worked on a few additions to the library webpages, notably a "Library Notices" section where people can expect to find news of activities affecting the library, recommended library and information training courses and also access a list of recent purchases via a link to LibraryThing. Library Assistant, Lianne Smith, has recently developed a Brasenose Library presence on Facebook which in addition to comments and notices offers a quick link to SOLO. We have further ideas to expand the content of the webpages and Facebook.

We are delighted that the Schools and Publications Officer has recognized the library as central to the College both physically and as an integral part of the system of study and learning offered by Brasenose; the jewel in the crown. Since September 2009 the library has seen a steady flow of 6th formers through the library. Parents and prospective students alike are invariably thrilled to see the beautiful space and witness it as a working library.

For the second year running we made a short video for student induction. The success of the video made for Michaelmas 2009 spurred us to ask Classics and English student Harry Ford to pen something for us once more. This year he enlisted the help of Modern Languages finalist Ellie Buchdahl and English second year Richard O'Brien to play key parts in the film noir parody which also featured the College Archivist. Once again Lianne Smith was camerawoman and editor of the film. It was, by necessity, filmed in a matter of hours but the enthusiasm of those involved made it possible. Freshers appeared to appreciate this alternative style of induction; they laughed in the right places and correctly answered the questions at the end about using the library, thus demonstrating that they had taken in key information while being entertained.

(The video may be viewed on YouTube)

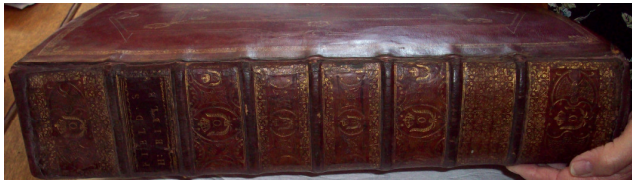
A small but important project on which we have embarked this year is the replacement of volumes in the Loeb series of books. Many of these well used texts had seen better days and with the help of graduate Chris Tudor we identified the key items for replacement. The books replaced thus far have been purchased using money from the Reynolds Fund which became available to us this year. We still have a long way to go but would like to replace as many worn out Loeb's as possible and also to add to and improve our collection if possible.

We are happy to report that the cataloguing of the Yarborough Collection (books that belonged to Principal Yarborough) has been completed. Our cataloguer, Sophie Floate, who is funded by alumnus Paul Lloyd has moved on to another section of the books located in Basement XII.



Every year we are visited by researchers from outside the University as well as those from within Oxford. Their interests vary widely but of particular note this year was a request to view a fore-edge painting by Samuel Mearne, bookbinder, on Holy Bible, Cambridge, 1660, provenance: Given by John Dolben, Bishop of Rochester and Clerk of the Closet, 1666. The researcher, Jeanne Landman, is writing a book on fore-edge painting and wanted to include an image of what is apparently a rare and early example of fore-edge painting. It was a joy to meet Ms Landman and share in her enthusiasm for fore-edge painting. Had she not

requested a visit to the library we might not have been aware of this wonderful book within our collection. We envisage discovering more treasures as we slowly but surely get around to cataloguing all of our older and antiquarian books on OLIS.



Delighted though she was to view the painting she ultimately decided not to include a photograph of it in her book, commenting: "My reason for the decision is that the edge is 18-inches long and the image would be anywhere from 7

to 9-1/2-inches long. My feeling is that this vast reduction would not show the painting to its best advantage. It would merely look like the other fore-edge paintings from much smaller books and it deserves more. It is, indeed, a wonderful item".

One of our most exciting projects of the year has been that of replacing the library chairs which had certainly seen better days. The replacement could not come too soon as exam pressure had taken its toll and the vast majority of the chairs had worn through to the foam which then rapidly disintegrated making for a rather uncomfortable seat, not to mention an unsightly appearance.



The old chairs were not in any condition to last another term and have now been replaced by fantastic, robust, bespoke chairs that are completely in keeping with their surroundings and will last for decades. We hope that the fabulous embossed "nose" on the chair backs and the "naming" plaques will make them a rather special library asset. Yes, they were expensive and yes we do need sponsors for them, but judging from the favourable comments and just how wonderful they look in place, we feel that they are already a great success and an asset to the library.



The final initiative to report on is the box scheme for students who wish to leave work in the library which was introduced in Michaelmas 2010. Owing to severe pressure on work spaces it became necessary to devise a scheme that still allowed work to be left in the library yet didn't involve piles of work left on desks for days on end. The rented box system has proved successful, and together with the marvellous new chairs, the effect on the overall appearance of the library is incredible. Our beautiful, user-friendly library now looks a little more loved and even more conducive to study.

College Librarian
October 2010