

## THE OLD LIBRARY & COLLEGE ARCHIVES IN FIRST COURT



**MAGDALENE COLLEGE'S OLD LIBRARY** has been somewhat overshadowed by the Pepys Library, and as a result has not been as greatly appreciated as an important and distinguished collection in its own right.\*

### **THE COLLEGE HAS KEPT BOOKS**

in First Court since it had any to keep, and in its present location since about 1850. It is housed in



handsome rooms with oak shelving. The outer room was designed by Stephen Dykes Bower (the architect in charge of Westminster Abbey and St Edmundsbury Cathedral) in 1966.

**THE INNER ROOM** was built in 1927 by Harry Redfern (who also designed Mallory Court B) and it is probably the only purpose-built library room in College.

**THE OLD LIBRARY** consists mainly of about 6,000 volumes, almost all of them pre-1835



and leather bound, creating an impressive visual impact. Many volumes have separate items bound in, so the number of titles is nearer 8,000.

Notable among many bequests are the books

of Dr Peter Peckard (Master, 1781-97), whose memorial brass adorns the first stack-end. One of the oldest and most splendid books is the Nuremberg Chronicle (1493), a universal history; but there are also early editions of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales (Pynson, 1492), and Aesop's Fables (Wynkyn de Worde, 1503). About a quarter of the sixteenth-century books are not represented in any other Cambridge library, while the collection of Puritan and early eighteenth-century political and theological tracts and sermons is unrivalled in the university.



GEORG BRAUN CIVITATES ORBIS TERRARUM  
Printed in Köln and Antwerp from about 1572, with numerous hand-coloured maps and town plans including these two images of Genoa and Florence.

**AMONG MANY OTHER TREASURES**, there are first editions of Harvey's epoch-making treatise on the circulation of the blood (1628), Newton's Optics (1704), and, among more modern books, James Joyce's Ulysses (Paris, 1922).

There are also magnificent map-volumes by Gerard Mercator (1512-1594, the first to use the term 'atlas') and John Speed (1552-1629); together with a pair of eighteenth-century globes, terrestrial and celestial, by John Senex.

\*See: A N L Munby, *Cambridge College Libraries* (1970), p. 28.

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Of the **SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**, four stand out:

the medieval manuscripts (some three dozen in number), the extensive Ferrar Papers (seventeenth- and eighteenth-century documents of the Virginia Company and Little Gidding), the I A Richards Collection (books, papers, and Chinese artefacts (*see above*), scrolls and photographs), and the books and manuscripts of T S Eliot (Honorary Fellow).



The Old Library also houses **RECORDS OF THE COLLEGE**. The more important parts of the College Archives are kept in the inner room. They start appropriately enough with a manuscript copy of the original Statutes (1555), followed by Fellows' and Scholars' admission registrations from 1575, and others from 1644, including a record (*see foot of this column*) of the admission of Samuel Pepys. There are numerous estate deeds of College property from the sixteenth century onwards; our Buttery records (*see right*) are

continuous from 1657, general accounts from 1696, and student files from 1912 (the latter kept in store on the other side of the road). The Archives also contain many private papers of several Masters and Fellows, and Alumni; those of the writer A C Benson and the mountaineer George Mallory attract particular interest.

The Irish political leader C S Parnell, and the Professorial Fellow of Magdalene C S Lewis are also represented.



There is a fine collection of **MODERN PHOTOGRAPHS** of College buildings, portraits, and events.

### **OPENING HOURS**

**The Old Library is normally open during Full Term on Thursdays from 11.45am to 12.45pm and at other times by arrangement. We welcome visits and enquiries by students, scholars and other readers.**



**NEW EXHIBITIONS** exploring the treasures of the Old Library and the College Archives are held regularly.

Those scheduled for 2014 to 2015 include:

**Michaelmas Term 2014** *The Bicentenary of the introduction of the Gospel to New Zealand:*

*Samuel Marsden and the Magdalene Missionaries*

**Lent Term 2015** *50th Anniversary of the death of T S Eliot (Honorary Fellow of Magdalene College)*

**Easter Term 2015** *The Manuscripts of the Old Library – an exhibition as a prelude to the Launch of the on-line Catalogue in September 2015*

**Michaelmas Term 2015** *Student Life seen through the Archives*

Please feel free to contact **THE OLD LIBRARY TEAM** to arrange a visit or to make an enquiry.

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