

The Old Schools Quadrangle. Below, Christmas tree and the Tower of the Five Orders

As the Bodleian Library prepares for the opening of the £80m Weston Library, Linora Lawrence continues her all-access tour around this celebrated institution

An a-Z of the Bodleian



Q is for Quadrangle (Old Schools), the historic heart of the University of Oxford. If you were stopped by a visitor to Oxford asking ‘We are only in the city for two hours, where is the university campus?’ what would you answer?

You would probably explain that there is no central campus because the university developed ‘collegiately’ over 800 years.

Then, realising they want a ‘taste’ of Oxford and a memory to take away with them you might tell them to walk down Broad Street, turn right between the Clarendon Building and the Sheldonian Theatre, taking in the view of Hertford Bridge (popularly called the Bridge of Sighs) on their left and walk through the arch opposite into the Old Schools Quadrangle where they will feel they have stepped back 400 years.

Once in the Old Schools Quadrangle the first question is why the name? The answer is that the quad was built, at Bodley’s suggestion, to replace the higger-mugger that was Schools Street (on the same site), with a formal and prestigious set of buildings to be the university’s centre for teaching and examining. This would be housed on the first two floors with the library occupying the third.

Since about 1880 the library has occupied the whole building. Designed by Sir Henry Savile, building work began a year after Bodley’s death, in 1614, and took five years to complete. The inscriptions over the doors round the sides list the whole course of a medieval education.

The foundation subjects were the seven Liberal Arts and a student in the 17th century would have had to spend seven years studying

these in order to become a Master of Arts (effectively a licence to teach). The doors led to what we today would call lecture rooms, but in those days were called schools, some upstairs on the first floor, hence the names of four subjects appearing over the doors which originally had staircases to the upper floor.

Unlike today when a student chooses a particular subject, or combination of subjects, to study, the only choice your medieval scholar would have had to make on becoming an MA would be which of the three superior faculties he might study after completing his foundation course – Jurisprudentæ (law), Medicinæ (medicine) or, the greatest he could aspire to, Theologiæ (theology).

The student would, of course, have been 14 or so when he came up to Oxford and was expected to already have Latin.

‘Tongues’ meant the study of Greek and Hebrew, and Natural Philosophy covered what much of what today we know as science.

The Tower of the Five Orders on the east side of the quadrangle is named after the five orders of architecture as exemplified in the columns which are Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite. It contains a statue of King James I, shown presenting his works to Fame and the University (a popular Renaissance concept).

The statue that stands before the Proscholium (the entrance to the Divinity School) is not of Thomas Bodley, but of his great contemporary benefactor to the library and the quadrangle, William Herbert, the third Earl of Pembroke (who was also Chancellor of Oxford University 1617-30) thus proving, if proof were needed, that Bodley knew a thing or two about fundraising.

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Ris for Radcliffe, Dr John Radcliffe and all things Radcliffe. It sounds like a quiz question, but just how many things in Oxford are named after Dr John Radcliffe?

Radcliffe was born in Wakefield, probably in 1650 though there is some doubt as to the precise date. What is certain is the date of his death, All Saints Day, November 1, 1714, and his magnificent legacy to Oxford.

The son of the governor of the Wakefield House of Correction, Radcliffe was educated at Wakefield Grammar School and then came up to University College in March, 1666, the year of the Great Fire of London.

He came to an Oxford in which Robert Boyle was creating Boyle's Law and Sir Christopher Wren, then Savilian Professor of Astronomy, had just been commissioned by Gilbert Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of the University, to design a building in which graduation and degree ceremonies would take place. This was to become the Sheldonian Theatre.

Radcliffe obtained his BM in 1675 and started practicing medicine in Oxford. From the start he proved to be an instinctive diagnostician, often recommending fresh air and not bleeding his patients – a standard treatment of the day.

He did not worry about offending his medical colleagues and apothecaries and was often quite rude to his patients, be they rich or poor. He became known for saving the lives of people with smallpox, which probably sealed his claim to fame.

After obtaining his MD in 1682 he moved to London in 1684, where he lived first of all in Bow Street, Covent Garden and then in Bloomsbury. He became physician to Princess Anne, daughter of James II, and attended various members of the royal family over the years.

Sadly he was castigated for not attending (Queen) Anne on her deathbed, but he was ill himself and they both died in the same year, 1714.

Radcliffe's will left large sums of money to Oxford as well as some to St Bartholomew's Hospital in London for the provision of good food and clean bed linen for the patients, again proving he knew what contributed to a person's recovery.

The Radcliffe Trust was formed from the Radcliffe's residual estate and still exists today and with an investment portfolio greatly enhanced by the sale, in 1970, of agricultural holdings which Dr Radcliffe had bought in 1713. They were acquired to become the new town of Milton Keynes. Radcliffe also left money to support two medical travelling fellowships.

An old friend of *Oxfordshire Limited Edition*, Sir Roger Bannister, was a Radcliffe travelling fellow.

The Radcliffe Camera was originally known as Dr Radcliffe's Library and the books were not medical or scientific.

Radcliffe had specified that £40,000 be set aside for the building of a library next to the Bodleian and indeed Wren's pupil Nicholas Hawksmoor drew up plans for it, but he died in 1736 and it was left to the Scottish architect, James Gibbs, to revise them and give us the neo-classical design we know so well today.

The Radcliffe Science Library in Parks Road was opened in 1901 and the books (which for the past 50 years or so had all been scientific



John Radcliffe, by Sir Godfrey Kneller

Photograph: Copyright Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford

were transferred there. An additional wing was opened in 1934.

A new name had to be found for what was now a rather grand reading room of the Bodleian and it became known as the Radcliffe Camera (camera = room).

The Radcliffe Observatory was founded after the Camera. Thomas Hornsby, the then Savilian Professor of Astronomy, having just observed the transit of Venus across the sun's disc in 1769 from an upper room in the Bodleian's tower, proposed to the trust that Oxford should have a dedicated working observatory.

He also said he could not continue to do his job properly without such a building. Opening in 1773, important astronomical and meteorological work continued to be done

there until 1934 when the Observatory transferred ownership, first to Lord Nuffield for his Institute for Medical Research and, secondly, when the institute moved to the John Radcliffe Hospital in 1979, to Green Templeton College.

The Radcliffe Infirmary, built with funds provided by the Radcliffe Trust, on land given by Oxford's MP, Thomas Rowney, opened its doors on St Luke's Day, 1770. It finally closed in 2007 when the last departments transferred 'up the hill' and the site was sold to the University of Oxford.

There is so much to learn about Radcliffe's life and times and, happily, the Bodleian is marking the 300th centenary of his death with an exhibition mounted by curator, Stephen Hebron, who has written a book, *Dr Radcliffe's*

Library, which was published to coincide with the opening of the exhibition on November 28. Oh, and the gift shop sells Radcliffe Camera bookends.

S is also for shop – the Bodleian Gift Shop, which is a box of delights and full of truly original gifts, a high proportion of which are inspired by items in the Bodleian's collections.

It is to be found in the Old Schools Quadrangle. Interestingly, when the chosen room was fitted out to serve as a shop it was revenue from some of the *Harry Potter* filming (Duke Humfrey's Library was Hogwarts library and the Divinity School was the infirmary) that paid for it.

This seems rather apt as some people feel that finding the shop is a bit like trying to visit Diagon Alley if you do not know how to get there. Greetings cards and gift wrap, many of them featuring images of vintage book covers, are bestsellers.

You can buy anything from a bar of chocolate labelled 'Writer's Block' to the curator's chair, a true copy of a chair especially designed for the Library. New this year is Baby Bod, a child-sized version of the chair and new literary jewellery ranges.

Library-themed gifts include the 'Silence Please' collection which includes mugs and coasters; items based on the Tradescant botanical images; jewellery, including beautiful Japanese Nightingale earrings, scarves and, naturally, books, for both children and adults.

What is new and trending? Well, hands-up who knows about Margo Selby. Margo, who trained at Chelsea College of Art and Design and the Royal College of Art, is a weaver who has created three-dimensional fabrics that have become her trademark.

November sees the launch of *Bibliotheca* – a collaboration between the Bodleian and Margo Selby. Look out for fashion accessories and beautiful textiles for the home.

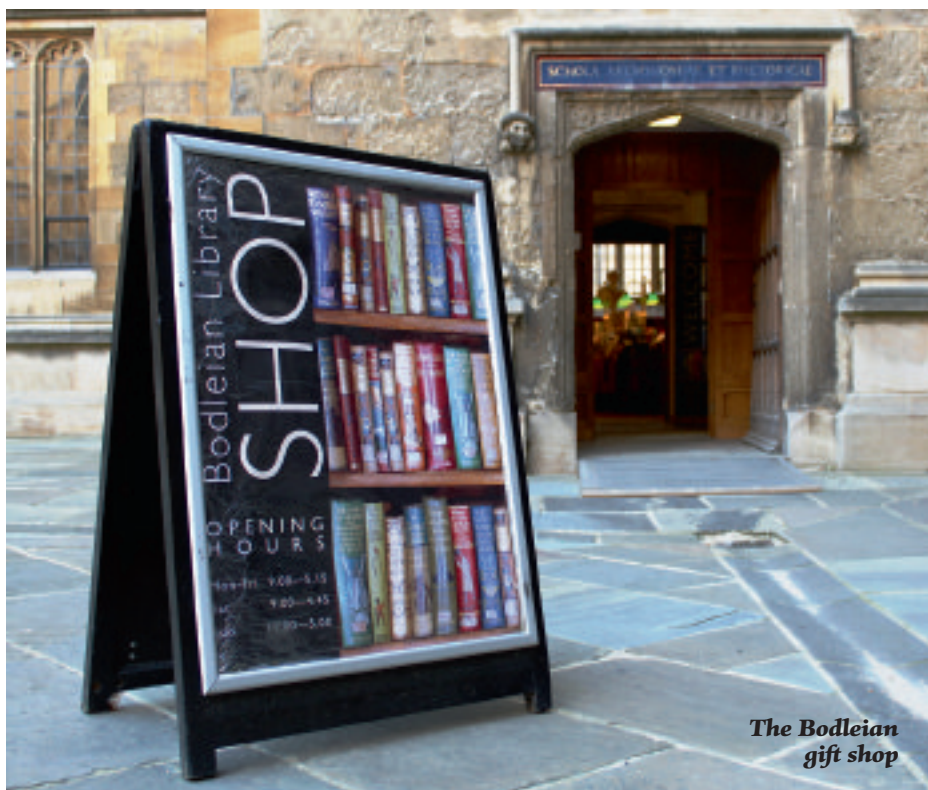
Everything is, of course, available from the online shop and for those of you who like statistics: over 1,000 Tolkien posters are sold online each year; over 8,000 leather bookmarks are sold in the gift shop and over 120,000 Bodleian Christmas cards landed on doormats across the world last year.

S is also for staff, arguably the Bodleian's most precious commodity. After all, it was people who created the books and manuscripts that form the library's treasures, and without people those books and manuscripts wouldn't have been written in the first place, let alone collected, protected, repaired, catalogued, digitalised and otherwise made available to be studied.

When Thomas Bodley opened his library in 1602 he made two appointments – the librarian and the janitor.

Today, the Bodleian group of libraries employs approximately 700 staff across their 27 libraries. Librarians form the largest group of staff, although divided into many sub-categories. Porters/security staff, engineers, handymen, facilities staff, and minibs drivers (the unsung heroes who enable everyone else to do their jobs) form another large department, namely support services headed by Andrew Macduff, whose job title reflects the past. He is Bodley's Janitor and Facilities Manager.

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The Bodleian gift shop



**Colin Harris,
Superintendent of the
Special Collections
Reading Rooms**

**Photograph:
Nick Cistone**

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which have not yet been mentioned in this series – conservation, within which there is Andrew Dawson and his bookbinding team – a sample of their work was on BBC Four only last month in *The Secret Life of Books* when Professor Alice Roberts was filmed in the Bodleian examining Mary Shelley's first draft of her famous novel, *Frankenstein*.

Alice's table was piled up with a number of the Bodleian's familiar grey boxes, made on the premises to protect rare books and manuscripts.

Then there is storage and logistics, accounts, human resources, communications, staff development, estates projects – the list goes on.

Archivists and librarians who work in the Bodleian fall into two groups: those with qualifications in archive or library studies and library assistants who join the library, in some cases straight from school, and who will work under the guidance of the professional archivists and librarians.

A good way to grasp these differences is to contrast four members of staff at opposite ends of their careers; luckily four volunteers have stepped up to the plate, to use baseball terminology.

Every year the library offers work placements to graduate trainees (they took on 14 last year) who will, hopefully, go on to become professional archivists or librarians.

A typical trainee will come to the library with at least a first degree. They will then have a year of practical experience learning how to process collections, work in the library's reading rooms and do some cataloguing, working on issue desks, and even learn about conservation techniques.

At the end of this time they will go on to study for their postgraduate degrees in archive or library studies at somewhere like Aberystwyth, Sheffield or University College London, where these courses are run.

Alternatively they may continue working and do a 'distance learning' degree which takes much longer.

Two of this year's intake, Emily Chen and Harriet Costelloe, are on an exciting, new graduate trainee course (in conjunction with the University of Aberystwyth and the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund's Skills for the Future programme) specialising in digital curation. Their two-year courses will see them qualify as, not just archivists, but digital archivists.

On-the-job training is combined with study. Much of their training will be about traditional archiving but also about preserving the vast output of digital material on the Internet.

Digital archives are surprisingly fragile and both old and new technology has to be employed. Archivists starting out now will be dealing with e-mail archives and computer hard drives as much as letters and diaries.

Emily comes to the Bodleian with a BA in History, a BSc in Biology from the University of California and an MSc in Ethnobotany.

Harriet comes with a BA and a Masters in the History of Art via the Universities of York and Oxford. Both have excellent research skills and a good grasp of digital technologies but the great attribute they share with all good archivists is a Sherlock Holmes-like passion for patiently drilling down to solve a problem.

When asked what their dream jobs would be Emily said: "To join the library at Kew Gardens



Harriet Costelloe



Emily Chen



Vicky Saywell

Photograph: Nick Cistone

where I could make use of my Ethnobotany degree (the study of human plant-based medicines), but I wouldn't rule out going back to America to a job hopefully in the same field."

Harriet revealed: "I too would want to make use of my degree in History of Art so my dream job would be working for Tate Britain."

Wherever they go it is clear these two will be great assets to their institutions.

Colin Harris left Oxford (High) School (for Boys) in 1967 with three A-Levels and joined the Bodleian staff as a library assistant for the princely sum of £400 per annum. He was effectively an apprentice working his way through each floor in the New Bodleian.

In January of 1968 he was told to report to Duke Humfrey's Library where he was to work until 1977 when his manager retired. Colin was the successful applicant for that post and became a senior library assistant.

Interestingly this job entailed being a part-time admissions officer as Readers' cards were issued from Duke Humfrey's Library in those days. In due course a separate admissions office was created and was initially located in Schola Musicae, before eventually moving to its permanent home in the Clarendon Building.

Pausing only to help catch a rare book thief in 1978, Colin made a change in 1980 when he made a successful application to become the Superintendent of Room 132 (the reading room for Modern Manuscripts and the John Johnson Collection).

In 1993, he married a colleague, Susan James who worked in Illustrated Printed Book Photography.

There was more merging of rooms in 1998 and Colin became a Superintendent of the Special Collections Reading Rooms working

sometimes in Duke Humfrey and sometimes the other side of the road.

After a sojourn in the Radcliffe Science Library while the New Bodleian was a building site, he is happy to have now moved back to the new Weston Library – that's 47 years and counting!

Vicky Saywell, another long-serving member of staff, retired at the end of July this year. Vicky was first brought into the library as a six-week-old baby to be shown off to work colleagues.

Her father, Ronald Tandy had started at the library as a Bodley boy in 1928 and, apart from his war service in the RAF, he worked there until his retirement in 1978. Vicky was nine-months-old when she attended her first Bodleian Christmas party for the children of employees.

In 1969, at the age of 16, she joined the library where she says she was nabbed by the Keeper of Oriental Collections, Norman Sainsbury, for his department, thus bypassing the usual year working up and down the 11 floors of the book stack.

Vicky found her niche in the Department of Oriental Collections and stayed there building up her expertise in that area and obtained a City and Guilds Library qualification along the way. She served under three Keepers in all and acted as PA to one of them, Adrian Roberts.

She became known as an ace party organiser initially helping with both the children's and the staff Christmas parties under the late Georgey Grey, taking over the role on Georgey's retirement. Saving the best to last Vicky had a splendid retirement party of her own in the Divinity School, which was entirely appropriate given her 45 years of loyal service.

