



The Bodleian Law Library is one of the largest academic law libraries in the country, with over 550 000 volumes shelved on four floors, mainly on open access. In addition to the extensive printed collections, the Library provides members of the University with access to hundreds of online legal resources. The Library welcomes a readership ranging from undergraduates to senior members of the University, local Oxford practitioners and distinguished visiting scholars from all over the world. With over 450 desks, two IT rooms, a dedicated Graduate Reading Room and wifi or Ethernet connections throughout, the Library offers exceptional facilities to its readers, underpinned by a staff that includes at its core six full-time professional law librarians.

The Library's extensive holdings cover the laws of the British Isles, Commonwealth and European countries, the United States and over 60 other jurisdictions. Specific subject areas covered in particular depth include Jurisprudence, English Legal History, Criminology, International Law, General and Comparative Law and Roman Law. Special collections range from the personal law library of lawyer Charles Viner (1678-1756), to the University's extensive collections of Official Papers from the UK, EDC, the UN, the ICAO and others.

Oxford's Faculty of Law, the largest in the United Kingdom, is a community of over 150 legal scholars across the University, and in thirty-seven Colleges. The Faculty is unique, in that it offers the only graduate degrees in the world that are taught in tutorials as well as classes, and it has the largest doctoral programme in law in the English-speaking world.

Oxford's long tradition of distinguished legal scholarship stretches back through the great twentieth century scholars, such as H.L.A.Hart, Rupert Cross, Tony Honoré, Peter Birks and Guenter Treitel, through the nineteenth century luminaries such as Frederick Pollock, William Anson, and Albert Dicey, to the eighteenth century lectures of William Blackstone, and beyond.

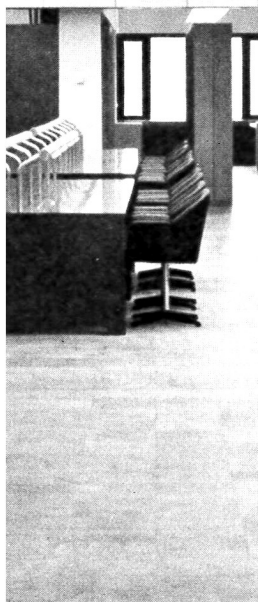
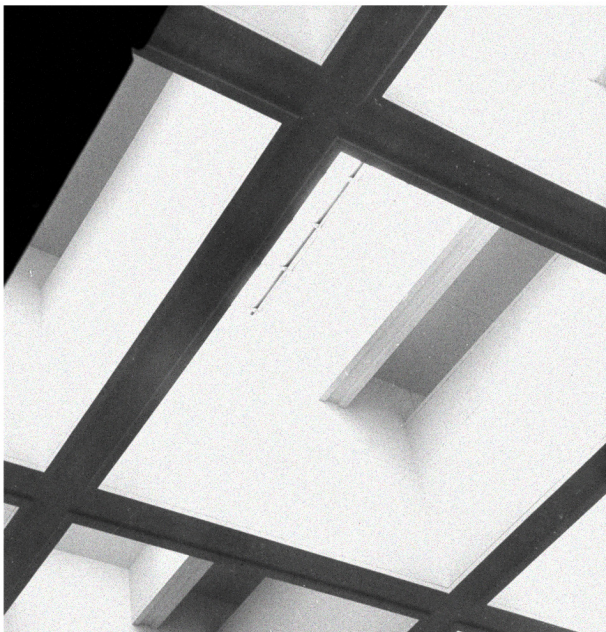
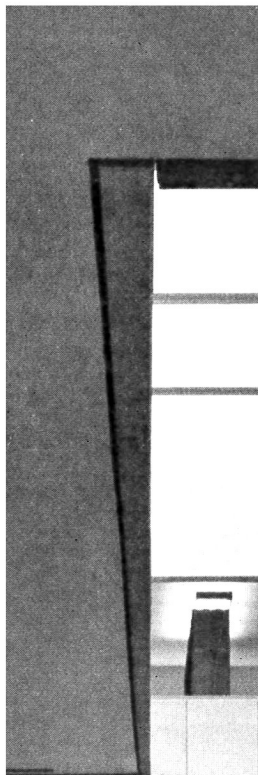
The Faculty's remarkable and highly international legal community of students and scholars is an outward looking and innovative body, which also contributes to wider society, for example through the Oxford Pro Bono Publico which mobilises graduate law students and Faculty to carry out legal research pro bono, and Oxford Legal Assistance, a new legal clinic programme for undergraduate law students.



Bodleian  
Law Library

50th Anniversary ~ 2014

Celebrating 50 years  
of the  
Bodleian Law Library



1964-2014





**Celebrating 50 Years  
of the  
Bodleian Law Library**

**1964 – 2014**

Edited by Ruth Bird  
Bodleian Law Librarian



Bodleian  
**Law Library**

*50th Anniversary ~ 2014*



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Opening day, 17 October 1964.

Featured on the stairs, inter alia, are the Chancellor, Rt. Hon. Harold MacMillan, and the Dean of Harvard Law School, Erwin N. Griswold.

*(photo by David Leron)*





# I. Introduction

Achieving an anniversary of 50 years is a mere blip in the history of the 800 year old University of Oxford, but it is none the less an important milestone. It comes as the requirements of scholars and researchers are undergoing a fundamental change in approach, and the role of libraries themselves are changing dramatically.

No longer the repositories of the world's knowledge, libraries are now powerful partners in the research process, facilitating the access to commercial resources, maintaining the balance with paper resources for those who still value this proven technology, and providing teaching and guidance through the labyrinth of organised and disorganised information in its physical and virtual form.

The Bodleian Law Library was established in an era when holding large collections of books, published around the world, was the hallmark of a great library that met the needs of scholars. Research was often guided by what was on hand, and an august university was in part defined by the breadth and depth of its collections. To be lacking a dedicated law library in the mid-twentieth century was a deficiency that even Oxford could no longer ignore.

It was through the dedication of members of the Faculty of Law, and the, at times, single-mindedness of one person in particular, Peter Carter, that a library of the quality and standing of the Bodleian Law Library was eventually built. The Law Library expanded and evolved, developing its collections and its services under the watchful eyes of

the staff, in particular the Law Librarians. There have been four in this first half century.

Mr E. H. Cordeaux 1964 – 1978

Miss Shanne Lush 1978 – 1988

Miss Barbara Tearle 1988 – 2003

Ms Ruth Bird 2004 –

This anniversary provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the recollections of our first readers, academics and staff, and to gain an understanding of the impact the new library had on them. Because the library was part of a larger building designed by a leading architect, we include some architectural notes and memories in this collection. And for the benefit of those who come after us, we provide a brief history of the planning for a law library at Oxford, based on a variety of available resources.

We hope that this collection, together with the Exhibition and the website <http://www.lawbod50.com/> will be of interest to our current and future readers and users of the services provided by the Bodleian Law Library.

Ruth Bird  
Bodleian Law Librarian  
October, 2014

## **2. Memories**

### **a. The academics**

#### **Sir Frank Berman**

I was just coming to the end of my DPhil probationary year when the Library opened. I don't think I'd been aware of the drama that surrounded the architectural planning, but I do recall making excursions past the construction site, like Goldilocks marvelling at the Three Bears taking shape, and rather pleased at the fact that Daddy Bear was going to be Law's piece.

And I certainly remember making tracks for the spot immediately it opened to revel in the sheer luxury of books - all of them - on open shelf, and wandering up and down them drinking it all in. Nor have I forgotten the feel of the inpouring of natural light, so that you no longer had to huddle the books you were using with their elbows to their sides within the radius of your desk lamp, nor indeed (after Old Bodley, the Radcliffe Camera, and Rhodes House) the sheer freshness of the air.

Those are still the feelings I get 50 years later.

**Peter Clarke**

**(Lincoln, Jesus, 1964 – )**

I came up as a freshman to Lincoln in 1964.

Like, I suspect, everyone else, I cannot believe it was 50 years since the St Cross building opened. Save for 3 years, when I was a lecturer at Nottingham University, the building has been an integral part of my life since then.

It opened, if I remember rightly, a week into Michaelmas Term. We had heard stories about what the library facilities had been like before, but the idea of a Law building was new to those in the years above us. I have a number of recollections: first, the lectures (given by individuals as varied as Professor Sir Rupert Cross (complete with printed handouts), Roy Stuart and John Latimer Barton (complete with poodle), gave a huge range of insights into the Mods course. Later, especially in the third year and BCL, there was more specialisation and use of the seminar and Law Board Rooms. Second, the concept of a “reading only” library was new to me – and, I think, new to many others. But one became used to it; and, having found a seat in which one was comfortable, the shelves offered everything – and far, far more, than one could ever want. Even in the first two terms, trying to find somewhat obscure periodicals could be a challenge. Third, there was coffee available. This was something that stopped for many years (at least for graduates and undergraduates) but the ability to have coffee mid-morning or mid-afternoon was most welcome. The Lincoln library and (later) the Codrington Library, were very useful and had their advantages, but one knew that everything would be at St Cross.

Finally, one reminiscence. One afternoon, I had fallen asleep reading a chancery report. Many will sympathise. I was sitting next to a contemporary from Lincoln, who switched law reports, so when I woke up, the law report was open at the right page. I started reading, and nothing made sense. I really thought that I had – to use modern idiom – “flipped”. However, a huge grin from my neighbour indicated what had happened.

**John Eekelaar            (University, 1963 – 65)**

Goodness: 50 years already! I suppose my main impression is how little it has changed (ignoring the recent expansion of the faculty facilities, which is very striking). But the main reading room seems much the same as it was at the beginning, even (largely) the location of the collections. It was of course wonderful and very easy to use, as now. A great improvement on its previous location (the top, I think, of the Old Bodleian, which I experienced in the first year of my BCL) – though that did have a certain atmosphere to it.

It's changed of course quite a lot in the lower levels, where there used to be past editions (now sadly exiled somewhere in the sticks [ed: actually they are still on level 1]) and a little corner of offices housing the Penal Research Unit (now the Criminological Research Centre) and Alan Milner's law reporting outfit (he will have memories!). My impression is that it can now become rather more crowded at times, but the general ambience seems very similar. I cannot really think of anything exciting that happened there, but that's surely as it should be. The view from the back windows is not so interesting as when army vehicles would turn up at the Officers Training Corps buildings, and the New College sports fields are slightly less visible: but who would think of looking out of the windows!!

**Jeffrey Hackney            (Wadham, 1959 – 62, 1963 – )**

Moving to St Cross struck me as a quite excellent development.

My first reaction to the building was that it had been modelled on an Aztec temple and it was a constant source of pleasant surprise that there were no human sacrifices at the top of the steps.

Inside, the building was very austere after what lawyers had been used to in the Lower Reading Room of the Old Library, which was a wonderfully comforting environment, though of course the stack there



was on another planet. The design, if not 60's brutal, was certainly 60's austere. The librarians were pleased that they had forced at least one change in the design - a step across the reading room floor which while no doubt visually very stimulating, meant books could not be put on trollies for re-shelving at the end of each day since the step blocked its access. Those were the days when persuading architects that buildings were about users and not about visuals, was harder than it is today. And because the carrels contained the heating elements for the building, they had to be open top and bottom which made them useless for typing or even quiet discussions. I was thinking of putting a notice 'Beware of the limbo dancers' on the inside of the carrel I shared with Richard Buxton, just in case they startlingly appeared when he was deep in concentration.

Also noticeable was that when there was heavy rain it was like working inside a kettle drum as the rain pounded on the roof. I think I even dreamed up 'pluvophonous' to catch the effect. And the idea that the tables were actually solid African hardwood and not veneered shocked even then as an extravagance. I remain amazed that no Vice Chancellor has since required the tops to be removed and replaced with veneered chipboard, using the proceeds to fund a new science building. But the chairs were good and the easy access to an increased range of shelf books was idyllic.

The Law Board room was a great luxury and in keeping with the style of the day, the Chair's chair was a different colour, and the walls were the ubiquitous tasteful white or off white. It was the best part of two decades or more before the Board felt able to put anything on the walls and I suspect that it was the memorial to the Polish Government in exile which broke the taboo.

The lecture theatres were quite amazing compared with the Schools - NO MORE TRAILING (NOT TO SAY RUSHING) ROUND FROM COLLEGE HALLS/LECTURE ROOMS/LIBRARIES BECAUSE THE SCHOOLS DID NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY, though those of us

who had been to Professors Daube and Hart lecturing in the Exam Schools, whatever their discomfort must always think fings ain't what they used to be.

**Lord Hoffman            (Queen's, University, 1954 – 73)**

I'll try to recall my thoughts. I do remember being impressed by the grandeur of the facilities, after the Bodleian collection had been previously housed in the Camera (when I arrived in '54) and then in the Old Bodleian (from about '56 onwards).

**Tony Honoré            (Queen's, New, All Souls, 1948 – )**

I don't have much to contribute, though I was in the process by which Peter Carter got the appalling original design for the library rejected and got Martin in as architect instead. I was also involved in the discussion about which books should be transferred from the main Bodleian to the Law Library, where on the whole we prevailed over the historians, but the final decisions really were the end taken by the Bodleian staff. The new library was popular with undergraduates from the start, but took longer to catch on with law dons. For me, easy access to the South African material was a great plus, as was the open shelf access and open catalogue in general.. So much easier than the old Bodleian, beautiful as that was and is. The library was admired aesthetically from the start and remains one of the best post war Oxford buildings fifty years later.

And congratulations on the way you have run the law library.

## **Peter North (Keble, 1956 – 60 & 1965 – 84; Jesus, 1984 – )**

I was in the Library earlier this month, finishing a new edition of a book, and it crossed my mind that this year was the 50th anniversary of its opening. I arrived back in Oxford the following year, so my experience of the Library is only one year short of its life but, perhaps more interesting, is the fact that I can recall life “before the Law Library”. I would be very happy to provide reflections:

I undertook the BCL in 1959, using the Old library, but when I became a Fellow at Keble, the Law Library was one year old. Before that it was on the upper floor of the Old Library. At 9.30 in the morning when the library opened there would be a queue to get in to get a seat. If there were no seats, readers had to sit on the window sills. The shelves contained ordinary texts, the LQR, MLR and CLJ, and Lloyds, All ERs, The Law Reports, the Weekly Law Reports and the English Reports. Books were often required from the stacks, and there was pressure on other libraries. For example, the Codrington, where one needed a letter of permission from one’s tutor to gain access; St Anne’s, whose law library was shared by all the women’s colleges; and the Rhodes House Library with its Commonwealth collection on open shelves.

In the Bodleian there was a lack of space, and only one copy of each report series. It closed at 7pm and was not open on weekends.

There was nowhere central for teaching law. Lectures were held in Colleges and in the Exam Schools. So Fifoot, being a fellow at Hertford, lectured at Hertford Hall on Saturday mornings, with tables covered in marmalade!

Having then taught in Wales, and Nottingham, coming back to the new library gave the overall impression of space, light, and an absence of queues. The BLL was viewed as undoubtedly the best law library in the Commonwealth, with books freely accessible on open shelves. There was a sense of emptiness, however, initially, with few books on the

shelves on levels 2 and 3. All primary material was kept upstairs, and no-one ventured to the ground floor. At one stage the Law Reports International office was based in there.

With the carrels, senior academics had one each, junior academics shared 2 per carrel. With some, it was their 'empire', and no-one was allowed to tread inside (eg, John Morris). It was marvellous to have this facility.

There were still some turf wars over the collection. For example, the Estates Gazettes were split, with the BLL only holding them from 1965; there were 6 volumes per annum, and when the years 1957 to 1964 were required for research, it was necessary to still go to the bowels of the New Bodleian to consult them. (Eventually they were transferred to the BLL). The other infuriating aspect was that Hansard and Bills and Acts were kept in the Rad Cam as 'Official Papers'. [Ed: Eventually the BLL purchased these and held the duplicates on site].

The catalogue was all on cards; and there were no photocopiers, so everything had to be transcribed manually. Portable typewriters were allowed to be used.

The student population in the 60's was also different. There were fewer undergraduates, 220 men and 8 women (one of whom became my wife). In 1960 there were only 18 students in the BCL, of whom 6 were from Trinidad, Canada and Sth Africa. Most of my teaching was in the BCL and when I took seminars, with John Morris, students would gather in the Common Room. There were never more than 30 students in the BCL, and much of the content was compulsory. There were a handful of DPhil students, and virtually no Masters students. The BCL students were a tightly knit group, and with low numbers, it was possible for them to have research desks allocated. Many came from all over the Commonwealth.

There was no sponsorship available to the library – the University only set up the Development Office in 1987.

The food and drinks policy of the Bodleian was enforced in the Law Library as well. A contemporary was fined by the Proctors for bringing food into the library: 'Used a Bodleian paper knife to cut a lemon for my gin and tonic'.

It is my belief that the undergraduates of today work harder and are brighter than then.

There was an enormous contribution made by Peter Carter to the establishment of the Law Library; he was a stubborn person, but without his cussedness there would not have been a library. He was a great advocate and guardian of the Law Library, and was not happy if anything was changed.

Ted Cordeaux, the first Law librarian, went to Ghana in the late 60's to advise them on their library and was there for 3 or 4 months. He made many interesting contacts in his visits overseas, all to the benefit of the library in some way.

### **Francis Reynolds      (Worcester, 1960 – )**

Extract from a speech given by Francis Reynolds at a seminar at Corpus Christi on 19 February, 1988:

Now the next matter one needs to talk about, and can't leave out of course, is the Law Library. I think the Law Library has been a crucial feature in the development of this Faculty. The Law Library is, I should have thought, undoubtedly the best collection of Anglo- American and other materials outside the United States, though there may be one or two Australian ones - Monash - coming up, but I should have thought it was still probably the best outside the United States. It is actually quite difficult to find out how the whole project originated, because although there are people present in the room and others who were members of the Faculty, or indeed chairmen of



the Board at the time, not everyone seems to have very clear recollections. Now here I shall be open to correction, but I've examined the papers at the University Offices, and the Law Library seems to originate, really, from a proposal for more library space in 1933, which reiterated proposals that were made in 1929, on the basis that lawyers need more space, they need open-access books and so forth. Now this was lost till the War, nothing happened in the War, and after the War the matter was taken up again. When I was an undergraduate, law shared the ground floor of the Camera with English - which was extremely restrictive. A certain amount of books could be got from one floor below, the top floor of the Bodleian stack, but anything else required ordering with quite a complicated procedure. The Bodleian curators offered the Law Faculty I think it was three rooms in an L-shape on the first floor of the Bodleian quadrangle, or the whole of the ground floor of the Camera. And this was eventually accepted under protest, and in the papers appears at this stage the first intervention of somebody who was quite plainly extremely important in this whole development in the '50s, and that was Professor Waldock. And there were memoranda [from him] saying 'this should be accepted, but under protest'.

Now the project leading to the Library, as far as I can see - but other people may have other recollections - in many ways seems to have been triggered off by a rather surprising thing. It was a lunch given at Worcester by my predecessor and colleague Mr. Alan Brown, who was then Lord Mayor of Oxford, to Dean Griswold of the Harvard Law School, together with Sir Douglas Veale, and there may have been others present, though the documents don't say. At which the impression I get is that Griswold said that 'your facilities here are inadequate for a university of this distinction. You should try and expand them (the idea wasn't of course new) and I might be able to help you, if you'd like to approach foundations, and so forth'. During 1953, there was rather slow progress on

this, and Griswold did back down a bit because he didn't want to appear to be interfering in the affairs of another university. But I think it's reasonable for me to read this letter from Sir Maurice Bowra to Lord Evershed, the Master of the Rolls, who was a Pilgrim Trustee, on the 3rd. of October, 1953:

'I am rather surprised at what Griswold says, since I have never heard complaints to now about the lack of law books or opportunities for study. In addition to the Bodleian and the Codrington, the colleges have quite good law libraries. Griswold, of course, wants a centre for law studies, and to that I'm not very sympathetic. I prefer the present college arrangements, so I am not very keen on the project, but I daresay others would be if they knew of it'.

And that was followed up by a subsequent letter from the Registrar, who said he thought on the whole the majority of the Faculty were not in favour of trying to expand facilities for law study, though he did say at one point - he said 'there's one new thing: We're all being urged to take these new-fangled graduates (he didn't say 'new-fangled', but that's the impression of it) and we may need more space and better facilities for them.

What then seems to have happened is that in 1956 the Rockefeller Trustees gave a grant of £10,000 for a party to go and look at American law libraries, with a view to drafting proposals. And this being quite a small sum was able to be granted by some small committee of the Rockefeller Trustees without going to the full body of the Trustees. And the small committee - consisting of Mr. Butterworth, Mr. Waldock (as he then was), Mr. Shephard (the architect, who was recommended as he had designed the New College Boathouse and the Memorial Hall at Winchester), and Mr. Brian Campbell, now Bursar of this College - went to America. The file is quite considerably taken up with elaborate letters from Sir Douglas Veale, attempting to obtain visas for these people,

and the letters say things like this: 'I certify (i) that Mr. Brian Campbell is employed by the University in a responsible position in my office... (ii) that he is married, and lives in a most attractive old house in the centre of Oxford [laughter]. (iii) that (i) and (ii), taken together with my general knowledge of him, make me certain that he will wish to return to this country [laughter]. Mr. Butterworth was going to return for his two small children, and Mr. Waldock for his wife [laughter]. The impression I get is that this committee came back and reported, negotiations went ahead with the Rockefeller Trustees, much aided, I think, by Mr. Dean Rusk who was... Secretary of State [United States Dept. of State, 1961-9], and I think Mr. Henry Allen Moe, who was a Brasenose man and one of the Guggenheim Trustees, and in the end the Rockefeller Trustees offered £150,000 towards the building if the University could raise the other £140,000 of the £290,000 it was estimated would be needed. That was in 1957. Now work then went on, obtaining money from other foundations, and the impression I get from the files - and this has been reinforced by Miss Lush of the Law Library, who has some of Sir Humphrey Waldock's papers, is that a great deal of this was done by Sir Humphrey Waldock. Which actually, in retrospect, surprises me, because he wasn't a person with whom members of the Faculty in my age-group came very much into contact. He behaved in rather a grand way. He was normally in Strasbourg or The Hague. He rang up on Fridays to see if... there were any messages from his graduate students. But he plainly put in an enormous amount of work in the late '50s on this project. And money was raised - it's not quite clear entirely by whom - from the Gulbenkian and the Pilgrim Trust, despite the original lack of interest from Lord Evershed, from the Trustees of Henry and Clara Oppenheimer. There are all sorts of miscellaneous small donors, the Commonwealth governments, and so forth. And the Inns of Court were kind enough to send £250 and ask for four separate receipts for £62/11/01- each [laughter].

Eventually, I think I'm right in saying, the balance of the money was largely raised from the U.G.C. itself, partly I suppose because the building was combined with two other faculties. And the money that they offered again became unconditional and the money was raised, and the project went ahead some time around 1960.

Now as I say, on the whole I prefer not to refer to living people, but some can't be avoided, and there's no doubt that the Faculty owes an enormous amount to the work of Mr. Carter, who as far as I can see... was about from 1960 to the opening in 1964. The impression I get is that a lot of the fund-raising work - and this could be wrong (Mr. Carter will I'm sure tell us if so) — was done by Professor Waldock up to '60. And Mr. Carter then took over, and piloted the construction of the building, the removal of the books, and all that sort of thing, and dealings with the donors, and so forth, from 1960 to 1964. And the Faculty owes an immense amount to his work, and to the work of Sir Humphry Waldock (as he later became) before that time.

As opening came nearer, there are some amusing things in the papers. There were problems of where the books should go, and there was a firm letter written by Mr. Prestwich of Queen's, saying virtually that all law books were really history, because history covered everything, and laying very heavy claims to books that historians wanted. For instance, I think the whole of the Law Quarterly Review. The ancient historians weighed in. There were some strong comments from Professor Brunt, and at that time the Principal of Brasenose was the chairman - no, I think Professor Brunt dealt with Professor Honoré (as he now is), and then later on Mr. Sherwin-White with Mr. Nicholas. But the Greats Faculty were rather more muddled, and there are letters saying 'I'm afraid I've lost my list of books we need' [laughter]. But the historians retained rather a higher profile. As far as I can see, on the whole the other faculties lost out, and all the books relevant to law were moved to the Law

Library, and as far as I can see the main reason was the reluctance of the Bodleian staff to re-classify books in a different way to the way they were classified. At the same time, the Faculty commissioned a project for writing a History, which is of course where Professor Lawson's book comes, and the Law Library was opened on the 17th. of October 1964. And Dean Griswold was conferred the honorary degree of D.C.L. immediately before that. And the very next item in the University Gazette, after the granting of a D.C.L. to Dean Griswold is the addition of Professor Kahn-Freund to the register of Congregation, which I think is extremely significant in the history of the Faculty.

I well remember there were other events around the opening of the Law Library. For a start, I think I'm right in saying (Mr. Carter will confirm all about this) that the opening of the Law Library was treated by Bodley's Librarian as an event for librarians, not for lawyers, and so every librarian in - perhaps, the Commonwealth, certainly in this country - was invited [laughter]. I remember a Law Faculty Board meeting, at which Mr. Carter said something to the effect that 'not many places are available for members of the Faculty'. I think he was then pursued, and somebody said 'how many?', and he said well, really, rather few'. And then thirdly - I can't quite remember how many times this went on - 'can't you tell us how many?' 'Well, really very few, and the answer turned out, I think, to be two [laughter]. Is that right?

P.B.CARTER (Tutor in Law, Wadham): Not in the end, no [laughter].

REYNOLDS: Not in the end. But what in the end happened is that a lot of these librarians luckily refused, and so spaces were available for Faculty, and in the end I suppose most of the Faculty were able to go. But the original arrangements, I think, were rather different. I think it's perhaps fair to say that some of the features about the Library reflected ideas about faculty operations



in the collegiate structure which would no longer necessarily be prevalent. For instance, the only accommodation in it for undergraduates was a windowless room, actually bang in the centre of the building, which is now used for keeping polishers and polish and that sort of thing, where there was a machine from which undergraduates could get coffee. There was a small common room for graduates. I was told that the Rockefeller Trustees wanted a cafeteria, but this was thought to be contrary to the idea of college society, and so forth. And the result is that we've had to extend into the Territorial Army building, or whatever it's called, at the back, which is not quite as satisfactory as it might have been.

I remember going around, at the opening of the Library, with various people - and I think one, actually, was you, Barry [Nicholas], and you were saying 'this is all very nice, but I'm not sure who's going to use it. And I think quite a lot of members of the Faculty thought that at the time. I remember another librarian saying 'all libraries generate their own users', and it's certainly proved to be true, of course. Not only has it been an immense advantage to us, but it's in many ways, you could say, small, and there are proposals to have more seats, and so forth. On the 24th of October 1964, the... Board recorded its heartiest thanks to Mr. Carter for his work over the previous four years. Well, looking back, I think it's quite obvious that most members of the law Faculty must have played a role in this. One should remember a figure like Professor Goodhart, who... paid for the furnishings in a better style than would otherwise have been possible in accordance with the U.G.C. requirements, but I think we owe an immense amount to the rather unseen, not very prominent and perhaps not very well now remembered work of Professor Waldock, and of course to Peter Carter, who's still with us, and... piloted it through with conspicuous success.

## **Guenter Treitel      (Magdalen, All Souls, 1954 – )**

The most important of my 'early memories' is that the new library completely changed the life of those of us who were then engaged in legal research in Oxford. Before that event we had just two rooms in the old Bodleian Quadrangle and access on open shelves to perhaps 20,000 volumes (I do not recall the precise number). Foreign law was very poorly served. On the opening of the Library, the number of books rose to about 200,000 (I think). The primary source material from the US and from the main Commonwealth jurisdictions was excellent and the principal European systems were well represented. My particular debt to all this wealth of easily accessible material is reflected in my book on 'Remedies for Breach of Contract: a Comparative Account' (1988, but with a long period of gestation) which simply could not have been written in pre-1964 Oxford.

There was also the question of space for readers. Before 1964, one had to queue up before opening time and to be pretty nimble to secure a seat. In the new building, each member of faculty had his or her own carrel – and unrestricted parking space! The main reading room was usually full (in term-time) but so far as I can recall it was never impossible to find a seat. The other great advantage for junior members was that almost all the lectures for law students were in the St Cross Building. This contrasted with the previous practice whereby lectures were given in the lecturer's college so that there could be a long trek from one lecture to the next, with quite a few falling by the wayside.

The building was comfortable and easy to use. One contributing factor was that, in its early days, the Library had enough shelf space for all its holdings. That made it in some respects easier to use than it is now, particularly in relation to the runs of primary source material, which these days are sometimes more fragmented than they were in 1964 and for some years thereafter.

Perhaps I should mention the grand opening with a speech by Erwin Griswold, the Dean of the Harvard Law School. I think that his choice as a speaker was meant to reflect the substantial financial contribution from the US to the building and filling of the Library. In the evening there was a dinner, after which Kenneth Wheare (then I think VC) made a speech in his best form.

Finally, I should record our gratitude to Peter Carter, without whose tireless efforts none of this would have been possible.

## **b. The students**

*These contributions were taken from email responses to a request for 'Memories of the Law Library', requested in early 2014. They are reproduced as received, and College and date details are included where possible.*

### **Robert Albright (Worcester, 1968 – 71)**

I went up to Worcester College in October 1968, aged 17. The Law Library was quite a long walk across town, nearly 30 minutes I recall.

As Worcester had an excellent law library of its own, I attended the new building mainly for lectures, always in the morning and finishing in time to get back to Worcester for lunch.

The most memorable lecturer was Rupert Cross on Criminal Law. Being almost completely blind, he was always escorted to the podium by an assistant. It is only now in writing this note that I realise he had been an undergraduate at my own College. He was at the time Vinerian Professor of English Law. I subsequently got to know his successor as Vinerian Professor, Guenter Treitel, in a different social context.

My most embarrassing memory is leaving a note of endearment at the reading place of a beautiful dark-haired fellow undergraduate. I much admired her from a distance but did not have the confidence to approach. She is now an eminent QC.

**Mark Aronson (1970 – 73)**

I started using the Bodleian Law Library when I was a D Phil candidate between 1970 and 1973, and I've used it on and off since then.

I love (and love) its layout. In particular, I like the way that one can find and access out-of-date editions of current works so easily – simply find the shelf number of the current edition, and go downstairs where all the books have a red "X" in front of corresponding shelf numbers. The fact that there is so much on open shelves is a real blessing – most libraries with huge holdings require their users to call for books to be fetched from remote storage. The recent addition of "state papers" downstairs, once again on open (albeit compactus) shelving is a superb move. It makes those materials enticingly accessible, enticingly browsable.

From my student days, I have to add a more personal note – the coffee room for post-grad students is where my wife and I first met. That was in the days when the English Dept's collection was housed in the same building (my wife was researching in English Literature).

[Australia]

**Bryan L. Ashenheim (Wadham, 1964 – 67)**

As one of the first students to have used the Bodleian Law library (it was opened exactly one week (from my recollection) after I matriculated (at Wadham), I remember the library well, though its

opening must have been more of a relief for those students previously matriculated who would have had in previous years to use the main Bodleian for Law studies. I never used it regularly as Wadham had (and presumably still does have) an excellent law library of its own and a visit to the Bodleian was only necessary for lectures or for reading some more obscure journal which Messrs. Carter and Brownlie may have put on the reading list!

I do remember thinking that it was a comfortable, clean, modern building and was never, while I was trying to use it, crowded. It was always very quiet, as libraries should be, but this one seemed more ghostlike, probably because it was not all that well used.

I have not been back since I went down in 1967, though I did try to visit it about 20 years ago when I was on a driving tour of that part of England with friends, but I am ashamed to say I could not find it!! This may have accounted for its lack of use – it was rather far away from the colleges (Wadham was probably the nearest, if I remember correctly) and it must have been quite a hike or ride for students of some of the other colleges.

I saw pictures of the renovated building in a recent Oxford Today and while it was now full of computers on apparently all desks, it looked very much as I remember it, still not out-of-date in the modern world.

[Cayman Islands]

### **Stewart Ashurst      (Exeter, 1964 – 67)**

I remember the clean line of the beetroot brown tables, the smell of polish and the glow of the gold hooded lights above. I also recall that on those occasional mornings I managed to make it to the library, I would always vow to make a better attempt at understanding the latest article in the MLR. Mostly of course I dreamed of how I might just happen to meet in the stacks that gorgeous, alluring woman I

could espy a table or so away under those mesmeric lights! Happy Days..

**Bob Austin (Keble, 1975 – 77)**

I worked at Research Desk No 6 on the northern side of the ground floor of the New Bodleian from 1975 to 1977. I had a pleasant view over playing fields and I was quite snug once the library got around to turning on the heating each autumn.

I had come from the University of Sydney to Keble to prepare a doctoral thesis on equity and the law of trusts. Fortunately for me, the other three incumbents of the 4-desk unit rarely showed up. The staff were extremely helpful and I was able to find everything I needed. The system of replacing books uplifted from the shelves with a note giving your desk number actually seemed to work, and I was able to retrieve books from other desks virtually whenever I needed them.

A brace of library carrels for academic staff was on the floor above me, accessed by a spiral staircase. I have a strong memory of the distinctive footfalls of the two Oxford academics who most frequently used those carrels. Guenter Treitel's walk was brisk. He skipped down the stairs as a man in a hurry. The gait of JHC Morris was slow and deliberate. He would have had time to compose a couple of paragraphs on the conflict of laws by the time he reached the bottom of the stairs (and perhaps a chapter as he went up again).

I frequently encountered HLA Hart when taking coffee in the room near the library front door. He quickly identified me as a Sydney person - significant from his perspective because he delighted in hearing and talking about the jurisprudence wars at Sydney Law School, on which he had strong views. He showed generous hospitality to me as a young overseas academic.

I returned to the New Bodleian in 1985 as a Visiting Fellow at Corpus Christi. By that time I had a Chair at Sydney and I had graduated to one of the upstairs research carrels. By then they were peopled by a new generation of Oxford dons, equally friendly but perhaps lacking the gravitas of their predecessors.

I took sabbatical from my law firm in 1994, and spent a couple of months in the New Bodleian again. And again, I benefited from the kindness and assistance of the library staff as well as the academics. That stay was special for me because my elder daughter, who had travelled with my wife and me and her younger sister as a pre-schooler and then as a young girl on the earlier occasions, was by then a graduate student taking the BCL at Keble.

Keep up the excellent work.

[Australia]

**Sandra Barwick      (St Hilda's, 1973 – 74)**

I was in the law library in Michaelmas 1973 and Hilary 1974. I came from Carlisle, the first member of my extended family to have the chance to get into the Sixth Form, let alone university, and Oxford seemed as though it was in another dimension of time and space.

Obviously I'd been a studious grammar school girl, so in the first week at St Hilda's I asked a second year how much time I should spend studying. She said eight hours a day. I asked if that included tutorials and lectures, and she thought not. So I attempted in my first term to attend all the law lectures and study for eight hours a day in the law library. Obviously that doesn't leave a lot of time to eat. I lost a stone in my first term, and I was already thin. During the lectures I was too tired to take a lot in.

I remember the steps, rank upon rank of concrete steps, some kind of metaphor. I'd got to Blackwells too late to buy some of the basic text books, and the early books on the reading list were always already out in the library by the time lectures finished, so I had to start at the books at the most complex end of the reading list and read backwards down it, meaning I was mostly terminally confused.

When I looked up from the business of trying to work out why on earth judges came to the conclusions they did, and stared round the hard surfaces of the modern building all I saw were male faces. Women were deliberately kept in a minority by Oxford at the time, and I suspect they were an especial minority in subjects like law. Male faces, they seemed grey faces. Everywhere. I felt alien, and the building felt alien too.

Now, it seems odd that I never asked one of my tutors for help. I guess the Carlisle schoolgirl wasn't confident enough. After two terms I took my Mods (and passed, amazingly), and swapped to English, where it was possible to sit in the peace and beauty of the Radcliffe Camera and feel happy.

### **Stephen Batten QC                      (Pembroke, 1960's)**

I do have good memories of the Law Library – the beautiful clean lines, the broad steps, the simplicity and logic of the interior, the broad and ample desks, the comfortable chairs, the smell of the rubber flooring and, especially, the particular quality of the silence which it produced.

But I also have one harrowing memory which lives on and tortures me to this day. It is a memory of an event which could only have happened in and because of that silence. I haven't shared it with many.

I so loved the building and its space that I used to go there just to work in peace and regardless of any need for references; my preferred spot was midway down the desks to the right as you went in and back



to the wall. A good vantage point for studying humanity studying how to run itself if concentration slipped.

Now there were, in the mid sixties, two law students who were both tall and both completely unsighted. During one of my many moments of slipping concentration, I looked up and saw that one of these gentlemen was coming through the doors to my left just as the other was leaving the diagonally opposite corner to my far right. My childlike and ghoulish mind immediately conjured forth a collision.

101 ways to miss and only one for it to go wrong. Each glided silently, at a slow and gentle pace, but, inexorably, down the one and only. I sat and watched; time suddenly slowed down; I was glued to my chair by panic, incompetence and the fear of interfering.

They met with quite a bump; each apologised to the other and moved quickly on. I have always wondered whether anyone else even noticed and I have always wondered whether either knew the identity of the other and the reason for their colliding.

As for me, I could do no work for the rest of the morning but learned thereafter and during my career at the Bar to keep “healthy scepticism” about “real life” waiting in the wings for longer than most of my colleagues.

Please tear this up if you wish; or, next time you’re in there, imagine it and wonder whether it has ever happened again.

**Rupert Birtles (1967 – 70)**

Thank you for inviting my memories. I don’t think I can scrape up any stunning anecdotes, but I do remember the Law Library with awe and affection. I matriculated in 1967, so the building was almost brand new at that time, very light, spacious and well-equipped. If there were Speer-ish overtones to the architecture (underlined by the quite

aggressive bag searches on exit), these were offset by the practicality of the library and study facilities and the intimate nooks which lurked around corners of the book stacks, and also the proximity of the University Air Squadron HQ round the back which was always good for a break-out for coffee and temporary inhalation of the oxygen of a parallel world.

The adjoining lecture theatres were also, I remember, comfortable places to kid oneself that one was spending several hours working, whilst the mind could wander over any topic under the sun, and the body could come into various degrees of contact with those from the ladies' colleges, in those days still segregated. And who could not wonder at the performances of Professor Rupert Cross, ushered to the dais by his helper, his lectures delivered to the precise hour length through dextrous contact of his hands on the hands of his glass-less wristwatch – always a fascination for some reason.

My time at Oxford was one continuous 3-year joyful experience, and the Law Library contributed well to it.

### **Simon Brilliant            (Lincoln, 1973 – 75)**

I would be delighted to share my memories of the Law Library with you. I was at Lincoln doing the BCL between September 1973 and June 1975, so about 10 years after the building was opened. I had not done my first degree at Oxford so the building was new to me. In those days, and I do not know whether it has been possible to continue the arrangement, those on the BCL had reserved seats in a prestigious position near the windows so working there was always an ego boosting business. There were no personal computers then so libraries we used for the purpose of reading books. One didn't always need to read a great number of books. For example, in the first term studying the conflict of laws under the legendary Dr John Morris, one simply needed to learn his shortened version of Dicey and Morris off

by heart. All I can remember of it now is that his witticism “To garnish a debt is not to put vegetables around it” was to be found on page 321.

Of course the Bodleian had to compete with the college law library in which (amazing as it may now seem) one was allowed to smoke, whilst in the Bodleian I had solemnly promised in writing not to kindle any fires. So I can say I did find the building easy to use and I always had a seat. It was also a very good place for meeting people and people watching, even if that had not been intended. Amongst those who had their seats on the same table as me were Paul Craig, who won the Vinerian, stayed on at Oxford and is now the Professor of English Law and Patrick Moloney, who became a libel silk and is now a circuit judge. By and large we were a scruffy lot with hair almost to the shoulders and clothes to match. But two people, whom I only later got to know, did stand out for their elegance: Dick Pears, a former head of Tanfield Chambers, in his Navy blazer, and Florence Baron, the High Court judge who sadly died recently, in twinset and pearls.

### **Carolyn Brown**

Prosaically, and randomly, I remember being amused at how perfectly the light fittings were placed so that it was impossible to make eye contact with the person sitting opposite. Which was annoying, sometimes.

### **Richard Buckley (Merton, 1965)**

Like many things my recollections of the Bodleian Law Library are divided into three parts: undergraduate, research student and tutor. As an undergraduate I found the sight of so many readers beavering away unnerving: I assumed (possibly correctly) that everyone else worked many more hours than I did. But it was always possible to find

a seat, and the superbly comfortable chairs were (and still are) conducive to a quiet doze in the midst of a wrestle with the Law Reports. I also recall floors that squeaked and, when it rained, a roof that seemed to magnify the sound of the storm.

As a research student I was delighted to be allocated a permanent desk of my own in the basement, away from the intimidating spectacle of hundreds of other readers, and spent many happy hours in the Library working on my thesis. I remember enjoying working on the collection of old textbooks, which happened to be in the basement, tracing the development of changing interpretations of the law across more than a century.

But my most enjoyable memories of the Law Library are the eighteen years I spent as a tutor with a desk in a carrel. Having a “place of one’s own” in one of the world’s greatest law libraries constituted ideal conditions for legal research. My carrel faced North and I found the view over the playing fields towards Islip an agreeable source of relaxation. I recall gazing absent-mindedly out of the window one day in the late seventies or early eighties when a helicopter landed and Prince Charles climbed out of it.

I once heard a story, almost certainly apocryphal and possibly associated with more than one name, of a reticent tutor who lost his carrel key but was reluctant to trouble the Library staff by asking for a new one. He was said to have been seen crawling underneath the door in the gap between the door and the floor.

### **Patrick Callaghan (St Peter’s, 1969 – 72)**

My main memories have less to do with the library itself than the cafe behind it! It was a place to retreat to when the brain was getting fuzzy, for a cup of tea or coffee, something to eat, and a chat with friends

who might be in the library at the same time. So far as I can recall it was in a building behind the library and up a set of stairs.

So far as the library itself is concerned, all my memories are positive. I recall it being light, airy, quiet and comfortable, with a particularly nice atmosphere at night in the winter. It certainly could get busy, but I don't think I was ever stuck for a seat. The staff were always pleasant and helpful. I should say that, despite this, I gave up law as soon as I left Oxford!

### **Andrew Carruthers (1969 – 72)**

I was a student there from 1969-72. I remember it basically as a place where we went to work a solid day. The only way to cope with the inevitable list of 80 cases a week for tutorials was to regard it as an office and adopt office hours. It could be debilitating in the afternoon. It was fatal to linger over lunch. Overall I quite liked it as it was comfortable and easy to use and had good facilities (unlike the then college law library which was basically an attic). I also remember the cafeteria next door (is it still there?) and a remorseless diet of pies and beans and one conversation which I overheard there of girl A telling girl B of sharing a sleeping bag with some rather inexperienced young man, with the inevitable consequences. Amazing how these things come back to you!

Only other vivid memory of this sort was getting fed up with people chattering and one hot afternoon asking, or rather demanding, a girl opposite me to keep quiet. I gather the shock wave of my loud request went round the whole place and my friends with me were overwhelmed with pride, or embarrassment, I am not sure which. The villain was shocked into silence.

As to lectures, Rupert Cross, who was such an impressive man who I still cite as an example of what a blind man can do, and seminars on

international trade with Francis Reynolds (the clearest exposition of contract law) and the Scottish lawyer whose name (Alan?) just escapes me but who became a law lord and died recently of cancer, again the most clear of lecturers. Apart from these I hardly went to lectures as there never seemed to be enough time.

Regards and good luck with the project, sounds interesting.

**Peter Cattrall            (Trinity, 1965)**

Many thanks for your email- you must have transmitted thousands but it would be churlish to action the delete button without recognising the Law Library's {presumably this is the St Cross building?} forthcoming half century celebrations! I matriculated in '65, which, I guess, was the year after the Law Library's opening. I recall it as a fine building where I used to attend lectures - the names Rupert Cross, Professor Daube, Professor Wade & Guenter Treitel spring immediately to mind - all of whom were immensely impressive to a callow student of jurisprudence! I recall doing some study in the magnificent library, whilst trying not to allow my attention to wander by looking to see what my fellow undergrads might be about! I do seem to remember that, after Mods, I might have used the library rather less for actual study as I was fortunate enough to be allowed to use the Codrington library in All Souls. Here, again, one was immensely fortunate & privileged to rub shoulders with the great and the good, in a particularly in time atmosphere which was hugely conducive to study. Hopefully, a bit of knowledge rubbed off one way & another!

These initial forays into Oxford's jurisprudential world must have inculcated a love of the law as I've been involved almost all my working life. I much enjoy visiting Oxford now & again &, coincidentally, am going to a dinner of the Trinity law society next week!

All good wishes for an enjoyable and successful celebration of your Library's "50th".

**Keith Chapman      (Magdalen, 1974 – 77)**

Thank you for your e-mail about the Bodleian Law Library. I studied Jurisprudence at Magdalen 1974- 1977.

At that time the building was regarded as being very modern, and I think it has retained a contemporary feel. In those days the library was always crowded and it was sometimes difficult to get hold of particular All England and Weekly Law reports. I can remember studying for my finals in the library and talking breaks walking by the river. Although I enjoyed my time outside the library more than my time in it (!) the Bodleian Law library has happy memories for me associated with more carefree times. It was also quite convenient for Magdalen! I am not sure how the development of the internet will have affected things as I have not gone on to practice law. I imagine you can now find almost everything you need on line.

**Simon Chester      (1968)**

Ruth - my memory is a modest one, since I used the library when it was but four years old. This will sound fogeyish, but computers were unknown except in Colin Tapper's imagination. I don't think photocopiers arrived until my second year. The library existed only on paper, and impossible to use microfilm.

The library was all very new, and vaguely Aztec in its appearance. What I noticed was how frequently the Faculty's legendary scholars were in the Library. This is a marked contrast to North American law libraries, where you will never bump into a professor in the stacks or camped out in a carrel.

Professor Otto Kahn-Freund would come in around 10 each morning - this was where he worked, not in his rooms or some office. His example showed that legal scholarship needed a law library. John Finnis would be deep in the Commonwealth materials. Patrick Atiyah, Nigel Walker and G.H. Treitel made regular appearances.

And Rupert Cross, accompanied by Belinda Bucknall, his reader, in the corner, having the Criminal Appeal Reports read out loud to him. Once he had digested a case, his astonishing memory retained it indefinitely. He was amazing in how he could find references in his Braille lecture notes.

Congratulations to all of you on fifty years.

[Canada]

### **Michael Clothier (1964 – 67)**

I started working in the Bodleian Law Library on October 21st 1964 and I have many happy memories. I was, of course, deeply impressed with its design.

My thirst for knowledge did not, I am afraid, preclude doing the crossword (the Times) during Professor Barton's lectures on Roman Law. There was a glamorous librarian at the central desk, whom I felt obliged regularly to consult. With this sort of beginning I have never looked back.

### **Thomas Cromwell**

At least three things stand out: how odd it seemed, and yet how wonderful, to put on a gown and swear the oath not to "kindle any flame" in library; the thrill of seeing, for the first time, a full set of all of



the nominate reports and finally, the glorious and accessible collection. Happy anniversary.

**Peter Crowley            (Hertford, 1971 – 74)**

I was a Hertford undergraduate from 1971 to 1974, and spent many a happy hour (sometimes even one after the other!) at the Law Bod.

Apart from the amazing brightness and comfort, and the joy of the leather-bound law reports, I have two very different memories which might assist or amuse. The first is from the Spring of 1972, on a sunny day, walking up the steps and seeing Rupert Cross standing on the first flat area with his face turned towards the sun, basking. He was completely blind, of course, but relished the warmth of the sun on his face. His reader (Belinda Bucknall, now a semi-retired Silk and a good friend) stood beside him, keeping an eye on things. One of those "for ever" moments. And what a wonderful man he was!

The second was equally memorable, but for very different reasons. The Law Bod had its share of nutters, of course. One was a probably-self-styled "Bart." (can't remember his name) who was always slamming books down onto desks and being a thorough nuisance to everyone. I'm pretty sure he wasn't a formal student, although he might've been once: one of those eccentrics whose family subsidised him as a good way of keeping him away from them! One day he was being particularly annoying and a staff member took him to task. He shouted something and began to storm out - slamming the glass door open but so violently that he smashed it and cut himself very badly. You can rest assured that there was no wave of sympathy!

### **Janet Danks (then Ratcliffe) (Lady Margaret Hall, 1968 – 71)**

My memory of the Law Library (1968-71) was of a fine place to work, once I had succeeded in getting into it.

I am disabled as a result of polio. My walk across the Parks from LMH was (in most weathers) a constant delight, but then I was confronted by that cascade of steps up to the Library entrance. I used to push myself up by leaning against the wall. Coming down was easier but scary. A friend of mine who was on the Libraries Committee suggested that a handrail might be fitted. The response was that the Library had been designed by a most eminent architect, whose work could not possibly be disfigured in that way. Arrangements could, perhaps, be made to take me up in the book lift. I was rather over sensitive in those days and did not take up the offer.

In later life my responsibilities included helping churches comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. I often wondered if anyone more resolute than I had taken on St Cross.

### **Sean Day (Oriel, 1974 – 76)**

Gosh – it is hard to believe that the library is 50 years old now! It was the new building on campus in my time (1974 to 1976).

I spent a lot of time there as I didn't live in college, and so commuted into Oxford from my digs on Boar's Hill. I remember it as being a quiet, comfortable work environment.

My most vivid memory was seeing all of the Australians gathered together on the steps one day in October 1975, chatting and arguing ferociously together. I couldn't figure out what had them so animated, and later discovered that they had just received news of Gough Whitlam's unprecedented ouster by the Governor General of Australia (he was Prime Minister). One of those at the center of the

action was Kim Beazley, who later went on to lead the Opposition in Australia.

I also remember chatting with Benazir Bhutto on the front steps – I don't think she was a law student, but the steps were often a comfortable place to gather and talk, particularly in the spring and summer.

Oddly, I don't remember ever seeing or crossing paths with Tony Blair, despite his having read Jurisprudence at the same time as me!

**Peter Deacon (Worcester, 1966)**

Thanks for the e-mail, and congratulations on reaching your 50th. As I came up in 1966, I recall it as a virtually "brand new" facility. However, sadly, neither I, nor, I suspect, any other Worcester man, would have many memories to share - apart from attending lectures there in what I recall as excellent theatres - as we had our own law library in College, as well stocked as one might expect in the college of he whom we all regarded as the best teacher of law, anywhere, anytime, namely Francis Reynolds!!

**Baroness Ruth Deech (Fraenkel) (St Anne's, 1962 – 65)**

I was a 2-3rd year undergrad when it opened. I am sorry to say that all I remember is that we were not told about it at all! Having been accustomed to going to the old Bodleian in the Broad for our studies, we came back to find the books were no longer there, and had been moved to the new building. There was as I recall no induction or explanation - we were just left to get on with it. I knew that Peter Carter was involved - but no more than that. It had from the start what it still has now, the hushed but not intimidating atmosphere; it

was also a great boy-spots-girl place, since we were now all together in an open space . . .

**Stephen Dobson      (Balliol, 1972)**

I was not a regular user of the Bodleian Law Library, I'm sorry to say. I'd like to excuse myself by pleading the well-stocked law library provided by my college, Balliol, but even that would be somewhat economical with the truth. In any event I do have one abiding memory of the Bodleian Law Library.

In the summer of 1972 I came there once a week for a penology tutorial. I'm afraid I've forgotten the name of the extremely able, kind and supportive woman academic who tutored me. In any event her room was one floor down from the level at which one entered the building, and to get to it I had to walk through stacks of shelving packed with back numbers of British national newspapers. If I was early for my tutorial or felt like dallying after it, I would spend a fascinated few minutes, or sometimes rather more, browsing through this material – I remember on one occasion getting quite excited because I thought I might be able to find The Times edition for the day of my birth – sadly I failed. But I won't forget these times spent looking at what has been called the first draft of history.

**Jeremy Eccles                      (1964)**

As a 1964 matriculant, I must have been there for the earliest of days at the Law Bod with bells on, for I took the threat of exams at the end of my second term seriously - and worked assiduously to pass them. That gleaming new building full of shining young faces was surely an inspiration, despite its then-garish yellow brick.

I'm afraid I then began to rest on my laurels and enjoyed the next four terms to excess - so my main memories of the Bod were a) falling asleep on a pile of books and b) using the book-tagging system as a way of discovering the names of my more distracting female fellow alumni.

After the fun - which included both stage and film appearances with Burton and Taylor in *Dr Faustus* - I retired to the less-distracting Codrington Library for the serious business of achieving a degree in my third year!

[Australia]

### **Martin Edwards (1976)**

I think my most interesting memory is of a speech given by Lord Denning in the St Cross Building. Each time he started to talk about one of his celebrated judgments, he was greeted with rapturous applause, rather like a legendary rock star performing the opening bars of his classic hits. This was (roughly) 1976, give or take a year or two.

### **Courteney Ellis (1964)**

My most vivid Michaelmas 1964 memory is of Roman Law lectures by Vinerian Professor Rupert Cross. Totally blind, he would enter the stage in the main St. Cross lecture theatre, tap his way to the front of the stage and always magically stop within what seemed like inches of the edge of the stage.

There he would hold forth for an hour, without notes, on the intricacies of Roman Law. He would quote in Latin from the Institutes of Gaius and Justinian. He would dissect the views of other luminaries such as David Daube. He would expatiate on the distinctions between

admixtio and commixtio, between alluvio and effluvio, on the intricacies of riparian rights in Roman Law, etc., etc.

At the end, he would tap his way off the stage and be gone.

He was a jurisprudential Superman. It was a mystical experience to attend his lectures.

### **Frankie Fook-Lun Leung (Keble, 1974 – 76)**

I was awed by the company of eminent academics who worked so hard at the library. Unlike Professors in the US who rely on research assistants to look up materials, at Oxford you actually could have a top ranking professor standing beside you looking up a case in a law report.

That is a humbling experience for me.

### **Stephen Fordham (St Edmund Hall, 1970)**

I am somewhat embarrassed to confess that I do not have many memories of the Law Library – almost all of my studying was done in the more “cosy” environment of the college library.

[Singapore]

### **Richard A D Freeman (Magdalen, 1963 – 65)**

I remember the new Bodleian Law Library, although in my day I thought it was always referred to as the “St. Cross Law Library,” while acknowledging that it was part of the Bodleian. I went up to Magdalen as an Academical Clerk (i.e. Choral Scholar) in 1963 with the intention of reading Metallurgy. I changed in my third term (for social and

athletic reasons) to Law because we had John Morris, Gunter Treitel, and Rupert Cross as fellows at Magdalen and Law seemed like a good subject to change to and begin my career at university. Moreover, my father had read Law in the early 1930s at Lincoln and my younger brother was scheduled to read Law at Keble starting in 1964. When the St. Cross building opened, it became much more convenient for me to work there than go the old Bodleian. However, I have to say that it was in my third year that I started spending the most time in the St. Cross Building – a full three hours each morning (before going off to row on the river). Then in my fourth year (I was granted a fourth year because a Blue and a Choral Scholarship were considered extenuating circumstances) and I made my home at the Aztec Temple on St. Cross Road and worked hard for my degree.

I liked to way the desks were set up – with the lights in between opposite readers - and I always thought it was a light and airy building. I have not been back to it since 1967, but I would be interested in doing so when I next come over to the UK.

**Penny Freer                      (Lady Margaret Hall, 1967 – 70)**

I read jurisprudence at LMH 1967-70. There were few lady law students, and we shared a college law library at St. Hugh's, so the Bodleian St. Cross Law Library was “my” law library. In good weather I would walk across the Parks from LMH, and often had lunch with the ducks in between morning and afternoon study sessions.

In the 1960s, the building was probably regarded as architecturally innovative, and certainly was a contrast to the older Oxford buildings, although the mellow stone was very much the colour of university buildings. I suppose today I would describe the building as relatively low rise with a large footprint. I found the long flight of steps to the main entrance inviting. The steady temperature in lecture rooms and the library provided a good environment to study, throughout the year

– and that would certainly have been innovative in the 1960s! The spacious desks, for general work, and discreet carrels, for complete concentration, were very good facilities, and were very much used. I haven't seen how the library is set up now, but presumably it has extensive computer screens.

The book collection was wonderful. I learnt there how to search deeply into books to find exciting materials that would not be in text books. I became an avid reader of articles in law journals which raised ideas that were new to me, and I was proud to find that I worked in the same library as many professors. It must have stood me in good stead as I later became a partner in a City Law Firm.

Special memories? Mixing with young men from other colleges, particularly in a cramped windowless storage room which doubled as coffee room. The one thing the building lacked was a good coffee room – and the coffee was awful! Lectures on jurisprudence by Professor Ronald Dworkin, recruited from the US, who talked vehemently about civil liberties – which hadn't been highlighted in our studies until then. Seeing Professor William Wade sitting in his carrel for day after day, apparently staring unemotionally into his books, or into space, and one day spotting him walking back from the book stacks clutching a sheet of paper with just a few handwritten words, smiling to himself ecstatically – he had found what he was looking for (no doubt a definitive matter of administrative law)! Many years later, a partner at my law firm who said he remembered seeing me, day after day, studying at the Bodleian – apparently I looked intense and was quite frightening so he never introduced himself to me at Oxford!

**Richard Gardiner (1964)**

I do not have anything very original to offer.

My four recollections of arriving at St Cross library in October 1964 are: first, the wide spread of the steps; second, the solemnity of signing



the book; third, the spaciousness of the reading room; and fourth the very full Gulbenkian lecture theatre (though it was not so full as the years went by!); and also how fresh and new it all seemed.

**Peter Garforth-Bles                      (St Peter's, 1970)**

I can remember my first morning at the St Cross Building (much whiter than it is now) when all the new intake turned up for our first lecture - there was a lot of excitement and some apprehension - reading jurisprudence would be new to all of us. Would one enjoy the subject? Would one be any good at it? We came in all shapes and sizes - from conventional to many guys with very long hair and some with no shoes.

Some people never turned up to lectures at all. I realised quite quickly that if a Professor was going to take the trouble to lecture us on a subject, there was a reasonable chance we might get an exam question on it.

We had some superb lecturers: Professors Cross, North, Gould, Treitel, Wade, Rodger and others. Professor Dworkin was completely beyond me.

My career in the law has been most interesting. I have been (and still am) negotiating and drafting concession agreements for a major oil company to gain rights to explore for and produce oil and gas all over the world.

Some years after I left Oxford, I led a party of my colleagues (mainly Americans) around Oxford and they asked to see the library. (A wit among them suggested that I might not be able to find it!). With the help of the staff, our boss tracked down an old book he had been keen to look at in connection with the company's claim for compensation for expropriation against one of our "host" countries.

The library was always a pleasant place to be. Some students seemed to live there. I live near Oxford and still have a valid library card and do occasionally visit.

**Peter George (Dom Alexander) (Magdalen, 1966 – 68)**

Thank you for your message about the Bodleian Law Library – it was a relief not to have another appeal notice!

I was privileged to have my own desk in the Law Library for two years: 1966-8, whilst I was studying for the BCL. Everything was new and state of the art and the staff were fantastic. My only distraction was during the manoeuvres sometimes conducted by the CCF outside the window, but that was rather fun. I loved the short walk from Magdalen up to St Cross to the library and feel very blessed to have been at Oxford during those wonderful years.

**Peter Godber (Wadham, 1964 – 67)**

I have strong memories of 1964 as a law student at the Bod. EG there were very, very few women students using Bod Law Library. So I fear that the male law students called the lovely well-endowed lady on the Bod Law reception desk the "university chest". Sorry about that, but you could make a good article re gender issues. 1964 cf 2014.

I edited and massively upgraded the student Law Magazine "Verdict" which the Bod staff displayed well.

**Mike Goolden (1966 – 69)**

I "used" the library from 1966-69, so was there near its beginning. I'm afraid I was rather an infrequent user, however, as my attentions were

mainly in other directions. I don't think the academic pressures on undergraduates then were as demanding as nowadays. However whenever I went there I did find it an inspiring building, and it was always a haven of peace and quiet. It was certainly never crowded then!

Architecturally I thought it a fine building, with its sweeping steps and pleasing design - rather more impressive than its neighbour St Catherine's. Wasn't the Gulbenkian Foundation its principal funder? Did they have something to do with the design or did they just provide the money?

In those days it was easier for undergraduates to keep a car at the University; one was not supposed to park in the centre of Oxford, but it was always possible to park around the Law Library. Not inconvenient for a law student, but rather a long walk to College (10 minutes!).

**Phillip Gordon (1965 – 67)**

I used the Law Library from 1965-1967, when it was spanking new. I thought it a wonderful place, filled with light. The lecture rooms were comfortable. I thought that the exterior was a fine combination of Cotswold colors and modern lines. I'm not sure how it has aged, given the great expanses of skylights, but as a user I loved it.

[USA]

**Bryan Gould (1963 – 64)**

I well remember, as a BCL student, watching the new building take shape, and being immensely impressed by its scale and modernity. By the time it actually opened, I was in London, taking up a position with

the Foreign Office, but the Library was in full operation by the time I returned in 1968 as a Law Don at Worcester. I got to know the Library very well over the next six years, both because of the time I spent in my little carrel - looking back, a rather monastic working environment but carrying with it a sense of privilege and commitment to academic pursuits – and by virtue of the lectures I gave in the lecture theatres and the time I spent – rather nervously – in the Common Room while waiting for the appointed hour for the beginning of the lecture to arrive. Over that six-year period, the Library was pretty much a home from home for me, as I'm sure it was for both dons and students; we were privileged to have such a superior facility available to us.

[New Zealand]

**Paddy Grafton Green            (Wadham, 1962 – 65)**

I was an under-graduate reading law at Wadham College between 1962 and 1965 and remember well the opening of the Law Library in the St Cross building on 17 October 1964 by Dean Irwin Griswold, then the Dean of the Harvard Law School. He was confined to a wheelchair and, at the instigation of my tutor, I was given the responsibility of wheeling him around Oxford during the course of that day! There was plenty of pageantry and it is with some relief that I am able to report that I avoided any collisions and in particular tipping Dean Griswold out of his chair and I ensured his safe arrival on time at the Sheldonian, the new Law Library and other places of importance during the day. My reward for my efforts took the form of supper cooked by the Vice-Chancellor's wife, Mrs (subsequently Lady) Wheare, and served in her kitchen at Exeter College where her husband Kenneth Wheare was Rector.

**Adrian Hall (Mansfield, 1964)**

On looks, we thought the steps leading up to the main entrance looked like a set for Cleopatra or similar film. It was never crowded. The Librarians were very knowledgeable and knew where even the most obscure book could be found. (No checking of a computer then!!). The lecture theatres were comfortable. All in all, a great place. One great advantage was its location as regards Mansfield: just across the playing fields (as they were then) of Corpus.

**Akhtar Hamid (1966)**

Thank you for writing to me. I can't believe that the Bodleian Law Library is already 50 years old. I went up in Michaelmas 1966, almost exactly 2 years after, as you state, the library opened its doors, and it became my home away from home, so to speak, for the next four years.

And I took special pride in the fact that, as the acknowledgement plaque at the library entrance suggested, my country (Pakistan) had contributed in some way to its setting up.

[Pakistan]

**Sarah P J Hardman (1973 – 76)**

First impressions of the building were frankly disappointing - I was underwhelmed if one can use such a term - this was Oxford and the Bodleian was renowned - this was just a very 60's style office building and my expectations were of something far more traditional and grand in appearance.

Of course it is a creature of its time but it was well put together and functional. I do remember the lovely desks and sensible lighting but the

squeaky floors were a constant distraction to an easily distracted first year student.

I also recall that unless you were up with the lark, you would struggle to find a space as it was always crowded and that was a big disincentive to making the trek there when you could use the college library for most purposes and so I only tended to use it to read material which was not available elsewhere. Personally I think that was sensible since I was thereby not denying a space to others who did not have the use of a college library.

Another abiding memory was the inability to readily access key must read articles cited by your tutor and which had to be requested at the desk - they always seemed to be out with someone else - those were the days of the photocopier and presumably no matter how many copies were prepared, there were never enough. It did make you wonder if some zealous competitive types were hoarding them.

It also seemed that miles of shelves were devoted to reports which were never going to be of use to the typical undergraduate - it did give me the impression that the undergrads were tolerated as a necessary evil but that the library was really there for the postgrads and academics.

Of course in time one's initial impressions were replaced with a more enlightened appreciation of the quality of the facility and of the diligence and knowledge of the staff and how privileged one was to be able to benefit from the same.

No doubt the library has gone from strength to strength and in the modern digital age, though I daresay all relevant stuff can be accessed on line, as a traditional lawyer, I still prefer to read from a book in a library to squinting at a screen.

## **Judge Richard S Harper (Magdalen)**

Such happy days. I always preferred to work during the day; I was never a late night worker. I used to meander by foot each week day from Magdalen to the Bodleian Law Library. When I arrived, I felt the surroundings and ambience of the law library to be warm and welcoming; cosy even. The silence and comfort made it a welcome home in which I could address the work that needed to be done, with such a marvellous collection of written materials to assist. I remember too the kindness of the library staff. All round the library harbours very fond and warm memories indeed. A place of safety, for reflection, learning and betterment.

## **Richard Hildreth (1968 – 69)**

When I used the law library during 1968-69 it was impressively new, well lit, and not very crowded at all. I generally chose a seat on the north (?) side with a view of the playing fields as I prepared for my next tutorial with Professor Otto Kahn-Freund.

[United States]

## **Ashley Hilliard (Magdalen, 1972 – 74)**

My years reading law at Oxford do not qualify as “early” for the Bodleian Law Library, but belong, perhaps, to the period when it was hitting its stride. I was an undergraduate at Magdalen College from 1972 –74. Most of my activities, including library study time, took place in the college. The college had a well-stocked law library room, which we undergraduates made our own, the better to compare notes and prepare for our tutorials with support. Most of us purchased the basic texts for our subjects. Digesting them was task enough. The Bodleian

was unknown territory, entered maybe between lectures, to find a quiet place to read or write.

When I did enter, I was struck by the size of the space and extent of the collection, with statutes, cases and treatises on the laws of countries around the world. This law business seemed more complicated than anticipated: “*lus longus, vita brevis est*”, the philosopher might have quipped.

I returned to Oxford in 1975-76 to study for a BCL. Now the Bodleian Law Library became the centre of my academic endeavours, such as they were. BCL students from the various colleges came together in the library. I recall the pleasure I took from having my own carrel – a nice perk. I also recall the helpfulness of the library staff, on whom we relied extensively in those pre-internet search days. The space was conducive to study.

Best wishes for the next 50 years!

[Canada]

### **Frank Hinks QC (St Catherine’s, 1968 – 72)**

I read law at St. Catz between 1968 and 1972. I have happy memories of the Bodleian Law Library which was so close to St. Catz that I used in preference to the college library. I carried out most of my studies in the law library, in my BCL year having a desk of my own. Nothing disturbed the cool calm and spacious atmosphere. On one occasion Dr Morris (a large man of Dicey & Morris and the Rule against Perpetuities fame) slipped flat on his back. A lesser building would have been shaken. The law library was not even stirred!



**Robert Hogarth (Magdalen, 1972 – 75)**

I used to spend my afternoons (when not playing football etc.) in the Bod and while there learned the skill, which has never deserted me, of falling asleep while remaining sitting upright. So I think the library was always quiet enough and easy to use.

The most interesting book I ever found was when looking for a book on Crim and Pen, finding a biography of the Birdman of Alcatraz, which I read avidly for as long as it took to finish.

**Michael Hwang (Pembroke, 1964 – 68)**

I was among the first users of what was then called St Cross Law Library in the Autumn term of 1964 ( which was my Schools year). Having until then worked in the traditional surroundings of my College Law Library, the old Bodleian, and the Codrington in All Souls, the new building was of course a revelation.

The feeling of walking into a brand new building with one of the most impressive collection of law books in the world was indescribable. But you must remember that this was an age before photocopiers ( let alone computers) and students would have to access the actual books and articles on our reading lists physically, and make notes of the relevant passages. So, for a relatively arcane subject like Public International Law, where there were virtually no textbooks or materials in our College libraries, all students had to source for those books and articles from St Cross, which would have had one ( or perhaps two) copies of the texts in question. So we would have to cycle up to St Cross before 9 am and queue up at the main door waiting for the library to open in order to find that precious textbook or article for our week's essay. At the stroke of 9, the doors would open, and we would run in faster than the crowds at the opening of the Harrods annual sale and seek the book or journal in question.

Those of us from the same college ( Pembroke) would form a pact, and each of us would be assigned the task of hunting down a particular book or journal and we would then meet later and sit together and exchange our loot after we had each made our own notes from the materials we had found.

A year later, after I had passed Schools, I enrolled for the BCL, and was assigned a permanent seat in the library as a post graduate student. I was ensconced in a table of 4 post graduate students, with a good view of the hockey field of St Catherine's College except for one thing: the goal was just out of our sights, so we would see some exciting play and then have our view cut off as the player aimed his shot for goal and we would have to wait for a cheer or a moan to find out if a goal had been scored.

All of the 4 postgraduates eventually had successful legal careers. Perhaps the one who achieved the greatest fame was Nicholas Hasluck ( son of Paul Hasluck, former Foreign Minister and later Governor General of Australia) who became a High Court judge in Western Australia but is better known in Australia for his erudite and reflective writings as a novelist and a poet.

[Singapore]

## **Charles Hume**

Sadly, or perhaps typically, my memories of the Law Library are not memories of great academic research or insight. Rather, there are two more mundane ones which still remain with me:

\* Falling asleep over my books in the afternoon of long days spent there

\* The excellent café which served student size lunches which yet accommodated student pockets

Aside from that, I have a lasting impression from my first visit as a fresh-faced undergraduate – a sense of wonder at the size of the library, the endless shelves of legal tomes and the realisation that most people weren't falling asleep.

**Tim Jobson**                      **(Keble, 1965)**

I was one of the first students to use the library, which opened at the beginning of my final year reading law at Keble. Keble library was museum like, with poor lighting and not well stocked with up to date law publications. The new library was convenient for Keble and was a perfect place for my studies for the whole of my final year. Most days I would arrive at 9.30am, leave at 12.45pm, sometimes come back in the afternoon but usually work for a further session from 8pm until 9.30pm. I was joined by most of our year of Keble lawyers (13 in all), but only a few of us worked there for all those hours. If too many of us were there together, there was a risk that it became a social, rather than studying, occasion.

I revelled in everything about the design, the open plan and books on several levels around the outside, the light and airy feel and the desk lighting.

We all got to know the two librarians, and the junior librarian, Barbara, was my partner at the Keble College summer ball in 1965.

I am sorry that I have no photographs or physical memorabilia but hopefully this may be of some small interest!

**Peter Jolly**                      **(1965)**

It's so long ago, as I came up in October 1965, that I can hardly remember. Ironically, only last week for the first time in over 45

years, I was back in the Library doing some research, and found the staff very helpful. Memories of 1965-8? Great place to work: not overcrowded, and, living out of college for 2 years, I often used it as my workspace.

### **Rhidian Jones                    (Keble, 1962 – 66)**

Your namesake at the Keble alumni office said you were seeking stories of the early days in what we then called the Aztec Palace.

I am a 70 year old recently retired Keble lawyer with fond memories of Michaelmas Term, 1964. I am afraid I was a pretty poor law student and took from 1962 to 1966 to complete a sportsman's third. Arriving at Keble in the Davidge era when scholarship was not prized, (he made me throw away my scholar's gown and buy a second hand commoner's one), I well recall his famous quote, "To be a law tutor it was sufficient to have an MA and be a gentleman". In consequence, I chose to play a lot of rugby, act, write sappy poetry, be commissioned into the TA through the OTC, and be elected President of the JCR. Despite that unpromising academic start I had a reasonably successful career as a lawyer, probably as a direct result of the breadth of my extra-curricular activities.

The opening of the new law library was a visible symbol of the professionalization of the Law Faculty at Oxford from which even Keble was not spared. Law tutors of the stature of David Williams and Peter North were recruited, which meant some of us were privileged to be tutored by two persons who respectively went on to be vice-chancellors of Cambridge and Oxford, a signal honour. But these accomplished academic lawyers also arranged to exchange students for specialist tuition in other colleges, and to put on courses of lectures in practical legal subjects.

That autumn I attended a course of eight lectures by Lenny Hoffmann, (later a much respected Law Lord), at Univ on Torts against Economic Interests. I have my notes still. This was a marked contrast to endless Roman Law papers and the like. It dealt with day to day business realities, which is how I have subsequently earned my living. At each lecture he handed out a list of authorities, and it was then that I first started reading cases in the law library as opposed to using case books.

One of the cases imprinted on my memory from the course was *Brimelow v. Casson* [1924] 1 Ch. 302. Its facts are splendidly memorable. In the wake of the opening of Tutankhamun's tomb, a promoter, Jack Arnold, got up an Egyptian themed touring show including chorus girls, who were so poorly paid they had to augment their earnings by practising the oldest profession, and one of them even had to live with a fellow artist, who happened to be a dwarf. When the tour reached Maidenhead, somewhat appropriately, it was closed down by the trade union representative, Lugg, persuading the local producers not to let it be shown. On Arnold's action for inducement to breach of contract it was held that the public interest in preserving the morality of chorus girls was a sufficient defence.

A young Harvard Law School student, Douglas McNeill, immortalised this decision in verse in the *Langdell Lyrics* in 1938. I cannot remember the correct reference but I recall reading it in your law library in, I believe, the *Harvard Law Review*. It is, in any event, now widely available on the internet, but I set it out below corrected as I committed it to memory in your library all those years ago.

#### The Ballad of *Brimelow v. Casson*

The ladies of the chorus of the Wututtut Revue  
Through economic pressure had their virtue to eschew.  
Twas economic pressure that accounts for their proclivity

To supplement their earnings with professional activity.  
That poor benighted maiden didn't say it just for fun,  
'If Snow White lived with seven dwarfs, well I can live with one!'  
An economic royalist, Jack Arnold was his name,  
Began this competition with the houses of ill fame.  
'Twas some ironic destiny by which the troupe was led  
That prompted them to end their tour at England's Maidenhead."  
The matter was reported to our hero, labor's Lugg,  
Who vowed he'd get Jack Arnold even though it meant the jug.  
He gathered up the union's most persuasive breach inducers  
To tell this sad and sordid tale to Arnold's pet producers.  
I'm proud to say the latter said they didn't give a damn  
About Jack Arnold's contract, and they closed him like a clam.  
I'm prouder of the Chancellor, who didn't bat an eye  
But calmly told Jack Arnold that his action wouldn't lie  
So here's to Merrie England, let the Union Jack unfurl,  
The Chancellor and Heaven will protect the working girl."

Although my career was primarily in corporate law, in recent years I have worked closely with trades unions as an independent director of their bank, Unity Trust Bank plc, and latterly as a member of the Supervisory Board of Thompson LLP, the U K's leading TU law firm. You may imagine that the Ballad of Brimelow v. Casson is my party piece in that context. Thank you for equipping me appropriately with your library's wonderful resources.

**David Kosky                      (Magdalen, 1967 – 70)**

My favourite memory of the Law Library in the St Cross Building was an item of Graffiti spotted in the Gentleman's lavatory scrawled by an anguished student having second thoughts about his chosen subject and which read as follows:

"Law is real s--t"

Underneath appeared the learned comment:

"as opposed to personal s--t, I presume."

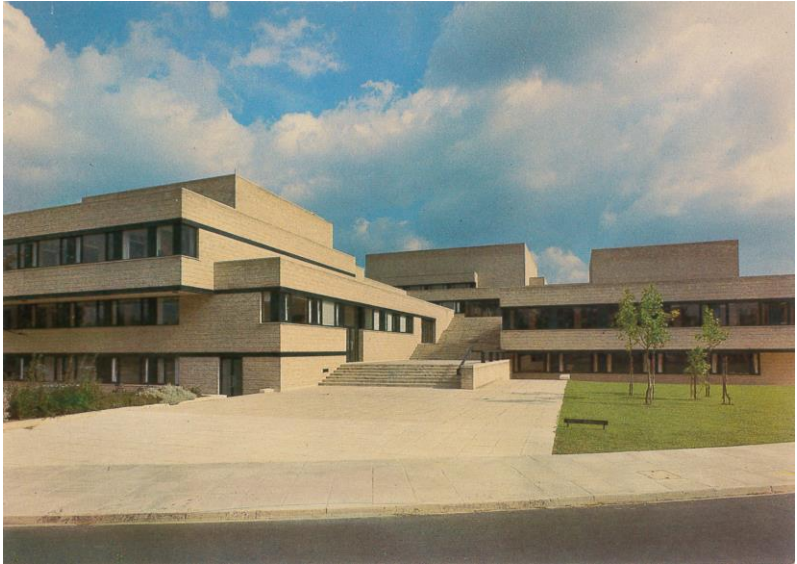
I doubt that you will wish to publish this but it enlivened an otherwise dreary day among many.

**Nicola Lacey                    (University, 1979 – 81)**

I shall always be grateful for the privilege of access to that wonderful library, both as a BCL student in 1979 – 1981 and during my two periods working in Oxford. I have particularly fond memories of my assigned desk as a BCL student – next to John Dewar – overlooking the then OTC building, which if I remember right served rather good lunches which leavened the effort to get my head round restitution!

**Linda Litchfield                (Somerville, 1974 – 76)**

I first entered the Law Library in October 1974. I had arrived in Oxford, aged 21, to do a BCL over two years, having obtained a BA in law at Kingston Poly (as was) and then Bar Finals at the College of Law in central London. I had been called to the Bar and knew that I wanted to practice, but academia was still exerting a pull. The chance to spend 2 years studying in Oxford, with DES grant secured at the last moment, was too good to miss. My college was Somerville, but there were no law fellows there then, and I went to Lincoln for tutorials. My links with Somerville were tenuous: I never lived in, ate only 3 meals there in two years and I can't remember even entering the library. In my first year, I lived in a bedsit in Frenchay Road and in the second, shared a flat in Divinity Road. There was one other Somervillian reading for the BCL (it was all women then, of course). And it was the Law Library that really became my second home while I was in Oxford. I never got over the thrill of having my own dedicated seat. I don't remember the number (if it had one) now, but it was on the right hand side as you walk to the back of the library from the



An early colour photograph of the St Cross Building. *(Thomas Photos)*



Opening day, 17 October 1964. *(David Lerman)*





The St Cross Building, November 2010. *(Jerry Phillips)*



A snowy morning, January 2010. *(BLL staff)*



The view towards the city centre, January 2009. *(Ruth Bird)*



The gallery, January 2009. *(BLL staff)*



The International section, April 2010. *(BLL staff)*



Seating in the European Documentation Centre, September 2002.  
*(BLL staff)*





Research desks in the gallery overhang, July 2013. *(KT Bruce)*



Books being relabelled as part of the Moys reclassification project,  
Summer 2009. *(BLL staff)*



The new Graduate Reading Room, opened April 2006. *(Ruth Bird)*



Building refurbishment in the Graduate Reading Room, July 2011. *(BLL staff)*



The ground floor being prepared for the arrival of the Official Papers collection, August 2010. *(BLL staff)*



The Official Papers section, November 2010. *(Jerry Phillips)*



Shanne Lush, Bodleian Law Librarian 1978 – 88,  
photographed in August 2014. *(Ruth Bird)*



Barbara Tearle, Bodleian Law Librarian 1988 – 2003, speaking at the  
official opening of the Freshfields IT Room, 13 May 2002. *(BLL staff)*



entrance, facing the wall, one in from the window. I think I could walk to it blindfolded, even 40 years later. (How can it be 40 years?). My neighbour in my first year was Hugh Collins, and in my second a charming Australian from Magdalen, now a silk in Adelaide, Jonathan Wells, who I am still in touch with and spent a nostalgic evening with when he came to London last year.

I spent nearly all of my time in the library, when I wasn't at a lecture, seminar or tutorial. I loved the fact that I could just leave all my books piled up in my space overnight and they would be exactly as I'd left them when I came back. Even the most obscure set of law reports or journals could usually be tracked down in the stacks. The staff were unfailingly helpful and courteous. I regarded it as an incredible privilege to be able to use the library. And it wasn't only a place to work. Friends and colleagues were usually working there too and social arrangements could be arranged by direct contact or leaving notes.

Remember, this was a long time before mobile phones or emails. I don't remember if there were any catering facilities in the building, though I suppose there must have been. There was an area outside where one could sit and read, because I remember reading great chunks of Iris Murdoch's *The Black Prince* on a terrace outside, when I needed a break from studying.

And there were other distractions from books. At the beginning of my second year, in 1975, I became aware of a tall bearded lawyer who seemed to be spending an inordinate amount of time perusing books on the shelves near my desk. "Lurking in the stacks" has a sinister connotation which would be unfair. Eventually, after several days, he approached me and asked me if I liked choral music. To be honest I didn't know the answer to his question but I said "yes" and that was the beginning of one of those deep, passionate, ultimately extremely painful relationships that can seem so important when you are in your early twenties. It ended before I left Oxford the following Summer but haunted me for decades afterwards. And it all started in the library!



After I left Oxford I practised at the Bar from 1976 to 2003, then retired from the law and took a degree in fine art textiles, at Goldsmiths, University of London (library not so memorable). Since 2007 I have been self-employed as an artist using textiles and doing some teaching of textiles to adult learners.

**Michael M Martin (New, 1966 – 68)**

I spent many hours at the Bodleian Law Library in 1966-68 working on my B.Litt. thesis. While it didn't have the ancient charm of the main Bodleian or the convenience of the New College library, it had space, light, an accommodating common room, and an incredible collection. As an impatient American, I appreciated that the staff operated at a higher level than I seemed to encounter elsewhere in Oxford. I also have fond memories of lectures presented in the classrooms on the lower level.

**Bill Marshall Smith**

One of the main memories I have is of the sound of heavy rain on the plastic skylights, which always seemed to me to be a bit of a design fault, especially in a library. Presumably someone has sorted those out by now.

The other thing I remember is that the lavatories had soft toilet paper at a time when most of the men's colleges were still using a form of greaseproof paper marketed under the name of Bronco. Not very academic I know, but it is odd what sticks in the mind after 40 years.

**David Matas (New)**

I remember using the typing room. I suspect it does not even exist anymore. Those who typed notes, like myself, brought their own

portable typewriters. We were consigned to a room above the central atrium. The door of the room was always closed to prevent the noise of typing from distracting the other Bodleian users. I appreciated the existence of this room. It meant that I was not forced to try to read my illegible writing from notes I would otherwise have had to take. The existence of the room showed both the flexibility of the library and its anticipatory eagerness to adapt to the technology of the time.

The law library was conveniently placed right beside the New College cricket ground and clubhouse. Because I was a New College student, I was able, when I wanted to take a break, to dip out of the library, get some tea and watch some cricket. I consider myself fortunate to have gone to New College, and this was one reason for that.

I have another memory to pass on. The Bodleian Law Library was not just a library. It was also a collection of lecture halls. When I was there, though I gather this has changed since, any don or professor could give a lecture series of whatever length on any subject of his or her choosing. Any resemblance between the lecture topics offered and the subjects of tutorials or exams was mere coincidence.

Each college had its own library, with its own rudimentary collection of basic law books. For the casual law student, they sufficed. Most law students did not come regularly to the Bodleian. The beginning of each term was different.

Each term began with a migratory throng of students swooping down on the Bodleian flitting from lecture to lecture to decide on what lecture series they would follow. As the term wore on, the numbers in each lecture series would dwindle as students made up their minds. Some lecture series had to be cancelled altogether when numbers dwindled to nothing. With each new term, a new cacophonous choir of lectures began and a new crowd of visitors arrived.

Outside of the beginnings of term, the Bodleian was a self selected relatively few serious law students. The Bodleian was the university meeting place for law research, writing and scholarship, otherwise fragmented through the college system.

[Canada]

**John McKenna (1984 – 85)**

Thank you so much for such a lovely email. I am so pleased to hear that your library remains essentially unchanged from the 1980s!

I have such fond memories of my time there - initially as a BCL student (84-85) then working through the stacks on the lower level during my attempt to complete a D Phil on the links between the various doctrines of estoppel (86-89).

Apart from the wonderful working environment you have, the terrace outside the library's main entrance provided the perfect venue for many long chats with fellow students - some of whom remain my closest friends!

Unfortunately, the law libraries in Queensland are going through a difficult time at the moment. In the universities, students now seem to be encouraged to work from home and use the internet to access the law reports - with the law libraries ceasing to be the hub of university life they once were.

In the legal profession, too, even the larger firms and sets of barristers are seeing the internet as the answer to all their research needs - with their law libraries being reduced in size or abandoned completely.

In a somewhat ironic twist, however, the library I am associated with - the Supreme Court of Queensland Library - now seems to be

returning to its original function (1862) of providing the only comprehensive source of legal information in the State.

Apart from the usual research services which it provides to the courts and the legal profession, the library a very active legal history programme - which includes collecting original materials relating to Australian legal history (early photographs, documents, legal opinions, oral histories etc), managing the Selden Society in Australia, hosting about 10 lectures a year (often by visiting academics or judges from around the world) and maintaining a fairly active publishing programme.

Three of the more ambitious publications we are planning for this year (all of which have an Oxford connection) are:

(1) a festschrift for John Finnis (with contributions from many of the Australians who studied under Finnis in Oxford);

(2) an account of Lord Atkin's Queensland connexions. Lord Atkin was born in central Brisbane - in a cottage which ultimately became the site of the Federal Court building - and quite a lot of work has been done recently to piece together from family letters the circumstances of the family's emigration to Australia and ultimate return to Wales;

(3) a history of the library itself (which celebrated its 150th anniversary last year). The history of the library is of particular interest because the development of the collection reveals quite a deal about the tastes and priorities of the English Judges who found themselves in early colonial Queensland. Rather than simply putting together a utilitarian collection, they spent a substantial part of their budget on a collection of early English works of purely historic significance (including abridgements from the 1500s) and a fairly large collection of US materials.

[Australia]

## **Richard Morris (New, 1963 – 66)**

My main recollection is working all day long in the Law Library from 9am to 5pm one day shortly after the start of my postgraduate BCL course in September 1966. I had been having some misgivings about whether I was really suited to this alarmingly academic course, but had determined that day to put these aside and get down to work. At 5pm, along with the nine other BCL students, I participated in a three-hour seminar at the Library. At the end of this, I was patting myself on the back and preparing to return to my room in St John Street to have some supper and play a bit of music when I suddenly saw that all other nine students were remaining in the Library to continue their labours. This broke my spirit and the next morning I called on my tutor, the super-eminent Professor Honoré, and resigned from the course.

I hasten to add that the Library itself was wonderful. I probably would not even have considered embarking on the BCL without it!

## **Vitit Muntarbhorn (Keble 1970)**

The “Bod” - Embodiment of Sociability and Serendipity

Should one reminisce? I have fond memories of the Bodleian Law Library – the “Bod” or “Law Bod” - from the early 1970s when I was studying at Keble College, Oxford, as a law undergraduate. Almost every weekday, during the term, I would ride my bike there and park it in a corner nearby. Of course, the outward aim was “to read the books” and digest all the court reports in the term’s reading lists meted out by the tutors. This would be accompanied by various lectures that undergraduates - “undergrads”- could attend as part of the cyclical curriculum.

At the time, the building in the Saint Cross area looked quite new, with its creamy stone exterior and the multiple steps leading up to the reading areas. In a way, architecturally, it had a rather layered

look – offering, literally, in front of the glass entrance, an imposing set of stairs as stepping stones for those looking for piles of books and knowledge. Inside the building, the main reading area was a sort of atrium with a covered roof, framed by large windows. It had an airy feeling to it, with that high ceiling, encircled by walkways, with stacks of books to the side. The mood was (usually) quiet and surrounded by the light that penetrated the windows nonchalantly from the floor above. Whence the illumination - Dominus illuminatio?

At the back, in a sort of red-bricked “annexe”, there was a coffee place where you could get a sandwich lunch with soup. However, the joy almost next door could not be overlooked. Turn right and the “Bod” itself was not far from great green areas, including Oxford’s parks. Turn left and stroll slightly backwards at a leisurely pace – and you would land up at perhaps at St. Catherine’s College, with the charming Addison’s Walk in the vicinity. Autumn always looked sensational in the sun, due to the carpets of brown leaves with other hues, interspersed, which presaged the approaching winter and its soon-to-be air of melancholy. Like other parts of Ye Olde England, of course, it got and gets soggy and wet (at times and many times) in Oxford!

While, in a way, all libraries are a cathedral of/to knowledge, the “Bod” itself turned out to be a surprise for me for another key reason. I met some of my best friends there and they were not necessarily from Keble. There was Mike who was introduced to me one day – who was from Balliol. He had this great, voluminous laugh which resonated with a hint of lechery, intermixed with a wonderful “joie de vivre”. We met by accident, and it was a dirty laugh – at first sight! (Or was it - at first fright?) We were always joking while having coffee at the nearby annexe or while whispering in the corridors in the “Bod”’s seemingly sacrosanct precinct. Of course, it was hallowed ground. Yet, the “Bod” was/is happily also the place of hellos (and goodbyes and “a bientot”). The pleasure of unforeseen friendships, informal dialogues and amicable chit-chats lured and lurked. There should

always be some room for titillation as an intermission for all those serious hours poring over the hefty tomes.....

Then there was Jenny whom I also met by chance, who was studying at St.Hilda's. She was dating someone at one of the other colleges at the time. Our friendship was simple and platonic - we got on famously with our chit-chats and occasional teas at St.Hilda's and other warm-hearted venues, as we reflected on our daily studies and life at Oxford. Drinks here, dinners there, theatres/plays alfresco, exams in uniforms competing with penguins (white bow ties, dark suits and the flapping of gowns) . Occasionally, there would be those punting expeditions, replete with picnics along the Cherwell, with several friends frolicking carefree along the river bank, before the panic of approaching "finals".

Of course, the years have passed. I have kept in touch with Mike whom I see almost every time I go to London. He is now an eminent lawyer – QC – with two children and a wife with a great sense of humour. Jenny, I contact once in a while and the last piece of news was that she was living in the north of England, her children growing up, inheriting her intelligence and gentility. Somehow, these indelible friendships strike a chord within me, embodying what Oxford and the "Bod" were great at offering. Knowledge at its best, of course, but much more. What this environment gave us was not only educational insights and the skills of critical analysis. There were and are also personal souvenirs, remembrances of contacts and sociability, often quite by chance and enduring , despite the vagaries of life.

A cultural space, personifying freedoms and engendering friendships. As our young lives started/start to chart our course towards the future, the heartening warmth of serendipity !

(Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn - M.A, B.C.L.Oxon.) - is a Distinguished Scholar at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. He is a former UN Special Rapporteur and a UN human rights expert.)

**Timothy Noble (University, 1962 – 65)**

Thank you for this email. I do remember the new law library well. I found it wonderfully light and unstuffy, whereas many other law libraries were dusty and heavy and dark. However, I have to admit that I did not spend much time in the new library. My excuse is that it was my last year and by Christmas 1964 I had reached the simple conclusion that trying to gain more new knowledge ahead of my Finals was a losing strategy and that instead I should try to revise and learn the knowledge I already had (or thought I had). I would probably have to admit, if pressed, that other non-academic distractions also played their part in my absence from the library.

Happy 50th birthday! To the library, not to you ! I subsequently qualified as a barrister at Gray's Inn and then left the law for finance and the business world.

**Millius Palayiwa (Oriental, 1970)**

I found the staff extremely helpful! They used to collect the law reports for you or kindly lead you to where they were.

They definitely did the photocopying for you. The lay out of the building was great (shame about the outside!). It was a great place to study. Thank you for making me the person I have come to be.

Continue the good work and care of the law library!

**Maggy Pigott (was Toohey) (Lady Margaret Hall, 1969 – 72)**

Thanks for your request. I offer the following memories:

I read Jurisprudence at LMH between 1969-72, in the days of single sex colleges. I loved walking through the Parks to the recently opened, state of the art, Law Library.



As a newcomer to law I found the large, impressive, building a little daunting; it reinforced how little I knew and how much there was to learn in three short years.

I enjoyed working in a modern Library but enjoyed, even more, my frequent and lengthy coffee breaks. There, many friendships were started that have continued to this day.

I used to study with another LMH lawyer who was (and is still) very beautiful. I well remember the regular admiring notes that were passed to her, often asking her out - and the dearth of missives I received! It was all part of the rounded education I received whilst at Oxford.

### **John Prebble (St Edmund Hall, 1968 – 70)**

I used the Bodleian 1968 – 1970. As a postgraduate student I had a carrel. One abiding memory is of the fairness of the Law Librarian, even though a couple of requests of mine must have caused him some inconvenience.

First, the architects had designed the desks with fluorescent lights along the side opposite the reader. The lights were fine most of the time, when you were bending over your books and taking notes. But if you wanted to lean back in your chair and have your on the side of the desk near you, you quickly found yourself beyond the range of the lamp, which was fixed. I remedied the problem by bringing a second-hand Anglepoise that I acquired from a junk shop. This, it turned out, was not permitted: only Bodley's lights in Bodley's library. But instead of just forbidding the light, as some librarians might have done, the Librarian went to some trouble to lend me an approved one.

Secondly, my father had visited for a few months and was kindly going to sell me his Mini at whatever he would get from a dealer. But how to check? I requisitioned the latest issue of Glass's Guide, the car

dealers' version, forbidden to the public. But I guessed that the book would be in Bodley, Bodley being a copyright library. My guess was correct; the book was in the catalogue, but at first the Bodley guardian of Glass's Guide declined to let me have it. The publishers had been very reluctant to deposit the book at all, and agreed to do so only when Bodley promised not to let anyone see it, a promise that I knew was unenforceable. I was in the law librarian's office when he telephoned the guardian of the book, who explained about the promise. The law librarian said, about me, in a mild tone of voice, "I don't think that he will accept that", since the librarian was well aware that I knew the law that applies to copyright libraries. We struck a deal: the people in the stacks would not deliver Glass's Guide to the law library in the normal way, for me to take it to my desk, but I was allowed to visit the Guide's shelves under escort.

The shelves were several levels down, in an underground bunker near The Broad. On the end of the stack someone had pasted a prominent skull and crossed bones, forbidding people to look at the contents of the Glass's Guide shelves. Nevertheless, I did so, and found the price information that I wanted. My escort said that he was fairly sure that no other reader had managed to penetrate the Guide's defences.

I sometimes wonder what would have happened if I had demanded to consult Glass's Guide at my reader's desk in the Law Library, as was my right. I suspect that the Law Librarian would have supported me, nuisance though it would have been. He was a man of principle.

To respond to your specific questions: the library was easy to use, though I would have appreciated a shelf in the postgraduate carrels. This was not possible, because of the fixed reading lights that I have mentioned. I suspect that the architects had sacrificed utility to a stripped-down Danish style of architecture. I do not recall the library ever being crowded, and service was quite fast. Occurred to me: I thought that the library was never crowded, though, having my own

carrel, I never had to compete for a general seat: though I have no impression of others doing so

[New Zealand]

**Anne-Marie Randall (St Hugh's, 1967 – 70)**

I have very fond memories of the Law Library. I came up to St Hugh's in 1967 and I remember my "college mother" taking me there for the first time and saying that some people hated the design but she loved it, she always thought of it as a pile of butter pats!

All our lectures were there, the ones I mainly remember were Professors Cross and Daube in our first two terms - blind Professor Cross (Cross & Jones) on Criminal Law, being led to the lectern by his secretary and swaying as he delivered his lecture, telling the stories, explaining the law. Professor Daube with his strong Viennese accent bringing Nosferatu to mind and managing to make Roman law interesting, telling us about his own professor's daughter Rhea "who was a gay girl and we called her Men's Rhea" (in 1967 gay didn't have its current meaning).

Then, after Mods, I remember Dr Trietel (Trietel on Tort), very measured and clear, and the real star, Professor Hart, who made jurisprudence seem so straightforward and clear. This was the era of "the Hart/Devlin controversy - fascinating. And then we had a visiting lecturer from Harvard - Ronald Dworkin, described by my tutor as an up and coming young man, but whom I found incomprehensible.

But I know you are really asking for memories of the library. I can remember sitting there in my first week feeling completely self conscious, overawed and out of place, diligently reading everything on the list for my first tutorial and composing my first essay - on constitutional law I think - and not really understanding any of it. (Miss Thorneycroft's reaction confirmed my view. But she was rather

bemused by the fact I turned up to my tutorial in sub fusc, having been on the only protest march of my student career, under the spell of the charismatic Michael Rosen who suggested the dress!).

I really grew into the library in my final year when I was living out of college, and used to get a lift into Oxford in the morning every day and bag a place as soon as the library opened - 9am? I spent most of the day there and I think that was the first time I discovered the fairly grim little coffee room, somewhere in the basement? With slot machines from memory? I stayed until early evening when my boyfriend would pick me up and we would drive back to Boars Hill listening to The Archers (oh those wild student days).

I remember the library as a good place to study, very well stocked, there was rarely a problem with getting whatever books one needed, and it was comfortable and peaceful - very conducive to learning. One more memory - I think it must have been in the summer, the books were infested with tiny scarlet spider-like creatures. I reported this to the librarians who seemed unconcerned so maybe it was normal! (And no, I didn't use drugs, despite the era!)

### **Christopher Saul (St Catherine's, 1973 – 76)**

I was a Jurisprudence undergraduate at St. Catherine's College from 1973 to 1976. I spent many hours in the "Bod".

I often think back to those times with affection. The library always struck me as very well planned and practically laid out. It was, moreover, something of a treat to go and seek out law reports - particularly older law reports. The staff were, moreover, unfailingly helpful.

I wonder whether today's students are quite as privileged as we were in the sense that modern media may be means that students have less

real world incentive to touch and feel law reports, articles in the LQR, text books and journals. I hope that I am wrong!

I send you my sincerest thanks for the enlightenment and enjoyment which the Bodleian Law Library gave me.

**Stephen Scott            (Queen's, 1961 & 1969)**

I regret that I shall not be able to attend the celebration of the St. Cross Building,-- a wonderful establishment well worth celebrating, and one where I have through the years spent many fruitful and pleasant hours and days.

When I matriculated in 1961, and through my residence in Oxford between 1961 and 1963, the law collection was in the Old Bodleian Library, and the bulk of the collection was not available on open shelves. The well-lit, open, and accessible library in the St-Cross building, next to the green space of playing fields, was truly a delight when I first returned to Oxford in the summer of 1969, and has remained so for me in the years since.

From 1969 to 1979 I was able to spend at least four to eight weeks in Oxford each year, not to mention several months while on leave in 1973-74. I was favoured on each occasion with a research desk around the perimeter of the reading room, where I could enjoy the view of the playing fields, work on my courses or publications, and roam in the open stacks.

On one such occasion I found copies of two foreign-language translations, one in Hungarian and one in Russian, of early editions of A. V. Dicey's famous Law of the Constitution. These had been presented by Dicey to the Codrington Library at All Souls, the seat of his Vinerian Chair. At least one volume contained, pasted in its covers, a manuscript letter from Dicey, addressed to "My dear Oman", clearly the military historian Sir Charles Oman who must then have been the

Codrington Librarian. Dicey remarked that he hoped that these volumes would show that he had not been without making some mark on the profession.

At some moment Codrington removed these volumes from its collection and transferred them to Bodley.

As soon as I happened on the two volumes, lying in the open stacks, and vulnerable to theft of the volumes or at least of the MS letter, I brought both volumes to the Law Librarian with the suggestion that they belong in the Rare Book room, where I suppose they are now.

Patrick Neill visited McGill a few times while he was Warden of All Souls and Vice-Chancellor; I think twice to work on an arbitration with one of my colleagues, and once when he was establishing the Oxford Alumni institution and its network. (On that occasion I managed to induce Pierre Trudeau to join us at a luncheon for Oxford alumni.)

On one of these visits I told Patrick about the two foreign-language editions, and he expressed real annoyance at the fact that anyone in at All Souls should have abandoned them, even to Bodley, probably an annoyance prompted particularly because of the presence of Dicey's letter. In those years I think that Neill held a conference on Dicey.

The Hungarian volume, if memory serves, had been published in 1902; the Russian in 1905 (roughly coinciding, it occurs to me, with the establishment of the First Duma).

### **Charles Shannor      (1970 – 73)**

The Bodleian Law Library, when I came up in 1970 to study jurisprudence, served as a convenient locus for study and a lifeline to American Law, which I had studied for two years before coming to Oxford.

It was the only place in Oxford for perusing new United States Supreme Court opinions, though these were invariably six weeks or so behind due to mail delivery by ship. I had to go to Anthony Lewis' office at the New York Times in London to get quicker access to important cases.

For research, Bodleian Law was completely sufficient for my needs then, and the lecture halls were very spacious and airy.

[United States]

### **Christopher Sharp (1971 – 74)**

I was up between 1971-74 so the St Cross Building was still quite new, but well 'settled in' during my time. I expect this meant the snags had all been sorted out. I really like working in it, at least during day light, as the sense of space (and application) in the main reading room (the central area, which I believe may have been redesigned now) was very conducive to study, save that the strip lights over the desks were not good for eyesight and I had to have colour filtered spectacles to deal with them.

However, I particularly liked, at a later stage, to work on the desks beyond the bookshelves by the windows, perhaps for the reason that one got more natural light, as well as privacy. When I returned to Oxford to study there while doing the Bar Finals (supposedly in London but we found it better and more interesting to sit in (wholly informally) on the BCL course!) it was very pleasant to use the graduates' common room along the terrace.

You ask if the library was ever crowded. My recollection (now you prompt me to recall) is that there were times when it was quite difficult to find a desk, but mostly it was fine. I suspect the crowded times were shortly before exams!

I personally thought the design of the Gulbenkian lecture theatre, and the space outside it (I recall a rather imposing long staircase) was attractive, functional and generally pretty cool! I still think the building is attractive, although I have only passed by outside in recent years.

However, a particular recollection is that during, I think, the summer of my second year I was provided with an office, as I was chairman of the Law Society and we ran a VI form event (it must have been in 9th or 10th week, I guess) whereby we invited VI formers, especially from state schools if possible, to come to Oxford for a few days, stay in colleges and attend various talks about Law as a degree subject and as a profession, and some rather more social functions, mainly (as I recall) at St Cross. We had support from members of the professions, including the local County and Crown Court judge (Judge Mynett) as well as tutors and professors, and these VI-formers seemed to get a lot out of it. Indeed I think I read somewhere that something like this event is still run, possibly on a rather more ambitious scale. It certainly took a lot of organising and the staff did not have the time and so we administered a lot of it. Hence the office - which was very grand for an undergraduate. I suspect we did not have exclusive use of it but the memory plays tricks.

As I say, although I come back to Oxford for various reasons (indeed will be at conference in St Catherine's later this month for a weekend), I have not been inside the building for very many years. Perhaps I should try and do so as I understand there has been some radical reworking of the internal design. Good luck in your celebrations.

### **Mike Shepherd (Queen's, 1963 – 66)**

During my first year I used the law library in the basement of Queens library but from my second year I was privileged to be able to study in the new Bodleian law library. You could not imagine two such different



places. Queen's library was two floors underground dark and remote and more than 300 years old whereas the Bodleian was brand new, well lit, state of the art and also had what for me was a fascinating collection of law books from the USA including statutes and law reports from a number of States. The new library also gave the opportunity to meet fellow law students from other colleges in the University of whom many were from overseas including the Rhodes Scholars

In my third and final year when having to live in digs up Iffley Road I found it a tremendously useful and quiet base for studying and exam revision.

What I find really difficult is accepting that it was all 50 years ago!

**Tim Smith                      (St Peter's, 1966 – 69)**

I read law at St Peter's College from 1966 to 1969. So the Law Library was close to brand new when I used it. It was and remains a fine example of 1960s architecture (which sadly cannot be said of all 1960s buildings). I just remember it as a wonderful facility where all the materials one could possibly need were right there on hand. So, yes, it was easy to use and the staff were always most helpful (as no doubt they are today!). I do not recall it ever being crowded.

In fact, it had a lovely quiet stress-free atmosphere that was most conducive to study so I spent many hours there. If our recommended reading included, say, an article from the Modern Law Review, then the book would usually fall open at the right page so well read was it! I do remember being shocked on occasion by the fact that the relevant article had been torn out in an act of what can only be described as literary vandalism. But I guess all this material would be available on-line now so no longer an issue.

With best wishes for your anniversary

**Pam Somerset (now Morgan) (1967 – 70)**

It is with some embarrassment that I am replying to your request, as I barely visited the law library in my first two years and when I did I saw more of the coffee room than the interior of the library! However, this was remedied in my final year (1970) as a result of blind terror at the prospect of looming finals, having done so little studying in the preceding two years. The Bodleian Law Library then became something of a second home, with hardly a moment in the coffee room. Spending time studying in the peace and quiet of the library must have done some good, as I did get a Second somewhat to my astonishment and that of my tutors and I went on to have a long thirty eight and a half year career in the legal department of a major British pharmaceutical company, most of it in Belgium.

**Nick Staite (St Edmund Hall)**

Without any family connection with the law, I found myself drawn to it when in the sixth form. I was completely ignorant of how laws were made, let alone developed by judges, yet I was fascinated that they seemed to bear on every aspect of everyone's lives, all the time.

Lucky enough to become an Aularian, I found that SEH boasted a tiny law library, housed in the former vestry of St Peter's-in-the-East. What a contrast to the St Cross edifice and its sweeping steps! How austere and functional it was, not at all the vaguely gothic building of stone flagged corridors and high-ceilinged rooms with motes of dust caught in sunlight struggling through murky stained-glass windows, as I kind of expected such an institution to be. I later discovered the Codrington Library at All Souls, which satisfied my sentimental needs as well as some of my curiosity about that enigmatic establishment.

Still, I loved the smell of the place, the shelves and the pages of the thousands of books. I could never have imagined that there were so

many books written on so esoteric as some of the more obscure areas of the law; and I was fascinated by initially chance encounters with texts from around the Commonwealth and the rest of the world.

It was a great place to study and write, spreading law reports and reference books around on the spacious desks. There was the equally frustrating and rewarding business of following slips of paper about the Reading Room, from the shelf where the book was before beginning a journey from one student's desk to another. This was well before computers and electronic tracking, let alone access to materials online, hands on the physical object not staring at a screen with a 'virtual' text. Searching for cases and erudite commentaries was done with the index and the citation, none of the modern searching by keyword through a database like Westlaw. It could be as physical a challenge as it was a cerebral one.

The lecture theatre was and still is, I suppose, a great contrast to the intimacy of the tutorial. It was, nevertheless, interesting to see the same faces turning up, people from other colleges never entered, with futures never known.

I was of the era when Prof Sir Rupert Cross entertained his enthusiastic audiences with his unique delivery. I can still see him being led to the lectern, then wandering about it, at arm's length, as he performed and taught so effectively- quite an inspiration.

Happy memories of a special place where I did some important growing up and fortified what became a life-long interest in the law and a career in the profession of solicitor for approaching 40 years. Floreat Aula, Floreat the Bod Law Library!

### **William Stebbings (Lincoln, 1973 – 77)**

I was a student from 1973 to 1977 (BA in 1976; BCL in 1977) and I have to confess that my college, Lincoln, had an extremely good law

library (and hopefully still does) so I wasn't always the greatest user of the Bodleian in my undergraduate days. However, when I was a BCL student it was very pleasant to have an allocated seat on the north side of library (looking out over New College sports ground) and, of course, you were then mixing with a variety of overseas students. But I do have a couple of memories of the library and law lectures:

1. John Morris leaning over the balcony of the the library fixing BCL students with stares so as to "round them up" for his Conflict of Laws seminars;

2. Ronald Dworkin chatting to students outside the lecture theatre sucking on his (unlit) pipe; when a member of staff remonstrated with him about the "no smoking" rule, he gave them a brief lecture on the difference between sucking on a pipe and lighting it;

3. Peter Birks - fantastic lecturer - delivering 8 brilliant first year undergraduate lectures on the Roman Law of Delict without hesitation, interruption - or even notes; all from memory. Genius.

4 Jeffrey Hackney - great lecturer and indeed tutor (he taught me Legal History as an undergraduate and a graduate).

Sadly Brian Simpson had left just before I came up but he made the entrance interview at Lincoln highly entertaining. I assume his lectures were equally entertaining.

I'm just saddened to think that all bar Jeff Hackney have passed away. I remember meeting Jeff outside Wadham after some weeks after I'd taken the BCL and he said to me "Great paper. Why couldn't you have done as good a paper in Finals last year?" And I didn't know he was an examiner (although there was only another student and me taking the paper). My BA tutorials with Jeff were taken in his room in the church tower of St Edmund Hall; by the next year he'd gone back home to Wadham so tutorials were in his rooms in the tower over the main gate. Splendid settings both and he was a really great tutor.

That said, John Morris and Peter Birks were phenomenal. I'm sure Ronald Dworkin was but I regret Jurisprudence was never a subject I felt at ease with.

**Robin Stephenson (St Edmund Hall, 1972 – 75)**

In response to your request, my most enduring memory of the Bodleian Law Library is securing a job there as an undergraduate in 1972 which involved going in an hour or two before it opened to tidy up the desks and return books to their allocated positions on the shelves.

This job had two great advantages: firstly I quickly gained a comprehensive knowledge of the layout and content of the library; secondly, I was able to locate and 'reserve' the books I needed for the day before the library opened its doors, thus I was never in the position of finding that the textbook or law report that I particularly wanted had already been taken by another student.

Some of this preferential access must have been beneficial as last year, after successfully negotiating the Judicial Appointments Commission process, the Lord Chancellor approved my name as suitable for appointment as an Employment Judge.

**William Stockler (Jesus, 1964)**

My memory is perhaps not one which you would wish to share with others, but, when we first started using the library immediately after its opening, the librarian, or at any rate the person sitting at the desk, was the most gorgeous girl I had ever set eyes on! She tended to distract me from the work which I was trying to do, so I tried not to look in that direction.

I was of course only 19 at the time....

On a more serious note, I thought that the library was very well run and it was always possible to gain access to any cases, LQR articles or other documents, with the help of the staff if necessary. It was not overcrowded. I also seem to remember mixing with undergraduates reading English in the lunch interval, because I believe that they went to lectures nearby.

### **Anthony Thornton (Keble, 1966 – 70)**

Many thanks for giving me an opportunity to reminisce about the Bodleian Law Library. I read law at Keble between 1966 and 1969 and for the BCL between 1969 and 1970. I found it rather disagreeable to work in the Keble Library but found the Bodleian a stimulating place to work, not the least reason being that I spent many happy hours browsing through the various collections and law journal collections chasing marginally relevant or irrelevant but interesting references and reading material. It was also a convivial place to meet others and some of my life-long friendships of fellow practitioners and judges were born there. For example Hilary Heilbron QC and Lady Justice Hallet (who still insists on calling me bubbles which was her nickname for me on account of my unkempt beard and hair unfavourably observed in the Bodleian and even more unfavourably commented on whenever she passed near me amongst the desks and stacks).

At the time, I did not have strong feelings about the building although I now realise how well it is laid out internally - one of the best libraries I've ever had to use or work in - extremely well designed to allow it to be so well lit by natural daylight and having a principal lecture room which provided audible and relatively comfortable facilities for the crowded lectures from the "greats" (particularly Professors Cross, Daube, Nicholas and Wade) all of whom filled the hall for a complete course of lectures. I now look back on it, and at it on my rare trips

passed it, as a fine example of a functional 1960s building which ought to have (maybe did) win prizes. The colour of the facing stone is particularly attractive.

Yes I did find the library easy to use. Of course, I was using it in the pre-electronic, pre-internet age. Pausing, it would be good to read comparisons of then and now use by those who have had extensive experience of both eras). I found it very easy to use. There were four essential reasons for this: Well laid out, good manual indexes in the card filing systems); very helpful librarians (although I was not one of the many lucky male undergraduates who were able to continue their discussions about the secondary collection after hours); comfortable seating and good individual lighting and an absorption of background sound (we were respectful of other library users in the 60s so that assignations and gossip was usually carried out in furtive corners or around the not-so friendly coffee machine).

I particularly remember my BCL year. My carrel was in the basement next to Michael Crystal QC, another life-long friend. He had arrived from QMC for two-year BCL so I only saw him rarely. He had, by then, already mapped out his career as the leading and most distinguished member of the Insolvency Bar and was in the process of editing the next edition of Williams on Bankruptcy for the chambers he was already earmarked for and from which he took silk when only about 34 and which he is still the titular albeit more than semi-retired head. He took over the whole of the carrel (i.e. all four sections). The other two appointees never showed - one a Rhodes Scholar from Australia never appeared to leave the bowels of his Magdalen hideaway and took one of the top firsts, the other never proved himself or herself to be a real person. Crystal was working on one of the obscure sections through most of the year. Due to his overbearing manner, his ready propensity to ply the ladies at the desk with champagne lunches (he wasn't interested in those secondary collection conversations) and his unusual student manner (i.e. already talking and acting like a Silk aged 21), he always was able to get others to look out all the obscure

references which would stay in rows flagged on his desk unless a furtive PhD candidate scurried in, "borrowed" the book tracked down by the invariably accurate ticket system and then scurried back with it and replaced it with a murmured apology. I did much work there, rarely with MC present, I merely cleared a small space around the nineteenth century cases on relation back and then restored them for further non-reading by the Master.

On a more serious note, I will never forget the BCL seminars on conflicts held in one of the seminar rooms. They were chaired by Peter North (my Keble Tutor - see below) and winged by John Morris and Peter Carter with occasional visitors such as Professor Dworkin in his first term as Professor Hart's successor on tort conflicts. John Morris afterwards was heard to opine "never again" on the grounds that the BCL course was not concerned with hunting accidents in South Dakota caused by accidental firing in North Dakota leading to ill-treatment in Wyoming and a loss of employment rights in Delaware. "We" are concerned with the "real" problems encountered by that too distinguished editor of what is now Dicey, Morris and Lord Collins of Maplebury. (Incidentally, I thought the heart of conflicts was renvoi and the four-card trick produced by Professor Dworkin was all about that!)

Surprisingly, never crowded to capacity and after about 5.00 pm never crowded in any sense. It must have been the location since all the other libraries, as I was led to believe, had standing room only for most of the day and evening - mainly as a result of users from other disciplines. In the Bodleian LL, non-lawyers were never seen - save a few MPhil Beowulf candidates in the Graduate common room.

One of the memorable features of a memorable four years studying law - now 54 years later I'm about to retire after 20 years on the Bench. I know its fashionable to say this but its nearly true - I learnt most of my law and acquired my love of the law from the BLL (with a little help from some of the Greats I sat at the feet of)



1. My tutors were Peter North, Dyson Haydon, Vere Davidge and David Williams - subsequently and respectively VC of OU, Justice of the Supreme Court of Australia, died of port poisoning and incandescent rage at the modern age, VC of CU. The Keble lawyers 1966 - 1968 subsequently held a dinner - the 2 VCs' dinner - to celebrate the fact that that corps of undergraduates - Williams was only in Oxford for 3 years in temporary exile from Cambridge for we never learnt what - had been taught simultaneously by the - at the time of the dinner - 2 current VCs. They gave a brilliant after-dinner speech (yes singular). They both stood up on opposite sides of the table and spoke 2 sentences each time on time giving one speech. We never learnt who prepared the script but it was brilliantly funny!

2. In the graduate common room I met for the first and only time a demur female English graduate towards the end of the summer term. On learning my vocation, she asked: "Do you know Lennie Hofmann?" (Yes not Lenny Henry but LH). I did, partly from his joint Evidence seminars with Professor Cross. LH subsequently became a drinking companion in the Bung Hole in High Holborn. On asking her how she knew the Lion Heart from Univ, she replied: "He took me two nights ago to the Univ Ball - I only realised he was married when I saw him the following morning bicycling up the High with a baby seat on the back!".

3. The Conflicts seminars taught us fear and how to master it, how to sniff a winner and diplomacy - all essential features of a successful practitioner. It came about this way: Morris and Carter had an abiding loathing of each other. They both thought that bullying was the key to learning and, of course, they were very clever and we were not stupid. The socratic method was used to pick out problems from the pre-prepared problems. They took it in turn to question and bully the victims. All the while Chairman North moderated with his invariable consummate skill. The way to avoid death or permanent breakdown when singled out was to answer the questioner with sycophancy however wrong one might be (and even the wannabe Vinerian scholars

were frequently wrong). This method always worked because the other of the pair would always want to score points off the questioner so that the victim became the ping pong ball between the hunter and the hunted. Of course the ball was often treated very harshly but never for long since one or the other would come to the rescue in order to show up his cleverness and put down his loathed rival. North not only umpired this appalling exhibition of childishness with remarkable dexterity, he always managed, as an editor of Cheshire can do almost without thinking, to add his own brief comments. They were memorable not only for their timing and content but Peter had a pronounced stutter which he had mastered but not eliminated and that added to the quality of his contribution. Hence - diplomacy learnt from North, fear learnt from, in my case, dealing with Carter, and sniffing a winner dealing with Morris (i.e. giving an answer which enabled Morris to turn his brilliance onto Carter). Few of my contemporaries learnt that Morris was the man to befriend so I was in the relative comfort of always being helped out!

Enough of my BLL thoughts - make of them what you will!

### **Mike Tiley (St Peter's, 1965 – 68)**

Congratulations on reaching the Bodleian Law Library's 50th anniversary later this year! I had the privilege of using the library while studying Jurisprudence at St Peter's from 1965-1968 and felt fortunate to be able to work in a fine modern piece of architecture. It was exhilarating to be able to ascend those dramatic stone steps to the main entrance on a sunny morning which seemed like a stage set for Aida! I remember that the black leather chairs in the library felt almost luxurious when compared to the wooden chairs back at school and in most other libraries in Oxford. I seem to remember that it seemed easy to use the library and to find a place to work though we envied the postgrads who could use the seats (carrels?) by the windows with their fine views of some of Oxford's buildings and playing fields as

welcome distractions from some dry law reports! I remember liking the law lecture theatres with attractive plain light wooden panelling and concealed modern lighting. Am I right in thinking that these were sometimes used by English students who may have used part of the building then? I also remember liking the contrast of the clean modern lines of the library to the grainy gothic limestone of the ancient St Cross church across the road.

That's about it from my memories of nearly 50 years ago and I hope that they will be of some use to you for your celebrations.

### **Chris Till      (St Edmund Hall, 1979 – 82)**

When I was at St Edmund Hall, University of Oxford (1979 to 1982) I used to use the library a lot. Often I'd turn up on Saturday mornings after a heavy night in the college bar. Anyway, back then (1979) I was a bit of a punk rocker and I was going through a bit of a:-

“I'm a punk and I am still wearing my leather jacket but I'll mix it up with some military gear” phase.

Now - part of my outfit was a cool webbing military scarf. Originally it was green but I had dyed it a fetching shade of black to match the old black leather bikers jacket (a la Ramones). I think, in truth, I was trying to look the least like a lawyer that I could. Basically I did not fit into the tweedy/sporty/studious Bodleian Law Library thing.

That morning I had a hangover and when I sat down at the study tables (in full view of the librarians) I decided to “mute the lighting” a bit by putting the scarf over the light that was above the desk.

Got the idea from Keith Richards who always hung a scarf over his lampshade in hotels. What a rebel, eh! Anyway – this caused a bit of a furore at the staff desk and the junior librarians got into a huddle and

eventually summoned the head librarian to deal with the leather jacketed oafish punk.

“You’ll need to take that scarf off from there, young man”

“Oh yeah – why is that then?”

“It could cause a fire and all the books could burn!”

“OK – I’ll just have to take it off then won’t I”

Which I did.

This incident caused a bit of a stir with the law students around me and a few weeks later one of them came up to me and said:-

“You’re that bloke that had to take the scarf down aren’t you?”

“Yeah, what of it?”

“Think you’re a bit of a Jimmy eh, bit of a rebel, in the law library?”

“Err, what are you getting at, man?”

“Well let me tell you – you’re a light weight!”

“Oh really, why’s that then?”

“Well, my mate from XXXXX College has just set the record for the Bodleian”.

“What record is that then?”

“He’s just finished privately urinating in every room at the Bodleian”

”That’s not cool, man, that’s just gross” say I.

“Yah - you ain't so cool, eh!”

So...if the librarians ever noticed a progressively worse and pervasive smell of urine in the place around the late seventies/early eighties the secret is now revealed.

And it was nothing to do with this particular Human Punk/Lawyer.

[New Zealand]

**Noel Vautier (Wadham, 1964)**

I came up to Oxford in September 1964 to study for the BCL at Wadham College.. I remember well how thrilled we were with the brand new library. As post-graduate students we each had our own reserved desks with lovely views over the fields towards the Cherwell and Maxwell's home on the hill. Maxwell was if I recall correctly the Maxwell of the law publishers Sweet and Maxwell and of course the owner of the Mirror newspaper. I can never recall the library being crowded. There were of course a lot fewer of us then - 23 I recall studying for the BCL.

The building was very modern in 1964 being in a similar style to St Catherine's College further down St Cross Street which I think opened two years earlier

In these pre-computer and pre-web days we were completely reliant on accessing printed law reports and textbooks. The new library was therefore wonderful.

Two of our law lecturers were Guenter Trietel (now Sir Guenter) and Don Harris, both I understand still alive and living in Oxford.

[New Zealand]

## **Raymond Wacks      (University, 1971)**

As a research student, I was perched above the throng of undergraduates beaver away below. Occupying this elevated station (at a large desk with ornate lamp) one developed a false sense of importance, even of superiority. This was 1971, long before the laptop generation - with easy access to online sources and the other contrivances that students now take for granted.

The law library, in hindsight, seemed a more tranquil environment than it is today: no security checks, apart from a peremptory peek inside one's briefcase on departure; not even, I think, a library identity card.

There were some minor shortcomings. The glass roof leaked when the rain was heavy. And the staircases always seemed a great distance away. (Is it a myth that the library's celebrated architect neglected to include the staircases in his design, and they were incorporated later?)

Such was the relaxed ambience 40 years ago that I was actually employed part-time in the library (to help me pay my college battels), so I was able to see things from a slightly different perspective ...

Best wishes, and happy birthday!

## **Thomas Glyn Watkin      (Pembroke, 1971)**

When I came up to Oxford to study law in October 1971, the Bodleian Law Library at St Cross was still comparatively new. At our first meeting with our tutor as first-year undergraduates, I remember him urging us to make use of the 'new' Law Library, which was such an improvement on the previous accommodation, and which was an environment which made one feel like studying. During my first week, therefore, I spent an occasional hour prior to lectures starting to find my way around the Library.

While the task was daunting at first, within a short while I had familiarized myself with the ground floor shelves and from there acquired the habit of spending my mornings and afternoons reading at St Cross. It was a friendly place to work. The staff were welcoming and helpful, and the large open reading room, bathed in natural light from above, allowed one to spot friends coming and going and to punctuate work with pleasant encounters in and around the building.

Learning how to make use of a copyright library was one of the greatest benefits I received from studying at Oxford, and the confidence which working in the Bodleian gave me has meant that in my future career I have never felt daunted nor other than 'at home' in the great collections in Britain or overseas. The open shelving meant that one could take a break from work in progress and wander around the collection to introduce oneself to areas of the law which one had not yet studied, and to whole areas of legal study which were not even part of the curriculum. There it was that I became familiar with the periodicals, reports and statute law of other jurisdictions – North America, the Commonwealth and the rest of Europe - long before I became involved with their academic study. It was there also that I first saw the range of books and periodicals on legal history and Roman law, including the works on the legal history of my own native Wales. Without ever having to make requests or fill in forms, I was able to make discoveries in a rich archive, so that when in later years I came to study and teach some of these areas, I already had a solid appreciation of the materials essential to such study. The freedom to go down into the bowels of the Library and consult old editions in the stacks was also to prove useful for historical detective work in later years.

A retired professor with whom I later taught told me that his son, who went on to become a Lord Justice of Appeal, had written to him during his first weeks at Oxford saying the law library appeared very good. His father told me that he had written back telling him that he was 'sitting in the eighth wonder of the world'. Many of my colleagues

in later years would make regular pilgrimages to St Cross to conduct their researches on days free from teaching commitments.

It was also a great pleasure just to walk around the building. The flights of steps connecting the various floors of the building, linking the Library and the lecture theatres, suggested a classical progression from one level to another, architectural structure seemingly reflecting the goal of academic progress. A devotee of organ music, I once commented, somewhat pretentiously, that walking around the building was like passing through a Bach fugue. I still think that I know what I meant. There was an element of excitement in the experience. While sitting in the Library, it was an added inspiration to see some of the great legal scholars of the day come and go, and know that one was working in a place where some of the most significant ideas of the time were being conceived and developed.

I enjoy returning, and - whenever I do - still if possible sit in the seat which I occupied regularly during those early years of legal study. It doesn't allow me to recapture my youth, but to this day I continue to feel the thrill of learning in a truly scholarly environment.

I am very grateful to St Cross for the experience and confidence it gave me, and wish the Library, its staff and its readers well for the next half-century.

**Anthony Weale (1964 – 66)**

I matriculated in MT 1964 so was amongst the first to use the new library. I remember very clearly that I thought (and still think) I was extremely lucky to coincide with the new facilities and particularly open access so that I didn't have to grapple with using the main Bodleian which seemed very hard to fathom. In those days, there was ample space; the library often seemed to be sparsely populated. As a result, small noises echoed e.g. the sound of a ring-binder being snapped shut.



There was a wonderful smell of new wood. I remember too being surprised by how noisy the rain was on the roof; is it still?

**Andrew White            (University, 1968 – 71)**

I read Law at Univ between 1968 and 1971 and always went to Bodleian Law Library for anything I couldn't find in Univ's law library. BLL never disappointed me. It was always a good place to work in and I can never remember it being overcrowded.

We had all our Law lectures in the St Cross Building and I remember hearing Cross, Daube and Honore'. Cross was the blind professor and had to be shown onto the stage by his secretary. Daube had professorships at UCLA and Oxford and always arranged his UCLA lectures so he was away from Oxford in the English winter. I attended the inaugural lecture by Honore' which involved the Vice-Chancellor with beaules being in the lecture theatre and all students present having to wear gowns.

**David Wightman        (1962 – 65)**

The Library opened at the beginning of my final undergraduate year – and what bliss! With its easy access to books, carrels, lighting, peaceful and ample space, it became my place of choice for working.

Nearly fifty years later – and still a practising lawyer – it remains my yardstick for how a law library should feel.                      Best wishes for your celebrations!

**David Williams            (1969 – 71)**

I studied for the BCL – the 2 year course as it then was (unless one was a graduate of Oxford, Cambridge or TCD) – 1969 to 1971. The

library was new and it was very easy to study for the BCL courses. So much material was so close at hand. There were only about 26 of us on the BCL course then and each of us had an allocated carrel. It was seldom crowded and if perchance one wanted a book already in use then it was interesting to walk around and talk with whoever it was had that book at their desk, and what they thought of its contents. I recollect a rather primitive tearoom behind the Air Training Corp building (I think – some military building).

A special memory: Sitting at my desk one day I wondered why the Mayor of Oxford (wearing his chains), the bearer of the city mace in medieval garb, etc were standing beside large black cars parked in the drive beside the New College fields. Then down came a helicopter and out stepped a very elegant lady in a modern dress. It was HRH the Queen Mother arriving to open some facility in the city. A very English meeting of the ancient and modern, I thought, on an Oxford sports field.

[New Zealand]

**David Willis**                      **(New, 1970)**

Thank you for your email. It certainly provoked memories some 44 years after matriculating and first attending an introduction to the library layout and a first lecture I think by a distinguished and drily amusing professor who read his notes from Braille cards - shame on me for not being able to remember his name, he was outstanding.

A few memories: the morning walk across town from St Peter's with time for thought, the approach towards a pleasantly modern building, "clean" lines, a little imposing and suggestive of an academic rigour I realised early on I would not match, but not excessively daunting and thankfully neither antique nor cramped; the hush of the reading hall with large flat surfaces to spread out on and the reading lamps which

drew one in to a private space for study; so much information at hand though I had to ask for help from the librarians on many an occasion to locate some obscure reference; daydreaming from time to time of course, people watching - it was always well used by day though as I lived out of town in my final year and used occasionally to work late-ish at the library before going to eat at Vincent's it was quite relaxing to have the place more to oneself; whispered discussions behind the shelves with another in my college law set about "who's that girl you're sitting next to?". Happy days!

Oh dear, memory does play tricks and I hope my recollections will not be gainsaid by some clever contemporary (I wasn't a very studious student but I did like the library).

### **Stephen Young      (Trinity, 1965 – 68)**

I read Law (or Jurisprudence as it was officially called in those days) when I was at Trinity from 1965 to 1968. I remember using the Bodleian Law Library. I don't think it was all that often as there was a law library with basic English law reports at Trinity, and I bought all the standard textbooks. Also two out of the eight papers that I took in my finals included a lot of Roman Law (Delict and the Law of Sale). I forget now why, but I recall that we were allowed access to the Codrington Library at All Souls to study resources in Roman Law, and I went there as well as the Bodleian Law Library.

(There was also a Roman Law paper for Law Mods but I think all we really needed to prepare for that was the standard textbook - by R W Lee as I recall - plus the OUP editions of the Institutes of Gaius and Justinian. I think we also consulted other textbooks occasionally such as Buckland and Honore. In those days we (or most of us anyway) were able to read Gaius and Justinian in the original Latin. I am not sure how much students today can do that).

I have no adverse recollections of the Bodleian Law Library, so I cannot relate any horror stories of chaos and disorder (and indeed one would not have expected this sort of thing). From memory it was a perfectly congenial place to work and there was no difficulty getting hold of materials. I certainly don't remember that it was ever crowded to the extent that one couldn't easily find a seat. As a Scotsman I was wondering about whether I should go on to qualify as a Scots lawyer (which I did in due course), and I recall looking at the Scots Law Times (the volumes of which I think were on the open shelves). In those days Scots Law all seemed a little strange to me since at that time I had been introduced only to Roman and English Law.

### **Anonymous**

Being an undergraduate at BNC and having our own law library, I did not use the BLL very much. One thing I do recollect is the pale green card that I was given to remind me not to burn the books which until recently I still retained, now covered with telephone numbers.

### **Anonymous (1963 – 66)**

I used the new Bodleian extensively in doing research for my DPhil thesis. Since I did a comparative study of US and UK law, I found the American collection excellent and easily accessible. Obviously, the UK and Commonwealth collections were superb as well, but that was to be expected. Incidentally, in my first year (1963-64), before the new Bodleian was open, I had to use the old Bodleian, where the American collection was two or three floors below ground with almost no heat during the winter. I could stay down there for about 15 minutes at a time, before coming up to the ground floor to warm up.

Using the new Bodleian was especially meaningful to me because of the role that Peter Carter played in its founding. Peter was my tutor when

I first arrived at Oxford, before I switched from the BCL to the DPhil under Tony Guest. I kept in touch with Peter for many years after leaving Oxford. One of my fondest memories is when Peter visited me in my office at the University of Michigan Law School. We followed the office visit with a delightful lunch. Peter then had to leave for the airport, as he was en route to Canada to see the woman whom I believe became his second wife. Peter was as modest as he was wise. I never knew of his heroism during World War II until I read his obituary. I treasured his friendship. He was indeed a great man.

### **Gnome@Keble College (1969 – 72)**

As a law undergraduate 69-72 I can contribute the following memories:

A. Very green ex grammar school boy shows up October 1969 to swear in. My (solicitor) father asks permission to show me the law reports, journals etc and the librarian kindly agrees. My Dad was thrilled to get to look round the largest law library in the Commonwealth -made his day!

B. Law don ventures onto lower floor and is surprised to spot female (believed to have been on the staff) "in delicto flagrante" with a student. Nice work if you can get it!

C. Indian student heard to complain loudly in the library: "We are surrounded by the British Army!" Because of the proximity of the OTC!

D. Said OTC members were always hosing down their Land Rovers with copious amounts of water, as viewed from the library.

E. Once saw a mature student pacing up and down, looking distracted. Then he would pull a book (any book) from the shelves and make copious notes on the content of a page or three. He would carefully

replace the book, pace up and down a bit more and then grab another book (apparently at random) and scribble notes on some of its content on top of the notes he'd already made! He repeated this procedure several times before slumping back in a chair, closing his eyes and placing his hands about his throat as if he had decided to strangle himself! I think he had "lost it"!

F. Outside the library in the lectures I recall Professor Wade lecturing on admin law, with his deep booming voice, that some decision was ultra vires, void and a nullity. Boy, could he boom! Happy days!

## **c. The Law Library Staff**

### **Martin Barnsley (Catolguer, Head of Cataloguing 1966 – 2003)**

When I applied to work in the Law Library in 1966, I had first looked around, so I already knew that the library was very modern with good facilities. The whole layout of the new building was very grand, so I expected to have a nice modern environment to work in, which I did. I have great veneration for the Old Library and the Divinity School and everything else that goes with the main Bodleian, but I thought that I was quite forward-looking and I wanted to try a fresh environment.

I found the other staff very pleasant to work with, and the collection, being part of the Bodleian, was obviously unique. So everything was very impressive. The head of the library was Mr Cordeaux who was very efficient and very organized, but very supportive as well. He was old-school, and might have preferred his staff to be a bit more smartly dressed at times! But he was always ready to listen and to respond.

Everyone, of course, did a bit of almost everything, but my specific responsibilities were only within a cataloguing framework. I had

special responsibility for preparing the law entries for the catalogue in the main library. Everything, including books in the Law Library, had to have an entry in the main catalogue. Our entries were written out by hand on cards which I carried over to the main library to give to the head of cataloguing.

Before we went online, the only catalogue in the Law Library was the card catalogue, and catalogue cards had to be typed out, which was a very tedious process because we had multiple entries for every book. Filing the cards took time as well. When we went online in 1988, it was a huge change to the whole cataloguing world. At that time, the main Bodleian catalogue did not have a subject index, so the subject index in the Law Library was a significant benefit to our users. We had our own subject headings which were devised by our then head of cataloguing, Martin Smith, in conjunction with some of the law lecturers.

In probably the early 1980s there began to be serious discussion of computerized cataloguing. I was the Law Library's representative on the original working party on catalogue automation. I was a junior member, but I think it was very important to have input from the Law Library. And with the success of the electronic catalogue, the subject of computerized legal research became more urgent.

## **Derek Beacham**

I was seconded for a few months to assist in preparations for the move to the St Cross site, and my final working day for the Law Library was in fact the day of the opening, although I was called upon from time to time to help with invigilation on Saturday mornings. On one memorable afternoon I was left in charge of the Library while several members of staff attended a funeral!

My duties prior to the move were helping the regular staff with cataloguing and classifying using the Cutter system for the new card catalogue. We were housed in what had been the Lower Exhibition Room (subsequently to become the Oriental Reading Room) on the ground floor of the New Bodleian.

The law reading room area was situated in rooms on the first floor of the south side of the Old Bodleian, later occupied by the general catalogue of printed books and main desk facilities. Stack material was housed on J floor of the New Library.

At the opening ceremony I was on hand to help and advise guests, and at one point was accosted by a smiling gentleman who asked if I knew who he was. I'm afraid I had to declare my ignorance. "I'm Denning" he replied. He had become Master of the Rolls the previous year, and seemed very pleased about it.

Much later I advised on aspects of conversion of the catalogue by OCLC.

**Donald Hogg            (Deputy Janitor, Bodleian Library,  
1967 – 74; Janitor 1974 – 93)**

When I joined the main Bodleian Library as Deputy Janitor on 1 November 1967, the Law library was described as a 'dependent library' but was largely autonomous. The law Librarian at the time was Mr E. H. Cordeaux. I think he co-operated with Mr Dennis Merry in compiling a Bodleian Library publication, the exact name of which I forget, as we always referred to it as 'Cordeaux and Merry'.

The Bodleian Library vans were used to transport books between the main Bodleian library and the Law Library, and to other points, and this arrangement appeared to be mutually satisfactory.



Although the St Cross Building was a 'shared' building, we at the main Bodleian Library always regarded the St Cross Building basement as the 'Law Library' basement. In the 1970's the Bodleian Library mounted an important exhibition in the U.S.A., and the basement was used for the temporary storage of exhibits. We also used the basement for the storage of redundant furniture and artefacts.

The Lyell Lectures were held in the St Cross Building auditorium annually and after the lectures refreshments were served in the Common Room.

I had some minor dealings with Miss Lush, Mr Barnsley, Mr Smith and Mr Wilkins, and later with Miss Kirby. So far as I can remember all our meetings were friendly and useful.

I appreciate my recollections of the Law Library are rather scanty and may not be suitable for your purpose, but in view of your interest in this matter, I thought I should commit them to paper.

**Denise Kirby                      (Principal Library Assistant, 1969 – 90)**

I worked in the BLL from 6 Oct 1969 until Dec 1990 so this year I celebrate 45 years [of working for the Bodleian Libraries] (I think a double life sentence). Originally I worked in cataloguing and we all had only 3 sessions on the control desk.

After a couple of years I transferred to Accessions where I was Shanne Lush's right hand woman doing the accounts (our budget then was about £40,000 and also had to be converted from various currencies into sterling every two weeks), processing new books, supervising registering of periodicals and organising the loose-leaf inserts into English and foreign titles.

Molly Charnock and I supervised the Reading Room, alternating morning and afternoon on the control desk which was more efficient

than previously as there was more continuity between us and therefore Readers had an excellent service.

There was a reader whose hobby was writing to many judges disagreeing with their judgments (obviously they took no notice!!!). He used to have two briefcases which were joined with a length of string so he had both hands full when leaving the library. He would kick the exit door on the wooden panel to open it but one day he missed and his leg went through the glass panel and he had a 2 foot x 1cm gash down his calf. I had never seen such red blood. It was like poster paint. He was taken to the Senior Common Room while waiting for the Paramedics to arrive. He said, 'Now I know how I can get access to the SCR'. After he went to hospital on a stretcher down the outside staircase with T marked on his forehead, Mr Cordeaux the Librarian offered me a glass of sherry or two. How I managed to keep upright during the rest of the shift I can't remember.

Mr Cordeaux always offered me, and occasionally other members of staff, a glass of sherry on Friday lunchtimes. A nice interlude after a busy week.

In my new life in Admissions I sometimes meet old Law Library readers and it's nice to know that we were appreciated for our efficiency and friendliness.

I also worked with many eminent professors etc who were really very kind and friendly and I shall be sad not to see some of them at the celebration in October (people like Bernard Rudden and Guenter Treitel).

### **Robert Logan            (Head of Technical Services, 1978 – 2003)**

I will deal with my memories of the start of the legal research database era. Lexis was initially paid for and administered by the Law Faculty,

the result of the policy of Butterworths (UK licence holders) to deal only with end users not libraries or librarians.

You couldn't get the password for Lexis unless you had been on the Butterworths' training course. I had to take one of the Oxford Law Faculty places to get trained. The Oxford Law Faculty didn't object to my being nominated at all and eventually a huge console arrived. We had a dedicated phone line which never worked properly; eventually it failed completely when mice chewed through the line. We had to rig up a Heath Robinson affair to bypass the chewed section. It was completely fated. Half the time the telephone line didn't work – it was only a relay through Butterworths UK which went on a transatlantic cable to Lexis headquarters in the US. And then the transatlantic cable failed so they had to send a ship with a diver to repair it and this took a couple of weeks. The HUGE console took up a whole desktop [sited in the small room off the Reading Room recently vacated by Law Reports International] and it was kept under strict lock and key. People had to go through about three passwords and prove they had been trained by Butterworths. In fact it soon became me that did a lot of the searches as the faculty found it was a lot easier to ring up and ask me to do it. Because it was so cumbersome and quite slow the original Lexis wasn't that heavily used.

Also it was expensive, because I think we used to keep a record of the usage of individual members of faculty and how much their searches had cost. Although they weren't billed individually, they had the feeling if they did use it excessively they might be! Later on Butterworths appointed someone at the larger law schools and paid them a retainer to help them develop their usage system with the institutions. It was Colin Tapper here. The sessions were heavily booked by postgraduate students and it was actually quite difficult for library staff to join.

On providing IT for staff - the trouble was that the Law Library was out of sight out of mind when it came to Bodleian's provision of equipment. Eventually in the late 1980s I sent a memo to the then

Secretary of the Bodleian who had complained that I hadn't replied to an email, explaining that I could not as the Law Bod didn't have any computers. The Secretary's response was "Ah that must be why you didn't word process that last document. I haven't seen anything typewritten for years."

Changes in computing started to happen when Peter Burnett arrived in the Bodleian and when Barbara Tearle arrived in the Law Bod in 1988.

### **Shanne Lush (Deputy, then Law Librarian, 1961 – 88)**

By the end of 1960, the new Bodleian Law Library was taking shape. Mr E.H. Cordeaux had been appointed as Superintendent, after many years working as a cataloguer and bibliographer. Such law books as were on open access were on the shelves of half the Lower Reading Room of the Old Library, while most - mostly British publications received by copyright deposit - were in the closed stacks in the New Bodleian.

But the Law Faculty had long hoped for its own library, but by then its plans had moved towards a totally open-access library in a new building, with the Bodleian collections as its basic source (though still never for loan). I was working on the creation of a totally new university law library in Canada, saw the advertisement for an assistant at the Bodleian quite by chance, and just before Christmas 1960 was appointed, though it took until Whit Monday, 1st May 1961, for me to arrive in Oxford.

By then, the West Publishing Company had provided a complete set of its U.S. law reports and one of my first tasks was literally to push the volumes on trolleys through the tunnel from the New Library to the Underground Bookstore, its home pro tem. I was also checking our holdings of U.S. and Canadian legal material before Mr Cordeaux went

to the annual meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries, where he was given much useful advice and continuing friendship and help from many people, among them Fred Dennis of Buffalo, Phil Cohen in New York and Bill Hibbitt of Carswell's in Toronto.

The Library had been given a handsome grant to acquire legal material from Commonwealth countries. I spent much time discovering what was already held by Rhodes House, which had benefited from receiving everything issued by Government Printers of British colonies since the 1920s. All the statutes etc. were duly checked, listed and transferred to the New Bodleian, where we had the use of a newly shelved area well below ground, on K floor.

Mr Cordeaux had devised a classification suitable for open access, divided into common law countries and otherwise, and in each, as statutes, law reports, journals and textbooks, or by topic (e.g. International Law, Jurisprudence). Slowly the old and new books were reclassified and moved into this new pattern. There was no separate catalogue of law books, and Martin Smith arrived in the autumn of 1961 to begin to create a new card-catalogue, with, in due course, various assistants. Eventually we were given the large room on the ground floor of the New Library (later the Oriental Reading Room) to do our ever-growing clerical work, in Acquisitions and Cataloguing. All the time, of course, we were also taking care of the Lower Reading Roomy which continued to serve that generation of students and faculty.

The St Cross Building, of which Law was the greater part, slowly took shape. We had no part in that, until, not long before we were to move there, Mr Cordeaux discovered that there was no provision for 'staff comforts', nowhere to take a coffee or lunch break, so a small room was created on the then-unshelved ground floor, which served the purpose for ever after, while I was working there.

By the summer of 1964, the new classification had been applied to all the books. Mr Cordeaux had measured the likely growth for ten

years of all the titles and sections, the start of each title had been marked on the new shelves in the St Cross Building (how did we do it?), but the volumes had to be brought up in a lift and transferred a mile or so down the road.

Mr Beesley of the Book stack had designed new trolleys, with moveable tray-shelves, each the length of one of the new bookshelves, and drafted some of the stack staff to help: so at 8 a.m. on Friday September 4th 1964 the move began - three furniture-vans went back and forth, and all was done by 5 p.m. on September 12th. Some 150,000 volumes were moved. But the library could not yet be open to readers - some essential work still had to be done on the Building; the entrance hall, perhaps, was not yet floored adequately? – so the Law Library Staff were given an extra week's holiday!

By 24th September the Society of Public Teachers of Law had held its annual meeting in Oxford and there was a grand celebratory lunch at Wadham, to which Mr Cordeaux, Martin and I were invited. And then came the Opening Day, October 17th: speeches in the Gulbenkian theatre downstairs and do I remember champagne in the library? I do remember how embarrassing it was to discover then that the Building was totally unsuitable for anyone disabled, as I had to escort a wheelchair from the Gulbenkian to the library, two floors up, by a very circuitous route (accompanied by four sturdy undergraduates to help). It was impossible to go anywhere without using steps or stairs, even to reach the only lift.

After that, we got used to our new surroundings. Open access meant that there were lots of books to be put back on the shelves: early-morning part-time staff were hired for that. One of the five senior members of staff was always 'on duty' at all times that the library was open, so it was decided that the evening-duty in term would be from 6-10p.m. not in two shorter shifts as in the Bodleian to take up only one full evening a week (with a morning off in lieu). Sometimes this meant that one person had to do two shifts in a week, but luckily no

one was ever off sick for long. Holidays of more than the odd day could only be taken in vacation.

As Britain was probably going into 'Europe', another handsome grant had been made so that we could acquire legal material from France, Germany, etc. Slavonic Acquisitions in the Bodleian was the source of our Russian and East European material, though we had our own Russian speaker to classify and catalogue it. British publications of course arrived automatically, but this meant we had to also take in 'true crimes' which were tucked away out of sight, far from true Criminology.

There was some contact with the outside world of law librarianship. In April 1965 Mr Cordeaux and I attended what may have been the inaugural meeting of the International Association of Law Libraries at The Hague, and in 1960 I had a grant to attend the American Association in Los Angeles. Much later I also went to the Canadian Association meeting in London Ontario, which celebrated the 25th anniversary of the library I had started there. We were in amiable rivalry with the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies in London - no sharing of foreign purchases then - and rather ignored the Squire Library in Cambridge. But we did have a relationship with the University of Ghana (as the Faculty did) and two of their law librarians came on internship to us, in the 1970s.

We had our routines, pleasantly enough, until 1978. For many years, extra cover in the evenings had come from Mr Marychurch, a retired Merchant Mariner, who "sat on the Desk" checking bags and keeping an eye on things, until he was made to retire. A more significant retirement, a trifle early, was that of Mr Cordeaux; and I took over as Law Librarian. (The title had changed from Superintendent some time before, but we were always under the eye of the Keeper of Printed Books.)

Things went on much as before, not much change of staff (though there was the first case of official maternity leave) until I took the

opportunity of very early retirement, in September 1988. Someone else could take charge of all the changes that would result from the introduction of the computer. Barbara Tearle arrived then, to deal with everything that had to be made new.

### **Martin Smith                    (Cataloguer, Accessions, 1961 – 96)**

I joined the Bodleian Library in September 1961, to take charge of cataloguing the law collections in preparation for the move to St Cross Building in 1964. The Law Library was in the Lower Reading Room of the Old Library, and I was disconcerted to find that there was nowhere for me to sit. I was given a folding desk and a collapsible chair on K floor of the New Library bookstack. After a few weeks of toiling in the depths I was given a carrel on A floor, which was all very well until the winter came. I had a nice view of Trinity College garden, but the winter of 1961/62 was very cold, and the heating did not seem to reach to the top of the New Library. Eventually, when additional staff were recruited to assist with the cataloguing, we were given the former exhibition room in the New Library as a workroom.

Apart from about 20,000 volumes in the law reading room, the bulk of the law collections in the bookstack to be re-catalogued was classified according to Nicholson's complicated classification scheme for law. We also took class 35 in Coxe's numerical classification, law books shelf-marked AA Jur (books acquired 1800-1820) and the Viner collection, and the Commonwealth and American law books from Rhodes House. We discovered that more than one hundred books acquired between 1800 and 1820 were not in the pre-1920 catalogue, and one wonders how many other books from that period had slipped through the net. Compared with modern practice the cataloguing process was very labour-intensive. Catalogue entries were handwritten on 5 x 3 cards which were farmed out to freelance typists, to be typed on cards which were later filed by hand. The manuscript cards were subsequently used as the basis for the subject catalogue.



The move to St Cross Building was planned to start in Closed Week (which was the first week in August). At the end of Trinity Term 1964, the law library was closed, and all the books from the reading room and various parts of the stacks and the camera basement were moved and re-assembled on K floor according to the simple classification scheme devised by Ted Cordeaux, the Law Librarian. Every section was measured and sufficient spacing marked out on the shelving in the new library. Because of delays to the building work, the move was deferred to the end of August, but everything went very smoothly, using the metal trolleys with detachable trays which could be loaded into the removal vans. Building work was still not finished and we could not re-open to readers until the end of October. It was peaceful working in a library with no readers for two months. During that time I sorted and filed 70,000 catalogue cards. For our coffee break we had to plug our electric kettle into a socket in the reading room floor. In the original plans the staff room was to be a windowless room on the ground floor, later used as the cleaners' storeroom. The staff were never consulted, and as a result of a staff revolt, a bay in the bookstack on the ground floor was partitioned off to provide a decent staff room.

Although we were not open for readers, the official opening of the Bodleian Law Library was performed on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1964 by Erwin Griswold, Dean of Harvard Law School. In those days no consideration was given for disabled access to the building (except for the soundproof carrels for blind readers), and Mrs Griswold who was disabled had to be carried in her wheelchair up and down the steps by four burly undergraduates. When the guests arrived, we were supposed to check whether they had yellow or white tickets. The Faculty wanted to give the most distinguished guests seats in the front row of the Gulbenkian Theatre, but the distinguished judges and academics did not want to be told where to sit. They wanted to sit with their friends. Lord Denning was most annoyed at being asked to show his ticket. A journalist and a photographer from the Sunday Times arrived but were turned away, as they had not been invited. So

they went along the road to St Catherine's College, and published an article about the opening of Arne Jacobsen's new building.

The Oxford Times published a profile of Peter Carter, the Faculty delegate, who played a prominent role in planning the new library, but he was described as the "Law Librarian". Ted Cordeaux, the real Law Librarian, was not happy. Peter Carter considered it his mission to preserve the integrity of Sir Leslie Martin's design, and it was always difficult to get him to agree to any alteration. We were not even allowed to have a pencil sharpener screwed to the top of the staff desk in the reading room. A solution involving fixing the pencil-sharpener to the underside of a hinged wooden flap did not work. The lighting on the monumental staircase, much admired by architectural writers and compared to an Aztec pyramid, was so discreet as to be almost invisible, and there was no handrail. Only after a member of staff leaving the library in the dark slipped and broke her leg was the lighting improved and handrails were installed. Apparently the Aztecs required a human sacrifice.

After opening to the readers, the benefits of an open access library with more than 300 seats, compared with 70 seats in the Old Library, soon became apparent. In 1966 criminology was transferred to the Law Library, and the United Kingdom's accession to the European Community prompted a further growth of our European collections. Staff relations under Ted Cordeaux's genial direction were always harmonious, except for one or two rare occasions. Once, at the time of student unrest in 1968, a young man on the staff went to Mr Cordeaux and told him the library should be run more democratically. Needless to say, this suggestion was not well received.

### **Margaret Watson (Academic Services Librarian, 2002 – )**

My father was the Librarian of the Institute of Economics and Statistics, which in 1964 shared the St Cross Building with English and

Law. I remember seeing a photocopier here for the first time (he allowed me and brother to photocopy our faces, pressing our noses onto the glass) and I remember him helping us to slide down the wide bannister in the Foyer. It was also the place where, as a child, I saw rolling cases for the first time.

When I was older I had various holiday jobs in the Economics and Statistics Library which, before Cornmarket and Queen Street were closed and the traffic diverted, seemed rather remote from the City centre. This presented a problem for staff lunches. Economics and Statistics staff were allowed to take an extra 15 minutes for lunch. The English Faculty Library staff, more enterprisingly, ate together, taking it in turns to cook lunch for each other.

Tea breaks were stratified and hierarchical affairs. I knew nothing of the arrangements for Law and English, but the Institute staff though had two common rooms. My father, as head librarian, and the academic staff took their coffee and tea in the senior common room, which I believe was where the English Common Room is today. The library assistants, receptionist, secretaries and the two women who worked the data machines went to the Peacock Room. This was where the History of the Book room is today, although I wonder whether the walls have been moved, as I am sure there used to be walk-in cupboard where we made the tea. We would sometimes be joined by Mr Roper (the resident caretaker), and some of the building staff, including the switchboard operator. I realise now that this daily informal contact with the people who ran the building may have given us an advantage when it came to maintenance work.

I well remember some of the heated conversations over tea and coffee: there was a big argument one day about men and housework, during the course of which I revealed that my father washed his own socks. "Your father has gone up considerably in my estimation," one of the secretaries remarked after that. I wonder what she thought of him before!

## **H.A.E. (Tony) Wilkins**

*Tony Wilkins was on the staff of the Bodleian Law Library from 1967 to 2005, having worked in other Bodleian libraries beginning in 1956, thus making him the longest-serving Bodleian staff member at the time of his retirement in January 2005.*

Recollections of the introduction of photocopying:

The Law Library acquired its own photocopying machine probably in the early 1980s. The original machine was an enormous Xerox photocopier, about five to six feet square, and not very easy to use. The toner had to be stirred every morning. And it had a drum with almost a mirror finish that had to be completely cleaned every week. This had to be done by someone who had been approved by Rank Xerox and had completed an appropriate training course. But there were problems with the photocopying process. The machine would put the image onto the paper and then pass the paper through a fuser which was almost like a grill. Sometimes the paper would stop under the fuser and become almost charred. Later machines also had their problems, including the possibility of being sprayed with toner when trying to change the toner bottle.

When photocopying was first introduced, it wasn't very widely used. People came in and expected to read the material and make notes. Later on, of course, they would come in and photocopy the summary, and hope that it contained enough information to write the required essay.

At first, photocopying was done only through a staffed service. A form had to be filled in for each item to be copied, and then library staff had to reconcile the forms with the cashbook, and the cashbook with the actual money that had been taken. The procedures became much simpler when self-service photocopying was introduced.

## **Ken Humphreys (1930's)**

Ken Humphreys (subsequently librarian of Birmingham University) in describing The Beginning of a Librarian began to work at the age of 16 in 1933 in the Codrington Library but began to read for a BA in 1935, hard-pressed to study while working full time till 7pm and, "it was therefore a splendid day when Bodley's Librarian invited me to look after the Law Library of the Bodleian... paid at one shilling per hour. The Law Library was open in term from 10am till 1pm and from 5-10pm ... my responsibility was under the supervision of a senior member of staff who, I think, never visited as it was outside the Bodleian, in the Examination Schools..."

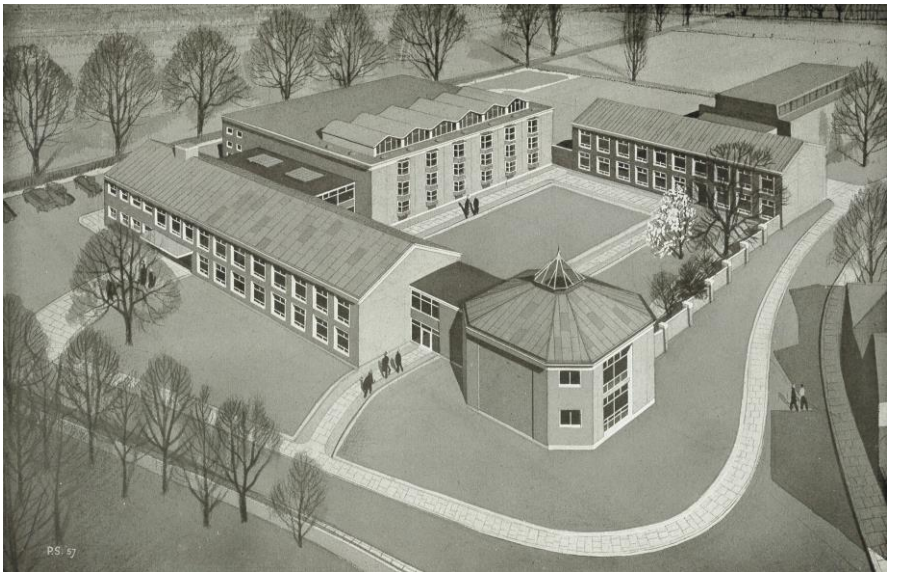
### **A couple of additional staff related notes:**

**Mr Cordeaux**, the first Law Librarian, came as a Bodley Boy in the 1930s, and went to the Second World War, stationed mainly in India, in the administration section of the RAF. On his return he did his degree through St Catherine's. He was noted as a very orderly man.

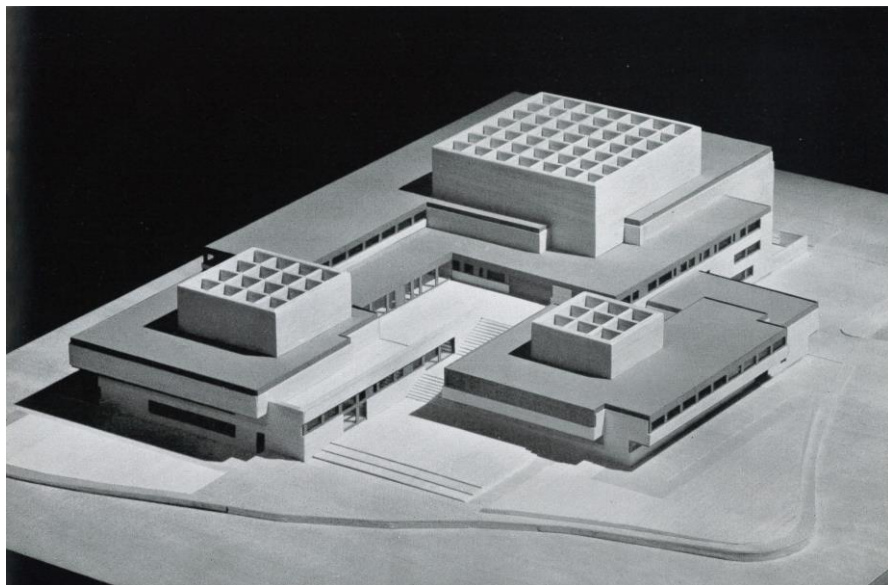
**Mr Michalski** was the first Foreign Law Librarian and one could always tell where he had been because he smelled of cigarette tobacco. When the European Law books started to be purchased there was a need for someone who knew about civil law. Mr Michalski had been working in Blackwells, and he had been a junior lawyer in Poland. He spoke Polish, Russian, German and Italian. He worked in the Law Library for over 12 years from 1965, and was kind enough to leave a small legacy to the Law Library when he died in 2012 at 104 years of age.



Law books from the Radcliffe Camera being unloaded at the Old Library, December 1955. *(Bodleian Library)*



Peter Shephard's 1957 design. *(Peter Shephard)*



Architects' model of the St Cross Building, 1961.

*(J.L. Martin in association with Colin St. John Wilson)*

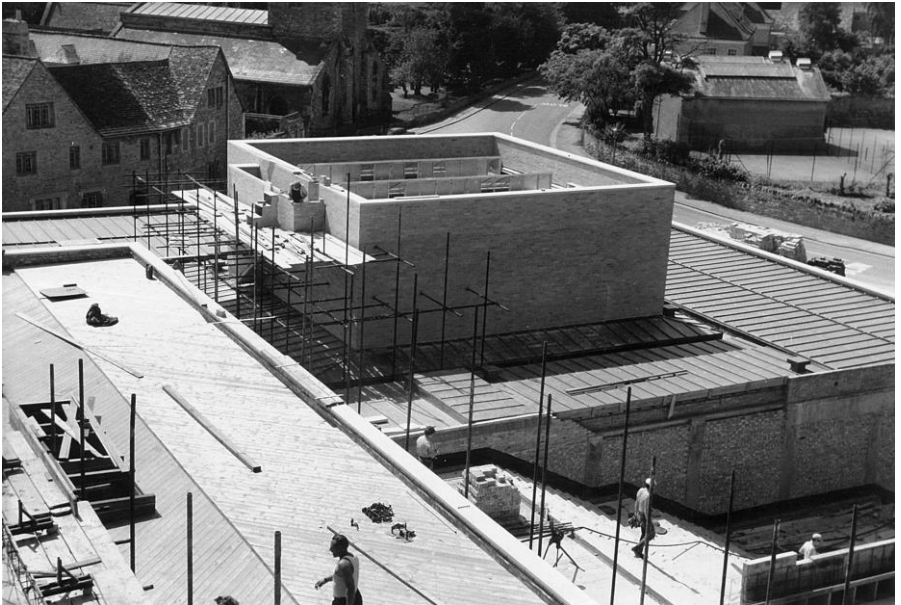


Artist's impression of the Law Library reading room, 1961.

*(Leslie Martin in association with Colin St. John Wilson)*



Construction of the St Cross Building. (*University of Oxford Surveyors*)







St Cross Building exterior, 1964. *(John Donat)*





Law Library reading room, 1964. *(John Donat)*





Law Library gallery, 1964. *(John Donat)*



## **3. History**

### **a. A history of the Bodleian Law Library**

**B. Politowski, Graduate Trainee, July 2014**

#### **Introduction**

For those who are familiar with the Bodleian Law Library in its current incarnation, it is difficult to imagine Oxford without it. The Law Bod, as it is more fondly known, occupies pride of place central to the imposing St Cross Building which sits at the junction dividing Manor Road and St Cross Road in a manner echoing the way it divides opinion: a building of architectural ingenuity or an eyesore in the 'City of Dreaming Spires'.

As law libraries and their history goes, the Law Bod is just one among many. And yet over the past 50 years the Bodleian Law Library has gone from virtually non-existent to markedly important as one the finest legal collections in Europe, with an international reputation which precedes it.<sup>1</sup>

Despite its world renown, and attracting a lot of attention - related variously to architecture, law and librarianship - over the years, there exists no definitive history of the Bodleian Law Library. As University, Faculty and Library unite to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary there comes the opportunity to write one. Like all narrative histories, it is only one version of events freely open to challenge, but is hopefully an

interpretation which will at least give an insight to the fascinating story behind this integral building.

## **Law at Oxford**

Evidence suggests that law has been taught at the University of Oxford since the 12th Century, some of the great scholars in ecclesiastical and civil (or Roman) law over the centuries having taught in the colleges. However, perhaps with slight exception to Roman law, the legal scholarship of yesteryear is far removed from that of the law student today.<sup>2</sup>

Modern legal teaching, as we might understand it, began at Oxford with the creation of the School of Jurisprudence in 1876. The school, established to teach the new undergraduate degree of Bachelor of Jurisprudence, catered for the significant rise in the number of students coming to Oxford to study law.<sup>3</sup>

Fortunately, the Bodleian already had a significant collection on English law to provide for this increase in numbers. In 1610 Sir Thomas Bodley had struck an agreement with the Stationer's Company which, subsequently enshrined into law with the Statute of Anne in 1710, provided for the system of legal deposit. This system, fortunately inclusive of English and Scottish law books, still exists today. Supplemented by the creation of a dedicated law collection in the All Souls' Codrington Library in 1867, the University of Oxford was theoretically in an excellent place to provide for this new law teaching.

However, a good collection is useless without a good library, or indeed a good librarian, and the Bodleian's law books were completely submerged amongst the general collection, a 'law' classification non-existent and no complete list of the legal materials to be found in the book-stack available to readers.

## **The Squire Bequest**

An opportunity to rectify these early issues came in 1898 with the death of a Miss Rebecca Flower Squire. At Squire's bequest her trustees approached the University of Oxford with a significant endowment which, amongst other things, would fund the creation of scholarships in law as well as the building of a proper law library, a librarian thereof, and the books to fill it. This was a substantial offer, and had things gone differently we would be celebrating the hundred and tenth year of the Squire Law Library here at Oxford. However, the bequest came with the requirement that any descendants of Squire, or peoples from the Parish of St Mary, Newington, be given priority when selecting scholars. This proved a request which did not sit well with the more liberal ideals of the day to be found within the Law Faculty, and was thus rejected by Professors Dicey and Jenks - two stalwarts of Oxford legal academia.<sup>4</sup>

The issue could not be resolved and the trustees approached Cambridge with the same offer which, with a small change to Squire's will made in the court of Chancery, was duly accepted.<sup>5</sup> As one record of the history of law at Cambridge notes with some delight, 'While Oxford had to wait another sixty years for a separate law building, Cambridge obtained its new premises...in 1904.'<sup>6</sup> Interestingly the requirement attached to the Squire bequest remains on the Cambridge statute books, but no claim as founder's kin has ever been made.<sup>7</sup>

## **The Examination Schools**

Throughout the early 20th century the Law Faculty continued to grow, and with it the requirements for access to legal materials. Much of the burden to provide for law students fell upon the Codrington Library which had allowed access to the Anson law reading room for members of the university and barristers of the Oxford Circuit through mutual agreement with the Faculty. However, with access

dependent on the goodwill of All Souls College, and the library far from a comprehensive collection of materials, the Codrington could not continue to act as the University's *de facto* law library: aside from other restrictions, the college would not then allow women to enter!

In 1922 the Law Faculty sent a request to Bodley's Librarian insisting that, 'the student of modern English law requires easy and constant access to several hundred volumes of reports, not to mention textbooks and digests.'<sup>8</sup> Whilst acknowledging the existence of the Anson room and the efforts of the Camera staff in providing for law, the result was deemed far from satisfactory. In response the following year a 'law' section was created within the Bodleian classifications and a 'working' collection of circa 2,800 volumes siphoned off and sent to a small reading room set up in the Examination Schools. This reading room was to be staffed by one Bodley Boy who would be supervised by an assistant based at the main Bodleian.<sup>9</sup>

Unsurprisingly the demand for access to legal material quickly outgrew the provision created by the new reading room. Not only was the collection rather basic - consisting of only the most popular law reports and some heavily used text books, insufficient for anything other than the most rudimentary undergraduate study - but the room itself was cramped, poorly lit and maintained rather irregular opening times. During term access was allowed between 10am-1pm, 5pm-7pm and 8pm-10pm, with the proviso that during daytime hours the room could be booked as teaching space by members of faculty, and in the evening by one of the many mooted societies within the University. Only with rare exception and on written application to Bodley's librarian was the reading room open for longer during term or at all during vacation.

One of the boys, Ken Humphreys, subsequently librarian of Birmingham University, began work in the Codrington Library as he read for his BA in 1935, but found himself hard pressed to find time for study whilst working each day until 7pm. He noted with some

delight how, 'it was a splendid day when Bodley's Librarian invited me to look after the law library.' Paid at one shilling per hour, the unusual opening hours of the law reading room allowed Humphreys to study at the Bodleian between his hours of work, and no doubt oft-times in work hours as he recalls his supervisor, based at the Bodleian, never visited the Examination Schools.<sup>10</sup>

Another Bodley Boy, later to become Oxford's first proper Law Librarian, remarked of those days that, 'law students were gentlemen and spent the afternoons at sport, or perhaps lunch.'<sup>11</sup>

### **The 1931 Report**

The 1930s brought with it the Bodleian Commission into Library Provision in Oxford, which, together with the Law Faculty, agreed the need for better facilities for law. The suggestion the commission arrived at was that a new special law library should be created occupying two rooms in the new library building the Commission recommended be built; the New Bodleian.<sup>12</sup>

Whilst in principle the Law Faculty agreed the need for a dedicated law library at Oxford, the offer of just two rooms where merely 4,000 volumes could be contained was seen as totally inadequate. 'The Oxford Law School requires and deserves an adequate University Law Library!', they said. At a minimum the Faculty required space to accommodate 100 readers and 25,000 volumes available on open shelf. After all, 'Law books which are not on open shelves directly accessible to readers are dead books.'<sup>13</sup>

For a while it looked like the Law Faculty would be getting its way: in 1933 plans were drawn up to create a Law Library within the Clarendon Building where it would occupy one entire floor.<sup>14</sup> However, by 1935 this plan had been radically altered with the announcement of the creation of a new law reading room in the Bodleian quadrangle, once the space had been reorganised following



the opening of the New Bodleian. Research trips were made to the libraries of Middle and Inner Temple, as well as the Squire Law Library, to see how the new reading room should be structured and the Law Faculty was promised space for 100 readers and 30,000 volumes on open shelf.<sup>15</sup> Building work on the New Bodleian commenced in 1936 with Queen Mary laying the foundation stone the following year.

## **The War**

With the outbreak of World War Two the recently constructed New Bodleian was requisitioned by the MoD for 'war purposes'. Plans to move books to the New Bodleian had to be put on hold, and with it any plans to reorganise the old Bodleian quad cancelled.

The Examination Schools too were occupied by the military authorities and the Law reading room closed, the books returned to the underground bookstore of the Camera where readers could consult them 'in the ordinary manner'.<sup>16</sup> Additional space was soon found, and law was able to occupy a newly created reading room on the ground floor of the Radcliffe Camera. Quick work was done to the former bookstack, cleaning the walls and ceiling blackened by the gas jet lamps, installing electric lighting and providing tables and chairs for 44 readers.<sup>17</sup> Joined by the library of the English Faculty, by the end of the war there was just about space for 130 readers and some of the books for these two large faculties, with the remainder stored in the underground bookstack.<sup>18</sup>

## **The 1950s & Move to the Bodleian**

It was not until 1953 that the discussion over the law collection again came to the fore. In April of that year the University had played host to a man called Erwin Nathaniel Griswold, the Dean of Harvard Law School. Anecdotes suggest that at a lunch, following a tour of the facilities Oxford had to offer, Griswold turned to the Lord Mayor of

Oxford and several of the Law Faculty and remarked words to the effect that in his opinion, 'your facilities are inadequate for a university of this distinction. You should try to expand them.'<sup>19</sup> And certainly Griswold acted on his views, writing to the Master of the Rolls, a member of the Pilgrim's Trust, to enquire about funds for a new centre of law at Oxford.<sup>20</sup>

In the meantime, certain members of the Law Faculty had taken it upon themselves to begin again the crusade to acquire an adequate law library, especially Professor Sir Humphrey Waldock (upon whose extensive papers this history is based). On behalf of the Faculty, Waldock wrote to the Squire Law Library to enquire of their facilities, and forwarded the reply to Bodley's Librarian accompanied by a note warning of the disquiet amongst the Faculty with the Bodleian's perceived refusal to take the provision for law seriously.<sup>21</sup>

Nowell Linton Myers, Bodley's Librarian since 1948, had in fact already been at work on proposals to better supply for law within the Bodleian and offered two options:<sup>22</sup>

1. The Law Library could be permanently housed in the main Bodleian in an L shaped reading room which would allow only 15,000 volumes on open shelf, but offer a considerable improvement in equipment and reading room conditions.

2. Alternatively, the law collection could remain where it was, in the Lower Camera. However, English would be removed and Law would take up the entirety of the Lower Reading Room and the upper level of the bookstack (now the Upper Gladstone Link). This would allow for a considerable increase in the number of books available to readers: a proposed 12,000 volumes on open shelf and a further 4,000 in the law collection's own stack, leaving law as virtually the only collection not reliant on the new bookstack. This, argued Myers, would be more than sufficient: 'I am very surprised to hear the numbers using the Squire Library', he wrote back, 'there would have

to be a major revolution in Oxford lawyers' habits for anything like these figures to be realised here!'<sup>23</sup>

The Faculty was unimpressed with either suggestion. As far as they were concerned the conditions were such in this 'basement' of the Camera as to render it unsuitable for permanent accommodation. Even with significant work to the reading room, 'readers would have to accept conditions of permanent artificial lighting and an atmosphere which can only be described as foul.'<sup>24</sup> The Faculty decided they could put up with the conditions of the Camera no longer and said they would choose the lesser of the two evils moving to the Bodleian, albeit under great duress. 'Facilities available in the University for legal research are utterly inadequate,' were their parting remarks. 'Visiting Professors...are amazed by the poverty of our Law Libraries...and the best lawyers...are now tending to go to Cambridge and London where more adequate facilities are offered.'<sup>25</sup>

Bodley's Librarian was not impressed with the Faculty's decision which appeared to be a case of cutting off one's nose in spite. 'I think a good deal of prejudice is raised against the Lower Reading Room in the Camera,' wrote Myers in response to the Faculty's description of his newest reading room as a 'basement'. 'It is of course simply a ground floor, and is not sunk in the ground at all! My suggestion in fact is that in the new allocation of space, Law should come in on the ground floor, (and that in more senses than one).'<sup>26</sup>

## **An Appeal to Griswold**

So the move went ahead and in 1955 the law collection found itself in a new home on the first floor of the Bodleian Quadrangle, where with some disappointment the Faculty discovered that even a miserly 12,000 volumes could barely be contained on the shelving and the rooms could only seat 75 in a faculty now numbering over 700. If Myers thought he had at least temporarily quashed any further discussion over a new law library, he was wrong.

The Faculty, annoyed with their achievement in moving to the new premises, turned to an old ally and contacted Dean Griswold of Harvard. A lengthy letter was penned noting his previous sympathy with the idea of providing better for legal research at Oxford and setting out the current situation. Not only could the Bodleian not provide sufficient space to work, nor accessible volumes to work upon, but they even lacked a trained law librarian or a law catalogue. Encouraged by his previous concern shown for their welfare, could the Dean trouble himself to take up the question of library provision at Oxford once more?<sup>27</sup> Griswold's response was short and to the point: he would be delighted to and would set on making enquiries right away.<sup>28</sup>

### **A Trip to America**

Griswold was true to his word, and indeed his influence worked quickly. Just a year later, in 1956, the Faculty was able to approach the University's Hebdomadal Council with a proposal to set up a committee tasked with investigating the possibility of creating a Law Library, and the assurance of funding for such a committee from the Rockefeller Foundation to the tune of \$10,000. The creation of a new Law Library, the paper argued, could amend the significant detriment the comparative pooriness of library provision was having on legal studies at Oxford.<sup>29</sup>

A committee was duly appointed and, with a consulting architect to advise, travelled to America where they found great enthusiasm for the type of design present in those law libraries in California. A large central reading room, surrounded by volumes of easily accessible books on vast rows of open shelving: this was the legal scholar's dream!

The committee carefully considered and delivered its report in the Michaelmas Term 1957. A site was suggested - that of the relatively open space on Manor Road, actually at that time earmarked for a

University Sports Centre! - and the consulting architect, Peter Shephard drew up the plans.<sup>30</sup>

## **Designs and Architects**

Peter Shephard's plans are pleasingly rural. The Library, a low two-storey brick building, occupies central position across a grass courtyard from the centrepiece - an octagonal lecture theatre. There are faculty offices, seminar rooms and an oversize bookstack. Space was also left for future expansion and as then an undecided University building.

However, it was not Shephard's designs which went on to become the Bodleian Law Library. Whilst the University Council approved in principle the creation of such a library and on this specific site, Shephard's plans were rejected. In his place Sir Leslie Martin, the Cambridge architect, and his colleague Colin St John Wilson - the man who would later design the British Library building at St Pancras - were selected. Funding was provided with a generous donation from the Rockefeller Foundation of \$150,000 - over half the cost of construction. A further £22,000 came from the Gulbenkian Trust, and the University agreed to fundraise the remainder.<sup>31</sup>

## **Completion of the Library**

To cut a long story short, over the next five years Martin and Wilson met regularly with the University and the plans for the new St Cross Building (now also to accommodate English and the Institute for Economics & Statistics) became a reality.

On 17th October 1964, Dean Griswold was once again in Oxford; this time to receive an Honorary Doctorate in Civil Law, and to open the new Bodleian Law Library. Following the degree ceremony, the Chancellor, accompanied by Bodley's Librarian and Griswold, led a

procession to the new building. Here library staff - marked by the white carnations they wore - were on hand to provide tours to the guests, and champagne was served in the main reading room.<sup>32</sup> This building, the architectural historian Pevsner was to write just 10 years later, 'it has all the splendour of Persepolis.'<sup>33</sup>

It is possible to read too much into it, but in the same edition of the Bodleian Record in which the opening of the Law Library is announced comes the resignation of Myers.<sup>34</sup> Having spent his last sixteen years as Bodley's Librarian negotiating with the Law Faculty, it was probably with some relief he finally saw them established in a site away from the central library.

## **Conclusion**

At the time of its construction, there were still those who questioned the need for such a large law library at the University of Oxford.<sup>35</sup> However, as we look back on the past fifty years, it is clear that the Law Bod still offers a large, bright reading room, the white walls and concrete panels timeless and immaculate, still as popular with readers as it ever was. Now an integral part of the Bodleian it enjoys an international reputation. Professor Francis Reynolds, in a seminar as part of a series on the history of Oxford, described it thus: 'I think the Law Library has been a crucial feature in the development of the [Law] Faculty. The Law Library is, I should have thought, undoubtedly the best collection of Anglo-American and other materials outside the United States.'<sup>36</sup>

When it was built the Bodleian Law Library was intended to grow into its space over 50 years, and hold a collection of 450,000 items. Having reached that 50 year mark, the Library has lost space to other pressures such as the need for more offices and seminar rooms, whilst incorporating the entire Official Papers Collection, once housed in the Bodleian, across its ground floor. The Library now contains over 550,000 volumes. Despite this the Law Library remains unique in its

commitment to the founding principle of retaining all material on open shelves accessible to readers: as I write, at the moment not one book has been transferred to the Book Storage Facility (although that is due to change in the near future!).

As the next fifty years are considered, with plans underway for the renovation of the St Cross Building, it is certainly true that priorities of and for readers are significantly different. However, it should weigh heavy in our minds the basic requirements made of a law library back in 1933: that material is available to consult, and there is a nice place to read it.

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<sup>1</sup> The Bodleian Law Library was considered, for example, in 1994 - just 30 years after its construction - as one of 'the two principal legal academic research libraries in the British Isles', the other being the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, London. (Twining, 1994: 92).

<sup>2</sup> Bird (2012), 284-5.

<sup>3</sup> For a contemporary discussion of the development of law at Oxford during the latter half of the 19th Century, see Bryce (1893).

<sup>4</sup> Lawson (1968), 96-7.

<sup>5</sup> *Re Squire's Trusts*, (1901) 17 TLR 724.

<sup>6</sup> Cambridge University (1996), 18.

<sup>7</sup> *Loc. Cit.*

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Chairman of Law Faculty to Bodley's Librarian dated 8th May 1922, Bodleian Library Records MS c.1686.

<sup>9</sup> The initial funding for the creation of the reading room came from All Souls, with the Bodleian reimbursing the college some years later (see Bod. Lib. Records MS c. 1686 ff.).

<sup>10</sup> Bodleian Law Library Archives, Papers of Sir Humphrey Waldoock, unattributed note. See also Lush (1987), 2.

<sup>11</sup> Lush (1987), 2.

<sup>12</sup> Bodleian Commission (1931), 68. Interestingly with the Commission's report came a separate report accompanying by a H. Harold, then student of Christ Church. Harold's report highlighted the benefit building a new library building on land to the east of St Cross Road - the site now occupied by the St Cross Building. *Ibid*, 107-9.

<sup>13</sup> Law Board Memorandum 1933 to the Bodleian Curators. Also Lush (1987), 1-2.

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- <sup>14</sup> Report by Bodley's Librarian dated 8th November 1933, Bodleian Library Records MS c. 599.
- <sup>15</sup> Memorandum by head of the Law Faculty dated 22nd May 1935, Bodleian Library Records MS c. 599. See also Committee on the Law Library (1957), 2-3.
- <sup>16</sup> Report of the Bodleian Curators dated 22nd May 1939, Bodleian Library Records MS c. 1686.
- <sup>17</sup> Craster (1952).
- <sup>18</sup> Lush (1987), 3.
- <sup>19</sup> Reynolds (1988).
- <sup>20</sup> Unattributed report 1953?, Bodleian Law Library Archives.
- <sup>21</sup> Letter from Waldock to Myers dated 5th August 1953, and letter from Squire Law Library to Lawson dated 22nd June 1953, Bodleian Law Library Archives.
- <sup>22</sup> 'Needs of the Law Faculty in the Bodleian' dated 16th November 1953, Bodleian Law Library Archives.
- <sup>23</sup> Letter from Myers to Waldock dated 7th September 1953, Bodleian Law Library Archives.
- <sup>24</sup> 'Memorandum on the Provision for Law in the Reorganised Bodleian' [L (53) 27], dated 24th November 1953, Bodleian Law Library Archives.
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- <sup>27</sup> Letter from Waldock to Griswold dated 28th March 1955, Bodleian Law Library Archives.
- <sup>28</sup> Letter from Griswold to Waldock dated 7th April 1955, Bodleian Law Library Archives.
- <sup>29</sup> 'Scheme for the Development of the Law Library', a paper presented by Waldock and Butterworth to the Hebdomadal Council dated 25th May 1956, Bodleian Law Library Archives.
- <sup>30</sup> Committee on the Law Library (1957)
- <sup>31</sup> 'Memorandum on the Need for a New Oxford Law Library' dated 26th May 1958, Bodleian Law Library Archives.
- <sup>32</sup> 'Convocation: Order of Proceedings, 17th October 1964', and 'Notes for Staff', Bodleian Law Library Archives.
- <sup>33</sup> Pevsner (1974), 275.
- <sup>34</sup> Bodleian Libraries (1966), July.
- <sup>35</sup> Reynolds (1988).
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*



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## **b. From Maitland to Pevsner: the early history of the Law Library**

**Shanne Lush, Deputy, then Law Librarian, 1961 – 88**

*Text of a lunch-time talk given to the Friends of the Bodleian, 5 November 1987.*

Good afternoon. If there is anyone here who-doesn't know me, I am Shanne Lush and for very nearly half my life I have been involved with the Law Library. But though oral history is a fashionable pastime now, I am not talking today about the last 25 years or so of the Library's history but how it came-to be where it is, and what it is - according to Nikolaus Pevsner when he reached Oxford in 1974 for his Buildings of England series, it is "the only recent university building in Oxford of international calibre".

I suppose that everyone must know by sight what is still colloquially called the Law Library building, even those people who have no reason to use law books, or to visit the English Faculty Library or the Institute of Economics and Statistics, or who have never spent an evening at a meeting or a talk in the Gulbenkian Lecture Theatre. For the past ten years or so, anyone who uses what passes for Oxford's "inner ring road" to drive over Magdalen Bridge between 4 and 6 o'clock in the evening will have had plenty of time to sit and stare at the solid masses of pale brick and glass, the rearing flight of steps, the terraces. Anyone passing in a helicopter may have admired the stretches of copper and glass in the roof. The reading rooms of the 3 libraries are defined by their towers; readers benefit from the natural daylight from overhead. The skylight in the Law Library is as large as the quadrangle of the Old Bodleian Library.

That is a graceful if perhaps accidental gesture of reconciliation, between the new Law Library and its old home in the Lower Reading

Room, now mostly occupied by the Bodleian Catalogue. Law books and readers had been installed there in 1955, in some splendour but also in what the Law Faculty considered to be insufficient space. Lawyers are not, as myth would have it, just interested in making money. Especially not academic lawyers. What they really need is books. Every statement ever made by a lawyer about a library dwells on this: he needs rapid reference to lots of books. "Law books which are not on open shelves directly accessible to readers are dead books". So said the Law Faculty to the Bodleian Curators in 1933.

The Faculty did not comment directly on the statement of the then current Commission of Inquiry into Library Provision in Oxford that "with the separation of the book-stores from the reading rooms direct access has fallen into disuse, because most readers in a large library prefer to have books brought to them".

What the Law Faculty did complain about in 1933 was the Commission's recommendation that "there should be a special Library for Law, consisting of a collection which may be estimated at 4000 volumes of legal works.... on open shelves". This would occupy one or two rooms of the new Special Library Building (which the Commission recommended should be built opposite Merton College Garden) with Bodleian books sent for temporary use there. There would be rooms for History and English, other rooms for other subjects, each measuring 15 by 20 feet; the rooms could also be used for teaching.

The Faculty was not at all pleased with this suggestion. "The Oxford Law School requires and deserves an adequate University Law Library"; it says firmly.

What it had then, in 1933, was a small room (Room 6) in the Examination Schools. That Law Library contained about 2,800 books and was administered by the Bodleian, by one "other" assistant and a Bodley boy. One of the boys, in later life a University Librarian, and then working for a degree, described his joy when Bodley's Librarian invited him to leave the Codrington Library in 1933 "to look after the

Law Library of the Bodleian, to be paid at one shilling an hour. The Law Library was open in term, in the morning from 10 till 1 and in the evening from 5 till 7, 8 till 10. According to another Bodley boy who had worked there earlier and who subsequently became the first proper Law Librarian, law students were gentlemen in those days and spent the afternoons at sport, or perhaps at lunch. The library was closed in vacation.

That Law Library did not aim at being adequate for higher study, and yet the books it held were down at the Examinations Schools and inconvenienced anyone else who needed to refer to law books in Bodley: so the Commission hoped-to arrange for something better.

There was, also, of course, then as now, the Codrington library but that was open only by the good will of All Souls College and could not act as a comprehensive Law Library. Apart from other restrictions it did not then allow women through its doors at all.

There was also the Maitland Library. Ah, so "Maitland" at last. When I was I thinking of a time span for this talk, not wanting to go back to the very beginning, to the days when "Jur." or Jurisprudence was one of Bodley's four original class marks, I was intrigued by the obsolete shelfmark "Maitland" in some of the books that are still on the Law Library's shelves. I thought, then, that it had been used for the law books kept in the Schools. And so in a way it was, but the Maitland Library was in fact quite separate: it occupied another small room in the Schools, and was run by the same Bodley boy, who cannot remember ever being visited there by a more senior member of the Library staff. The Maitland Library started with 300 books from Maitland's own library and was at first kept in a room in All Souls. That was in 1908. It was moved to the Schools in 1920 where it was administered by Sir Paul Vinogradoff, who bequeathed to it, when he died in 1926, 2000 more books on law and social studies. On his death the Maitland library was taken under the wing of the Bodleian. By then it also contained books on Economic History from Frederic Seebohm,

so it was not a very legal library. The Professor of Jurisprudence had the right to hold seminars in the room; but by 1931 he was thought unlikely usefully to do so, and in 1933 the Maitland Library was split up. History books were given to the History Faculty Library of the day, law books to the Bodleian and the "obsolete or redundant books" were sold - which was a pity, because thirty years later many of those titles on legal history had to be bought again (and some are still needed) so that historians would not have to trudge down the road to the new Law Library, or indeed so that lawyers need not traipse back to the history sections in the Camera.

"Back to the Camera" would be a return to the scene of their youth, for some lawyers. In 1940 the Law Library moved out of the Examination-Schools and into, the ground floor of the Camera.

It is comforting to read in Sir Edmund Craster's History of the Bodleian Library that "although war was gradually closing down all building-work that was not military or governmental, it was found possible to dismantle the room (from which the books had been removed, the first to be moved into the New Bodleian Library's stack), [and] clean down its walls and the ceiling that had been blackened by the dim light of a single gas jet, to install electric lighting and heating and to supply tables and chairs for 44 readers". The room was shared with the select Library of the English Faculty. By 1945 it had seats for about 130 readers, to be used by the two large faculties.

But the Law Faculty was not satisfied with that. It looked on the arrangement as temporary, and expected that when the Bodleian was able to proceed with the development of the Old Library that had been prevented by the war, Law would be given at least the space that it had been pressing for in the 1930's. In 1933 its requirement "severely scaled down", it says, "from its ideal", was for 25,000 volumes on open shelves and seats for 100 readers: or - a few years later, in 1938 for 30,000 books on open access and an expert Law Librarian.

Bodley's Librarian rejected the need for an expert and made no comment on the number of books. Then came the War ...

The next discussion, or in the most courteous way it could be called an argument, took place in 1953. The Law Faculty was offered an L-shaped room on the first floor of the Schools Quadrangle, which provided, it agreed, "ideal reading conditions" but space for only half the number of readers and books the Faculty wanted. Or the Law Library could take over the whole of the Ground Floor of the Camera, with 78 seats and the possibility of having all the rest of the law books on open access in the Camera Basement, the upper floor of Underground Book Store. But this was rejected; it was dark, the lights would be on all the time, there was fug and smells, even if, as Bodley's Librarian protested, the Faculty was prejudiced in calling the Lower Camera a basement", "as it is not sunk in the ground at all;" he said, NO: the place is utterly inadequate, was the response; visiting professors and other lawyers are amazed at the poverty of our law libraries and go to Cambridge or London". But for the moment the Faculty accepted the southern half of the first floor of the Old Library, and set about seeking money to create an adequate Law Library that would make the University an efficient centre for Commonwealth law studies: it could become a centre for the teaching and study of 'Anglo-American jurisprudence, and "at a time when momentous constitutional changes were taking place in the Commonwealth" (this was written in 1956) " Oxford could play a significant role in preserving that heritage and maintaining respect for the rule of law in these territories".

With the University's blessing, a small committee of the Law Faculty, with a consultant architect, visited the United States in November 1956 to look at modern law libraries and to ask questions of their librarians, and returned with great enthusiasm for the libraries it had seen in California. Here, it seemed, was the answer, a reader's dream come true, large numbers of books close at hand, rows of stacks close to the desks - no time wasted walking round the walls of vast reading

rooms, (as at Harvard), - no division between many small reading rooms, (as at Columbia). A Californian Library was what was wanted: and the money to build it.

With great zeal and despatch the committee of the Faculty prepared a substantial brochure of 31 pages, to explain its needs; the architect, who had travelled with the committee to America, Peter Shephard, prepared sketches and drawings of an open access library, with over 151,000 volumes on two floors of stacks directly accessible from the reading room, a further 150,000 on the Ground Floor and seats for 220 in the Reading Room.

Where was this Library to go? Should it be on the Manor Road site? This was already being discussed in November 1956 and early in 1957. This was the best available open space. In 1931 it had been suggested as the site for a new university library, or at least as a repository for half a million volumes, said the dissenting Commissioner who became Sir Roy Harrod. That suggestion was not taken up but the site had been bought by the university from Merton College and was being used by the Territorial Army and, I think also in a wooden hut, by the Institute of Economics and Statistics. But Council and the General Board agreed that the Manor Road site would be allocated to the Law Library and to the English Faculty Library.

Peter Shephard's drawings are charmingly rural. A two-storey brick building with a low pitched roof stretches along St. Cross Road, facing the Balliol field. That contains offices and seminar rooms. The reading room and stack are at right angles, looking at Manor Road across a grass quadrangle fringed by trees, dominated by a magnolia in full flower. The English Faculty Library (with which he is not concerned) is another two storey building to the east. On the important angle of the two roads, across from St. Cross Church, is the octagonal lecture theatre, its roof crowned with a pointed cap, and two huge windows filling the south wall. What fortunate circumstance prevented



generations of lecturers having to speak against the never ending grind and roar of traffic round that corner?!

Because of course there is no octagonal block on the corner and it is not Peter Shephard's name that is linked to the Building. (Nor is it included in Mr. Colvin's story of *Unbuilt Oxford*, which is a pity.).

What happened next is that the Rockefeller Foundation had agreed to provide £150,000, or more than half the expected cost of the Law Library if the university could raise the remainder.

By now the university had decided that the Institute of Economics should also share the site and that it was essential that the buildings three institutions should be designed a single scheme under a single architect, as befitted such an important site. The California ideal for book-stack and reading room should not be forgotten; whoever was chosen as architect should study those earlier designs. A handsome exterior was needed. Perhaps some expense could be saved by bearing in mind the common needs of the three users.

In May 1958 the choice of architect fell on Sir Leslie Martin, by then Professor of Architecture at Cambridge. I must confess that my researches do not explain exactly why. The documents are still restricted; oral history has not so far recounted the story, and the most likely protagonist has recently died. But Sir Leslie with Colin St. John Wilson was quickly at work on his brief, which was to provide the same scale of accommodation and at the same cost, as had been shown in the original drawings.

By the middle of 1958, after great efforts by various members of the Law Faculty, other lawyers and indeed others in the university, almost all the money had been raised, and was capped by £10,000 from the Pilgrim Trust. The hard work of the Faculty cannot be overstated! By an unfortunate coincidence, the Oxford Historic Buildings Appeal had been launched in November 1956 at almost exactly the same time as the Lawyers began to seek money, and though they were careful never

to confuse the two appeals, foundations and fund-granting bodies had on the whole to choose between the two good causes. Oxford buildings turned from black to - if not white, then pale yellow; and Sir Leslie's plans for the Manor Road Buildings took shape.

What of the Bodleian in all this? My sources may be one-sided, there was no doubt great debate there, but by April 1957 the Curators "had agreed to the creation of a dependent law library and the transfer to it of the relevant parts of the collection in their charge".

Somehow I read into that a sigh of relief that the cuckoo was after all going to build its own nest.'

For eighteen months more, the Faculty committee and the Secretary of the Bodleian worked over the plans, discussing in minute detail the size of desks, the length of book stacks, how to save space here and there. The Schedule I became Scheme A or B and eventually C. The Reading Room was on two levels, then one. Staircases were squeezed. The boiler house moved. The caretaker's flat moved. The space between stacks varied from 4'6" to 3' to 4' 1.5". By February 1960 the more or less final plans were agreed. The model was approved by the Royal Fine Arts Commission and placed on display here in the Sheldonian, for the benefit of members of Congregation, on 26th September 1960. That was just two months under four years since the explorers of the Law Faculty had first made their way to California.

Four years and a month later, in October 1964, the Law Library opened to readers. And Pevsner was to say "This is a monumental building. It has the splendour of Persepolis".



## **4. Architectural notes**

### **a. The St Cross Building and its architects**

**Ronald Richenburg, Senior Library Assistant, August 2014**

The Bodleian Law Library has a significant place in the architectural history of Oxford. Completed in 1964 and now listed at Grade II\*, it was part of the first wave of overtly modernist architecture in a university (and city) that had only begun to embrace Modernism in the late 1950s.

#### **The need for a library**

During the first half of the twentieth century, the Bodleian's small but growing collection of legal materials moved from one unsatisfactory location to another until, in 1956, plans began to be made for a purpose-built law library on largely unoccupied land at the junction of Manor Road and St Cross Road. At an early stage, it was decided to include two other libraries (for the English Faculty and for the Institute of Economics and Statistics, though the latter has since moved to another building) and the associated faculty offices, as well as lecture theatres and other shared accommodation, and the inclusion of these disparate elements in a single architectural conception is a significant feature of the design. The building itself is known as the St Cross Building, but it has often been called (particularly in the early literature) the "Group of Three Libraries" or "Manor Road Libraries"

or similar, and it is not unusual for the building to be referred to simply as "the Law Library", presumably because creating a law library was the *raison d'être* of the entire project.

## **The architects**

The slightly remote location meant that a modern design was less controversial than would otherwise have been the case, and the architect appointed was Sir Leslie Martin (1908-2000) who on this project (and several others) worked in association with Colin St John Wilson (1922-2007). Their first assistant was Patrick Hodgkinson, and the design team also included Douglas Lanham.

### *Leslie Martin*

It is difficult to overstate the importance of Martin and Wilson in the development of modern British architecture. Leslie Martin's most famous work is undoubtedly the Royal Festival Hall, completed for the Festival of Britain in 1951 when he was Deputy Architect (i.e. deputy head of the Architect's Department) of the London County Council (LCC). He later became Architect to the Council and remained in that position until 1956. The Royal Festival Hall, immediately popular with both architects and the public, did much to increase public acceptance of modern architecture. But the Royal Festival hall was simply the most high-profile of many projects of the LCC. In the post-war period, there was not only extensive rebuilding after the devastation of World War II, but also, and perhaps even more significantly, a great expansion of public services, particularly public housing, under the new Labour government of Clement Attlee. In London, buildings for the public sector were built by the LCC which had the largest architectural practice in England at the time, and Martin's senior position gave him enormous influence over the direction of architecture and the careers of younger architects.

Even before the war, Martin had attained a degree of prominence, first by being appointed (at the age of 26) head of the school of architecture at the Hull College of Art, and then by co-editing (with Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo) *Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art* (1937, reprinted 1971), a highly influential volume with contributions by many of the leading artists and architects of the time who embraced “the constructive trend in the art of our day”.

After leaving the LCC, Martin became the first Professor of Architecture (and head of the department) at Cambridge University where, under his leadership, a relatively minor school of architecture became internationally known. During this time (1956-1973) and afterwards, he also maintained a private practice, devoted chiefly to university and cultural buildings. As described by Sarah Menin and Stephen Kite,

Martin enjoyed great prestige in these years: ‘beautiful commissions were being handed to him as a celebrity’. He was invited to undertake more projects than he could possibly handle, and frequently handed opportunities on to talented younger architects: thus [James] Stirling gained the Leicester University Engineering Building commission (1959-63, with James Gowan) that launched his international reputation. A roll-call of the architects that Martin influenced as supporter, mentor and collaborator would include many of the key names of British twentieth-century architecture.<sup>1</sup>

Martin’s other buildings in Oxford include the Zoology and Psychology Building, the University Offices in Wellington Square, and several smaller buildings for two of the colleges. He also continued to write extensively, particularly on the theoretical aspects of urban planning

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah Menin and Stephen Kite (in part, quoting Colin St John Wilson), *An Architecture of Invitation: Colin St John Wilson*, Ashgate, 2005, p. 64.

and the use of space, and he is well known for his efforts to relate theory to practice.

### *Colin St John Wilson*

Colin St John Wilson (later Sir Colin, but widely known, informally, as Sandy Wilson), like Leslie Martin, exerted enormous influence through his buildings, his writings and his teaching. His early career included several years at the Architect's Department of the LCC where his work was partly supervised by Martin and where his close colleagues included several other individuals who became key figures in British modernism.

When Martin became Professor at Cambridge, he invited Wilson to join him, both on the Cambridge faculty and in his own architectural practice. Wilson accepted this offer, and worked in association or in partnership with Martin on a number of major projects, mostly in the university sector, throughout the remainder of the decade and into the 1960s. Wilson also carried on a practice under his own name (later to be known as Colin St John Wilson & Partners), continuing into the new millennium, with some later projects in association with Long & Kentish. The work was largely for universities and cultural institutions, though there were also several houses for private clients, which have been widely discussed in architectural literature. However, the most significant project was the British Library in London, completed in 1997 after decades of planning, controversy and changes in government policy, and this is now the building for which he is best known.

Wilson's teaching career included several periods as a visiting professor at Yale and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and then, in 1975, he was appointed Professor of Architecture at Cambridge (succeeding Bill Howell who had taken over from Leslie Martin two years earlier), holding that position until 1989.

The most significant influence on Wilson was the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto (1898-1976) who, though a modernist, did not always follow the modernist orthodoxies that were current at any given time. In a famous speech to the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1957, Aalto said (quoted by various writers with minor differences in wording), “The architectural revolution, like all revolutions, begins with enthusiasm and ends with some sort of dictatorship.” Wilson embraced this line of thought and developed it further in one of his best-known books, *The Other Tradition of Modern Architecture: The Uncompleted Project* (1995).

## **The building**

The highly acclaimed design of the Bodleian Law Library was the end result of a design process in which two other schemes were also considered, and which went hand in hand with the development of a “generic plan” for a library.<sup>2</sup> This generic plan, adapted for varying size requirements, was the basis of the design of the other two libraries<sup>3</sup> in the building, and had some relevance to several smaller academic libraries, both in Oxford and in Cambridge.

The main reading room of the Law Library and of each of the other two libraries is a large cube, brick on the outside, but with a roof consisting almost entirely of skylights which provide brilliant illumination during the day. The cubes rise above the offices, lecture halls and other facilities which are located in a series of interlocking

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<sup>2</sup> Leslie Martin described the generic plan in his book *Buildings & Ideas, 1933-83: From the Studio of Leslie Martin and his Associates*, Cambridge University Press, 1983. See pp. 40-41. This is followed by a discussion of the St Cross Building (described as “Library Group, Manor Road”), pp. 42-49.

<sup>3</sup> The word “libraries” is used here to refer to the libraries for which the building was designed, even though one of them has since moved to another location.



horizontal planes. The monumental external staircase, rising two storeys to the Law Library, but with access to common facilities at first-floor level, is a significant unifying feature and has been widely discussed.

The influence of Alvar Aalto can readily be seen, and one of Aalto's most celebrated works, Säynätsalo Town Hall (completed in 1951) in Finland, is often said to be a major architectural antecedent. Like St Cross, this is a multiple-use building of brick construction with a broad external staircase, and with the main element (the council chamber) contained within a large volume of bold geometry that rests on and rises above the other components. There are also echoes, particularly in the interior spaces, of another major work by Aalto, the Viipuri Library (completed in 1935).<sup>4</sup> Other influences have been suggested as well: the long horizontal planes have a precedent in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959); and the organization of internal spaces may owe something to Louis Kahn (1901-1974), though the influence of Kahn was probably more direct in the earlier schemes that were considered.

The first two schemes for the Law Library were characterized by clusters of columns which defined separate spaces for groups of readers. But the Bodleian view was that the multiplicity of columns would prevent library staff at the main enquiry desk (referred to then as the "control desk") from having a clear view of the reading room (and of the readers!). It was also thought that a split-level location for the enquiry desk was impractical. Wilson, however, was very favourably disposed towards the second scheme, and the concept of defining intimate spaces within a larger one was used in much of his later work.

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<sup>4</sup> It is also known as the Vyborg Library, as the town of Viipuri was ceded to the USSR and re-named at the end of World War II.

But, in light of the objections, a third scheme was developed, and this is what we see today. When one enters the Law Library, the most striking feature, which is immediately noticeable, is the great sense of light and spaciousness: this is the main reading room which is of double height, lit by skylights, and is large enough to contain seats for 232 readers in the main area. The effect is enhanced by the white walls and the light-coloured wood used in the shelves and fittings. Entry is from one corner, where the main enquiry desk is located and from which there is a clear view across the main seating area to the shelves which stand beyond on two sides. A gallery overlooking the main area has similar rows of shelves.

On both the main floor and in the gallery, there is further seating beyond the shelves, alongside the windows – small tables on the main floor and closed carrels in the gallery. These seating arrangements were intended to provide for the needs, as then perceived, of the different categories of readers: undergraduates who were more likely to need assistance (and supervision) in the main area; smaller and more remote tables for graduate students who were expected to be more independent; and the relative privacy of closed carrels for faculty members. Library policies have evolved, and the current scheme is much more flexible, but its origins in the original scheme can still be seen.

When the library was planned, a fundamental requirement was that the entire collection should be on-site and immediately available. The size of the library made this possible, and convenience was enhanced by the close proximity of many of the shelves to the desks and carrels.

With the growth of the collection, together with the creation of the Freshfields IT Training Room and the addition of the Official Papers collection, the library now occupies the two lower floors as well as the main floor and the gallery. Nonetheless, space is still a problem (likely to be exacerbated by future alterations to the building), but we

fully expect our reading room to remain an efficient and pleasant place for all of our users.

## **A personal note**

I am an intermittent user of the Law Library as well as a full-time staff member and, from both perspectives, I've always found the library a wonderful place to work. The ability to browse on open shelves is extremely useful, and the light and spaciousness (and particularly the great height) make the main reading room positively inspirational. Although opinions about modern architecture vary enormously, I think that the general satisfaction of our users indicates that the building works very well, even for those who are not consciously aware of architectural considerations.

## **b. Architectural comments over the years**

### **Nikolaus Pevsner, architectural historian, 1974**

The [St Cross Building] is the only recent university (as against college) building in Oxford of international calibre, and it is these architects' *chef d'oeuvre* up to the present. It had to fill a variety of functions and does that intricately and ingeniously. . . . Visually, it presents itself as a low, spreading building with great emphasis on the contrast between long window bands and sheer windowless cubes. The material is sand-coloured brick, used with slightly raised horizontal bands everywhere except in the three cubes which stand up above the rest. They represent the three sky-lit reading rooms. Altogether, this is a cubic design. . . . As against St Catherine's, . . . where the historical antecedent is Mies van der Rohe, here it is much of the progressive architecture of the twenties. That is

where one finds these massive cubes and these sweeping bands of low windows. In spite of its relative lowness and its complexity of grouping this is a monumental building. The approach to the Law Library establishes that at once, a wide, open staircase rising . . . to the entrance platform. It has the splendour of Persepolis.

Jennifer Sherwood and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Oxfordshire*, (Series: *The Buildings of England*), Yale University Press, 2002 (first published, Penguin, 1974), pp. 274-275. (The section on Oxford was written by Pevsner alone.)

### **Lionel Esher, architectural historian, 1982**

[A Civic Trust award] that year (1966) went to two Cambridge architects for an Oxford building – the new Law Library in Manor Road. This is an expansive building faced with blond bricks appropriate in colour, with a touch of Frank Lloyd Wright in its long horizontals and of Alvar Aalto in its splendid steps – a rare exception to the English tendency to reduce a monumental idea down to residential scale.

Lionel Esher, *The Continuing Heritage*, Franey & Co., 1982, p. 84.

### **Geoffrey Robson, architect, 1966**

This is one of the few buildings in England since the war which I should have liked to have planned, and I would hope to have grasped equally well the relationship between the three libraries with their stacks of ancillary rooms, and the lecture rooms common to all three, in such a coherent and satisfactory manner. Diagrammatically, the 3:4:7 relationship on plan – building up in section on a clockwise spiral in the same proportion – is a most satisfying idea. The great flight of steps leading

. . . , with a positively Aztec feeling of the imminence of human sacrifice, to the entrance to the Law library, is a conception which will do much to confirm the incipient lawyer in a belief in his detached and almost godlike qualities. I enjoy the effect of the great flight enormously and remain entirely unconvinced by the architects' reasoning that it originated solely from a rational analysis of the requirements, much as I would doubt whether some haute cuisine dish resulted from an analysis of calorie and vitamin content. . . . It is a functional building (certainly not a functionalist building) in that it has been generated from a basic idea of the planning of reading rooms. . . . This idea has been applied to the three libraries (which are almost identical in form and vary only in size) and the three have been dovetailed together so that it is difficult to guess, even if one sympathizes with the idea (which I do) which came first: the functional analysis or the sculptural form with the great staircase entrance. . . . I am certain that it will remain one of the most important buildings of the mid-twentieth century, and one of the most revealing: a rugged mass full of internal structural tensions; a monolithic form composed of brick, concrete and light alloy; a monument to our desperate desire for permanence and stability.

Geoffrey Robson, "Law Library Building: Oxford", *RIBA Journal*, Vol. 73 (Nov. 1966), pp. 505-510.

### **Richard MacCormac, architect, 2000**

Although he will always be associated with the masterful realization of the Royal Festival Hall, [Leslie] Martin perceived his major projects as those undertaken in the Great Shelford [Cambridgeshire] studio from the 1950s onwards while he was Cambridge professor. . . . This was where a powerful, volumetrically complex and distinct architectural language developed, in the context of academic and institutional commissions, which combined traditional and new materials in a peculiar and influential

conflation of modernism and the ‘materiality’ of the arts and crafts movement. . . . Martin shared with Aalto the sense of analogy between architecture and landscape. . . . We see this in the reading rooms of the Manor Road Libraries at Oxford (1959[-1964]) as raised daylight plateaux around which other territories are clustered. The form of these libraries is immediately intelligible because of the sequence of entrance, toplit reading room, book stacks and perimeter carrels. Here the idea of the generic organizing principle applicable to the different scale of each of the three libraries is very persuasive and, in fact, proved highly influential. The building is a tour de force compositionally. Like Harvey Court [a residence hall in Cambridge by Martin and Wilson, completed in 1962], it is built over and around a raised first floor plinth which gives access to the English and Law libraries from monumental flights of steps. But here the plinth provides for secondary functions which surround the two ground floor lecture theatres in a relationship which imitates the pattern of the reading rooms and book stacks above.

Richard MacCormac, “Obituary [Sir Leslie Martin]”, *arq: Architectural Research Quarterly*, Vol. 4, no. 4 (2000), pp. 300-301.

### **Sarah Menin and Stephen Kite, architectural historians, 2005**

If Harvey Court is a carved block that stands remotely alone, in their greater complexity, the Oxford Libraries approach Constructivism, sharing the same language of logical assembly that Martin’s friend Ben Nicholson had used in his three-dimensional sculptures of the 1930s, made in emulation of Vantongerloo’s quasi-architectural compositions. The blocks that compose the libraries are piled and interlocked in a giant’s Froebel game to make a monumental mountain of magical appeal in the flat Oxford plain. It was largely on the basis of the success of the Oxford Libraries that Martin and Wilson secured the

appointment as consultant architects for the British Museum Library project in August 1962. . . .

Sarah Menin and Stephen Kite, *An Architecture of Invitation: Colin St John Wilson*, Ashgate, 2005, p. 96.

### **Roger Stonehouse, architectural historian, 2007**

The search for structures and patterns of organisation and form growing from a close analysis of function was already central to the architectural approach in housing, student residences, and the university campus development plans. This approach was taken further in the development of the design for a group of three academic libraries at Manor Road, Oxford in 1959-1964. . . . “This scheme brings together in one composite group three Faculty Buildings that share certain facilities.” Thus, in Martin and Wilson’s eyes, this is not one building but a “library group” of three buildings, which are set upon a plinth, and, as such, it is a child of Leicester [referring to a plan by Martin and Wilson for Leicester University] and a precursor of the British Library. Both Manor Road and the British Library have organic, asymmetrical, balanced compositions of individually identifiable functional elements, which are brought together in an overall composition around a circulation concourse; both enable the constituent elements to respond to their internal functional requirements and to the site; both, justifiably, have been seen as romantic in their form. Therefore, Manor Road is a significant staging post between Harvey Court and the British Library. It has Harvey Court’s taut, precise formal ordering through a grid, particularly in each of the constituent Library ‘buildings’, but there is also a controlled informality in the way they interlock and are allowed to respond to the contingencies of the brief in their projections in plan and section, just as the myriad

inflections and articulations of the British Library are set upon and within the ordering of its grid and service cores.

Roger Stonehouse, *Colin St John Wilson: Buildings and Projects*, Black Dog Publishing, 2007, p. 250.

## **c. The Bodleian Law Library at 50 – current architectural comment**

### **The St Cross Building**

**Adrian Forty, Professor of Architectural History, Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London**

Arriving in Oxford in 1966, the St Cross Building was my first encounter with a significant piece of modern architecture. Here was a monumental building that was at the same time utterly unmonumental. Though large, it never drew attention to its size, and it seemed a lot smaller than it actually was. Some days you would not notice it was there at all, its low lying, horizontal planes barely seeming to rise above the ground. Completely lacking in the usual attention-seeking apparatus of traditional architecture, it was a building without an elevation, and from which it was impossible to know which was the back, the front or the side. But then there was the stair! What building in Britain had an outside stair going all the way up to the top? For anything so far from the Mediterranean to have an outside stair as long and as gradual as this was a surprise. And where most buildings that I knew were entered at the edge, and at the bottom, this was entered at the top and in the middle. All the conventions of what I supposed a building to be had been inverted.



Compared to the conventional architecture of Oxford, blank walls outside facing inwards towards open spaces, St Cross looks outwards, and the principal interior is an enclosed room. And what a room! Nowhere before had I seen a modern interior like that of the Law Library: calm, evenly lit, made of materials – precast concrete, birch-faced ply, cork – that did not speak of privilege and conspicuous expense, this was nonetheless a space that gave dignity to anyone entering it. By treating everyone the same, making everyone visible to everyone else, this wasn't like the old libraries with their shut-away cubicles, but a space that was open, inclusive – a laboratory of learning.

Many years later, visiting Gilbert Scott's Foreign Office shortly after it had been renovated, I was appalled by the impression of Britain that this must give to foreign diplomats: a country unable to shake itself free from the memory of its imperial past. And how I regretted that Sir Leslie Martin's Whitehall Plan, which would have swept all this away, had not been realised. Martin's new buildings, had they been built, would have signified a country that had found a new identity for itself. I imagined them having the feel, and the quality, of the St Cross building – egalitarian, capable of staging the occasional ceremony, dignified without being pompous. The St Cross Building, in 1966, showed what the future might look like – and it made it worth looking forward to.

(Adrian Forty was an undergraduate at Brasenose College 1966 – 69.)

## **Ghosts of the Primitive**

**Professor Stephen Kite, Welsh School of Architecture,  
Cardiff University**

The Oxford Library Group is theatrical, even cinematic, with its great external stairs - likened to the Odessa steps in Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) - carving upwards, through insistently horizontal brick strata, to the cubic *Stadtkrone* of the Law Library.

Kenneth Frampton depicts this work - among other creations of Leslie Martin and his collaborators - as 'the only serious attempt, after the English Free Style, to create a normative, yet unequivocally Modern brick architecture for the British Isles, one that, in its capacity to respond appropriately to the triad of climate, context and programme, was to prove itself capable of being generally accepted by society as a whole'.<sup>5</sup> In October 1960, the *Architectural Design* journal published the approved scheme of The Oxford Library Group, with the story of its evolution, credited to 'Leslie Martin in association with Colin St. John Wilson' and with Patrick Hodgkinson as 'Principal assistant'.<sup>6</sup> Without gainsaying the outstanding qualities of the realised scheme, so eloquently contextualized by Frampton, here I want to briefly call up the ghosts of the 'First version' and the following 'Preliminary scheme' for the Law Library - the largest of the three libraries composing the group. These lost schemes were much mourned by Martin's associate Colin St. John Wilson for their vivid demonstration of ideas germane to this 'Modern brick architecture' and of themes central to the subsequent development of Wilson's own work.

Both the 'First version' and the 'Preliminary scheme' (the latter also introduces the key move of the 'diagonal-in-the-square' organization) pay explicit homage to Louis Kahn's tiny but epochal Trenton Bath House (1954-8) project in New Jersey, USA. As a reader of the Yale University, School of Architecture journal *Perspecta*, Wilson would have known the 1957 issue in which the Trenton project was published. Here Kahn proclaimed a new beginning for Modern architecture, an 'order of spaces integrated with the order of construction', and the 'concept of space order in which the hollow columns supporting the [Trenton Bath House] pyramidal roofs

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Sarah Menin and Stephen Kite, *An Architecture of Invitation: Colin St John Wilson* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 90.

<sup>6</sup> 'Library group for Oxford University, Manor Road, Oxford', *Architectural Design* (October, 1960), 399-403.

distinguish the spaces that serve from those being served'<sup>7</sup>. In the penultimate Oxford 'Preliminary scheme' this concept of served-and-servant structure-space was manifested as four-column islands; these ordered the large numbers of readers into defined groups of 25, related to bays of bookshelves, and study-carrels. But the scheme was thrown out by a client concerned at the difficulty of supervising readers in the forest of columns of such a hypostyle hall. Wilson was disgruntled at this failure of the normally astute Martin to defend a scheme which would have provided 'wonderful reading spaces'; he defined this: 'as the moment when I knew that I would soon have to move on and become my own master'<sup>8</sup>. Nonetheless, the simpler, more open, yet still columnar arrangement of the realised scheme preserves much to which the 'Preliminary scheme' aspired: the diagonal-in-a-square annular array of readers, books, and carrels, in an order of spaces integrated with a humane order of construction, pervaded by the natural light of the heavens.

Whether described as the 'primitive hut' (for its primal structural and spatial origins), as the 'four-poster', or as the 'aedicule', this columnar structure-space would become a leitmotif of Wilson's subsequent work in its capacity to articulate richly evocative spaces - in the domestic realm a fine early example is Cornford House, Cambridge (1965-7). Largely on the basis of the Oxford Libraries, Martin and Wilson landed the appointment as consultant architects for the British Museum Library project in August 1962, thus beginning a long story whose lineage leads from Oxford to London's St Pancras. Here Wilson's British Library (1974-97) uses the aedicular column order to humanize the vastness, offering the reader a choice of welcoming scales and settings that mediate between insideness and outsideness.

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<sup>7</sup> Louis Kahn, 'Order in Architecture', *Perspecta*, vol. 4 (1957), 58-63 (p. 59).

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Menin and Kite, *An Architecture of Invitation*, p. 93.

## **The British Library and the Manor Road Libraries**

**M.J. Long, OBE, partner, Long & Kentish (architects); previously with Colin St John Wilson & Partners (1965 - 96)**

The British Library was probably the last public building of its kind to be built in Britain. The architects, Colin St. John Wilson and Partners, helped to write the brief, designed the building down to furniture and lighting detail, and redesigned over the years as dictated by the constraints of annual construction budgets. And yet, through all that, it was agreed by all involved that the building was to be designed to last for 250 years. A significant ingredient in that sort of life expectancy was the use of first class natural materials – stone, brick, and hardwood – that would improve with age.

The choice of natural materials is, of course, more than just a maintenance issue. The buildings in Cambridge, done when Wilson was working in association with Leslie Martin (at Caius and Peterhouse colleges) demonstrated the tactile pleasures of being surrounded with natural materials, and the importance for people in inhabiting an environment scaled to themselves. It is at the heart of a kind of architectural design championed by some of Wilson's heroes: Alvar Aalto, Jorn Utzon, Louis I. Kahn, and Giancarlo De Carlo. Later in his career, Wilson championed this thread of twentieth century design in his book "The Other Tradition" (of Modernism).

The Manor Road group of libraries in Oxford, designed by Leslie Martin in association with Colin St. John Wilson, and with Patrick Hodgkinson, has an important place in the development of these architectural ideas. Cleverly located at different levels, each library has its own approach, its own entrance, its own "ground level". No lions here. The reader is invited in, not "put down". This, and many other ideas developed at Manor Road were very important in the subsequent evolution of the British Library.

An important image for all of us working on the British Library was the painting “St. Jerome in his Study” by Antonello da Massina (National Gallery, London). Partly enclosed by a piece of furniture that helps focus the saint’s attention on his task, he nevertheless can look up to long sunlit views. This combination: a carefully designed desk light that provides a focussing pool of light, the relief of a long view, and the ability to sense a cloud crossing the sun, are all important aspects of both buildings. And in both, the long term study places are defined by the calm of square rooms with their focussed centre of gravity. These are not the square rooms of the Beaux Arts, with central axes; these squares are entered at the corners, creating a calm perimeter and a series of busy entrance corners where active and dynamic connections can be made to the rest of the world.

## **Time, timelessness and the St Cross Building**

### **Jeremy Melvin, architectural historian**

The St Cross building and I are the same age, but I have a more allusive affinity with it in relation to time. Taken to see it as an eight-year-old by admiring architect parents, I saw, or thought I saw, the minute hand of a clock move. The illusion has never recurred on subsequent visits but it has stayed with me, implying that the building strives both to stand outside time and to respond to changes over time.

Leslie Martin and Sandy Wilson sought this balance between timelessness and chronological time, as a part of a wider concern they shared to explore architecture’s role as a conveyor, not just a container, of knowledge. The opportunity to design a library for Oxford University (which has always rejected architecture’s claims to academic status), for a combination of old and new libraries, for traditional and modern forms of knowledge, could focus their efforts into a real project. To establish architecture’s credentials as a form of

academic knowledge it would have to address both the timelessness of certain forms of knowledge as well as constant change and contingency in the constitution and manifestation of knowledge.

The architects' response exploits architecture's unique capability to use space as an analogy for time, and they combined that with what became one of the most common compositional motifs of post-war British architecture. Consisting of a stack of horizontal planes, this device is deceptively simple. But while owing something to Le Corbusier's famous *Maison Dom-ino* diagram, those planes are not necessarily the same size or shape, and may not be stacked vertically or at regular height intervals. Moreover, those planes might have a larger enclosed volume inserted within them, as Martin himself did at the project which has some claim to be the origin, the Royal Festival Hall. [It is also present in the Pompidou Centre, where vast uninterrupted floorplates are linked by the external escalator].

St Cross takes this one stage further. While the planes could, theoretically, continue endlessly and evenly, at certain points there are features that create locally specific instances. These include the external stair, a reference to the archetypal 'sacred' space, but above all the reading room ceilings, which both refer to the archetype of the aedicule which defines part of a larger space for a particular purpose, and adapt Alvar Aalto's and Louis Kahn's use of light as an almost sculptural device. Time might flow to infinity, but it needs concentration and focus to foster freshly thought insights that may themselves expand knowledge. These aedicular instances are an equivalent of my childhood experience of seeing time itself accelerate: moments that subjective impressions intensify.



## **5. Recent developments**

Although this booklet is a celebration of the origins of the Bodleian Law Library, there have been some more recent innovations and changes which are worth noting.

### **Freshfields IT Training Room and the compulsory first year Legal Research and Mooting Course**

In 1999 the requirements for the training of lawyers were amended, and law schools had to demonstrate some legal research teaching as part of the undergraduate degree. At that time, law firm Freshfields decided to provide funds to both Oxford and Cambridge law schools to establish a purpose built teaching facility, and ongoing funding for staff to teach the course. At Oxford, the space on the north east corner of the first level was refurbished into a teaching room with 25 computers at desks, opened in 2002, with appropriate equipment to assist teaching, such as a data projector, screens, etc. A new post was created which has evolved to the Legal Research Librarian, and an Australia law librarian, Prue Presser, was appointed to develop and introduce the new first year compulsory Legal Research Skills programme. The programme continues, and has evolved; it is still compulsory, but the assessment is now done by students participating in a compulsory moot in Trinity term. The teaching concentrates on the legal information skills needed by students, using books together with e-resources.



## **Weekend opening**

In 1999 law firm Lovells Durrant White proposed funding extended weekend opening of the Law Library. At that time the Bodleian was centrally funded to be open from 9am to 1pm on Saturdays, year round, and was closed on Sundays. This was then the norm in the Bodleian Group of libraries. The move to extend term time opening on Saturdays to 5pm, and Sundays from 11am to 5pm, was an innovative experiment. After a year 's trial the project was deemed so successful that weekend opening was extended several times, from 8 weekends per term to 9 weekends, and then the hours were changed to be open until 6pm on both days, opening later (10am) on Saturdays. The push for longer hours continues, and from our 51<sup>st</sup> year, 2014 – 2015, the hours will be from 10am to 7pm on both days. Usage continues to be steady, with increases in numbers in some years, but no falls. Hogan Lovells continue to actively support this program.

## **Donor funding**

Perhaps the greatest change in funding for the law library started in the 1990s, when the Faculty of Law, who had never created their own collection, unlike other Faculties such as English, undertook to contribute to the shortfall in central funding for the collections. It approached law firms and others to see if there would be some means to help improve the library materials allocation. The donors initially were Freshfields (Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer), who supported the creation of a computer teaching room, and the staff to run it, and Lovells (Hogan Lovells) who sponsored the weekend opening. These schemes, started from 1999, are still running, and the loyalty of the donors has helped the law library weather financial storms. In the 2000s these firms were joined by Baker & McKenzie (materials, especially eresources), Slaughter and May (teaching projects and materials), Weil Gotschal Manches and Allan Myers QC. This support has proven invaluable, and has helped us enhance services and

collections in the past 10 - 15 years well beyond our previous capabilities.

## **Official Papers move to the St Cross Building**

In 1990 it was first mooted that the best place for the Official Papers collection would be with the law collection. Having these two collections in separate buildings meant that the Law Library had to purchase its own copies of Bills, Acts and Hansard, to meet the research needs of the lawyers, whilst the legal deposit copies were in the Rad Cam.

Thus in 2009 planning commenced to bring the Official Papers collection into the Law Library from the basement of the Radcliffe Camera, where it had been located for over a century.

This involved clearing out a collection of Bodleian Bibliographies that had been placed in the basement 'temporarily' in the 1980s. In place of the gloomy ground floor which was off limits to users, gleaming new white rolling stacks were installed, and the Official Papers team arranged the transfer of over 2.5 linear kilometres of parliamentary papers, UN materials, and other collections to the St Cross Building.

As a result of excellent preparation and planning, the transfer went smoothly, and the users of the OP collections were very pleased to have easy access in well-lit conditions to these resources. The OP staff, Hannah Chandler, Andrew Milner and Julie Alden, also moved to the St Cross Building, and have become an integral part of the Law Library, complementing our collections, allowing de-duplication of materials, and adding a new dimension to the range of services we are now able to offer our readers.

## Graduate Trainees

The BLL decided in 2006 to become involved in the Graduate Trainee programme of the Bodleian Libraries. It was one way of ensuring that we would gain from the ideas and enthusiasm of recent graduates, and we could give back to the profession. There are few locations in the UK where graduate trainees are able to work in law libraries. We are very proud that a number of our trainees, having completed their Masters in Information/library Studies, have gone on to work in law libraries.

This overview is from one of our recent trainees, Francesca Marsden, 2012-13: Since 2007, the Bodleian Law Library has offered two one year-long positions for budding librarians as part of the Bodleian Libraries Graduate Trainee Scheme. The scheme, which follows the SCONUL Code of Practice, offers approximately twelve places per year across various Bodleian Libraries. Trainees experience a wide variety of tasks within their work, and attend training sessions, visits to other libraries and workshops throughout the year. It is a great opportunity for trainees to see whether the information world really is for them. Whichever libraries trainees end up in, the scheme guarantees *'a solid grounding in core library activities and an excellent start to your career in the library and information profession.'* At the Bodleian Law Library, one position is within the Information Resources department (mostly behind-the-scenes work, processing material), and the other is in the Academic Services department (more front line, dealing with incoming requests and enquiries). The work of the roles is different, but both spend equal time on the hub that is the enquiry desk.

A series of quotations from our trainees will be placed on the project website.

## **European Documentation Centre**

### **Margaret Watson, EDC Librarian**

In 1983, I discovered that there was a European Documentation Centre (EDC) in the Bodleian. During my last term as a postgraduate student at UCL a small card had appeared on the notice board advertising a post running the EDC in the Exeter University Library. “Would suit a linguist with law library experience” are the words I remember, and as a classicist with A levels in French and German who had shelved books almost every day for a year in the Geldart Law Library in St Anne’s, it seemed worth a shot. To my delight, I got the job, and I made sure I visited the Oxford EDC to see how it was organized here before I went west (to Devon).

In those days the Bodleian EDC was in the basement of the Radcliffe Camera, and managed by the dynamic Stephen Richard, Deputy to the Keeper of Printed Books, whom I was to encounter later on at national EDC events. By the time I returned to Oxford in the 1990s, the EDC had moved to the Bodleian Law Library, and Elizabeth Martin (now the Librarian of Nuffield) was in charge. I was lucky enough to become her successor in 2001.

The Bodleian has had an EDC since 1963 and holds some EDC material from the 1950s. It is a neutral collection of the official publications of the European Union intended to support research on the EU and in the field of European integration. Before the development of the internet, access to the printed documents was vital. It is not surprising that in the early years there was some competition to house Oxford’s EDC, with St Antony’s apparently considering putting in a bid that was very effectively seen off by the Bodleian in 1977!

One of the original conditions attached to EDC status by the European Commission was that ‘Professors interested in European affairs’ would assume academic responsibility for the EDC. However

as Stephen Richard noted, 'the condition of academic responsibility [for EDCs] is not met in the majority of cases, as in Oxford - - the de facto responsibility lies with the Libraries concerned, aided by interested academics'. This is still the case.

A current EDC requirement is the provision of a professional librarian to manage the collection. It is this provision, rather than the actual documentation, that is now the most important aspect of an EDC: current publications are available online, but the expertise of the staff, the official link with the EU Institutions and engagement with the international network of information professionals are all essential to making the Library a centre of excellence in this field. During the Long Vacation of 1991, the EDC moved to the St Cross Building and became part of the Law Library. This was in response to the University's development of European studies, an area that continues to grow. 2013 saw the 50th anniversary of the EDC network; it was also the 50th anniversary of the Bodleian's EDC.

## 6. The Future

The Bodleian Law Library Institutional Memory Project comes at a time of change for the Bodleian Law Library. In 2015-2016, a major refurbishment of the St Cross Building will take place.

The greatest change in the use of the St Cross Building in its first 50 years has been the growth of the requirements of the Law Faculty. In 1964, the Faculty Secretaries occupied two offices in the Building. In 2012, the Law Faculty took over the area that had once been the library of the Institute of Economics and Statistics, and in 2015-16 they will expand into the three library wings. The ground floor will be extended into the current IECL area, to enable full use of the space by the Law Library, with the installation of additional rolling stacks to retain material on site and with ongoing full open access.

As a result, the Law Library will need to send some of the law collection to the University's off-site Book Storage Facility at Swindon. The least used paper reports and journals which are available online will be selected.

There will be noticeable enhancements to the library as a result of the works; it will have an enhanced entrance, more open and welcoming to the readers, with staff stationed at a counter/desk located in front of the current catalogue drawers, which will be removed to safe storage. The area on Level One will be upgraded and the collections re-housed. The collections will be rearranged where practical. New style seating areas and several small discussion rooms will be created. In this way it is hoped that the law library will continue to reflect its

history, but also accommodate some of the changing needs of its readers, well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Law Library will continue to provide core research support to our broad readership, and to innovate and change our approach to meet the challenges of the ever-changing world of technology and information sources. We are located in an iconic 1960s building, but we are not constrained by it, and we will continue to meet the varied information needs of our readers, now and into the future.



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