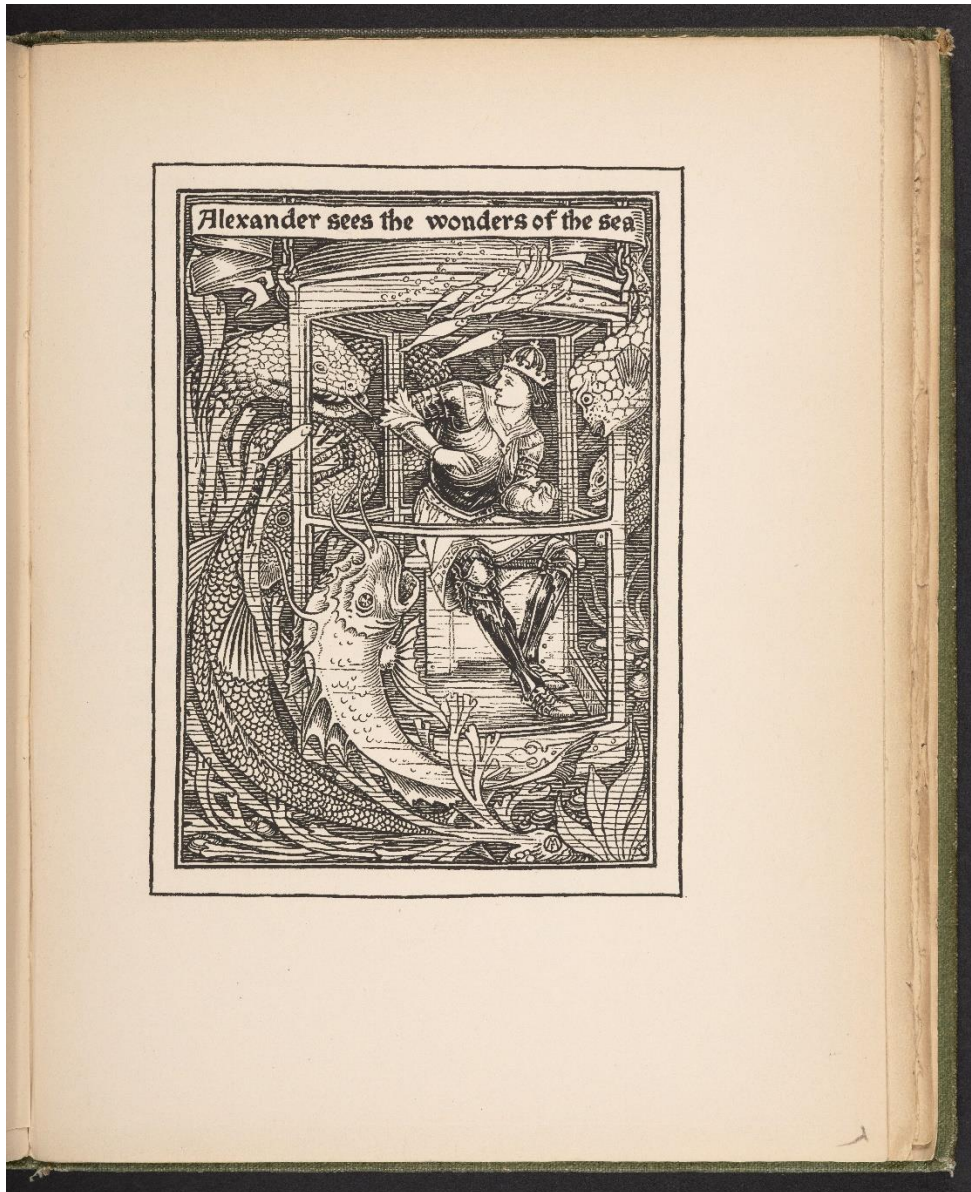


# CILIP Rare Books and Special Collections Newsletter

Issue 120  
November 2022



*Alexander in his submarine. The Story of Alexander. Told by Robert Steele, & drawn by Fred Mason. (London: David Butt, 1894). Image courtesy of The British Library.*

Issued November 2022

© CILIP Rare Books and Special Collections Group and contributors.

ISSN 0959 1656

## Contents

Editors' notes	1
Chair's update	2
News from the Committee	3
Conference report and reflections: Oxford 2022	5
Beyond the Binary: Performing Gender Then and Now	7
Reviews	13
Exhibitions	15
Events & notices	17
Committee members	20

## Editors' notes

This month we say farewell to Karen Brayshaw as one of our editors with many thanks for her tireless efforts over a number of years to keep the RBSCG Community informed and entertained with this *Newsletter*. We wish her a happy retirement from the RBSCG Committee, but know that she will be very busy with her other commitments – not least providing us with an article!

In this autumn issue, we have some reflections on the first in-person conference of the Group since 2019, a very welcome opportunity to come together in person and catch up. The theme of the conference, 'Are You Sitting Comfortably', was an important opportunity to discuss and discover ways in which we must surface untold stories and question our potentially exclusionary traditional methods. Christine Davies and Rhian Isaac offer insightful reflections on their experiences of the conference held at St Hilda's College, Oxford, 7-9 September 2022. In her update, our Chair Lucy Evans explains the plan for future in-person and online conferences.

In keeping with the theme of marginalised histories, Karen moves from editor to contributor and tells us about the inspiring 'Beyond the Binary' project taking place at the University of Kent.

In our next issue (Spring 2023), we will be introducing a new feature, "Treasures in Focus", highlighting magnificent items from collections around the UK (and dare we hope for around the world?!). We look forward to reading about the varied and amazing treasures that exist in your institutions! Please get in touch if you would like to contribute.

**Jane Gallagher & Katherine Krick-Pridgeon**

**Newsletter Co-editors**

[Jane.gallagher@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Jane.gallagher@manchester.ac.uk)

[k.a.krick@gmail.com](mailto:k.a.krick@gmail.com)

## Chair's update

I am pleased to write this Chair's letter two months after our first in-person conference since 2019 took place in Oxford (where does the time go!). Over eighty delegates met over three days at the beautiful St. Hilda's College, Oxford, to discuss the theme *Are you sitting comfortably?* The conference aimed to arm delegates with the tools to tell new stories with existing collections, to collect to tell untold stories, and to meet uncomfortable stories head on. Speakers included J C Niala (University of Cambridge), Helen Williams (Library of Mistakes), Waseem Farooq (The Aga Khan University), Danny Millum (University of Sussex), Jess Starr and Ed Lake (Jarndyce), Maddy Smith (The British Library), Sian Prosser (Royal Astronomical Society), Kate Bernstein, and Erin Farley (Dundee Libraries). The delegates also enjoyed a session with [Uncomfortable Oxford](#)<sup>1</sup> and various visits around Oxford.

It felt wonderful to be back with colleagues, listening to interesting and thought-provoking papers and having the chance to discuss and comment face-to-face. Being able to socialise and reignite old friendships gave the conference a warm and collegiate atmosphere, and it was a pleasure to organise. A great deal of thanks should be extended to Jill Dye (now of National Museums Scotland) and Rich Wragg, who now takes on the role of Conference Coordinator. The feedback survey was also heartening to read, with 92% rating the conference "very good" and 8% "good".

We are conscious, as a committee, that an in-person conference is a significant financial commitment for delegates and their institutions. Although we were able to offer several bursary places this year (and some reports are included in this *Newsletter*), we want to ensure we are reaching as many people as possible. Following the success of the 2021 online conference, organised by Bob MacLean, we have decided to offer an online conference in 2023 and return to an in-person conference in 2024. This is very much an experiment in the first instance and we will be very keen to hear what Group members think. With this in mind, please look out for a survey in 2023 which will canvass opinions about future events – both conferences and day events. We are also always keen to hear from people with ideas for future conferences and day events. Recent suggestions in the feedback survey from the 2022 conference include equality, diversity and inclusion, bookselling, access and imaging, and highlighting non-western collections.

We also have several long-standing committee members standing down at the end of this year. Karen Brayshaw hands over the editorship of this newsletter to Katherine Krick-Pridgeon (in conjunction with Jane Gallagher). This is Karen's second stint on the committee, in which she also organised a very successful conference at Canterbury Cathedral, and we are grateful that she has been a part of things for so long. Christine Megowan, Day Events Coordinator, steps down after several years on the committee; she also organised an excellent conference in Cardiff in 2019. We are grateful that Christine will continue her involvement with the Bibliographic Standards Committee. Our treasurer, Dunstan Speight, will also be stepping down at the end of the year. We have been extremely lucky to have him looking after the Group finances over the last few years. Dunstan has kindly agreed to mentor the new Treasurer in 2023. We would be delighted to receive [applications](#) for the roles of Day Events Coordinator and Treasurer by 30<sup>th</sup> November.<sup>2</sup>

Please do get in touch if you have anything you would like to discuss, or anything you feel the RBSCG could support you and your institution with.

**Lucy Evans**  
RBSCG Chair  
[Chair.RBSCG@CILIP.org.uk](mailto:Chair.RBSCG@CILIP.org.uk)

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.uncomfortableoxford.co.uk/](http://www.uncomfortableoxford.co.uk/)

<sup>2</sup> [www.cilip.org.uk/members/group\\_content\\_view.asp?group=201312&id=690468](http://www.cilip.org.uk/members/group_content_view.asp?group=201312&id=690468)

# News from the Committee

## Join the RBSCG Committee

We have two vacancies coming up on our committee: Honorary Treasurer and Day Events Organiser. Full details are available [online](#); below are a few snippets of the role descriptions and skills and experience.<sup>3</sup> To apply, please send expressions of interest (of around 200 words) outlining your suitability for the role to the [Secretary](#) by 5PM on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November.<sup>4</sup> For the role of Treasurer, please also provide at least one professional reference.

### **Honorary Treasurer**

The Hon. Treasurer is responsible for the financial governance and administration of the Group i.e., “sound management of its finances, maintaining proper accounting records, and complying with financial management regulations of CILIP Finance Team”.

#### ***Skills and experience required***

##### ***Essential***

- The Hon Treasurer must be numerate, methodical and well organised with an eye for detail.
- They need good oral and written communication skills and confidence in dealing with a range of people.
- They need to be able to manage confidential and sensitive information and records.
- We use Excel spreadsheets for the accounts, cash books and other management documents, so experience of this software is required.
- In order for them to be able to assist with and have insight into the wider activities of the Committee, they must be a current member of the Group and have current or recent experience of working with special collections.

##### ***Desirable***

- Previous experience of accounts work would be helpful but is not required as the previous Treasurer will offer full training and support.

### **Day Events Organiser**

The Day Events Organiser coordinates single-day and partial-day events relevant to rare books and special collections. Outside of its annual study conference, the Rare Books and Special Collections Group organises several smaller events each year, both online and in-person. Events may include tours, workshops, lectures, discussion sessions, and social events. These events provide members with networking and professional development opportunities.

#### ***Skills and experience required***

##### ***Essential***

- The Day Events Organiser must have a keen sense of the key issues within the rare books and special collections community and be able to identify topics that will provide relevant training opportunities and initiate constructive conversations and debates between our members.
- They need to have good oral and written communication skills and confidence in dealing with a range of people.
- In order for them to be able to assist with and have insight into the wider activities of the Committee, they must be a current member of the Group and have current or recent experience of working with special collections.

---

<sup>3</sup> [www.cilip.org.uk/members/group\\_content\\_view.asp?group=201312&id=690468](http://www.cilip.org.uk/members/group_content_view.asp?group=201312&id=690468)

<sup>4</sup> Email [Secretary.RBSCG@cilip.org.uk](mailto:Secretary.RBSCG@cilip.org.uk)

### ***Desirable***

- The ability to approach people to lead or participate in various types of events. Alternatively, they must be willing to assess and follow up on suggestions for future events.

## Receiving Our Monthly Bulletin

Did you know that our secretary, Alex Kither, sends out a monthly bulletin with news, information, and the odd job advert relating to the world of rare books and special collections?

If you haven't been receiving it, please go to <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/youremailpreferences> and when completing the form, under "Special Interest Groups", ensure you have ticked "Rare Books & Special Collections Group".

## Become a Book Reviewer

We're looking for more reviewers! Would you like to receive a free book on a subject relating to the world of rare books and special collections? If you have seen a recently published book you would like to review, or would be interested in reviewing books for the RBSCG newsletter in general, please email the editors (emails above under "Editors' notes"). You will be given clear guidance and a deadline for publication. Thank you!

## Missing Books Register Reminder

The Committee would like to remind all members about the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers' Missing Books Register. This platform is free of charge and enables anyone to report and register stolen or missing rare books and antiquarian material. It's also possible to search for specific items in the database to inform any book purchases or sales.

Find the Register and more information at: <https://missingbooksregister.org>.



# Conference Report: Oxford 2022

Widening participation. Inspiring creatives. Diversifying the stories we tell. These were some of the themes explored in this year's RBSCG Annual Study Conference and I applaud the RBSCG committee for designing a programme with such political weight and urgency. Archives and libraries, as we know, are not neutral spaces and bear all the hallmarks of white supremacy and addressing this in our collections and current practice should be a priority. Given my recent appointment to a special collections position at the University of Kent, I was immensely grateful to receive an RBSCG bursary in order to attend this conference as it provided incredible opportunities to meet and learn from more experienced professionals as well as inform my own practice ahead of the new academic year.

With an impressive programme of talks, workshops, college, and library visits, this year's conference 'Are you sitting comfortably?' was designed to confront some uncomfortable topics whilst ensuring



*The conference drinks reception held at the Divinity School. © Jane Gallagher.*

that we, as delegates, still felt safe, respected, and included. Not only is this a difficult brief, but a standard high impossible to uphold consistently. I certainly struggled a little during the Uncomfortable Oxford sessions which revolved around group discussion and participation because – as a newbie – my imposter syndrome jerked at the inevitable exposure of my own ignorance. I think it possible that other delegates were also caught off-guard, but I know the committee will have registered this and I personally found a fortunate remedy in the kindness and empathy shown by the others in my group. Our group leader, too, was wonderfully engaging and I hope to have an opportunity to go on an Uncomfortable Oxford tour sometime! Certainly, kindness and empathy were displayed throughout the conference by the community as a whole – you are a lovely bunch – and the committee had taken care to give us plenty of opportunity for relaxed networking and socialising. Our drinks reception in the Divinity School hosted by Richard Ovenden was particularly swish.

On a more serious note, I must emphasise how inspiring and informative *all* the papers and lightning talks were. I cannot describe them all here in depth, but those given by JC Niala, Maddy Smith, and Tabitha Tuckett reverberated particularly with me, as they pertained respectively to community engagement, exhibition curation, and the management of volunteers. JC opened the conference by playfully yet provocatively asking us to consider both who was and who was not in the room. She then shared the outreach she did for the Museum of Oxford, demonstrating how community engagement at an individual and institutional level can be ethical, effective, and sustainable. Maddy talked about the British Library's *Breaking the news* exhibition, and I was struck by the amount of labour that ensued from her team's curatorial choices, such as the securing of so many copyright permissions to enable grassroot voices to come through. It was also good to learn how visitor feedback led to additional content warnings being added throughout the exhibition's run. Both JC and Maddy emphasised how their projects developed organically beyond their original briefs in response to the stories, knowledge, and feelings shared by members of the public. Their process was not fixed, but fluid. They relinquished control in favour of collaboration – a theme brilliantly explored by Sian Prosser and Kate Bernstein too. Tabitha spoke about UCL's volunteer project that involved combing the online catalogue to identify hidden diversity in the collections, and

this spoke directly to my own priorities regarding diversity and discoverability. I was also inspired by how offering remote volunteering opportunities increased accessibility.

Visiting the different Oxford college libraries on the Thursday and Friday afternoons was a special treat and a great opportunity to talk to the staff about their diverse collecting policies and institutional politics. As a material girl with a penchant for Arts and Crafts aesthetics along with research interests in eighteenth-century print culture, my highlights involved monopolising Albin's *Natural History of Birds* (1738) at the Weston Library, and craning my neck to appreciate the beautiful ceiling of the Oxford Union Society Library – the latter particularly since our visit was very nearly occluded by an indignant events manager claiming the grounds were closed for a beer festival!



*One of the conference visits was the beautiful library of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. © Jane Gallagher.*

Reflecting back on the conference, I can certainly see how it has boosted my confidence and had an impact on my activities at work. I am currently liaising with our Student Support and Wellbeing team to develop a volunteering programme to enable neurodivergent students to engage with us, and pursuing lines of research for our upcoming Eliot exhibition that address the anti-Semitism in some of Eliot's work and acknowledge his role as an editor supporting the Caribbean Artist Movement. Most significantly, perhaps, I've added notes columns to my retrievals template in order to apply intersectionality when listing material for the various workshops we run at Kent's Special Collections and Archives. By intentionally diversifying the collections that we use in workshops, I hope we are one step closer to decolonizing our service. 'Are You Sitting Comfortably?' inspired and challenged me to confront the uncomfortable and make what changes I can. In other words, I can't wait for next year!

**Christine Davies**  
**Special Collections and Archives Coordinator, University of Kent**

## Conference Reflections

After years of virtual meetings, it was incredibly exciting to travel to Oxford and meet rare book colleagues in person at the RBSCG Conference. I was inspired by projects taking place around the country and the important work that librarians, and others, are carrying out to share untold and challenging stories. I was interested in how the British Library consulted with communities affected by events featured in their *Breaking the News* exhibition and collaborated with them to select items and write interpretation. This is an approach I would like to build into future projects. Discussions around the importance of adapting our language, building trust, and de-centring ourselves when working with communities were valuable when exploring how we amplify under-represented voices. Thank you to the organisers for such an enjoyable and thought-provoking conference and to Antiquates for sponsoring my bursary place.

**Rhian Isaac**  
**Senior Librarian: Special Collections, Leeds Libraries**

# Beyond the Binary: Performing Gender Then and Now

An AHRC collaborative research project at the University of Kent

The University of Kent Special Collections and Archives (SC&A) are in the middle of some exciting work focused on our music hall and pantomime collections. In 2016/17, the University purchased the remarkable pantomime collection of David Drummond, a prominent bookseller, collector of theatre and pantomime material, and a onetime actor. In 2018, this was followed with the arrival of a generous bequest from the estate of Max Tyler. Max was a retired banker and had served as archivist and historian to the British Music Hall Society. During his life, Max was an avid collector of all things relating to Music Hall. These two collections wonderfully complement each other and illustrate the close connections between music hall and pantomime.

The Max Tyler Music Hall collection includes books, song sheets, ephemera, research notes and many audio-visual recordings relating to the British music hall tradition. The material spans the late nineteenth century to the early twenty-first century.



*Items from the David Drummond Pantomime Collection  
©University of Kent*

The David Drummond Pantomime collection characterises the uniquely British tradition of pantomime from the late 1700s to the early twenty-first century. The collection is visual and includes rare photographs of performers, original artworks of amazing costume and set designs as well as items such as posters, flyers, scripts from a vast range of pantomimes, and much more: recently the box of comedy boobs had an airing in a live performance... but more about that later.

In 2021, we had applied for a small grant from UKRI AHRC to support some new collaborative research: we were thrilled to be successful in our application. We were delighted to work in partnership with our colleagues at the University's School of Arts, Professor Helen Brooks and Dr Oliver Double, with Helen being primary investigator and Olly and I acting as co-investigators. As a group, we were particularly interested in exploring representations of gender in popular performance, giving us the opportunity to contribute the discourse on gender expression and new audiences with diverse, inclusive histories of performance and gender.

***Beyond the Binary: Performing Gender Now and Then*** brought together students, public researchers, performance-makers, archivists, and academics to undertake original research into our historic music hall and pantomime archives. They worked together to unearth histories of gender play and presentation hidden within the collections.

The research team include people from all backgrounds and from across the gender spectrum, including queer, gender-fluid, and non-binary people. In March 2022, we held our inaugural research meeting online. We had originally planned to hold both in-person and virtual events to be as inclusive as we possibly could. Somewhat to our surprise, we found that most people wanted to attend the virtual sessions and so we adapted our programme to accommodate that. In SC&A we set



up an overhead camera, enabling us to show themed material live from some of our many exciting boxes of materials. We also worked with our Digital Imaging team to digitise several thousand items throughout the project and placed them in a shared space where researchers were able to access them at their own convenience. We also provided access to the British Newspaper Archive, to explore the histories of gender expression. The virtual session ran between March and July 2022.

You can find out about our academic aims and objectives [here](https://research.kent.ac.uk/beyondthebinary/456-2/).<sup>5</sup>



*Poster for Beyond the Binary project*

<sup>5</sup> <https://research.kent.ac.uk/beyondthebinary/456-2/>

## A day in Special Collections and Archives!

In July, we welcomed our researchers to SC&A for a Hands-on History study day. We started the day in our meeting room with a discussion about being a safe space and respect for each other (and coffee and cake – obviously!) We then demonstrated appropriate handling techniques, embarked on a behind-the-scenes tour, and spoke about caring for and listing archives. The group then split into pairs and we gave them boxes of selected material to list into a pro forma sheet based on the information for a catalogue record. This raised some interesting conversations, especially in relation to personal bias, what terminology is appropriate to use and thinking about the context and era from which an item originates. Everyone made a catalogue record which we then talked about, firstly in pairs and then as a wider group. This type of activity is something we will look to repeat in the coming year. We ended the day with a communal supper at the local pub where the conversations about the collections and the research continued.



*Beth Astridge preparing for the two-day event © University of Kent*

## A day at the Museum!



*Making a glamorous principle boy  
© University of Kent*

The next day we arrived at the [The Beaney](#), our local gallery, library and museum, who hosted our public engagement events.<sup>6</sup> This included an interactive pop-up exhibition, to show off the research and collections, with a family-friendly quiz and a creative craft table. Many children of all ages and abilities engaged with this activity (some parents too!) and they really loved creating the most amazing dames and principle boys. Everyone had an opportunity to record their own recollections of pantomime and to leave written feedback on some of the research questions. In the afternoon, we took over the Beaney's Learning Lab for an 'In Conversation' session exploring pantomime dames, principle boys, and male impersonators with Lottie Walker, Adam Borzone, Naomi Paxton, and Andre Vincent. Before the event, we sent the four practitioners copies of some material from the collections and asked them to bring something relating to their own performance. This was fantastic, illustrating how each one approached gender performance differently, be that in the way they walked, the voice they adopted, and the type of female or male they represented.

## The end...almost: Rowdy Dowdy Boys and Saucy Seaside Girls?

The final event of *Beyond the Binary* took place on Thursday 29 September, with a spectacular show, 'Rowdy Dowdy Boys and Saucy Seaside Girls' at the Gulbenkian Arts Centre, Canterbury. The event brought together music, comedy, and history. This new performance-lecture was co-created with non-binary folk performers, the Lunatraktors, and featured comedian Mark Thomas. The Lunatraktors created new work inspired by items in the collection, which were displayed on a screen

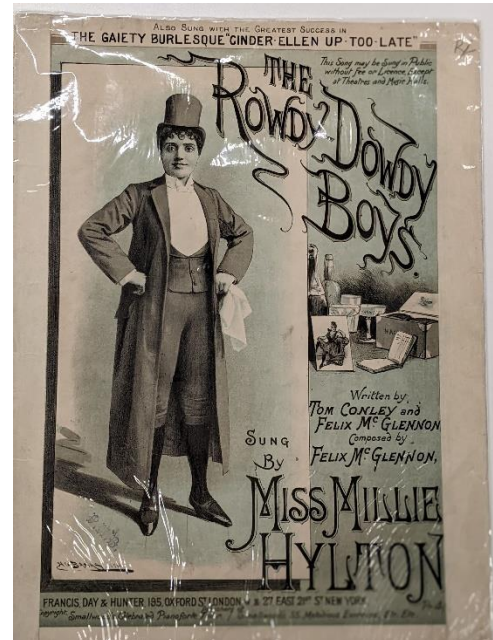
<sup>6</sup> <https://canterburymuseums.co.uk/the-beaney/>

and on the stage – and that brings us back to the comedy boobs, which were displayed on a specially made stand (adapted from a music stand) alongside one of the pantomime Dame costumes worn by Eddie Reindeer. Mark Thomas performed a hilarious piece he had written on the day – again inspired by the collections. After the live performance, a panel discussion took place during which we learned of the ways that the performers had experienced representations of themselves in music hall and pantomime performances during their early lives. These were positive and negative and now serve to inform their own work.

### Watch this space...

This year we were also delighted to succeed in our bid for the Archives Revealed Cataloguing Grants scheme. Our cataloguing project – *Oh Yes It Is!* – will be starting early in the New Year and will continue throughout 2023.

The funding award will make an enormous difference in how we make the David Drummond Pantomime collection accessible to everyone. We will unlock its potential for researchers, historians, performers, and all those interested in the history of theatre and pantomime. We can't wait to get started!



*Rowdy Dowdy Boys song sheet from the Max Tyler Collection © University of Kent*

**Karen Brayshaw**  
**Special Collections & Archives Manager, University of Kent**

## Reviews

**Alice Blackford Millea, *Oxford University: Stories from the Archives*. Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2022. 200 p., illus. ISBN: 9781851245710. £30.00.**

As one of the UK's oldest and most prestigious universities, Oxford boasts an impressive archive full of documents and artefacts from throughout its lengthy history. Alice Blackford Millea, one of the Assistant Keepers of Oxford University Archives, has carefully selected 52 items from the collections to tell the University's story in fascinating detail. Each item - from illuminated manuscripts to car headlamps - has been reproduced in beautiful colour photographs, making the reader feel as though they're in the Reading Room, poring over the material in person.

Interspersed throughout the chapters are insights into the process of finding these artefacts in the Archives, the founding of the Bodleian and the Archives, and the challenges associated with using such a collection as the basis for recounting the University's history. Millea notes that 'disputes and disagreements leave a bigger mark in archives than calm and harmony'. Her book covers several of these disputes, from large-scale riots to debates over students' dress and car ownership. However, as Millea argues, this means that Oxford's Archives present a fragmented history: many important administrative documents throughout Oxford's history were discarded after no longer being deemed useful, and other documents were produced with no intention of their being retained: sometimes the only record of an important event is a line in a paper that survived by pure chance.

One of the key themes explored in this book is the often fractious relationship between town and gown as the fortunes of the University and the town (later city) of Oxford grappled to maintain the balance of power. From its beginnings in the bloody St Scholastica's Day riots of 1355 to the much-less-dramatic resolution during the mid-twentieth century, Millea manages to shed light on these events through the use of documents such as charters of privilege. These sources show the power wielded by the University at various points in its history - conversely, the eighteenth century (a relatively quiet period for Oxford) is only represented by a few documents, most notably a brawl during Queen Anne's visit.

Another theme, which develops as Oxford's story reaches the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is that of social progress. From not admitting women as students to the appointment of Oxford's first female Vice-Chancellor in 2016, the University administration's attitudes towards women undergo an enormous change. Oxford's role in establishing higher education both within the UK and abroad is also covered, with an interesting insight into the University's presence in West Africa and its difficult relationship with the Colonial Office.

This book is a beautiful look into Oxford's past, and will definitely appeal to anyone who loves history, libraries, and archives.

**Clare Williams**  
**University of Nottingham**



**Myra Seaman, *Objects of affection: The Book and the household in late medieval England*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021. 284 p. (Manchester Medieval Literature and Culture). ISBN 9781526143815. £85**

*Objects of Affection* is a multidisciplinary and multifaceted study of a single codex: Oxford, Bodleian Library Manuscript Ashmole 61. Drawing on an exhaustive analysis of the forty-one verse texts comprised within its covers, it evidences how this book participated in providing “emotional literacy” to the members of a late fifteenth-century English household. Accordingly, in each of its main five chapters, Seaman brings to the fore material and textual evidence which exemplifies the role of Ashmole 61 as object of instruction, mercy, correction as well as a testimonial object and an object of liberation. This innovative approach complicates the view of the medieval household book as a passive medium for reading and accessing information. Likewise, it breaks with the idea that the act of reading was a unilateral and detached activity. Instead, Seaman’s analysis underscores the agency of this volume in shaping and enabling meaning and affective response amongst the inhabitants of a series of human and non-human ecologies (“the ecology of the late medieval English household, the ecology of the medieval book, the ecology of affective spirituality [and] the ecology of reading.” Seaman, 2021, p. 3).

Seaman’s dissection of this material is impressive and undoubtedly, of great value for those working within the disciplines of manuscript studies and the history of the book. On the other hand, it is also a meticulous study of a single codex, and those outside the field may struggle keeping up with this type of analysis or engaging with some of the lengthier sections dedicated, for example, to discussing Old English etymologies. There are only a handful of images included to illustrate some of the sections, although readers can refer to the online digitised version to help them follow the narrative. There is also a very useful table of contents in the appendix, listing the 41 texts by title and including details about quires, foliation, and watermarks.

Regardless of this complexity (for sure, more a sign of the gaps in my knowledge than a reflection of Seaman’s quality of writing), *Objects of Affection* is a fitting example of how to go about shaking up traditional approaches to the study of books. Indeed, one of the most interesting sections for me was the introduction to the volume, the place where Seaman takes time to expound the new materialist theories and concepts from emotion studies underpinning her research. This framework is remarkably similar to the one that I am building for my own investigations about emotional experiences in book exhibitions. It is a framework that helps us think about the emotional pull of the book, both as text and object, picking up on the potential of this affective agency to influence spaces, relationships, meanings, subjects, and stories. For this reason, I would encourage anyone working on Special Collections to take time to read the introduction to this book and reconsider the investigative value of the objects under our care in this fascinating new light.

**Susana Sanchez-Gonzalez  
University of Manchester**

# Exhibitions

## Cambridge

### Medieval Britain in Colour: 500 Years of Illuminated Manuscripts

“Medieval book artists - known as illuminators - were remarkable innovators. This focussed display charts the changing use of pigments and gold by British illuminators from tenth to the fifteenth century, looking at themes such as Discovery and Innovation, The Story of Blue, and Working with Gold.

The 14 manuscripts on display are drawn principally from our own collections and include the Macclesfield Psalter and the Peterborough Psalter. Exceptional loans from Cambridge colleges, including the second volume of the Bury Bible from the Parker Library, are also on display.

The manuscripts have been selected from over 70 that we have examined as part of an Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded research collaboration with Durham University, and several have their origins in our local region of East Anglia. The display showcases the pioneering contribution the Fitzwilliam’s heritage scientists and curators have made to manuscript studies.”

**Open Tuesday 18th October 2022 to Sunday 22nd January 2023; for more information, visit <https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/visit-us/exhibitions/medieval-britain-in-colour-500-years-of-illuminated-manuscripts>.**

**The Fitzwilliam Museum  
Trumpington Street  
Cambridge, CB2 1RB**

## London

### Alexander the Great: The Making of a Myth

People have been telling stories about Alexander the Great for over 2,000 years. He built a vast empire that stretched across the world from Greece to Northwest India. According to the legends, however, he was also the son of an Egyptian pharaoh who visited his mother in the form of a dragon, rode across the sky on a flying chariot, spoke with talking trees, and knocked on the door of Paradise (but they wouldn’t let him in).



*Alexander taming the man-eating stallion Bucephalus, in Johannes Hartlieb, Alexanderbuch (Strassburg, 1514) © The British Library*

The British Library is holding a major exhibition this winter that explores how the stories became ever more fantastical as they spread across the cultures of Europe, Asia and beyond. Using illuminated manuscripts, early printed books, engravings, and other artworks, it considers how the historical person was adapted to become the fictional hero everyone wanted him to be. It shows how the *Alexander Romance* was at the heart of this storytelling for over 1,000 years,

but how the legends also found their way into epic poetry, drama and opera, and are now being explored in novels, comics, films and even video games.

Alexander's premature death aged 32, his desire to create a multicultural state, questions around empire-building and colonisation, and the persistent speculation about his sexuality, all add to the relevance of this exhibition today.

Among the highlights from the British Library's own collections are:

- A 15-metre parchment scroll (13th century), purporting to be the text of a letter from Alexander to his tutor Aristotle
- 11 beautifully illustrated manuscripts (15th to 18th centuries) of Firdawsi's epic Persian poem, *The Shahnamah*
- Handel's autograph score for his opera *Alessandro* (1726)

There are also 35 items generously lent by libraries, museums and private collectors, such as:

- A beautifully-illustrated Greek *Alexander Romance* manuscript (14th century), in Britain for the first time (Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies, Venice)
- A suit of armour (1607) covered in illustrations of Alexander's battles in Asia, produced to inspire Prince Henry Frederick, son of James I & VI (Royal Armouries)
- A letter (1972) from the novelist Mary Renault in which she explains the inspiration for her character Bagoas, Alexander's eunuch slave and lover in *The Persian Boy* (St Hugh's College, Oxford)



*Alexander killing a dragon, in a manuscript of Firdawsi's Shahnamah (Isfahan, 1614) © British Library*

The exhibition is accompanied by a colour catalogue (hardback and paperback versions), and a full programme of events.

**Alexander the Great: The Making of a Myth will be open until 19 February 2023 at the British Library in London. More information, including ticket sales, on the British Library website at [bl.uk](https://www.bl.uk) (search: Alexander the Great).**

**Adrian S. Edwards, Co-curator, Alexander the Great  
The British Library**

## Saint Francis of Assisi

“Come face-to-face with one of history’s most inspirational and revered figures in the first major UK art exhibition to explore Saint Francis of Assisi’s life and legacy.

Presenting the art and imagery of Saint Francis (1182–1226) from the 13th century to today, this exhibition looks at why this saint is a figure of enormous relevance to our time due to his spiritual radicalism, commitment to the poor, and love of God and nature, as well as his powerful appeals for peace, and openness to dialogue with other religions.

From some of the earliest medieval panels, relics and manuscripts to modern-day films and a Marvel comic, the exhibition shines a light on how Saint Francis has captured the imagination of artists through the centuries, and how his appeal has transcended generations, continents and different religious traditions.

It brings together paintings from the National Gallery Collection by Sassetta, Botticelli, and Zurbarán with international loans including works by Caravaggio, Josefa de Óbidos, Stanley Spencer, Antony Gormley, Giuseppe Penone and an exciting new commission from Richard Long.

This exhibition is curated by Gabriele Finaldi, Director of the National Gallery and Joost Joustra, the Ahmanson Research Associate Curator in Art and Religion at the National Gallery.”

**Open 6 May – 30 July 2023; for more information, visit**

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/exhibitions/saint-francis-of-assisi>.

**The National Gallery  
Trafalgar Square, London  
WC2N 5DN**

## Treason: People, Power & Plot

**Discover the history of the most serious crime that you can commit**

‘Treason: People, Power & Plot’ is a major new exhibition from The National Archives on the history of treason since 1352. Opening on 5 November 2022 and closing on 6 April 2023, the exhibition brings iconic and unknown archival documents to life, including the original Treason Act and the Monteagle Letter that tipped off the Gunpowder Plot.

From the most famous treason trials such as Guy Fawkes, Anne Boleyn and Charles I, to the cook who poisoned the porridge and the young girl tried as a witch, the exhibition showcases nearly 700 years of treasonous history.”

For more information, visit <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/treason/>.

**The National Archives  
Kew, Richmond  
TW9 4DU**



## Manchester

### Transitions in Print

Revealing secrets of the European printing revolution.

The Rylands has one of the world's greatest collections of 15th-century European printing. For over 100 years, we have used innovative technologies to examine these earliest printed artefacts.

In this exhibition, explore how scientists, historians and imaging specialists are joining forces to develop tools and new ways of looking at these historic documents using cutting-edge techniques, giving us new insights into our earliest printed heritage.

Keep an eye on our events programme for opportunities to see technologies used to investigate our collections in action and demonstrations of our printing press.



*St Christopher Woodcut (c.1430s) Ref. 17249.2. © University of Manchester Library.*

#### What's on display

- Discover how we uncovered new information on a print of St Christopher which is one of the earliest produced in Europe.
- Examine an Indulgence, printed in the 1450s by Johann Gutenberg, to see if you can find details that are being studied by pattern recognition technology.
- Uncover the mystery of a woodblock thought to be a rare survival from the 15th century.
- See a printed copy of St John's Apocalypse as old as the Gutenberg Bible.

# TRANSITIONS IN PRINT

**12 October 2022  
– 18 March 2023**

Revealing secrets of the  
European printing revolution

**Transitions in Print:** is open to the public at the John Rylands Research Institute and Library until **18 March 2023** during public opening hours. For more information, visit [www.library.manchester.ac.uk/rylands/visit/events/transitions-in-print](http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/rylands/visit/events/transitions-in-print).

# Events & Notices

## UCL Special Collections events

**Wednesday 23 November** 5-6pm ONLINE

### [Legacies Of Eugenics: A New Digital Collection](#)

Professors Joe Cain and Marius Turda with Erika Delbecque and Nazlin Bhimani

Free. Open to all. Book [on Eventbrite](#).

Joe Cain (UCL) and Marius Turda (Oxford Brookes) will be joined by Erika Delbecque (UCL Head Of Rare Books) and Nazlin Bhimani (UCL Institute Of Education Research Support and Special Collections Librarian) to discuss the context of a project to digitise publications held by UCL Special Collections from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century produced by the Galton Laboratory For National Eugenics alongside publications held by the Institute Of Education from early educational psychologists. Examples of collection items will be shown live online.

**Wednesday 30 November** 5.30-6.30pm IN PERSON (UCL Bloomsbury)

### [Early Modern mathematics books](#)

Dr. Yelda Nasifoglu, UCL Research Institute For Collections Visiting Fellow

Free. Open to all. Book [on Eventbrite](#).

Our second visiting fellow's talk is given by Dr. Yelda Nasifoglu who will talk about who sold, bought and read Early Modern mathematics books, with examples from UCL Special Collections on display.

**Monday 5 December** 5.30-7pm IN PERSON (UCL Bloomsbury)

### **Re-imagining The Musical Bandstand**

Free. Open to all. Booking link coming soon.

Artist and musician Mataio Austin Dean, musicians from Bentham's Body Ensemble and Slade Fine Art student Chantal Goulder will talk about their project for UCL Music Futures (Institute Of Advanced Studies) looking at the history of the musical bandstand and outdoor musical performance. The musicians will perform examples of the music selected for the project, and maps and other collection items from UCL Special Collections' [London History Collection](#) will be on display, together with the art piece commissioned for the project.

[@UCLSpecColl](#)<sup>7</sup>

## Sandars Lectures 2022-2022

### **"Incunabula in Cambridge: European heritage and global dissemination**

The development of printing in Western Europe was not just a technological innovation; its profound social and economic impact ushered into the Continent the transition from a medieval to an early modern society, a phenomenon which was analysed in different ways by Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *L'apparition du livre* (Paris 1958) and by Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (CUP, 1979). For the last twenty years, an international network of scholars and librarians coordinated by Professor Cristina Dondi has been uncovering the historical evidence for the seismic impact of the European printing revolution preserved in the many thousands of surviving incunabula (books printed between the 1450s and 1500). Harnessing the tools of the digital revolution is also allowing us to reconstruct virtually, and understand, the dispersal and formation of

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://twitter.com/UCLSpecColl>

European and American book collections over the intervening centuries. Incunabula in Cambridge libraries, including Sandars' own collection, will be set in the wider context of where they came from, and their connections with other collections around the world.<sup>8</sup>

**Tuesday 22 November:** [Books from the suppressed religious institutions of Europe: Mapping the dispersals](#)

**Wednesday 23 November:** [Samuel Sandars as a collector of incunabula](#)

**Thursday 24 November:** [Reassessing the European Printing Revolution, forty years after Eisenstein](#)

#### **About the speaker**

Cristina Dondi is Professor of Early European Book Heritage, and Oakeshott Senior Research Fellow in the Humanities at Lincoln College, University of Oxford. She is also Secretary of the Consortium of European Research Libraries. During the period 2014-2019 she was the Principal Investigator of the 15cBOOKTRADE Project, funded by the European Research Council, whose results were shared with the general public in an exhibition held in Venice in 2018/19 and now online at <https://www.printingrevolution.eu/>. She is the editor of *Printing R-Evolution and Society 1450-1500. Fifty Years that Changed Europe* (Venice: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2020), and co-editor (with D. Raines and R. Sharpe) of *How the Secularization of Religious Houses Transformed the Libraries of Europe, 16th–19th Centuries* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022)."

**Cambridge University Library  
West Road, Cambridge  
CB3 9DR**

## **The 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Stewart v Somerset**

Dunstan Speight, Librarian of The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, has written a four-piece blog series celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Stewart v Somerset (1772). The series uses manuscripts in the Lincoln's Inn collection detailing the case of James Somerset, an enslaved African, that eventually led to his freedom and was a contributory decision to the eventual abolition of slavery in the British Empire.<sup>9</sup>

[Chapter 1: James Somerset](#)

[Chapter 2: The Case – Stewart vs Somerset](#)

[Chapter 3: The Decision and Legacy of Stewart vs Somerset](#)

[Chapter 4: Dido Belle's Letter, 1786](#)

---

<sup>8</sup> [www.lib.cam.ac.uk/sandars/sandars-lectures-2021-2022](http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/sandars/sandars-lectures-2021-2022)

<sup>9</sup> [www.lincolnsinn.org.uk/news/?tags=261](http://www.lincolnsinn.org.uk/news/?tags=261)



ANTIQUATES  
FINE & RARE BOOKS



**bruynzeel**

**creating space** for a healthy planet

**FIRSTS**

LONDON'S RARE BOOK FAIR

**ECOSPACE**

Harwell

 **POLYGON** group company



BY APPOINTMENT TO  
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN  
PURVEYORS OF RARE BOOKS  
& MANUSCRIPTS  
MAGGS BROS. LTD LONDON

**MAGGS BROS. LTD.**

RARE BOOKS & MANUSCRIPTS

48 BEDFORD SQUARE · LONDON · WC1B 3DR

T: +44 (0) 207 493 7160 WWW.MAGGS.COM



## CILIP RBSCG Committee Members

November 2022

<b>Name</b>	<b>Committee role</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Lucy Evans	Chair & Conference Co-ordinator	<a href="mailto:lucy.grace.evans@gmail.com">lucy.grace.evans@gmail.com</a>
Sarah Cusk	Vice Chair	<a href="mailto:sarah.cusk@lincoln.ox.ac.uk">sarah.cusk@lincoln.ox.ac.uk</a>
Stephanie Curran	Digital Champion & Web Editor	<a href="mailto:snk.curran@gmail.com">snk.curran@gmail.com</a>
Erika Delbecque	Equality & Diversity Champion	<a href="mailto:erika.delbecque@gmail.com">erika.delbecque@gmail.com</a>
Jane Gallagher	Newsletter Co-editor	<a href="mailto:Jane.Gallagher@manchester.ac.uk">Jane.Gallagher@manchester.ac.uk</a>
Tanya Kirk	CILIP Liaison	<a href="mailto:Tanya.Kirk@bl.uk">Tanya.Kirk@bl.uk</a>
Alex Kither	Honorary Secretary	<a href="mailto:Alex.Kither@bl.uk">Alex.Kither@bl.uk</a>
Katherine Krick-Pridgeon	Newsletter Co-editor	<a href="mailto:k.a.krick@gmail.com">k.a.krick@gmail.com</a>
Robert (Bob) MacLean	Rare Books in Scotland (RBIS) Liaison	<a href="mailto:robert.maclean@glasgow.ac.uk">robert.maclean@glasgow.ac.uk</a>
Iris O'Brien	Chair of the Bibliographic Standards Committee	<a href="mailto:Iris.O'Brien@bl.uk">Iris.O'Brien@bl.uk</a>
Dunstan Speight	Honorary Treasurer & Antiquarian Booksellers Association (ABA) Liaison Officer	<a href="mailto:dunstan.speight@lincolnsinn.org.uk">dunstan.speight@lincolnsinn.org.uk</a>
Jacqueline Spencer	Historic Libraries Forum (HLF) Liaison	<a href="mailto:Jrs70@kent.ac.uk">Jrs70@kent.ac.uk</a>
Laura Wood	Social Media Officer	<a href="mailto:laurawood0497@gmail.com">laurawood0497@gmail.com</a>
Rich Wragg	Conference Coordinator	<a href="mailto:r.d.wragg@sussex.ac.uk">r.d.wragg@sussex.ac.uk</a>