Librarian’s report for 2015–2016

The Meyricke Library currently holds 33,806 [last year: 35,326] books. During this academic year, 1,197 [958] books were added, including 126 [60] gifts, with a new Portuguese section developed and superseded editions withdrawn across the sciences. The average number of readers present was 40 [38].

An RFID self-service and book security system was installed in September 2015, paid for from the OUP Library Fund. The new system has speeded up borrowing and provided for ‘self-return’ by readers as well as improving security. Hanging power sockets have been installed over reading room desks in order to remove trailing cables. A plaque was installed on the outside wall of staircase XVII to mark the Meyricke Library’s original use as the Sir Leoline Jenkins Laboratories.

The Welfare Library has been moved from the nurse’s office to the Lower Library, where it has been catalogued and made available for borrowing on an honesty system.

The Celtic Library holds 8,671 [9,619] books and journal volumes. There are 46 [51] registered readers. This year, 45 [71] books were added to the collection.

6,764 [5,690] loans were made from the Meyricke and Celtic Libraries, of which 9% [9%] were to postgraduates. Of 570 [601] students, 400 [350] (that is, 70% [58%]) borrowed from the Libraries at least once.

There were 13 [16] visits to the Fellows’ Library by researchers from outside College, with 15 [19] enquiries answered by email. Library staff gave tours for groups including the Europaeum Bonn-Oxford Seminar in Theology, the Historic Houses Association, and many Old Members, with 152 [140] names listed in the visitors’ book.

The Oxford Conservation Consortium completed a condition survey of the College’s manuscripts, several of which were displayed to major donors in the new Weston Library. Digitised versions of the Welsh manuscripts were added to the new Digital.Bodleian website. Lawrence of Arabia’s thesis was lent to Magdalen College during November 2015 for their exhibition Lawrence of Magdalen. Finally, 9 [12] authors were permitted to reproduce images from our manuscripts.

An Organ Studies Library has been established in celebration of John Wellingham’s contribution to teaching organ scholars at Jesus College. It consists of 150 scores so far, to be catalogued by the Librarian, and will initially be housed in the Chaplain’s office.

The College Archivist, Christopher Jeens, sadly died in service in August 2015, and was commemorated in the College Record. The Librarian returned to full-time work, dealing with archives enquiries and supporting research on the new College history. Dr Robin Darwall-Smith was appointed as the new Archivist, two days per week, from April 2016. Emma Sillett (née Jones) continued in post as library assistant until January.

Owen McKnight
Librarian