

LIBRARIES IN CAMBRIDGE¹

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Cambridge University Library (CUL)

A summary as introduction: Differences between Cambridge and Göttingen

Cambridge	Göttingen
Access to the library is restricted	Access possible for every adult
Conventional reading room	Reading room with emphasis on user team work
Open access areas arranged by subject	Books in open access areas are arranged according to accession sequence
Legal deposit library	No legal deposit
Acquisitions from library suppliers often on the basis of an approval plan	Books selection done by subject specialists
Anglo-American Cataloguing rules are used	RAK (for the time being)
Journals are bound only when they are shelved in open access areas, otherwise they are left unbound (in boxes)	All journals (with the possible exception of yearbooks) are bound
Fixed working hours for the staff	Flexible working hours for the staff
Staff <i>commonly</i> call each other by their first names (observed even between different levels of the hierarchy, very few exceptions)	Attitude more distanced
Library is understaffed especially in the field of cataloguing but vacancies are filled.	Library in a difficult financial situation; further reduction in staffing levels scheduled until 2015
Open plan offices prevailing	Offices for one person or two persons as a rule

¹ This report is the result of a visit to Cambridge from 18 February to 3 March 2007.

Library building and general assessment

King George V (1910–1936) opened the library designed by Giles Gilbert Scott in 1934. It has magnificent architectural features and is ornate with oil paintings showing eminent scholars and prominent members of the British nobility once playing an important role in the history of the British and Foreign Bible Society² holdings of which are housed in the library. Statues of George I (1714–1728) and George II (1728–1742) in the attire of Roman Emperors stand in the entrance hall with an inscription in the pedestal, which praises them as benefactors of the University. I could not help being impressed by this display of a long unbroken and proud tradition. Furthermore, the library staff offers emotional commitment and a human touch which is apt to endear the British to every foreign visitor.

Access to the library

Strict regulations are enforced: With only few exceptions no person can enter the library without having a reader card³. The latter is necessary to pass a turnstile⁴. Thus mere tourist visits are impossible. Private persons applying for a reader card have to produce a letter of recommendation preferably issued by a professional (physician, solicitor or priest) stating that they are fit and proper to use the library. The library checks these recommendations in order to find out whether they are fakes.

Members of the university (including students) are entitled to a user card ex officio. Undergraduates do not have borrowing rights during their first and second year at the university. Furthermore, a ceiling is imposed on the number of books a person can borrow at a time.

Reading room

The reading room is a haven of tranquillity. Order and quietness are of the highest importance. The reading room houses a reference collection of about 70,000 volumes. Users are not allowed to put books back onto the shelves after they once

² The Earl of Shaftsbury KG, and the Marquess of Northampton KG

³ Members may take in visitors to see the UL by arrangement; the exhibition room is open to the public without restriction.

⁴ Drehkreuz

removed them from their place. Books have to be put on a table after use from where the library staff will return them to their proper place. The tables are lit individually in a way that is very helpful for full concentration. On the other side: I saw some users wearing coats in the reading room and even bottles of water were detected. Later I was told that the library staff would not like to interfere with this conduct because of allegedly insufficient heating. The reading room staff also comprises a team of book fetchers who deliver books from the closed stacks very fast. In 2005/2006, it took only 18 minutes on average until an order placed by a user in the reading room was fulfilled.

Stacks

At present, the library houses approximately 8 million books. The total influx per year in books alone is approximately 120,000 titles. The existing space in the stacks last for the next twenty years due to newly erected extensions. Most of the modern books which are thought to be scientifically relevant are presented in open stacks and arranged systematically. The systematic groups are wide and thus the waste of space due to systematic arrangement is limited.

The systematic order of course is very convenient for users. Only books before 1950 and very valuable ones are stored in closed stacks.

All books from the open stacks can be borrowed whereas the items stored in the closed stacks can be borrowed only to a small percentage.

Catalogue

Nowadays the computer catalogue ("Newton") covers all scientific holdings available in the library. Other holdings, which might be of interest, have to be searched for using the guard book catalogue. Printed leaves of catalogue sets have been pasted here. Ordering via the computer catalogue is possible but is restricted to those items which are in closed stacks. In case of open access locations, the user has to fetch the book himself / herself.

Tearoom

The library has a tearoom where a very tasty tea and a selection of other drinks and of course food are served. The British obviously prefer strong liquoring tea, which is usually blended from Assam, Ceylon and Kenya produce.

The addition of Kenya tea sets British tea apart from mixtures sold in Germany (even by the same company).

Legal deposit

The legal deposit law dates from 1710 (Queen Anne's reign) and entitles

- The British Library,
- The University Library of Oxford
- The University Library of Cambridge,
- The National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh,
- The National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth and
- The Library of Trinity College in Dublin

to receive one copy of each title published in the United Kingdom.

As Great Britain is the country with the highest number of new titles per year in the world – approximately 200,000⁵ – acquisition by means of legal deposit is of pre-eminent importance to CUL although not all titles actually reach Cambridge: The influx due to legal deposit is approximately 80,000 titles per year.

Approval plans

CUL uses approval plans to facilitate the acquisition of books whenever it is possible. On the basis of a very detailed profile the library supplier decides for himself which books are eligible for Cambridge. Legally CUL is entitled to return volumes it does not want but this occurs very seldom. As a rule the library accepts the selection made by the supplier. Often approval plans comprise the delivery of catalogue data as well. These files are fed into the database and serve as one possible source for the cataloguers.

⁵ Germany has approximately 90,000 new titles per year

Cataloguing

Whereas titles in non-English languages are catalogued within the department, which is responsible for their acquisition, a separate team catalogues new books in English. Here ends up everything what comes from the Legal Deposit Department and from the Department of English Collections.

The legal deposit libraries in the UK join forces in creating the database of the British National Bibliography. Each of them is responsible for feeding new titles from a certain part of the alphabet, which was assigned to the respective institution.

In Cambridge, the cataloguing team has a tremendous backlog so that books, which are displayed to the users as “recently acquired” actually are often several years old. However, due to an ingenious system and careful order within the backlog it is possible to trace individual items requested by users very quickly and make them available in the reading room.

Cataloguing is done according to Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules and the most recent American MARC format. This requires the set up of an authority file⁶ for each author giving information about each individual’s year of birth and of death. This authority file is linked with the dataset of the book. Each dataset is checked twice by different cataloguers to ensure a high degree of flawlessness⁷. The title can be traced in the users’ catalogue only AFTER the label with the call number is attached to the spine and the book is ready for use.

In Göttingen books in open access locations have a shelf mark representing their place in the systematic order and additionally the regular call number according to sequential location⁸. In Cambridge there is only one system of shelf mark applied: the systematic shelf mark which is supplemented by a number indicating the sequence of the book within the classification group. To find out the correct number before creating the shelf mark a register is maintained of all classification groups indicating the titles of former books assigned to the respective group and their current number. Each new book has to be entered in handwriting at the end of the list.

⁶ = Normdatensätze

⁷ There are mistakes however: Inka Tappenbeck e.g. was spelt Tappenberg whilst the authority file was correct.

⁸ = numerus currens

Journals

Only those journals are bound which have to be allocated to the open shelves. All other journals are kept in boxes even at the risk of single numbers getting lost. The acquisition is done with the help of “Voyager” software which comes from the States and which is used throughout the acquisition departments.

Staff and working hours

The staff seems to be fairly close to each other. Nearly everyone calls his/her colleague by his/her first name and they sit together in a relaxed and peaceful atmosphere while having tea or coffee in a special section of the tearoom, which is not accessible for the public. It is unusual and officially forbidden however to have tea at the workplace (not always observed).

There are fixed working hours:

Mo–Thu 8:45 a.m. – 5:20 p.m.

Fri 8:45 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

Lunchtime 12:45 a.m. – 2.00 p.m.

Plus once in a month 4 hours on Saturdays

or once in two months 8 hours on Saturdays

Total 37:20 hours per week

The number of hours per week is to a certain extent misleading: Many persons work longer hours than they are paid for.

In Great Britain, there is a difference between *Civil Servants* (entitled to a pension paid by the taxpayer) and *Public Servants* (who have to pay money into a capital fund, which provides for their income after retirement). All staff of CUL consists of *Public Servants*.

Cambridge International

It is obvious that Cambridge University attracts students from all over the world. In keeping with the general impression personnel with a foreign background seems to me much more perceptible at Cambridge University Library than at Göttingen

SUB. Gotthelf Wiedermann jokingly even made the bold statement that due to the high number of foreigners among the staff CUL was so effective.

Of course, in Goettingen we also have colleagues with a foreign background but they all work as ordinary rank and file members. In Cambridge, things are different: During a visit of only one week, I personally made the acquaintance of two former Germans as heads of a department, two Dutchwomen as head respectively deputy head of a department and a Japanese as head of a department. A German native obviously is even deputy head of a division! Furthermore, there is a sizable influx from Eastern Europe as well. Two highly effective members of staff came from Poland respectively Russia. Anishka from the periodicals department e.g. is said to have curbed successfully the backlog in checking in upcoming numbers of periodicals.

Open-plan offices

Many departments are housed in open-plan offices. There is no privacy for the staff there. Furthermore, it is difficult to air these rooms and in summer they are said to become unpleasantly hot due to lack of shading equipment.

Terminology

The boss of the whole library is called Librarian, the person one level below him is the Deputy Librarian, the organisation then is grouped into Divisions⁹, within the Divisions there are Departments¹⁰. The head of a department is often a person with an academic background.

If a book is borrowed by a user the staff checks it out (or discharges it), when it is returned it is checked in (or recharged). The expression “to check in” allegedly is slightly slang.

Nostalgia

It was a strange feeling when I left the library for the last time. A fit of nostalgia overcame me when I walked down the corridor from the tearoom passing the picture of the warship (the library houses the archive of Vickers, the armaments concern),

⁹ = Abteilungen
¹⁰ = Dienststellen

the shelves with hand carved sides, the bronze door which leads to the reading room: it was like leaving a place long familiar to me although I arrived there only a fortnight ago for the first time in my life. Above all, I would like to thank Gotthelf Wiedermann and all his colleagues who by their kindness and hospitality made my stay at the University Library so deeply impressive.

The World of the Colleges

General information

What is a college?

You should know that currently Cambridge University has 16,000 students in total, which means that each of the 31 colleges has 500 students on average. The older colleges all consist of rooms to accommodate the students, a chapel, a dining hall and a library. The newer colleges often are without a chapel. Above all a college is an independent organizational entity of its own right which of course has to cooperate with the university and other colleges but is not in any way obliged to obey orders from them. This applies to the college libraries as well. Students and fellows of a college form a clearly structured and closely knit community which provides the basis of academic success. On the other hand: Persons who shirk from work should better look for a different place because any shortcomings in this field will be detected soon.

Admission to university

No one can attend Cambridge University who was not accepted by one of the colleges. So A level¹¹ graduates have to apply for admission to the college of their choice. Although not formally stated only those graduates with the highest grades are eligible. But nobody is entitled to be accepted even if the exam is very good. All depends on the interview in which fellows of a college make an assessment whether the applicant is suited for study in Cambridge. Sometimes disgruntled parents complain in the press that their child was not accepted despite highest marks. In these cases obviously the jury came to the conclusion that the applicant has already reached her/his highest potential and the study in Cambridge will not benefit her or him as it is intended. But there is hope even for the rejected. Their application will be transferred to a pool of candidates from which other colleges with a vacancy can make a selection.

¹¹ "A level" exam is comparable with the German "Abitur".

Financial aspects

Students are not allowed to work for money during term. Obviously there are fears this might distract them from their study and impairing their results in the examination. The tuition fees are 3,000 £ per year, the college charges for living and food approximately 4,000 £. The system of state stipends for the financially less strong was totally abolished; nowadays all support is paid as a loan which has to be returned provided an income high enough to allow such repayment is available. We should take into consideration that the British government aims at raising the percentage of the population with a university degree up to 50 Percent

Degrees and duration of study

The first examination is the Bachelor. It takes three years to achieve it. In case it is a language course, one year is to be added for a stay abroad. An aspiring teacher has to add one additional year for a preparatory course in education.

The master's degree requires the Bachelor exam and one additional year.

The dropout quota in Cambridge is only 5 percent, at state universities it is 15 percent. A prolongation of the study is possible on grounds of health only ("degrading"). Degrading means that a student is excluded from the university for one year and is not allowed using e.g. the college library. The duration of such a degrading shall not be used to gain an unjust advantage over other students.

The scope of tuition and its implications on college libraries

Not only the university caters for the academic tuition of the students by means of lectures and seminars but also the colleges have their share. They offer additional training in small groups by members of their staff (called "lecturers"). Of course not every college has specialists for all subjects. In case the needed lecturer is not available among the fellows of the own college the student joins a teaching group from another. The resulting bicycle traffic is one of the characteristics of Cambridge. In principle, all colleges cater for all disciplines and the holdings of the college libraries reflect this universality. Even college libraries with not more than 60,000 books have an astounding array of various disciplines represented. Basic books on

nuclear physics, computer programming, German history, and French poetry can be found there.

Nonetheless, some colleges put emphasis on certain disciplines, which is reflected in the holdings: In Peterhouse e.g. there is an extensive collection of history books.

Opening hours

Taken into account the long opening hours (until midnight, some are open 24 hours) the library staff has to rely highly on the trustworthiness and honesty of the users. In the evening and during the night there is no supervision and books could be taken out of the library without anyone noticing it. The users are asked to check out the books they borrow properly but experience shows that this does not always happen. Therefore, there are losses, which are not promptly replaced; before buying replacement copies three years have to elapse normally.

In order to overcome this problem some college libraries have installed a security system with an alarm bell, which rings when a book not properly discharged, is taken out. Furthermore, there might be surveillance cameras (CCTV) with video equipment in operation to film people as they enter/exit the library.

The college libraries are open to current members of the college only: Admission depends on the possession of a machine-readable identification card. This provides for the necessary security during the unstaffed opening hours.

Staff

Many college libraries manage on with a staff of two or three persons: the Librarian who usually has a Master's degree and one or two library assistants.

Only the larger college libraries have a staff of ten or more but this is seldom. The additional staff is often assigned to retro-cataloguing of old stock as part of a programme to make accessible all books in the library via the computer catalogue. In some cases additional staff has the duty to oversee the manuscripts and rare books of the college.

Language

Nearly all books in a college library are in English. Even in the field of German history titles by English speaking authors prevail and are only supplemented by translations of well known German titles. German books are used only, when it cannot be avoided: The “Realenzyklopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften” is one of these exceptions to the rule. The result is that there is no need for students to become fluent in a foreign language. Even among those with a university degree, a sufficient knowledge of French e.g. cannot commonly be expected.

Donations

Donations of books from fellows of the college can be a mixed blessing. In some colleges (not all!), they are regarded as an offer that cannot be declined even if they are of no use to the college library at all. Quite a different thing is the donation of money. A sizable number of college libraries have been refurbished or have even received a new building paid for by funds donated by former students of the house.

Union catalogue

The holdings of nearly all college libraries¹² can be found in a union catalogue using the same search software (“Newton”) as it is in use at the University Library. The use of datasets stemming from external sources is possible. Unfortunately, each college librarian duplicates the existing catalogue set when a new acquisition is to be entered. It was universally agreed upon that it would be much better to add the copy of the own institution¹³ to an existing dataset.

I hope that one day Cambridge will follow suit the example of Oxford: There all holdings of a specific title are said to be connected with one dataset only, thus providing a far better overview about the holdings in the town.

¹² Not all college libraries contribute to the Union catalogue, e.g. Peterhouse is not a contributor.

¹³ „Exemplarsatz“ in PICA terminology

Some college libraries in detail

Corpus Christi College – Parker Library (Ms Gill Cannell)

To have an appropriate understanding of the Parker Library some historical information might be useful:

The reformation is often regarded as the decisive development, which ended the middle ages and paved the way for the modern era. This period of transition was not an easy time for England although the amount of bloodshed was much less than in Germany. At the beginning of the 16th century some academics in Cambridge e.g. already discussed their criticism of the Catholic Church although making sure that no one outside their circle got notice of it. The first time these new ideas had an impact on the political world was in 1534 when Henry VIII (1509–1547) had an Act of Parliament passed declaring him head of the Church of England. The reason was the king's desire to eliminate the influence of the then Pope who deliberately blocked the divorce of Henry's marriage. Apart from the fact that the Church of England now became a national church and many monasteries and nunneries were closed and expropriated nearly nothing in dogma or liturgy was changed. The influx of Lutheran ideas though did take place under Edward VI (1547–1553) and it was a cruel reversal when under Mary I (1553–1558) the Catholic faith was violently re-introduced and nearly 300 persons adherent to the protestant denomination were put to their deaths¹⁴. That is why it was all the more important to Elisabeth I (1558–1603) to smooth the religious feelings of her subjects and to find a formula for peaceful social existence. The Queen was a Protestant at heart but assigned archbishop of Canterbury a man of wise moderation: It was nobody else than Matthew Parker. He led a group of churchmen compiling the 39 Articles which form an important part of the Book of Common Prayer and are valid to this very day. These articles steer a middle way between Catholicism and Protestantism and make it possible for many believers to live under the same ecclesiastical roof provided they are prepared to acknowledge the monarch as "Supreme Governor of the Church of England"¹⁵. Matthew Parker had been master of Corpus Christi College and was able to collect a vast number of manuscripts and incunabula when during the reign of Henry VIII

¹⁴ That is where Mary's nickname "Bloody Mary" stems from.

¹⁵ The Queen's official title

many ecclesiastical institutions possessing a sizable number of these items were closed. He laid special emphasis on the Anglo-Saxon time in order to prove that from the very beginnings the Church of England had developed independently from Rome. This attempt was doomed to failure but we are happy to have his collection nevertheless which he bequeathed to his former college. It is one of the most important collections of material from the Anglo-Saxon time in the world.

Gill Cannell, the Parker Sub-Librarian, informed me about the fire-protective quality of wooden boxes, purpose-made to store extremely valuable manuscripts. These boxes are able to withstand fire for an hour provided they are made from oak. Furthermore fire repellent curtains are used which are drawn before the shelves, an additional measure to slow down the possible spread of fire and thus giving more time to rescue workers.

I am deeply thankful for having the privilege to visit the Parker Library while being aware that a short visit like mine is not enough to get into touch with the extreme wealth of material even in a superficial way.

New Hall (Ms Alison Wilson)

New Hall is one of the younger colleges in Cambridge and is entirely reserved to women. It was founded in the 1954¹⁶ and could move to its new site in 1964. All buildings were then newly erected and painted in white throughout. The most striking architectural feature is the Dome which houses the imposing dining hall with the fellows' table on an elevated level. The librarian is Alison Wilson, who holds two Master Degrees, one in English, the other in Librarianship. Besides her duties in running the 60,000-volume college library, she also is a consultant on library building and a prolific writer in this field.

¹⁶ I was surprised to learn that after New Hall six even younger colleges were founded: Churchill College in 1960, Darwin College in 1964, Lucy Cavendish College in 1965, Wolfson College in 1965, Clare Hall in 1966 and Robinson College in 1977. The aforementioned colleges are situated in the University extension area west of the so called "Backs", the green belt behind the old colleges in the city centre.

Pembroke (Ms Patricia Aske)

Pembroke, one of the older colleges, has a wonderful library being erected at the end of the 19th century. A small extension has been built recently which improves the situation considerably (lift, entrance, lending counter, workroom for the librarian, Patricia Aske, and a meeting room beautifully furnished and equipped with a window out of stained glass (Yamada room)). The library houses a bust of Ted Hughes (1930–1998), a poet and author of children’s books, who studied at Pembroke in the 1950s, and a photograph of Sylvia Plath, an eminent writer in her own right and his first wife. Ted Hughes was a very strong character and a person highly honoured in his lifetime¹⁷. However, the fact that his first and second wife both committed suicide raised doubts whether his “strength” was maintained at the expense of his wives. There is another famous Pembrokean, Thomas Gray (1716–1771), whose “Elegy written in a Country Churchyard” is a household name to every British schoolchild. Pat showed me Thomas Gray’s literary remains, which are archived in the compact shelving in the basement.

As Pembroke is an old college, there is also old stock, which is accessible via a card catalogue only. One of Pat’s many tasks consists of retro-cataloguing these items. She also has to deal with donations by fellows which have to be accepted even if they are less desirable for an undergraduate library. I saw a heap of books published by Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, which every academic library in Germany would accept with pleasure, but due to the language problem mentioned above they are a mixed blessing in Cambridge indeed.

When leaving Pembroke I passed again the memorial for the dead of World War I and II. In the Great War alone (as World War I then was called) 300 students and graduates solely from Pembroke were killed! Their names are carved in stone, a painfully long list of lives lost.¹⁸

¹⁷ He was poetus laureatus (=Hofdichter) to Elizabeth II., and member of one of Britain’s most exclusive orders, the Order of Merit (OM). Its membership is restricted to 24 persons at a given time.

¹⁸ The original inscription starts with: “Vivit memoria trecentorum domus filiorum qui pro patria militantes vitam posuerunt.”

Peterhouse (Ms Erica Macdonald)

The Library of Peterhouse is the most striking example for the generosity of a single donator: Mr. Gunn – once a student at Peterhouse and now running a pain clinic in Canada – gave the money for the Gunn gallery of the Ward Library. The library got a new room in an adjacent building directly connected with the existing hall. Both old and new rooms were furnished splendidly with thick sound-absorbing carpets and wonderful bookshelves, columns and paintings, mahogany and cherry wood furniture, the walls painted in dark red and cream, imparting an atmosphere to the library of almost unsurpassable luxury.

St. John's College Library (Dr. Mark Nicholls)

St. John's College belonging to the older colleges¹⁹ has a new library building whose design was cleverly devised to be in keeping with the historic courtyard to which it has been added. The building is divided into small areas thus making the stay in it as comfortable and non-disturbing to others as possible. The library has an unusual high number of staff (6.5 fulltime-equivalents). The Librarian Dr. Mark Nicholls not only performs his duties in the library but is also a tutor in *Late-Elizabethan and early-Stuart government and politics*.

I was also privileged to receive a guided tour through the old library with breathtaking holdings comparable to those shown in the *Göttinger Kostbarkeiten* exhibition. I was astonished to learn that even Uffenbach – a Frankfurt patrician strongly connected with the history of Göttingen State and University Library²⁰ – once visited this place. While generally dissatisfied with the way Latin was pronounced by the English he found the then librarian of St. John's College the only person in England to pronounce Latin correctly!

¹⁹ Founded in 1511 by the mother of King Henry VII, Lady Margaret Beaufort.

²⁰ Uffenbach was pressurized by the Frankfurt city leaders to take his share in the burdensome task of municipal administration of his home town. The only chance to avoid this was either to acquire a military rank of a foreign power or to leave Frankfurt. This was the background of a contract he struck with the authorities in Hanover. He promised to bequeath his rich library to Göttingen after his death and was in turn given the pro-forma rank of a colonel in the army of the British King and Hanoverian Elector.

Trinity College Wren Library (Sandy Paul)

The last library I visited was the Old Library of Trinity College designed by Christopher Wren and built between 1676 and 1690. It is a very long room in breathtaking baroque style which made an overwhelming impact on me, indeed. In keeping with the imposing grandeur of architecture is the richness of precious details in the furnishings thus making the Wren Library a treasure house, which is a treasure itself. Among the many items on display is the death masque of Newton (and a collection of his works in contemporary editions), and a statue of Lord Byron by Berthel Thorvaldsen. The construction of this building was possible due to the fact that Trinity is by far the richest of all Cambridge colleges. The number of Nobel Prize laureates stemming from this college alone is said to be larger than that of many countries in total.

The generous provision of funds is also reflected in subterranean extensions of the working library, which are used for compact shelving. Special thanks to Sandy Paul for his kind-heartedness.

Acknowledgements

Without the support of Alison Wilson, my journey would never have happened. Her invitation to Cambridge was decisive to overcome my travel laziness and will never be forgotten. Thank you very much, Alison!

Without the continuous support of Victoria Viebahn my English would not have been sufficient to meet the demands. While helping our English group to enhance our command of the language she also acquainted us with the differences of feeling and expression between Germany and Great Britain.

Without Heinz Fuchs' friendly help the contact to Cambridge University Library would not have been made.

Without Gotthelf Wiedermann the programme for my visit to CUL would not have been set up. He devoted two mornings to introduce me to the library in general and to the department of which he is the head in particular.

To them and many others not mentioned here my sincere thanks.

Finally yet importantly, I would like to extend my thanks to Ulrike Lang and BI-International for a generous travel allowance.

Tourist reminiscences

Excellence sustained: The art of gâteau²¹ making

While Göttingen University has lost much of its former splendour and tries hard to work its way up again there is undoubtedly one institution in Göttingen, which could maintain its standing and the quality of its output: The fabulous “Cron & Lanz”.

Cambridge of course also has a first class café: It is called “Fitzbillies” and is situated at Trumpington Street not far away from Fitzwilliam Museum. Unfortunately, I could go there only once: The quality of the cake was excellent and the tea very tasty. The selection of gateaux however was small and the guest room rather modest and not equipped with the wonderful furnishings we are accustomed to in the Weender Straße.

Shopping hours gained: A Sunday afternoon at Heffers

From Monday to Friday shops, close rather early: in February normally at 5:30 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. at the latest²². This should be taken into account if you want to avoid being without toast bread or cheese in the evening.

On Saturdays, Cambridge is filled with a frightening number of shoppers, which made me leave the city as fast as possible. I could totally understand Gotthelf’s decision to avoid Cambridge on weekends and to concentrate on hobby activities far away.

Even on Sundays, shops are open. The Cambridge Branch e.g. of Marks & Spencer – one of the leading high street retailers in Britain – opens at 11 a.m. and closes at 5:00 p.m.²³ Not only Marks & Spencer is open on Sundays – many other shops are on service as well. This was stunning to me who expected the proverbial dull “English Sunday” which generally was spent by perusing the thick weekend editions of the newspapers. However, my information stemming from a travel guide from 1989 obviously was outdated and did not take into account the economic change brought

²¹ Gateau = Torte

²² The opening hours may vary during the course of the year.

²³ Even in remote areas of the Scottish highlands (e.g. at Inverness or Elgin) the M & S branches there have similar opening hours.

about by Maggie Thatcher²⁴. Since then shopping on Sundays has become common while fortunately the hustle and bustle of Saturdays gives room to a more relaxed attitude.

Although first being hostile to opening hours on Sundays I have to admit they have some charm. I could pay a visit to Heffers, Cambridge's large bookshop. Other notable bookshops do not seem to exist in Cambridge, which was explained to me by the fact that many students have only little or no money left to be spent on books due to the great expense for tuition and accommodation in a college. At Heffers, I took the opportunity to ask about delivery time for an order placed with the book wholesaler (in case an item is not available in the shop): The answer was that it would take approximately 4 days!

My attention focussed on the history section and the result was the same as with the holdings in the college libraries: Whilst of course the whole range of British history is covered, World War II is still a major topic in the book market with a special emphasis on Winston Churchill, his politics, his speeches, his historical writings. He is still alive in the mind of a nation infinitely thankful for his adamant determination not only to resist but also to *defeat* a "monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime" even though he had "nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat"²⁵. Correspondingly, in a BBC opinion poll the majority of participants nominated him as the greatest Britain ever.

Reciprocally the interest of the British public in German history obviously is concentrated on the Nazi period. There were even two copies available of Hitler's "Mein Kampf" (in paperback and translated into English).

²⁴ Margaret Hilda Thatcher, Baroness Thatcher of Kesteven LG (= Lady of the Most Noble Order of the Garter), OM (= Order of Merit), PC (= Member of the Privy Council)

²⁵ Churchill in his inaugural speech as Prime Minister on 13th May 1940 (Quoted from: Parliamentary debates / House of Commons : official report, 5th series, vol. 360, Column 1502).

Further reading

History of Cambridge and her university and colleges

Boyd, Stephanie: The Story of Cambridge. Republished with corrections. Cambridge [u.a.] : Cambridge Univ. Press 2006. 96 S.

Popular introduction into the history of Cambridge and her university and colleges.

Brooke, Christopher and Roger Highfield: Oxford and Cambridge. Photographs by Wim Swaan. Cambridge [u.a.] : Cambridge Univ. Press 1988. 367 S.

More demanding introduction into the history of the universities and colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, illustrated with excellent black and white photographs.

Cambridge University Library : the great collections. Ed. by Peter Fox. Cambridge [u.a.] : Cambridge Univ. Press 1998. 231 S.

Richly illustrated book providing insight into some core elements of Cambridge University Library, e.g. the Royal Collection, the Stefan Heym Archive, the Acton Library.

Furtherance of academic excellence : Documentation of new library buildings in Cambridge. Compiled by Alison Wilson; ed. by Elmar Mittler. Göttingen : Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibl. Göttingen 2006. 220 S. (Göttinger Bibliotheksschriften ; 37)

Inaugurated by the LIBER Architecture Group. The emphasis lies on new or extended college libraries; each chapter starts with schematically arranged information given as response to a questionnaire; many illustrations.

Wilson, Alison: Recent developments in Cambridge College Libraries, in: LIBER quarterly, 16 (2006), no. 2.

Valuable overview over some of the most recent extensions of college libraries in Cambridge. Available as online resource.

English and British history in general

Hibbert, Christopher: The story of England. Reprinted. London : Phaidon Press 2004.
224 S.

A wonderful introduction into English history for those who seek general information. Particularly helpful for the Middle Ages.

The Oxford illustrated history of Britain. Ed. by Kenneth O. Morgan. Reprinted with revisions. Oxford [u.a.] : Oxford Univ. Press 1992. 646 S.

Generally regarded as the best book about British history in one volume. Should be read with an understanding of British history already built up by simpler books.

St. John-Parker, Michael: Britain's Kings & Queens. Reprint. Norwich : Jarrold 2006.
32 S. (Pitkin Guides)

Basic, but useful outline of British history.