

The Management and Development of Libraries at Women's Colleges in Oxford, 1879 to 1920

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the management and development of libraries at women's colleges in Oxford. This study examines the colleges established for women students between 1879 and 1920: Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford; Somerville College, Oxford; St Hilda's College, Oxford; and St Hugh's College, Oxford. These colleges were founded to allow women to study in Oxford, but women were not permitted to become members of the University of Oxford until 1920. Consequently, most of the academic provision for students, including library access, was provided by colleges and the Association for Promoting the Education of Women. This study analyses contemporary documentary evidence to learn how the libraries were staffed and their collections developed, allowing us to gain a greater understanding of the history of women's college libraries.

This dissertation is split into three main parts. Section 2 looks at the broader context, discussing women students' access to libraries in Oxford and comparing their access to the rights of male undergraduates. It explains that women students could request admission to libraries at the University of Oxford but that they only had automatic access to their college library and the Nettlehip Library. Section 3 focusses on staff. It shows that women's college libraries were typically staffed by a single librarian; however, there are examples of library teams and the use of student assistants. This section also considers the librarians' education, experience, and tenure as well as their wider roles within their college. It reveals that the librarian was often a college alumna with no previous library experience and who often had other administrative and/or academic duties. Section 4 discusses library development, with an emphasis on collection development. This section examines the role of the library committee in managing the libraries and their approaches to collection development. It also demonstrates how the committees dealt with space and budgetary constraints, often through collaboration and with the help of external benefactors.

Declaration

I have read and understood the College and Departmental statements and guidelines concerning plagiarism. I declare that:

This submission is entirely my own original work.

Wherever published, unpublished, printed, electronic or other information sources have been used as a contribution or component of this work, these are explicitly, clearly and individually acknowledged by appropriate use of quotation marks, citations, references and statements in the text. It is 14,883 words in length.

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List of Abbreviations

AEW: The Association for Promoting the Education of Women

LMH: Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford

Home Students: The Society for Oxford Home Students

Somerville: Somerville Hall/College, Oxford*

St Hilda's: St Hilda's Hall/College, Oxford*

St Hugh's: St Hugh's Hall/College, Oxford*

* Somerville, St Hugh's, and St Hilda's all changed their names from Hall to College at different points in their early history.

Note on Dates

The academic year at the women's colleges had three terms: Michaelmas Term was from October to December, Hilary Term from January to March, and Trinity Term from April to June. In this dissertation, academic years will be presented as in the following example: the academic year of October 1898 to June 1899 will be presented as 1898/99.

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The Management and Development of Libraries at Women's Colleges in Oxford, 1879 to 1920

1: Introduction

In June 1878, a meeting was held at Keble College, Oxford, at which it was agreed that a hall of residence for women should be established in Oxford.¹ This meeting led to the foundation of Lady Margaret Hall (LMH), the first of the four women's colleges established in Oxford between 1878 and 1920. LMH and Somerville Hall, Oxford (Somerville) both opened in 1879, followed by St Hugh's Hall, Oxford, (St Hugh's) in 1886, and by St Hilda's Hall, Oxford (St Hilda's) in 1893. The creation of these four colleges and the Association for Promoting the Education of Women (AEW), the organisation that arranged the lectures and tutorials for women students, meant that women were able to access higher education in Oxford for the first time. However, it was not until 1920 that women became members of the University of Oxford and could be awarded degrees.

The women's colleges were spaces where women students both lived and studied, and soon after their establishment, each began a library. Although initially small, these collections continued to grow, eventually requiring a librarian to manage them and a designated library space. Although each college library developed independently, they all faced similar challenges, such as low budgets, and achieved similar milestones, such as the building of a library. By examining college records, one can learn how the libraries were established, managed, and developed at this important stage in the history of women's university education in Oxford.

¹ Janet Howarth, "In Oxford but...Not of Oxford": The Women's Colleges', in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume VII: Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part 2*, ed. by M. G. Brock and M. C. Curthoys, 8 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), VII, 237–308 (p. 246).

1.1: Aims and Scope

This dissertation aims to provide the first detailed study of women's college libraries in Oxford during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although there is considerable research on the history of women's colleges in Oxford and women's university education more generally, little scholarship focusses on their libraries.

This dissertation will examine the libraries at four women's colleges opened between 1879 and 1920: LMH, Somerville, St Hugh's, and St Hilda's. It will not consider the Society of Oxford Home Students, also established in 1879, because it did not have a library of its own during this period.² The Society allowed women to attend the lectures arranged by the AEW but live with family or in lodgings, and had no central space of its own until its Principal, Bertha Johnson, rented 16 Ship Street in 1910.³ Over this period of forty-one years, the women's colleges and their libraries changed significantly. This dissertation examines some of the key developments, focussing on staff and collection development.

To improve our understanding of the context, management, and development of women's college libraries in this period, this dissertation will be organised into three main parts. Section 2 considers what access women students had to other libraries in Oxford and if their experience differed from that of male undergraduates. Focussing on library staff, section 3 explores who staffed the libraries and what their academic backgrounds, experience, and roles were in the college. It also considers the use of student assistants. Finally, the fourth section examines library and collection development. It looks at how the college libraries developed their collections and what their priorities were, asking the following questions: what were the main challenges to development? What role did donations and bequests play in

² Marjorie Reeves, *St Anne's College, Oxford: An Informal History* (Oxford: St Anne's College, 1979), p. 2.

³ 'Somerville Hall and The Society of Oxford Home-Students (Later St Anne's) Were Formed. LMH and Somerville Received Their First Students', *Education & Activism: Women at Oxford: 1878-1920* <<https://www.firstwomenatoxford.ox.ac.uk/1879-somerville-hall-and-the-society-of-oxford-home-students-later-st-annes-were-formed.-lmh-and-som>> [accessed 3 September 2022].

the development of collections? How did women's college libraries work together to support students access to resources?

1.2: Methodology

This dissertation is a historical study of women's college libraries based on primary source analysis. The primary sources are mostly archival documents, such as council or committee meeting minutes, and college publications, such as registers of students, annual reports, and historical accounts. These resources were used to collect the data for analysis and, along with secondary sources, to compile Appendix A, which is a list of all known librarians and student assistants who worked at the women's colleges. The colleges have large archival collections, including institutional and personal papers. Much of this material is not digitised and was consulted in person between August 2021 and July 2022. Due to time constraints and the length of this dissertation, it was not possible to examine all archival material. Consequently, the analysis is focussed on the colleges' annual reports, council minutes, and library committee minutes because these resources offer the most information on library staff and collections.⁴ However, this means there is potential for further research using the colleges' unexamined papers and personal archives, which could present other information about the management and development of the libraries. It is also important to note the differences in the extant material available in each archive and the possible impact on the analysis. First, not all colleges kept the same types of records and second, some colleges kept more detailed records than others. This means that the surviving data can be uneven, resulting in more emphasis being placed in this study on a particular library or period because of the information available.

⁴ Due to the archivists' leave, I could not examine all the volumes of council minutes at LMH.

This dissertation analyses qualitative and statistical data to compare the college libraries, their staff, and collections. Using both qualitative and quantitative data was important to address the research questions selected. For example, one can gain a more complete picture of collection development in a particular year by considering both the number of books acquired and any comments in reports about donations, increased numbers of students, or a new subject area. The archival collections are rich in textual and numerical material therefore, this approach allows for full use to be made of the archival evidence, allowing broader themes and issues as well as each college's unique histories and circumstances to be discussed

1.3: Literature Review

The history of women's college libraries is a subject that has not been subject to sustained attention by researchers, but it overlaps with four broader areas of scholarship: the history of women's university education, the history of academic institutions open to women, the history of academic libraries, and the history of women in librarianship. Within the published work on these four topics, the Oxford women's colleges and/or their libraries are often briefly discussed but there is little work dedicated to the libraries.

The history of women's university education has been studied in detail. Many studies have explored the political movements in favour of women's access to higher education and others have considered women's experience of university during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁵ These often have a broad geographical focus and examine different universities in

⁵ Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850–1920*, *Women in Culture and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Janet Howarth and Mark Curthoys, 'The Political Economy of Women's Higher Education in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Britain', *Historical Research*, 60.142 (1987), 208–31 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2281.1987.tb02292.x>> [accessed 20 September 2021]; Gillian Sutherland, 'The Movement for the Higher Education of Women: Its Social and Intellectual Context in England, c. 1840–80', in

the United Kingdom or elsewhere, but there are a number of publications that focus on women's education at Oxford.⁶ *Her Oxford* is a general history of the women's colleges and the experience of their students in Oxford from 1870s to 1970s. Janet Howarth's important work on women's education in Oxford also provides detailed information of the establishment of the women's colleges, their supporters, and the criticism and challenges faced by both the colleges and their students.⁷ Another important resource is *Education and Activism: Women at Oxford University, 1878–1920*, a research project whose website presents short articles about the women's colleges, their staff, and students.⁸

Other important works for this dissertation are the histories of individual academic institutions. These histories often discuss the reasons for their establishment, their early development, and the challenges faced in providing education for women. Histories of all Oxford women's colleges have been produced⁹ and similar exist for other women's

Politics and Social Change in Modern Britain: Essays Presented to A. F. Thompson, ed. by Philip J. Waller and Alfred F. Thompson (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1987), pp. 91–116; W. Gareth Evans, *Education and Female Emancipation: The Welsh Experience, 1847–1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1990); Elizabeth Seymour Eschbach, *The Higher Education of Women in England and America 1865–1920* (London: Garland, 1993); Carol Dyhouse, *No Distinction of Sex? Women in British Universities, 1870–1939*, Women's History (London: UCL Press, 1995); Judith Harford, *The Opening of University Education to Women in Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2008); Christine D. Myers, *University Coeducation in the Victorian Era: Inclusion in the United States and the United Kingdom* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Laura Schwartz, 'Feminist Thinking on Education in Victorian England', *Oxford Review of Education*, 37.5 (2011), 669–82; Nancy Weiss Malkiel, *'Keep the Damned Women out': The Struggle for Coeducation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Sara Z. MacDonald, *University Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in Canada*, Carleton Library Series, 257 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021).

⁶ Annie M.A.H. Rogers, *Degrees by Degrees: The Story of the Admission of Oxford Women Students to Membership of the University* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938); Vera Brittain, *The Women at Oxford: A Fragment of History* (London: Harrap, 1960); Janet Howarth, 'Women', in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume VIII: The Twentieth Century*, ed. by Brian Harrison, 8 vols (Oxford University Press, 1994), VIII, 345–75; Howarth, 'The Women's Colleges'; Judy G. Batson, *Her Oxford* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2008); Imogen Hurst, "'A Fleet of...Inexperienced Argonauts": Oxford Women and the Classics, 1873–1920', in *Oxford Classics: Teaching and Learning, 1800–2000*, ed. by Christopher Stray (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), pp. 14–27.

⁷ Howarth, 'The Women's Colleges'; Howarth, 'Women'.

⁸ 'Education & Activism. Women at Oxford: 1898–1920' <<https://www.firstwomenatoxford.ox.ac.uk/>> [accessed 1 September 2021]; 'Combined Register: 1827–1920', *Education & Activism. Women at Oxford: 1898–1920* <<https://www.firstwomenatoxford.ox.ac.uk/collections/>> [accessed 17 August 2021].

⁹ Gemma Creighton Bailey, *Lady Margaret Hall: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923); Reeves; *St. Hugh's: One Hundred Years of Women's Education in Oxford*, ed. by Penny Griffin (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987); Margaret E. Rayner, *The Centenary History of St Hilda's College, Oxford* (Great Britain: Lindsay Ross, 1993); Pauline Adams, *Somerville for Women: An Oxford College, 1879–1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Laura Schwartz, *A Serious Endeavour: Gender, Education and Community at St Hugh's, 1886–2011* (London: Profile, 2011).

colleges.¹⁰ Although not histories of institutions as such, memoirs written by members of women's colleges often recount important events from their lives at college.¹¹ For example, Elizabeth Wordsworth's memoir contains valuable information about the establishment of LMH and its early history. The libraries are often mentioned briefly in institutional histories and personal memoirs, with any comments generally focussed on significant moments, such as large bequests, new buildings, or, less frequently, changes of staff.

Considerable research has also focussed on the history of academic libraries at British universities. Some studies have examined the library provision at universities founded in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹² R.W. Ratcliffe's work reveals the importance of local support for the development of universities and their libraries, which was also the case for the women's colleges in Oxford. More research has been done on libraries and librarianship at the ancient libraries; for example, P. S. Morrish, Peter Hoare, and Peter Freshwater examine the changes and developments in library practice and management at older academic libraries.¹³ The Bodleian Library has received much attention and there are many works that chart its history and development.¹⁴ Other libraries in Oxford have been examined but not the

¹⁰ For example, Alice Gardner, *A Short History of Newnham College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Bowes & Bowes, 1921); Barbara Stephen, *Girton College 1869–1932* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933); Margaret Janson Tuke, *A History of Bedford College for Women, 1849–1937* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939).

¹¹ Elizabeth Wordsworth, *Glimpses of the Past* (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1912); Janet E. Courtney, *Recollected in Tranquillity* (London: Heinemann, 1926); Eleanor C. Lodge, *Terms and Vacations*, ed. by Janet Spens (London: Oxford University Press, 1938); Vera Farnell, *A Somervillian Looks Back* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948).

¹² Bernard Naylor, 'The Libraries of the University of London to the 1960s', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Alistair Black and Peter Hoare, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), III, 345–56; R.W. Ratcliffe, 'The Civic Universities and Their Libraries', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Alistair Black and Peter Hoare, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), III, 357–76.

¹³ P.S. Morrish, 'Library Management in the Pre-Professional Age', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Giles Mandelbrote and K. A. Manley, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), II, 479–93; Peter Hoare, 'The Libraries of the Ancient Universities to the 1960s', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Alistair Black and Peter Hoare, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), III, 321–44; Peter Freshwater, 'Books and Universities', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Giles Mandelbrote and K. A. Manley, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), II, 345–70.

¹⁴ K.A. Manley, 'E.W.B. Nicholson (1849–1912) and His Importance to Librarianship' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 1978); Edmund Craster, *History of the Bodleian Library: 1845–1945* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1981); I. G. Philip, *The Bodleian Library in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, The

same extent.¹⁵ Unfortunately, few of these works discuss women's access to Oxford's libraries in great detail, except the recent work by Duncan Jones.

In July 2022, research by Duncan Jones was posted on the *Education & Activism* website.¹⁶ This post, published after my archival research was completed, explores women students access to libraries and covers some of the same topics as this dissertation, demonstrating that there is growing interest in this area of study. Jones' post describes women's access to university libraries between 1879 and 1920 and discusses development of college libraries but much of its focus is on the history of the Nettleship Library. The post includes appendices listing the college librarians and the collection totals for some of the libraries; however, the appendices are incomplete. The archival research completed for this dissertation identified more information on collection size at each of the college libraries (see figure 4). My research also identified an additional sixteen members of staff and the eight student assistants, and some of the dates of employment Jones supplies are incorrect.¹⁷ Nevertheless, Jones' post is a useful resource for the study of women's college libraries and will support future work in this area.

Female library workers have been a topic of discussion since the nineteenth century, with contemporary sources debating women's suitability for the work or describing the

Lyell Lectures, Oxford, 1980–1981 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983); I.G. Philip, 'Bodleian Library', in *The History of the University of Oxford: Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part 1*, ed. by Michael G. Brock, 8 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), vii, 585–97; Mary Clapinson, *A Brief History of the Bodleian Library*, Revised edition (Oxford: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 2020).

¹⁵ Charles Firth, *Modern Languages at Oxford 1724–1929* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929); Paul Morgan, *Oxford Libraries Outside the Bodleian: A Guide* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society and the Bodleian Library, 1974); Giles Barber, *Arks for Learning: A Short History of Oxford Library Buildings* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1995).

¹⁶ Duncan Jones, 'Libraries for Women Students', *Education & Activism. Women at Oxford: 1898–1920* <<https://www.firstwomenatoxford.ox.ac.uk/article/libraries-for-women-students-in-oxford-1878-1920>> [accessed 15 July 2022].

¹⁷ See Appendix A. Jones mentions an F. Butlin as a librarian at Somerville in 1892, but I found no record of this person in my research.

opportunities available.¹⁸ Studies have explored the historical attitudes to, and experiences of, women librarians; for example, Evelyn Kerslake's work offers data on women in libraries, their education, pay, and working conditions.¹⁹ Kerslake's work focusses mostly on public libraries, as this was the where most women were employed. Consequently, this dissertation's emphasis on women working at college libraries will complement the existing work on women in librarianship.

Although important work has been done on women's university education and the history of libraries in Oxford, this dissertation provides a new perspective to existing research. By exploring the history of women's college libraries, it can offer new insights into women's work in librarianship and on the development of small academic libraries during late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

¹⁸ For example, Ethel S. Fegan, 'Women Librarians', *The Library Association Record*, 12.5 (1910), 224–26; Lucy Toulmin Smith, 'On Openings for Women in Library Work', *The Library Association Record*, 1.11 (1899), 719–24; Nigel Webber, 'Prospect and Prejudice: Women and Librarianship, 1880–1914', *Library History*, 6.5 (1984), 153–62 <<https://doi.org/10.1179/lib.1984.6.5.153>> [accessed 16 August 2021]; R. A. Storey, 'Prospect and Prejudice, or Women and Librarianship 1880–1914; a Fourth Footnote', *Library History*, 7.1 (1985), 21–22 <<https://doi.org/10.1179/lib.1985.7.1.21>> [accessed 16 August 2021]; W. A. Munford, 'Prospect and Prejudice, or Women and Librarianship 1880–1914; Three Footnotes', *Library History*, 6.6 (1984), 181–83 <<https://doi.org/10.1179/lib.1984.6.6.181>> [accessed 16 August 2021]; Evelyn Kerslake, 'The Feminisation of Librarianship: The Writings of Margaret Reed', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Alistair Black and Peter Hoare, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), III, 548–55.

¹⁹ Webber; Evelyn Kerslake, 'A History of Women Workers in English Libraries, 1871–1974' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leicester, 1999); Evelyn Kerslake, "'They Have Had to Come down to the Women for Help!'" Numerical Feminization and the Characteristics of Women's Library Employment in England, 1871–1974', *Library History*, 23.1 (2007), 17–40 <<https://doi.org/10.1179/174581607x177466>> [accessed 16 August 2021]; Kerslake, *The Feminisation of Librarianship*; Julia Taylor McCain, 'Women and Libraries', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Alistair Black and Peter Hoare, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), III, 543–47.

2: Women's Access to Libraries at the University of Oxford Before 1920

Although women could not be members of the University of Oxford until 1920, this did not mean that they had no access to the University's libraries. Decades before the creation of the first women's college, women were using the Bodleian Library. Mary Ward (née Arnold), for example, had been introduced to the librarian Henry Coxe by Mark Pattison – a Bodleian curator and the Rector of Lincoln College – and she made much use of the library's resources in the late 1860s, describing the reading rooms in great detail in her memoirs.²⁰ However, for women students, access to many of the libraries at Oxford was a privilege not a right until they became members of the university, with admission procedures and protocols depending on the individual library. Considering women students in the university library context will illustrate the precarity of their access and the importance of women's college libraries for their students. For reasons of length, this section focusses on the Bodleian Library, Radcliffe Library, and Taylor Institution and will not discuss departmental libraries in detail.

In 1895, Arthur Sidgwick – a prominent supporter of women's university education and Oxford academic – wrote to the governing body of the University of Oxford to ask for a grant.²¹ This grant was to buy books for the Nettleship Library, a central library space open to all women students, but the content of his letter speaks volumes about the women students' access to library facilities in Oxford. He writes:

until this year there has been no library to which all the students have access. The want of greater facilities in obtaining access to books has been much felt by our students, and particularly by the Home Students. As compared with Undergraduates they are in every way at a disadvantage. It is more difficult for them to obtain admission to the University Libraries: the best Hall Library cannot of course compare

²⁰ Mrs Humphrey Ward, *A Writer's Recollections*, 2 vols (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1918), I, pp. 148–50; John Sutherland, 'A Girl in the Bodleian: Mary Ward's Room of Her Own', *Browning Institute Studies*, 16 (1988), 169–80 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/25057834>> [accessed 5 October 2021] (pp. 173–74).

²¹ Janet Howarth, 'Sidgwick, Arthur (1840–1920), Educationist and Classical Scholar', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-48597>> [accessed 19 August 2022].

with the College Libraries; and they are on average far less able to buy books for themselves.²²

His letter highlights the financial and institutional barriers that made it more challenging for women students to access academic resources, and it also raises an important question by contrasting the male and female student experience. How did women students' experience and access to libraries differ from that of male undergraduates?

Undergraduate library provision at men's colleges varied, meaning that some male undergraduates did not necessarily have access their own college library. Soon after being founded, all four women's colleges established library collections for their students' use, but this had not been typically the case in men's colleges. In 1880, the librarian of Brasenose College Falconer Madan wrote that 'Nearly all college libraries have been, till lately, fellows' libraries only' but that undergraduate libraries were being established, noting that 'Few colleges are now without a suitable room where students can read or borrow the books which they most need for their work'.²³ Each college had different rules on access, use, and borrowing, but there was two main types of provision: colleges had either one library that could be accessed by all, or two libraries, the main college library and an undergraduates' library.²⁴ The size and quality of these undergraduate libraries varied greatly depending on the college.²⁵

Male undergraduates, as members of the university, had the automatic right to access some, but not all, university libraries. The *Student's Handbook to the University and Colleges of Oxford* is an excellent resource for learning about the university libraries and their

²² Oxford, St Anne's College (St Anne's), W.S. 2/1, Letter from Arthur Sidgwick to the Hebdomadal Council, 23 May 1895.

²³ F. Madan, 'The Library of Brasenose College, Oxford', *Notes and Queries*, s6-II.43 (1880), 321–22 (p. 322).

²⁴ *The Student's Handbook to the University and Colleges of Oxford*, 2nd edn (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1873), pp. 44–47.

²⁵ Barber, pp. 22–23; M. C. Curthoys, 'The Colleges in the New Era', in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume VII: Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part 2*, ed. by M. G. Brock and M. C. Curthoys, 8 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), VII, 115–58 (p. 149).

admission policies, especially as it was frequently updated. The 1873 edition reveals that the only individuals with an immediate right of access to the Bodleian Library and Radcliffe Camera were Oxford University graduates and (male) students in Civil Law and Medicine.²⁶ The Radcliffe Library, which contained the science collections, only granted automatic access to those permitted to study at the University Museum.²⁷ The Taylor Institution library was open to all university members but borrowing rights depending on the user's status at the university.²⁸ These basic rights of access changed little over the next few decades. Although immediate access was only granted to certain groups of people, it does not mean that others were not able to use the collections, and the handbooks outline the different application procedures.

The application process typically involved presenting a recommendation to the librarian. The University of Oxford's 1856 statute allowed access to the Bodleian Library to anyone who presented themselves with a letter of recommendation: 'alii vero, si literas commendatitias a probato aliquo viro secum attulerint' ('others, indeed, if they did bring with them a letter of recommendation from some approved man').²⁹ This meant that male undergraduates and non-university members, including women, could now request access. Although this statute does not outline exactly who a 'an approved man' could be, the 1873 handbook gives more specific instructions for non-university members: 'Strangers are admitted on presenting a written recommendation from a Graduate of the University, or on some other sufficiently respectable introduction'.³⁰ Despite this change in policy, by 1883 space had become a problem and E.W.B. Nicholson, the Bodleian Librarian from 1882 to

²⁶ *Student's Handbook, 2nd Edition*, p. 36.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 43–44.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 40–41.

²⁹ Craster, p. 145; *Statuta Universitatis Oxoniensis* (Oxford: E Typographeo Academico, 1857), p. 193. Translation is my own. Although 'alii' is a masculine plural noun, mixed gender groups in Latin use the masculine form.

³⁰ *Student's Handbook, 2nd Edition*, p. 36.

1912, had to temporarily reduce the number of readers admitted.³¹ In October 1884, he published a notice that ‘he would continue to admit students of either sex who were preparing for an honours-examination [...], but he must request other applicants to wait till he informed them of his ability to admit them’.³² This policy continued until July 1888.³³ This notice, combined with Nicholson’s employment of women, support of women working in librarianship, and his early appeals for the building of toilets for women in the Radcliffe Camera, suggests that he welcomed and supported women students using and working for the library.³⁴ However, this views were not always shared by his colleagues and the library’s curators.³⁵

Other libraries also required potential users to supply recommendations. Those wanting admission to the Radcliffe Library had to do in writing, including ‘if personally unknown’ to the librarian ‘a sufficient letter of reference or introduction’.³⁶ In the 1888 handbook, it is stated that non-members could access the Taylor Institution library, if they had recommendations from two people with a Masters of Arts from the university.³⁷ Similarly, All Souls College opened the Codrington Library to external readers in 1867.³⁸ Access was automatically offered to Oxford graduates and barristers, but male undergraduates had to be recommended by a Chichele Professor or their tutor, but in 1876 this was expanded to include recommendations from the warden or a fellow from All Souls

³¹ *The Bodleian Library in 1882–7: A Report from the Librarian* (Oxford, 1888), pp. 41–42.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³³ Manley, p. 176.

³⁴ Manley, pp. 99–100; 122–23; *Bodleian Library, Annual Report of the Curators of the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1888–1918) 1911.

³⁵ Manley, p. 100.

³⁶ *Student’s Handbook, 2nd Edition*, p. 43.

³⁷ *The Student’s Handbook to the University and Colleges of Oxford*, 9th edn (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1888), p. 99.

³⁸ J.S.G. Simmons, ‘All Souls’, in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume VII: Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part 2*, ed. by M. G. Brock and M. C. Curthoys, 8 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), VII, 209–20 (p. 212).

or the head or tutor of a college/hall.³⁹ This was extended further in the late 1880s when ‘other persons’ were eligible to apply for admission with a recommendation, meaning that women students could now apply for access to this library.⁴⁰ The first known female reader was Somerville student Cornelia Sorabji in 1890.⁴¹

In some respects the access male undergraduates and female students had to university libraries was quite similar. Both groups had to apply for access to certain libraries, such as Bodleian Library and Radcliffe Camera; however, there were other libraries that automatically granted admission to male undergraduates but not to non-members, like the Taylor Institution library. However, this is not the only way that women students were potentially at a greater disadvantage. The need supply a reference from Oxford University graduates or from certain ranks of academic staff might have been a challenge. Male undergraduates would likely have been able to request recommendations from academic staff at their college or from their professors as well as potentially from college alumni and other personal connections. Women students, especially those without familial or friendship connections to Oxford graduates, may not have been able to secure a recommendation as easily as many of their tutors were women. Although there were university lecturers and fellows who supported women’s university education, this was not the case for all academic staff and some may not have been willing to provide a recommendation. The option of providing a ‘sufficiently respectable introduction’ at the Bodleian and Radcliffe Libraries would have allowed students more options for acquiring letters of reference, such as from women’s college principals or tutors.⁴² However, deciding who was classed as ‘respectable’ would have been down to the the individual librarian. Depending on their view of women’s

³⁹ *Student’s Handbook, 2nd Edition*, p. 46; *The Student’s Handbook to the University and Colleges of Oxford*, 4th edn (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1876), p. 47.

⁴⁰ *Student’s Handbook, 9th Edition*, p. 103.

⁴¹ Adams, *Somerville for Women*, p. 114.

⁴² *Student’s Handbook, 2nd Edition*, p. 36.

colleges or women's university education, librarians could have blocked women's students access to their libraries. Although there is no evidence that such behaviour took place at scale, the fact that women students did not have the automatic right of access to the libraries but were admitted at the discretion of others means that their access was precarious and could be affected by changes in personnel or policy.

Although departmental libraries are not the focus of this section, the English Fund Library, founded in 1914, is worth singling out for comment.⁴³ Although not provided with automatic access from its inception, registered women students studying English were permitted to use the library from Hilary Term 1917. A letter from E.S. Craig on behalf of the Committee of Management of the English Fund was sent to all women's colleges informing them of the change.⁴⁴ Although the letter states that changes in regulations made during a 'time of emergency' could be altered after the World War I was over, Craig noted that 'it is the earnest desire of the Committee to be able to make the principle of the admission of Women Students to the Library a permanent one'. English was a popular subject with women students and the numbers of female students were consistently higher than male students in the late 1890s and early 1900s.⁴⁵ For example, during its first five years there were eighteen men and sixty-nine women who studied in the School of English.⁴⁶ It is therefore notable that admission to women was not offered when the English Fund Library was first established. Despite the change in policy, the letter only refers to admission for students studying in the

⁴³ D.J. Palmer, 'English', in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume VII: Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part 2*, ed. by M. G. Brock and M. C. Curthoys, 8 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), vii, 397–411 (p. 411); Morgan, p. 165.

⁴⁴ Oxford, St Anne's College (St Anne's), O.U. 5/2, Letter from E. S. Craig to Miss Burrows, 13 November 1916. This is the only extant letter, but the letter is mentioned in records at Somerville and St Hugh's.

⁴⁵ Palmer, p. 405.

⁴⁶ C.H. Firth, *The School of English Language and Literature: A Contribution to the History of Oxford Studies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1909), p. 36.

school, meaning that there were still women – college staff or students studying other subjects – who still may not have been able to use the English Fund Library.⁴⁷

One of the most important libraries for women students, outside of their college library, was the Nettleship Library. The Nettleship Library was founded by the AEW after they received a donation from the library of the late Henry Nettleship, a fellow at Corpus Christi College and a classics scholar who supported women's university education.⁴⁸ The library, founded in 1895, could be used by any members of the women's colleges or Home Students, providing a collection of books for reference and borrowing and, later, a reading room. As a non-collegiate space, the Nettleship was the first central library that could be accessed by all women students and, unlike the Bodleian Library and other libraries discussed previously, women students had a right of admission and did not need to apply to use the space. Although it was run by the AEW and their appointed library staff, a library committee was established and the librarians from the women's colleges were all members.⁴⁹ As with the college libraries, the Nettleship's collection was initially small, but it was developed, going from 1,130 volumes in 1896/97 to 8,466 volumes in 1919/20.⁵⁰ Not only was access to the collection of great use to the students but its reading room was well used, being described as 'a great convenience, especially between lectures'.⁵¹ As will be discussed in more detail in section 4, although each of the women's college libraries was independent, they formed part of network of libraries that worked together to improve the students' access to books. However, the Nettleship Library was the only centralised space of its kind for women

⁴⁷ Duncan Jones, *'Libraries for Women Students'*.

⁴⁸ Ingram Bywater and Roger T. Stearn, 'Nettleship, Henry (1839–1893), Latin Scholar', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2011
<<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-19912>> [accessed 30 August 2022].

⁴⁹ Oxford, St Anne's College (St Anne's), Nettleship Library Minute Book 1896, 28 Jan 1896.

⁵⁰ Oxford, St Anne's College (St Anne's), St Anne's, AEW. Complete Set of Annual Reports 1879–1920, A.E.W. 1/1 A, Report 1896/97 and 1919/20.

⁵¹ St Anne's, AEW. Complete set of annual reports 1879–1920, Report 1900/01.

students and therefore, it made a unique contribution to women's university education. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine the library in much more detail, but its archives hold much interesting material about its founding and development.

In conclusion, gaining admission to university libraries was not always simple with each institution having its own rules about which groups could apply for access and what the application procedure entailed. As discussed, despite being members of the university, male undergraduates would also have had to apply for access to certain libraries. Women students had to supply letters of recommendation to apply for admission to the Bodleian Library, Radcliffe Camera, Radcliffe Library, and the Taylor Institution amongst others. Although women did use these spaces, their experiences may not have been the same as the male undergraduates. For example, some libraries, like the Taylor Institution, had different borrowing rights for non-University members. At the Radcliffe Camera, there were only two desks reserved for women and there were no toilet facilities for them until 1911.⁵² Therefore, women's college libraries and the Nettleship Library performed important roles for women's university education as, although their collections could not match the larger university libraries, they were spaces where women students had a right to read, work, and borrow books with few restrictions.

⁵² Brittain, p. 72; Manley, pp. 122–23.

3: Staff at Women's College Libraries

Women's college libraries in Oxford were mostly run on a day-to-day basis by a single member of staff: the librarian. During this period, this position was held only by women.⁵³

The librarian's role, in collaboration with a library committee, covered acquisitions, cataloguing, classification, the development and maintenance of library spaces. Most holders of the librarian position took on the role without any training or experience in librarianship.

In 1910, Ethel S. Fegan, when discussing women in librarianship, wrote:

With regard to the libraries of the women's colleges, [...] the post of librarian is generally filled by some former student without any special training, and she must, as a rule, have some private means as well, since the colleges [...] cannot afford to offer much more than a nominal salary, unless the post is not combined with another.⁵⁴

Fegan's comments accurately reflect the situation in the Oxford women's colleges and this section will demonstrate the prevalence of alumnae taking on library work and other roles in college. It will explore many aspects related to staffing, such as recruitment, duration of employment, multiple roles, and the use of assistants. This discussion is supported by Appendix, which collates this information, and other biographical details, for all known library workers.

3.1: Staffing

When the colleges began their library collections, they did not have a member of staff dedicated to library work. This is likely because the collections were small and did not require much management; for example, Elizabeth Wordsworth, long-term Principal of LMH, recalls that 'in the very early days, our library would not have filled a single shelf. It consisted at first of exactly two books'.⁵⁵ Staff may have worked on the library informally

⁵³ Appendix A.

⁵⁴ Fegan, p. 225.

⁵⁵ Wordsworth, p. 151.

as student assistants may have, as many colleges did not employ a designated librarian for many years after the college's foundation. Somerville was the first to appoint a staff member as Librarian, with Isabella Don being given the role (and that of Resident Tutor in English Literature) in March 1885, which she held for one academic year.⁵⁶ Somerville did not appoint another librarian until 1893 when Mildred Pope took on the combined Librarian and Secretary role.⁵⁷ LMH was the next college to appoint a librarian in 1895 when Eleanor Lodge became Librarian and Assistant Secretary.⁵⁸ Although from 1890/91 to 1895, the library had been run by a member of the council, elected Council Librarian, and a student assistant.⁵⁹ St Hugh's had no formal library staff for its first nine years, but in November 1895, the Council decided that the Vice Principal role would include responsibility for the library and Margaret Lee was appointed to the position.⁶⁰ The vice principal would continue to manage the library, along with her other duties, until May 1904 when the roles were separated.⁶¹ At this point, Helena Deneke became Librarian.⁶² At St Hilda's, Christine Burrows ran the library as part of her role as Vice Principal from 1896 until 1908 when, as at St Hugh's, the librarian position became a separate role. In October 1908, Margaret Keeling began working as Librarian and Resident English Tutor.⁶³

From 1885, when the first librarian was appointed, until the end of the 1919/20 academic year, there were at least forty members of staff who worked in some capacity in the four college libraries: four at St Hilda's, eleven at St Hugh's, sixteen at Somerville, and ten at

⁵⁶ Oxford, Somerville College (Somerville), Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 6 March 1885; Oxford, Somerville College (Somerville), Somerville College Reports 1879–1890, Report 1886/87.

⁵⁷ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 12 June 1893.

⁵⁸ Oxford, Lady Margaret Hall (LMH), L.M.H. Annual Reports 1880–1896 vol. I, Report 1894/95.

⁵⁹ Lodge, p. 83.

⁶⁰ Oxford, St Hugh's College (St Hugh's), SHG/B/2/1, St Hugh's Hall Committee Minutes 1890–1908, 20 Nov 1895.

⁶¹ St Hugh's, St Hugh's Hall Committee Minutes 1890–1908, 17 May 1904.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 17 May 1904.

⁶³ Oxford, St Hilda's College (St Hilda's), MIN 004/1, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford. Minutes. From 1896 to 1918, 18 May 1908.

LMH, with one individual, Margaret Ramsay, having worked at both Somerville and LMH. One must note that there may have been other individuals who worked at the libraries but who did not enter the historical record. This number also does not include student assistants who will be discussed in section 3.3. These forty individuals held forty-seven discrete positions within the college libraries and held a range of job titles (see figure 1). Generally, the libraries were run by a single individual with the title of Librarian. However, for some colleges there were periods of time at which the library work was completed by multiple people and job titles were not consistent. Somerville has the largest range of job titles, but because there are no surviving job descriptions in the Somerville archives it is impossible to know the nature of each role. For example, one cannot know whether the positions of Sub-Librarian and Assistant to Librarian were different roles or just a change of job title. Consequently, rather than assuming a hierarchy of roles, this dissertation will use “librarian” as an umbrella term for all staff members working at a library; however, all references to specific job titles will be capitalised.

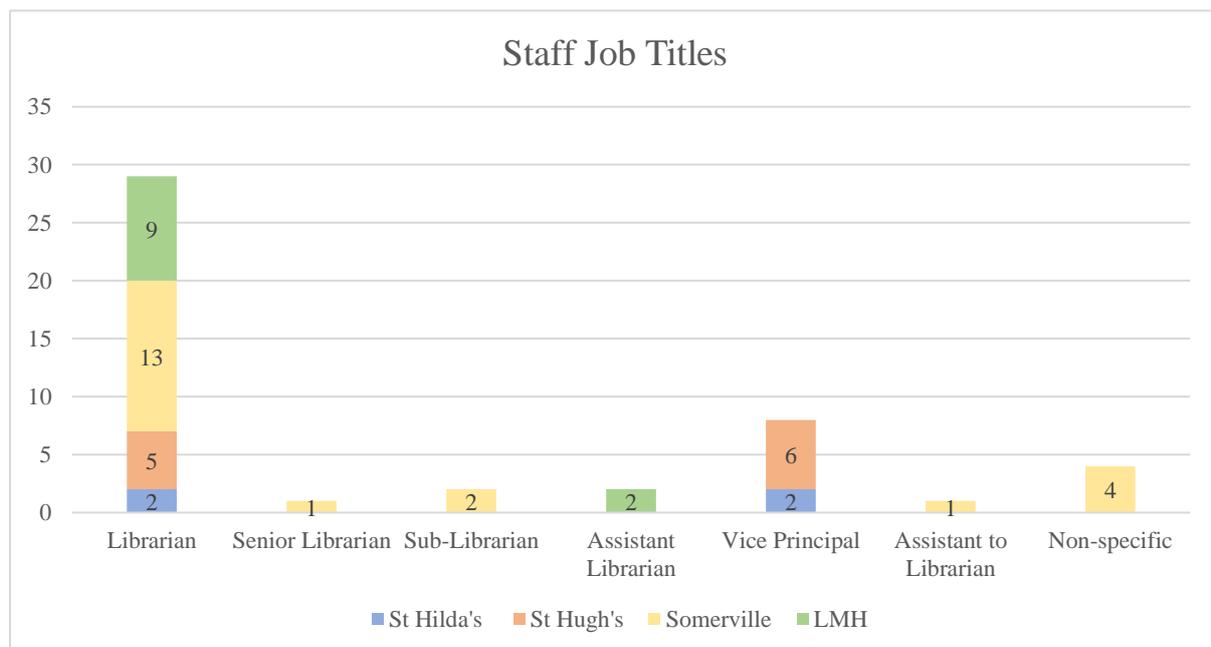


Figure 1: The job titles held by all members of library staff.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Source: Appendix A.

3.2: The Role

There is little information available about the exact duties of the librarian at the women's colleges. There is only one known job description, which dates from 10 March 1898 and outlines the duties of the library committee and the librarian at LMH. The librarian's duties are described as follows:

- a. To have custody of the books.
- b. To see that the Catalogue is kept in order & complete.
- c. To keep the amounts of money received & expended.
- d. To summon the Committee where required.
- e. To acknowledge any gifts of money or books.⁶⁵

In this case, the librarian did not have sole charge of acquisitions, with purchases being decided by the committee on which the librarian sat. The breakdown of roles and responsibilities are likely to have differed across colleges and across the decades. Most commonly, the position was filled by a single individual, who took on most of the duties connected with the library. However, there are fourteen known examples where the librarian was supported by another member of staff or a student assistant, which will be discussed later. The role of librarian was generally recruited on a permanent basis or on a fixed-term contract; however, there were seventeen occasions where the role was held temporarily either to cover a time when the librarian was on leave or when the librarian herself was covering another role within the college. These periods of cover could be short, such as for one term, or last for years. For instance, the librarian role at St Hugh's was covered for 1916/17 and 1917/18 by Olive Sinclair and Joan Evans respectively because the librarian, Eliza Thomas, was on sick leave.⁶⁶

The librarian role was typically a lower paid position. It is challenging to calculate the average salary for several reasons. First, not all records discussing a librarian's employment mention salary and, if they do, other benefits, like free accommodation, are not always stated. Second, many librarians held other posts within their college so their salary was a combined

⁶⁵ Oxford, Lady Margaret Hall (LMH), Council Minutes 1884–94, 10 March 1898.

⁶⁶ Oxford, St Hugh's College (St Hugh's), SHG/R/1/1/1–4, College Reports, Report 1916/17; 1917/18.

total; or they earned additional income through lecturing for the AEW or private coaching, meaning their librarian salary may not reflect their total income. The salaries are inconsistent both within individual colleges and between them as is reflected in the following examples of starting salaries. At Somerville, the lowest salary per term for someone holding the Librarian position was £5, paid to Isabella Don (Librarian and Resident Tutor) in 1885; the highest known salary was £25 per term paid to Madeline Giles (1914) and Vera Farnell (1915) for the Librarian and Secretary position.⁶⁷ At St Hilda's, Lilian Counsell was paid £40 whilst covering the role of Vice-Principal in 1902 and Margaret Keeling (1908) and Louisa Todd (1912) were both paid £50 as Librarian and Resident Tutor.⁶⁸ At St Hugh's, we know only three salaries: Margaret Lee was paid £30 per annum as Vice-Principal (1895) and Joan Evans was paid the same as Librarian in 1917, while Helena Deneke was employed as Librarian in 1904, she received no salary but free board and lodgings.⁶⁹ At LMH, as Librarians Dorothy Kempe received £10 per annum (1898) and Agnes Clay was paid £15 per annum (1902) whereas Evelyn Jamison was paid £60 per annum in 1907 for the joint position of Bursar and Librarian.⁷⁰ These are just some of the twenty-four known salaries but, because of the wide variety of types of positions held and the long time span between 1885 and 1918, they are difficult to analyse.

It is also challenging to find comparative salaries outside of the Oxford women's colleges because there were not many women working in academic libraries.⁷¹ However, there are a few examples that provide helpful comparisons. The librarian of the Yorkshire College (later the University of Leeds), Fanny Passavant, was hired in 1885 for £45 and her

⁶⁷ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 6 March 1885; Oxford, Somerville College (Somerville), Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 2, 20 Oct 1914; 15 June 1915.

⁶⁸ St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford. Minutes. From 1896 to 1918, 14 Oct 1902; 18 May 1908; 17 Feb 1912.

⁶⁹ St Hugh's, St Hugh's Hall Committee Minutes 1890–1908, 20 Nov 1895; Oxford, St Hugh's College (St Hugh's), SHG/B/3/1/1, Council Minutes 1911–1917, 9 June 1917; and Schwartz, *A Serious Endeavour*, p. 62.

⁷⁰ LMH, Council Minutes 1884–94, 9 June 1898; 23 Oct 1902, and Letter from Mrs Johnson to Evelyn Jamison, 9 March 1907.

⁷¹ Kerslake, ““They Have Had to Come down to the Women for Help!””, pp. 22–23.

salary had increased to £125 in 1910.⁷² Fanny's assistant, Miss F. M. Ekins, who worked at the library for 27 years, had a starting salary of £26 in 1896, which was increased several times until her final salary in 1923 was £170.⁷³ A further example comes from Manchester College, Oxford (now Harris Manchester College), which was a men's college. Manchester College's library was run by Lucy Toulmin Smith, from 1894 to 1911 and her starting salary was £120 per annum.⁷⁴ It is important to remember that, compared to the women's colleges, the University of Leeds library was significantly larger, with likely more funds and a higher workload, and Manchester College, although it only opened in Oxford in 1893, was a long-established institution, founded in Warrington in 1757 as a college for Unitarian students. Nevertheless, their female staff were paid much higher wages than any of the librarians working at the Oxford women colleges. The archival evidence therefore demonstrates that women's college librarians generally earned a much lower salary than their counterparts in similar institutions. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss the socio-economic implications of the low salaries paid to librarians but, as noted by Ethel Fegan, those who worked as librarians at women's colleges would likely need to have private means or salaries from multiple jobs.⁷⁵ This would inevitably limit who could take up these positions.

3.3: Teamwork and Student Assistance

Although most colleges tended to only have one member of library staff, there a few examples of small teams. LMH has only one period in which a small staff team was running the library. Evelyn Jamison was supported by Agnes Clay as Assistant Librarian from June

⁷² Kerslake, 'A History of Women Workers in English Libraries, 1871–1974', p. 58.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁷⁴ D.S. Porter, 'Smith, Lucy Toulmin (1838–1911), Literary Scholar and Librarian', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004

<<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36151>> [accessed 12 August 2022].

⁷⁵ Fegan, p. 225.

1907 to January 1910. Although the reason for needing an Assistant Librarian for these years is not stated, it might have been because of Jamison's increased workload. When Clay resigned as Librarian in 1907, Jamison took on the role as well as becoming Domestic Bursar.⁷⁶ Jamison held both positions until 1909/10 when Winifred Moberly was employed as Domestic Bursar.⁷⁷ This coincided with Agnes Clay's resignation from her roles at LMH in early 1910.⁷⁸ After this time, Jamison worked alone in the library until she resigned as librarian in 1921, indicating that she was able to fulfil her library duties without assistance.

Somerville has the most evidence of teams sharing the library work. Mildred Pope and Alice Bruce had the longest running team, working together for around six years from 1893/94 until 1899. Pope, as Senior Librarian, was Bruce's superior for two of these years but from 1895/96 they both shared the Librarian job title.⁷⁹ Pope also worked from October 1905 to October 1907 as Acting Librarian, with two staff working with her for some or all of this period. For those two years, Lucy Kempson was Sub-Librarian.⁸⁰ Emily Overend also worked at the library until November 1907. It is not known when Overend took on the library work, but it was likely after she finished her studies in 1906. We know little about the nature of this work as it is only briefly mentioned in the council minutes when she was being replaced: Miss Overend 'should be relieved from Library Work & that for next Term Miss Ramsey should give two hours' work a day & receive her board'.⁸¹ After Lucy Kempson took over from Pope in October 1907, she was supported at two separate times during her tenure as librarian: first, for Hilary term 1908 by Margaret Ramsay and second, Miss Wynne Jones worked as an 'assistant to the Librarian' for the 1911 Hilary term.⁸² The records do not

⁷⁶ Oxford, Lady Margaret Hall (LMH), L.M.H. Annual Reports 1905–1912 vol. III, Report 1906/07.

⁷⁷ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1905–1912 vol. III, Report 1909/10.

⁷⁸ Oxford, Lady Margaret Hall (LMH), Council Minutes 1909–14, 22 Jan 1910.

⁷⁹ Oxford, Somerville College (Somerville), Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1893/94; 1895/96.

⁸⁰ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 23 Oct 1905; 4 Feb 1907.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 30 Nov 1907.

⁸² Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 30 Nov 1907; Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 2, 7 Feb 1911.

indicate why assistance was needed at these times and not others, and it is notable that neither Overend, Ramsay, or Miss Wynne Jones were mentioned as working in the library in the annual reports even though they usually list library news and staff changes. This, therefore, suggests that the work was informal, perhaps taken on due to temporarily increased workloads or because the college wanted to provide some work for recent alumnae. The latter seems likely in the case of Ramsay who, after studying *Literae Humaniores* at Somerville from 1904 to 1907, assisted the Classics Tutor but this may not have been enough work or she may have needed additional income.⁸³ Unfortunately, there is nothing currently known about Miss Wynne Jones or her connection to Somerville. She is not listed as a student at any of the colleges, but it is possible, as she was only mentioned once, that her name was recorded incorrectly. Therefore, little can be learnt from her period of employment at the college.

Another way that colleges could find additional assistance, especially to undertake some of the more basic collection management tasks, was to use student assistants. Eleanor Lodge describes the earliest example of this in her memoirs, writing about her experiences working in the library as a student at LMH.⁸⁴ She commented that the work comprised mostly of labelling books and shelving. Student assistants were also used at St Hilda's and Somerville, although not much evidence remains about how many students took on this work, how long they helped, or even the names of all the student assistants. These two colleges took slightly different approaches. St Hilda's included students on its library committee and as part of this role they were required to help with shelving at busy times of the year, as described by Ethel Collinson to her mother in 1918:

I have been nominated for Library Representative for History [...]. The office is really 2nd year, but our present poor Second Year is so overworked that the B. thought I might undertake the job. The functions are merely to represent the History school on

⁸³ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 21 Oct 1907; 30 Nov 1907.

⁸⁴ Lodge, p. 83.

the Library Committee and to put away the history books at the beginning and end of term.⁸⁵

The meeting minutes from St Hilda's library committee, which had been established in October 1909, also reveal that some students were given the role of Sub-Librarian.⁸⁶ There are four named Sub-Librarians – Violet Doudney, Agnes Sandys, Mary Aslin, and Mary Codd – who each held the position for varying durations from Hilary term 1911 to Trinity term 1915.⁸⁷ After this point, the minutes do not list if any of the student committee members were Sub-Librarian, but there is a reference to the position at the November 1920 meeting, indicating that the role was still appointed.⁸⁸ There is no surviving evidence as to what the position entailed or if the students received payment, but it is notable that St Hilda's used students rather than staff to provide additional assistance to the librarian. As St Hilda's had only a few members of academic staff, with only two tutors until 1918 when a third was employed, it may not have been feasible to have the other staff help in the library.⁸⁹ Although it is not known if the Sub-Librarians received payment, or some other recompense, the role provided them with experience of library work and notably one Sub-Librarian, Mary Aslin, went on to work in librarianship.⁹⁰

Slightly more information is available about the student assistants at Somerville. The first example dates from 1911, when Katharine Farewell Jones was paid £5 for assisting Mildred Pope whilst Lucy Kempson was on leave.⁹¹ The annual report records Jones' help,

⁸⁵ Oxford, St Hilda's College (St Hilda's), Collinson letters, PP 13/30, Letter from Ethel Collinson to Mrs Collinson, 5 May 1918.

⁸⁶ St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford. Minutes. From 1896 to 1918, 30 Oct 1909.

⁸⁷ Oxford, St Hilda's College (St Hilda's), MIN 002/1, S. Hilda's Hall Library Committee 1910–1915.

⁸⁸ Oxford, St Hilda's College (St Hilda's), MIN 002/2, S. Hilda's Hall Library. Minutes of Library Committee Meetings Hilary Term 1916–1923, 25 Nov 1920.

⁸⁹ *St Hilda's College, Oxford Centenary Register 1893–1993*, ed. by G. Verity B. Brown and Margaret E. Rayner (Oxford: St Hilda's College, 1993).

⁹⁰ Brown and Rayner.

⁹¹ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 2, 2 Dec 1911 and Oxford, Somerville College (Somerville), Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1911/12.

noting that she ‘undertook much of the work’.⁹² Several years later, the college council formalised this a role, agreeing:

(2) that she [the Librarian] be allowed to get assistance from time to time (3) That a student be awarded £5 a term to assist the Librarian, & that for this year, she be appointed by the Principal & Librarian⁹³

Ellen Winters was awarded the bursary, but we do not know how long she worked at the library. Fortunately, the library committee minutes described the scope of her work, stating that ‘she was giving almost 1 hour a day to her work being to put away books, book plate & label books etc’.⁹⁴ There is only one further mention of this bursary, in November 1917 when Hannah Lister was appointed for one term. It is, therefore, not clear if the bursary was awarded each term or year, or only when the librarian required more assistance.⁹⁵

Nevertheless, the council’s resolution reveals that Somerville considered both ad hoc and regular help with collection management to be a good way to support the librarian’s work.

While there were many librarians who worked alone, it is evident that there were also teams of people taking on library work. As has been shown, some of these were more permanent teams, like Mildred Pope and Alice Bruce who worked together for six years. Others were more temporary during times of staff absence or, like with the student library committee members at St Hilda’s, at times of increased workload. The paucity of details with many of these examples also demonstrates that there were students and staff who took on library work but whose contribution was not always be listed in college reports or minutes and, even when it was, the nature and extent of their contribution is not always evident. This is important to remember when looking at St Hugh’s and LMH which did not appear to use

⁹² Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1911/12.

⁹³ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 2, 30 Oct 1914.

⁹⁴ Oxford, Somerville College (Somerville), Somerville Library Committee Minutes 1903–1916, 30 Oct 1914.

⁹⁵ Oxford, Somerville College (Somerville), Somerville Library Committee Minutes 1916–1923, 6 Nov 1917.

staff and student teams very much; there may have been informal and/or voluntary help that was simply not recorded.

3.4: The Librarians

Although not much is known about the daily lives and work of the librarians, we can learn about more about them by examining council minutes and college annual reports. Annual reports are particularly useful source of information because they shared news about the college and its students, both past and present. From these records, we can learn about the librarians' university education and their careers. This section will explore the librarians' academic background and experience in library work, the positions they held in their colleges, and the duration of their employment as librarians, and their future work.

There is one notable connection between the forty staff members who worked at the libraries: all, bar Miss Wynne Jones, had attended one of the women's colleges in Oxford. The colleges often appointed an alumna when positions became available or when temporary assistance was needed to cover leave. This was true for both teaching and non-teaching roles. For librarian positions, the trend was also to appoint recent alumnae, with around half (nineteen of forty) of librarians being employed in their role within two years of completing their studies at Oxford.⁹⁶ Colleges did not, however, just employ their own students. At St Hilda's, two of its four librarians had studied at St Hilda's and two at St Hugh's. The St Hugh's annual report commented on St Hilda's appointment of Margaret Keeling in 1908: 'The appointment of M.A. Keeling as Tutor in English and Librarian at St. Hilda's Hall, Oxford, gives us special pleasure, as she is the first of our students to hold an official position in another women's college in Oxford'.⁹⁷ This comment not only reveals the college's

⁹⁶ Appendix A.

⁹⁷ St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1907/08.

continued interests in the lives and careers of its alumnae but also the status placed on employment in the Oxford context. St Hugh's hired around half of its librarians from other colleges: Ethel Venables was a Home Student; Margaret Hayes-Robinson was from St Hilda's; and Dora Wylie, Eleanor Jourdain, and Olive Sinclair all studied at LMH. LMH and Somerville's libraries were staffed mostly their own alumnae. LMH only employed two non-LMH alumnae: Maria Czaplicka and Margaret Ramsay, both having studied at Somerville, were employed as temporary librarians in the late 1910s. Somerville alumnae comprised thirteen of sixteen individuals who worked at the library. One of the two non-Somerville students was Rose Sidgwick. Although Rose Sidgwick, who had been a Home Student, had not studied at Somerville, she was not unknown in the college. In the 1902/03 annual report, which mentioned her temporary appointment as history tutor, she is described as one 'who bears a name long and closely connected with the College'.⁹⁸ Her father Arthur Sidgwick, mentioned earlier in section 2, was a long-term member of the Somerville Council.⁹⁹ This does raise of the question of how librarians were appointed. The proportion of alumnae employed and this comment about Rose Sidgwick's employment, indicates that colleges mostly hired those already known to them. This does not mean that those appointed were not suited to the roles, but it is evident that colleges were likely hiring from a smaller pool of candidates and perhaps were not advertising library positions externally.

We learn little of the recruitment process from documentary records, as council minutes tend to only state appointments with little discussion of job requirements, candidates, or the selection process. There are many instances where principals were empowered to select and appoint replacement staff, or where the principal proposed her choice to be approved by the council. There are only a few extant examples of more formal application processes, with

⁹⁸ Somerville, *Somerville College Reports 1891–1903*, Report 1902/03.

⁹⁹ Howarth, 'Sidgwick, Arthur (1840–1920), Educationist and Classical Scholar'.

several instances being recorded in the St Hilda's archives. In 1910 the college wanted to recruit a history tutor and a committee was set up to advertise the post, supply particulars to applicants and consider the salary.¹⁰⁰ Three applicants were considered, and Elizabeth Levett was appointed.¹⁰¹ A similar process was undertaken when recruiting for the new Librarian and Resident English Tutor in 1911, with a committee being instructed 'to consider as to the filling of the vacancy and to submit the names of selected candidates to the Council'.¹⁰² Notably, in this second example there is no mention of advertisement and it is possible that the committee approached potential candidates directly. However, before the appointment was made Edward Armstrong, Chairman of the St Hilda's Council, had an interview with Louisa Todd. Armstrong notes that he 'distinctly approved of Miss Todd', that 'her judgement seemed very sound' and that 'she knew her own mind' before noting that 'I feel quite satisfied, [and] doubt if we should do better'.¹⁰³ He also states on the benefits of having prior knowledge of the candidate: 'I had particular advantages (1) I had her alone (2) I know several of her S. Hugh's friends very well indeed, [and] she knew all about me'. These comments reveal the close-knit community formed by the women's colleges and its impact on recruitment. Women's colleges in Oxford were small and a sense of community is likely to have developed because of the small numbers of students and staff who both lived and worked together. This may have made informal recruitment easier and may explain why many positions were held by alumnae: the staff would have known the suitability of an individual for a role and an alumna of a women's college would have known about college life, other staff, and have an understanding of the role itself before appointment.

¹⁰⁰ St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford. Minutes. From 1896 to 1918, 24 Feb 1910.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 28 May 1910.

¹⁰² Ibid., 25 Nov 1911.

¹⁰³ Oxford, St Hilda's College (St Hilda's), BURR 012/15, Letter E. Armstrong to C. Burrows, 1 Feb 1912.

Another indication that colleges preferred known candidates and were less concerned about prior experience with library work, is that none of the librarians appointed had any formal training and only three had worked previously in librarianship. One of the student assistants, Ellen Winters, is described as having worked in a library before, but nothing is known about the duration or nature of this work.¹⁰⁴ Eleanor Lodge and Margaret Ramsay worked as both assistants and librarians. As a student, Lodge had assisted in the LMH library, and Ramsay was an assistant at Somerville and later a librarian at LMH. It is possible that their previous experience made them desirable candidates for the librarian roles but there is little evidence indicating this. Although Ramsay's experience at Somerville may have made her a suitable candidate for the temporary librarian position at LMH, where she also coached in classics, the annual report for the year focusses on her first in Literae Humaniores and her previous library work is not mentioned.¹⁰⁵ Even after being appointed as librarian, there is no evidence that anyone went on any training courses, but rather learnt any necessary skills on the job.¹⁰⁶ Women had been working in libraries in the UK since the 1870s and there would have been many whose experience would have made them more qualified than college alumnae. In general, women library workers were found mostly in the public sector, but there are some examples of women employed at university or college libraries, such as Fanny Passavant and Lucy Toulmin Smith as well as at the Bodleian Library. The Bodleian Library first hired women in around 1883 and the annual reports list many women employees, including Oxford college alumnae who worked mostly on cataloguing.¹⁰⁷ There is no evidence to suggest these women applied for or knew of college librarian vacancies, but it is

¹⁰⁴ Somerville Library Committee Minutes 1903–1916, 30 Oct 1914.

¹⁰⁵ L.M.H. Annual Reports 1905–1912 vol. II, Report 1919/20.

¹⁰⁶ Different forms of education and training existed from the early 1890s, including summer schools and, later, correspondence courses. See; Gerald Bramley, *Apprentice to Graduate: A History of Library Education in the United Kingdom* (London: Bingley, 1981), pp. 42–62; Dave Muddiman, 'Education for Librarianship', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Alistair Black and Peter Hoare, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), III, 534–42 (pp. 35–36).

¹⁰⁷ Bodleian Library, *Annual Report of the Curators of the Bodleian Library*, 1900–1901; 1905; 1909; 1910–1916.

interesting to consider why none of these women went on to work at a woman's college. The fact that women who lived locally, some with an Oxford education, and all with experience in library work, were not applying for these roles supports the argument that the positions were not advertised to the public. However, it is also possible that the roles were undesirable to those not wishing to work in the college environment, because of the low pay, or if the librarian position was combined with either a teaching or administrative role.

The women's colleges were small institutions, and staff often held several positions, including administrative, academic, and pastoral roles. Some held a range of paid and voluntary roles that supported the smooth running of the college, like Eliza Thomas and Louisa Todd. Thomas worked at St Hugh's for four years, during which she acted as the head of a hall of residence, librarian, German tutor, and, for one year, college secretary.¹⁰⁸ Todd was not only Librarian and Resident English Tutor at St Hilda's; she was also the president of the college's boat club.¹⁰⁹ Those who worked at a college for a long time will have held a multitude of different roles over the years, with a notable example being Alice Bruce who worked at Somerville for her entire career (1894–1929). Bruce once commented that she had worked every role in the college other than those of science or classics tutor, and for a brief time in 1898 she was the librarian, history tutor, and vice-principal.¹¹⁰

It was more common than not for the librarian role to be held alongside other positions or duties in college. Thirty-two of forty librarians held another office for some or all of their tenure as librarian and the nine who did not tended to be those appointed as temporary librarians.¹¹¹ The other positions held by librarians fell into two main categories:

¹⁰⁸ St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1917/18.

¹⁰⁹ St Hilda's, Letter from Ethel Collinson to Mrs Collinson, 17 Feb 1918.

¹¹⁰ Adams, *Somerville for Women*, p. 53; Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 11 May 1896; 24 Oct 1898; Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1895/96.

¹¹¹ See Appendix A. The nine only employed for library work were: Joan Evans, Dorothea Schuster, Julia Du Cane, Rose Sidgwick, Miss Wynne Jones, Elsie Bazeley, Juliet Mellor, Barbara Friere-Marreco, and Maria Czaplicka.

tutorships and administrative roles. Thirteen individuals held the role of tutors or were tutoring in some capacity whilst acting as librarian.¹¹² In terms of administrative roles, twelve librarians worked as Secretary for some or all of their tenure and one as Domestic Bursar.¹¹³ Another frequently held role was Vice-Principal.¹¹⁴ At St Hugh's, the Vice-Principal covered the duties of librarian from 1895 to 1904 and in this time seven individuals held this role. This was similarly the case in the early years of St Hilda's when Christine Burrows was Vice-Principal from 1896 to 1908. At Somerville and LMH, the Vice-Principal and Librarian roles were always separate positions but were both held simultaneously by Alice Bruce and Edith Pearson. These statistics show that the day-to-day management of Oxford women's colleges was done by a small group of people whose responsibilities covered many different areas. It was uncommon for someone to work only as a librarian, with only Rose Sidgwick, Joan Evans, Lucy Kempson (1905–07), and Vera Farnell (from 1919/20) employed in a permanent capacity in this way. Although it is impossible to know the proportion of time librarians spent on their library work in comparison to their other duties, the number of librarians holding other college positions suggests that the library did not require a full-time member of staff. This would have been the case especially in the earlier years of the colleges, when the libraries had smaller collections and fewer students using them. Vera Brittain notes, in connection to the first LMH librarian Eleanor Lodge, that:

in the eighteen-nineties librarianship at Lady Margaret Hall was a relatively light occupation, as the college had little money to spend on books and the students read mainly in the Radcliffe Camera. Eleanor Lodge filled her time by becoming unofficial adviser to every one [sic] reading History until her actual appointment as tutor.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Louisa Todd, Margaret Keeling, Helena Deneke, Cecilia Ady, Eliza Thomas, Isabella Don, Mildred Pope, Alice Bruce, Emily Overend, Margaret Ramsay (at Somerville and LMH), Agnes Clay, Evelyn Jamison, and Elizabeth Levett.

¹¹³ Eliza Thomas, Olive Sinclair, Mildred Pope, Alice Bruce, Margery Fry, Lucy Kempson, Madeline Giles, Vera Farnell, Joyce Thornton, Matilda Lyne, Eleanor Lodge, and Dorothy Kempe.

¹¹⁴ Christine Burrows, Lilian Counsell, Lucy Lee, Ethel Venables, Margaret Hayes-Robinson, Dora Wylie, Winifred Mammatt, Eleanor Jourdain, Edith Pearson, and Alice Bruce.

¹¹⁵ Brittain, p. 93.

Even as the libraries grew larger, budgets increased, and dedicated library spaces were built, the evidence shows that most librarians still worked multiple roles.

It is important to consider the length of the librarians' tenure and the role they went onto next as this can provide insights into the librarians' careers and aspirations. The figures show that it was more common for a librarian to stay in her role for two years or less; however, one should note that a large proportion (fifteen of twenty-four) of these individuals were temporary librarians (figure 2). This, therefore, explains why so many librarians worked in their roles for under a year. If one considers only those librarians with permanent jobs, there is a more even distribution of tenures with an equal number working 1–2, 3–4, or 7–9 years in post (figure 3). The person with the longest tenure as librarian was Vera Farnell, who worked in the role at Somerville for twelve years. There were many reasons why individuals resigned their librarian position, such as family illness (Dora Wylie¹¹⁶), an upcoming marriage (Agnes Clay¹¹⁷ and Ethel Venables¹¹⁸), or to take on charity or mission work (Louisa Todd¹¹⁹ and Edith Pearson¹²⁰). However, for those with permanent positions, it more common for them to take on another role in their colleges or to move to another academic institution. Of the women who moved institutions, some were appointed to academic positions; for example, Rose Sidgwick was employed as an Assistant Lecturer at the University of Birmingham and Margaret Ramsay became a Lecturer at the University of Aberdeen.¹²¹ Others, like Margery Fry, took roles as heads of university residences for women or began

¹¹⁶ St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1900/01.

¹¹⁷ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1905–1912 vol. III, Report 1909/10.

¹¹⁸ St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1898/99

¹¹⁹ St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford Reports, Report 1919/20.

¹²⁰ Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, *The Brown Book* (Oxford: Lady Margaret Hall, 2019), p. 44.

¹²¹ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1904/05; John Harrower, *Aberdeen Alumni at Other Universities*, 2 vols (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1911), I, p. 55.

similar administrative and pastoral roles; for example, Margaret Keeling became Dean of Women Students at the University of Alberta.¹²²

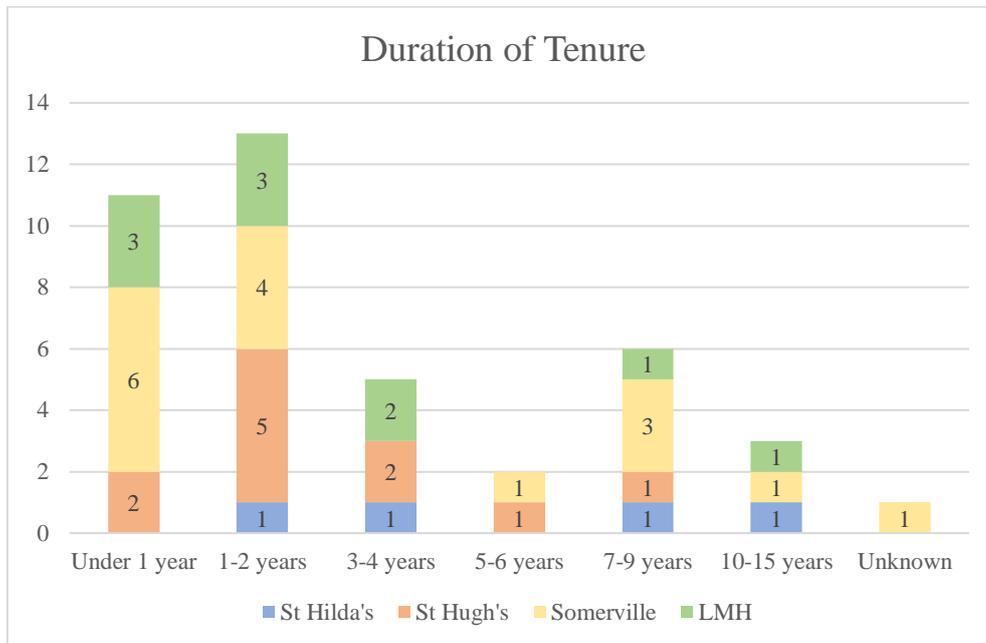


Figure 2: Length of time working as librarian.¹²³

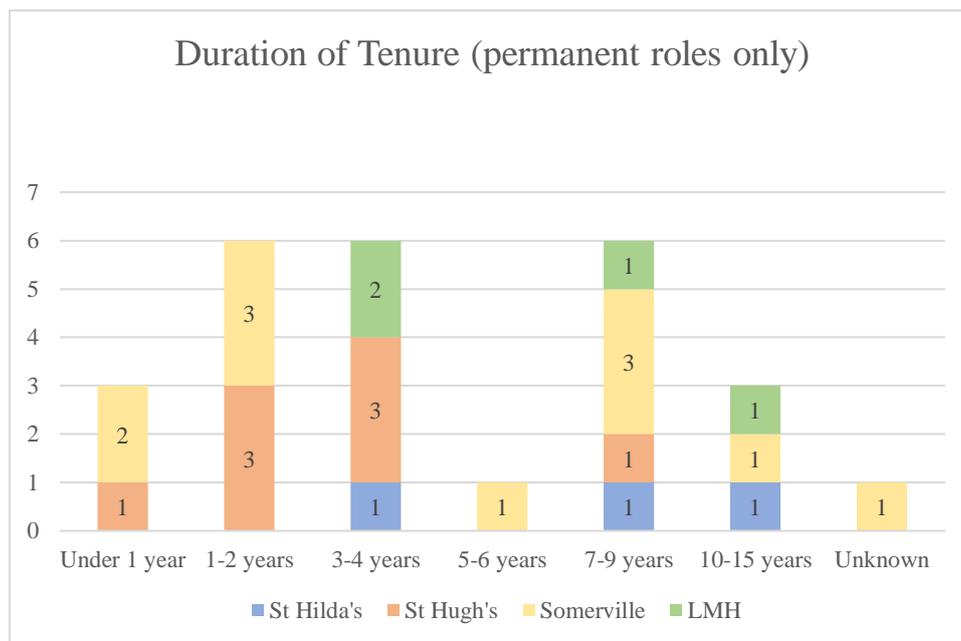


Figure 3: Length of time working as librarian in a permanent position.¹²⁴

¹²² Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1903/04; Brown and Rayner.

¹²³ Source: Appendix A.

¹²⁴ Source: Appendix A.

There is little evidence that the librarians were interested in a career in librarianship. Other than Mildred Pope and Margaret Ramsay who took on temporary librarian work, only one librarian returned to librarianship later in their careers. Winifred Mammatt had temporarily acted as Vice-Principal of St Hugh's for 1901/02, when this role still included responsibility for the library, and then later, after working as a teacher, she returned to work as Librarian at the college from 1922 to 1926.¹²⁵ In addition, Mary Aslin, who had been a student assistant at St Hilda's, went on to have a career in librarianship.¹²⁶ It seems women worked as librarians because the role allowed them to continue working in an academic environment and community rather than because of a particular interest in librarianship. For example, Margery Fry's reaction to being offered the job as librarian at Somerville was that the role was 'so tempting' even though she personally felt little vocation for the role.¹²⁷ This does not mean that the librarians did not enjoy their work nor was librarianship necessarily considered as a steppingstone into other academic jobs in the women's colleges or elsewhere. Nevertheless, librarianship did offer those wanting to work at an academic institution a role that contributed to college life and supported student learning.

Conclusion

This section examined how women's colleges staffed their libraries. It demonstrated that colleges employed Oxford alumnae, with most of them having only recently completed their studies and few having any experience of librarianship. This illustrates the colleges' tendency to hire those already known to them. It is notable that, in addition to their library work, most librarians held an administrative or tutorial position, revealing that colleges were often staffed

¹²⁵ Lewis Carroll, *The Letters of Lewis Carroll*, ed. by Morton Norton Cohen and Roger Lancelyn Green, 2 vols (London Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1979), II, p. 1062; St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1922/23.

¹²⁶ Brown and Rayner.

¹²⁷ Enid H. Jones, *Margery Fry: The Essential Amateur* (York: Sessions, 1990), p. 51; Batson, p. 78.

by a small group of women, each with a range of responsibilities. Although the low wages might have caused librarians to take on multiple roles or the librarian might have wanted to work in other capacities, it created a close community for students and staff.

4: Collection and Development of Women's College Libraries

The most discussed topic in library committee meetings and annual reports was the library collection, whether describing new acquisitions, thanking donors, or planning budget allocations. These documents cover all aspects of collection management, discussing acquisitions, cataloguing, classification, weeding, and shelving. These extensive records reveal how each college managed their library and collections and offer many insights into day-to-day decision making as well as larger library projects. They show that the colleges faced similar challenges, each wanting to build a strong collection whilst managing limited space and budgets, but some colleges, like Somerville, were better resourced than others, leading to libraries that became strikingly different in size. This section will focus on two main areas: the management of the libraries and collection development. It will discuss the library committee and consider their development priorities, both in terms of the collection and the library space. It will also demonstrate the important role that collaboration and external support played in library development.

4.1: Library Management

A central element to the running of women's college libraries in Oxford was the library committee. LMH was the first to set up a committee in 1890/91,¹²⁸ followed shortly by Somerville in 1893¹²⁹ and St Hugh's in 1895,¹³⁰ but St Hilda's did not have a committee until 1909.¹³¹ The establishment of the committees was generally associated with the appointment of librarians, although, for example, the creation of the LMH committee predates Eleanor Lodge's employment as librarian by four years. The library committees were typically

¹²⁸ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1880–1896 vol. I, Report 1890/91. The date given by Pauline Adams is in correct. See; Pauline Adams, ““A Voice and Physiognomy of Their Own””, *Oxford Magazine*, Second Week, Michaelmas Term 1996, pp. 6–10 (p. 9).

¹²⁹ Oxford, Somerville College (Somerville), Library Committee Minutes 1893–1903, 30 Oct 1893.

¹³⁰ St Hugh's, St Hugh's Hall Committee Minutes 1890–1908, 20 Nov 1895.

¹³¹ St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford. Minutes. From 1896 to 1918, 30 Oct 1909.

formed of a combination of college council members, college staff, the librarian, and student representatives; however, the composition of committees did differ both between colleges and over time. The establishment of library committees facilitated the formalisation of library and collection management processes. One of the main duties of the committees was to select books for acquisition, and the committee minutes generally include long lists of books for purchase or those donated to the library. Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine these lists in detail, they offer valuable data for future research on collection development as from these lists one can learn which titles were being acquired and the proportion of the budget given to each academic subject. As well as considering collections, the library committees also discussed rules, budgets, space, and furniture requirements.

While one cannot know the dynamics between the library committee and the librarian, there are some indications that, at least for some colleges, the committee was responsible for decision-making whereas the librarian focussed on the day to day running of the library. At LMH, for example, a document dating from 1898 outlines the roles and responsibilities for the committee and the librarian.¹³² It gives the committee responsibility for making decisions on collection care, receiving donations and grants, and deciding on how to spend the budget and the librarian was required to maintain the collection and catalogue, and record income and expenditure. At Somerville, the librarian was not even a member of the library committee when it was established, although this was changed just two months later.¹³³ However, it was generally the case that each library committee worked collaboratively to make decisions and improve their library's collection. For example, in the early years of the Somerville committee, a meeting was held one a week to discuss possible acquisitions.¹³⁴ At St Hugh's, there was a shifting of responsibilities over time for some collection management decisions.

¹³² LMH, Council Minutes 1884–94, 10 March 1898.

¹³³ Somerville, Library Committee Minutes 1893–1903, 30 Nov 1893.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 27 April 1894.

There had been several committee meetings when weeding of the collections was discussed and generally the librarian had been permitted to weed as she saw fit; however, this changed in 1918 when a new system was approved: ‘The Librarian proposed that for the future no book should be sold or otherwise disposed of out of the Library without the consent of the Library Committee’.¹³⁵ This change illustrates the collaborative nature of the work and that committee members were very involved in the running of the library.

It is important to remember that committee members were not recompensed for their time or labour, but many remained on the committees for years, suggesting a dedication to their role with the library. The specific contributions of individual committee members were seldom recorded, but there is one whose involvement with the library was both recorded and celebrated. Frank Hesketh Peters was a fellow of University College, Oxford and had been their librarian from 1876 to 1884.¹³⁶ He was a founding member of Somerville’s council, and he was the Chairman of the Somerville library committee from its inception in 1893 to October 1899.¹³⁷ The committee note that ‘As Chairman Mr. Peters rendered services to the Library which it is impossible adequately to estimate’.¹³⁸ Although they do not give details of the help Peters supplied, such comments show that the experience, advice, and assistance of the committee members was appreciated, and that the committees were central to the running of the libraries.

4.2: Challenges for Development

Two of the main challenges faced by librarians and library committees were limited budgets and limited space. Each college financed their library in different ways, usually with a

¹³⁵ Oxford, St Hugh’s College (St Hugh’s), SHG/B/8/1/3, Library Committee Minutes 1912–1922, 31 Oct 1918.

¹³⁶ Personal correspondence with Robin Darwall-Smith, archivist at University College, Oxford.

¹³⁷ Adams, *Somerville for Women*, p. 14; Somerville, Library Committee Minutes 1893–1903, 20 Oct 1893 and 18 Oct 1899.

¹³⁸ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1899/1900.

combination of a grant paid by the council and student subscription fees. However, it is difficult to analyse library finances in a detailed way because the exact breakdown of income is often not given nor are changes in budget allocation always listed. If one examines the known library grants, it becomes evident that the colleges had rather different budgets available to them. Somerville's grant was the largest: it was £20 in 1890, had increased to £105 by 1900 and, although it was reduced to £75 between 1904 and 1907, it was raised to £120 in 1913.¹³⁹ LMH had a much smaller grant. Starting at £5 in 1888, it was increased to £20 in 1898, which was described as 'barely adequate'.¹⁴⁰ The known grants at St Hugh's and St Hilda's date from much later. St Hugh's received a £28 grant in 1908 that steadily increased until it reached £90 in 1920.¹⁴¹ The library grant was introduced at St Hilda's in 1902 as a temporary measure and the council decided that their grant would match student subscriptions.¹⁴² However, the grant continued to be supplied, reaching £20 by 1912 and remaining at this amount in 1918/19.¹⁴³ There is evidence that library committees pushed for their council to increase the grant. St Hugh's asked for an increase of £5 per term in 1918, arguing that it would 'considerably increase the usefulness of the Library'.¹⁴⁴ This was approved and brought the grant up to £75 per annum.¹⁴⁵ However, these requests were not always successful, as can be seen at St Hilda's in 1912 when the council decided not to increase the grant but instead suggested that one-off purchases could be paid for from central

¹³⁹ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 8 Nov 1890; 22 Oct 1900; 14 Nov 1904; 11 Nov 1907; Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 2, 29 Nov 1913.

¹⁴⁰ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1880–1896 vol. I, Report 1887/88; Oxford, Lady Margaret Hall (LMH), L.M.H. Annual Reports 1897–1904 vol. II, Report 1897/98; 1899/1900.

¹⁴¹ Oxford, St Hugh's College (St Hugh's), SHG/B/2/2, St Hugh's Hall Council Minutes 1908–1912, 15 Nov 1910; St Hugh's, Council Minutes 1911–1917; 5 Nov 1916; Oxford, St Hugh's College (St Hugh's), SHG/B/3/1/2, Council Minutes 1917–24, 3 Nov 1917; 23 Nov 1918; 22 Nov 1919.

¹⁴² St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford. Minutes. From 1896 to 1918, 10 March 1902.

¹⁴³ St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford. Minutes. From 1896 to 1918, 20 Nov 1912; St Hilda's, Library Records: Reports 1915–29, Report 1918/19.

¹⁴⁴ Oxford, St Hugh's College (St Hugh's), SHG/B/8/1/3, Library Committee Minutes 1912–1922, Report 1917/18.

¹⁴⁵ St Hugh's, Council Minutes 1917–24, 23 Nov 1918.

funds.¹⁴⁶ Comparing the size of the colleges' library grants reveals that the librarians had vastly different buying power and it is therefore not surprising to learn that Somerville had the largest collection and St Hilda's the smallest. Those libraries in receipt of smaller grants therefore may have relied more heavily on donations of money and books to build their collections.

Space was another key concern for women's college libraries. A frequent complaint from librarians was that there was not enough shelf space for their growing collections and the need for a dedicated library space was repeatedly requested. Issues of space are, of course, closely connected to budget concerns. If a college needed to buy more bookcases or build a new library, they had to raise the funds to do so. In the early years of the colleges, the library collection was often housed in corridors and common areas and the need for a purpose-built space was widely discussed. Finding funding for such building projects was challenging and colleges often sought help from their supporters. However, it was not always easy to secure enough funding. To build its library, Somerville raised £3,040 in donations, but it had to use £2,400 from the Emily Pfeiffer bequest (received in 1892) to afford the project.¹⁴⁷ Planning and financing building projects could take a long time, requiring the libraries to make do with insufficient accommodation in the interim. LMH, for example, had to wait many years before their library could be built. The first mention of the LMH library building project was in the 1894/95 annual report, which stated that they had not yet received enough donations to build a library in the planned new (Wordsworth) building. In the subsequent years, many library reports commented that the need for more space was becoming 'more and more pressing' and that 'a new building for the Library is even a greater

¹⁴⁶ St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford. Minutes. From 1896 to 1918, 26 Oct 1912.

¹⁴⁷ Adams, *Somerville for Women*, p. 64; Howarth, vii, p. 259, 'The Women's Colleges'; Jessica Hinings, 'Pfeiffer [Née Davis], Emily Jane (1827–1890), Poet', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-22084>> [accessed 6 September 2022]; Somerville, *Somerville College Reports 1891–1903*, Report 1901/02.

need than more books'.¹⁴⁸ The librarian even indicates in an editorial for the alumnae magazine that 'we increase it [the library] as fast as possible, in the hope that the books will bring the buildings'.¹⁴⁹ This comment may not reflect the librarian's actual collection development plans, but it does illustrate the need for an improved space. The Wordsworth Building was completed in 1896 and, fifteen years after the library was first planned, the Talbot building and its new library was opened in 1910.¹⁵⁰ The new library was described as 'an immense boon to the Hall in many ways'.¹⁵¹ Smaller scale purchases, like new furniture, heating or additional bookshelves, were frequently needed to support the expanding collections and the students' use of the space. Although the colleges did make many improvements themselves, college supporters also offered financial assistance with such projects; for instance, a St Hugh's donor paid for the library to be redecorated and for more bookshelves in 1904/05, and in 1917 the library received an anonymous gift of forty-eight oak chairs.¹⁵² This demonstrates that it was often through external financial support and fundraising that libraries were able to develop their spaces.

Even after the building of dedicated libraries, librarians still struggled with space as collections outgrew the existing storage and alterations were needed. This was particularly a problem for Somerville and its rapidly increasing collection in the 1910s. This came to a head in 1915 when Somerville had to move to Oriel College, Oxford as Somerville's buildings had been requisitioned for use as a military hospital due to their proximity to the Radcliffe Infirmary.¹⁵³ Oriel allowed Somerville to house its library in one of their lecture rooms and about a third of the collection was moved.¹⁵⁴ The library space could no longer be used for

¹⁴⁸ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1897–1904 vol. II, Report 1899/1900; LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1905–1912 vol. III, Report 1905/06.

¹⁴⁹ Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, *The Brown Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906), p. 23.

¹⁵⁰ Howarth, *The Women's Colleges*, p. 262; Batson, p. 134.

¹⁵¹ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1905–1912 vol. III, Report 1910/11.

¹⁵² St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1904/05 and St Hugh's, Council Minutes 1917–24, 3 Nov 1917.

¹⁵³ Adams, *Somerville for Women*, pp. 88–89.

¹⁵⁴ Oxford, Somerville College (Somerville), Somerville College Reports 1914–1924, Report 1914/15.

reading and reference and, due to lighting issues, hours of access were also reduced.¹⁵⁵

Despite moving to a smaller space, the librarian continued to buy new books (1,120 volumes over four years) and was able to add more shelves to house the expanding collection.¹⁵⁶ The college, and library, returned to Somerville from Oriel in October 1919. Somerville was the only women's college to face such extensive disruption during wartime, but this did not mean that its library services, and collection development, was suspended. Indeed, this example demonstrates how Somerville continued to improve their collections even in constrained circumstances.

4.3: Collection Development

Much of the library committees' focus was on increasing the size of their collections. Annual reports generally state the number of volumes acquired in the previous year, highlighting any gifts or bequests, and often mention subject areas that have, or need, improvements.

Similarly, library committee meetings reveal which were priority subjects, the titles which were required, and other plans to improve students' access to the books they need.

The least is known about the collection development at LMH and St Hilda's because there are no extant committee minutes for LMH and those from St Hilda's are not very detailed. There are a few mentions of the development needed in the LMH library collection. For example, it is noted in the 1886/87 report that the LMH library needed 'complete standard editions of the leading classical writers.'¹⁵⁷ Not much else is known about their collection development priorities and more emphasis is, instead, given to the need for increased library accommodation. At St Hilda's, the library was described in 1901 as 'slowly growing, but [it] needs a large addition of modern standard works to make it adequate to the

¹⁵⁵ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1914–1924, Report 1915/16.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., Report 1915/16; 1916/17; 1917/18.

¹⁵⁷ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1880–1896 vol. I, Report 1886/87.

needs of the students'.¹⁵⁸ Over time the collection did grow, with twenty to fifty volumes added on average each term; however, this had increased in the latter half of the 1910s with 1,092 titles being added between 1916 and 1920.¹⁵⁹ Most of the books bought were for English and modern history, but in 1917 and 1918 there was a push to buy more on French, with the minutes noting that 'this subject still requires to be considerably built up'.¹⁶⁰ It is not surprising that St Hilda's had an emphasis on English and modern history as these were the only subjects in which the college had dedicated tutors, until Christina Keith was appointed as Classics Tutor in 1918.¹⁶¹

Somerville seemed to have developed a large collection much earlier than the other colleges, with their library holding around 3,700 volumes by 1894/95.¹⁶² The collection was strongest in history, and it was commented that:

the History Students of the first year at any rate can now get all the books ordinarily required for their reading without having recourse to the overcrowded Camera. This is a substantial advance, though very much remains to be done.¹⁶³

The following year, the report notes that acquisitions were focussed on more specialist history books as well as on the English and French departments.¹⁶⁴ Described in 1907/08 as being a 'very inadequately equipped' section of the library, modern languages continued to be an area of development but, like at St Hilda's, English and modern history were the largest subject areas.¹⁶⁵ Another of Somerville's considerations concerning collection development was supporting student access. For example, when discussing buying more German books in

¹⁵⁸ St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford Reports, Report 1900/01.

¹⁵⁹ St Hilda's, S. Hilda's Hall Library Committee 1910–1915; St Hilda's, S. Hilda's Hall Library. Minutes of Library Committee Meetings Hilary Term 1916–1923.

¹⁶⁰ St Hilda's, S. Hilda's Hall Library. Minutes of Library Committee Meetings Hilary Term 1916–1923, 5 Nov 1918.

¹⁶¹ Brown and Rayner.

¹⁶² Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1894/95.

¹⁶³ Oxford, Somerville College (Somerville), Somerville College Reports 1879–1890, Report 1894/95.

¹⁶⁴ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1895/96.

¹⁶⁵ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1907/08; 1909/10; 1913/14; Somerville, Library Committee Minutes 1893–1903, 18 Oct 1900.

1900, the library committee prioritised expensive volumes that students were unlikely to be able to acquire personally.¹⁶⁶ Similarly, the library made several decisions to help students access materials in vacations: they subscribed to the London Library and they purchased duplicate copies of books to help those students who relied on their college library for their reading.¹⁶⁷

St Hugh's library committee describes their approach to collection development more explicitly. In the committee's first annual report, they stated that they, like Somerville, would prioritise acquiring expensive texts.¹⁶⁸ They also decided in 1898 that the budget would be split equally between the subjects regardless of the number of students currently studying in each.¹⁶⁹ This reveals their intent to develop the collection evenly, rather than focussing on the subjects with the highest number of students. Their aim was to make 'the Library as general & comprehensive as funds permit'.¹⁷⁰ New subjects were added to the library as soon as they were needed regardless of the number of students in that school; for instance, in 1907 the committee agreed 'that the presence in the Hall of one geographical & one German student justified and even necessitated the inclusion of these two new subjects'.¹⁷¹ Although the budget was shared equally, the committee was concerned that some subjects were better represented than others. In 1903, it is discussed that the library's stock was good for history, English, and science, but inadequate for classics, mathematics, and modern languages.¹⁷² Despite this admission, there was not overall change to acquisition strategy until 1912/13 when the committee decided to prioritise buying expensive volumes for the subject with the

¹⁶⁶ Somerville, Library Committee Minutes 1893–1903, 18 Oct 1900.

¹⁶⁷ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1907/08; 1913/14.

¹⁶⁸ Oxford, St Hugh's College (St Hugh's), SHG/B/8/1/1, Library Committee Minutes Mic 1896–Nov 1905, Report 1896/97.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Hilary Term 1898.

¹⁷⁰ Oxford, St Hugh's College (St Hugh's), SHG/B/8/1/2, Library Committee Minutes Dec 1905–Jan 1912, Report 1905/06.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 18 Oct 1907.

¹⁷² St Hugh's, Library Committee Minutes Mic 1896–Nov 1905, Report 1903/04.

highest proportion of students.¹⁷³ Although even before this point, it is clear that the previous strategy – sharing the budget equally across subjects – no longer suited the library’s needs. The library committee minutes present many examples of when a higher proportion of the budget was spent on one subject area or when the allowance for one subject was given to another.¹⁷⁴

The college libraries all reflected on the usefulness of their collections, the speed of growth, and subject areas that could be improved. However, the size of their collections was significantly different. One should note here that it is challenging to accurately state the number of books held in a library at any given year. Even though reports and minutes often list the number of books added to the collection each year, this was not done consistently from the libraries’ establishment. Consequently, one cannot know the exact starting number and, as the numbers of lost and weeded volumes are not listed, simply adding the numbers of new volumes would give an inflated total. Nevertheless, the approximate size of a library’s collection is often listed in reports or minutes, and these figures are therefore more reliable (figure 4).

¹⁷³ St Hugh’s, Library Committee Minutes 1912–1922, Report 1912/13.

¹⁷⁴ See, for example, St Hugh’s, Library Committee Minutes Dec 1905–Jan 1912, 16 Oct 1908; 21 Oct 1910.

	St Hilda's	St Hugh's	Somerville	LMH
1890/91		300		
1891/92				
1892/93				
1893/94			3000	
1894/95			3700	
1895/96			4361	
1896/97		1000	5500	
1897/98			6000	
1898/99			6600	
1899/1900			7100	
1900/01				
1901/02				
1902/03				
1903/04				
1904/05		2000		
1905/06				
1906/07				
1907/08				5450
1908/09		2629	14000	
1909/10			14400	
1910/11			14600	
1911/12		3100		
1912/13			15200	
1913/14			15404	
1914/15			15714	8000
1915/16				
1916/17				
1917/18		4649	16318	
1918/19	3556	5511		
1919/20		6260		

Figure 4: Known library collection totals.¹⁷⁵

Despite the fact that Somerville and LMH were opened within a year of each other, Somerville's library became considerably larger with around 8,500 more volumes than LMH by 1908/09. Somerville reached a total of 3,700 volumes fifteen years after the college was founded whereas a comparable sum was not achieved by St Hugh's and St Hilda's for

¹⁷⁵ Sources: St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford Reports; Oxford, St Hugh's College (St Hugh's), SHG/K/1/1/1, Library Accessions Register 1917–1934; St Hugh's, Library Committee Minutes Mic 1896–Nov 1905; St Hugh's, Library Committee Minutes Dec 1905–Jan 1912; St Hugh's, Library Committee Minutes 1912–1922; Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903; Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913; Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1914–1924; LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1905–1912 vol. III; and Oxford, Lady Margaret Hall (LMH), L.M.H. Annual Reports 1913–1920 vol. IV.

approximately twenty-fix years. Despite these caveats listed earlier, archival records allow us to calculate an approximate library collection total for each of the four colleges: by the end of the academic year 1919/20 Somerville had around 17,124 volumes,¹⁷⁶ LMH approximately 10,702,¹⁷⁷ St Hugh's had 6,260 exactly,¹⁷⁸ and St Hilda's had in the region of 3,758 volumes.¹⁷⁹ These numbers demonstrate the difference in size of the four collections. This would have had a significant impact on a student's access to the books they needed and the students studying at St Hugh's and St Hilda's may have needed to make more use of the Nettleship and university libraries.

There were two ways the women's college libraries acquired new: by purchasing books or by receiving them as gifts. Financial and physical gifts were sometimes part of large bequests but, more commonly, individuals gave smaller donations of individual titles, furniture or decorative items, or smaller sums of money. Pauline Adams comments that the libraries depended greatly on gifts for their development.¹⁸⁰ This was not unusual, and many academic libraries at new institutions, like the civic universities, relied on donations especially in their early years.¹⁸¹ The receipt of large personal or institutional collections allowed academic libraries to continue expanding their collections, like the donation of the University of London Library's receipt of the Goldsmith's Library of Economic Literature in 1903.¹⁸² However, donations were also important for longer established universities: the Bodleian Library received 31,432 volumes as gifts between 1885 and 1887.¹⁸³ Ratcliffe comments that for civic university libraries 'the benefaction of their founding years

¹⁷⁶ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1914–1924, Report 1917/18; 1918/19; 1919/20.

¹⁷⁷ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1913–1920 vol. IV, Report 1914/15; 1915/16; 1917/18; 1919/20.

¹⁷⁸ St Hugh's, Library Committee Minutes 1912–1922, Report 1919/20.

¹⁷⁹ St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford Reports, Report 1918/19; St Hilda's, Library Records: Reports 1915–29, Library report 1919/20.

¹⁸⁰ Adams, "A Voice and Physiognomy of Their Own", p. 7.

¹⁸¹ Ratcliffe, p. 370.

¹⁸² Naylor, p. 350.

¹⁸³ *The Bodleian Library in 1882–7: A Report from the Librarian*, p. 5; Hoare, pp. 329–30.

developed into a tradition of giving'.¹⁸⁴ This was also the case at the women's colleges whose annual reports include long lists of donors and the frequent acknowledgment of gifts both large and small.

At the founding of the colleges, the library collections were formed principally by gifts. Even before it opened, Somerville appealed for gifts of books, receiving about one hundred in response.¹⁸⁵ Yet, it was not just in the early years of the colleges' history that gifts were made. Donations were listed in reports and library committee minutes through the period studied, and St Hilda's even had a dedicated book for recording donations.¹⁸⁶ Comparing the number of volumes presented versus purchased demonstrates how important donations were for the growth of women's college libraries. The number of donated volumes was often high, sometimes exceeding the number purchased by the college. Donors mostly presented individual volumes, but sometimes larger numbers of books were given, such as the 203 volumes donated to Somerville by Emily Overend, an alumna and a previous library assistant and tutor, in 1919/20.¹⁸⁷ Unfortunately, as the number of donated books is not always recorded, there is only one academic year where one can compare the donation to purchase ratio across all four colleges. Figure 5 illustrates that in 1914/15, most colleges bought more items than they received as gifts, but this was not always the case and amounts could vary dramatically. For example, in 1919/20 St Hugh's acquired 810 books with 651 of them being gifts.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Ratcliffe, p. 370.

¹⁸⁵ Adams, "A Voice and Physiognomy of Their Own", p. 7.

¹⁸⁶ Oxford, St Hilda's College (St Hilda's), Library Records: Donations to the Library 1905–15.

¹⁸⁷ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1914–1924, Report 1919/20.

¹⁸⁸ St Hugh's, Library Committee Minutes 1912–1922, Report 1919/20.

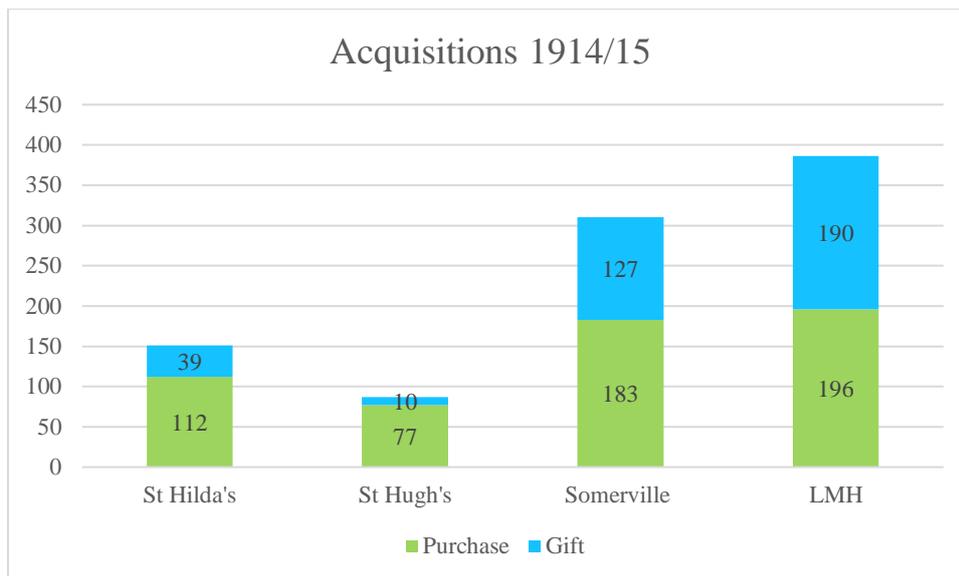


Figure 5: Acquisition totals separated by purchase and gift.¹⁸⁹

The libraries also received significant numbers of books from bequests. Somerville received the largest bequests as it was given the portions of the libraries of Amelia B. Edwards and John Stuart Mill.¹⁹⁰ The Edwards bequest of around 2,000 books was bequeathed on her death in 1892 but arrived in intervals between 1896 and 1906/07.¹⁹¹ John Stuart Mills' library of over 2,000 books was given by his legatee in 1904/05.¹⁹² The size of these gifts partly explains the difference in size between Somerville and the other college's library collections, and the library reports comment on how they improved the breadth of their collection substantially.¹⁹³ However, large bequests also worsened the ongoing problems of a lack of shelf space. Even though some books, deemed unnecessary, were sold from both collections, there were frequent discussions about the need for temporary storage and more shelf space both before and after the opening of Somerville's library building in 1904.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁹ Sources: St Hilda's, S. Hilda's Hall Library Committee 1910–1915, Report 1914/15; St Hugh's, Library Committee Minutes 1912–1922, 28 Oct 1914; 4 Feb 1915; 6 May 1915; 16 June 1915; Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1914–1924, Report 1914/15; LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1913–1920 vol. IV, Report 1914/15.

¹⁹⁰ Adams, *Somerville for Women*, pp. 66–67.

¹⁹¹ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1891/92.

¹⁹² Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1904/05.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, Report 1905/06; 1906/07.

¹⁹⁴ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1901/02; Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1905/06; and Somerville, Somerville Library Committee Minutes 1903–1916, 28 Jan 1908.

Somerville's acquisition of two large and valuable private collections was not the norm, and most bequests tended to be smaller. However, smaller bequests could also have a notable impact on the library's collection, depending on the subject matter or the size of the library at the time of the bequest. For example, Lucy Toulmin Smith, the librarian at Manchester College, Oxford, bequeathed one hundred books to Somerville in 1911.¹⁹⁵ This does not seem like a significant number when one considers that the library held around 15,000 volumes at that time; however, it is the nature of the bequest that makes it important. She had left the first one hundred volumes published by the Société des anciens textes français, which meant that the library now had a complete collection of an important resource for students of French.

The libraries' supporters were connected to the colleges in various ways, and it was common for gifts to be received from council members, Oxford academics, college staff, alumnae, students, and publishers. Their generosity and the impact of their gifts on the development of the collections was frequently celebrated, for instance, LMH declared 'Were it not for the continual kindness of donors, the Library would be unable to fulfil the growing demands made upon it'.¹⁹⁶ This generosity was not just limited to the libraries. Bequests, and regular book donations, were just one part of a larger tradition of support, with many benefactors giving donations to college building or scholarship funds, bequeathing sums of money, or giving their time, for instance as members of the council or as scholarship examiners. At St Hugh's a notable supporter was Clara Mordan, who supported the college by funding a scholarship, sitting on the council, bequeathing £10,000 (to which was later added £36,000 from Mordan's inheritor) and 252 books.¹⁹⁷ After her death, it was decided

¹⁹⁵ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1913–1920 vol. IV, Report 1911/12.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., Report 1914/15.

¹⁹⁷ Deborah Quare, 'Mordan, Clara Evelyn (1844–1915), Suffragist and Benefactor', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004

<<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-52275>> [accessed 25 August 2022]; Betty Kemp, 'The Early History of St Hugh's College', in *St. Hugh's: One*

that the library would be named after her.¹⁹⁸ Not all supporters were as financially or personally involved in the running of a college as Clara Mordan, but many wished to contribute to the colleges' continued growth and success. For example, in 1910 Somerville received a letter from some of its alumnae, including previous college librarian Margary Fry, declaring the need to expand the college buildings to allow for more student accommodation and larger lecture spaces.¹⁹⁹ This building project, costing £17,000, was entirely financed by donations and loans from college supporters. These are just two of many examples that demonstrate the central role women's college community support played in the founding, management, and expansion of the college.

4.4: Inter-Collegiate Initiatives

Section 4 has shown how the college libraries were developed by their librarians and library committees, with the support of external benefactors. However, the librarians also worked together and created several collaborative schemes that allowed the libraries to better support all women students.

Although the colleges ran their libraries independently, it had generally been possible for alumnae and students from other colleges to apply for admission to use their libraries. For example, St Hugh's was proud to state in the 1909/10 library report that 'The collection of French books has improved so much that students from other Halls quite occasionally apply for leave to read one at St Hugh's'.²⁰⁰ In addition, the Home Students, as non-collegiate students with no designated library, were able to access the four college libraries by paying a

Hundred Years of Women's Education in Oxford, ed. by Penny Griffin (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 15–47 (pp. 31–33); St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1915/16.

¹⁹⁸ St Hugh's, Council Minutes 1911–1917, 15 June 1915.

¹⁹⁹ Adams, *Somerville for Women*, pp. 83–84; Batson, pp. 131–32.

²⁰⁰ St Hugh's, Library Committee Minutes Dec 1905–Jan 1912, Report 1909/10.

subscription.²⁰¹ The librarians started several initiatives that formalised collection sharing and widened student access. The first of these initiatives was focussed on science collections. In 1905, a committee comprising of all the college librarians met ‘to discuss suggestions for throwing open the College & Hall Science Libraries to all science students’.²⁰² The idea was to allow science students to be able to read in, and borrow from, any library and to create a shared catalogue of science books. However, there was also a collection development element to the scheme. It was agreed that each college would specialise in a sub-section of science and would be required to spend an agreed amount on developing their holdings.²⁰³ Somerville was responsible for physics and chemistry, LMH for zoology and physiology, St Hugh’s for geology, and St Hilda’s for botany. It was also decided that a committee would be created, formed of the AEW science tutors, the librarians, and student representatives, to make recommendations for new titles. This initiative had benefits for students and the libraries. The students were now able to access four collections rather than one, which would have been particularly advantageous for those studying at colleges with smaller collections, such as St Hilda’s. It also meant that each library could focus on expanding one aspect of the science collection, potentially reducing overall spending. The creation of a shared catalogue, which also included the Nettleship Library collection, would have been an excellent resource for the students and was a physical representation of the libraries’ collaboration.

The science scheme was a success and was still running in 1920, although there were some discussions about moving the scheme to a centralised science library.²⁰⁴ Perhaps as a result of this success, other similar initiatives were considered. In 1912, Somerville’s library committee conceived of the idea of the libraries jointly funding the purchase of periodicals

²⁰¹ Adams, “‘A Voice and Physiognomy of Their Own’”, p. 9.

²⁰² St Hugh’s, Library Committee Minutes Mic 1896–Nov 1905, 6 Nov 1905.

²⁰³ St Hugh’s, Library Committee Minutes Dec 1905–Jan 1912, 12 Dec 1905.

²⁰⁴ St Hugh’s, Library Committee Minutes 1912–1922, 22 Oct 1920.

for classics students.²⁰⁵ This idea was approved, and the Nettleship Library agreed to be the central body that held these journals.²⁰⁶ There were also discussions about allowing intercollegiate borrowing of anthropology books. St Hugh's began to allow such borrowing in October 1915 and a proposal to formalise this initiative was put forth in February 1916.²⁰⁷ The other colleges appeared to have some reservations: Evelyn Jamison, the librarian at LMH, would allow students to read anthropology books, but any borrowing was at her discretion, and Somerville and St Hilda's agreed that they would consider applications for use.²⁰⁸ It is not clear why the anthropology scheme appeared to have come up against more resistance, especially as there were no financial implications to the agreement and some colleges, like St Hilda's, appeared to have very small anthropology collections, meaning therefore their students might benefit from accessing other libraries. Unfortunately, the records provide no further insights into the response to the anthropology initiative. Another failed proposal was an intercollegiate geography initiative. It was planned to be similar in structure to the science scheme in which each college would specialise in an aspect of the subject but, as only St Hilda's agreed to join, the proposal was dropped.²⁰⁹ As with the classics periodicals, the Nettleship Library was able to provide some support and agreed to consider buying duplicate copies of geography books when necessary.²¹⁰

Regardless of whether these intercollegiate borrowing initiatives or the pooling of resources to buy periodicals were taken forward, their conceptualisation demonstrates how the women's colleges worked together to develop solutions to their library problems. The library committees knew that, perhaps for reasons of space and/or budget, each individual

²⁰⁵ Somerville, Somerville Library Committee Minutes 1903–1916, 31 May 1912.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 29 Oct 1912.

²⁰⁷ St Hugh's, Library Committee Minutes 1912–1922, 28 Oct 1915; St Hilda's, S. Hilda's Hall Library. Minutes of Library Committee Meetings Hilary Term 1916–1923, 8 Feb 1916.

²⁰⁸ St Hilda's, S. Hilda's Hall Library. Minutes of Library Committee Meetings Hilary Term 1916–1923, 8 Feb 1916.

²⁰⁹ St Hilda's, S. Hilda's Hall Library Committee 1910–1915, Easter & Trinity Term 1915.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 11 May 1915.

college might not be able, or wish, to buy all the necessary books for all subjects, but that working together might allow them to do so. The intercollegiate science scheme therefore allowed the women's colleges to collaborate in a way that supported students, allowed for collections to be improved, and limited expenditure. However, it is clear from the failure of the geography initiative and the reticence regarding the anthropology proposal that not all colleges wished to replicate this scheme across other subjects. This indicates that whilst librarians accepted requests for admission from external students and agreed to some collaborative projects, they did not necessarily want the libraries to become fully open to all. The libraries remained independent but intercollegiate committees and initiatives did create links between the librarians and their collections, allowing for greater sharing of resources and improved student access. These working relationships are also shown by librarians offering personal help to other colleges, for example with reclassifying or reorganising their collections.²¹¹

Conclusion

This section considered how the library was managed, presenting the important role played by the library committee in building collections but also in developing the library space. The role of collaboration and external support is evident: not only was collection development supported by library committee members and tutors recommending new acquisitions, but gifts of books and money from staff, alumnae, and other external donors helped the collections to grow and become more comprehensive. This was similarly the case with building and improving the library spaces, as benefactors helped to finance these projects. The college librarians also worked together to improve student access to material through

²¹¹ Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, *The Brown Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1908), pp. 34–35; St Hilda's, Library Records: Reports 1915–29, Report 1920/21.

resource sharing and the creation of inter-collegiate schemes. This section has demonstrated the librarians and the library committees endeavoured to serve their academic communities and to strengthen their library collections, and the help of external supporters often made such changes possible.

5. Conclusion

Whether they were celebrating the completion of a new library building, evaluating the usefulness of their collections, or reporting on the work of dedicated staff, the women's colleges in Oxford often discussed and reflected on their libraries. The college archival records chart the development of the library service and are an important resource for the study of academic libraries and women's education.

This study addressed three key topics concerning libraries and women's university education in Oxford. Section 2 discussed the broader context of women's access to libraries between 1879 and 1920, highlighting the importance of college libraries, and the Nettleship, for women students. Section 3 was focussed the history of women's college library staff. This dissertation is the first detailed study of college librarianship and its examination of recruitment, pay, the use of library teams, and the librarians' career paths provides us with a better understanding of the role of librarian and the women who held it. The fourth section discussed the library itself, considering how libraries, and their collections, were managed and developed by library committees. It showed that each library's collections were very different in size and scope, with those at LMH and Somerville being much larger than the libraries at St Hugh's and St Hilda's. Regardless of the size of their budgets and existing collections, all the library committees wanted to develop their collections further and improve subject area coverage, an aim that was supported by donations, bequests, and the establishment of inter-collegiate resource sharing schemes.

This dissertation offers a new perspective to existing research on women's university education by analysing women's college libraries in Oxford. However, there are areas of future study that could build upon the research presented in this study. One could explore if there were changes in library and collection development after women became members of the University of Oxford in 1920 and could access university libraries more easily. It would

also be of considerable interest to compare the results from this study to librarianship at other women's colleges to learn if the trends identified in the Oxford women's colleges are reflected at similar institutions. This could be part of a larger project considering women library workers at British universities more generally. Discussion of the Nettleship Library was beyond the scope of this dissertation but, as the only central library space for women, it performed an important role for women students. Some research by Duncan Jones has been done on the Nettleship but more work on this library would add to our understanding of women's university education in Oxford.²¹²

Although this dissertation has focussed on the libraries, many aspects of library development reflect wider challenges and trends for Oxford women's colleges between 1879 and 1920. They also faced issues of space and low budgets, hired alumnae to fill college posts, and needed the support of external benefactors to help with development. Therefore, it is important to consider the libraries within their college contexts. In providing students access to the resources necessary for their studies, the libraries were central to college life and the academic experience. They were a 'boon' to the colleges and often a source of great pride.²¹³ Studying these libraries allows us to learn more about library management during this period but also to build a broader picture of women's university education.

²¹² Duncan Jones, *Libraries for Women Students*.

²¹³ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1905–1912 vol. III, Report 1910/11.

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Appendix A: Staff and Student Assistants at Women's College Libraries in Oxford, 1879–1920

Staff: St Hilda's

Reference number	Shi001
Name	Burrows, Christine Mary Elizabeth
College Library	St Hilda's
Role(s)	Oct 1896–Oct 1908: Vice-Principal ²¹⁴
	1894–1910: Modern History Tutor ²¹⁵
Next known role	Vice-Principal and Modern History Tutor at St Hilda's ²¹⁶
University education	1891–94, Modern History (2 nd) from LMH and St Hilda's ²¹⁷

Reference number	Shi002
Name	Counsell, Lilian Sophia
College Library	St Hilda's
Role(s)	Oct 1902–Oct 1903: Vice-Principal (temporary) ²¹⁸
Next known role	Assistant Mistress at Cheltenham Ladies College ²¹⁹
University education	1893–96, Modern History (2 nd) from St Hilda's ²²⁰

Reference number	Shi003
Name	Keeling, Margaret Adele (later Margaret Fairley)
College Library	St Hilda's
Role(s)	Oct 1908–June 1912: Resident English Tutor and Librarian ²²¹
Next known role	Dean of women students, University of Edmonton ²²²
University education	1904–07, English (1 st) from St Hugh's ²²³
	1907–08, Teaching Training (double 1 st) from University of London ²²⁴

²¹⁴ St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford. Minutes. From 1896 to 1918, 13 Oct 1896; 18 May 1908.

²¹⁵ Brown and Rayner.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford. Minutes. From 1896 to 1918, 14 Oct 1902.

²¹⁹ F. Cecily Steadman, *In the Days of Miss Beale: A Study of Her Work and Influence* (London: E. J. Burrow, 1931); Brown and Rayner.

²²⁰ St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford. Minutes. From 1896 to 1918, 14 Oct 1902.

²²¹ Ibid., 18 May 1908; 25 Nov 1911.

²²² Brown and Rayner.

²²³ St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1906/07.

²²⁴ Ibid., Report 1907/08.

Reference number	Shi004
Name	Todd, Louisa Fentham (later Louisa Bradbury)
College Library	St Hilda's
Role(s)	Oct 1912–June 1920: Resident English Tutor and Librarian ²²⁵
Next known role	Mission work ²²⁶
University education	1903–06, English (1 st) from St Hugh's ²²⁷ 1906–07, a year's [teacher?] training at St Hugh's ²²⁸

Staff: St Hugh's

Reference number	Shu001
Name	Lee, Margaret Lucy (known as Lucy)
College Library	St Hugh's
Role(s)	Nov 1895–June 1896: Vice-Principal ²²⁹
Next known role	AEW Lecturer and founder of Wychwood school ²³⁰
University education	1890–92, English (1st) from St Hugh's ²³¹

Reference number	Shu002
Name	Venables, Ethel Mary (later Ethel Simon)
College Library	St Hugh's
Role(s)	October 1896–Easter 1899: Vice-Principal ²³²
Next known role	Left to marry ²³³
University education	1890–93, subject unknown, Home Student ²³⁴

²²⁵ St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford. Minutes. From 1896 to 1918, 17 Feb 1912; St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford Reports, Report 1919–20.

²²⁶ St Hilda's, St Hilda's Hall, Oxford Reports, Report 1919–20.

²²⁷ St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1905/06.

²²⁸ Ibid., Report 1905/06. There is no further indication of the nature of this training or if it was completed, but Louisa Todd went on to become a teacher before moving to St Hilda's (St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1906–07).

²²⁹ St Hugh's, St Hugh's Hall Committee Minutes 1890–1908, 20 Nov 1895; 11 Feb 1896.

²³⁰ Deborah Quare, 'Lee, Margaret Lucy (1871–1955), Headmistress', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-56939>> [accessed 12 August 2022].

²³¹ Quare, 'Lee, Margaret Lucy (1871–1955), Headmistress'; 'Wychwood School' <<https://wychwoodschool.org/our-history/>> [accessed 7 July 2022].

²³² St Hugh's, St Hugh's Hall Committee Minutes 1890–1908, 19 May 1896; 14 Feb 1899.

²³³ St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1898/99.

²³⁴ 'Combined Register: 1827–1920'.

Reference number	Shu003
Name	Hayes Robinson, Margaret Wade (later Margaret Leys)
College Library	St Hugh's
Role(s)	Easter–Oct 1899: Vice-Principal ²³⁵
Next known role	Lecturer at Royal Holloway College ²³⁶
University education	1895–98, Modern History (1 st) from St Hilda's ²³⁷

Reference number	Shu004
Name	Wylie, Dora Janet
College Library	St Hugh's
Role(s)	Nov 1899–May 1901: Vice-Principal and Resident Modern History Tutor ²³⁸
Next known role	Left to care for mother ²³⁹
University education	1892–95, Modern History (2 nd) from LMH ²⁴⁰

Reference number	Shu005
Name	Mammatt, Winifred Mary
College Library	St Hugh's
Role(s)	[May?] 1901–Nov 1902: Vice-Principal (temporary) ²⁴¹ Oct 1922–26: Librarian at St Hugh's ²⁴²
Next known role	Assistant Mistress at Queen Margaret School ²⁴³
University education	1891–95, Modern History (3 rd) from St Hugh's ²⁴⁴

²³⁵ St Hugh's, St Hugh's Hall Committee Minutes 1890–1908, 14 Feb 1899; 9 Oct 1899.

²³⁶ Brown and Rayner.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ St Hugh's, St Hugh's Hall Committee Minutes 1890–1908, 7 Nov 1899; 14 May 1901; St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1898/99.

²³⁹ St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1900/01.

²⁴⁰ *The Englishwoman's Review of Social and Industrial Questions, 1895–1896*, ed. by Janet Horowitz Murray and Myra Stark (London: Routledge, 2018); 'Combined Register: 1827–1920'.

²⁴¹ St Hugh's, College Reports, Report, 1900/1901; SHG/B/2/1 St Hugh's, St Hugh's Hall Committee Minutes 1890–1908, 11 Nov 1902.

²⁴² Carroll, II, p. 1062; St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1922/23.

²⁴³ Carroll, II, p. 1062.

²⁴⁴ St Hugh's, College Reports, Report, 1900/01.

Reference number	Shu006
Name	Jourdain, Eleanor Frances
College Library	St Hugh's
Role(s)	Nov 1902–May 1904: Vice-Principal ²⁴⁵
Next known role	Vice-Principal at St Hugh's
University education	1883–86, Modern History (2 nd) from LMH ²⁴⁶ 1904, PhD from University of Paris ²⁴⁷

Reference number	Shu007
Name	Deneke, Helena Clara
College Library	St Hugh's
Role(s)	May 1904–June 1913: Librarian ²⁴⁸ 1909–June 1913: German Tutor (St Hugh's and AEW) ²⁴⁹
Next known role	German Tutor and Bursar at LMH ²⁵⁰
University education	1900–1903, English (1 st) from St Hugh's ²⁵¹

Reference number	Shu008
Name	Ady, Cecilia Mary
College Library	St Hugh's
Role(s)	Michaelmas Term 1910: Deputy Librarian (temporary) ²⁵² 1909–23: Modern History Tutor ²⁵³
Next known role	Modern History Tutor at St Hugh's
University education	1900–03, Modern History (1st) from St Hugh's ²⁵⁴ 1938: DLitt from University of Oxford ²⁵⁵

²⁴⁵ St Hugh's, St Hugh's Hall Committee Minutes 1890–1908, 11 Nov 1902; 17 May 1904.

²⁴⁶ Janet Howarth, 'Jourdain, Eleanor Frances (1863–1924), Author and College Head', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004

<<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-48446>> [accessed 12 August 2022].

²⁴⁷ Howarth, 'Jourdain, Eleanor Frances (1863–1924), Author and College Head'.

²⁴⁸ St Hugh's, St Hugh's Hall Committee Minutes 1890–1908, 17 May 1904; St Hugh's, Council Minutes 1911–1917, 8 Feb 1913.

²⁴⁹ Kemp, p. 45; St Hugh's, Council Minutes 1911–1917, 8 Feb 1913; St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1909/10.

²⁵⁰ St Hugh's, St Hugh's Hall Committee Minutes 1890–1908, 8 Feb 1913; St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1913/14.

²⁵¹ Kemp, p. 45.

²⁵² St Hugh's, Library Committee Minutes Mic 1896–Nov 1905, Report 1910/11.

²⁵³ Kemp, p. 44.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

Reference number	Shu009
Name	Thomas, Eliza Mary
College Library	St Hugh's
Role(s)	June 1913–Nov 1917: Librarian and German Tutor ²⁵⁶
	Feb 1916–Nov 1917: Secretary ²⁵⁷
Next known role	Illness ²⁵⁸
University education	1909–13, German (2 nd) from St Hugh's ²⁵⁹

Reference number	Shu010
Name	Sinclair, Olive Wortley
College Library	St Hugh's
Role(s)	Oct 1916–June 1917: Librarian and Secretary (temporary) ²⁶⁰
Next known role	unknown
University education	1905–09, French (2nd) from LMH
	June 1915–1916, MA in Education from King's College and London Day Training College ²⁶¹

Reference number	Shu011
Name	Evans, Joan
College Library	St Hugh's
Role(s)	June 1917–1918: Acting Librarian (temporary) ²⁶²
	1918–Oct 1922: Librarian ²⁶³
Next known role	Unknown
University education	1914–16, Diploma in Archaeology Distinction from St Hugh's ²⁶⁴

²⁵⁶ St Hugh's, Council Minutes 1911–1917, 10 May 1913; 7 June 1913.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 12 Feb 1916.

²⁵⁸ St Hugh's, Council Minutes 1917–24, 3 Nov 1917.

²⁵⁹ St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1913/14.

²⁶⁰ St Hugh's, Council Minutes 1911–1917, 24 Nov 1916; St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1916/17.

²⁶¹ University of London, *The Historical Record (1836–1927): 2nd Issue* (London: University Press, 1926); 'Modern Europe', in *History Theses 1901–1970: Historical Research for Higher Degrees in the Universities of the United Kingdom*, ed. by PM Jacobs (London, 1976), pp. 67–94 <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/theses-1901-70/modern-europe> [accessed 12 August 2022].> [accessed 12 August 2022].

²⁶² St Hugh's, Council Minutes 1911–1917, 9 June 1917

²⁶³ St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1918/19; 1922/23.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., Report 1916/17.

Staff: Somerville

Reference number	Som001
Name	Don, Isabella Turnbull Sturrock
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	March 1885/86: Librarian and Resident Tutor in English Literature ²⁶⁵
Next known role	Principal of Aberdare Hall ²⁶⁶
University education	1882–84, English (1 st) from Somerville ²⁶⁷

Reference number	Som002
Name	Pope, Mildred Katherine
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	June 1893–1893/94: Librarian and Secretary ²⁶⁸
	1893/94–1895/96: Senior Librarian ²⁶⁹
	1894–1934: Tutor ²⁷⁰
	1895/96–Feb 1899: Librarian ²⁷¹
	Oct 1905–Oct 1907: Librarian (temporary) ²⁷²
	Oct–Dec 1911: Librarian (temporary) ²⁷³
Next known role	Tutor at Somerville
University education	1891–93, Modern Languages (1 st) from Somerville ²⁷⁴
	1903, PhD from University of Paris ²⁷⁵

²⁶⁵ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 6 March 1885.

²⁶⁶ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1879–1890, Report 1886/87.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Report 1884/85.

²⁶⁸ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1879–1890, 12 June 1893

²⁶⁹ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1893/94; 1895/96.

²⁷⁰ Adams, *Somerville for Women*, p. 53.

²⁷¹ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1895/96; Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 6 Feb 1899.

²⁷² Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 19 June 1905; 4 Feb 1907.

²⁷³ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1903/13; 1911/12.

²⁷⁴ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1892/93.

²⁷⁵ Philip Bennett, 'Pope, Mildred Katherine (1872–1956), French Scholar', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-41136>> [accessed 12 August 2022].

Reference number	Som003
Name	Bruce, Alice Moore
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	1893/94–1897/98: Secretary ²⁷⁶
	1893/94–1895/96: Sub-Librarian ²⁷⁷
	1895/96/–Feb 1899: Librarian ²⁷⁸
	May 1896–: History Tutor ²⁷⁹
	Oct 1898–1929: Vice-Principal ²⁸⁰
Next known role	Vice-Principal at Somerville
University education	1887–90, Modern History (2 nd) from Somerville ²⁸¹

Reference number	Som004
Name	Fry, Sara Margery (known as Margery)
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	Feb 1899–Oct 1904: Librarian and Secretary ²⁸²
Next known role	Warden of women's hall of residence at the University of Birmingham ²⁸³
University education	1894–97, Maths (no exam) from Somerville ²⁸⁴

Reference number	Som005
Name	Schuster, Dorothea
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	Hilary Term 1902: Librarian (temporary) ²⁸⁵
Next known role	Unknown
University education	1896–98, Modern History (certificate) from Somerville ²⁸⁶

²⁷⁶ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1893/94; Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 24 Oct 1898.

²⁷⁷ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1893/94.

²⁷⁸ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1895/96; Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 6 Feb 1899.

²⁷⁹ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 11 May 1896.

²⁸⁰ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 24 Oct 1898; W. Gareth Evans, 'Bruce, Alice Moore (1867–1951), Educationist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-51854>> [accessed 19 August 2022].

²⁸¹ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1879–1890, Report 1889/90.

²⁸² Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 6 Feb 1899; 24 Oct 1904.

²⁸³ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1903/04.

²⁸⁴ Thomas L. Hodgkin and Mark Pottle, 'Fry, (Sara) Margery (1874–1958), Penal Reformer and College Head', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004

<<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-33286>> [accessed 19 August 2022]; Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1888/99.

²⁸⁵ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 30 Nov 1901; Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1901/02.

²⁸⁶ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1897/98; 1898/99.

Reference number	Som006
Name	Du Cane, Julia Katherine Rosalind
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	Michaelmas Term 1902: Librarian (temporary) ²⁸⁷
Next known role	Unknown
University education	1899–1902, Modern History (3 rd) from Somerville ²⁸⁸

Reference number	Som007
Name	Sidgwick, Rose
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	Oct 1904–June 1905: Librarian ²⁸⁹
Next known role	Assistant Lecturer in History at University of Birmingham ²⁹⁰
University education	1896–99; Modern History (1 st) as an Oxford Home Student ²⁹¹ 1903, Oxford Diploma for Education (distinction) ²⁹²

Reference number	Som008
Name	Kempson, Lucy Caroline
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	Oct 1905–Oct 1907: Sub-Librarian ²⁹³ Oct 1907–Jan 1914: Librarian and Secretary ²⁹⁴ Trinity Term 1909: Bursar (temporary) ²⁹⁵
Next known role	Nurse with the French Red Cross ²⁹⁶
University education	1894–97, Modern Languages (3 rd) from Somerville ²⁹⁷

²⁸⁷ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 6 Dec 1902.

²⁸⁸ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1901/02.

²⁸⁹ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 24 Oct 1904; 23 Oct 1905.

²⁹⁰ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1904/05.

²⁹¹ Enid Huws Jones, 'Sidgwick, Rose (1877–1918), University Teacher', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-52389>> [accessed 19 August 2022].

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 23 Oct 1905; 4 Feb 1907.

²⁹⁴ Adams, *Somerville for Women*, p. 66; Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 4 Feb 1907; Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 2, 20 Oct 1914.

²⁹⁵ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1908/09.

²⁹⁶ London, National Archives, War Office: Service Medal and Award Rolls Index, First World War, WO 372, 372/23/23105; Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1914–1924, Report 1915/16; 1917/18. It is not known for how long Kempson worked as a nurse, but she was appointed as Resident Tutor at Bedford College on 4 Nov 1918 (Personal correspondence with Anne-Marie Purcell, Archives and Special Collections Curator at Royal Holloway, University of London).

²⁹⁷ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1891–1903, Report 1896/97.

Reference number	Som009
Name	Overend, Emily Martha (later Emily Lorimer)
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	?–Nov 1907: library work. ²⁹⁸
	1906/07–10: Tutor in German ²⁹⁹
Next known role	Tutor in German at Somerville
University education	?–1904, French and German from Trinity College Dublin ³⁰⁰
	1904–06, German (1 st) from Somerville ³⁰¹

Reference number	Som010
Name	Ramsay, Agnes Margaret (known as Margaret)
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	Hilary Term 1908: library work ³⁰²
	Oct 1907–Trinity Term 1908: Assistant Classics Tutor ³⁰³
Next known role	Classics Tutor (temporary) at Somerville ³⁰⁴
University education	1898–1904, Classics (1 st) from University of Aberdeen ³⁰⁵
	1904–07, Literae Humaniores (1 st) from Somerville ³⁰⁶

Reference number	Som011
Name	Miss Wynne Jones
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	Hilary Term 1911: Assistant to Librarian ³⁰⁷
Next known role	Unknown
University education	Unknown

²⁹⁸ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 2, 30 Nov 1907.

²⁹⁹ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1906/07; Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 2, 25 Oct 1910.

³⁰⁰ Peter Sluglett, 'Lorimer, David Lockhart Robertson (1876–1962), Diplomatist and Linguist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004
<<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-58306>> [accessed 28 August 2022].

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 1, 30 Nov 1907.

³⁰³ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1906/07.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., Report 1907/08.

³⁰⁵ Harrower, I, p. 55.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., I, p. 55.

³⁰⁷ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 2, 7 Feb 1911.

Reference number	Som012
Name	Bazeley, Elsie Theodora
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	Hilary Term 1912: Librarian (temporary) ³⁰⁸
Next known role	Lecturer in Science at Whitelands Training College ³⁰⁹
University education	1902–1906, Zoology (3 rd) from St Hugh's ³¹⁰ 1906–1907, Holy Scripture (Alternative Course Diploma) ³¹¹

Reference number	Som013
Name	Giles, Madeline
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	Jan 1914–Trinity Term 1916: Librarian and Secretary ³¹²
Next known role	Medical school ³¹³
University education	1909–13, Literae Humaniores (1 st) from Somerville ³¹⁴

Reference number	Som014
Name	Farnell, Vera
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	Oct 1916–1919/20: Librarian and Secretary ³¹⁵ 1919/20–1928: Librarian ³¹⁶ 1920–34: Assistant Tutor in Modern Languages ³¹⁷ 1924–1947: Dean ³¹⁸
Next known role	Assistant Tutor in Modern Languages and Dean ³¹⁹
University education	1911–14, French (1 st) from Somerville ³²⁰

³⁰⁸ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1911/12.

³⁰⁹ St Hugh's, College Reports, Report 1911/12.

³¹⁰ Ibid., Report 1907/08.

³¹¹ Ibid., Report 1907/08.

³¹² Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1914–1924, Report 1914/15.

³¹³ Ibid., Report 1914/15.

³¹⁴ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1913/14.

³¹⁵ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1914–1924, Report 1914/15.

³¹⁶ Duncan Jones, 'Libraries for Women Students'; Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1914–1924, Report 1918/19.

³¹⁷ Duncan Jones, 'Librarians for Women Students'.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1914–1924, Report 1914/15.

Reference number	Som015
Name	Thornton, Joyce Clement
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	Michaelmas Term 1918: Library and Secretary work (temporary) ³²¹
Next known role	Secretarial work for Delegacy for Local examinations ³²²
University education	1915–18, Modern History (2 nd) from Somerville ³²³

Reference number	Som016
Name	Lyne, Matilda Geneviève
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	1918/19: Library and Secretary work (temporary) ³²⁴
Next known role	Unknown
University education	1915–18, Modern History (3rd) from Somerville ³²⁵

Staff: LMH

Reference number	LMH001
Name	Lodge, Eleanor Constance
College Library	LMH
Role(s)	1895–1897/98: Librarian and Assistant Secretary ³²⁶
Next known role	History Tutor at LMH ³²⁷
University education	1890–94, Modern History (2 nd) from LMH ³²⁸ 1928, DLitt from University of Oxford ³²⁹

³²¹ Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 2, 12 Nov 1918.

³²² Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1914–1924, Report 1918/19.

³²³ Ibid., Report 1918/19.

³²⁴ Ibid., Report 1918/19.

³²⁵ Ibid., Report 1918/19.

³²⁶ Lodge, p. 83; LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1880–1896 vol. I, Report 1898/99.

³²⁷ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1897–1904 vol. II, Report 1898/99.

³²⁸ Frances Lannon, 'Lodge, Eleanor Constance (1869–1936), Historian and College Head', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004

<<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-34582>> [accessed 28 August 2022].

³²⁹ Ibid.

Reference number	LMH002
Name	Kempe, Dorothy (later Dorothy Gardiner)
College Library	LMH
Role(s)	1898/99: Librarian and Assistant Secretary (temporary) ³³⁰
Next known role	Unknown
University education	1895–98, English (3 rd) from LMH ³³¹

Name	Pearson, Edith Anne
College Library	LMH
Role(s)	1898/99–March 1902: Librarian ³³² 1888/90–March 1902: Vice-Principal ³³³
Next known role	Warden of LMH Settlement ³³⁴
University education	1879–81, Philosophy (2 nd) from LMH ³³⁵

Reference number	LMH004
Name	Clay, Agnes Muriel (later Agnes Wilde)
College Library	LMH
Role(s)	Oct 1902–June 1907: Librarian ³³⁶ June 1907–Jan 1910: Assistant Librarian ³³⁷ ?–1910: Tutor ³³⁸
Next known role	Marriage ³³⁹
University education	1896–1900, Classics (2 nd) from LMH ³⁴⁰ 1900–1902, Literae Humaniores (1 st) from LMH ³⁴¹

³³⁰ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1897–1904 vol. II, Report 1897/98.

³³¹ John D. Haigh, 'Gardiner [Née Kempe], Dorothy (1873–1957), Writer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-51780>> [accessed 24 July 2022].

³³² LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1897–1904 vol. II, Report 1898/99; LMH, Council Minutes 1884–94, 6 March 1902 and letter from Edith Pearson to Mr Spooner, 8 March 1902.

³³³ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1880–1896 vol. I, Report 1888/89; LMH, Council Minutes 1884–94, 6 March 1902.

³³⁴ Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, *The Brown Book*, p. 44.

³³⁵ Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, *The Brown Book*, p. 44; *The Englishwoman's Review of Social and Industrial Questions* (London: The Englishwoman's Review, 1881), xii, p. 367.

³³⁶ LMH, Council Minutes 1884–94, 23 Oct 1902; Oxford, Lady Margaret Hall (LMH), Council Minutes 1906–09, 7 March 1907; LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1905–1912 vol. III, Report 1906/07.

³³⁷ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1905–1912 vol. III, Report 1907/08; LMH, Council Minutes 1909–14, 22 Jan 1910.

³³⁸ LMH, Council Minutes 1909–14, 22 Jan 1910.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 22 Jan 1910.

³⁴⁰ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1897–1904 vol. II, Report 1901/02.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Report 1901/02.

Reference number	LMH005
Name	Jamison, Evelyn Mary
College Library	LMH
Role(s)	June 1907–1909/10: Bursar and Librarian ³⁴²
	1909/10–1921: Librarian ³⁴³
	1916/17–1921: Assistant History Tutor ³⁴⁴
	Oct 1915–March 1916: Bursar (temporary) ³⁴⁵
	Trinity Term 1918: Vice-Principal (temporary) ³⁴⁶
Next known role	History Tutor and Vice-Principal at LMH ³⁴⁷
University education	1898–1901, Modern History (1 st) from LMH ³⁴⁸

Reference number	LMH006
Name	Levett, Ada Elizabeth (known as Elizabeth)
College Library	LMH
Role(s)	1908/09: Assistant Librarian (temporary) ³⁴⁹
	Assistant to the Modern History Tutor ³⁵⁰
Next known role	History Mistress at Edgbaston High School ³⁵¹
University education	1904–07, Modern History (1 st) from LMH ³⁵²

Reference number	LMH007
Name	Mellor, Juliet Vivien
College Library	LMH
Years in role	Trinity Term 1912: Librarian (temporary) ³⁵³
Next known role	Unknown
University education	1899–1902, Modern History (2 nd) from LMH ³⁵⁴

³⁴² LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1905–1912 vol. III, Report 1906/07.

³⁴³ ‘Proceedings and Obituaries’, *The Antiquaries Journal*, 53.2 (1973), 384–412 (p. 403); LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1905–1912 vol. III, Report 1909/10.

³⁴⁴ ‘Proceedings and Obituaries’, p. 403; LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1913–1920 vol. IV, Report 1916/17.

³⁴⁵ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1913–1920 vol. IV, Report 1915/16.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Report 1917/18.

³⁴⁷ ‘Proceedings and Obituaries’, p. 403.

³⁴⁸ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1897–1904 vol. II, Report 1900/01.

³⁴⁹ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1905–1912 vol. III, Report 1908/09.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Report 1908/09.

³⁵¹ Brown and Rayner.

³⁵² LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1905–1912 vol. III, Report 1908/09.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, Report 1911/12.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Report 1911/12.

Reference number	LMH008
Name	Friere–Marreco, Barbara Whitchurch (later Barbara Aitkin)
College Library	LMH
Role(s)	Oct 1915–March Term 1916: Librarian (temporary) ³⁵⁵
Next known role	unknown
University education	1902–05, Classics (1 st) from LMH ³⁵⁶
	1908, Diploma of Anthropology (Distinction) from the Pitt Rivers ³⁵⁷

Reference number	LMH009
Name	Czaplicka, Maria Antoinette/Marya Antonina
College Library	LMH
Role(s)	Trinity Term 1918: Librarian (temporary) ³⁵⁸
Next known role	Lecturer in Ethnography at University of Oxford ³⁵⁹
University education	1910–11, Anthropology from LSE ³⁶⁰
	1911–12, Anthropology from Somerville ³⁶¹

Reference number	LMH010
Name	Ramsay, Agnes Margaret (known as Margaret)
College Library	LMH
Role(s)	1919–20: Librarian (temporary) ³⁶²
	Classics tutoring at LMH ³⁶³
Next known role	Tutor in Classics at LMH ³⁶⁴
University education	1894–1904, Classics (1 st) from University of Aberdeen ³⁶⁵
	1904–07, Literae Humaniores (1 st) from Somerville ³⁶⁶

³⁵⁵ LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1913–1920 vol. IV, Report 1915/16.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., Report 1914/15.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., Report 1914/15.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., Report 1917/18.

³⁵⁹ Collins, 'Czaplicka, Marya Antonina [Marie Antoinette] (1884–1921), Anthropologist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004

<<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-46557>> [accessed 13 July 2022].

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² LMH, L.M.H. Annual Reports 1913–1920 vol. IV, Report 1919/20.

³⁶³ Ibid., Report 1919/20.

³⁶⁴ *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies*, ed. by Elizabeth Baigent and André Reyes Novaes, 40 vols (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), xxxviii, p. 67.

³⁶⁵ Harrower, I, p. 55.

³⁶⁶ Ibid, I, p. 55.

Student Assistants: St Hilda's

Reference number	SAShi001
Name	Doudney, Violet Mary (later Violet Toy)
College Library	St Hilda's
Role(s)	Hilary Term 1911: Sub-Librarian ³⁶⁷
Next known role	Teacher training at Maria Grey Training College ³⁶⁸
University education	1908–1911, English from St Hilda's ³⁶⁹

Reference number	SAShi002
Name	Sandys, Agnes Moncrieff (later Agnes Leys)
College Library	St Hilda's
Role(s)	Michaelmas Term 1912–June Term 1913: Sub-Librarian ³⁷⁰ Hilary Term 1914: Sub-Librarian ³⁷¹
Next known role	Research student at University of Manchester ³⁷²
University education	1910–1914, Modern History from St Hilda's ³⁷³

Reference number	SAShi003
Name	Aslin, Mary Snow
College Library	St Hilda's
Role(s)	Michaelmas Term 1913: Sub Librarian ³⁷⁴
Next known role	Librarian at Rothamsted Experimental Station ³⁷⁵
University education	1911–15, English from St Hilda's ³⁷⁶

Reference number	SAShi004
Name	Codd, Mary Frances
College Library	St Hilda's
Role(s)	Trinity Term 1914–Trinity 1915: Sub Librarian ³⁷⁷
Next known role	Junior Administrative Assistant at the Admiralty ³⁷⁸
University education	1912–1915, English from St Hilda's ³⁷⁹

³⁶⁷ St Hilda's, S. Hilda's Hall Library Committee 1910–1915, Hilary Term 1911.

³⁶⁸ Brown and Rayner.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ St Hilda's, S. Hilda's Hall Library Committee 1910–1915, Michaelmas Term 1912; Trinity Term 1913.

³⁷¹ Ibid., 30 Jan 1914.

³⁷² Brown and Rayner.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ St Hilda's, S. Hilda's Hall Library Committee 1910–1915, Michaelmas Term 1913.

³⁷⁵ Brown and Rayner.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ St Hilda's, S. Hilda's Hall Library Committee 1910–1915, Trinity Term 1914; Trinity Term 1915.

³⁷⁸ Brown and Rayner.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

Student Assistants: Somerville

Reference number	SASom001
Name	Jones, Katharine Farewell
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	Michaelmas Term 1911: student assistant to Librarian ³⁸⁰
Next known role	Private teaching ³⁸¹
University education	1907–1911, Classics from Somerville ³⁸²

Reference number	SASom002
Name	Winters, Ellen Dorothea Margaret
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	Oct 1914–?: student assistant to Librarian ³⁸³
Next known role	Ministry of Munitions (1916–19) ³⁸⁴
University education	1913–19, Modern History (1 st) from Somerville ³⁸⁵

Reference number	SASom003
Name	Lister, Hannah
College Library	Somerville
Role(s)	Michaelmas Term 1917/Hilary Term 1918: student assistant to Librarian ³⁸⁶
Next known role	Unknown
University education	1913–?, from Somerville ³⁸⁷

³⁸⁰ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1911/12; Somerville, Somerville College Minutes of Council vol. 2, 2 Dec 1911.

³⁸¹ Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1911/12.

³⁸² ‘Combined Register: 1827–1920’; Somerville, Somerville College Reports 1903–1913, Report 1910/11.

³⁸³ Somerville, Somerville Library Committee Minutes 1903–1916, 30 Oct 1914

³⁸⁴ *Who Was Who, 1951–1960: A Companion to Who’s Who, Containing the Biographies of Those Who Died during the Decade 1951–1960* (London: A. & C. Black, 1967), p. 1185.

³⁸⁵ ‘Combined Register: 1827–1920’; *Who Was Who, 1951–1960*, p. 1185.

³⁸⁶ Somerville, Somerville Library Committee Minutes 1916–1923, 6 Nov 1917.

³⁸⁷ ‘Combined Register: 1827–1920’.

Student Assistants: LMH

Reference number	LMHSA001
Name	Lodge, Eleanor Constance
College Library	LMH
Role(s)	Unknown date: student assistant ³⁸⁸
Next known role	Nanny ³⁸⁹
University education	1890–94, Modern History (2 nd) from LMH ³⁹⁰
	1928, DLitt from University of Oxford ³⁹¹

³⁸⁸ Lodge, p. 83.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 81.

³⁹⁰ Lannon.

³⁹¹ Ibid.