

FRIENDS OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE LIBRARY NEWSLETTER, January –February 2021



A word of welcome... From John Wagstaff, College Librarian

Welcome, Library Friends, to our first Newsletter of 2021. I hope that everyone had a good New Year, even though for most of us the celebrations will have been more muted than usual. Personally I always tend to enjoy New Year more than Christmas, because of the hope that a new year brings; but this year has not started very well for many people, alas.

Nevertheless, as I write this in late January our Working Library is

open once again, albeit to a reduced number of students since many of them did not return in person to College after the Christmas break. The Old Library remains closed to visitors, although we are still kept busy with cataloguing its books, and with assessing damaged materials for conservation.

In that regard, probably the best piece of news that I can offer this month is that our latest Sponsor a

Book brochure is finally ready, and is being sent out with this Newsletter. We have selected a wide range of items that we hope will be of interest to our Friends. Don't forget that it is perfectly possible to "part-sponsor" an item — so for example if you wanted to donate £100 towards a £300 repair, that would certainly be welcome.

As always, we are very grateful for any support we receive from our wide circle of Friends. THANK YOU!



Eight years of conserving Old Library collections through our "Sponsor a Book" programme

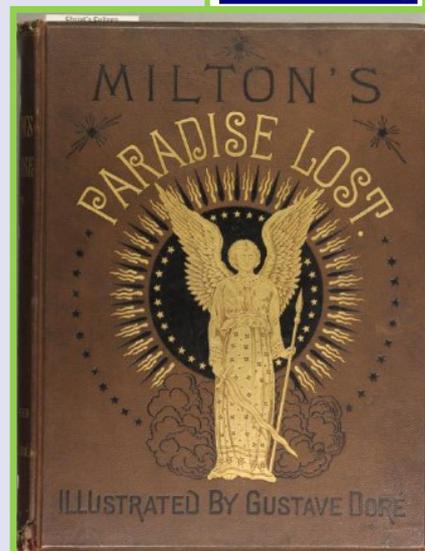


Since this month marks the launch of our 'Sponsor a Book' initiative for 2020-2021, we thought it might be fun to look back briefly at the history of the scheme. As in previous years, our supportive Friends can choose to sponsor a title from among a range of items that each require conservation work. The sponsorship money enables us to restore each item to its former glory.

Inaugurated in 2013, Sponsor a Book has since raised over £20,000 for the repair and protection of more than fifty items from the Old Library's

collections, both printed and manuscript. They include several works by Christ's alumni, such as Milton's *The History of Britain* (1695) and Darwin's letters to his cousin William Darwin Fox.

"Sponsor a Book" has also resulted in the conservation of more modern works, including Henry James's *The Better Sort* (1903) and a selection of nine rare novels by Graham Greene. This year's brochure includes an 1882 edition of *Paradise Lost* beautifully illustrated by Gustave Doré (see image), along with works by Albrecht Dürer, by the astronomer-monk Johannes de Sacrobosco, and by Edmund Spenser.



Ready for sponsorship! *Paradise Lost* by Christ's alumnus John Milton, handsomely illustrated by Gustave Doré (1882).

Looking back at “Sponsor a Book”

In 2014, thanks to a Library Friend’s generous sponsorship of our copy of Darwin’s *The Structure and Distribution of Coral Reefs* (1842), we were able to fund repair of the book’s broken and detached spine, and the cleaning of its pages, making a dramatic difference!

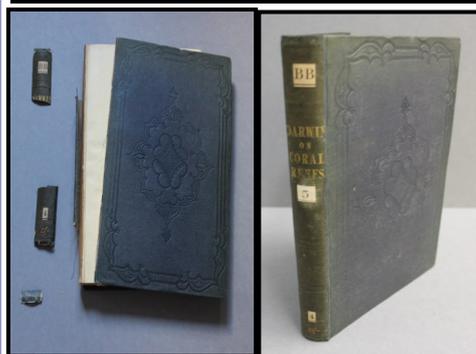


Halfway through cleaning the text-block: much improved!

In 2017, some generous sponsorship of our damaged copy of volume 3 of *Froissart’s Chronicles vol. III* (1523-25) paid for the stabilisation of its spine, and for extensive repairs to torn pages using conservation-grade repair tissue. The pages look much better and are more structurally stable following this treatment.



Before (top right), after (right), and during conservation (above)



Before (left) and after (right) conservation.

(Yet) another surprising discovery at Christ’s College Library

We’ve said before that Christ’s Library, being an old foundation, is likely to yield surprises from time to time. The latest of these is a set of military medals that was, to an extent, hiding in plain sight in a drawer under a display cabinet that was originally located in the Old Library. As far as we can tell, the medals were donated to the College in 1955, and had never been properly inventoried (something that we will be putting right very shortly). They originally belonged to Major-General (and Christ’s alumnus) Sydney Buxton Pope (1879-1955). Do any of our Friends have an in-depth knowledge of medals? A piece of paper found in the drawer has helped us identify some of them, but we would surely benefit from the input of someone with greater expertise in the subject than we have.



A selection from the impressive set of medals donated by the widow of Major-General Sydney Buxton Pope. It includes the Mons Star (3rd from the left) and a World War II star (4th from the right), all flanked by the DSO (Distinguished Service Order) and French Legion d’Honneur (possibly a Chevalier, we aren’t sure). Third from the right is a King George V Jubilee Medal.

We invite any Friends who are knowledgeable in this field to help us create an accurate inventory.

We would love to hear from you! If you would like to send us comments about this *Newsletter*, arrange a visit to the College Library, sponsor a book, make a donation, or simply share some memories, please contact us at library@christs.cam.ac.uk; by telephone at 01223-334950; or by post at Christ’s College Library, St Andrew’s Street, Cambridge CB2 3BU.