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“Visit to Map Department, Cambridge
University Library”

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The Charles Close Society was founded in 1980 to bring together all those with an interest in the maps and history of the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain and its counterparts in the island of Ireland. The Society takes its name from Colonel Sir Charles Arden-Close, OS Director General from 1911 to 1922, and initiator of many of the maps now sought after by collectors.

The Society publishes a wide range of books and booklets on historic OS map series and its journal, *Sheetlines*, is recognised internationally for its specialist articles on Ordnance Survey-related topics.

Visit to the Map Department, Cambridge University Library

Gerry Zierler

On a sharp sunny day in April a party of about ten members descended on Anne Taylor in the newly reopened Map Department of Cambridge University Library, now greatly improved and with much brighter facilities.

Anne started an excellent visit with a synopsis of the University Library's architecture and growing requirements as a legal deposit library. She explained that the five staff in the Map Department coped with a card catalogue of over 300,000 cards arranged alphabetically by the area covered on the map but with no geographical hierarchy (so you cannot find out how many maps, for example, there are of Spain and its parts without looking through the whole catalogue) and often with sparse publisher information! However, items catalogued since 2000 can be found on 'Newton' the library's online catalogue www.lib.cam.ac.uk/newton and on COPAC, the inter-library system www.copac.ac.uk

Society members were honoured to see not just a sample from the Charles Close Society Archive which is kept at Cambridge University Library, but also a splendid display mounted especially for our visit.

Included was material from the sixteenth century, such as Ortelius' image of the world, Braun & Hogenberg's 1575 map of Cambridge, and an early map of Iceland from 1595.

Other impressive material on display included a portolan of the Aegean from about 1650 and the Gardner (proof) copy of John Speed's Cambridgeshire and, to the delight of certain



Anne Taylor describes some of the items put on display for the CCS visit to Cambridge University Library [GJ]

of those present, Cheshire. Other famous names featured were Cellarius, Ogilby (the road to Oxford from Cambridge) and James Wyld.

Ordnance Survey maps on show included a beautiful 1:500 plan of Clare and Trinity Colleges from 1888, showing the site of the library-to-be as Clare's cricket ground, together with a 25-inch sheet of Cambridge from 1927, reprinted in 1942 but still showing the library as a first world war hospital.

Members pored over some of Peter Clark's donation to the library, including an 1889 six-inch map of Hadleigh; the western half hachured, the eastern half not. Also shown were some early examples of colour (blue and brown) with 1887 examples of one-inch maps of Beaconsfield and Ramsgate.

Amongst the OS ephemera were Instructions for Detail Survey 1948, The Red Book 1952, and the Levelling Handbook 1954, all of which gave a fascinating insight into the enormous changes in procedures over the last half century.

We were brought more up-to-date with examples of the Soviet 1:10,000 mapping of Cambridge 1986, and bang up-to-date with screens showing the Newton index online. Anne Taylor was thanked and congratulated on providing such a wide ranging and fascinating display, all with comprehensive verbal descriptions and labelling, into which so much work had gone.