

The National Brewing Library –

It is now over ten years since the opening of the National Brewing Library (NBL) within the Oxford Brookes University Special Collections facility in Oxford.

by **Chris Marchbanks**

Tom Martin, the IBD Library Group Chairman gave details in *The Brewer International* (May 2004) of how this exciting project got off the ground.

One of the unique features of the NBL library is that it is still growing and allows personal access to its shelves for browsing as well as research – as it is for reference only. Since then, there has been a period of quiet expansion and professional enhancement, so now it is timely to describe what has been achieved and the changes that have been made.

The period from 2002 to date has been a tumultuous time for all the major UK breweries changing ownership and size as the industry regrouped. This has meant many brewery libraries have closed which, thanks to the generosity of their owners, has been a fantastic opportunity for the NBL to grow its book content and fill many issue gaps and expand the range to over 200 beer and brewing journals. This is an on-going project and the list of journal gaps can be found on the NBL website and any member who can help fill them is urged to contact me.

The library moved during 2006 into a custom-built research block – The Buckley Building – used for all the University's Special Collections – many of which have synergistic links to brewing such as Catering and Hotel



Management (Fuller Collection) – Cookery (Jane Grigson Collection and the Ken Hom library) and in 2008 the Michael Jackson 'Beer Hunter' Archive. This latter was a large bequest to Oxford Brookes University of the 200 plus beer and whisky books he wrote, plus his library, notebooks, cuttings, full filing cabinets of brochures and related brewery detail.

At the moment the Brewing Library has over 6000 books and pamphlets with more than 1100 which have been added since 2002 – and is currently receiving 28 journals – from our own JIB and B&DI to Belgian, US and Spanish trade, technical and brewing history magazines. All donations of books and

journals are acknowledged with thanks in the annual acquisition list which is within the NBL website pages.

Library management

The Library is managed by a joint IBD and Oxford Brookes Committee which oversees the book and journal acquisitions, library cataloguing, book conservation and reader support – such as a photocopying service within the copyright agency rules. Day-to-day librarianship is carried out by the Oxford Brookes staff within the University Library. The NBL is also very grateful to the IBD Grants Committee for its ongoing support with funds to assist with cataloguing and library administration.

A recent addition in 2009 was the IBD Archive – which followed a review at Clarges St. of old Minute and Committee books, ledgers and membership histories for both the IoB and IBG. They now have a new home at the NBL Oxford.

The original source and founder benefactors of the NBL were the IoB, IBG, BLRA, (BBPA) and the Whitbread archive library. To this foundation – libraries and books from all the major UK breweries, EBC, BFBi, MBAA, ASBC, Brewers Association (USA), CAMRA, IBD members old and new have donated books and or journals as downsizing and anniversary opportunities occurred.

The Library continues to welcome all donations, so making the NBL the largest and best UK brewing library with a very wide subject base. If you have brewing textbooks,

The library shelves at Oxford Brookes University.



ten years on...



IBD Library Group (LAG) Committee meeting at NBL on 26 April 2012 – surrounded by the books and, miraculously, everyone is present.

brewery histories, old brewery pamphlets or related trade publications which are surplus to your needs, do not throw them away – please let the IBD know – and a new home will be found – as our reach is ever widening as the IBD grows.

The most recent new major donor is the Brewery History Society (BHS) which, when its archive was split, donated its extensive library of brewery history books plus many specialist magazines on labels, beer mats, breweriana, CAMRA local sections and brewery company house magazines to the NBL – thus enormously enhancing the completeness of its scope.

In addition to books, more modern systems have been donated as film, VHS video, CD to internet e-journals. With the digitising of many books, magazines and scientific journals – change can be expected and plans are being discussed on how these developments can best be conserved.



The Library is always looking for donations of old beer books and pamphlets.

The consequent increase in size of the University libraries means that new premises for the NBL are being built – the fourth location on site in 12 years – with a move expected in late 2013.

Is it time you visited the NBL?

To increase your beer knowledge, help your brewery research interest or just have an enjoyable browse:

- Look at the catalogue to find what book(s) or journal(s) are available using (<http://catalogue.brookes.ac.uk/TalisPrism>)
- Then make an appointment to visit the library.



- Enjoy a quiet read surrounded by brewing literature of incomparable diversity.

The Library is always looking for donations of old beer books and below are ten historic brewing texts that we are looking for, so please keep a look out. Check those dusty shelves and you may be able to help grow the NBL for posterity.

1. *A new Art of Brewing Beer, Ale and other sorts of liquor.* T. Tryon, 1691
2. *Brewing made Easy.* W. Moir, 1802.
3. *The whole art of Brewing Welsh Ales.* J. Robinson, 1848.
4. *A handbook for Australian Brewers.* J.C. MacCartie, 1884.
5. *The Hop – its culture, marketing and manufacture.* H. Myriek, 1899.
6. *The Life and Work of Cornelius O'Sullivan* edited H. D. O'Sullivan, 1923.
7. *A Perfite Platforme of a Hoppe Garden* R. Scott, 1784.
8. *Viticulture and Brewing in the Ancient Orient.* H. Lutz, 1922.
9. *Burton and its Bitter Beer.* J.S. Bushnan, 1853.
10. *The Economies of Brewing.* E.J. Tweed, 1866.

You can learn more about the National Brewing Library at www.brookes.ac.uk/library/speccoll.html. Please contact Chris Marchbanks if you can help to extend the collection on cjmarshbanks@aol.com ■

