

## New University Buildings at Cambridge

## THE NEW UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

THE University Library, after occupying its old site for four hundred and sixty-four years, has now removed to a new building on a new site. The difficulties, not only of storage but also of the proper handling of the books in a medieval building, have long been recognised, and records of debates in the Senate House on what ought to be, or could be, done go well back into the last century. Many suggestions for alterations and hoped for improvements were made from time to time, but all with the view of remaining on the old site. Ideas for additional stories, for covering in the old courts, for excavating cellars underground were in turn suggested and debated, but without any definite move ever coming out of it all.

Meanwhile the pressure on the Library steadily grew: a flood of books burst out after the War and the problem of how to store, handle and make accessible a collection increasing each year by as much as a third of a mile of shelving became more and more acute. All available space in the town was requisitioned and each part contained its host of 'little used' books which necessitated an outlay on a special messenger service.

In 1921 a definite move was made to tackle the situation seriously, and a syndicate was appointed to consider the needs of the Library and the best way of meeting them. The syndicate reported in due course that in its opinion the only method was to build a new library on a new site. This suggestion was adopted by the Senate, not without some opposition from those who regretted a break in the historical continuity of the old site and who perhaps dreaded the upheaval (the Library Syndicate allowed three months for the move; actually it was finished, without a hitch, in eight weeks).

The special syndicate then proceeded to consider possible sites, and chose that of the King's and Clare playing fields across the river (the Eastern Hospital during the War) as the most central and accessible of the few remaining positions that were available. The two colleges concerned showed great public spirit in meeting the wishes of the University, and eventually Sir Giles Scott was asked to prepare plans for a new library.

At that time, although the financial aspect was a matter of grave concern, the University, recognising the desperate need of the Library and its importance as the pivot on which so much of its work turned, determined to risk all and go ahead. Certain bequests and the assistance of the Rockefeller Foundation, which agreed to take into consideration the University outlay on the Library to count as part of its contribution to the Rocke-

efeller scheme for certain scientific departments in the University, thereby greatly eased the situation. A complete building has, therefore, been opened by H.M. the King instead of, as might have been the case, only a part awaiting time and opportunity for its continuation.

Sir Giles Scott has planned a building which combines an exterior of great dignity with an interior admirably designed for its purpose. Libraries differ considerably in their policy towards their readers. All of them provide one or more reading rooms, and the Cambridge Library for the first time in its career has followed suit with a main reading room to accommodate two hundred readers, not to mention smaller rooms for special purposes and tables and seats in all the book stacks. The Library, however, has a policy, not to be found everywhere, of allowing all members of the Regent House and, under certain not very arduous regulations undergraduates as well, free access to the great majority of the shelves. This is a great privilege, since in looking for one book another may be noticed the existence of which the reader was previously unaware. In addition, most books can be borrowed and taken away home or to the laboratory.

The needs of those working in the sciences do not differ materially from those of readers in other branches of knowledge, and the same general rules are made to apply to all. It is impossible to give a full account, or even a partial one, of the scientific books in a general collection of a million and a half volumes, but mention may be made of the periodical department. Periodicals form a branch of literature much consulted by the sciences. To this department a large wing is devoted. Current numbers are to be found in pigeon holes, and the bound volumes of each series are close at hand; all 'dead' periodicals are stored elsewhere to avoid confusion but are easily obtainable. The classification is minute, and there are some eighty separate headings into which the sciences are divided.

Apart from its service to present readers, a great library has another function to perform, namely, that of conservation of literature for the reader of the future. This applies especially to those few libraries, of which Cambridge is one, which receive books under the Copyright Act, and this is perhaps the main reason why many libraries allow no book to pass out of their precincts. In Cambridge the risk of undue wear and tear on books and periodicals that are likely to be much used as laboratory tools is minimised by the use of the numerous well-equipped libraries attached to the



various departments, such as the Balfour Library of Zoology, the Philosophical Society's library and those attached to the Departments of Botany, Geology, Physiology and so on, to mention only those concerned with sciences. The colleges in their libraries are more and more taking heed to the needs of the undergraduate as well.

Science has its rarities in the book world, not equal in fame to Caxtons or folio Shakespeares, but of these the University Library has its fair share. The scientific worker is usually concerned with the more modern book and with the facility



FIG. 1. Drawing of the north-east corner of the Zoology Court with the main entrance.

with which he can obtain it. This aim the new University Library now satisfies as never before.

C. F.-C.

#### NEW DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY

The University of Cambridge only awoke to an interest in biological science about sixty years ago. The evolution controversy between Huxley and Owen at the British Association meeting at Cambridge in 1862 started it. There were at Cambridge collections of vertebrate animals, insects and birds, and both controversialists undoubtedly urged their proper housing. In consequence Cambridge decided to build a museum, the opening of which was followed by a proposal to create a professorship. Finally, Newton was appointed professor in 1866. His department consisted of a room for himself, and here he used to meet all who

cared to come, conducting informal classes. Arthur Balfour used to say that he enjoyed these, and he introduced his younger brother, Francis Maitland, who in the next ten years established embryology as a distinct division of animal science. Newton lent F. M. Balfour his private room for practical classes in 1875, and the University created a chair of animal morphology for him in May 1882, but he lost his life when climbing a spur of Mont Blanc two months later. Among his pupils in this period were Sedgwick, Garrod, Milnes Marshall, Bridge, Hickson, Lister, Weldon, Harmer, Shipley and Bateson, all men of high repute in zoological science.

The chair of animal morphology died with Balfour, but his teaching was continued by Adam Sedgwick first as lecturer and then reader at a nominal salary of £100 a year, Trinity College providing a fellowship and other emoluments. Other colleges, noticeably King's, Christ's, John's and Caius were similarly benefactors to the new Department, and so the Cambridge school of zoology grew into existence. Classes increased and biological teaching for medicine was called for, and the University raised the roofs over the Department of Mineralogy and over the Philosophical Library, providing large and most picturesque attics for practical zoology. Sedgwick succeeded Newton as professor, remaining such for two years before moving to the Imperial College of Science. I succeeded him and in my first year I had to have a research guest in my own room, which was also my office and the storeroom for the research material of Balfour and others, as indeed it remained for twenty-five years more. Classes in comparative physiology, entomology and hydrobiology were established, and it soon became apparent that they were filling long-felt wants. The University helped the subject all it could, adding rooms vacated by mathematics, botany and physiology in turn, thus providing a ramshackle and widespread laboratory, no part of which was even reasonably fireproof, or suitable for that experimentation which the modern development of zoology makes imperative. The task before the University was to provide a modern building for at least 400 students and 36 research workers, these being the laboratory attendances of 1932-33.

The Empire Marketing Board was interested in entomology and offered a conditional grant. This led to an investigation by the Rockefeller Trustees that embraced not only the biological departments of Cambridge but the University Library as well. The necessary sum to secure a Rockefeller grant was raised by private donations and by a State grant. Zoology benefited both by building costs and endowment for experimental zoology