

Helen Shenton
New Deputy Director of Harvard University Library



Above: Helen Shenton

Helen Shenton, Head of Collection Care at the British Library, has been appointed to the newly created post of Deputy Director of Harvard University Library in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She begins work at the end of March 2010.

Helen will play a significant role at a key moment in the history of the development of the library and information provision of Harvard University. She will contribute her expertise in leading new initiatives and change management to strengthen

and help transform Harvard's great library system, comprised of 73 library units, towards a system designed to meet the needs of the twenty-first century.

Helen is a leading figure in her field in the UK, Europe and beyond. She has been a member of numerous national and international groups, such as IFLA (International Federation of Library Association) Preservation and Conservation Committee, LIBER (Association of European Research Libraries) Preservation Division, University College London's Centre for Sustainable Heritage's Academic Advisory Committee, Archbishop of Canterbury's Library Advisory Council and the National Heritage Science Strategy Steering Group. She is a founding Board member of the UK's Digital Preservation Coalition.

Since joining the British Library from the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1998 and becoming its first Head of Collection Care in 2002, Helen has transformed the library's approach to collection care into a world class operation, as uniquely evidenced by the opening of the Centre for Conservation comprising state of the art

studios for the conservation of books and preservation of sound, and an ambitious training and public outreach programme. Under her leadership the British Library has conserved more than 1.3 million items; increased access for readers by producing more than 152 million surrogacy frames and images; taken part in major projects such as the virtual reunification of Codex Sinaiticus (the earliest new testament in the world); secured a future for the National Preservation Office as the Preservation Advisory Centre; contributed thought leadership to the profession, for example, through the development of life cycle collection management; and built digital preservation expertise within the Library from 0 to 100 years' collective experience over the past ten years.

In keeping with Helen's appetite for progress, she leaves the British Library having put in place an ambitious programme to address the key strategic challenges for the preservation and conservation of its physical and digital collections for the next 10 years. The strategy combines the best of the known with the best of the new and places the library on a sure-footing to face the seismic changes of "Digital Britain", the increasingly important environmental and energy issues and the current financial climate.

"I am so proud of what we've achieved at the British Library. It has been a privilege to work with such phenomenal collections, to grapple with such revolutionary developments in the library, media and information world, and to work with such an interesting and talented range of people" says Helen. She goes on to say "I am now looking forward very much to the undoubtedly challenging and exciting life ahead at Harvard". The new role embraces a range of key services - from high density stores to archives and records management, from information systems to preservation - whilst also being deeply involved with the Taskforce set up by the Provost to develop Harvard University Library.

By: Caroline Peach / Kissley Leonor, British Library

Other sources of information:

British Library Collection Care website: <http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/ccare/>

BL Centre for Conservation website: <http://www.bl.uk/conservation>

PAC website: <http://www.bl.uk/npo/index.html>

Codex Sinaiticus: <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/>

Harvard Gazette article: http://hul.harvard.edu/news/2009_1211.html

Harvard University Library Taskforce Report:

March 2010

http://www.provost.harvard.edu/reports/Library_Task_Force_Report.pdf