

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

(A Small Tour)

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Когато се пише за място, което си видял и на което си работил за кратко, впечатленията за четящия стават малко по-истински. Нека прочетем за специалните колекции на университета в Единбург, за музеите и галериите към библиотеката, за модерното оборудване при обслужването на хора с увредено зрение ...

It is the fourth week of our stay in the Edinburgh University Library but we still feel as if we arrived yesterday.

Edinburgh has this magical air that makes you feel as if you are living in a fairy tale. But apart from its historical background and significance as an educational centre it is a magnificently developed modern city. In the heart of the city is Edinburgh University that has always been as engine of contributions to the development of progressive philosophical and scientific thought and contemporary achievements. But the University itself wouldn't what it is without its Library, and it is about the Library and its "wonders" we shall speak now. The first treasure one finds here is the staff – friendly, enthusiastic and compassionate. The librarians welcomed us in a splendid way that made us feel part of the team. Our mentors, Rowena, Liz and Theo, considerably introduced us to complex library, buildings and procedures, and all their colleagues willingly helped them.

Another particular detail about the Library is its wonderful location in the so-called Meadows - a green spot at the exact centre of the city. Many are tempted to rest close to the University Buildings, and the Library itself. But if the weather tricks you with one of those awful rainy days one might probably decide to visit the University museums and galleries – Talbot Rice Gallery, Anatomy Lecture Theatre, Museum of Instruments, etc., that are successfully managed by the Library.

The "Library" is a monster that comprises 15 sites (or app.), bound together in an efficient network. Some of the libraries are "ancient", and some of them are very modern – all perceiving the idea to build self-reliance in students and academic staff by providing digital resources accessible on- and off-campus. The library has developed a system of adequate facilities, training and help, for disabled people, nature students and services tailored to specific groups. Services for library users include Learning and Resource Centre, Computer Labs and Study rooms for individual and group work. Nature students, though they in no way have long white beards, can benefit from a summer school, which is compulsory for all who are going back to university some time after they had finished with studying and is available to those who are the first representatives of their families at the university. At the summer school, students undergo serious training on information literacy and can see if the Library to be as pleasant as they hoped. Disabled users find themselves at ease using special hardware equipment (including stretched keyboards and bigger mice) and software functionality. Many students with dyslexia find their way to Edinburgh Library Resource Learning Centre.

Of special interest is the Multimedia Compartment, where students gain the opportunity to create

their own “film” or “audio” studio.

A new experiment for the Library is the merging of the computer services with the public services, which results in the organization of a special Help Desk Area, where people can request more in-depth assistance, apart from the traditional lending and issuing services.

The Special Collection Division is worth mentioning, for it has been developing for several centuries, starting from 16th. The store room contains some wonderful items as the only copy of Bohemian act, a Chinese manuscript on silk (17 c.), and the diploma paper of Charles Darwin who attended a medical program of the University at the time. Before Mr. Arthur Conan Doyle started his prominent writing career he was awarded a Doctor of Medicine from the university and his thesis is in the library. You can check this on the library online catalogue (<http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk>). Celebrities tend to enrich library collections with their own books and materials.

All these “wonders” are hosted in a tremendous building of 6 floors. It is especially designed for library building and recently is subjected to refurbishment. The number of computing labs is constantly growing and is in rivalry with the traditional reading area. The design of the building surprises with its labyrinth- like resemblance. One is tempted to look behind and try to focus the obscure figure of a monk, benevolently asking you to share the knowledge base of the library.

It is like moving with time-machine backward and onward in library world.

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