

# INTELLIGENCE INSIDER

Your Oxford Health Libraries' monthly newsletter



Oxford Health  
Libraries

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## Visiting two London libraries: reflections

When I became interested in librarianship as a career, I only knew of public, university, and school libraries. I first met a healthcare librarian after I finished my MSc in Information and Library Studies; it happened during a coffee break at a conference. She told me about the work her team did supporting evidence-based information for patient care and healthcare students; I was so inspired that I wanted to be one of them.

That brief and serendipitous encounter was very valuable,

not just as it defined my career choices, but because it also helped me to

undertake a reflective approach to my professional development: recognising the skills and knowledge I already had, to then identify ways I could gain further knowledge and experience to improve teamwork as well as the quality of the services I provided. That is how I embarked on the Chartership process, which involved reflecting on the value not only of healthcare libraries but also of the wider world of libraries, across the breadth of the profession. I became a chartered librarian before I started my role as outreach librarian at Oxford Health.

Some members of our library team are chartered librarians, others are undertaking this certification. To support this, we arranged a visit to the House of Commons and the Supreme Court Libraries in London at the beginning of October. These services are fascinating; they require such a depth and high level of specialization to manage their collections and have a huge impact on public life.

The buildings where these libraries are located are not doubt a delight for any visitor. However, what I found even more compelling was the influence they have on the government and the justice system of the United Kingdom and beyond: the Supreme Court, in fact, acts as the final court of appeal in the UK and for some UK territories that are subject to [The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council](#), which today serves as the highest court of civil and criminal appeal for many Commonwealth countries and other entities.

First, we visited the [House of Commons Library](#) on a day when the parliamentarians did not sit. The Library Loans Manager took us from [Portcullis House](#), which is now the main entrance to Westminster Palace, to the library. On the way, we were shown some parts of the building and were told its history; this was useful information which complemented what we learned once in the library. We were told how, from a small collections of printed materials on a few shelves, the reference library grew and now provides a very important information service to the parliamentarians, using electronic resources and facilitating consultation of the historic material. We were interested to find out the types of enquiries the library receives, how they promote their services and how the library engages with the public. At the Oxford Health Libraries, we sometimes consult some of the resources they produce to respond to enquiries related to healthcare issues in specific constituencies or for matters of Public Health. We receive updates from the House of Commons Library via a subscription service, to which anybody can sign up: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/>.

Just across the square from the Palace of Westminster, stands [the Supreme Court](#) which hears cases of the greatest public or constitutional importance affecting a large population. We were received by the library manager, who runs the whole service supported by an assistant librarian. The library serves the Justices, their assistants and the whole court staff. They deal largely with document supply and literature searches, as we do here at Oxford Health.

We were shown the court rooms and heard about the dynamics and function of the hearings that take place in there. The library manager explained that he sometimes attends some of the hearings as part of his learning activities, to help him individuate gaps in the library resources and services and thus better serve his users.

This is similar to the activities performed by our [Outreach Librarians](#) who attend clinical and non clinical meetings to gain knowledge that will shape the services we provide and to support the staff with information at the point of care.



**Bertha Calles Cartas**  
Assistant Library Manager

During our visit to the Supreme Court Library we were also interested in understanding the challenges faced by this specialized library. It was emphasized the importance of networking and establishing good communication channels and relationships with other librarians: the library manager offered different examples of his collaboration with Supreme Court librarians from around the world.



These visits have been very valuable to our team, and not just to those working on their Chartership certification, to identify areas of improvement such as networking and promotion of services. We are very grateful to the generosity of our colleagues at the House of Commons and the Supreme Court who took the time to explain, in great detail, their services. I learned that despite the difference between the services supplied by government and law librarians and those provided by healthcare libraries, we are all part of the same family of librarians, with similar challenges and also lucky enough to enjoy the same rewarding outcome: the information we provide will have an impact on the wider society.

## NHS Staff Survey



There are three dedicated IT Stations around the Trust, to allow you to complete the NHS Staff Survey: at Warneford Library, Littlemore Café, and the Hot Desking Room at Whiteleaf Centre.

**Have your say before Friday 29 November [here](#).**



**Kate Jones**  
Outreach Librarian  
Primary Care

## Thames Valley GP Training event

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October found me at the lovely Double Tree Hilton hotel in Thame for the annual Thames Valley GP Training event. This was my second time at this event but last time I was working with Bucks Primary Care staff and this time I was on the look-out for Oxfordshire colleagues.

Running a stand is tricky, people avoid eye contact as though their lives depend on it!

I tried all the usual tricks: I bought freebies – pens, bookmarks, even chocolates. I tried to look approachable: I took out my knitting and subtly displayed my Archers tote bag – all without success. No one came near – well, one person, bless her. My big chance came when I saw the absolutely massive queue for the tea/coffee. A captive audience!

Once I approached the GPs in the queue they all seemed genuinely pleased to talk with me. Every last one knew what an NHS OpenAthens account was and if they didn't already have one, they wanted one. Most were surprised to learn that Oxfordshire had a librarian who was dedicated exclusively to serve Primary Care. Many even voluntarily came over to chat with me later and look at the board games and books that I had brought along.



So, in the style of any good reflection, what can I conclude:

- GPs DON'T like Quality Streets
- GPs DO like free highlighters
- GPs are keen to access high-quality evidence
- The food at the Hilton is lovely.

Hopefully I will forge ongoing relationships with many of the lovely people I met there.



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