



Who are you, where are you based and what do you do?

My name is Dianne Shepherd, Senior Librarian, The British Museum

The British Museum's Library is a reference collection of over 335,000 titles dedicated to the research of human cultures – past and present – across the globe. Since opening in 1759 the British Museum's curatorial departments have grown their subject specialist library collections to support research into its objects and exhibitions, collaborative projects with external researchers and museology. The curatorial departments include Africa, Oceania and the Americas, Asia, Britain, Europe and Prehistory (including Horology), Money and Medals, Egypt and Sudan, Greece and Rome, Money and Medals, Middle East, Prints and Drawings and Conservation and Scientific Research. External library researchers access the library materials through our public library service point in the Anthropology Library & Research Centre (ALRC). Archives are also consulted in the ALRC under the invigilation of the library team. Objects and relevant printed materials are consulted in the different object study rooms.

I joined The British Museum as the Senior Librarian in October 2021. I manage the library collection across the estate. Given the diverse nature of the collaborative research undertaken at the British Museum it is important that the library team integrates into the library sector. On arriving at the British Museum, I have focused on building a professional library team that develops sectoral participation into their professional practice. Participating in M25 is key to achieving this ambition.

What do you most enjoy about your job?

I am enjoying my role because the library team is especially supportive and friendly. As a team we are reviewing the multiple parts of a library service. There is a lot of satisfaction in the realisation that bit by bit we are making a difference. The only way to review special collection management is through the examination of the physical. As we delve into collection we are finding many fascinating stories.

How has/can the M25 Consortium support you in your career?

The M25 supports the library team's development through its facilitation of sharing of experiences and professional practice through its events. This does not just benefit the library service but also individual career development through the building of their skill sets.

What would it surprise people to know about you?

I became a librarian many years ago so I could work in the field of environmental science and protection. I later became drawn into social history and have not looked back.

Complete the sentence: If I wasn't working in a library I would be...because...

If I wasn't working in the library and information sector, I would now want to work in garden design and management because I love horticulture for plant interest and wildlife.

Dianne Shepherd, June 2024