Newnham College Library Guide 2026-27

Welcome to Newnham College Library! We are Eve Lacey (College Librarian), Natasha MacMahon (Assistant Librarian), and Sasha Gardner (Early Career Librarian). We are looking forward to introducing you to the Library collections, services, and study spaces.

Newnham College Library is one of the best-stocked college libraries in Cambridge, with a strong collection of some 100,000 volumes, including approximately 6,000 rare books. The Library also offers general and interdisciplinary reading, a good reference collection, a selection of periodicals and newspapers and access to e-resources. The library is housed within three interlinked buildings – the beautiful 1897 Grade 2* listed Yates Thompson Library (Architect: Basil Champneys); the light, airy and modern Horner Markwick Library, opened in 2004 (Architects: John Miller + Partners); and the 1982 Katharine Stephen Room, listed as an important example of postmodern architecture (Architects: Van Heyningen & Haward).

The cover of this booklet depicts our bookplate, which was designed in 1908 by etcher George Eve (1855-1914). It features the Newnham College flower, an iris, and its edges are inscribed with Acanthus (otherwise known as Bear's breeches) scrollwork. There are living examples of both these flowers in Newnham gardens – Acanthus grows in the borders along Peile, and irises bloom around the Observatory at the back of the playing fields. The Latin motto reads *Potius multum legere quam multa,* advising us that it is better to read in depth than to read many things – we hope you'll enjoy reading both widely and deeply during your time in the Library.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any queries or access requirements. We will do everything we can to ensure you have all the resources you need throughout your studies.

Contact

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Assistant Librarian Natasha MacMahon, MA, MA
Early Career Librarian Sasha Gardner, BA, MSt, MA

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www.newn.cam.ac.uk/student-hub/newnham-college-library

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Visiting the Library

Newnham College Library provides library services to members of Newnham College. All new library users must complete an induction before card access to the library is activated. For current members of Newnham College, this will give you access to the Library 6.30am to 1.45am daily (including weekends).

Any changes to closing times will be advised as soon as they become known. The library is completely closed for several days over the Christmas & New Year period. Resident members of Newnham College must not admit strangers into the library. Personal guests may be signed in by arrangement with library staff during staffed hours throughout the year, with the exception of Easter Term when we reserve the study space for Newnham members for this period of revision and exams. **The library is staffed 9am - 1pm and 2pm - 5pm Monday to Friday.** Members of the wider academic community wishing to consult materials held in the Library must request a reader's appointment by contacting Library staff in advance. Please note that space is limited so access may not be granted in every case.

Accessibility

The College works closely with the University's Disability Resources Centre to ensure that students have what they need to take full advantage of their time at University. A lift operates between all three floors of the new Horner Markwick Library. There is no lift access to the upper floor of the old Yates Thompson Library. Please get in touch with Library staff if you would like assistance with access and book fetching, and visit the Accessibility page on our website (https://newn.cam.ac.uk/student-hub/newnham-college-library/accessibility) for more information about the support and equipment available. We are always ready to consider ways in which we can best serve any library user. Please just let us know how we can help.

Library collections

New books

The collection is kept as relevant, up-to-date and useful as possible by the annual purchase of over 1,000 new titles to support study in all subjects, especially at undergraduate level.

Library users are encouraged to suggest new books for purchase, by contacting your Director of Studies or Library staff, or using the online recommendation form on our web page (under 'Using the Library'). Sometimes, it is necessary to buy more than one copy of a book to meet demand. If we don't have enough copies of the books you need, please tell us.

Closed stack

Approximately 25,000 books are kept in the closed stack collection. They are less current than the open shelf material, but many of these can be borrowed. You can request closed stack material in person or by emailing library@newn.cam.ac.uk.

Rare books collection

Approximately 6,000 books are held in the Newnham College rare books collection. These may not be borrowed. Please contact the Librarian if you wish to consult material from the rare books collection or would like to find out more. Students are invited to view rare books before their subject formal hall, and we encourage you to make use of our special collections in your research.

Displays and exhibitions

Look out for new books by the self-issue terminals, regular displays in the Yates Thompson Library, and rare books in the exhibition cases upstairs in the Horner Markwick Library. Contact the Librarian if you'd like to curate a book display.

Archive collections

Newnham College Archives contain administrative, academic, social, photographic, and personal records dating from the College's foundation, and sometimes earlier. Some of the archive catalogue is browsable online via archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk. Please contact College Archivist Frieda Midgley if you are interested in visiting the archives: archivist@newn.cam.ac.uk We run a Library & Archives Research Award every year to fund students to spend a week studying our archives and special collections.

Finding print & electronic resources

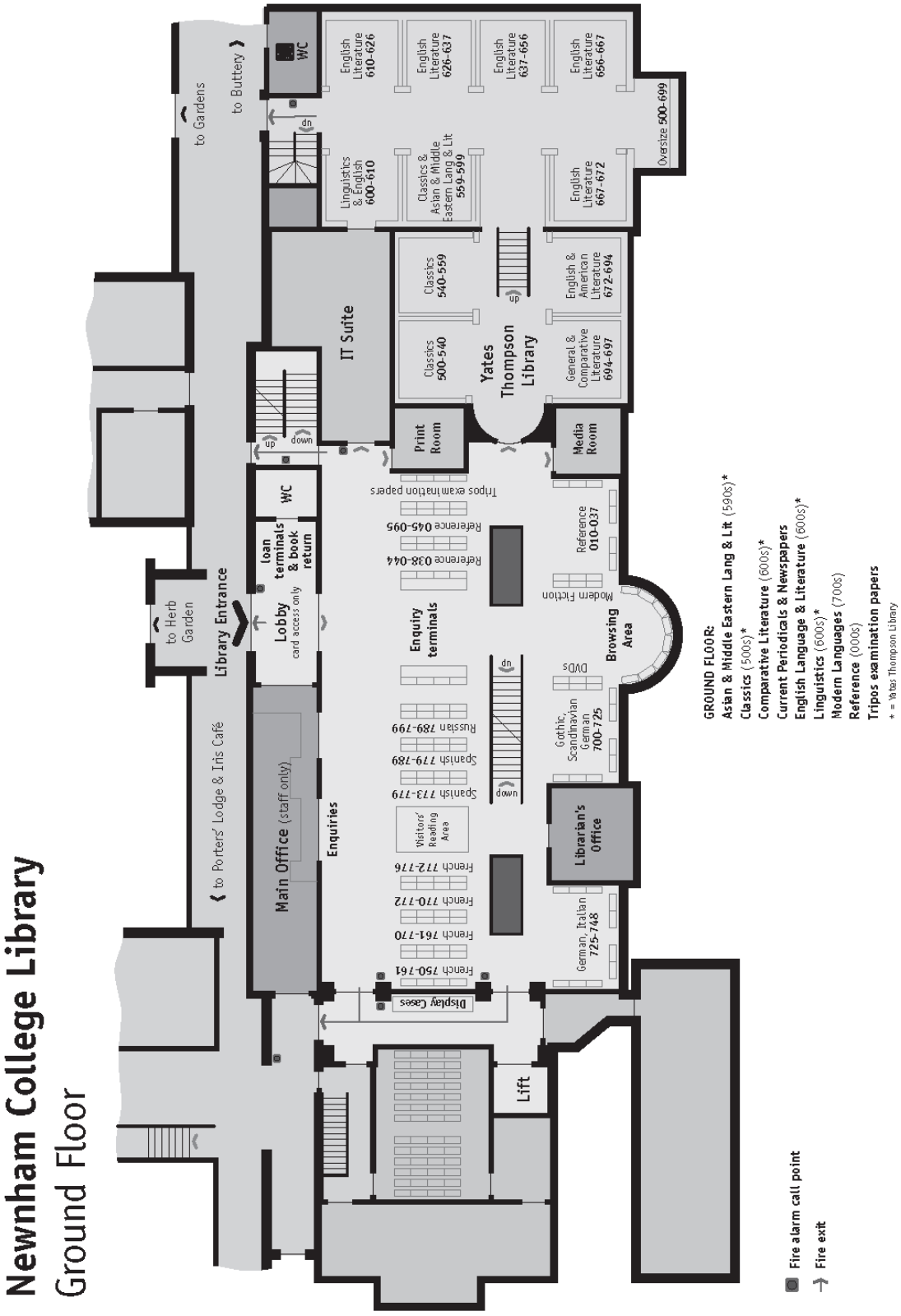
Two dedicated enquiry terminals are provided on the ground floor. These give access to iDiscover, the catalogue where you can search for print and electronic resources across all of the University's libraries. You can limit your search to items held here by selecting Newnham College from the library location drop-down menu. The enquiry terminals are public terminals, so you can conduct iDiscover searches but do not log in. To access 'My Library Account' on iDiscover or to look at online journal articles and ebooks, go to iDiscover on your own device (idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk), or use one of the computers in the IT suite.

Layout

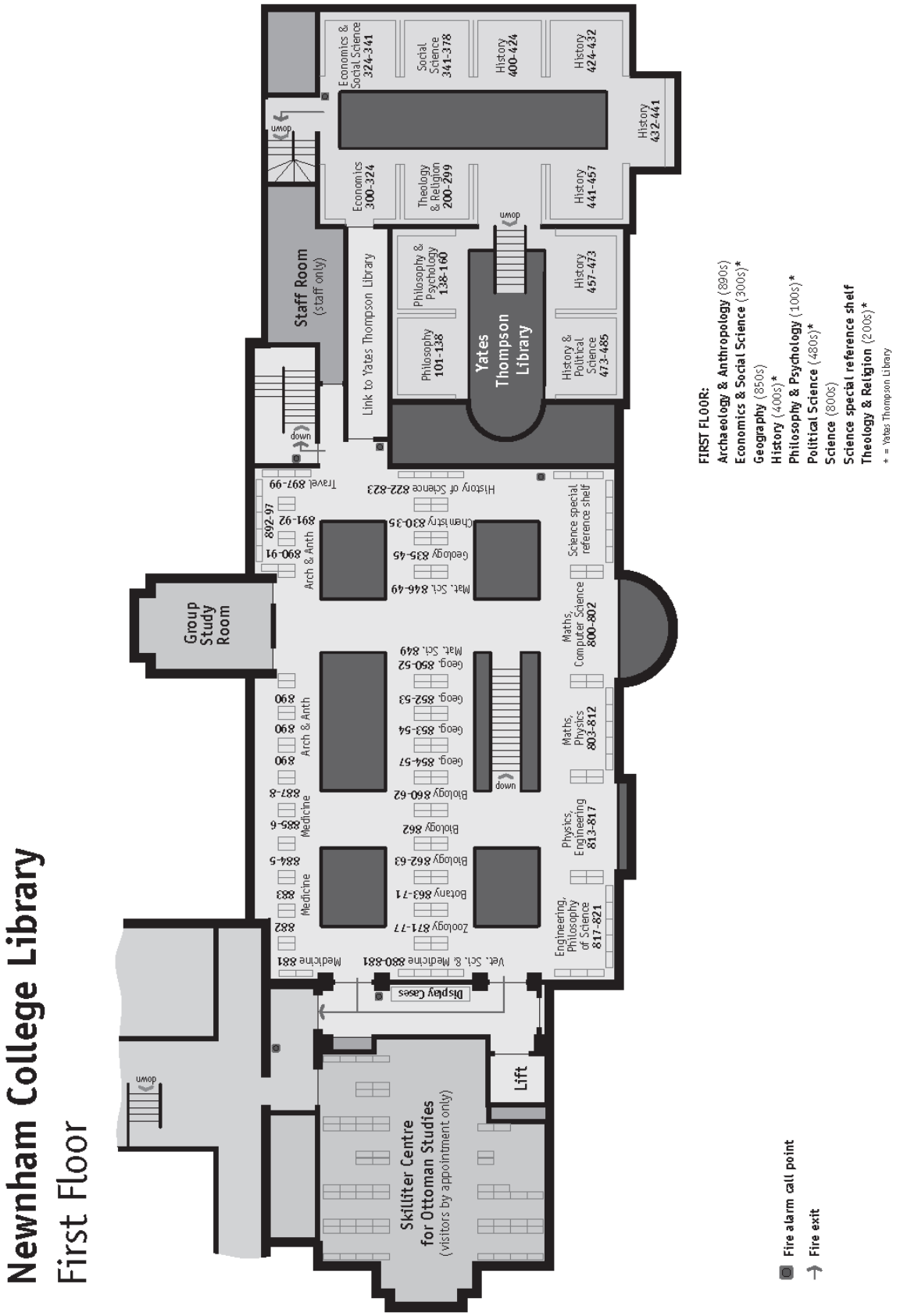
The older part of the library is called the Yates Thompson library, and the new part is the Horner Markwick library. The Yates Thompson library is on two floors; the Horner Markwick library is on three floors, including a basement. Books have been arranged according to an in-house classification system based on Tripos subjects. Please ask staff if you would like to know more about our classification system. To find a book, search for it on iDiscover and consult the maps on the noticeboard by the enquiry terminals to find its location. General reference books and dictionaries for all subjects are in the Horner Markwick Ground Floor area, along with sections for Modern Fiction and Poetry, Graphic Novels, DVDs, JCR collections, and a 'Shelf Help' section (070s), which has books on study skills and wellbeing. On this floor, you will also find shelves marked 'Free books' where you can help yourself to books that have been withdrawn from the Library collection and leave behind books you no longer want. Bound periodicals for all subjects are in the basement.

Maps

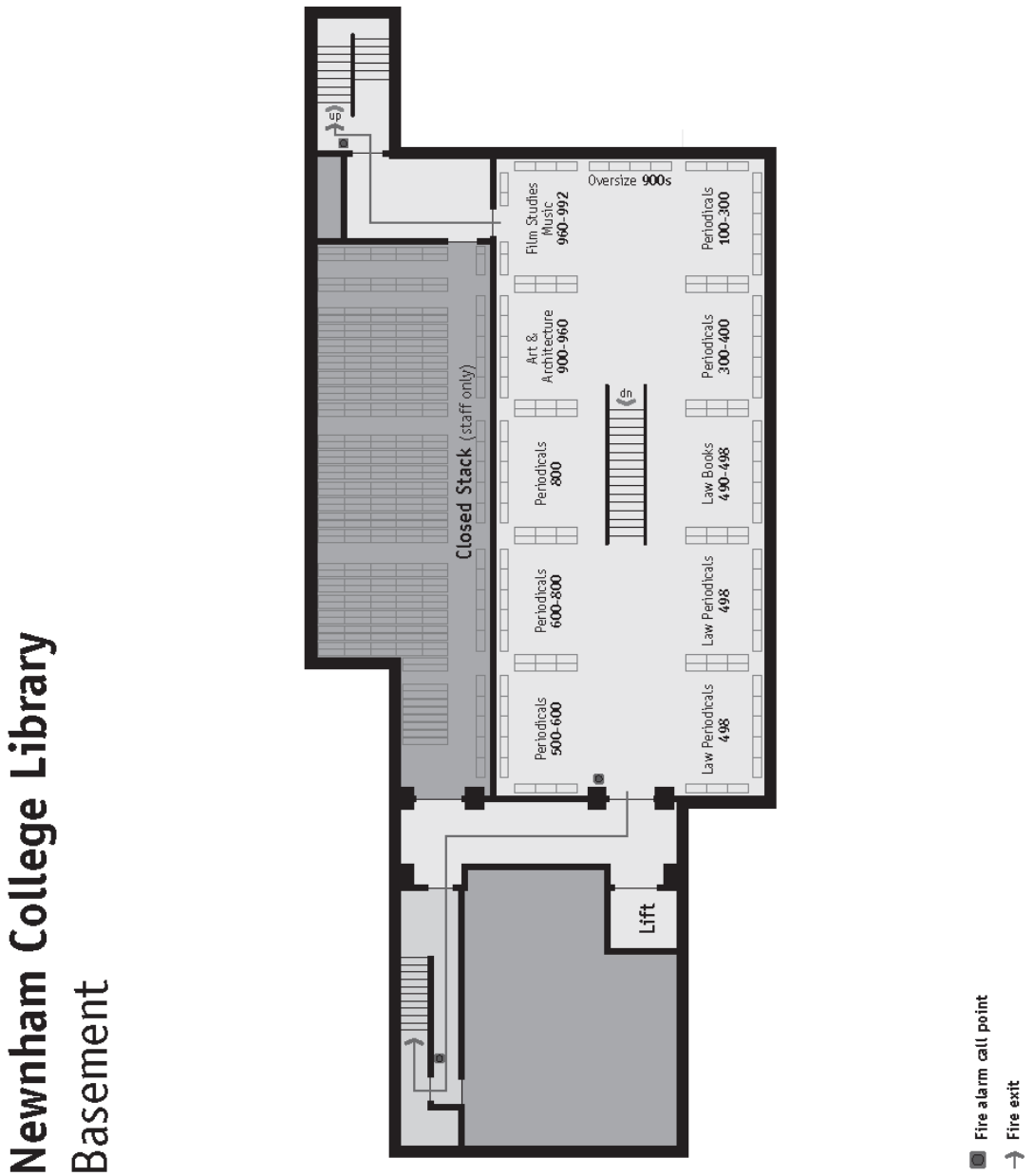
Ground floor



First floor


Newnham College Library
First Floor
Economics & Social Science 324-341
Social Science 341-378
History 400-424
History 424-432
History 432-441
Economics 300-324
Theology & Religion 200-299
History 441-457
Staff Room (staff only)
Link to Yates Thompson Library
Philosophy & Psychology 138-160
Philosophy 101-138
Yates Thompson Library
History 457-473
History & Political Science 473-485
down
Travel 897-99
History of Science 822-823
Science special reference shelf
Chemistry 830-35
Geology 835-45
Mat. Sci. 846-49
Arch & Anth
890-91
891-92
892-97
Group Study Room
Maths, Computer Science 800-802
Geog. 850-52
Geog. 852-53
Geog. 853-54
Geog. 854-57
Biology 860-62
Mat. Sci. 849
Maths, Physics 803-812
Biology 862
Biology 862-63
Botany 863-71
Zoology 871-77
Physics, Engineering 813-817
Engineering, Philosophy of Science 817-821
Vet. Sci. & Medicine 880-881
Medicine 881
882
883
884-5
885-6
887-8
Medicine
Display Cases
Lift
Skilliter Centre for Ottoman Studies (visitors by appointment only)
FIRST FLOOR:
Archaeology & Anthropology (890s)
Economics & Social Science (300s)*
Geography (850s)
History (400s)*
Philosophy & Psychology (100s)*
Political Science (480s)*
Science (800s)
Science special reference shelf
Theology & Religion (200s)*
* = Yates Thompson Library
Fire alarm call point
Fire exit

Basement


Newnham College Library
Basement
Closed Stack (staff only)
Periodicals 500-600
Periodicals 600-800
Periodicals 800
Art & Architecture 900-960
Film Studies Music 960-992
Oversize 900s
Law Periodicals 498
Law Periodicals 498
Law Books 490-498
Periodicals 300-400
Periodicals 100-300
Lift
up
dn
BASEMENT:
Art, Architecture,
Film Studies & Music (900s)
Bound periodicals (all subjects)
Law (490s)
Fire alarm call point
Fire exit

Find your subject

Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic	Anglo-Saxon History Yates Thompson library first floor (450s) Anglo-Saxon, Celtic Literature Yates Thompson library ground floor (600) Norse Horner Markwick library ground floor (700) Anglo-Saxon Archaeology Horner Markwick library first floor (890s)
Archaeology & Anthropology	Horner Markwick library first floor (890s)
Architecture	Horner Markwick library basement (950s)
Asian & Middle Eastern Lang & Lit	Yates Thompson library ground floor (590s)
Chemical Engineering	Horner Markwick library first floor (819s)
Classics	Yates Thompson library ground floor (500s)
Computer Science	Horner Markwick library first floor (802s)
Economics	Yates Thompson library first floor (300s)
Education	Yates Thompson library first floor (370s)
Engineering	Horner Markwick library first floor (819s)
English	Yates Thompson library ground floor (600s)
Geography	Horner Markwick library first floor (850s); Yates Thompson library first floor (300s)
History	Yates Thompson library first floor (400s)
History & Philosophy of Science	Horner Markwick library first floor (821-823)
History of Art	Horner Markwick library basement (900s)
Law	Horner Markwick library basement (490s)
Land Economy	Economics Yates Thompson library first floor (300s) Geography Horner Markwick library first floor (850s) Land law Horner Markwick library basement (497.3)
Linguistics	Yates Thompson library ground floor (600)
Mathematics	Horner Markwick library first floor (800-808)
Medicine & Veterinary Medicine	Horner Markwick library first floor (880s)
Modern Languages	Horner Markwick library ground floor (700s)
Music	Horner Markwick library basement (980s)
Natural Sciences	(Biological) Horner Markwick library first floor (860s-880s) (Physical) Horner Markwick library first floor (810s-840s)
Philosophy	Yates Thompson library first floor (100s)
Politics	Yates Thompson library first floor (480s)
Psychology	Yates Thompson library first floor (130s)
Sociology	Yates Thompson library first floor (300s)
Theology & Religion	Yates Thompson library first floor (200s)

Periodicals (also called Journals)

The library subscribes to several printed periodicals, magazines, and newspapers. You can find the latest issues in the browsing area by the Click & Collect table, and back issues in bound volumes in the basement. Many periodicals are available online as ejournals.

Borrowing

Newnham College students can borrow up to 10 books at a time from the College Library. If nobody else has requested the book you have borrowed, the loan will automatically renew for as long as you need it. Please return your Newnham Library books to us as soon as you have finished with them so that they are available for others to find and read.

If the book has been requested (sometimes referred to as a recall) for use by another reader, you will be sent an email advising you to return the book within 3 days. Please email librarian@newn.cam.ac.uk if you are unable to return a requested book to us on time. Books can be borrowed over the vacation and College Library requests are suspended outside of termtime.

Reference books (marked 'Not to be Taken Away') cannot be borrowed and must be consulted in the Library. Some books from the 'Shelf Help' (070s) section offer guidance on health and wellbeing. If you would rather not charge these books to your account, you can borrow them without recording the loan and return them through the anonymous book drops when you have finished.

Self-issue system

To borrow a book, use the self-issue loan terminal in the library lobby. There's another self-issue terminal in the Library entrance area near the iDiscover terminals. You will need to scan your University card and type your surname then scan the barcode of each book you wish to borrow. There are step-by-step instructions next to the loan terminal and video instructions in the online induction. If you cannot issue the book to yourself using this system, please use a manual loans slip to record your loan(s) and post the slip in the manual loans box (also in the Library lobby). Please do not lend Newnham College Library books to anyone else; you are responsible for all books borrowed on your card.

Returning books

Return books by placing them in the book drops in the Library lobby area, or return them directly to the Library Office if it is staffed.

Accessing your account and checking your loans

Log in to 'My Library Account' on iDiscover to see the books you have on loan from Newnham and other libraries in the University. You will receive an emailed summary of the items you currently have on loan at the beginning of every month. If you see a book listed on your account that you think you have already returned to us, please let us know. 'My Library Account' is also a way of monitoring any requests you have placed and any overdue items you may have on your account.

Requests and recommendations

Please email library@newn.cam.ac.uk if the book you want is unavailable. Library staff may be able to buy the book if it is not already in stock, buy an additional copy if it is frequently on loan, or help you access it online or in another library.

Desks and workspaces

There are sockets available to plug in your laptops at every desk in Horner Markwick. In the Yates Thompson Library, there are sockets at every desk upstairs and charge points with extensions cords in the corner desks downstairs. If you lift up the desk flaps, you'll see how to switch on the task lights, and plug in your laptop. Wifi is available throughout the Library – you should set up an eduroam account to use this effectively (help.uis.cam.ac.uk). We also have two standing desks in the Library, and bookable desk space in the Group Study Room and Media Room.

IT facilities

There are several screens to connect to your laptop and two computers in the IT Suite (The Wolfson Room) on the ground floor of the Horner Markwick library. There is another computer and another screen in the Sidgwick Study Room too.

Photocopying, printing, scanning, binding

There are multi-function copiers/printers/scanners in the Library and in the Sidgwick Study Room. You need your University card to operate them, and you need to add credit to your DS-print account in order to print. There's more information about how to do this on the College computing website and on the noticeboards in the Library print room and Sidgwick Study Room. Ask staff in the Library or IT Department if you need help getting started. Print/photocopy costs are 5p per side (A4 black & white), 10p (A3 black & white); 20p per side (A4 colour); 40p (A3 colour).

Further instructions and details of print charges and copyright restrictions are available in the Print Room, but do ask Library staff if you need help. There is a comb-binding machine in the Library. Please ask Library staff if you would like binding materials or a demonstration.

Other services

Doors & Fire Exits

There is only one main entrance and exit to the library. All other doors are for emergency use only, and alarmed. They will release automatically in the event of the fire alarm sounding, except for the Yates Thompson library fire exit door, which has a 'Break glass for key' container on the wall next to it.

Fire Alarms

If you hear the continuous fire alarm, leave the library immediately and go to the assembly point in the sunken rose garden. Please familiarise yourself with all fire exits and evacuation procedures; there are further details in our online induction videos.

Lift

If you need to use the lift, press the button marked 0 for Ground Floor, 1 for First Floor, and -1 for Basement. In the unlikely event of the lift getting stuck, there is an alarm button (with a yellow bell) which puts you directly through to the lift engineers who will come and rescue you.

Toilet

There is a toilet in the library lobby. Users should remember to take their University cards with them so that they can get back in through the inner lobby door. Accessible toilets are available near the Buttery and in the Iris café.

Food and drink

Please do not bring any food (or chewing gum) into the Library. Reusable, securely-lidded drinks may be brought in (please make sure you keep your container sealed when you are not actually drinking). Single use cups are not permitted in the Library.

Sidgwick Study Room

The Sidgwick Study Room is a separate quiet study space on the first floor of Sidgwick Hall. It is available for members of Newnham College (via card access) 24 hours a day and all year round. It has another copier/printer/scanner, 1 computer, and 1 screen. Card access to this space is granted once you complete the online Library induction.

Using other libraries

All University members may use the University Library as well as their own Faculty library. University members will often be able to study in and borrow from other Faculty libraries, but College libraries are usually restricted to their own members, unless you make an appointment to consult their collections in advance.

Helpful websites

Newnham College Library *newn.cam.ac.uk/student-hub/newnham-college-library*
The College Library website with information about facilities, opening hours and borrowing. There are links to search the collection, make book recommendations, and place Click & Collect requests.

iDiscover *idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk*
Search Cambridge libraries' print and online collections on this catalogue. Log in to manage your loans, requests, fines and saved search results.

CamGuides *camguides.lib.cam.ac.uk*
A set of resources for students beginning undergraduate or postgraduate degrees at the University of Cambridge.

Cambridge Libraries Gateway *www.libraries.cam.ac.uk*
Details of opening hours, phone numbers and contact names in the University Libraries Directory.

Library Essentials *libguides.cam.ac.uk/libraryessentials*

Cambridge LibGuides *libguides.cam.ac.uk*
Lots of useful information and pathways to resources

LibAnswers *answers.libraries.cam.ac.uk*
Useful FAQs on using the University's libraries.

Library rules and borrowing regulations

Newnham College Library is run on a basis of trust and co-operation and we rely on all our readers to comply with the Library Rules below. It is particularly important that your loans are registered, so that the collection remains an excellent resource, and so that all books can be easily located.

1. The Library may be used by current members of Newnham College. Alumnae of the College are asked to contact Library staff in advance to check arrangements for access.
2. Authorised users will have their University cards validated for Library use after completing a library induction.
3. Library users must use their own University card to gain admission to the Library and, if eligible, to borrow books; library users must not use their card to admit anyone else to the Library.
4. Members of the wider academic community who are not members of the College, and who wish to consult materials held in the Library, must apply for a reader's appointment by contacting Library staff in advance. Space is limited and Library staff may not be able to grant access in every case.
5. Current members of Newnham College are allowed to borrow up to 10 books from Newnham College Library. Members of Newnham College who borrow books must not pass them on to non-members of Newnham College.
6. Books must not be marked or defaced in any way.
7. Books taken out of the Library must be correctly recorded on the self-issue loan terminal or using a manual loans slip. Please email Library staff if you are unable to record your loan using either of these methods.
8. The following may not be taken out of the Library: reference only books, including books from the Special Science Shelves, unbound periodicals, pamphlets, rare books and books from special collections, and certain books and periodicals marked 'Not To Be Taken Away'.
9. If nobody else has requested the book you have borrowed, the loan will keep renewing automatically for as long as you need it.
10. Books should be returned to the Library when they are requested by another borrower or by Library staff. If a book is lost or not returned after multiple requests, a replacement charge may be applied. Please email library@newn.cam.ac.uk as soon as possible if you are unable to find or return a book.
11. Lost cards should be reported to Library staff.
12. Library users must remove all personal property on leaving the Library.
13. No food should be brought into the Library. Drinks may be brought into the Library if they are in reuseable, securely-sealed, leak-proof, spill-proof containers. Please take care not to bring in anything that, if spilt, could damage library books, equipment, carpets or furnishings.
14. No candles or other naked lights may be used in the Library, and no smoking or vaping is permitted in the Library.
15. Books belonging to other libraries should be returned where they belong (and not left in Newnham College Library).