

LASSCO

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THREE PIGEONS

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A LARGE VICTORIAN OAK LIBRARY BOOKCASE,

double-sided, removed from The Queen's College Library, Oxford

each long side divided into four bays of adjustable shelves and flanked by a pair of show-timber pilasters with raised and fielded panels, each short end incorporates a further conforming bay, the four bays are deeper to one side than the other (internal depth 35cm / 20cm),

DIMENSIONS: 243.5cm (95^{3/4}"") High, 399cm (157") Wide, 66cm (26") Deep, (width and depth excluding cornice)

STOCK CODE: 44136

LOCATION: LASSCO Three Pigeons



HISTORY

The late 17th Century Upper Library at The Queen's College, Oxford University, is one of the finest rooms in Oxford. It houses the largest and most diverse collections of rare books in any of the University Colleges. We are delighted to have acquired a quantity of oak bookcases that, for the past 160 years have had a supporting role there.

This large bookcase was salvaged together with a series of bookcases were inserted into the 17th Century library as interval cases in order to house a massive influx of books in the mid 19th Century. Queen's had received a very large bequest in the 1841 from Robert Mason, an Old Member, who stipulated in his will that £30,000 should be spent on the library, and the library only, and be spent within three years. Having shoe-horned the books into the Upper library the Fellows then commissioned C.R.Cockerell (architect of The Ashmolean and Taylor's Institute) to adapt the arcaded undercroft of the 17th century building - glazing the arcades - in order to double the available space.



The above photograph of The Upper Library must date to between 1850, by which time the smaller, interval bookcases were in place, and the mid 1880's when they would have been removed to the newly completed Lower Library. We have discovered a graffito on one of the bookcase carcasses: "altered by Smyint(?) Co. Clarendon St. Oxford Sep 1884" which ties-in with the Upper library at that time being restored to its original density of shelving. This large bookcase could well have been commissioned for the new Cockerell Lower Library at this stage.



By the end of 20th Century, shunted aside for a different shelving scheme, the peripatetic bookcases were part of an increasingly congested Lower Library.

Having restored the Upper and Lower libraries in 2013/14, the College finally went underground with a new library extension in 2017. extending beneath the Provost's garden. With miles of new shelving, they have opted, finally, to dispose of the 1840's interval bookcases and two of these larger - probably later, bookcases. LASSCO were very happy to acquire them.