

Case Study

Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide (formerly known as the Henry Martyn Centre)

OGI

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The Cambridge Centre for Christianity is currently relocating to a new Centre within Westminster College.

Here, Lucy Hughes, the archivist, talks about developing a new forward plans to coincide with the move to new premises.

- **How did you prepare for writing your plan?**

This has been an ongoing process, but the main form of preparation has been verbal discussions with other members of the team about how we want to position ourselves, the context for this being the run-up to our move into a newly- refurbished (and extended) building. As archivist, I also prepared for writing plans by reading circulars to relevant newsgroups (the Religious Archives Group) and attending meetings, for example a meeting of the Specialist Repositories Group in London in April 2013, where I heard a talk about Archives Service Accreditation. More recently, I attended a workshop on Archive Service Accreditation in Peterborough.

- **Did you already have a plan in place? If so, were you able to adapt it?**

A report on our archive produced in May 2012 by staff from the Private Archives Team at The National Archives, has formed the basis for subsequent plans and remains a very useful reference-point as we move forward. The report has been in many ways a link between the period in which my predecessor as archivist was here, and my own arrival as archivist in October 2012. My predecessor's perception of the priorities for the archive at the time were reflected and confirmed in that document, and the report reflected the Centre's sense of its own identity whilst simultaneously offering an objective assessment by an outsider. This has given me a framework within which to operate since I arrived in post.

- **Who else was involved in the process?**

The Director of our Centre, Dr Emma Wild-Wood, was closely involved with this process. We have had one-on-one meetings in which we discussed our aspiration to aim for Archives Accreditation, and other related matters.

- **How did you make sure that it fitted with wider organisational plans?**

Quarterly staff meetings have given an opportunity to ensure that planning is co-ordinated. The wider organisational context is that the Centre is governed by the Henry Martyn Trust, and the Director updates staff about decisions of the Trust and directives coming from trustees. We are also obliged to co-ordinate with plans made by Westminster College, since our offices, archives and library are located on Westminster premises. This has been particularly important during the period of refurbishment and building work that has been going on since 2013. Again, staff meetings (and more regular informal conversations) are an opportunity to keep abreast of these developments.

- **How did you ensure that stakeholder views were included?**

An email list is maintained by our administrator and news of the Centre's activities and plans is circulated to a range of stakeholders that way. For example, when the change of name was mooted, stakeholders were invited to indicate favoured form of words for the new title and strapline. Responses were taken into account when reaching a decision.

- **How long did the whole process take?**

It has been an ongoing process: two years so far! It is two years since we invited the Private Archives Team from The National Archives to come and make recommendations, and we are aiming to launch our new Centre in the summer of 2014 (three months from now). The launch will be an opportunity to draw together plans into a more definitive blueprint, since we will be producing new promotional literature at that time.

- **What was the hardest part of getting your plan together?**

The hardest part has been the fact that uncertainties associated with the building work, and changes to architectural plans, have been ongoing. Although there have not been any dramatic changes to the architectural plans, there have been a series of modifications made which will affect provision and working patterns to a certain extent. The move has also been distracting: the packing-up of the library and archive and the dispatch of the collections into temporary storage have taken up staff time, which has been difficult.

- **What has been the most useful part of the plan?**

It has been beneficial to try and develop an integrated approach to the archive, joining up different aspects of what we do and thinking about things in connection. Thinking about access policy, especially, has been useful. A new self-contained Centre (whereas in the past we shared Westminster Library's space) will hopefully permit us to welcome slightly different kinds of groups and maybe hold some events at the Centre that would not have been feasible in the past. This in turn should affect our relationship with stakeholders.

- **How have you continued to use and develop the plan?**

Having a forward plan has helped to maintain a sense of direction and purpose at a time when changes to our working life have presented challenges. Developing the plan continues – and will continue – as we move into our new Centre. Physical elements like disaster planning (which is location-specific) will increasingly receive attention during the coming months.

- **What tips would you pass on to other archive services for writing their forward plan?**

It is important to attend networking events, seminars and workshops offered to professionals in the sector where possible. These are always inspiring and help to get a perspective on what you

do. Wherever possible, step back and see the broader picture, as it can be easy to get absorbed with one particular aspect of provision at the expense of others.