

M25 SpeedMeet



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

Hello! I'm Chloë Carson-Ashurst, Library Assistant at The National Gallery. I work on site in the library five days a week, meaning that I have become very familiar with the repertoires of the various buskers who frequent Trafalgar Square! As part of a relatively small library team, I do a bit of everything, with particular responsibility for managing our periodicals and the Technical Library, which is housed in our Scientific Department and holds more technical scientific books – hence the name. I have just completed a project to reclassify the Technical Library from UDC to Library of Congress, which was a great opportunity to learn more about both classification and chemistry.

Alongside my full-time library assistant role, I am studying for my MA in Information and Library Studies at Aberystwyth via distance learning, and am also one of the Social Media Officers for The ECLAIR Community (an early career LIS network), so I'm rather busy, to put it mildly!

What do you most enjoy about your job?

Honestly...everything! I love working in the Gallery environment, surrounded by people who are passionate about Art History and sharing their love of it with others, and I love that I get to play a role in helping scholarship to move forwards. I love the satisfaction that comes from a well-ordered shelf of books. I love the variety of the job, which means that no two days are ever the same.

If I had to choose, there's nothing quite like the high that comes from tracking down an elusive article or missing book, following up all the leads until you crack the case!

What motivates you in your work?

Knowing that I am privileged to be part of an iconic institution and that my work contributes to the experiences of those who come to visit the Gallery and who learn from the research that takes place here.

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

This is the second library I've worked for which has been part of the M25 Consortium, and I have found the opportunities provided by membership to be invaluable. It was an M25 event about library school which convinced me to apply to Aberystwyth, and earlier this year, attending a panel on

subject librarianship was a fantastic insight into the work of subject librarians. I have also attended several M25 library visits and have loved meeting people in other institutions and visiting libraries I would never otherwise have seen; a trip to Wandsworth Prison Library last year was a particular highlight for me.

What would it surprise people to know about you?

I spent a year living in Russia and Ukraine as part of my BA in Russian and German, living in four cities during that time: Moscow, St Petersburg, Kyiv, and Odessa. My favourite city was definitely Odessa, which was incredibly beautiful and varied, and I really hope to be able to return in the future.

Complete the sentence: If I wasn't working in a library I would be studying for a PhD in either Classical Reception, Book History, or Golden Age Detective Fiction **because** I have far too many academic interests! I haven't ruled out the idea of doing a PhD at some point in the future, but I would need to at least settle on a subject area first.