

<p style="text-align:center">HISTORIC LIBRARIES FORUM <i>BULLETIN</i> NO. 10, January 2008</p>

**Historic Libraries Forum spring 2008 workshops:
Cataloguing antiquarian, special and early printed collections**

In response to continuing demand, the Historic Libraries Forum in collaboration with the Bibliographical Standards Committee will be holding two final day-long workshops on cataloguing antiquarian and early printed collections on March 4th at New Hall, Cambridge, and on April 3rd at The British Museum. These courses are aimed at those with little or no formal training in historical bibliography and antiquarian cataloguing. The workshops will look at practical and technical skills, such as establishing bibliographical format, collational formula and book structure, alongside some of the more ephemeral skills a cataloguer needs to tackle difficulties with dating items and recording provenance and binding information. Numbers are limited to 20 for the Cambridge day and 16 for the London workshop - early booking is advised. For more information on the Cambridge workshop please contact Alison Wilson (amw18@cam.ac.uk), for more on the workshop being held in London, contact Joanna Bowring (jbowring@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk).

**Historic Libraries Forum spring workshops:
Cataloguing antiquarian, special and early printed collections
BOOKING FORM**

I would like to book place(s) to attend the cataloguing workshop on the 4th March 2008, at New Hall, Cambridge @ £39.00 per place, **including** lunch.

I would like to book place(s) to attend the cataloguing workshop on the 3rd April 2008, at The British Museum @ £30.00 per place, **excluding** lunch.

I enclose a cheque, made payable to The Historic Libraries Forum, for £....

Completed booking forms should be sent to Chris Penney, Treasurer, 58 Selly Wick Drive, Birmingham, B29 7JH - invoices available on request on provision of an s.a.e.

Name(s) of attendee(s):

Name(s) of institution(s) if applicable and contact email:

Retirement Thoughts of a Past Chairman

I blame it all on Graham Jefcoate! In November 1992 he was the Hon. Secretary of the Library History Group, with a particular interest in old libraries; and when he planned a seminar, later called a forum, for a type of library often overlooked in professional activity he prevailed on me to take the chair and give the keynote address. The aim of the seminar was, according to the invitation, “to bring together representatives of small, independent historic libraries to discuss areas of common interest and concern”. It was also thought that the forum “may lead to the creation of a permanent grouping or similar joint enterprise”.

Fifty people responded and came to a meeting on 12 November 1992. The libraries involved were not all small or indeed independent – and “historic” is a term I never wanted to define too closely. But the hope for a “permanent grouping” did bear fruit, with myself as on-going chairman and Graham as a very effective first Hon. Secretary of the Historic Libraries Forum. Many of the hopes and desires expressed then did bear fruit, and continue to do so. It was crucial to keep on board those bodies already working in the field, and at that first meeting there were important presentations on the Cathedral Libraries and Archives Association by Joan Williams, and on the Association of Independent Libraries by Geoffrey Forster – both of whom have remained stalwarts of the Forum for many years. The Library History Group also played a supportive role and continues to do so.

From that first Forum a “permanent grouping” emerged, with a steering committee, a plan of action, and regular meetings – but no formal membership or subscription, in order to open up activities to anyone interested in historic libraries of all kinds. Within twelve months we had held workshops on photographic collections and sources of funding, and the well-attended second annual meeting, on the theme “Preserving and recording historic collections.” This pattern continued for a number of years, with a variety of one-day workshops on topics ranging from conservation to automation, by way of health & safety. “Dust, Mildew, Ladders etc.” was one characteristic title, and our annual meetings – held with only a few gaps for the past fifteen years – had titles such as “Strange Things in Glass Cases”, “First Catch Your Conservator”, or “Selling Your Soul”. This tradition seems set to continue, with for example the 2004 meeting exhorting members to “Automate or Vegetate”.

The Forum also tried – perhaps less successfully than in other areas – to develop a “political” role, through many changes in the political scene nationally. This led to our involvement in the controversial sale of the parochial library from All Saints Hereford. Since then we have intervened in other controversies - York Minster Library, the Science Museum Library, the use of the British Museum’s Round Reading Room for exhibition purposes, and the Hurd Library at Hartlebury Castle. In many cases, the Forum has lacked “clout” but has been able to call on the support of bigger battalions such as CILIP – indeed our involvement in more recent years with CILIP’s panel on Preservation & Conservation has been for me one of the most useful and rewarding aspects of my chairmanship. We have sought to advise members on applying for Lottery funding (the Heritage Lottery Fund didn’t yet exist in 1992 - and proceeded to steal the initials HLF from the Forum!). We were much involved in the British Library’s national programme for “Full Disclosure”, to reveal the hidden treasures in libraries of all kinds, and in the successor WILIP programme, which now

seems to have been axed by the MLA – again a body that didn't exist in 1992. The arrival of Heritage Link as an umbrella body has given us another way in to national counsels - though their stress on the voluntary sector has not always been so useful - but it led for example to our giving evidence to the review of dispersal of “heritage material” held in public hands undertaken by Green Balance on behalf of Heritage Link.

What I remember most about the Forum over the years, as well as all these meetings and controversies, is the cheerful and energetic support of my colleagues, and especially the *camaraderie* amongst all those attending our meetings, from the widest range of libraries and from all over the UK. It seems to me that this networking or interaction has always been one of the greatest strengths of the Forum, and one of the more popular aspects of our meetings, to judge from the feedback forms in recent years. It has certainly given me a lot of enjoyment and made new friendships for me, and I trust it will continue to flourish for many more years. The need is still there!

Peter Hoare

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Observations from the Incoming Chair

It is hard to imagine an Historic Libraries Forum without Peter at the helm. For 16 years he has steered the group, occasionally almost single-handedly, from its inception as a seminar for those interested in a sort of library frequently overlooked by the profession at large, to its current incarnation as a flourishing, active and quietly influential organisation with more than 450 members. Much of this growth and development is down to Peter's ceaseless canvassing, cajoling and promotion, and on behalf of the Committee and our membership I offer our sincere thanks for what must at times have seemed a Sisyphean task. He is not the only long-standing Committee member to have recently stood down – thanks are equally due to Joan Williams, our Treasurer, whose steady hand has kept the Forum afloat and in credit through some difficult times. I hope that Peter and Joan can be persuaded to continue to sit on the HLF Committee for as long as they can face, not least to help welcome a number of new Committee members. Joan's mantle is being taken up by Christine Penney, formerly at Birmingham University Library, whilst the Committee welcomes Robin Price, formerly from the Wellcome, and Peter's colleague on CILIP's Preservation and Conservation Panel, Felicity Stimpson, National Trust, and Katie Lord, Deputy College Librarian, Eton.

The plan for the future is to continue to do more, to offer more and to influence more. Our principal strength is the size of our membership, and we must continue to encourage new members. There are still a great many historic libraries which are either unaware of the Forum's activities or who are unaware of the benefits of membership. With the best will in the world our publicity can only go so far – the word-of-mouth network of existing members can reach far further. If one in ten of our mailing list introduced a new member in 2008 we could top 500. The organisation is free to join for anyone – those working in historic libraries, those researching historic libraries or using historic collections, those with a membership or interest in a particular library – anyone interested in historic libraries in any way and to any degree.

In order to continue to satisfy existing members and encourage new the Forum needs to continue to diversify and offer its members more. The *Bulletin*, perhaps our most visible presence, will continue to be produced tri-annually, January, May and September. With the advent of the electronic mailing list we are able to offer the newsletter to members in either print or electronic form, the latter helping the Forum directly by saving us postage.¹ Historically, the *Bulletin* has primarily been authored by members of the Committee, with occasional items reporting news from other like-minded institutions. We would be very keen to receive more submissions from our members - if you have news to report, issues you would like to see raised or if you would like to seek advice on any topic please contribute. In addition to the *Bulletin*, it is hoped during 2008-2009 to resurrect the long-deceased *Bibliotheca* – an occasional monograph publication of more substantial, footnoted articles culled from the best of our conference papers, meetings and workshops, or commissioned in response to demand. Our publications programme is set for further enhancement with the proposed production of a series of guidance leaflets, aimed specifically at offering straightforward, succinct advice on specific topics, with details of where to go for more help.²

Our programme of events has always proved popular, and we hope to increase the number and diversity of workshops and conferences. Already scheduled for 2008 are two final re-runs of our extremely popular Rare Book Cataloguing Workshops, run in conjunction with the Bibliographical Standards Committee. The first will take place in Cambridge on 4th March, hosted by New Hall College, the second on 3rd April in London at the British Museum. These events have been hugely over-subscribed each time they have been run – places are limited on each day – booking forms for both are included in this Bulletin, places allocated on a first-come, first-served basis - act fast. One of the great strengths of the HLF's workshops is that, unlike CILIP's special interest groups, we are not bound by a particular subject area. Workshops can be arranged on any topic, according to demand from the membership. We are currently discussing topics for further workshops - describing, dating and identifying bookbindings has been mooted as a possibility for an autumn meeting – please do contact any member of the Committee should you have other suggestions.

Finally, one of the Forum's most important roles is providing support and advice for libraries under threat. The encouraging news detailed elsewhere in this *Bulletin* regarding the future of the Wanlockhead Miners' Library and of Archbishop Hurd's wonderful library at Hartlebury, both supported by the Forum, should not disguise the fact that the past two years have seen a number of superb libraries dispersed. In order to help prevent further losses we need to know early on of libraries under threat. To return to my first point - the larger our membership the more influence we wield. I intend the Forum to play a more active role in the public protection and preservation of historic libraries which face an uncertain future.

Ed Potten

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¹ Every member who agrees to accept their copy of the Bulletin electronically saves the HLF three costly paper mailings each year. To register for your copy electronically please contact Joanna Bowring – jbowring@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk.

² See page 7 for details of how you can suggest topics for this series.

Update on the Hurd Library at Hartlebury Castle

Members of the HLF will recall the concern that has been aroused by the uncertainty regarding the future of the Hurd Library over the last few years. Following the retirement of the last incumbent in 2007 it was decided that the Castle should cease to be the official residence of the Bishops of Worcester and its sale was proposed by the Church Commissioners. The magnificent library room, built by Bishop Hurd especially to house his fine collection of books, which he bequeathed to all his successors, is one of the glories of the Castle – a hidden gem in an idyllic village, which has been there for over 200 years.

It was originally suggested that the library might be removed to Worcester Cathedral, where the Bishops could have ready access to it and where a space had been identified. But this idea did not find favour with bibliophiles in general and the residents of Hartlebury in particular, and it is largely thanks to them that the future now looks more promising. Working with others who shared their concerns they proposed that a Friends organisation should be formed and this was launched on a freezing evening in November last year. The Great Hall at Hartlebury could not be described as cosy even in the height of summer and they were told that if they attracted 60 people they would do well; in the event nearly 200 turned up and many had to stand at the back. The motion to found the Friends of Hartlebury Castle and the Hurd Library was carried with acclamation and the present membership stands at 218.

The Church Commissioners still plan to sell the Castle, but the Worcestershire County Council, who already lease half of it to house the County Museum, are keen to purchase the whole, as part of the county's heritage. They are working on a business plan which would aim to raise significant income through a series of activities on the site, while continuing to preserve public access. It is pleasing to note that they are eager to work closely with the Friends and the Museum Curator and some useful meetings have already taken place – as a result of which those of us on the Committee have been given plenty of jobs to do. These are:

- to look into the potential for fishing rights on the lake
- to look at the history of the gardens
- to investigate opportunities for musical events
- to write a paper on the library as an asset (This I must do by mid-February – and I used to fear I might be bored in retirement!)

We heard at our committee meeting this evening (25 January) that the Dean of Worcester has expressed the Chapter's wish for the library to remain at Hartlebury; this was most encouraging. The Church Commissioners have also agreed that, although the library must remain closed for the present, the Friends may care for it. So we intend to survey it as soon as possible and carry out a shelf check as a start. When volunteers were invited to help me in this task a forest of hands shot up - which showed how attractive and exciting ancient libraries are often perceived to be, a good augury for the future, I hope.

Chris Penney

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“Writing the history of your library”

The 2007 Historic Libraries Forum annual meeting was held in November at 14 Stephenson Way, courtesy of the Royal Asiatic Society. The Honorary Librarian, Helen Cordell, explained that the Society moved to these premises in 2005 and took the opportunity to rationalise its book stock and house it in secure basement storage. Their well-equipped lecture theatre, hung with oil paintings, proved a very congenial place to spend a day, and an excellent lunch was provided.

Peter Hoare, our outgoing-Chairman and the general editor of the *Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland* (2006), spoke about the organisation and scope of the three-volume work. It covers 1500 years of library history, has nearly 100 contributors and is the first scholarly history on this scale. It was clearly a huge effort to pull such a major work together. The first two volumes have many references to libraries now defunct, but volume three leads into the information age, discussing mostly extant libraries. The *History* is not just a survey of the various types of libraries which have been founded over the centuries: Peter has been anxious to set libraries in their social, geographical and political contexts. There is interpretation of the changing role of libraries, their contributions to education, industry and leisure, and their interrelationships. Peter suggested that libraries have been somewhat overlooked as historical sources and that there is much more information to be discovered and synthesised.

The *Cambridge History* will certainly be the starting point for any future research in library history, not least for its excellent bibliography. Peter cited Robin Alston's Library History Database, containing information on some 27,000 libraries in the British Isles, and now available on the web (<http://www.r-alston.co.uk/contents.htm>) Information on the Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland can be found online at:

<http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=9780521858083>

Professor John Beckett, Director of the *Victoria County History*, described the project as ‘a history of England from the bottom up’. It was founded in 1899, and since 1933 has been run from the Institute of Historical Research. The compilers have worked at parish level, allotting 8-10,000 words to each and using set headings. The majority of these pieces will not include libraries, but since the 1960s there have been volumes on towns, with libraries and museums included under ‘leisure and culture’. The VCH is thus an important source for philosophical libraries, mechanics’ institutes, book clubs and reading rooms, and it includes many footnotes which should be followed up by researchers. The contents of 100 volumes of the VCH are available on British History Online: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/>

Dr Sheila Hingley spoke about using your library's history and contents to aid development. The current interest in ‘Heritage’ can be exploited by hard-pressed librarians seeking resources and recognition for their organisations. She stressed the importance of building up a group of well-informed and influential academic users whose research illuminates the collections. Applying for Designation is a great deal of work, but if successful raises the library's profile and gives a head start in funding applications. Both Bishop Cosin's Library and the Sudan Archive have been designated at Durham. Producing a publication can be an effective way of promoting

the library both locally and nationally. *Treasures of Durham University Library*, published to coincide with an anniversary, has sold very well and will make the library more friends. It is short but scholarly, showcasing fifty items. Sheila's key tips for such a project are to employ a hard-working administrative assistant, to choose good contributors, make them commit to a date and be ruthless about enforcing it. She also suggests retaining copyright in the images so that they can be used for displays and postcards later.

In the afternoon, following much networking over lunch, we were treated to three case studies, always a popular feature of Forum meetings. Elizabeth Quarmby Lawrence spoke about writing the history of college (primarily Cambridge) libraries and the many and varied sources she has use for her PhD on the subject. Dr Neal Priestland described how he had investigated the membership records of Bromley House Library, Nottingham, transcribing them and adding biographical material. Lastly, Edward Potten gave a very practical talk about amassing and interpreting the information needed to write your library's history, based on a National Trust template used at Tatton Park. His aim was to provide a practical methodology for those considering embarking on writing or researching library history. In Ed's view much library history is written based solely on archival material, ignoring a vital primary source: the books themselves. He detailed the use of a pro-forma to gather and record information; it is a powerful tool for capturing information on provenance and calculating numbers of books by date. Ed is happy to share this form with people who are interested: write to edward.potten@manchester.ac.uk.

Alison Wilson

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Historic Libraries Forum guidance leaflets

The Historic Libraries Forum is preparing to publish the first in a series of short guidance leaflets, to be offered free, on demand, to our members. The purpose of these leaflets will not be to give exhaustive detail, but to provide a succinct guide to existing literature and sources of help. It is hoped in the future that we may be able to make these available to download as PDFs from our website, in time building up a library of immediate reference resources for members, along the lines of those on conservation topics offered by the National Preservation Office and detailed on page 10 of this *Bulletin*.

The first leaflet will cover Oriental material, how to identify what you have, and where to go for help and advice. Questions and suggestions on this topic should be directed to Helen Cordell at helen@cordell.uk.com.

We are seeking ideas for future leaflets and offers to author future guides. If you have areas you would like to see covered, or would like to volunteer to author a guide on a specific topic please contact a member of the Committee.

Wanlockhead Miners' Library

Wanlockhead Miners' Library, founded in the lead mining village of Wanlockhead in northern Dumfriesshire in 1756, was only the second subscription library for working people to be founded anywhere in the world. It is closely modelled on the Leadhills Library, founded in 1741, which fortunately also still survives today. Its founding ethos was mutual improvement – co-operative independent learning through book use. Mutual improvement still survives today, although now we call it lifelong learning, and it was in this physically bleak, although intellectually rich environment that the idea grew and flourished. The library was begun by thirty two very ordinary people whose work led to extraordinary things. It survived in active use for nearly two hundred years and it was only the decline of lead mining in the 1930s which led to its demise as a working library. During its 'lifetime' it accumulated over 4000 volumes, about 2,500 of which still survive today. The earliest title was published in 1616. The Library's membership peaked at 147 in 1850, the year the present library building was erected. In 1974 the Library was taken over by the newly founded Wanlockhead Museum Trust, which today administers The Museum of Scottish Lead Mining incorporating the museum, mines, restored miners' cottages and, of course, the Library.

At the beginning of 2007 the future of The Museum of Scottish Lead Mining was in doubt due to financial difficulties. However, a one-off grant was received from the Scottish Government in Spring 2007 to enable the Museum to continue; it has had a reasonably successful year. On 28th September a reception was held at the Museum to celebrate the Library's 250th anniversary. Those attending included Alex Fergusson, the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament and Joanne Orr, the Chief Executive Officer of the Scottish Museum's Council. The latest news is that the Museum has been invited to bid for up to £40,000 under the Scottish Government's Significance Scheme. The Significance scheme, as the name implies, is designed to recognise and support collections of significance, this could be the first time that a historic library has been so recognised in Scotland. A funding bid to support a research project on the library was submitted in late November 2007 and the outcome is awaited.

Dr. John Crawford,
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Historic Libraries Forum November Conference Disaster Preparedness on a Budget

This year's annual HLF conference will take place mid-November at the Wellcome Institute. In an ideal world all libraries would have cupboards full of torches, mops, light-sticks and crates, alongside a detailed disaster plan, identifying key items, and a long list of trained volunteers waiting for the call to arms. In reality, smaller institutions frequently lack the staff, money, time and expertise to prepare for disaster. Do not panic - November's conference is for you. Pro-forma disaster management plans, buddy schemes and a wealth of free support and information is available. Are you a small institution with experience of drawing up a plan? Are you in a buddy scheme with a larger institution? Share your experiences by presenting a case-study at the November Conference – contact Edward.Potten@manchester.ac.uk.

News from the Cathedral Libraries and Archives Association

An agreement with CURL and CERL has enabled the Cathedral Libraries Catalogue to be made accessible via COPAC; this represents approximately 25,000 MaRC records and includes material printed on the continent prior to 1701 and available in the 37 cathedrals of England and Wales. It should be noted that this is an historic catalogue, so readers should check that the institution still holds the material. The CLAA are very grateful to both parties for their part in making this possible, and with particular thanks to CURL for their financial support. For both CERL and CURL, the agreement represents a commitment to facilitate developments in the cataloguing of cathedral libraries.

A three-day conference was hosted by Manchester Cathedral in June 2007. A packed programme introduced delegates to Manchester Cathedral and its unique collection of parish records, and to several of Manchester's remarkable libraries, including the John Rylands Library and the library of Chetham's School. We also learnt about research into prebends of the Georgian era, and about the project to write a history of Manchester Cathedral. The conference was a tremendous success, and our thanks go both to Manchester Cathedral for hosting us so well, and to Christopher Hunwick (Cathedral Archivist) who organized the programme.

At the AGM, the Very Revd. Wyn Evans, Dean of St David's, stood down as Chairman of the Association. He has led us very competently and with great humour, and we are sad that other commitments led him to the decision to resign. We are delighted, however, to have as our new Chairman the Very Revd. Peter Atkinson, Dean of Worcester, who has been previously Vice-chairman of the Association.

The AGM for 2008 will be held on Monday 2 June 2008 at Lambeth Palace Library. The day's programme will also include an opportunity to view the current exhibition at Lambeth Palace library and presentations on the theme of conservation, one of the primary aims of the Association.

The CLAA's aims are to advance education through the promotion, preservation and protection of cathedral libraries and archives in the United Kingdom and Ireland, and the provision of appropriate access thereto. All Anglican cathedrals within this area are encouraged to join; associate membership is available for other appropriate individuals and organizations. For further information, contact:

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News from the National Preservation Office

The NPO will be running a training day on 4th March, *Basic Preservation for Library and Archive Collections*. This is intended as an introductory training day for those caring for paper-based collections. The preservation clinic offers participants the opportunity to discuss and resolve issues facing their own collections. A tour of the studios in the British Library Centre for Conservation will be provided.

It is worth reminding members that a wide range of leaflets issued by the National Preservation Office are available to download, free of charge. These leaflets can be accessed at <http://www.bl.uk/services/npo/publicationsleaf.html>. At present the following leaflets are available to download as PDFs or free from National Preservation Office, The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB:

- Basic preservation guidelines for library and archive collections
- Cleaning books and documents
- Glossary of terms commonly used in library preservation work
- Good handling principles and practice for library and archive materials
- Guidance for exhibiting archive and library materials
- Managing the digitisation of library, archive and museum materials
- Managing the library and archive environment
- Managing the preservation of library and archive collections in historic buildings
- Packing and moving library and archive collections
- Photocopying of library and archive materials
- Preparing funding applications for preservation and conservation projects
- Preservation of photographic material
- Prevention and treatment of mould outbreaks in collections
- Specifying library and archive storage
- Understanding and caring for bookbindings

In addition, the NPO publishes a bi-annual e-journal; to receive email updates when each new issue is available email npo@bl.uk.

Care and display of books workshop Tuesday 4th March 2008 The Natural History Museum, London

This workshop introduces the key elements of good practice for the care and display of books through a series of presentations, videos and practical sessions. This introductory workshop is suitable for Library staff and Archivists and all those with responsibility for book collections. It will be held at the Natural History Museum on 4th March, starting at 10.00am and finishing at 5pm. The course fee of £150 includes tea, coffee and lunch.

For more details contact Lisa Di Tommaso, telephone 020 7942 5562 or email: lisad@nhm.ac.uk