

HISTORIC LIBRARIES FORUM

BULLETIN NO. 15 **October 2009**

Maintaining the balance between providing a good customer service and safeguarding the security of stock is a perennial problem for libraries across the sector, but particularly for those with rare or historic collections. A number of high-profile recent cases have highlighted that libraries, museums and archives are as susceptible to plundering from within as without, and that there is a very real market for stolen material of all kinds. If major research libraries and national libraries can be targeted then smaller, less well-resourced collections must be under even greater threat. The 2009 HLF Conference, to be held on 17 November at The Royal Asiatic Society, examines what institutions can do to minimize the risk of loss and to ensure that, should the unthinkable happen, material is insured and marked to aid recovery. Full details and a booking form within - as always early booking is recommended.

Also within this Bulletin is a report on the latest re-run of our workshop on cataloguing rare and antiquarian material. Held at The John Rylands Library in Manchester in July, this event was, as always, over-subscribed, showing that there is still a very real need for affordable, basic training in this core skill. In response, the course will run for the fourth time in January 2010 in Cambridge - more details and a booking form will appear in due course on the website (<http://www.historiclibrariesforum.org.uk/>) - with a fifth session provisionally planned for London in summer 2010. Meanwhile, a new workshop examining marks of provenance, their identification and their recording in library catalogues is being planned for spring 2010. Our thanks to all involved in organizing and leading these sessions.

Progress continues to be made with the cataloguing of the Nantwich Parochial Library in Manchester, whilst negotiations to secure the future of another parochial collection under threat of dispersal are progressing. In recognition of the importance of these collections, and the number still under threat, The National Trust is proposing hosting a day conference on the parochial library in summer 2010 - details to follow in the next Bulletin.

Finally, the Historic Libraries Forum has been invited by The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to take part in a working party examining issues of eligibility for designation, evidence both of our growing visibility and credibility and of the MLA's willingness to increase its engagement with the library sector. Our greatest strength is in our numbers - with nearly 500 members we are a powerful lobbying voice - please continue to promote the Forum wherever possible.

Ed Potten, Chair.

HISTORIC LIBRARIES FORUM

2009

CONFERENCE

You're nicked! Security in the special library

Tuesday 17th November
10.15-4.00
Royal Asiatic Society, London

This conference will look at security issues in special and rare books libraries. Speakers include Judith Barnes (British Library) on collection security, Bob Johnson and Clare Pardy (Ecclesiastical Insurance) on the insurer's perspective and Peter Hoare (National Trust) on security marking. The afternoon will include a panel discussion on security issues with Sheila Hingley (University of Durham), Renae Satterley (Honourable Society of the Middle Temple), Christine Penney (Hurd Librarian) and Kathy Lazenbatt (Royal Asiatic Society) with plenty of practical hints and tips and time for networking and discussion.

Further information can be obtained from:

Katie Lord

k.lord@etoncollege.org.uk

or

Gudrun Warren

library@cathedral.org.uk

Annual Conference 2009

You're nicked! Security in the special library

Royal Asiatic Society, London

Tuesday 17th November

10.15-4.00

BOOKING FORM

Please send this form, with a cheque for £45 (conference fee and lunch) to: Miss C.L Penney, Treasurer, 58 Selly Wick Drive, Birmingham B29 7JH.
(clodpoll2001@yahoo.com - 0121 471 3733)

Cheques should be made payable to the Historic Libraries Forum.

If payment is being made through an institutional finance department please indicate this below. Confirmation will be by email. If a paper receipt is required please enclose sae. Please note that there will be no further reminder once payment has been acknowledged.

All booking forms must be received by 1st November.

I wish to attend the HLF conference on 17th November 2009

Name:

Address:

Institution:

Email (please write legibly):

Telephone number:

Any dietary requirements:

Payment enclosed (please tick):

Payment to be paid institutionally (please tick):

Invoice required (please tick). Invoices will be sent electronically. If a paper copy is required please enclose sae:

Address to which invoice is to be sent:

HLF Summer workshop:

“Cataloguing antiquarian, special and early printed collections”

This invaluable day of training was held in the Special Collections Department of The John Rylands University Library, Manchester on Tuesday July 7th 2009. The venue, in the recently renovated library on Deansgate, is an incredible mixture of gothic-style architecture, dating from 1900, and 21st century cutting-edge design.

The workshop was attended by approximately 20 librarians from all over the country, including representatives from the British Library and Oxford University. It was well organised and there were adequate breaks to allow our over-heating brains to recover!

The first session was concerned with book production in the hand press era and was led by Julianne Simpson, rare books librarian at The Wellcome Library, London. We learned about paper-production, the importance of chain-lines and watermarks, formats, printing history (including how far England initially lagged behind its European neighbours!), engravings, signatures, the importance of the colophon and more.

After lunch, Stewart Tiley from Cambridge University helped us to get down to the nitty gritty of cataloguing. He explained which fields and sub-fields should be used for specific features of a book, how references to other works should be cited, how to describe book-plates, bindings, edge decorations and the peculiarities of Latin abbreviations and lettering. On the last of these topics, Peter Hoare's invaluable guidance leaflet on cataloguing Latin books is available through the HLF website:

<http://www.historiclibrariesforum.org.uk/hlf/publications.html>

Quite difficult exercises were provided so that the attendees could practice what they had learnt. This was done in teams of two or three, and as well as being fun and challenging, provided a way to get to know representatives from different institutions. Stewart also followed this up by emailing all attendees some reference documents, so that we have crucial information to which to refer when putting our training into practice.

We all went away tired but happy! I would recommend this course to anyone who is involved with cataloguing antiquarian or rare books.

Pamela Johnson
Metadata Team Bibliographical Assistant
The John Rylands University Library, Manchester.

Library and Information History Group

Seminar on the History of Libraries

A series of research seminars, which are freely open for anyone to attend, has been organized by the Institute of English Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London. The sessions will take place in Room ST 275 in Stewart House, Senate House, Malet St., London WC1E 7HU, monthly during term-time on Tuesdays at 5.30 p.m. Stewart House is located next to the Russell Square entrance to Senate House.

Seminar convenors: Giles Mandelbrote (Early Printed Collections, The British Library, London); Dr. Keith A. Manley (Institute of Historical Research, University of London); Professor Simon Eliot (Institute of English Studies); Professor Isabel Rivers (Queen Mary); Professor Henry Woudhuysen (University College).

The seminars are jointly sponsored by the Institute of English Studies, the Institute of Historical Research, and the Library & Information History Group.

AUTUMN TERM 2009

October 6 Dr. Maureen Bell (University of Birmingham): 'Titus Wheatcroft: an eighteenth-century reader and his books'.

In 1723 Titus Wheatcroft (1679-1762), parish clerk and schoolmaster in Ashover, Derbyshire, began to make a catalogue of his books. His collection of nearly 400 items, in both manuscript and print, provides valuable evidence of a literate but relatively poor rural reader's access to books. His four surviving manuscript volumes also give an insight into how he used some of the books he owned, and offer evidence of his engagement with printed texts beyond those listed in his catalogue.

November 3 Prof. Simon Eliot (Institute of English Studies): 'Gutting Leviathan: the fall of the great circulating libraries in Britain'.

What were the economics that powered the great circulating libraries of the later nineteenth century? How important was the three-decker novel in this process? What caused the collapse of the three-decker novel in 1894, and how were the publishers involved? Why did many of the largest circulating libraries survive 1894 and flourish for another generation, or even two? And what finally beached these monsters?

December 1 Dr. Keith A. Manley (Institute of Historical Research): 'Infidel books and subscription libraries: government censorship in Europe during the Napoleonic period'.

Many governments tried to prevent libraries from acquiring politically inflammatory and heretical literature. In Germany secret societies of freemasons infiltrated libraries to promote their own views of Enlightenment and world domination, while Hanover feared for the morals of its children if they were allowed access to circulating libraries. Germany and Austria banned subscription libraries, fearing their malignant influence. In France, officials kept libraries under close surveillance. In comparison, British libraries escaped lightly from tight supervision, though in Ulster several were ransacked by yeomanry.

Further seminars will take place during 2010. Details will be available soon.

Information concerning the Institute of English Studies may be found on its website: ies.sas.ac.uk, or email ies@sas.ac.uk.

Launch of Thomas Plume Library's online catalogue and website

The Trustees of Thomas Plume's Library in Maldon, Essex, are proud to announce the completion of the Library's computerised catalogue, available online through the Library's new website (www.thomasplumeslibrary.co.uk). The online catalogue enables anyone anywhere in the world to find out more about the contents of this unique institution, founded in 1704 under the terms of the will Dr Thomas Plume, vicar of Greenwich and archdeacon of Rochester, who had been born in Maldon in 1630.

The Library which Plume bequeathed to his native town comprises over 8000 books and pamphlets covering the widest possible range of subjects, including theology, astronomy, travel, and politics. Although printed catalogues have been compiled in the past, the computerised catalogue makes it possible to search by subject as well as by author and title, and in the course of making the new catalogue a number of previously unknown works have come to light.

The go-ahead for the project was given in 2004, the Library's tercentenary year, and it has taken nearly five years to complete. It has been generously supported by grants from the Foyle Foundation, the Essex Heritage Trust, the Mercers' Company, the Marc Fitch Fund, the Aurelius Charitable Trust, the Hervey Benham Charitable Trust, and the Friends of Thomas Plume's Library. Other invaluable support has been provided by the staff of the Plume School and TDR Computers of Maldon. The new catalogue uses the 'Heritage' library management software, developed and supported by IS Oxford (www.isoxford.com).

Dr James Bettley, Chairman of the Trustees, said: 'It is very exciting that we have successfully completed this important project. The new catalogue and the website will help to make the Plume Library better known, which it deserves to be, because it is a very rare example of the library of a 17th-century scholar that has survived virtually intact in the building that was specially designed to house it. We are immensely grateful to all those who have helped to make the catalogue possible, especially the Foyle Foundation; Ian Kidman, our expert cataloguer; and the Plume Librarian, Erica Wylie, who has worked hard with Matthew Dawkins, our website designer, to bring the catalogue to the wider world. I should also like to pay tribute to Canon David Atkins, who retired as chairman at the beginning of June, whose confidence in the project enabled us to see it through.'

Work is now in progress on cataloguing books added to the Library since 1704, and on the Library's collection of manuscripts.

Cardiff Public Library Latest news

Following intense public and political pressure, Cardiff Council agreed in late September 2008 to enter 'round-table' discussions with CyMAL (the Welsh Assembly Government's museums, archives and libraries division) and representatives from Cardiff University, the National Library of Wales and Glamorgan Record Office, regarding the future of the special collections of rare books it was proposing to sell.

The first meeting of that group was held on 7 October, when all parties agreed to 'work together to identify which items from the collection should be recommended to be retained in Wales'. The Cardiff Heritage Friends produced a statement (which may, with other relevant documents, be seen on its website: www.cardiffheritagefriends.org/) welcoming these discussions, but emphasising the importance of retaining the special collections intact *as collections* in Cardiff, rather than 'cherry-picking' individual items.

Following that 'round-table' meeting, the first auction of books, scheduled for 4 November at Bonhams, London, was postponed, and Councillor Nigel Howells (the Executive Member of Cardiff Council responsible for libraries) informed a Council meeting on 16 October that 'until this [identification] process has been finalised and implemented it has been agreed that no books will be sold'.

At a meeting arranged by CyMAL on 23 February the Round Table group agreed to the terms of a scoping study of the collections. The group is also close to establishing an Expert Panel to provide independent advice to the organisations involved. Representatives of CyMAL were invited to observe a meeting between Cardiff Council and Cardiff University on 23 June at which the terms of further scoping work were agreed, this is now ongoing.

As the documents on the Cardiff Heritage Friends website demonstrate, the Cardiff rare books affair raises important questions regarding the role of public libraries with respect to heritage collections; the significance of collections and provenance when assessing a book's worth; and the relationship between public opinion and Council action.

The Historic Libraries Forum has recently written to CyMAL requesting further information on the progress of the working party and stressing its support for the views expressed by The Cardiff Heritage Friends regarding the importance of retaining Cardiff's special collections intact.

A report on the recent Rare Books and Special Collections Group Annual Study Conference, *A Special Relationship? Special Collections and the Antiquarian Book and MSS Trade*, will appear in the next *Bulletin*.

Cathedral Libraries and Archives Association AGM 2009

The Cathedral Libraries and Archives Association AGM was held this year at Westminster Abbey, who hosted us with tremendous care and generosity. Our theme for the day was the cathedral inventory. Cathedrals are bound by the *Care of Cathedrals measure 2000* to compile and maintain an inventory of objects in their possession considered to be of architectural, archaeological, historical or artistic importance. Any one cathedral will have objects made from a plethora of material including stone, wood, glass, metal, textiles, paper, and ranging in date from over a thousand years ago to the present day. Furthermore, a cathedral is a working environment, and many of its treasures will be in active, in some cases daily, use. So the compilation and maintenance of even a basic inventory is no small task, and one which often falls to the librarian or archivist.

Our first speaker was Allie Nickell, from the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England (CFCE), the body responsible for granting approval and giving advice on works affecting cathedral buildings. Allie Nickell set out the legislation governing the inventory, and outlined its purpose: to record acquisition, disposal, loan or loss of objects; and to aid their care, conservation and security. CFCE provides guidance notes to assist in the preparation of the inventory, with sections specifically for printed books and manuscripts. The documents are all available on the Church of England website (Allie Nickell stressed that although the inventory is important, CFCE are concerned to help cathedrals produce a useful working tool.)

Our next speaker was Simon Carter, Collections Manager at St Paul's Cathedral. He presented the situation at St Paul's from the perspective of his museum training, demonstrating how the inventory can operate within the wider context of collections management, and emphasizing the value of good software.

Finally, Tony Trowles, Librarian of Westminster Abbey, spoke about the practicalities of setting up an inventory project, referring to the selection of software and formulation of policies. The latter can include issues such as:

- what should actually be included – everything (including the lawnmower!) or those things which, in the terms of the CFCE guidelines are of importance (this decision depends on whether a cathedral is creating an inventory to fulfil the CFCE requirements, or as a wider asset management tool)
- whether items should be entered individually or as a set (a matter complicated by the working nature of many collections, which means sets can be separated and the individual items relocated frequently)
- security marking, particularly of unique items of historical importance

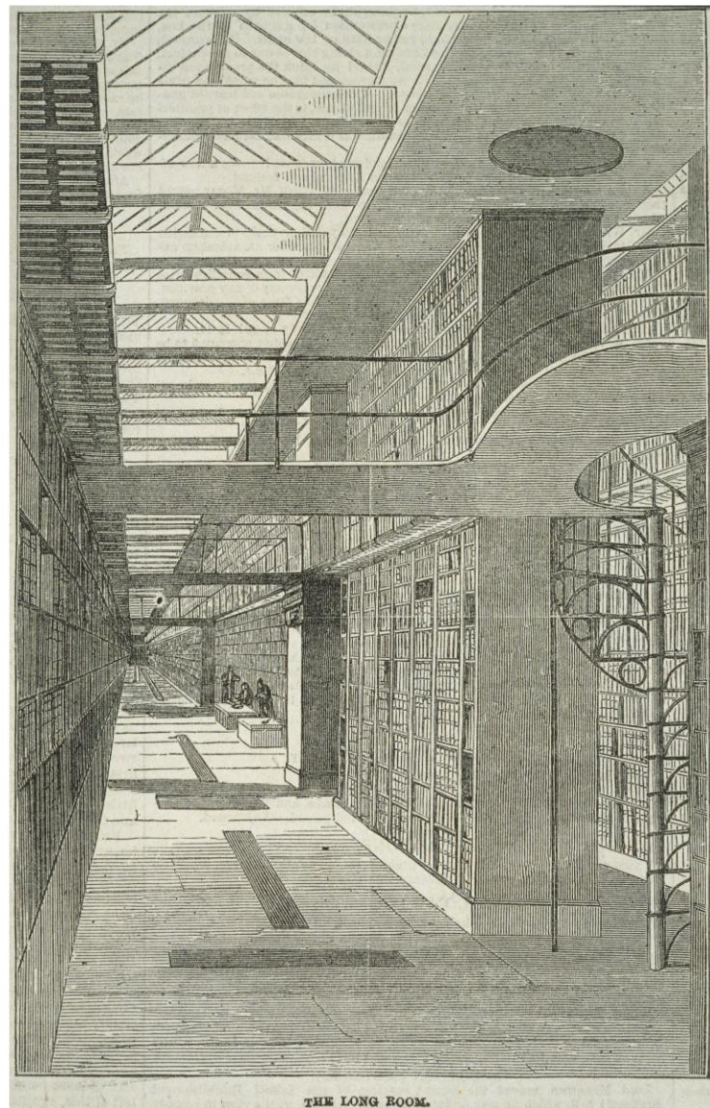
Our theme of inventories was picked up inventively by Dr Richard Mortimer as, assisted by Tony Trowles, he gave us a tour of Cheneygates and the library from the perspective of the issues raised by the objects housed therein.

At the AGM, a new edition of the Directory of Capitular libraries and archives was circulated; further copies are available from Gudrun Warren (library@cathedral.org.uk), and it will be available electronically from the CLAA website.

British Museum Central Library

The British Museum has refurbished an historic library space, known as the Old Sanskrit Library, to provide a home for its Central Library. Running behind the book presses on one side of the Museum's Enlightenment Gallery, the Sanskrit Library is the only remaining section of what was called the Long Room, a gallery designed as a book storage area by Sir Robert Smirke in 1845. For many years it was used for the Oriental Library (hence its name), but later fell out of use as a library space.

The Sanskrit Library is fitted with simple iron balconies, spiral access stairs and two tiers of book presses similar in design to those in the Enlightenment Gallery. It now holds the Museum's central reference library, which includes an extensive collection of books on the history of the Museum. Public access is currently by arrangement.



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Joanna Bowring, Head of Public Libraries, British Museum

Guidance leaflets

The HLF is publishing a series of guidance leaflets on its website covering various topics. The first, a *Guide to cataloguing books in Latin* by Peter Hoare, is available on the website:

<http://www.historiclibrariesforum.org.uk/hlf/publications.html>

Future leaflets will include archives for non-archivists and conservation. Please contact a committee member if there is a particular subject you would like to see covered by a leaflet, or if you are interested in contributing to one.

HLF on Facebook

The HLF has a group page on Facebook. This can be found at:

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/group.php?gid=28562679022>

You have to be a member of Facebook to be able to use it but joining is straightforward. On the group page you will find details of events and workshops, as advertised on the HLF website and in the Bulletin, but Facebook users will be notified of events as soon they are advertised on Facebook. It is also an easy way to network with other members, either publicly on the discussion board or via private messaging, and to share links to websites of interest.

Katie Lord, Eton College Library

William Henry Toms (c1700-1756)

Ed Potten is interested in tracing material, archival or printed, relating to the eighteenth-century engraver William Henry Toms for an ongoing bibliography and biography. Based in London, Toms was active from the late 1720s, engraving plates for books, maps, plans, bookplates and a wealth of single-sheet views and portraits. Any information gratefully received: Edward.Potten@manchester.ac.uk.
