

HISTORIC LIBRARIES FORUM

BULLETIN NO. 30 February 2015

The Forum held its very successful annual conference on 20 November, at Brunel University. Entitled 'Beyond the bid' this covered planning, fundraising and managing projects, as well as sustaining their outcomes into the future. The keynote speaker – Fiona Talbott of the Heritage Lottery Fund – did an excellent job of explaining and demystifying the whole process of applying for funding, and her useful presentation, along with those of the other speakers, are available on our website (www.historiclibrariesforum.org.uk/hlf/pastevents.html). The committee is in the early stages of planning this year's conference, which will cover aspects of the digitisation of a variety of media: why digitise, how to choose what to digitise and what are the best ways to ensure the results are useful to researchers. We hope to include a number of case studies, from large institutions with similarly large projects to smaller libraries, perhaps engaged in piecemeal digitisation of small collections. If there are any topics you would especially like to see covered, do please let us know. On 21 January Forum members visited the St Bride Institute on Fleet Street in the City of London for a tour. This visit, organised by Ed Weech, was the result of meeting staff from the Institute at the conference in November, and the tour of the library and printing museum was enjoyed by all. The St Bride Institute is currently closed to readers due to extensive building work nearby and we look forward to this gem of the library world re-opening in due course.

We are planning a number of workshops for Forum members over the coming months. Professor Nicholas Pickwood (University of the Arts London) has kindly agreed to lead a workshop on identifying historic bindings, to be held at Lambeth Palace Library in April or May. This will use examples from the Library's extensive holdings and will allow attendees to understand more fully the range of historic bindings in their own collections. We are also planning a re-run of the practical conservation workshop (at Middle Temple Library last August), run by Caroline Bendix; this is expected to take place at Christ's College Library in Cambridge in July or August. More details about both workshops will be sent out to members by email nearer the time.

One 'library in danger' has stood out over the last few months; that at the Imperial War Museum in London, which was set to close due to a £4m cut in the Museum's government grant, despite a ring-fenced grant of £8m for the Museum's Duxford site being announced in November. An online petition opposing the closure has gained over 20,000 signatures and the Forum has been active in encouraging support in the academic community. On 2 February it was announced that the library would not close (www.thebookseller.com/news/iwm-confirms-library-cutbacks), which is wonderful news. However, some staff (fewer than previously expected) will still lose their jobs and the library will operate with reduced hours and at a charge to readers; such changes could set a worrying precedent for other libraries facing cuts to their budgets.

The HLF committee has undergone a number of changes of personnel over the last few months, and we are lucky to have gained three new members: Jill Dye, formerly of Lambeth Palace Library and now at Ravensbourne, takes over as Web Editor from our Vice-Chair Ed Weech; Martyn Everett (Chair of the Saffron Walden Town Library Society) is our new Association of Independent Libraries representative; and Tanya Kirk (Lead Curator of Printed English Literature at the BL) replaces Karen Attar as Rare Books & Special Collections Group representative. Do get in touch with one of us (details at www.historiclibrariesforum.org.uk/hlf/committee.html) if you would like to share anything with the Forum membership or if you need advice. We look forward to meeting you at forthcoming events!

Liam Sims, Chair

**Historic Libraries Forum Annual conference 2014: *Beyond the Bid*
Brunel University Library, Thursday 20th November 2014**

Causing almost as much excitement as Boris Johnson's candidacy visit, the Historic Libraries Forum annual conference 2014 was held in Uxbridge in November, hosted by Brunel University Library. The event was attended by almost fifty members from all over the country. As a new Library and Information Studies student at UCL this was my first experience of the rock 'n' roll world of library conferences and the event certainly didn't disappoint. Designed around the theme of 'Beyond the Bid' it offered a day of talks and discussion ranging from Heritage Lottery Funding bids, to ongoing digitisation and cataloguing projects, via crowd-sourcing and volunteers, which were useful and relevant to the new practitioner and the experienced librarian alike.

It has always struck me that one of the best things about the library and archive world is how friendly everyone is. It can be daunting entering a room full of people you don't know, but I didn't have to worry. At the initial registration and coffee I was made welcome and joined in the general chat, which was mainly focused on excitement at the day ahead.

The event kicked off properly in the Research Commons, located in the Special Collections area. The first talk was pertinent to the many librarians from independently funded institutions in the room. Fiona Talbott, Head of Museums, Libraries & Archives at the Heritage Lottery Fund, described how to navigate the murky waters of funding applications in her talk, *From start to finish: how an HLF application works*. The talk outlined how to approach the sometimes daunting process of getting funding; looking at it from the first stages, where the work to be done is mainly around asking questions about the purpose and import of the project, and, as Fiona Talbott phrased it, "selling the idea" to the Heritage Fund. Then through to the more detailed second stage with considerations around activity, conservation and business plans. Fiona was keen to emphasise the range of projects the Fund helps with and that unsuccessful bids can reapply. Even if you do get a grant, that does not exclude you from applying again. The Heritage Lottery Fund is involved with ventures that include one-off acquisition of documents, funding for

events programmes to supporting digitisation and capital funding. Although I am not in the market for funding yet myself, the talk was both exciting, drawing my attention to the possibilities funding might offer, and reassuring me that it isn't quite as challenging to apply as I imagined.

The second presentation, by Louisa Yates, Director of Collections and Research at the fascinating Gladstone's Library, focused on an ongoing project which was only made achievable due to recent changes in the funding landscape. Her talk, *What a heavy thing is an [Excel spreadsheet]! Collaboration, digitisation and innovation*, looked at how alterations in academic funding aimed at encouraging cross sector collaboration has resulted in unusual and previously unthought-of partnerships. Louisa argued that the push for Humanities academics in particular to work with new communities in order to get funding is repositioning libraries and archives in a key way. The Gladstone's Library partnership with the University of South Carolina, with subsidy from the Mellon Foundation, has seen the beginnings of a project to digitise and create transcriptions of the massive manuscript holdings of the library. With the assistance of the university in the form of funding and equipment, the library have been able to offer a crowd sourcing model where keen volunteers can submit their reading of Gladstone's correspondence. This model benefits both parties and Louisa's talk discussed the importance of identifying needs and boundaries in relationships with your partner institution. It was fascinating to hear what can be done if the small resources of an important collection are amplified by partnership.

After a delicious lunch, where attendees could also enjoy a tour of the main library and a short talk in Special Collections, a brief AGM was held. With good news about increased membership and the balancing of bank books, as well as the successful campaigns over the year, it seems to have been a strong year for the Historic Libraries Forum.

Aptly, post lunch the third talk, by Ann Barwood, Canon Librarian at Exeter Cathedral Library & Archives, was entitled *Keep drinking the coffee!* Ann gave a brief summary of the long history of the library, dating back to 1050. Her talk though, was on a more modern period, following the travails of the collection since 2001, when the withdrawal of university funding meant that the library had to look for new accommodation, finally finding a home in the south wing of the Bishop's Palace. The building itself needed extensive repairs and modernisation to make it suitable for the space. The difficulties in this meant that Ann had to become an expert project manager, fund raiser and business planner in order to negotiate all the issues encountered in finding a new building, making it fit for purpose and getting the community involved. Her experience showed how varied the role of the librarian could be and how the skills needed to manage a project like this fall far outside the everyday job role.

Volunteers are essential to the running of many libraries. Louise Anderson, Librarian at Downside Abbey Archives & Library discussed their input in her session, *Powered by volunteers: the Downside experience*. As Louise outlined, the library had received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for their Beacon of Learning project, which

aimed to catalogue and digitise their collections, but also involved outreach as a key component. To include the community, volunteers were sought through targeted adverts. The recruitment, training and management of the volunteers threw up a lot of unforeseen problems that the organisation hadn't initially considered. Security checks and admin took months in some cases; scheduling was challenging, and volunteers had to be restricted to time slots; handbooks on procedure needed to be created. All these activities had to be carried out by libraries on top of their normal schedule. However, the benefits of the volunteers quickly made themselves felt, in the increased pace of their conservation work and cataloguing, as well as help with short-term moves. Louise commented the involvement of the volunteers also helped make the library more outward-facing and that much of what they are doing could not be delivered without volunteer help. It was useful to see how successful volunteer projects could be, but also to note the work involved.

Refreshed by coffee, the final session, *Sprints, marathons and hurdles* presented by Dunia Garcia-Ontiveros, Head of Bibliographic Services at The London Library was a fitting end to the day. Dunia's talk discussed their approach to an issue many libraries have: multiple types of catalogues. In their case a printed, card and computer catalogue covering various periods, which contained huge numbers of records. The 150th anniversary of the library provided the hook to hang a fundraising bid in 1991 to unify the catalogue, which proved to be the first of many. As Dunia wryly observed it feels unlikely they will ever be beyond the bid! Over the period 1991 to the present the library has tried several approaches to updating the catalogue; from buying records, to retro-conversion to a fresh approach in 2007, which saw a change in methodology. At every stage funding issues have come up, problems around the quality of records and difficulties with the building itself, which have all uncovered new priorities and issues. Dunia remarked that to keep going over such a long period requires great perseverance, motivation and flexibility. I admire the ambition of The London Library's approach, and the energy with which they have persevered with the project.

And so to the end of an interesting, insightful, inspiring and fun day. One of the things I appreciate about the Historic Libraries Forum is how accessible it is. For me as a student, I am delighted it is free to join, and to have the opportunity to come to a conference for such a small amount is a rare and beautiful thing. I really appreciate being a member of the HLF and I am already looking forward to next year's event!

Joanne McPhie

Preserving Physical Library Collections – A Quick Guide from the British Library (BL)
Dr Cordelia Rogerson, Head of Conservation & Preservation, British Library

With a collection numbering 150 million items one of the most frequent questions asked by visitors to BL Conservation is how do you decide what to conserve? The question has no easy answer. This article is intended to give a brief overview on how to approach the care of library collections, giving suggestions of activities that can

help answer the question above. The information is intended as a pragmatic starting point to understanding a collection and its needs. The principles are applicable to collections both large and small.

Prioritise preventive conservation actions

Consider the bigger picture, don't just focus on one item but look at the whole, or sections of, the collection. Often, improving shelving, boxing or even cleaning dust away, will have a more significant long term impact to a collection than conserving a single item. Item by item conservation is expensive and is unlikely to ever be completed for the entire collection.

Set out institutional objectives to help prioritise actions. For example, consider how long items should last, as this can inform how much resource and effort is needed for parts of the collection. At the BL, an Act of Parliament decrees the library must preserve collections in perpetuity, but this is not necessarily the case in all libraries.

Reflect on the purpose of the collection. Is access by researchers most important, or preservation? The BL is a working library and access is a high priority. Our actions therefore must balance access and preservation. That is, collection items must be available to be used and interpreted but also, for high profile or damaged objects, must be appropriately protected. The use of invigilated access, digitisation or surrogates can be enough to satisfy the majority of researchers and readers and can drastically reduce the handling needed for fragile items.

Collection Condition Surveys

Surveys are useful to gain an overall picture of the composition of a collection and will establish a baseline understanding of condition. Valuable incidental information about the collection is also gained. A sample approach is normally required since many collections are too big to be examined item by item. Statistically relevant sample surveys can be applied, such as that provided by www.libraryarchivesurveys.org.uk/

Some components of a collection will be more at risk than others due to inherent vice and external factors such as pollution or light. Inherent vice is the tendency in physical objects to deteriorate because of the fundamental instability of the components of which they are made. Often such degradation can be slowed by improving environmental conditions. A survey will reveal which items or formats are in the best condition and which need most attention. Such information can help decide where resources or actions are most needed and can make a difference.

At the BL an asset register of textile items is currently being compiled in order that a preservation plan can be created. Whilst it is known the BL collection holds many textile items, the number, composition, and importantly, condition is not understood. A two year project is now underway to gather information about textiles with a view to prioritising what actions to take and on which objects.

Using the results – establishing the biggest risks

Understanding the cause of condition features discovered during a survey is also important. Whilst inherent vice is an expected problem in all library and archive collections, particularly with machine-made papers, external factors will play a part. For the BL textile survey mentioned above, early results show storage is the biggest problem. Textile items are often in reasonable condition but they have been put into boxes designed for books and paper items and not for textiles. Such storage will ultimately cause damage through crushing and creasing. It is likely therefore; the longer project will pay more attention to upgrading storage than interventive conservation for the textiles.

A past condition survey for the entire BL collection was imperative in understanding the greatest overall risks to the collection. These are:

- Handling
- Disassociation (losing items)
- Security (theft or vandalism)

Having established these risks, actions were put in place to mitigate them. Improvements included handling training for staff, instructive handling videos for readers, more emphasis on a tracking system for the storage and retrieval of items and finally upgraded security systems.

Again the key point is to understand the bigger picture to identify actions that have impact where it is needed.

Benchmarks in Collection Care

A highly practical and useful starting point for understanding the preventive conservation needs of a collection and to determine what more can, or should, be done is Benchmarks in Collection Care. Published by the Collections Trust, in their own words it is:

a self-assessment checklist that sets out clear and realistic Benchmarks for collections care. Many museums use Benchmarks as a performance management tool to review and measure their current standards of collections care and work towards improvement.

The checklist covers the following topics:

- Policy
- Buildings
- Storage
- Housekeeping
- Handling & use
- Environmental monitoring & control

- Conservation
- Surrogates
- Emergency preparedness

This tool is available in an easy to use spreadsheet format and will give a clear indication whether procedures for planning, environment, use and monitoring are being 'met, partially met or not met' to a minimum standard. Using the tool is straightforward and the BL regularly refers to this as a means to identify areas to improve. As a third party publication intended for use by the heritage industry generally the standards can be used to influence management and directors as to the needs of the collection and any gaps in care that need addressing. Benchmarks in Collection Care can be downloaded free from the following link:

www.collectionstrust.org.uk/benchmarks-in-collections-care

What to conserve – a prioritising tool

Having considered the overall and preventive conservation needs for the collection, some items are likely to require interventive conservation treatment. With limited resources this can be a difficult choice as there could be many items that require some treatment. The BL develops priorities for conservation on an annual basis when collection curators are invited to suggest items for conservation treatment. Items are prioritised using the following criteria or questions.

- Is the item unique? (20)
- What is the condition of the item? (30)
- What is the level of use or demand? (30)
- Is the item protected (boxed)? Is there a surrogate? (10)
- Is the item catalogued and is the catalogue accessible remotely? (10)

The number in the brackets after the question gives the relative rating apportioned to each and a priority score is derived from the answers, numbering from 1-100. A spreadsheet is designed to calculate the score. The higher the score, the higher the priority for conservation. The system enables more objective decisions to be made and high priority items are selected to form a work programme each year that fits with the resources available.

Running repairs – a big impact

In addition to the items selected using the priority scoring system, Conservation at the BL also has a programme of running repairs. These are quick and minor repairs to items that have high demand. Repairs may be a tear in a page, a detached book board or just a new box. Normally these repairs take under 10 hours conservation work and are fitted in between longer projects or pauses in more complex projects. A great advantage of running repairs is that items get back to shelves quickly and are available for readers again. Running repairs have a big impact for the day to day maintenance of the collection and are popular with conservators and curators alike.

Conclusion

Any collection is likely to have too many and possibly conflicting priorities for its care. Rarely can everything be done that is needed. Choices will always have to be made to place limited resources for the greatest impact. Prevention is better than cure and do not get fixated solely on item-by-item conservation. Whilst every collection is unique the basic principles explained are designed to give a starting point in what can be an overwhelming problem.

Dr Cordelia Rogerson

News

Leeds Incunabula Project completed

Leeds University Library is pleased to announce the completion of a project to enhance the catalogue records for the earliest European printed books in Special Collections. Each catalogue record has been expanded to include details of decorations and annotations to the text as well as notes on provenance and a full description of the binding. The results of the work are now visible through our new online search facility:

<http://library.leeds.ac.uk/special-collections-incunabula>

Most of the Leeds incunabula were acquired by Lord Brotherton of Wakefield, the university library's main benefactor. The project has given a greater insight into his collecting strategy: to build a representative collection of high-quality items illustrating both the geographical range of early European printing and the variety of subject matter with which early printers and publishers were concerned. Classical writing is well-represented and includes works by Aristotle, Cicero, Horace, Juvenal, Livy, Ovid, Pliny, Plutarch, Tacitus, Terence and Virgil. There are theological texts by Anselm, Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, Bonaventure, Gregory, Jerome and Thomas Aquinas. Examples of medieval philosophy include works by Duns Scotus, William of Ockham and Robert Holkot and medieval literature is represented by, amongst others, Petrarch, Dante and Boccaccio. In addition there are dictionaries, encyclopaedias and instructional texts on astronomy and astrology, music, health and nutrition, geometry and arithmetic, as well as histories and world chronicles.

The Brotherton Collection contains one unique incunabulum, the *Epitome margaritae eloquentiae* by Lorenzo Guglielmo Traversagni, printed in Westminster by William Caxton in 1480. This item belonged formerly to Ripon Cathedral Library and was purchased for the Brotherton Collection in 1960. There are two further examples of Caxton's press in Special Collections at Leeds: Boethius' *De consolatione philosophiae* printed in Westminster in about 1478 and part of the Ripon Cathedral deposit, and Ranulf Higden's *Polycronicon* printed in Westminster in 1482 and formerly owned by G.W. Wentworth of Woolley Hall.

Many items in the collection contain hand-painted ornamentation of initials in gold and colours, floral borders, amusing caricatures or distinctive coats of arms. Provenance research has identified many illustrious former owners and at least half the incunabula contain manuscript annotations. One example contains a remarkable number of marginal notes and entertaining drawings to accompany the text. Work to digitise this unique item is nearing completion and an online learning resource will be launched in the summer.

We are looking forward to putting this and other significant items on display in the new Library Gallery, the culmination of our HLF project "Treasures from the Brotherton: Inspiring Audiences and Engaging Communities". Opening at the University of Leeds at the end of the year, the exhibition gallery will house a permanent display of Library treasures and a changing series of temporary exhibitions exploring different aspects of the collections.

Rhiannon Lawrence-Francis

Hurd Library

After some 8 years of campaigning to keep the Hurd Library in situ at Hartlebury Castle, we can at last report success. The Hartlebury Castle Trust has been awarded a grant of £5m by the Heritage Lottery Fund to enable them to purchase the castle from the Church Commissioners, who will then loan the library to them. The 'other' HLF has been of immense support throughout the campaign.

Chris Penney

Servite Priory, Benburb, Co. Tyrone

The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded £733,000 to conserve and make available the collections of the Servite Priory in Benburb, Co. Tyrone in Northern Ireland. The collection includes 20,000 rare books, manuscripts and archival materials, dating back to the sixteenth century. Until now the collection has been held at different sites and was at risk of deterioration. The grant is a major part of a £1.2 million project to create a library, museum and visitor centre which will become a substantial part of the local heritage landscape. Further information is available via www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/benburb-priorys-rare-book-collection-be-opened-public

Linnean Society receives Arts Council Designation

The entirety of the Linnean Society of London's library, archives and biological collections have been Designated as outstanding by the Arts Council England in December 2014. See www.museumsandheritage.com/advisor/news/item/3870

We were absolutely delighted when we received this official acknowledgement of the importance of our collections and of our efforts to make them accessible.

Elaine Charwat

Research Libraries UK launches UDC Hub

RLUK has launched the UDC Hub (www.rluk.ac.uk/udc), an online resource for collection holders and practitioners to share the latest innovations, case studies and best practice for unique and distinctive collections (UDCs). The UDC Hub is targeted at, and aims to foster greater collaboration and engagement between, collection holders across sectors, within RLUK and beyond.

The UDC Hub is community focused and community led. RLUK welcomes contributions which will help to keep the UDC Hub up-to-date with the latest developments concerning the sector, not limited to the following areas:

- Case studies
- Collection management
- Outreach and engagement
- Preservation
- Staffing and skills
- UDCs and research
- Funding, fundraising and advocacy

The UDC Hub is part of RLUK's wider strategic aim of supporting collections, wherever they are held. The recently published report, Unique and Distinctive Collections: opportunities for research libraries (www.rluk.ac.uk/work/rlukudc/), is the culmination of the work RLUK has carried out in order to understand how the definition, scope and rationale for what have been traditionally been termed 'special collections' are changing, and what the drivers and consequences of these changes are likely to be.

Melanie Cheung

West Dean College becomes the new training partner for the British Library

West Dean College have embarked on a collaborative programme of training with the British Library, delivering a portfolio of short courses into aspects of preservation and collection care for libraries.

The programme focuses on Continued Professional Development and is aimed at professionals, conservation students and others interested in furthering their skills. The jointly-branded courses will be delivered at West Dean College and the British Library.

Further information can be found via www.westdean.org.uk/BL

Cathedral Libraries and Archives Association newsletter

The latest issue of the newsletter of the Cathedral Libraries and Archives Association is available via their website at:

<https://cathedrallibrariesandarchives.wordpress.com/resources-publications/>

The CLAA aims:

To advance education by the promotion, preservation and protection of cathedral libraries and archives in the United Kingdom and Ireland;
The provision of appropriate access thereto.

Digitisation at Guildhall Library

Material Evidence in Incunabula

Guildhall Library has just completed a project to contribute provenance information to the Consortium of European Research Libraries' *Material Evidence in Incunabula* database. The project included creating digital images of provenance evidence and providing direct links from within the MEI database to images from the library's collection of fifteenth century titles, using the social media site Pinterest as a platform.

The response to the project has been overwhelmingly positive. The library's Pinterest boards have a growing number of followers, thereby bringing our collections to life for remote users. Researchers have supplied transcriptions for the more challenging annotations and marginalia and Guildhall Library was delighted to receive the National Acquisitions Group Award for its use of social media.

Marie Duval database

In partnership with the University of Chester, Guildhall is digitising the illustrations of Marie Duval held at Guildhall Library. Marie Duval, a 19th-century melodrama performer drew more than 800 pages of London life, featuring the hugely popular character Ally Sloper, Britain's first serialised comic strip. The project will culminate in the creation of an open access online image catalogue of Duval's work, and an international touring exhibition.

London Trade directories

Guildhall Library and London Metropolitan Archives are to start a new round of digitisation with Ancestry. Over 150 London trade directories, from the library's extensive collection of local and national trade and telephone directories, will be digitised this spring.

Ann Martin

Conference announcement and call for papers

What do we lose when we lose a Library? Belgium, University of Leuven, 9-11 September 2015

Full details of the event: <https://kuleuvencongres.be/libconf2015/website>

To commemorate the centenary of the destruction of the Library in 1914, the Goethe-Institut Brüssel, the British Council Brussels and the University of Leuven (KU Leuven) are organising a three day international conference on the challenging topic: What do we lose when we lose a library?

The fragility of libraries in their material and digital dimension remains, 100 years after the fire, one of the greatest challenges for the transmission of human knowledge. The two conference themes Library & Heritage and Library & Digital Challenge will shed light on the vision and approach to the past and the future of libraries. Scholars in the field of history, library science, information science, digital humanities, cultural and conservation disciplines are invited to submit an abstract. The conference is addressed to scholars as pioneers of organising cultural memory through expertise and knowledge. The aim is to raise worldwide public consciousness of the important task of sharing collective and cultural memory, and to raise awareness of the challenges libraries face in performing this task.

The keynote speakers of the Leuven Conference are:

Aleida Assmann (Universities Heidelberg and Tuebingen)

David McKitterick (Librarian and Vice-Master of Trinity College)

Ismet Ovčina (Manager of the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Michael F. Suarez, S.J (Director of Rare Book School at the University of Virginia)

Herbert Van de Sompel (Team leader of the Research Library of the Los Alamos National Laboratory)

Father Justin (Librarian Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt).

Special guest is Wolfgang Schivelbusch (Author from Die Bibliothek von Löwen. Eine Episode aus der Zeit der Weltkriege).

Call for Papers & Posters

Do you have a challenging perspective or new enlightening research on the conference subjects “Libraries, Heritage & Memory” and “Libraries and Digital Challenge” you want to present at the 2015 library conference? Abstracts for oral and poster presentations focusing on reflection or latest developments can be submitted until 2 March 2015. Authors of selected abstracts be invited to present during the Leuven conference (Abstract acceptance will be announced on 30 March). Full papers will be published in the post conference proceedings.

Theme I : Libraries, Heritage & Memory

In this section, speakers address aspects of libraries as memory institutions. What is the importance of keeping and developing our written heritage? How has this heritage been threatened in the past, especially by wars and political events? Do the same patterns occur today? And what can libraries do to strengthen their position? Scholars in the field of history, library science and communication, cultural, conservation and preservation disciplines are invited to submit an abstract in the theme ‘Libraries, Heritage & Memory’.

Topic 1 Destruction of libraries

Topic 2 Social and cultural impact of libraries

Topic 3 Collection care & preservation

Theme II : Create and maintain. Libraries and Digital Challenge

In this section, speakers address aspects of libraries in an increasingly digital context. What are the opportunities and challenges connected with digital libraries? How to provide global access to digital collections? What are suitable economic and technical solutions? And how do we deal with legal issues and sustainability concerns raised by the digital turn? How do we deal with legal issues and sustainability concerns raised by the digital turn? What must be done to prevent the loss of cultural heritage?

Scholars in the field of information science, library management and digital humanities are invited to submit an abstract in the theme ‘Libraries and Digital Challenge’.

Topic 4 Digital Libraries: Identity and Society

Topic 5 Legal issues and sustainability of Digital Libraries

Topic 6 Technological Opportunities for Libraries

Call & submission of abstracts until 2nd March:

<https://kuleuvencongres.be/libconf2015/website/call-for-papers-and-posters>

Reports from HLF activities

HLF Members Visit to St Bride Library on Wednesday 21 January, 2015

The St Bride Library, in Blackfriars in the City of London, is not in a location I am familiar with. Armed with a map, I walked the length of Fleet Street and saw up ahead, glowing in the evening light, St Paul's Cathedral. I crossed over to Bride Lane and followed the narrow road round, before climbing a steep flight of stairs to No 14 Bride Lane which took me to St Bride Library.

Our group of twelve members assembled in the library reading room and were welcomed by Bob Richardson, manager of the Library, Archive and Workshop. He informed us that this was not just a specialist library dedicated to the history of printing but a printing museum and educational/training facility too.

The meeting began with Bob outlining the history of the library and the people whose collections founded it. This was followed by a tour to the Rare Books Room, then down to the basement to see the printing presses, up the stairs to the bookstacks, and finally back to the reading room.

The Library opened to the public in 1895 and is perhaps the world's most famous printing library. Then, the St Bride Foundation incorporated a printing school and library for the local workforce employed in Fleet Street which, for nearly five centuries, was the major hub for printing books and newspapers in England. The Printing School moved out in 1922 but the Library remained. Today it contains 50,000 books and periodicals, and diverse archives and printing artefacts.

The library is run by two people – Bob, and Heather Jardine, volunteering at St Bride following retirement from Guildhall Library. Visitors may use the collections, for a nominal charge of £5 a year, and can identify and locate items using the online catalogue. It is a great credit that the holdings have been catalogued, especially with such a small staff, and Bob explained some of the obstacles they had to overcome during the retrospective cataloguing project, a situation that many librarians would recognise. Over the years, the library has had to reduce the number of journals it takes due to lack of funds, although the book acquisitions budget remains.

The reading room is furnished with a large table and chairs, a staff counter and desk, and bookshelves. A very large wooden plan chest of drawers occupies part of the room containing type donated by Oxford University Press. Fortunately, the floors have been strengthened to support the weight!

Our tour took us next to the Rare Books Room. A planned refurbishment of the Rare Books Room had been seriously expedited from a planned start in the summer of 2015 due to the imminent VIP visit of senior royalty. We discovered later that it was the Prince of Wales. When we visited, the room with its attractive bow windows and green-painted walls was completely empty, and shrouded in plastic sheets. Photographs show that in other times it had housed a large polished oval wooden table, along with portraits and dedications to the wealthy people who had made substantial contributions to the library in the past. These included William Blades

(1824-1890) whose collection of printing books forms the nucleus of the library, and John Passmore Edwards (1823-1911), one of the early supporters of the library who financed the purchase of Blades' books. The piece de resistance lies behind a false wall in the Rare Books Room. This part contains Blades' private library. He collected books which used examples of unusual typographies on many different subjects. The books that once graced Blades' home in Surrey are now in this room.

Bob selected a few gems from Blades collection to show us: an original Caxton of 1478; a Kelmscott Chaucer; and a 3000 BC example of Egyptian hieroglyphics on papyrus—a very rare example having writing on both sides!

Next, we descended to the basement which houses the collection of historic printing presses—all large and heavy pieces of machinery. One, designed by an American in the nineteenth century, was a style of press so heavy they could not be easily transported around the American continent, and so were popular only in Britain. One of the distinguishing features of this press is the figure of an eagle as its counter weight! The presses are currently used for training sessions, and Bob demonstrated the different working mechanisms, and other pieces of equipment associated with the presses, eg leather inking dabbers.

On a table were a few lithographic stones rescued long ago by Bob from a business which closed down. In fact, through a network of contacts in the trade, quite a lot of the objects were salvaged in the nick of time.

Back upstairs we went into a large stack area full of bookshelves. A tall wooden cabinet held examples of typefaces of a huge variety of alphabets: Cyrillic, Chinese, Japanese, Devanagari, etc. In this room the archive of the publishers Taylor and Francis (responsible for publishing many natural history books and journals) and an impressive Eric Gill collection are housed.

Our visit concluded back in the reading room which is currently closed due to building work. Despite the inconvenience this has allowed the opportunity for 8 NADFAS (National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Societies) volunteers to work on site, cleaning and carrying out remedial work on the collections. And, for the inconvenience of closing the building during adjoining major building works, the library will be compensated by the City of London.

Our visit lasted two and a half hours which is a long time for a comparatively small library. Bob engaged us with his fascinating account of the personalities at St Bride and history of the print. We all came away a little wiser and more informed about the history on our doorstep.

Further information is available at: www.sbf.org.uk/library

Ann Datta

Events and exhibitions

Managing Museum Collections: a Whistle Stop Tour Association of Pall Mall Libraries Training Session

Tuesday 23rd June 2015, 10.00am-1.00pm, at the Royal United Services Institute, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2ET.

Trainer: Briony Hudson

Fee: about £30 per person, depending on numbers

The programme will include:

Materials, identification, basic rules for working with and handling objects; packaging, storage conditions, requirements and risks; cleaning and conservation; disaster planning; documentation and loans; display and interpretation.

To reserve a place, please contact Julie Beckwith: Julie.Beckwith@rcplondon.ac.uk

Publisher and plunderer? Sir John Prise and the first Welsh books National Library of Wales, 31 January - 27 June 2015

Sir John Prise was one of Wales' foremost Renaissance figures. He amassed a superb personal library of printed books and manuscripts, including the earliest surviving manuscript in Welsh, the Black Book of Carmarthen. He also adopted new technology to publish the first Welsh printed book – *Yny lhyvyr hwnn* – in 1546.

This exhibition will look at the life and work of a remarkable “Tudor Man”, and will attempt to reconcile his cultural interests with his turbulent role of persecuting heretics, dissolving monasteries and pleasing his ruthless task-masters, Thomas Cromwell and Henry VIII. This will be a rare opportunity to view monastic plunder which fell into Prise's hands, treasures which, for a while, will be released from their chains at Hereford Cathedral Library.

Aberystwyth Bibliographical Society meetings February-March 2015

<http://users.aber.ac.uk/das/texts/aberbibgr1.htm>

Saturday 21st February, 2015, 11.00a.m.	Prof. Andrew Prescott: <i>Imaging and Imagining Magna Carta</i>	St. Paul's Methodist Centre, Queen's Road
Tuesday 24th March 2015, 6.30p.m	Rev. Neil Fairlamb: <i>Researching the History of the Wine Trade in North Wales</i>	Council Chamber, National Library of Wales

Royal College of Nursing Library & Heritage Centre exhibitions and events

The Royal College of Nursing Library has just launched its @RCNLibraries twitter account. Tweets will come from all across the UK detailing RCN library and archive events, exhibitions and collections news.

Upcoming events include:

Kate Luard's great-nephew, Tim Luard, will be talking about the numerous letters Kate wrote about her nursing work during WW1, at RCN HQ in London, 12 March.

www.rcn.org.uk/development/library_and_heritage_services/whats_on/event/kate_luards_unknown_warriors

Lunchtime lecture on raising awareness and understanding the complex subject of FGM with Carmel Bagness on 11 March.

www.rcn.org.uk/development/library_and_heritage_services/whats_on/event/zero_tolerance_and_maximum_action_understanding_fgm

The Angus Library and Archive

From 20-25 April, The Angus Library and Archive will be holding a free literature exhibition titled *Virtue and Vice and All Things Nice* at Regent's Park College, Oxford. The Angus is the largest collection of Baptist history and heritage; the exhibition will showcase some of the more unusual items from our nonconformist collection, including early children's literature, poetry, travel literature and much more. Two free talks will accompany the exhibition; more details will follow soon on our website and twitter feed (@RPCLibrary) including the full talk titles and times.

23 April: a talk on John Bunyan with Anne Dunan-Page, Professor of Early-Modern Studies, Aix-Marseille University, Vice President of the French Association of English Lecturers, Fellow of the Institut Universitaire de France

24 April: a talk on early children's literature with Dr Hannah Field, who completed her PhD on the Opie Children's Literature Collection at the Bodleian and is a Lecturer in English Literature, University of Lincoln

If anyone would like to be notified via email when tickets become available, please contact The Angus on 01865 288142 or angus.library@regents.ox.ac.uk

New library exhibition at King's College London

The great leveller: humanity's struggle against infectious disease runs until 15 April at 2015 in the Weston Room, Maughan Library, King's College London. The exhibition examines the long struggle to understand, contain and treat infection. All items in the exhibition are from the collections of the Foyle Special Collections Library, King's College London.

Highlights include copies of Edward Jenner's account of his experiments in smallpox vaccination, Henry Vandyke Carter's pioneering 1874 study of leprosy, John Snow's *On the mode of communication of cholera*, which traced the source of London's 1854 outbreak to the Broad Street pump, and a number of photographic sets published by the Central Office of Information, showing disease control in Africa. More information is available via:

www.kcl.ac.uk/library/collections/archivespec/exhibitions/maughan.aspx

Exhibition at Eton College Library until 27 March 2015

Record and Remembrance: The Macnaghten War Memorial Library 1923-2014

The First World War affected all aspects of life from 1914 to 1918, and onwards. This exhibition draws upon the remarkable Macnaghten Library collection to explore how the war was recorded then, and remembered today.

The Macnaghten War Memorial Library was bequeathed in 1934 by Eugen Millington-Drake, an Old Etonian and British diplomat, to pay tribute to the Boys who fell during the First World War. The original gift was a collection of signed and inscribed books about the war, in many languages and covering all subjects. Since then, the Macnaghten Library has increased its holdings and is now home to soldiers' personal papers, war art, original artefacts and more.

The exhibition is open by appointment from 9.30am-1pm, 2pm-5pm, Monday to Friday, at Eton College Library. Admission is free. Please email collections@etconcollege.org.uk or phone 01753 370590 for more information or to make an appointment.

Library website: www.etoncollege.com/collegelibrary.aspx

John Rylands Seminar on Print and Materiality in the Early Modern World

2014/2015 interdisciplinary seminar series, The John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester. Including:

Thursday 12 February 2015, 5-7pm

- Dr Sara Barker, Leeds, 'Translation and Transmission: Exploring the pre-periodical news world'
- Dr Stephen Pumfrey, Lancaster, 'Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England: What can we learn from historical corpus linguistics?'
- Michael Smith, Manchester, 'Feeling, Print and Protestant Unity in Post-Restoration England'

Thursday 12 March 2015, 5-7pm

- Dr Georg Christ, Manchester, 'Marino Sanuto's Diaries and History: Managing Venetian news, print and historiography (early 16th to 21st C.)'
- Dr Siobhan Talbott, Manchester, "'By the accounts we have in the last publick news": How information shaped behaviour in Franco-British commercial networks, c.1603-1763'
- Dr Mark Towsey, Liverpool, "'Who did they think they were": Reading history for self-fashioning in eighteenth-century Britain'

Sessions will be held in the Christie Room, The John Rylands Library, Deansgate, Manchester. The programme is supported by the John Rylands Research Institute. A group will go for drinks afterwards – all welcome! Convened by Dr Sasha Handley and Dr Jenny Spinks. Enquiries: Jenny Spinks: Jenny.Spinks@manchester.ac.uk.

Audiences, Authority and Collaboration in Museum Research: a joint Subject Specialist Network seminar, 12-13 March 2015, Tate Britain (12 March); National Portrait Gallery and the National Gallery (13 March)

This event is open to museum colleagues, academics and others with a professional interest in museum, gallery and archive collections. A limited number of places will be reserved for doctoral students. Early booking is advised.

Tickets for this event are free of charge but advance registration before Thursday 5 March is essential.

Programme and details of how to book are available via www.tate.org.uk/download/file/fid/45295.

Guildhall Library exhibition

Celebrity cooks : Mrs Beeton and her contemporaries, 21 January – 17 April

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the death of Mrs Beeton, the library is staging the exhibition *Celebrity Cooks: Mrs Beeton and her Contemporaries*. The exhibition traces her influence on today's 'celebrity cooks' and her place in the world of nineteenth-century cooking, alongside her contemporaries Eliza Acton and Alexis Soyer, using material from the library's extensive food and cookery book collections.

Accompanying the exhibition is a series of events covering different aspects of food history, including the lost world of the Georgian Chocolate House and the history of the English Cookbook, as well as an 'edible exhibition', where visitors will have the opportunity to taste sweet dishes through the ages (14 April, 6 – 8pm, £5 per person).

Membership

Membership of the Forum is free and anyone may join. In this Bulletin we welcome new members working at [Yale](#), [Leicester University](#), [Brunel University](#), [English Heritage](#), [Chevening House](#), [Wrotham Park](#), the Oxford Conservation Consortium, the [Great North Museum: Hancock Library](#) and the [Collegio Leoniano](#) at Rome.

Members@HistoricLibrariesForum.org.uk



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