

HISTORIC LIBRARIES FORUM

BULLETIN NO. 41

JULY 2018

This summer bulletin from the Historic Libraries Forum follows a very successful meeting at Cambridge University Library earlier this month, at which most of our discussion centred on organising the 2018 HLF conference. The date and venue (12th November 2018, Christ Church, Oxford) were announced in the previous bulletin, but we're now in a position to reveal the title: *"Any other duties as required": skills for non-traditional library responsibilities*. Though we are still in the process of confirming speakers, talks will likely include tips for managing non-book collections (art, objects, ephemera), compliance (DDA, GDPR) and writing fundraising bids. A full programme and booking form for the conference will be available in our autumn bulletin.

This month the HLF ran a sold-out provenance workshop hosted by Norwich Cathedral Library. I was delighted to attend this session myself, and to meet a broad range of participants, as well as learn a great deal from the incomparable David Pearson. Many thanks to Gudrun Warren for organising the day; for illustrating the sessions with wonderful examples from the Cathedral's collections, and for writing a summary of this event for the bulletin. Other HLF workshops in the pipeline range from book cleaning to 'Greek for Librarians' and, arising from feedback during the Provenance workshop, we also hope to arrange a session on photographing collections soon. If you have an idea for an event, or are interested in hosting an event for the HLF please do get in touch with me via J.S.Dye@stir.ac.uk.

As we seek to respond to a continuing demand for training events, fresh ideas and venues, we are officially looking for new committee members. If you are interested in joining the Historic Libraries Forum committee please send me (via email to the address above) a short statement of no more than 300 words outlining your interest in joining the committee, and any relevant experience, by Monday 20th August. The committee meets four times a year (reasonable travel expenses reimbursed) and shares responsibility for the production of the bulletin, responding to news of libraries in danger, the organisation of events including the conference and the hosting of committee meetings. For ease of travel, most of these meetings take place in the South East, and we are particularly keen to hear from anyone able to host meetings in central London. If you are able to host a meeting, but not commit to a full committee role, please do also get in touch.

Please continue to let us know if you hear any news of libraries in danger, and many thanks to those of you who have been in contact over the last few months. We rely on members to support the work of the Committee in remaining aware of any imminent threats to the preservation of and access to historic collections. Please also get in touch if you would like to share anything which might be of interest to the Forum (such as visits, meetings, tours, and exhibitions) or if you simply need advice.

Jill Dye, *Chair*

2018 HISTORIC LIBRARIES FORUM CONFERENCE

12th November, Christ Church, Oxford

The Historic Libraries Forum committee are delighted to announce that the title of this year's conference will be "*Any other duties as required*": *skills for non-traditional library responsibilities*. The theme is largely based on the feedback we have had from some of our members who increasingly feel that their job roles include a great deal more than what was once expected of a 'traditional' librarian; whether this be managing non-book collections, writing fundraising bids, getting to grips with the latest data compliance law, or even simply how to find the time to squeeze in all this CPD.

The full line up of speakers will be announced in our Autumn Bulletin, along with details on how to book your place. In the meantime, if you're looking for support in approaching 'non-traditional' library duties, please save the date and we hope to see you in November!

PROVENANCE WORKSHOP

Led by David Pearson, was held at Norwich Cathedral Library on Monday 9 July.

David Pearson (Research Fellow, at the Institute of English Studies in the University of London) led this workshop looking at various aspects of provenance. David began the day with an introduction to recent developments in provenance work, and its importance, and then the rest of the day was split between sessions considering different aspects of provenance. Each area was introduced with a PowerPoint showing examples, and then we looked at real examples from the collection at Norwich Cathedral.

The first session covered frustrations of provenance research, such as indecipherable writing (see also palaeography below), or ciphers or other cryptic marks which cannot be interpreted without supporting evidence. We saw books where the provenance evidence had been removed, either by clearly being cut out, or by being scratched or torn out – this was surprisingly more difficult to spot, as a tear lacks the clean, hard edge of a cut, and so doesn't stand out so clearly. Other ways of deliberately obliterating inscriptions included erasures, crossing-out, and washing-out (particularly used in incunabula). Rebinding of books, with the attendant trimming of the textblock, can remove all or part of an inscription or marginal annotation.

Next came inscriptions, and things written in books. We saw different styles of handwriting over ages, typical schoolboy doodling and pen trials. We learned that if a particular individual is known to use a certain motto, this can be used to extrapolate ownership even when the name is not present. Inscriptions may record purchase or gift; inscriptions especially in bibles may indicate much more information such as dates of birth, baptism, marriage, death. Booksellers' codes may also be found, although it may not be possible to understand them. Occasionally, marks may be a form of censorship, particularly when something such as a prayer book continues to be used after certain saints have been declared unacceptable.

After lunch we had a palaeography session. When you set out to read a document from whatever period, you are faced with a body of text, within which letters will appear more than once, so you can get to know the hand, and learn how it works. With provenance research you are more likely to be faced with at most a short inscription, so the chances of being able to compare forms to decipher particular letters are slim at best. Furthermore,

when working with a collection of books ranging in date across three or four centuries, you will encounter the full range of possible handwriting styles. So palaeography, whilst a vital skill, is at its most difficult when applied to provenance research. David suggested that a good palaeography handbook is an essential part of your provenance toolkit, along with as much experience as you can gain. Even so, there will be some inscriptions that you simply cannot decipher; in such cases noting the presence of an inscription in a catalogue entry at least recognizes its existence, and might one day encourage attention from another reader who can interpret it.

Bookbindings can be a fruitful source of provenance evidence: stamped initials may be identifiable; more elaborate heraldic devices are more likely to be traceable through published sources. Armorial evidence may indicate ownership, but it may also be a sign of a gift; appearance of royal arms is possibly more likely to be a sign of adherence to the royal cause, rather than actual royal ownership. Institutional arms may mark ownership of the books (but may not!); prize bindings – a book given by a university to a student literally as a prize – are quite easily identifiable once you know what you are looking for. Occasionally particular binding styles or tools can be associated with a town or even workshop.

The overall message of the workshop was that there is no real substitute to gaining hard experience – look at as many books as you can! But the real beauty for me of a workshop like this is having an expert explain to you what it is you have seen: I might have seen it, but not recognized it for what it was. Now I feel considerably better equipped to recognize what I see before me, and indeed scarcely two weeks after the workshop a book was placed before me which contained two of the distinct forms of marking which David had mentioned, one of which I had not seen before outside of the workshop; this made me very happy – in a librarian sort of way!

Gudrun Warren, *Norwich Cathedral Library*

NEWS

BATH

The rare books collection of Bath Central Library, kept with the general library collection since its inception, finally made its way over to its new home in the Bath Record Office: Archives & Local Studies in the Guildhall in June of 2017. Along with it came the Local Studies Librarian, Anne Buchanan, who has been responsible for looking after the rare books collection for 12 years. It is a collection comprised of over 1100 volumes acquired through purchase and donation over a period of about a century. The rare books also include an art bindings collection, a miniatures collection, and a collection of pre-19th century pamphlets which incorporate a single donation preserved in the same condition they would have been acquired from the bookseller, never having been bound or trimmed. A rudimentary inventory of the rare books collection was taken in 2005 for insurance purposes, but detailed cataloguing had to wait for Anne to take over as Local Studies Librarian, as she is a trained librarian and cataloguer. She began cataloguing the rare books using AACR-2 and DCRM (B) as well as adding some binding details and [ESTC](#) references where appropriate. Anne had to fit the cataloguing into her already busy schedule, so it was a slow process. She had been working on the rare book catalogue records for 11 years when it was decided to move the collection to new dedicated space in the archive storerooms of the Bath Record Office in the

Guildhall, which provides enhanced security, temperature and humidity monitoring and dedicated shelving. In August 2017, Holly Trant came on board to work on the cataloguing project.

The first order of business for the project was to ensure each book was accounted for following the move, and a record established with the new shelf mark. Once it was established that all the volumes were in the correct locations and that new shelf marks were recorded correctly, the records were ready to be written and/or edited. Anne had already converted many if not most the inventory records and turned them into respectable catalogue records. Her records are now being enhanced with copy specific notes, including provenance and bindings details using controlled vocabularies as well as statements of extent & dimensions (where none had been added) and ESTC references and/or other appropriate reference data. The majority of the record enhancement of the general rare book and folios catalogue records was completed in January of this year and the cataloguing of the miniatures collection is now in process.

Cataloguing the rare books collection at the Bath Record Office: Archives & Local Studies is a labour of love - as each day there is a discovery of something fascinating - such as finding a pressed flower hidden deep in the pages of a Victorian book or confirming (after a bit of research) that a book we have is indeed a counterfeit copy or describing a binding made of human skin (yes, Bath has one.) By moving the rare books collection to its new secure home in the Record Office and ensuring that each volume has a detailed catalogue record, the team at the Record Office is ensuring the City of Bath's rare books collection is both protected and accessible for generations to come.

Holly Trant, *Bath Record Office*

SALISBURY

Salisbury Cathedral library contains approx. 10,000 books dating from the ninth century onwards. 'Beyond the Library Door: Sharing Books and Bindings' is a three year project started in autumn 2017 focusing on the printed books. The key aim of the Project is to improve our own knowledge and recording of the book catalogue data and to subsequently make both the library and archive catalogues available online. As part of the Project we have been able to recruit a specialist cataloguer, Dr Anne Dutton, as well as archivist Hannah Tinkler. Up until now all our library catalogue data has been in hardcopy form only so Anne and I spent the first six months of the project assessing the different collection management systems available and choosing the one which best suits our requirements for both the library and archive collections. Alongside the cataloguing we have also recruited a large team of volunteers who, having received extensive training, are now cleaning the books and recording their condition. The project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, The Sackler Trust, The Pilgrim Trust and other grant giving organisations. We are also organising a range of public engagement activities including events for schools and community groups.

Emily Naish, *Salisbury Cathedral*

SION COLLEGE LIBRARY PROVENANCE PROJECT

In 2014 a major project began in earnest to catalogue the estimated 60,000 items in the Sion College Library collection, which came to Lambeth Palace Library in 1996 following the closure of the institution. Cataloguing to DCRM(B) standards, work is being diligently undertaken to capture all bibliographic and copy-specific detail including recording bindings

and marks of ownership. To date around 15,500 books and pamphlets have been added to Lambeth's online catalogue and are waiting to be discovered by researchers who are interested not only in the texts in the collection, but also in the wealth of provenance evidence to be found in Sion books.

From armorial bookplates to marginalia, the Sion College collection is a treasure trove of research potential. With a surge in academic interest in the history of books and libraries, the Sion team wanted to look for a creative solution to recording, identifying and sharing provenance data and for involving the wider community. This is where crowdsourcing came to the team's attention and the Sion College Library Provenance Project (<https://sionprovenance.wordpress.com/>) began to take shape as an exciting opportunity to engage and utilise the public's interest.



A small sample of the multiplicity of provenance evidence which is displayed in Sion books

First trialled in 2015, the project makes digital images of hundreds of marks of provenance available and freely accessible online, providing a platform through which users are invited to participate in transcribing complicated inscriptions or identifying former owners who have left their mark in many ways in the books in our care. These endeavours have already borne fruit with members of the public actively engaging with the project, adding to the already detailed catalogue entries which the Sion team are creating and making significant contributions to the growing pool of information about the history of Sion College Library and the stories of its books.

In 2017 the project was relaunched on a WordPress platform, making the content even more accessible and user friendly. The Sion team recently had an opportunity to share their experiences of creating and maintaining the project and in June they ventured to Scotland to deliver a paper on this innovative crowdsourcing initiative at the Independent Libraries Association Annual Meeting: *Past, Present, Future: the People in Independent Libraries*. By sharing the experience of working with the Sion College collection and developing the provenance project, the hope was to inspire other libraries to seek new means of capturing

audiences, expanding their reach and encouraging a sense of cultural custodianship among users.



Ken Gibb (Rare Books Librarian) and Jessica Hudson (Sion Project Cataloguer) at the ILA conference in June, presenting their talk entitled 'The Sion Provenance Project: Reaching for the Crowds'.

Cataloguing is ongoing, with new and fascinating material being regularly discovered and shared online as we delve further into the printed works that Sion College accumulated. With the help of the public, the collection is being fleshed out like never before and the intriguing narratives that the books have hidden are now coming to light. If you would like to get involved please visit the project site (sionprovenance.wordpress.com/), search for Sion material in Lambeth Palace Library's online catalogue (lambethpalacelibrary.org/content/searchcollections), email archives@churchofengland.org.

Ken Gibb and Jessica Hudson, *Lambeth Palace Library*



Historic Libraries Forum



@HistLibForum

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

ABERYSTWYTH

The centenary exhibition of manuscripts and rare books from Mostyn Hall has just opened at the National Library of Wales. Information is available here: www.library.wales/visit/things-to-do/exhibitions/the-mostyn-manuscripts-a-centennial-exhibition/

The meetings of the **Aberystwyth Bibliographical Group** for the 2018-19 season:

Tuesday 16th October 2018, 6.30p.m., National Library of Wales. Dr. Nicolas Bell: *The Welsh Martial: A Bibliographical Excursion with John Owen*

Tuesday 20th November 2018, 6.30p.m., National Library of Wales. Dr. Dylan Foster Evans: *Sir John Prise of Brecon and his Commonplace Book*

Tuesday 22nd January 2019, 6.30p.m., venue to be confirmed. Dr. Christopher Baggs: *George Gissing, Library History and Me*

Saturday 23rd February 2019, 11.00a.m., venue to be confirmed. Prof. Jane Cartwright: *Buchedd Gwenfrewy: The Life of St. Winefride in NLW MSS Peniarth 27ii and Llanstephan 34*

Tuesday 26th March 2019, 6.30p.m., venue to be confirmed. Dr. Keith Manley: *Bodies in the Library: The Family Book Collection of Agatha Christie*

Further details are available from our web site: aberbibgp.btck.co.uk/

CAMBRIDGE

Christ's College Old Library exhibition

In celebration of the 200th anniversary of the first publication of Mary Shelley's ground-breaking novel Frankenstein, Christ's College Old Library presents our current exhibition, 'The Art of Disruption: Society and the Supernatural', exploring the many ways in which writers have challenged convention using the strange, subversive, and chaotic world of the supernatural. Our exhibition examines many curious and disruptive supernatural forces: monsters and their evil, unnatural origins, witches who transgress and challenge social conventions, and mythical beasts who defy physical boundaries. We feature an array of library treasures, including Joseph Glanvill's book on witches and apparitions, our 1818 first edition of Frankenstein, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1640), and Edward Topsell's *Historie of Foure-Footed Beastes* (1607). Christ's College is on St Andrew's Street, in central Cambridge.

The exhibition is open to the public on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00pm to 4:00pm, and other times by appointment. The exhibition is currently open and will run until 15 November 2018.

Rare Books and Special Collections Group Annual Study Conference: The Library as Classroom at Downing College, the University of Cambridge, from 5th-7th September 2018

Delegates are invited to hear speakers from across the country discuss using special collections for teaching across all library environments.

Confirmed speakers include Dr Jessica Gardner (University of Cambridge), Siobhan Britton (University of Brighton), Sarah Mahurter (University of the Arts London), Dr Tabitha Tuckett (University College London), Sally Stafford (University of Cambridge), Professor Simon Eliot (London Rare Book School), Dr Niveen Kassem (Newcastle University), Jason Scott-Warren and Andrew Zurcher (Centre for Material Texts), Tracy Deakin (St. John's College), Anna Lobbenberg (The British Library), Rachel Sinfield (Fitzwilliam Museum) and Dr Robin Brooke-Smith (Shrewsbury School).

Visits will also be organised to the University Library and selected Cambridge colleges.

More information, including the full programme, booking form and information on how to book can be found here: <https://goo.gl/tHXMfR>

EDINBURGH

National Library of Scotland

Incunabula: people, places, products and their relationships

24 October 2018

Convenors: Anette Hagan and Robert Betteridge

This one-day seminar marks the completion of the National Library of Scotland incunabula cataloguing project. It aims to explore the relationships between 15th-century printed books and their places of production, authors, printers and aspects of material culture found in illumination, rubrication and bindings. It also hopes to bring together academics and librarians working with incunabula.

The call for papers has now closed but keep an eye open for the schedule announcement due soon.

LONDON

Study Session on Historic Marbled Paper at **RHS Lindley Library**, (80 Vincent Square, London)

Thursday 12 October 2-4.30 pm

£20 RHS member / £25 non-RHS member

Marbled paper is a type of decorated paper made by floating coloured paint or ink on a liquid surface and creating patterns which are then carefully transferred to paper or other absorbent materials. Marbled paper can be found in many historical books as endpapers or on front and back covers.

In this study session, Victoria Hall will explore the history and development of paper marbling highlighting the different techniques, patterns and materials that can be found in

historic books from the mid-18th century to the present day. Victoria studied Art & Architecture at University and has been creating marbled papers from her studio in Norfolk for 30 years. With experience in creating both facsimiles of historic marbled papers and new papers for fine books, Victoria has run many courses and workshops on paper marbling.

There will also be an opportunity to see at first hand historic marbled papers from the RHS Lindley Collections (rhs.org.uk/education-learning/libraries-at-rhs/collections) including the Highgrove Florilegium.

Refreshments will be provided during the break.

To book: please call 020 3176 5830 and quote reference number: 14934 (Lines open: Mon-Fri, 9am–5pm)

LONDON

New exhibition in the **Natural History Museum's** Images of Nature gallery – Expeditions and Endeavours.



Courtesy of the Trustees of the NHM, London

The first rotation of the Museum's new Expeditions and Endeavours exhibition which focuses on James Cook's Endeavour voyage, opened on 12 July – the date the voyage returned in 1771. The new theme in the gallery will take visitors on an illustrated journey through all of the world's continents, bringing together a glorious selection of original drawings that were created as a result of some of the greatest voyages and personal expeditions of natural history discovery. On display will be a rich cross-section of artworks from the Library and Archives collections by some of the finest natural history artists of all time, capturing new species and demonstrating how their visual contributions have significantly contributed to our understanding of the natural world.

Expeditions and Endeavour will run until October 2019 and have four rotations. Each rotation will feature a highlights case. nhm.ac.uk/events/expeditions-and-endeavours.html

Expeditions and Endeavours book by Andrea Hart and Paul Martyn Cooper (July 2018)

Since the eighteenth century, scientists and artists together have embarked on a succession of voyages and expeditions to document the natural world. With an introductory essay, the book presents a stunning selection of some of the images that were created as a result of these great voyages of natural history discovery. It brings together a rich cross-section of artworks held in the Museum's collections by some of the finest natural history artists of all time.

Featuring over 100 artworks which illuminate some of the most significant voyages and individual expeditions of natural history discovery undertaken over the past 300 years.

Expeditions and Endeavour is available from the Museum Shop and online at nhmshop.co.uk/expeditions-and-endeavours-images-of-nature.html priced £12.99.

SLOUGH

Kedermister Library, a 17th century parish library still housed in its original setting, is open for Sunday open afternoons on 5 August and 2 September 2018 between 2.30 and 5pm. Visits on other days/times are available by prior arrangement with the Hon. Librarian, Katie Flanagan.

The library is on the outskirts of Slough, with easy access from the M25 and M4, as well as the London Paddington/Reading railway line. Full details available here: langleymarish.com/stmary/kedermister-library/

MEMBERSHIP

In this Bulletin we welcome new members working at [Chatsworth](#), [The King's Fund](#), the [Royal Society of Medicine](#), the [National Trust](#), the [National Trust for Scotland](#), [St John's College Cambridge](#), the [British Library Qatar Foundation Partnership](#), the [University of Wales Trinity Saint David \(London\)](#), the [Répertoire International des Sources Musicales](#) at Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt and [The Wiener Library for the Study of The Holocaust & Genocide](#), London.

Members who wish to promote exhibitions, events, conferences, or training, or who wish to contribute articles to future Bulletins should contact members of the Committee or email info@HistoricLibrariesForum.com