

HISTORIC LIBRARIES FORUM

BULLETIN NO. 43

JANUARY 2019

Welcome to the first HLF newsletter of 2019. Forum activities this year have already started in earnest, with our first committee meeting kindly hosted by King's College London earlier this month. At it, we discussed plans for events in 2019, including cataloguing, cleaning and conservation. Unfortunately, at this meeting we also had to bid farewell to Gary Butler, our Independent Libraries Association representative. This means that there is now a vacancy on the committee for anyone within the ILA – please get in touch with me (Jill.Dye@imeche.org) if you fit that description, and would like to know further details.

You may also notice in the coming weeks that we are renewing our efforts to recruit new members. This is in response to slightly lower membership numbers following a purge of defunct email addresses. Membership of the Forum is free, and means that you hear about all of our events in advance of their being advertised to the wider public. Please do ensure that we have your up-to-date email address, and remind any new colleagues to register with their new details. More information is on our website: <https://historiclibrariesforum.com/contact/>

We will shortly be relaunching our Mentorship Scheme, thanks to the efforts of our Mentorship Scheme Coordinator, Emma Laws. Details of the revitalised scheme will be on our website shortly, but please do feel free to contact us should you wish to become a mentor, or feel like you would benefit from having a mentor. All our contact details are available on the website: <https://historiclibrariesforum.com/about/committee/>

This bulletin has much in the way of news and forthcoming events, but its main feature is the write-up of our annual conference, which took place on 18th November 2018 at Christ Church, Oxford. Many thanks to our organisers, to all our speakers and to everyone who attended. It has been wonderful to reflect on the many successes of the event as we begin our preparations for the 2019 annual meeting, which be held in central London in November (further details in forthcoming newsletters).

As ever, we would urge members contact the Forum if they become aware of any threats to historic libraries or collections (closures, sales of assets, reduction of services). Please also get in touch if you would like to share anything which might be of interest to the Forum membership, or if you simply need advice. Contact details are available on our website: <https://historiclibrariesforum.com/contact/>

Jill Dye
Chair

NEWS

BODLEIAN LIBRARY

An [Acceptance in Lieu Scheme](#) has been used to acquire for the nation the archive of former Poet Laureate Robert Seymour Bridges, to be held at the Bodleian Libraries. It includes poetic drafts, papers relating to the poet's wartime anthology *The Spirit of Man*, manuscripts and corrected proofs for his work *Testament of Beauty*, and letters and manuscripts from authors such as T. E. Lawrence and Rudyard Kipling.

BODLEIAN LAW LIBRARY

The library has undergone renovation work. Although the library footprint is smaller, it still offers over 300 desks, two IT rooms and over twenty private study spaces. The arrangement of collection space is now more logical with almost its entirety available on accessible shelving. There is also a Library Seminar Room, wheelchair access to all levels and an open and friendly entrance area.

BRUNEL UNIVERSITY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARY, LONDON

The Special Collections Library has embarked on a project to digitise their railway pictures and posters with the aim of making them more accessible. A student volunteer has created metadata for the collection and has taken images which have been added to the catalogue.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND

An online copy of the first edition of *Encyclopædia Britannica* has been published by the library on 10 December 2018 to mark the 250th anniversary of first pages of *Britannica* being published in Edinburgh. You can view the encyclopaedia online [here](#).

SHAKESPEARE BIRTHPLACE TRUST

The internationally recognised museum, library and archive collections held by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon are to become even more accessible to the public.

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust has taken the decision to invest in their public service and the opening hours of their Reading Room are to be extended by an extra day. From 5 March 2019, we will be open Tuesday to Friday, from 10 am to 4.30 pm, and on Saturdays, from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm. Access to the Reading Room is free to all.

The Trust holds the world's largest Shakespeare-related collection open to the public. It also has an extensive local history archive of Stratford-upon-Avon and south Warwickshire that includes records dating back to the 12th century, and manages the Royal Shakespeare Company's library and archive.

UNIVERSITY OF READING SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Applications are invited for the John and Griselda Lewis Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Reading. The Fellowship is available from March 2019, or a mutually agreed date and for a period of up to 12 months (we estimate this would equate to 2-3 months full time equivalent) and will attract a stipend of £5,000. Further details available [here](#).

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER, CENTRE FOR ENGLISH LOCAL HISTORY

[English landscape history](#) can be said to have originated at Leicester. Pioneered by W. G. Hoskins - who was able to establish both the discipline's academic credentials and popularise the subject at the same time - landscape history remains a cornerstone of what has become known worldwide as the 'Leicester approach' to local history.

Their latest venture is a partnership with Google. Using Google's technical wizardry and global reach, they are looking to take English landscape history to new audiences, delivered in new and innovative ways. The University of Leicester is proud to be the first UK institution of its kind to work with Google on a new app called [Field Trip](#). Field Trip works by presenting information, via their mobile devices, to users of the app based on their location.

WARBURG INSTITUTE LIBRARY

A book from Sir Isaac Newton's library has been discovered at the Warburg Institute. The Institute's library is home to hundreds of thousands of books dating from as early as the 15th century, but only recently has it been discovered that the book [Lusus serius: or, Serious pastime : a philosophicall discourse concerning the superiority of creatures under man](#) written by Michael Maier (1568–1622), alchemist and physician in the service of Rudolf II (1552–1612) has such links. An investigation of the bookplate to trace previous owners and other identifiers such as dog eared pages were used to identify the book's provenance.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The John W. Kluge Center and the Philip Lee Phillips Map Society at the Library of Congress invite qualified scholars to apply for a [grant](#) to conduct research for two months at the Kluge Center using the Geography and Map Division's collections and resources.

The Philip Lee Phillips Society Fellowship will award \$11,500 to selected scholars with the possibility of an additional \$2,000 as an honorarium for a later lecture and publication.

The Geography and Map Division has custody of collections numbering over 5 million maps, 100,000 atlases, 8,000 reference works, over 5,000 globes and globe gores, 3,000 raised relief models and several terabytes of born digital geospatial data.

The Philip Lee Phillips Map Society Fellow applications are due by 15 February, 2019.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2019

ABERYSTWYTH

Exhibition on the works of Humphrey Llwyd, writer and cartographer runs from 19 January – 29 June 2019.

CAMBRIDGE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

Dr Scot McKendrick (Head of Western Heritage Collections, British Library), 'Collecting Greek Manuscripts in Eighteenth-Century England: the origins, scope and legacy of the collections of Richard Mead and Anthony Askew', Thursday 7th February 2019.

GLADSTONE'S LIBRARY

Learn Latin at Gladstone's Library. The popular Latin in a Week course will be back in June 2019 aiming to take complete beginners to the point where they can read short extracts of poetry and prose. Information and booking now [available](#).

BRITISH LIBRARY

Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms: Art, Word, War; [exhibition](#) closes 19 February 2019.

INDEPENDENT LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION

The ILA annual conference will take place at the Devon and Exeter Institution, Friday 7th - Sunday 9th June 2019. Keynote speaker will be Naomi Korn, one of the UK's leading authorities on copyright, licensing and data protection. The Call for Papers is now open.

2019 is the Independent Library Association's thirtieth birthday! In this celebratory year the annual conference theme is that of adaptation: 'the action or process of altering, amending, or modifying something (especially something that has been created for a particular purpose) so that it is suitable for a new use'. Any library is an adaptable space: we've embraced technology, changing reader demographics, the loss of original buildings, the addition of new buildings, ever-shifting collections, and much more. What is so intriguing about libraries is that continuity is as important as adaptation. All libraries treasure their original buildings and oldest books; their longevity is their USP. How do libraries change while also remaining the same? How do libraries emphasise the new while retaining the old?

The ILA annual conference brings together those working in and around the independent library sector, fostering networking between all those who work in or around libraries, archives, and special collections. Papers from library founders, readers, members, subscribers, librarians,

archivists, interns, volunteers, trustees, benefactors, partner institutions and the general public will all be considered.

Papers must be 20 minutes long and can be on any of the following areas (other suggestions are also welcome):

- Projects that successfully changed any aspect of a library and its community
- Recruiting adaptation: impact of staff, trustees, and board members
- New ways of retaining a library's ethos
- Blending the old and the new
- The impact of digital technology
- Buildings and spaces: new builds and renovations
- Library communities then and now
- Exhibiting collection treasures in new ways
- Opening up library spaces with clever security

We emphasise that papers do not need to be scholarly. The Association is committed to hearing a diversity of perspectives. Please send queries and submissions of 250 words to Anne Howard and Louisa Yates at independentlibraries@gmail.com by 5 pm on Friday 22nd February 2019.

INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH

[Visual Sources for Historians](#): An introduction to the use of art, photography, film and other visual sources by historians (post-1500). Through lectures, discussion and visits the course will explore films, paintings, photographs, architecture and design as historical sources, as well as provide an introduction to particular items both in situ and held in archives and libraries. 26 February – 26 March 2019.

HISTORIC LIBRARIES FORUM ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2018

“‘Any other duties required’: skills for non-traditional library responsibilities’ was the theme of the November 2018 Historic Libraries Forum Annual Conference. This year the conference was held at Christ Church, Oxford. Six papers were presented:

Ann Sylph, Zoological of London Library (ZSL) - ‘Art works to zoo year books and aardvarks to zebras – cross collection care at ZSL Library and Archive’

Louisa Yates, Gladstone’s Library - ‘Big Bids and Tiny Teams: how an independent library is managing a wonderful windfall’

Freda Matassa, Matassa Toffolo – ‘Valuing your collection: results of a survey and what happened next’

Judith Curthoys, Christ Church Oxford Archivist – ‘DPA: Despair, Panic, Anxiety? How to deal with the new Data Protection Regulations without losing your head.’

Dorota Antoniak, University of Oxford Disability Advisory Service – ‘Inclusion and Disability – whose responsibility is it?’

Sian Prosser and Laura Dimmock, APLM Libraries –‘Continuing to develop professionally as a solo librarian

And the day concluded with a tour of the beautiful [Christ Church Library](#) and a chance to see the exhibition but together by **Steven Archer**, which highlighted some of the College’s treasures – including Queen Elizabeth I’s own cloth-bound bible and some original drawings by Lewis Carroll.

The first paper was presented by **Ann Sylph** from the [ZSL](#): ‘Art works to zoo year books and aardvarks to zebras – cross collection care at ZSL Library and Archive.’ This was a wonderful introduction to a day focused on the plethora of responsibilities that can be visited on librarians. The conference was told of the sheer enormity of the ZSL collection for which she is responsible; it contains not just reading materials but paintings and zoological specimens as well as a vast collection of ‘zoophemera’. Examples given included artefacts such as sculpture, historical photographs showing species now thought to be extinct and a collection of 35mm slides. The library and archive team at the ZSL have had to learn how to catalogue, preserve and promote a wide variety of material that goes beyond the bounds of what a library would usually be asked to hold.

Ann told the conference of a successful project to showcase the diverse nature of the ZSL holdings. As part of Hull’s City of Culture year in 2017 the ZSL loaned rare art works of marine life to be displayed in the city’s famous Deep Aquarium which had thousands of visitors during its installation. This was part of the ZSL’s strategic plan to increase engagement and outreach efforts by making their collection relevant.

The ZSL action plan formed the basis of the talk and was Ann’s recommendation for coming to grips with a varied collection and membership. It involved an extensive library review every four years to form the basis of effective library strategy going forward. This included surveying readers, library staff and other libraries on topics such as accessibility of material. The library implemented the changes suggested by the results, monitored impact, evaluated and developed upon this after a period of time and then repeated the process in order to deliver the best library experience for readers.

Ann closed the presentation with a list of tips for the conference:

- Promote your collection, drive engagement and make your collection relevant to what is happening in the world in that moment
- Implement a thorough disaster plan and have a disaster box to hand (containing essentials such as torch, plastic sheeting and blotting paper)
- Have a thriving volunteer community as this can not only increase the manpower behind the library but provide new skills and perspectives on the collection
- Be inventive and creative when tackling issues – don’t be afraid to think outside the box!
- Professional development is essential: keep reading, attending courses and attending conferences
- Seek advice and support when you need it

- Bigger Picture - Have a goal for what you want your institution to be that you can work towards
- Always maintain a work/life balance
- Don't be afraid of challenges
- Be strategic in what you prioritise and how you choose to tackle problems arising in your library and its collection.

Next the conference heard from **Louisa Yates** the Director of Collections from [Gladstone's Library](#). Louisa told the conference of the new digitisation project which is currently underway at Gladstone's Library.

The heart of Gladstone's Library is the Gladstone Foundation Collection. This is composed of the (approximately) 32,000 books that William Ewart Gladstone collected during his lifetime. What makes this collection unique and of such interest to scholars around the globe are some 11,000 books which contain Gladstone's own annotations. It has long been the Library's aim to make these incredible resources more widely available and not just to those with the resources and ability to be able to visit Gladstone's Library's physical location in North Wales.

Following a successful bid, on 2nd January 2018 Gladstone's Library was awarded \$400,000 by the Carnegie Trust for the digitisation of 15,000 letters and 5,734 books directly annotated by Gladstone. A free-to-access content management system is the planned location for the newly digitised assets so they may be stored and made accessible to scholars worldwide.

Such a large-scale project presented Louisa and her team with many challenges, from hiring new staff to coming to grips with brand new and ever-changing digitisation technology. For an independent library, the huge cost of digital capture equipment presented an issue, however the lack of comprehensive catalogue meant sending items away to be digitised presented too great a risk of documents returning muddled, or not returning at all! Using funding from the grant, an in-house digitisation suite has been established at Gladstone's Library in the Sea of Faith Room. Part of the promised delivery to fulfil the grant was first line transcription for each handwritten letter, which is the next stage of the project. The transcription of the huge number of letters could potentially be completed by volunteers or using online crowd-sourced transcription, which has been successfully implemented in other digitisation projects in the UK. A further potential source of transcription could come from students in America, following the contacting of the Library by a Professor interested in using the letters as a transcription exercise for their class.

Louisa reflected on the process from bid to submission to implementation and advised the conference of things that would have, in retrospect, been done differently and described the processes which she has found yielded the best results within her team:

- Great emphasis was given for the need of engagement with members of staff who would be delivering the promised outputs from the beginning of the application process
- Staging – breaking down tasks to their component elements and delegating individual tasks to specific team members. Breaking down the task makes it less overwhelming and allows the team to focus on one thing at a time rather than getting lost in the 'big picture'

- Increased knowledge of the technical elements of the project; equipment required for digitisation and digital storage
- Increasing the volunteer work force and ensuring that their starter projects give a sense of achievement and satisfaction. This will also increase their confidence in dealing with the material and mean that they can progress to more challenging tasks in the future

Louisa's main tip for the attendees (and anybody) attempting a project on this scale was that staging was key! She said "staging enables best practice with the only compromise being time." As digitisation is a topic at the forefront of modern librarianship it was fascinating to have such an insightful and in-depth look into the realities of what it takes, not just financially but practically, for an institution to get a project of this nature off the ground.

There was a break from the presentation of papers for Committee to conduct its AGM and the conference was treated to lunch in the stunning Christ Church dining hall.

After lunch it was another fascinating presentation from **Freda Matassa** who discussed how institutions can value their collections, drawing from her experience in the art world. This began as EU project to encourage lending and borrowing of art collections to link art across the continent. This brought the problem of valuing items to gain the correct insurance to the forefront of discussion as it became clear that professionals working in galleries or libraries loaning rare and valuable items actually had no guidelines or training in how to carry out such evaluations. With the cost of insuring collections for travel sometimes totalling 25% of an exhibition's budget, the valuation process and the associated insurance premiums were highlighted as key barriers to collection lending.

Freda was part of a team which carried out a survey in 2012 where 2 museums from every European country were asked about their attitude towards valuation and government indemnity. The findings were as follows:

- 81% said that premiums were a barrier to loaning items
- 38% cancelled loans because the cost was too high
- Little or no training was provided to those expected to carry out valuations of collections
- Most asked felt unable/unqualified to make these evaluations
- 65% were reluctant to accept government indemnity even though this can dramatically lower the cost of insurance
- 73% seldom question valuations presented to them

In conclusion, lack of methodologies and guidelines surrounding valuation has had a drastic and negative impact on the display and access to items of cultural value.

Financial value is not the only factor deciding the final value placed on an item. Cultural significance, the rarity of an item, and a duty of care to ensure collections paid for using public money are handled with due diligence must all be taken into account. Further issues with the valuation process were raised, for example the lack of comparisons available when valuing a unique item is necessary, and the difficulties encountered when attempting to value a public collection, as it will never be sold.

Freda closed the presentation by explaining that valuing a collection is not and cannot be an exact art as there are too many factors to take into consideration. However, she advised a measured approach to valuation following guidance from management and the consultation of experienced professionals when necessary. Collective decision making was encouraged, as well as the documentation of reasons contributing to the final value assigned to an item, which could be used as justification if required. This presentation certainly gave attendees much to consider in terms of what constitutes value, and helped de-mystify the process of valuation somewhat.

Judith Curthoys, the archivist from **Christ Church** gave a talk on the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Judith outlined the scope of the new measures, how they can affect libraries and other such institutions and what can be done to make sure we are all in compliance.

The Data Protection Act 2018 is already in UK law and will not be affected by Brexit. It is a continuation and evolution of the Data Protection Act 1998. It was explained that the main difference between the two is a *rethink* of what is meant by 'personal data' and that there is now a greater emphasis on the rights of data subjects over information held about them.

Things to remember when dealing with the personal data of your users:

- 'Personal Data' was defined as any information regarding a living person through which they can be directly or indirectly identified.
- 'Sensitive Data' is defined as a special category of data specifying sexuality, trade union membership, health etc.
- Data must be specific and collated for a specific purpose
- Justification must be provided for the collection and storage of personal data: what, why and for how long is being stored. Make sure that a record is kept of this decision so if challenged evidence can be provided. Legitimate interest is the most appropriate justification for data the subject would expect you to keep (*e.g.*, their name) and it is used and held in a manner that a data subject would expect
- Consent cannot be assumed. It must be given clearly and freely. If dealing with children under the ages of 13 the consent must be sought from either their parent or guardian
- Make sure information is kept securely
- When drafting your privacy notices do not be afraid to borrow from similar institutions. Under law these must be in accessible format, clear and easy language
- Archiving. You may still keep data for historical research purposes but it is always advised that this be anonymised – and again always document the reasons why you feel it is justifiable to keep the data

Judith was in charge of making sure that Christ Church was in compliance with the new regulations and offered some tips to the conference when attempting a data clean up:

- Appoint a specific member of staff to manage data
- Carry out a data audit

- Undertake 'Data Protection Impact Access and Legitimate Interest Assessments'
- Take the opportunity to have a deep data clean-up
- Set up systems and standards to ensure compliance

GDPR has been much talked about across all professions and this paper decreased ambiguity about what was expected from service providers and calmed fears surrounding the new regulations.

Dorota Antoniak from **Oxford University** talked to the conference about how we can make sure that our institutions are accessible to all. Disability is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to perform normal daily activities. The onus is placed on all public institutions to provide 'reasonable adjustments' so that their services can be used by all.

Dorota talked of the importance of Universal Design, which is the best approach to design, as its focus is on providing a comparable experience to all users. Its fundamental principle is about offering choice and giving control in how a space is used and experienced. Ergonomic furniture can be used by many people of differing needs and minimises the need for future adjustments as it can be used by all already. An able-bodied reader can use an ergonomic chair just as well as somebody with a back problem.

Some adjustments to space can be costly investments but there are steps that can be easily taken to ensure that your service is inclusive of everyone. Creating a detailed map of your institution and making it freely available online is an example of this. Putting it online will help people in planning their visit and also enable them to alert you to any reasonable adjustments that can be made for them in advance. If someone who is physically disabled is using your establishment then they will be able to tell you in advance if they will need help in collecting certain material or even request that the material they wish to use be ready for them when they arrive. A map will not only assist people with physical impairments but also those who suffer from anxiety as having an understanding of a space and being able to plan out their time has been proven to relieve symptoms. Advertising that personal induction can be offered will also ease symptoms stress and anxiety as well as being helpful for those with mobility issues, highlighting easy routes in and out of the building.

The underlying message of the talk was how can the service offered change to fit those who use it, rather than placing the responsibility on those who require adjustments.

To finish off the conference there was a joint presentation from **Sian Prosser** and **Laura Dimmock-Jones** who talked about 'Continuing to develop professionally as a solo librarian'. Sian and Laura highlighted the difficulties of being able to expand your professional knowledge when you are the single member of the team. They discussed the challenges that working alone in a historical library can present and the abundance of skills that you are expected to have, for example a thorough knowledge of how to clean solid silver candle sticks!

The big take away from this talk was:

- **Plan:** Carve out time for your professional development and treat it with the same importance as anything else in your work calendar
- **Make connections:** Find other professionals in your area and see what can be learnt from each other. Organise training days together and arrange visits each other's libraries where skills and knowledge can be passed on. A support base is a very useful tool when balancing a full work load and professional growth
- **Do not disregard social media as a freely available resource:** Much can be learnt about book repair, conservation of older artefacts and materials from unlikely resources. YouTube is full of tutorials on nearly every topic (SEADOM was a channel recommended for book repair tutorials) and Twitter/Facebook can be a wonderful tools in seeking advice
- Make sure to **invest in your 'informal team' (Volunteers and interns).** Building their skill set and confidence can only improve the running of the institution and will ensure that they take something away from their time with you
- **Think about the next person who will come in to do your job:** Make sure that you document any progress that you make and keep a record any useful materials and resources that you discover so that the next person who comes to the post has a wealth of information to draw on
- Finally, **Share:** If you come across something that is useful make sure to share it with your community so that other librarians, archivist and curators working as part of a small (or solo!) team can develop as well.

This presentation was the perfect note on which to end the day – a discussion of coming together to help improve individually and collectively as library professionals.

Our thanks to the Committee for organising a stimulating and inspiring programme for the conference to enjoy and a huge thank you to Christ Church team for providing such a wonderful venue for our discussions.

By Elspeth-Mhari Brodie-Browne and Lauren Ward, Bodleian Social Science Library

MEMBERSHIP

In this Bulletin we welcome new members working at [Canterbury Cathedral](#); [Durham Cathedral](#); [Lambeth Palace](#); the [House of Lords](#); the [British Museum](#); the [British Library](#); the [Science Museum](#); the [Robert Gordon University](#); the [University of Bristol](#); [Corpus Christi College](#), the University of Cambridge; the [University of Huddersfield Archives](#) at Heritage Quay; the [University of Hull](#); the [Bodleian Law Library](#), [Hertford College](#), [University College](#), [St Anne's College](#), [St Edmund Hall](#), the [Oxford Union Society](#), the University of Oxford; the [Taylor Library at Shrewsbury School](#); the [Caledonian Club](#); the [Royal Automobile Club](#); and the [Archives of Ontario](#) at Toronto

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.