

HISTORIC LIBRARIES FORUM

BULLETIN NO. 45

JULY 2019

This quarter has been a busy one for the Historic Libraries Forum, which this bulletin reflects. We have not one but TWO write-ups of HLF-run events: a collections care workshop which took place in Cambridge and our first ever online session, the NBK/Copac update. Thank you to Liam Sims for arranging the Cambridge workshop, to Bethan Ruddock for taking us through the changes to Copac, and to all those who attended. Participants' questions really added to the NBK/Copac session, making it tremendously useful to all members, which is reflected in the write-up below.

In committee business, we will sadly be saying farewell to Emma Milnes after our July meeting. Thank you to Emma for all her hard work, especially on last year's conference and our social media accounts. Jessica Hudson has agreed to take on the Social Media Officer role and is now in control of both our Facebook page and Twitter account (remember that you can follow us and tag us in anything you would like us to share – details are at the end of the newsletter). We are also delighted to be welcoming Darren Bevin to our July meeting as our new representative for the Independent Libraries Association.

Our conference planning continues, and we are currently in the process of finalising our speakers. All will be revealed in the Autumn bulletin, but in the meantime remember to save the date: Monday 18th November, Westminster Abbey. Other events are also in progress, with confirmed dates for an incunables workshop in Oxford and a practical preservation session in Norwich. We are trialling online booking for the Norwich event (link available below) by popular demand – let us know what you think! We are on the cusp of confirming the date for another ever-popular Rare Books Cataloguing course, which will take place in central London in the autumn. Greek for Cataloguers (online) is still on the way, but slightly delayed by its leader (me) moving house and changing jobs. We hope to be able to offer it before the end of the year. Please do get in touch with us if you have any ideas for future events, whether you would like to host, to lead or even just to attend.

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

ARMAGH ROBINSON LIBRARY



Founded in 1771 by Archbishop Richard Robinson, Armagh Robinson Library is Northern Ireland's oldest public library. In 2018 the Library appointed its first non-ordained head, Dr Robert Whan, the previous Keepers being ordained members of the Church of Ireland and from 1924-2018 also serving as Dean of Armagh. The Library has just completed the first year of a three-year project (funded by the Pilgrim Trust and the Apollo Foundation) to audit the book catalogue, which involves checking each individual entry against the physical item, updating and correcting details where necessary. In June 2019 a temporary exhibition on 'Leisure and Pastimes' was launched and will run until the end of August 2019. A grant of £3,700 from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust has enabled conservation of the Papers of Lord John George Beresford, who was Archbishop of Armagh 1822–1862, while £4,000 from the Association of Independent Museums' Remedial Conservation Grant Scheme is funding conservation of several books with (non-recent) water damage. Recent acquisitions include a rare publication printed in Belfast in 1720, eight leases signed by Archbishop Beresford and a letter of 1787 written by our founder to the Bishop of Dromore. With regard to public engagement activities, in a project founded by the Royal Society, the Library delivered six Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) workshops to 214 local primary school pupils between April and June 2019. These utilised science and architectural books within the Library collection and involved pupils visiting the Library, No 5 Vicars' Hill (the former Diocesan Registry, where examples of the Library's non-book

collections are on display) and St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, before constructing a model of one of these buildings using K'Nex. During Dementia Action Week (20th-26th May) the Library organised an event, 'Letters and Reminiscence', for those with Dementia and their carers. Facilitated by poet and playwright Maria McManus, participants were able to view original letters by Jonathan Swift, Bram Stoker, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and others, as well as share personal memories of writing and receiving letters. To enable long-term sustainability, the Library is presently building a new Endowment, with the National Lottery Heritage Fund matching £1 for £1 donations up to £1 million raised by March 2022. Looking ahead, the Library will be hosting workshops by David Pearson on bookbinding and on provenance on Tuesday 1st-Wednesday 2nd October 2019.

CATHEDRAL ARCHIVES, LIBRARIES AND COLLECTIONS ASSOCIATION (CALCA)

The triennial conference including the CALCA AGM was hosted by Salisbury Cathedral, 12 – 14 June 2019. Sessions covered issues of interest across the three professional areas. We began with professional standards, looking at Spectrum the UK collection management standard, the archive standard ISAD(G) and DCRM for libraries. Salisbury Cathedral is in receipt of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to support cataloguing of the Cathedral's library collection of some 10,000 volumes, and as part of its public outreach aspect of the project, Thursday morning's session was a public session on provenance, held in the South Transept of the cathedral and attended by cathedral volunteers, members of the public and the conference delegates. Volunteers formed the subject for another session, both from the perspective of an organization managing and enabling volunteering, and from the perspective of individual volunteers, what makes the volunteering experience either positive or negative. This was followed by conservation surveys for traditional archive and library materials, and for "everything else". Friday was given over to considering integrating collections and interpreting history and included insights into developing the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries at Westminster Abbey, Open Treasure at Durham Cathedral, and the new Lambeth Palace library.

INDEPENDENT LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION

The Independent Libraries Association celebrated their 30th birthday at this year's annual general meeting which took place at the Devon and Exeter Institution between 7 and 9 June. In recent years, the AGM has been expanded into a three day conference with speakers from a variety of institutions. This year the theme was 'Adaption, Change, Reinvention: Continuity and Change in Independent Libraries' with a keynote speech by Naomi Korn on 'Copyright: balancing risk, ethics and compliance'. Other speakers included representatives from Gladstone's Library, The Leeds Library, the Morrab Library, Chawton House and the Devon and Exeter Institution itself. For more information, and to read the Annual Report for 2018-2019, go to: <https://www.independentlibraries.co.uk/annual-meeting>.

PROVENANCE RESEARCH IN BOOK HISTORY

David Pearson's book has recently been published in a new edition, by Oak Knoll Press and the Bodleian Libraries. The new edition includes expanded bibliography and more illustrations.

SUNCAT

You may be aware that SUNCAT, the serials union catalogue for research libraries in the UK, is retiring in the summer. SUNCAT will be accessible until the 31st July, 2019. Thereafter, users are encouraged to use the National Bibliographic Knowledgebase, which will contain records from many of the SUNCAT Contributing Libraries, much of the SUNCAT functionality, plus more besides. You can find out more here: <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/national-bibliographic-knowledgebase> and <https://libraryhub.jisc.ac.uk/discover>.

If you have any questions about the SUNCAT retirement, please contact us at the SUNCAT email address: suncat@ed.ac.uk. If you have any questions about the NBK, please contact Jisc: nbk.copac@jisc.ac.uk.

REPORTS FROM HLF EVENTS

NBK/COPAC UPDATE FOR HISTORIC LIBRARIES FORUM MEMBERS, 20 JUNE 2019

The National Bibliographic Knowledgebase (NBK) underpins the new Jisc Library Hub Discover service, which is scheduled to entirely replace COPAC and SUNCAT at the end of July 2019. On Monday 10th June, Bethan Ruddock from Jisc gave an online update on what the NBK project means for historic libraries. The webinar is now available to view in full [here](#). In this post, Jill Dye, (HLF chair) summarises some key points from the session.

COPAC and SUNCAT are vital tools within the UK library profession, brilliant for identifying specific titles in other repositories and, for some historic libraries, acting as back-up or stand-in for their own library catalogues. The announcement that these platforms were closing, therefore, caused worry to some HLF members, so we arranged for Bethan from Jisc to introduce the replacement service and answer some burning questions from those in historic libraries or with historic collections.

Bethan began by introducing some key terms. NBK is the "data lake" which underpins the [Library Hub Discover](#) service. It is this service which will replace COPAC and SUNCAT (among others), remaining free and open to everyone. While it is still in pilot and some of the search functions aren't yet working, the potential benefit of the update is already evident (faceted searching, greater coverage of online materials, searches by region or consortium).

The root of members' concerns is that data will not simply be migrated from COPAC/SUNCAT to NBK, for very valid reasons that Bethan outlined (permission must be sought, data needs to be current). This means that past contributors to those platforms who've not already been in contact with NBK should do so as soon as possible – data will not be moved across without that contact.

Bethan summarised some key points for existing and would-be contributors:

- Anyone can request to contribute to the NBK whether they contributed to COPAC or SUNCAT or not.
- If your collections are on COPAC and are static (i.e. not added to) you can request that the existing COPAC data be added to NBK (they need your permission to do this).
- There is no time limit for sending data to NBK, but COPAC/SUNCAT will no longer be available after 31st July.
- You don't need perfect data to contribute. The minimum requirements are that the data is processable (not a PDF, but could be a spreadsheet) and that the title field is not blank.
- You don't have to contribute everything. You can just add your special collections if you decide that's most important.

Bethan also explored some of the new features that data in the NBK would be able to provide. This includes, for example, some useful tools on how to assess the strength of individual collections. She also briefly demonstrated Library Hub Cataloguing, where MARC records can be shared. Jisc is also working on a simple online cataloguing tool with which volunteers could put data straight into NBK. This would be excellent for the many members struggling to justify the cost of a library management system (but we're warned that it's not a priority for this phase, so won't appear until Q3 at the earliest).

To summarise, those worried about losing COPAC and SUNCAT for searching across multiple collections need not worry. However, data for some collections might not move across in time for the closure of COPAC/SUNCAT, so the coverage may be a little different for a while.

Those using COPAC as a library catalogue (Bethan's example was the Cathedral Libraries project) need to be aware that data will not simply be transferred from one platform to another without permission, or without making sure that the data is up to date. Bethan demonstrated this very clearly using an example from York Minster library. In these situations, the advice would be to get in touch as soon as possible, because the NBK team are very keen to find a solution, and can't do that without contact.

Bethan ended the session by reminding us that anyone with questions about the project, or about contributing data can email nbk.copac@jisc.ac.uk. Thank you to all those who attended, and thank you to Bethan for leading the event.

[View a recording of the session.](#)

COLLECTIONS CARE FOR HISTORIC LIBRARIES, FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM, CAMBRIDGE

21 JUNE 2019

Over morning coffee, a diverse group of participants assembled, including Librarians, Reading Room Assistants and Photographers involved in digitisation projects. The workshop was led by Edward Cheese (Conservator of Manuscripts and Printed Books, Assistant Keeper) and Monika Stokowiec (Assistant Conservator) at The Fitzwilliam Museum. It demonstrated the wide range of professionals working with special collections who seek a deeper understanding of the preservation of library and archival materials. In my role as Events and Outreach Co-ordinator at a small but busy independent library in Manchester, I understand very well how important it is for every member of staff in contact with collections to understand the vulnerabilities, the risks and the methods of protecting our precious artefacts.

We were led to our classroom, in this case the Founder's Library, a gorgeous 19th century library and an ideal space for our purposes. Our instructors started right at the beginning of Western book making. The group was shown the line of progression from the earliest techniques and materials all the way to our modern-day paperbacks. The level of detail was impressive; even parchment, leather and paper making techniques were described. We learned the importance of knowing the inherent qualities and tendencies of materials, as well as the processes they undergo, in order to predict how they will react under adverse conditions.

A holistic and historical approach showed us how the development of printing, the proliferation of book production and the changing storage implications over the centuries affected, in turn, the ways that books were designed, crafted and manufactured. For instance, clasps were necessary on 12th century books to limit any disfigurement of the parchment leaves within. The small number of books produced at this time also meant they could be stored flat. By the 17th century, with leaves made of paper and the skyrocketing demand for books, clasps had lost their function and books were stored upright to make better use of space.

With a crash course in the history of book production under our belts, we moved on to the various forms of chemical and physical degradation and how they come about. This led to a discussion about working with conservators to prioritise and execute work on collections in ways that are efficient, economical and sensitive to the objects.

After lunch we returned to our work. The afternoon covered handling, cleaning, housing, exhibiting and emergency planning. What a lot to cover in short space of time! But the level

of planning and preparation that went into the workshop made this achievable. We even had time to try building our own cleaning stations made of paper, designed to trap dust and debris.

After the workshop we were provided with extremely helpful supplementary guides on cleaning books, building display cradles and planning for emergencies, which we could keep for future reference. Such detailed theoretical explanation and very practical demonstrations, guides and tools would help any person who wishes to enhance their own knowledge and elevate conservation practices at their place of work. In fact, I would highly recommend this workshop for *any* member of staff working in an organisation with collections at its heart. Speaking as someone with an equal enthusiasm for conservation and engagement, it seems clear that shared understanding incentivises cooperation across disciplines and lays a strong foundation for successful collections care. In any case, what booklover wouldn't be thrilled to know more about such a fascinating subject?

Aoife Larkin

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BA Art History, MA Contemporary Curating

Currently studying MA Preventive Conservation

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

CILIP RARE BOOKS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS GROUP ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama 4-6 September 2019

Special collections materials differ from other types of library collections in that their physical carriers are often as important as (or more important than) the text or images they carry. The 2019 RBSCG Annual Study Conference, entitled *Let's Get Physical: Materiality in Special Collections*, will examine the ways that we describe, display, preserve, and promote the physical attributes of our collections, from medieval manuscripts to contemporary artists' books.

Join us in Cardiff for lectures, practical sessions, printing activities and visits around the city to visit different collections, plus plenty of time for networking with your colleagues.

The programme and booking information can be found here:

<https://www.cilip.org.uk/event/RBSCConf19>

Bursaries for new professionals and students are also available this year, including one reserved for an applicant from a BAME background. The deadline for applying for these is 5 July and all the information can be found at the link above.

Please note – accommodation is limited for this conference but day places are not so you will be able to book accommodation separately if the accommodation places sell out.

For further details or questions, please contact Lucy Evans: lucy.grace.evans@gmail.com.

HISTORIC LIBRARIES FORUM WORKSHOPS

- ❖ **23 September 2019, 10.30am (starting with coffee) to 4.15pm, cost £35. Conservation workshop, led by Caroline Bendix at Norwich Cathedral Library.**

A day on protective enclosures and supports, to include making a phase-box, a Melinex wrapper and a bookshoe, along with discussion on how to select the right protective enclosure and what to look for in the object to help you make that choice. Please bring 2-3 octavo examples for which you will make things (we can supply details of the type of damage the books should have).

Coffee and tea will be provided, but please be prepared to provide your own lunch (the library is directly opposite the Cathedral Refectory, and there are plenty of other opportunities for lunch within a short walk).

The Cathedral is only 10 minutes' walk from Norwich railway station; car parking is limited so must be booked in advance.

Numbers for the workshop are strictly limited to 16, so book soon to secure your place. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/historic-libraries-forum-conservation-workshop-with-caroline-bendix-tickets-64357633414>

- ❖ **30 September 2019 , Incunables workshop, led by Sarah Cusk and Will Hale, in Oxford**

Save the date and watch the website for more information.

KEDERMISTER PARISH LIBRARY

Kedermister Library, a seventeenth century parish library still housed in its original setting, continues its open afternoons in 2019 on 4 August and 1 September, between 2.30 and 5.00 pm. 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: <http://langleymarish.com/stmary/kedermister-library/>

NORWICH CATHEDRAL

Tuesday 16 July, 7pm, in the Weston Room, Norwich Cathedral Hostry.

Professor Nigel Morgan (University of Cambridge)

The liturgical manuscripts of Norwich Cathedral Priory and Diocese c. 1200-1500

The last in the series of Losinga Lectures, to mark the 900th anniversary of the death of the Cathedral's founder, Bishop Herbert de Losinga.

Contact NCCL Admin Team, 01603 218443, NCCL@cathedral.org.uk to book your FREE place.

MEMBERSHIP

In this Bulletin we welcome new members working at [Longleat](#), [Northumberland Estates](#), [The British Museum](#), [The British Library](#), and [The Portico Library](#) in Manchester.

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.



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