

HISTORIC LIBRARIES FORUM

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Historic Libraries Forum Summer workshops, 24th-25th May 2006 Cataloguing antiquarian, special and early printed collections

Speakers at this year's HLF summer workshops faced the unenviable task of delivering an entire year of lectures in both Historical Bibliography and Rare Book Cataloguing in a single day. Two parallel courses were run, the first at the National Library of Scotland, in collaboration with Rare Books in Scotland, the second at UCL, in collaboration with the Rare Books Group. The workshops were aimed specifically at those with little or no experience of rare and early printed material, and focused on both the history of book production and the practicalities of describing and cataloguing antiquarian books.

The UCL workshop involved the collaboration of rare book librarians from four major institutions: Karen Attar from Senate House Library, Julianne Simpson from the Wellcome Library, Susan Stead from UCL Library and Will Hale from Cambridge University Library. The day was divided into two sessions, one dealing with historical bibliography and the description of how the practice of book production is reflected in the characteristics of individual books, the other with the practicalities of how these features are identified and described in a catalogue record. Throughout it was apparent how beneficial attendees found the use of illustrations, concrete examples, physical books and a variety of other props, including a paper mould. Many of the concepts and features described were abstract and complex and the use of physical examples was key to the success of the day. Describing the practice and procedure of cancellation or imposition is one thing, physically to see the cancellans pasted to the stub of the cancellandum, or the unsewn book in sheets is quite another.

The use of examples was also crucial to the cataloguing training. Attendees were given a pack of facsimile titlepages, each selected to illustrate some feature of antiquarian cataloguing technique or practice. Later they were given a selection of books, and asked to comment on the features they identified and how these might appear in a catalogue record. The MARC fields for rare book cataloguing were described and illustrated and the importance of copy specific details, primarily provenance and binding descriptions, was heavily stressed. The detailed bibliography of reference sources provided as part of the cataloguing training was particularly well received by attendees.

The feedback forms from the London workshop were resolutely positive, with particular praise for the quality of the speakers, the level at which the training was pitched and the balance of the two aspects of the course. Both workshops were heavily oversubscribed, a telling indictment of the woeful state of current provision of both historical bibliography and cataloguing training, and it is hoped that the London

workshop will be repeated several times over the coming year to allow all those interested to attend. The success of the day was down entirely to the hard work and high calibre of the speakers, and the Forum expresses its sincere thanks to Karen, Julianne, Susan and Will. Recognition and thanks should also be given to their respective institutions for allowing them the time and resources necessary to make the workshop possible.

Ed Potten

National Trust

On Wednesday, 24th May, a group of librarians from a variety of academic and special library backgrounds met up at the National Library of Scotland for a day's workshop on cataloguing rare books. This proved to be a well-structured and very practical day with plenty of hands-on opportunities.

The group was divided into two and studied either cataloguing or bibliographical formats, swapping round after lunch so that we all covered both topics. The small group to which I was assigned began by comparing cataloguing records against the books they were describing. Eoin Shalloo and Robert Betteridge had selected books designed to demonstrate how the NLS dealt with particular features such as false imprints, large paper issue, incomplete volumes, Latin contractions and so on. After coffee, we looked at fine bindings and were told how we might describe these. Finally, we were each given a book to look at and asked to consider what we might pay particular attention to while cataloguing them. Mine, a seventeenth century book on rhetoric, had its leaves (as Eric Morecambe might have said) 'all there but not necessarily in the right order'. One gathering was duplicated and others bound incorrectly. This session also included theoretical help as we were shown a range of bibliographical tools that might assist us in our work.

In the afternoon Joseph Marshall and James Mitchell explained the complexities of bibliographical formats in an extremely clear way, making sense of the more impenetrable parts of Gaskell. In addition, James described the process of papermaking, illustrating this with prints of the stages involved. The books selected for us to look at included a book printed but never bound, so that the printing process was easier for us to see, while examples of cancels where a replacement leaf included further typographical errors further demonstrated the difficulties of printing at that period.

On the whole this workshop mostly consolidated my existing knowledge, but that in itself is comforting, and there were a number of areas that I was pleased to have explained in more detail. A follow-up session at a slightly advanced level would be helpful at some stage. I found the day well worth attending and would recommend it to colleagues should it ever be re-run. Thanks to all those involved in planning and delivering the workshop for us.

Felicity Stimpson

National Trust

Thanks, on behalf of the Forum, to Eoin Shalloo, Brain Hillyard, Robert Betteridge, Joseph Marshall, James Mitchell and the staff at the National Library of Scotland for their assistance in arranging and hosting the workshop. The Forum has donated the proceeds from the event on the 25th May to the NLS to be used for conservation.

The library at St. Walburga's Church, Zutphen

Some readers may remember that I wrote in the Bulletin two years ago about a LIBER Architecture Group conference in Venice and the magnificent historic libraries to be seen there. This year the conference venue was Utrecht University Library in the Netherlands. Although the emphasis was on 'Changing needs, changing libraries', one of the excursions included a visit to the chained library at St. Walburga's Church, Zutphen, which has not changed much in four and a half centuries. The 'Librije' is a collection of some 750 books and 7 manuscripts acquired by St. Walburga's clergy during the Middle Ages. It is housed in a specially designed vaulted reading room, which curves round one side of the church's apse. Sturdy benches with carved ends take up most of the floor space and generous gothic windows provide plenty of natural light for reading.



Although based on monastic precedents, this room, built in the 1560s, was designed as a public library where anyone could sit and read the books chained to the sloping desks. Surviving records indicate that opening the library was a move to encourage orthodox learning in the face of Protestant 'heresy'. The core of the collection consists of 85 incunabula, from presses as far away as Venice and Basel, as well as several centres of printing in Germany and France. Five hundred books date from the sixteenth century and the rest from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. They came from donations and bequests of incumbent clergy and other learned men of Zutphen, from the dissolved monasteries of the region and the chapter school. The elders who planned the building would be disappointed to know that books on Reformation theology were eventually accepted.

Entering the Librije one is struck by its good state of repair: not just the brightly painted corbels, representations of the saints on the pillars and the coats of arms of the founders in stained glass, but the bindings of the volumes on display. One is transported back four hundred and fifty years to the time when the leather covers and clasps were new. Their fine preservation must be partly due to the method of chaining directly to a rail above the sloping desks rather than on shelves below. It also reflects a recent conservation programme carried out in co-operation with the Royal Library at the Hague. The original desks and benches have been preserved too, and a terracotta tiled floor with clear prints of the paws of some large beast, popularly

said to have been made by the devil when he tempted a monk to eat chicken in the library. Perhaps it was not a bad idea to propagate a myth encouraging readers to behave themselves?

The library belongs to the top 100 cultural sites in the Netherlands and is unique in North West Europe: so many of the books have been preserved in their original condition and have been in this specially designed setting since first acquired. If visiting the Netherlands it is, as Baedeker would say, worth a detour.

www.walburgiskerk.nl

Alison Wilson

New Hall, Cambridge

GLAM: A new interest group for literary archives and manuscripts

GLAM (the Group for Literary Archives and Manuscripts) is a new organisation for anyone with an interest in the collecting, preservation, use and promotion of literary archives and manuscripts in Britain and Ireland. Founded in 2005, GLAM currently has over forty members. The group wishes to develop a broad and inclusive membership, and welcomes the participation of anyone working with – or interested in – literary archives and manuscripts. Membership is open to all and is free.

GLAM's aims include:

- Promoting awareness and raising the profile of literary collections and encouraging a collective approach to their care.
- Providing a support network for those with a stake in the field of literary archives and manuscripts, and encouraging cross-domain working between rare book librarians, museum curators and others working with literary collections.
- Supporting research and learning through partnerships with a range of audiences.
- Engaging in dialogue with major institutions, agencies and organisations with regard to the stewardship of literary archives and manuscripts.

GLAM's first initiative is to undertake a ground-breaking survey of collecting policy and practice in relation to literary archives and manuscripts. The fourth general meeting of the group is due to take place in September 2006.

GLAM has been hailed as an 'extremely welcome and timely initiative' (Judith Priestman, Curator of Literary MSS at the Bodleian Library) that 'highlights a gap in the profession which needs to be filled' (Nia Daniel, Archivist at the National Library of Wales).

GLAM is an independent organisation which is currently chaired by Chris Sheppard, Head of Special Collections at Leeds University Library. Further information can be found on GLAM's website, which is currently under development at <http://archives.li.man.ac.uk/glam>. To join the group, please contact the Secretary, Fran Baker: Fran.Baker@manchester.ac.uk.

Managing books in archive collections

Collections of books that form part of archive collections present a number of complex issues and difficulties to librarians and archivists, particularly in terms of appropriate storage and cataloguing. Reading University Library Special Collections hold a number of archives that include printed books. These include archives relating to the Isotype Institute, with books produced by the Institute and books from the Institute library, and the archives of the author and wood-engraver, Robert Gibbings, which include books from his personal library which vary from rare titles to more commonplace books. At Reading, practice ranges from storing and recording such books within Special Collections to absorbing them into the general open access library collection, depending on the nature and rarity of the books and the archive collection in question.

Members of staff from the University Special Collections are interested in finding out how other institutions with special collections manage such book collections, and a message was posted to the JISC LIS-RAREBOOKS and ARCHIVES-NRA discussion lists inviting others to comment on their own practices. Discussion list members were asked to comment on processing, cataloguing and recording item information, if the books were recorded on a library system and on an archive system if separate, storage of such material and policies on duplication.

Sixteen responses were received, with replies from six archivists, six librarians, two record officers and two individuals responsible for both the library and archive sections. Responses varied according to the nature and priorities of each institution, available resources and facilities, and issues that respondents chose to comment upon. There is also the issue that librarians tend to consider each book as a separate entity, whilst archivists are trained to consider each record as part of larger whole, and this may also affect policy relating to books in archives. However, a number of common trends emerged, and the following represents a general summary of the responses that were received.

Respondents were divided almost equally between those who would consider moving book collections out of archives, either transferring them to open shelves or a rare book collection, or disposing of them, and those who kept the books with the archive collection. Both groups contained respondents from both library and archive/record office institutions. One record office noted that it has a policy of no longer accepting books with collections of records.

Books with no annotations or provenance markings are often moved out of the archive collection, and catalogued as normal with provenance references in the library and archive catalogues. Annotated books tend to be treated differently as unique items, and are often stored and catalogued within the archive collections. The same appears to apply for books with a lot of inserts, although one institution would consider removing inserts, giving them manuscript numbers and transferring the book elsewhere. One institution kept particularly valuable and rare items in the archive as the environmental conditions were preferable. Another institution transferred most of the book collections to the library section, with the exception of particularly fragile or small items. Policy also appears to differ for pamphlets, which are often retained and catalogued within archive collections, as they are often quite ephemeral and fit in well

with archive material. Periodicals and journals published by an organisation also tend to be kept and recorded with the rest of the organisation's archive.

The retention of duplicates depends on value, annotations and terms of donation, although minimising duplication of material was a priority due to lack of space. One institution noted that duplicates would be kept if reference to the publication is essential to understanding the archive (for example, when the author is the creator of the archive), particularly if the other available copy was a loan rather than reference copy.

The majority of the respondents, as would be expected, noted that book collections within archives were recorded on archives accessions documentation when they arrived, and information was added about where they were transferred to if they were removed from the archive collection. In terms of cataloguing, responses ranged from the majority who catalogued all the books individually on the library management system, with an item level description in the archive system, to a smaller proportion of other institutions, both libraries and archives, who catalogued the books on the archive system only. This was often the case if the material is pre-1800 or in pamphlet or broadsheet format, and often, in the case of archives or record offices, using an in-house system for cataloguing printed materials or using a special template for book catalogue records on CALM. Some respondents noted that this was not ideal as books often became 'hidden' in archive collections. For those who operated a dual system, full cross-referencing and the inclusion of provenance information in the book record was also carried out. However, archives who took responsibility for the book collections as well, including the cataloguing of the material, were often those who had a librarian among the staff who would undertake this cataloguing work.

In terms of processing and storage, books in archive collections are generally shelved rather than boxed unless there are only a few, they are in pamphlet or broadsheet format, or the books are particularly valuable or fragile. Only a few respondents referred to processing and numbering practices. In general, depending on where the book collections are stored, the books are either classified according to the library open access or rare book sequence, if transferred from the archive collection, or given a manuscript/archive number if they are kept within the archive.

A number of institutions concluded that collections are generally dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and that procedures and policy on this issue are constantly evolving. From the wide range of practices indicated in the responses it is clear that there are no definite rules on this issue. Ultimately it is up to each institution to decide on how to manage books in its archive collections, depending on the type of institution and its priorities, available resources and the nature of each individual collection.

Fiona Barnard

University of Reading

Gunpowder, Treason and Plot!

In November the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution hosted the latest in a series of Association of Independent Libraries (AIL) conferences, *Gunpowder, Treason and Plot! Political Subversion in the Library*. Throughout history political authority and libraries have come into conflict because of the people involved in their foundation and running and the material made available on library shelves. As *Gunpowder, treason and plot!* was to illustrate, AIL libraries have not entirely escaped this conflict. The event was held, appropriately enough, on Friday-Saturday, 4-5 November 2005. The cellars of the BRLSI's Greek Revival home were checked for gunpowder before proceedings began but were found to contain only those wonderful museum and literary collections reassembled following the institution's re-launch in 1993 after long possession of its premises by the admiralty. The conference opened on Friday evening with a talk by Dr Keith Manley of the Institute of Historical Research, who gave a wide-ranging account of subscription libraries across Western Europe in the period 1790 to 1850. He looked particularly at how the enthusiasm of their subscribers was not always matched by that of local and national governments, who perceived a threat in the availability of certain collections and of particular books.

The twenty-six delegates reconvened on Saturday morning. The first talk of the day was by Martyn Everett of the Saffron Walden Town Library Society, who gave an account of Ervin Szabo, the director of the Budapest Metropolitan Library. Szabo was a leading Marxist scholar and anarchist, opposed to involvement in the First World War, who was key in the development of the Hungarian public library system. Martyn was followed by Geoffrey Forster of the Leeds Library, who looked at the participation in libraries - including the Leeds Library and the Birmingham and Midland Institute (then the Birmingham Library) - of the scientist, theologian and political thinker, Joseph Priestley. He examined how Priestley's participation in and disputes at the Birmingham Library helped to lead to the infamous Priestley Riots in Birmingham in 1791. A fine lunch was followed by the day's third speaker, John Gray of the Linen Hall Library in Belfast. John looked at political controversy, ancient and modern, in the subscription library, beginning with the Linen Hall's ill-fated librarian, Thomas Russell, a United Irishman, who was executed for involvement in Emmet's rebellion in 1803. John then described the unique and important Northern Ireland Political Collection - a crucial record and resource from all sides of the continuing conflict the continued existence of which is potentially threatened by proposed anti-terror legislation.

Ironically, the use made by political subversives of the British Library's round reading room passed totally unnoticed in former times. This was the subject of the day's final talk, by Marjorie Caygill of the British Museum, who drew attention to the many colourful characters, notably Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, who successfully obtained British Museum readers' passes before unleashing their revolutionary views on the world. The event ended with a chance to examine John Pinch the Younger's fine building of 1830 and to see the refitting of the top two floors after the departure of a longstanding tenant. The successful partnership of the AIL and BRLSI bodes well for 2009, when it is planned that they will together stage the second international conference of mechanics' institutes, athenaeums and literary institutions. Proceedings from the *Gunpowder, treason and plot* event should appear early next year.

Krystyna Smithers

The Ipswich Institute

Designation: the Durham experience

In October 2005 Durham University Library was informed that the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) had granted Designated status to two of its collections: the Sudan Archive and Bishop Cosin's Library. These were two of only thirty-eight collections in twenty-eight institutions to be granted Designation, and Durham was the only institution in the North East region to be successful. I was asked if I would write a short article for the HLF describing what it was like to go through this process and what we feel we have achieved by it.

The Designation Scheme was launched in 1997 for museums only and came out of a government report, *Treasures in Trust* (London, 1996), which recognised that many institutions outside the national museums held outstanding collections, many of which were unrecognised and unsupported. In 2005 libraries and archives were invited to join the scheme, but it was made clear that the first round of applications would be very selective, unlike any of the three previous museum rounds. This limitation would allow the panel to set benchmarks for a future rollout to other archive and library collections. Between thirty and forty collections would be chosen, so competition was considerable. In the end over seventy libraries and archives applied, some putting forward their whole collections, others, like Durham, opting to put only the most outstanding ones forward.

What can I say about the process of application? As is usual nowadays, time was too short. We had to write the application, assemble proof of use, get letters of support and make sure that all the institutional policies required were in good shape within a very short deadline – some six weeks. All this evidence was to take up no more than one A4 box file. The supporting documents included university and library policy documents and action plans, reports of outreach and collections care work, bibliographies citing academic work on the collections, proof of use of the collections and CVs of staff involved. We then waited from the end of April to the end of October 2005 to hear the result. As Durham had also put in a major Heritage Lottery Fund application during that summer I was too preoccupied to think too much about it so the successful result was a pleasant surprise.

Why were some less well-known collections successful whilst other more famous ones were not? This was expressly described as a benchmarking exercise, so one might expect a wide variety of collections to be chosen. An analysis of the list of successful applicants shows that there are examples of all the types of collection you might expect – a couple of good local collections, such as the Norfolk collection, outstanding whole libraries like Lambeth Palace and the LSE, an historic college collection, a literary collection, etc. Our designated collections fit well into this pattern. In the award letter we were told that the panel recognised that the Sudan Archive is indispensable to the study of that country and also to the study of Britain's colonial past. Bishop Cosin's Library, which incidentally was listed for its seventeenth-century library building as well as its contents, was recognised for its importance as an element of a World Heritage site, as well as for its place in the history of libraries and ecclesiastical history nationally and locally. From now on library and archive collections will not be subject to competition for a limited number of places but will be Designated on their own merit, as museums have been.

What has getting Designation done for us? No access to the museums' Designation Challenge Fund has been forthcoming for libraries and archives, so no chance for monetary gain, but I think that it was worth the effort to gain recognition of the place of our collections in the national heritage. Being stuck in the north east corner of England has a lot of disadvantages and we have to work extra hard to make our voice heard. Designation has given us a status we did not have before except amongst scholars who used our collections or people who happened to know Durham. It has given us a raised profile both in the North East region and within the University. In addition to recognising the importance of the collections, the process of Designation also recognises that your library or archive repository meets the government's criteria for collection management and public services, which may ease grant applications in future. The final strand is that the MLA recognises that you will make good use of Designated status. The Sudan Archive has certainly proved its worth in the last year as negotiators from the UN, the US State Department, the Sudanese government and the Foreign Office have made use of maps and documents from the archive to forward peace treaty negotiations. So to sum up, yes, I think it was worth all the effort. We now have a ready-made label to put on those collections, which instantly proves their worth.

Sheila Hingley

Durham University Library

Other news

The MLA has recently announced the launch of a new venture, Collections Link, a service providing information and advice in all areas of collections management. The service will offer direct advice by telephone as well as an online library of guidelines, fact sheets and standards and will bring together resources from a range of partner organisations, including the Institute of Conservation, National Preservation Office and National Archives. The focus will be divided into two strands. The first will deal with 'traditional' collections management, including documentation, conservation, preservation and copyright, whilst the second will provide new resources in more general areas of management. These will include project and change management, procurement, fundraising and Charity Law.

For further information about Collections Link, contact Eleanor Lovegrove, MDA Marketing Officer at eeleanor@mda.org.uk or on 01223 415 760.

The National Preservation Office has a new publication which may be of interest to HLF members: *Knowing the Need: a Report on the Emerging Picture of Preservation Need in Libraries and Archives in the UK* by Alison Walker and Julia Foster. Copies are available from the NPO or on-line: www.bl.uk/services/npo/pdf/knowning.pdf

'Coins, Cabinets and Collecting', an exhibition on a rare surviving numismatic library, has recently opened at Nostell Priory, a National Trust house near Wakefield. In 1835 Charles Winn of Nostell recorded in his diary his offer of "4 shillings a book" for items from his wife's family library at Boynton Hall, near Bridlington. The following year he recorded "the balance due for my purchases at Boynton: £166-10-0". These two seemingly mundane entries disguise the purchase of two of Nostell's greatest treasures: the Strickland family coin collection, and the associated library of

antiquarian books on coins, medals and gems. Coins and books have always been collected together, and the Winn family continued this long tradition, commissioning the great furniture maker Thomas Chippendale to produce a lavish medal and coin cabinet. The contents of this cabinet, alas, were long ago dispersed, but the ongoing cataloguing of the library has revealed that the collection of books on coins survives intact. These remarkable and beautiful books span the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and are some of the finest examples of engraved and illustrated books ever produced. In recognition of the completion of the cataloguing of this collection, Nostell Priory will be mounting a small exhibition on the history of coins and coin collecting from April 1st.

Historic Libraries Forum Annual Meeting 2006 “Access for All?”

The next annual meeting will be held on Thursday 16 November in the Weston Room, Maughan Library, King’s College London, Chancery Lane site. ‘Access’ is an umbrella term for a day which will cover improving access to buildings and collections, security issues, virtual access through web-sites and email and the importance of access as a factor in securing grants.

We have been promised speakers from the Centre for Accessible Environments on disabled access and the National Preservation Office on preservation and security. In the afternoon there will be case studies on virtual access and a talk on fundraising.

At the end of the day there will be a chance to tour the Foyle Library Special Collections with the Librarian, Katie Sambrook, and colleagues. Watch out for the booking form in the next Bulletin and on the web-site.

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