



# Library & Information History Group

## News from the Chair

News from the chair this issue is coming to you from a new chair! At our recent AGM, the group bade a fond farewell to Daniel Gooding, who stepped down as Chair at the end of his three-year term. I am delighted to follow in his footsteps, having served on the committee together since 2017. Elsewhere in the committee, Angela Platt has moved into the role of Conference Organiser, leaving a vacancy for an Events Officer. To apply for this role please send a short expression of interest and CV to [chair.lihg@cilip.org.uk](mailto:chair.lihg@cilip.org.uk) by Friday 12th February.

In this issue, Amy Solomons looks at eighteenth-century female readers in National Trust libraries, and we hear about a new database from the team at the Libraries, Reading Communities and Cultural Formation in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic project. It is wonderful to see more from projects that both featured at our first online Works in Progress event back in May.

The second of our Works in Progress events took place in November, and a short record of which can be found towards the end of this issue. The success of this format has been such that we hope to continue it in its current form, even when in-person events return. Look out for a third instalment in the first half of 2021.

Elsewhere in this issue, Daisy Stafford reports on the CILIP conference, which took place online this year, and Keith Manley gives an overview of a seminar given by Alan Nelson in the LIHG-sponsored History of Libraries series. The Spotlight feature looks at the Yates Thompson Library at Newnham College, Cambridge and was written by our very own Eve Lacey. Please do get in touch if you would like to write about a library with which you are associated, or anything else for the newsletter. Further details can be found at the very end of this issue. Finally, on behalf of the group, I wish you all a peaceful and prosperous new year.

Jill Dye  
Chair, CILIP Library & Information History Group

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## Women in the Margins

### Eighteenth-Century Female Readers in National Trust Libraries



*Library at Tatton Park, Cheshire, the Seat of William Wilbraham Egerton Esqre*

133822, The Library at Tatton Park by J C Buckler, 1820, watercolour, at Tatton Park, Cheshire.  
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National Trust libraries differ in size, scale, scope, and their significance within the eighteenth-century home. My PhD, a collaboration with the National Trust, investigates eighteenth-century female reading communities in private libraries with a specific focus on Dunham Massey, Erddig, Lyme Park, Tatton Park, and Townend. Using an interdisciplinary approach, I combine book and library histories with material culture, architectural and social history. The range of libraries and readers covered varies from the modest, rural yeoman's library at Townend, Cumbria with under 1,500 books to the grandeur of the 8,000-book elite family library at Tatton Park, Cheshire. Each library is accessible to the public as part of the visitor experience at the National Trust.

Connections between the libraries continue to be developed through property visits and an analysis of their eighteenth-century book collections. Three libraries in Greater Manchester - Dunham Massey, Lyme Park, and Tatton Park - are situated within twenty miles of each other and offer a comparison

of shared reading on a small geographic scale. These properties benefitted from the development of subscription libraries, bookselling, and printing facilities in large cities such as Manchester and Liverpool. Moving across the border from the North of England to Wrexham in Wales, Erddig contains a large eighteenth-century in-situ collection of books. Wrexham is situated on the Welsh border and would likely have been closely connected to gentry society in the English cities of Chester, Liverpool, and Manchester. Erddig's collections offer the greatest insight into different types of readers due to the family's commitment to their serving staff and the education of their children.

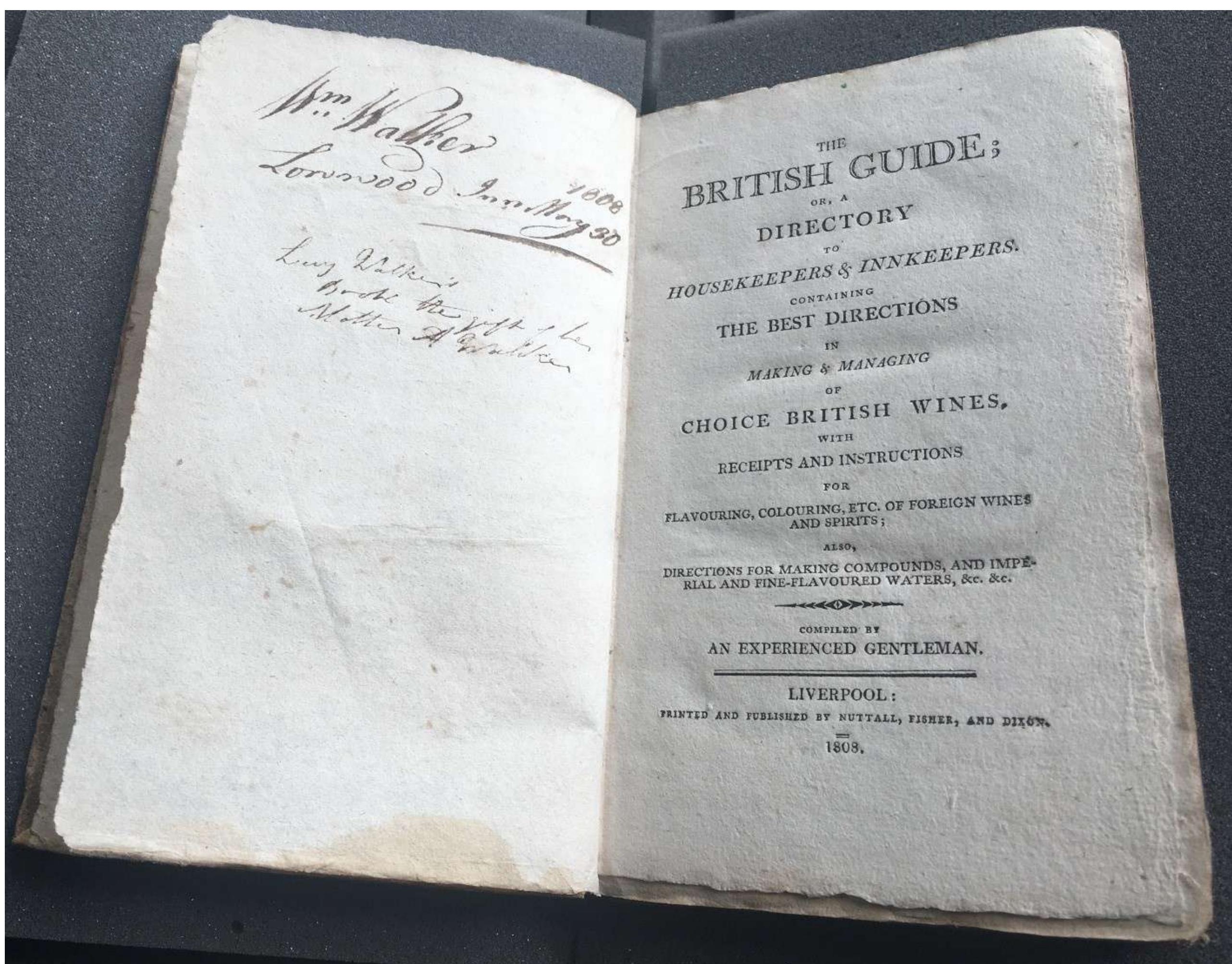
The library at Townend, a seventeenth-century farmhouse, is both a geographic and social outlier. Townend is perhaps one of the only surviving examples of a yeoman's library and provides a comparison to the elite reading experiences found at the other properties. The library contains unique examples of eighteenth-century reading, book

collecting and book ownership. The rural community at Townend acquired books in two different ways – through local book sales and books being sent to Townend from London by a young Benjamin Browne (1692-1748), a lawyer who owned Townend in the mid-eighteenth century. Moreover, the library provides a valuable insight into knowledge exchange in rural areas of Cumbria through local book-trade networks and printers.

Spanning the period 1660-1830, I focus on the ways in which we can trace female readers through library and archival evidence. Analysing in-situ collections at the Trust is important because the books in the library are connected to the broader history of the property and the people who lived there across the period. While the book collections are at the heart of my research, I analyse diaries, commonplace books, letters, borrowing records, and library catalogues to understand eighteenth-century female reading experiences. From ownership signatures to bookplates, marginalia to commonplace books, each source has its own value in the study of the history of readers in private libraries.

Using a combination of bibliographic and archival material is crucial when researching female readers because women only leave fleeting traces of their readership in eighteenth-century books. Archival material can be used to present a holistic view of women's reading through documents such as letters, diaries and account books. Documentary evidence can, when used alongside bibliographic evidence, provide a greater insight into women's reading in the eighteenth-century home.

Marginalia, the study of marginal annotations within texts, is of vital importance to the history of reading. However, the vast majority of eighteenth-century books contain no signs of readership, or indeed, signs that they were ever taken off the shelf. Tracing female readers can be particularly frustrating. While we know from eighteenth-century correspondence, diaries, and journals that they read widely, this anecdotal evidence is often not reflected in textual markings. Instances of existing marginalia can also be difficult to attribute to individual readers unless ownership signatures or other handwriting examples survive for comparison. Equally, researchers have a bias



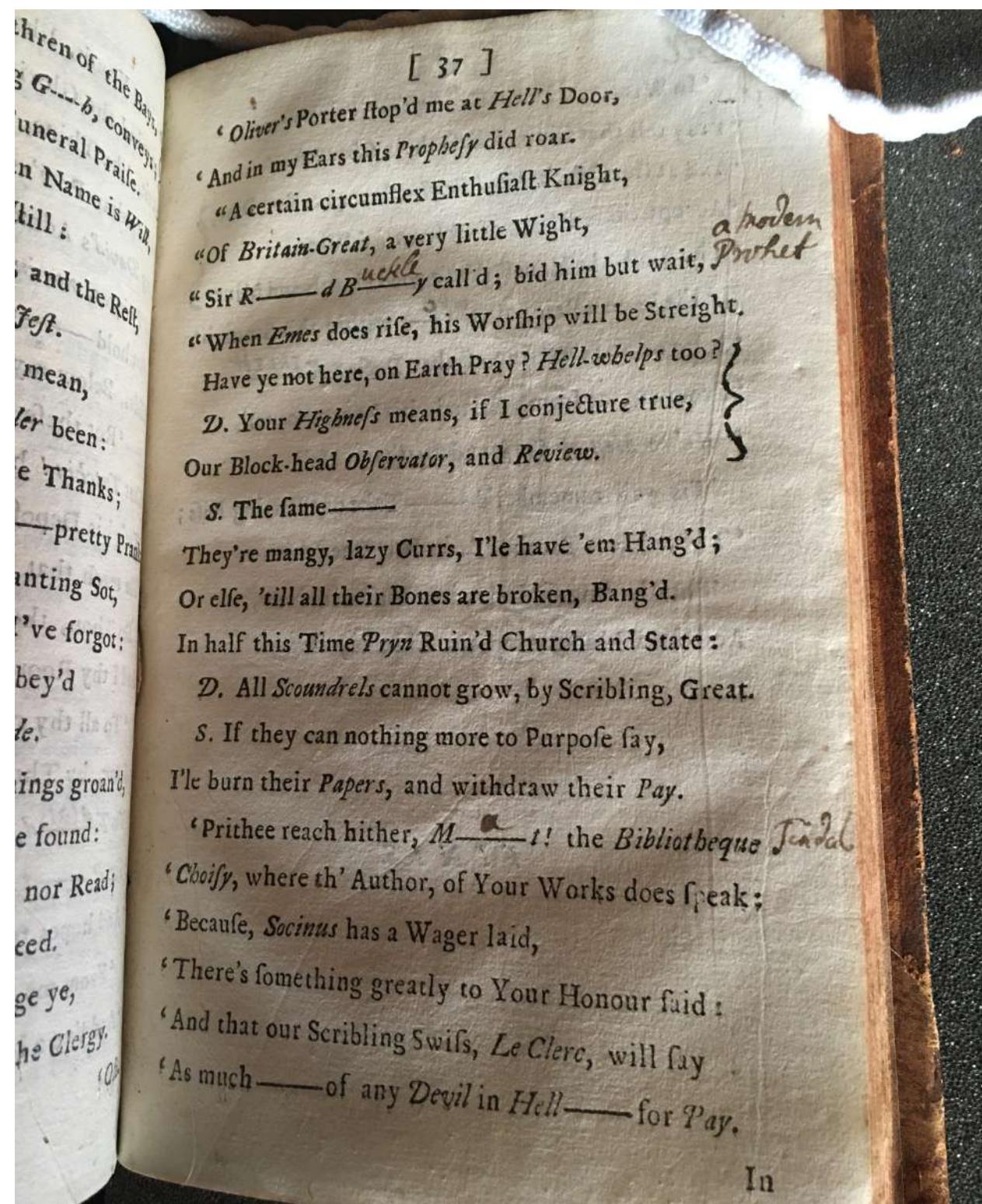
National Trust Libraries, 3074901, The British guide; or, A directory to housekeepers & innkeepers... (Liverpool:1808).  
Reproduced by kind permission of the National Trust.

towards studying the types of books women may not have read and towards a type of marginalia [active responses to a text] that it seems women were less likely to add to printed texts. Responding directly to methodological gaps outlined in the current scholarship, my research focuses on a range of texts including fables, cookery texts, dictionaries, conduct literature, novels, and religious texts.

The most common annotations found in eighteenth-century books are ownership marks. They usually feature on the flyleaf or title page of a book and often contain information about the book's acquisition, as well as the person who owned or read the book. Typically, books in National Trust libraries contain numerous signatures, both male and female, within the same book that can span generations of the same family. For example, a copy of *The Beauties of Aesop and Other Fabulists* (1807) held at Townend in Cumbria contains the inscriptions "Ben Browne" (1787-1807) on the title page and "Lucy Walker's Book" (d. 1862) on the rear flyleaf. Lucy Walker married George Browne (1804-1848), Benjamin Browne's nephew in 1832. This text shows evidence of multi-generational, continuous reading. Interestingly, Lucy Walker's signature is at the back of the book. The place of the signature perhaps indicates that Lucy was the secondary reader. There is almost something subversive about the placing of the signature at the back of the book, a sign that her reading experience and claim on the book is less important than that of the original reader, who probably read the book at least fifty years before Lucy Walker. A simpler explanation is that Lucy's signature is at the back of the book due to a lack of space on the title page for another signature. Equally, *The Beauties of Aesop and Other Fabulists* contains no other signs of readership which means we cannot be certain that the book was as valued and used as the signatures seem to indicate. My research uses these unique examples of female reading experiences to grapple with the signs, methods, and types of reading, as well as the seeming silence found within most eighteenth-century books. Any research into the history of readers within libraries tries to build a picture of readers from fleeting and often fragmentary evidence and my own research is no different.

Gift inscriptions in the front of books are another instance of an ownership sign because they highlight the circulation of the book within a community of readers. Lucy Walker's book collection at Townend includes books she received as gifts such as *The British Guide; or, A Directory to Housekeepers and Innkeepers* (1808). The front flyleaf bears the inscriptions "Wm. Walker,

Lowwood Inn May 30 1808", and "Lucy Walker's booke the gift of her mother A. Walker". The date and place of purchase show that the book was purchased within the Lake District not long after it was published. The gifting of the book from mother to daughter is indicated both in the change of handwriting from the purchase note and the inscription. The two examples of different handwriting are clear when comparing the exaggerated flourish at the end of the W in "Wm Walker" to Lucy Walker's signature, which can be compared to her signature in other books in the collection.



National Trust Libraries, 3160548.2, *The Apparition.. A poem.*  
(London:1710). Reproduced by kind permission of the National Trust.

While ownership marks can give some insight into their readers, they cannot be used as sole evidence that women read the books in their family library. Analysing marginalia can be problematic with annotations sometimes not aligning to the text, researchers struggling to read perplexing eighteenth-century handwriting, and researchers ascribing their own meanings onto the annotations they find. Signs of active readership, such as marginal notes, readers filling in the gaps in printed texts, underlines, and edits to the text attest to women's engagement with texts beyond just signing their name. Frances Legh's (1670-1728) book collection at Lyme Park in Stockport is particularly rich in evidence because Frances both signed her name and left traces of her reading through marginalia. A copy of the 1710 edition of *The Apparition... A Poem* by Abel Evans features the manuscript inscription 'Frances Legh' on the

front flyleaf verso. The book contains a number of textual gaps which invite readers to supply manuscript additions. Frances Legh supplied many of the names in the poem such as "Dr Tindall", John Dryden Brethren of the Bays and "Sir R\_\_\_\_\_ Buckley". The handwriting in these examples of directed annotations can be compared to the ownership signature on the front flyleaf to provide evidence that Frances Legh not only owned the book (seen through her signature) but also read and engaged with her books.

Additions to a text through manuscript annotations range from directed annotation, like in the case of Frances Legh, to additions which enhance already complete printed texts like Anne Jemima Yorke's (1754-1770) manuscript notes in a book of English operas at Erddig. The book contains five operas bound together with the manuscript cover title "English operas" and the signature "Anne Jemima Yorke 1770". Throughout the operas, which were published from 1764-1768, Anne Jemima Yorke makes additions to the music score such as crosses above notes to miss out and numbers at the top of some notes. Presumably, Anne's annotations were made during music lessons and chart her development through her musical education, something which the Sound Heritage project at the University of Southampton researches in greater detail. Anne's annotations place the book as a crucial part of her wider education and interests which provides researchers with an insight into eighteenth-century women's domestic education and leisure at Erddig. The book's place in the library also illuminates the dynamic mix of users and texts within a shared family space.

Despite the varied examples encountered in the National Trust libraries in this study, the overwhelming majority of books are bereft of any signs of readership. As well as researching the marks that do survive, any investigation of the history of reading must attempt to account for these silences. A wealth of documentary sources about each of the collections in my research survives at county record offices and university archives. As archive repositories begin to re-open in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential to compare the documentary traces to marginalia in the book collections. Accounting for female readers is challenging, so utilising every source available is key to understanding the significance of female readers in private libraries across the long eighteenth century. This approach means that I can present a holistic view of women's reading in eighteenth-century Britain instead of a series of isolated case studies. That women used and recorded their reading is obvious, but – as my PhD research explores – they did so through

incomplete traces. A brief mention to a book in a letter, a cookery book compiled from their reading and social experiences, or an ownership signature in the front of a book otherwise left unmarked are all indications of eighteenth-century female reading experiences.

Amy Solomons is a PhD student at the University of Liverpool and the National Trust researching private libraries and their reading communities in the long eighteenth century. Her research is funded by the AHRC North West Consortium Doctoral Training Partnership.

For more information on her research see:  
[http://www.nwcdtp.ac.uk/current-students/  
student-profiles-2/amy-solomons/](http://www.nwcdtp.ac.uk/current-students/student-profiles-2/amy-solomons/)



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## Book Owners Online

**A new website has been launched to house a database of book ownership.**

Book Owners Online is a directory of historical book owners, with information about their libraries, and signposts to further reference sources. It currently covers seventeenth-century English owners and has begun to be expanded.

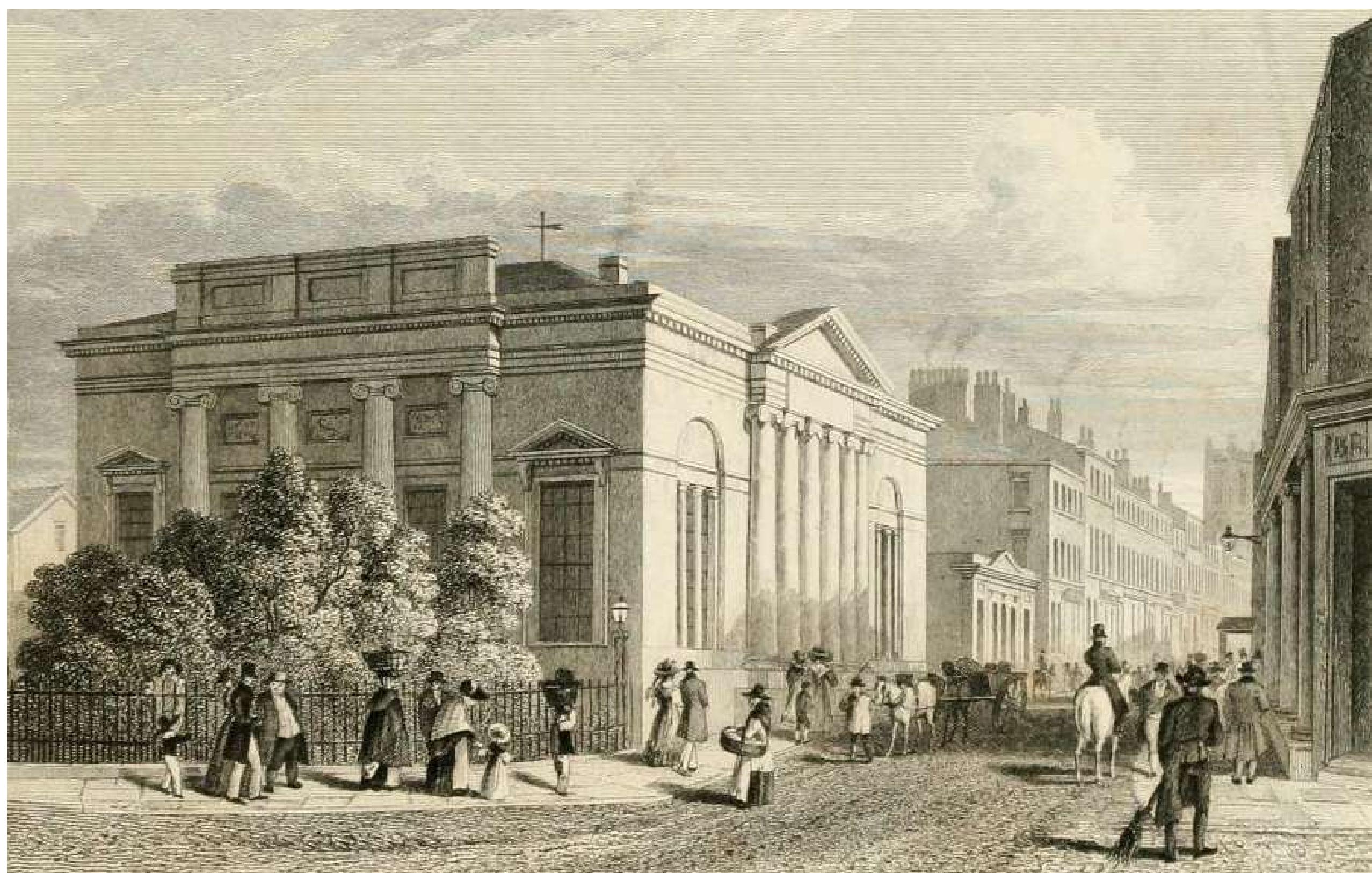
Book Owners Online is authored by the book historian David Pearson, published by the UCL Centre for Editing Lives and Letters (CELL).

Book Owners Online is intended to be a community resource and they welcome comments, feedback, and contributions. You can find submission forms and contact details here:

[5](https://bookowners.online>Contact</a></p>
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# Libraries, Reading Communities and Cultural Formation in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic

## A New Database Project



Liverpool Lyceum Building 1828, taken from 'Lancashire Illustrated', p.72, 1832.

Libraries, Reading Communities and Cultural Formation in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic is a £1 million Digital Humanities project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council which began in October 2019. Based in the History Department at the University of Liverpool – and working in collaboration with researchers at the University of Glasgow, Western Sydney University, the American Philosophical Society, California State University, Long Beach, Muhlenberg College, the University of West Georgia and the University of Helsinki – its primary aim is to investigate the contribution of books to social, cultural and political change in the Age of Enlightenment and Revolutions. It does this by exploring in unprecedented range and depth the role played by subscription libraries in the reading lives of communities and individuals across the British Isles and North America between 1731 and 1800.

### Project Background

This was a period of unprecedented expansion in the market for books during which reading

became a fundamental aspect of everyday life for more people than ever before. Books were used for pleasure and for education, providing access to self-improvement and social mobility in the absence of systematic schooling. By introducing new ideas, recasting old ones, and disseminating knowledge about "new worlds" discovered in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, they created and sustained new forms of identity both for individuals and communities. Yet they also remained prohibitively expensive, meaning that a significant proportion of would-be readers relied primarily on borrowing books rather than buying them.

The first formal subscription library (or social library, as they were more commonly known in North America) was the Library Company of Philadelphia, begun in 1731 by printer's apprentice Benjamin Franklin and his debating society, the "Junto" (a group of like-minded artisans), as a means of acquiring expensive books to provoke conversation. Thereafter, subscription libraries rapidly became a major part of the urban landscape, spreading first across the eastern seaboard of North America to colonial towns such

as Providence, Rhode Island (1747), Charleston, South Carolina (1748) and New York (1754), then to the Scottish Borders (Leadhills, 1741; Kelso, c.1750; Hawick, 1762), and ultimately to the rapidly-growing industrial towns of the north of England, including Liverpool (1758) and Leeds (1768).

With at least 350 in place by the turn of the nineteenth century, subscription libraries were essentially private membership clubs, where subscribers pooled their resources to acquire a wider choice of books than they could afford individually. This funding model set them apart from other book-lending institutions operating in this period, where a single individual was often responsible for deciding which books would be made available to readers and on what terms – either through philanthropic motives (as at endowed libraries such as Chetham's Library in Manchester, Innerpeffray in rural Perthshire or Marsh's Library in Dublin) or for commercial profit (as at the notorious commercial circulating libraries so famously dispatched by playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan as "an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge" (*The Rivals*, London, 1775, 12). Subscription libraries, crucially, depended instead on community-based collaboration and decision-making about what constituted useful and desirable reading, with the selection of books either delegated to sub-committees elected for the purpose or voted on democratically at annual general meetings. Subscription library collections thereby constituted material instantiations of members' shifting interests, helping to reveal the role of newly enfranchised readers in reorganising and extending literary, intellectual and political culture.

## Research Questions

Subscription libraries generated documentary evidence illuminating a wide range of significant research problems – including printed and manuscript library catalogues, membership lists, meeting minutes and other administrative records, together with the very few sets of borrowing records which survive – yet this documentation has never previously been brought together and assessed holistically. Our project employs cutting-edge digital tools (developed using Heurist, an Open Source collaborative web database service designed with the needs of humanities researchers in mind) to subject this material to systematic bibliographical, bibliometric and biographical analysis for the first time, thinking about four discrete but interlocking sets of questions:

Union Library Company of Hatboro: borrowing records (1789-90): page for Abel Marpole

1. Since libraries are primarily concerned with the provision of books, we ask: Which books were most often bought and borrowed, and what were the genres that particularly appealed to library subscribers? Were any books routinely censored, rejected or ignored? How cosmopolitan were 18th-century reading tastes, and how far did libraries acquire the works of continental writers – either in their original languages or in translation?
2. Subscription libraries depended entirely on the energy, resources and inclinations of the people who joined them. Who was involved in selecting acquisitions for subscription libraries, and what sort of readers made most intensive use of library collections? What exclusionary tactics were employed to restrict membership along political, social, religious or ethnic lines? How far were library books able to reach marginal readers, such as women, children, readers of colour and those unable to afford subscription fees?
3. While concerned fundamentally with acquiring books, subscription libraries were also expected to bring wider cultural benefits to the communities in which they were founded. To what extent was library-building an exercise in promoting civil society, enhancing cultural capacity and disseminating technical knowledge and expertise? How far were the civic-minded ambitions of library

founders and committees thwarted by the quotidian interests and reading tastes of individual subscribers? How did libraries develop into established institutions with generic and cultural practices of their own? What was the importance of subscription libraries and the books they collected in disseminating, reinforcing or challenging "imagined communities" on national, regional and local levels, and on either side of the Atlantic?

4. In making books available to communities of readers, subscription libraries were implicated in the transmission and amplification of new concepts (Peter de Bolla, *The Architecture of Concepts: The Historical Formation of Human Rights*, New York 2013), knowledge, ideas and vocabularies that helped shape cultural, political and social change. Weighting texts according to the frequency with which libraries were purchasing them and readers consulting them, our project will push the boundaries of conventional corpus analysis to ask:

How far were library borrowers exposed to new political deployments of traditional terms such as "patriot", "republic", "revolution" and "citizen", and to new concepts such as "public opinion"? Do such terms appear more frequently in the reading of Britons overseas than in the metropolis?

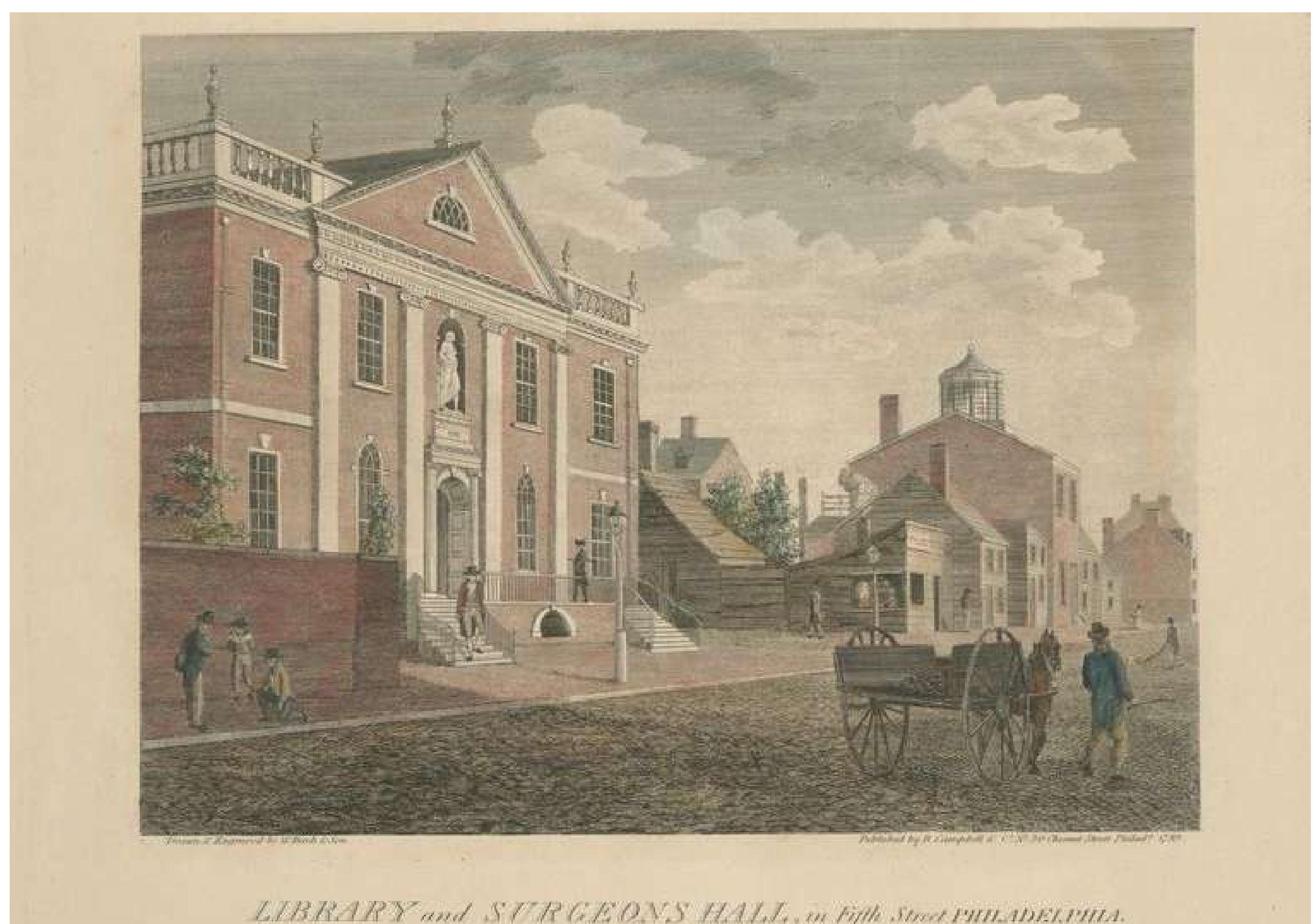
### Why Now?

Scholars have long been aware of the emergence of voluntary subscription libraries. Indeed, Benjamin Franklin ensured that they were written into the folklore of the American Revolution, boasting in his *Autobiography* that this new breed of library played a crucial role in giving ordinary Americans – through reading – the intellectual training and confidence they needed to break free from the British Crown:

*These libraries have improved the general conversation of the Americans made the common tradesmen and farmers as intelligent as most gentlemen from other countries, and perhaps have contributed in some degree to the stand so generally made throughout the colonies in defence of their privileges.*

Benjamin Franklin, *The Complete Works*,  
New York 1887, I. 159-60.

Yet previous research has tended to be concerned primarily with individual institutions, reluctant to look beyond the local to consider wider patterns. Paul Kaufman's pioneering work in the 1960s gave a glimpse of what was possible, showing that many English towns of this period had a library culture of surprising diversity and complexity (Paul Kaufman, "The Community Library": A Chapter in English Social History', *Transactions of the American*



Library and Surgeon's Hall, Fifth-street Engraving, 1800, by William Russell Birch (public domain)

*Philosophical Society*, 57.7 (1967), 3-67; Paul Kaufman, *Borrowings from the Bristol Library, 1773-1784: A Unique Record of Reading Vogues*, Charlottesville, VA, 1960; a recent overview is provided by David Allan, *A Nation of Readers: The Lending Library in Georgian England*, London 2008). His tabulation of borrowing statistics from the Bristol Library Society in the 1770s remains a primary point of reference by providing scholars with hard data on the reception of specific books and genres, but was severely limited by the technology available at the time. Kaufman presented only a small proportion of surviving Bristol loans, and was unable either to link those loans to named individuals or to show how representative (or otherwise) the Bristol collection was of subscription library acquisitions more generally. Our project updates Kaufman's approach for the digital age, extending our understanding of Bristol loans to the start of the nineteenth century, setting them alongside other surviving borrowing records in England, Scotland and colonial America, and considering borrowing patterns within the wider transatlantic landscape of subscription library book collecting and membership.

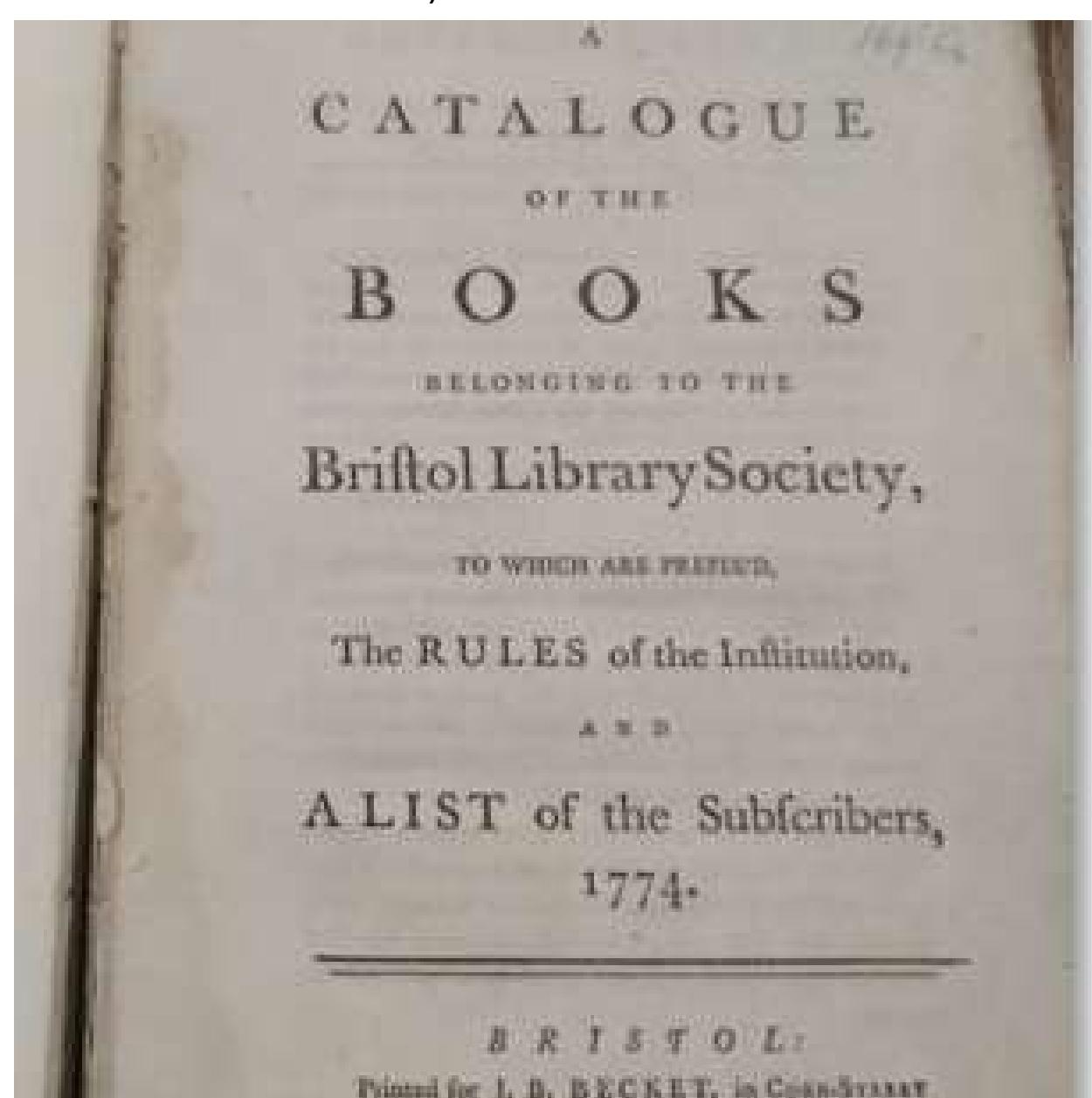
While we hope our work will ultimately be scalable to other types of library in other periods and places, our project also forms part of an ambitious 'blue skies' vision for the future development of digital work on the Enlightenment book world. Working in close collaboration with other major projects in Australia, the Netherlands and the UK, each focused on a different set of historical bibliometric data, our researchers are developing and promoting inter-operability and linked open data protocols for historical bibliometric research which will eventually allow users to search across a digital representation of eighteenth-century print culture of unrivalled – and until very recently unimaginable – depth and scope.

## Outputs

Data collected by the project will be published online in an open access database and will be freely downloadable by members of the library history community. The project is also planning a full suite of published academic books, essays and articles, including an edited volume arising from a conference planned for the summer of 2022 and an edition of the minute book of the Bristol Library Society to coincide with the 250th anniversary of its opening. More immediately, our edition of *The First Minute Book of the Liverpool Athenaeum* (founded in 1797 and still an important feature of the city's cultural landscape) was published at the end of

2020 (co-edited by David Brazendale and Mark Towsey), and we are currently working on a special issue of the LIHG journal *Library & Information History* planned for later in 2021 which will include explorative essays on Edmund Burke, Richard Champion and political networking at the Bristol Library Society (by postdoctoral research associate Dr Max Skjönsberg); on the ways by which early American social libraries both shaped and were shaped by the communities they served (by postdoctoral research associate Dr Sophie Jones); and on the cosmopolitanism of subscription library book collecting and their contribution to a common pan-European literary culture (by co-investigator Professor Simon Burrows).

The project also aims to bring tangible benefits to libraries, not least by enriching contemporary debate about the value of libraries through better understanding of their historical roles in community building. To help us achieve this, we are working in partnership with nine libraries in the UK, the USA and Australia, including surviving libraries from the period under review (the Library Company of Philadelphia, the New York Society Library, the Union Library of Hatborough, the Library Company of Burlington, and the Linen Hall Library in Belfast), and a smaller number which incorporated earlier subscription libraries (the Birmingham & Midland Institute, which subsumed the original Birmingham Library of 1779, and the State Library of New South Wales, first established in 1826 as the Australian Subscription Library) or subscription library material (the Liverpool Central Library and the Bristol Central Library, both Public Libraries which inherited documentation from now defunct institutions).



A Catalogue of Books Belonging to the Bristol Library Society (1774), title page.

The project will deepen each partner library's understanding of its own institutional heritage, including detailed biographical research on eighteenth-century members and (when COVID allows) in-person inspection of surviving library books to identify annotations and other traces of book use. As society starts to reopen, we are planning a rich programme of exhibitions, talks and workshops with our partner libraries, beginning with an online blog series 'Readers in Focus' from January 2021 and a 'Book of the Month' programme of mini-exhibits and blogs to run through 2022 at participating partner libraries. If you would like to know more about the project, have material that you think may be relevant to our research, or would like to host a talk or a visit from a member of the team, please let us know – we would love to hear from you on Twitter @C18thLibraries or email lib18cen@liverpool.ac.uk.

Dr Sophie Jones is Postdoctoral Research Associate on the project, with specific responsibility for North American libraries. Her most recent article explores variations of loyalism in the colony of New York, while her first monograph project considers the role of print culture and urban spaces in shaping political sentiment during the American Revolution. Dr Jones is currently a Reese Fellow at the Library Company of Philadelphia (2020-21) and an Adjunct Fellow at Western Sydney University, Australia.

Dr Max Skjönsberg is Postdoctoral Research Associate on the project, with specific responsibility for British libraries. An intellectual and political historian of the eighteenth century, he has published articles in the *Historical Journal*, *Journal of British Studies*, *History of Political Thought*, *Modern Intellectual History*, *History of European Ideas*, *History and Scottish Historical Review*. His first monograph, *The Persistence of Party: Ideas of Harmonious Discord in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, is published by Cambridge University Press in 2021.

Professor Mark Towsey, the project's Principal Investigator, is Professor in the History of the Book and Director of the Eighteenth-Century Worlds Research Centre at the University of Liverpool. His publications include *Reading the Scottish Enlightenment: Books and their Readers in Provincial Scotland, 1750-1820* (2010), *Before the Public Library: Reading, Community and Identity in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850* (2017), *Reading History in Britain and America, c.1750-c.1840* (2019) and *The First Minute Book of the Liverpool Athenaeum* (2020). He is a former LIHG committee member and served as editor of *Library and Information History* 2012-16.

## Publications

Atkin, Lara, Sarah Comyn, Porscha Fermanis, and Nathan Garvey. *Early Public Libraries and Colonial Citizenship in the British Southern Hemisphere*. Springer International, 2019.

Baldwin, Jack. *A Catalogue of Fifteenth-Century Printed Books in Glasgow Libraries and Museums*. Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 2020.

Chadwyck-Healey, Charles. *Publishing for Libraries at the Dawn of the Digital Age*. Bloomsbury, 2020.

Delaforce, Angela. *The Lost Library of the King of Portugal*. Paul Holberton Publishing, 2019.

Flanders, Judith. *A Place for Everything: The Curious History of Alphabetical Order*. Picador, 2020.

Goeing, Anja-Silvia, G. J. R. Parry, and Mordechai Feingold, eds. *Early Modern Universities: Networks of Higher Learning. Scientific and Learned Cultures and Their Institutions*, volume 31. Brill, 2021.

Laugesen, Amanda. *Globalizing the Library: Librarians and Development Work, 1945-1970*. Routledge, 2020.

Morrish, P. S. *Libraries in Leeds: A Historical Survey, 1152-c.1939*. Thoresby Society, 2019.

Peiss, Kathy Lee. *Information Hunters: When Librarians, Soldiers, and Spies Banded Together in World War II Europe*. Oxford University Press, 2020.

Pouey-Mounou, Anne-Pascale, and P. J. Smith, eds. *Early Modern Catalogues of Imaginary Books. Intersections. Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture*, volume 66. Brill, 2019.

Simpson, Murray C. T. *Scholarly Book Collecting in Restoration Scotland: The Library of the Revd James Nairn (1629-1678)*. Library of the Written Word, volume 82. Brill, 2020.

Teplitsky, Joshua. *Prince of the Press: How One Collector Built History's Most Enduring and Remarkable Jewish Library*. Yale University Press, 2019.

Walsby, Malcolm. *Booksellers and Printers in Provincial France, 1470-1600*. The Handpress World, volume 68. Brill, 2020.

## SPOTLIGHT

### YATES THOMPSON LIBRARY, NEWNHAM COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

Newnham was founded as a women's college in Cambridge in 1871. Its students would not be entitled to use the University Library for over half a century, until 1923. In the interim, the Yates Thompson library was constructed to house growing collections and provide the students with a space to study. It was the College's first purpose-built library and remains home to a core part of the working collection today.

Prior to the construction of this building in 1897, books were stored in various rooms around the College. The collection was developed steadily by a discerning and purposeful Library committee. This committee began meeting in 1882, one year after a vote to admit women to University examinations, and its establishment demonstrates the College's determination to prepare its students to compete with other members of the University. Early records of the Library committee include repeated requests for more book grants alongside frequent petitions for further shelf space and increasing discernment in accepting donations. Multiple reading rooms were filled, and the card cabinets were soon overflowing with catalogue records.

In response to the constant demand for more space, the College commissioned a new library. The Yates Thompson Library was designed by Basil Champneys (1842-1935) in the "Queen Anne" style, with distinctive red bricks and white sash windows. The project was overseen by Librarian Katharine Stephen (1856-1924) and Principal Eleanor Sidgwick (1845-1936); it was funded by Henry Yates Thompson (1838-1929) and his wife Elizabeth (1855-1941). The first phase of the Library building was completed in 1897, with an extension constructed in identical style in 1907.

Henry was a book and manuscript collector, and his passion for early printed books is evident in the printers' marks that decorate the Library. The blue barrel-vaulted ceiling is adorned with plasterwork panels depicting the emblems of thirteen printers: the Parisians Phillippe Pigouchet, Antoine Vérard, and the Estienne family; Richard Pynson and Julyan Notary of London; the Saint Albans Printer; Peter Schoeffer of Mentz; William Caxton of Westminster; the Venetian Aldus Manutius; Christophe Plantin of Antwerp; Andreas de Torresanis de Asula; Johannes Froben of Basel; and Cambridge University Press.

These elevated architectural decorations were balanced with a desire for practicality. Yates Thompson advised the College to avoid busts of eminent "ladies [...] to represent literature in the library" in favour of lockable glass cupboards to "hold I suspect all the books you are like to warrant such accommodation for".



Printers' marks on Yates Thompson Library ceiling

Newnham College gained a rare books room – the Katharine Stephen room – in 1982 and the adjoining Horner Markwick Library in 2004. Today, books are continually added to the open shelves of the Grade II\* listed Yates Thompson Library, its carrels still provide a much-loved study space to new generations of students, and its glass cupboards are filled with the College's special collections.

Eve Lacey is Senior Library Assistant at Newnham College Library and Librarian of the Skilliter Centre for Ottoman Studies.

## REPORT: CILIP CONFERENCE

In a year of cancelled events, I was especially excited to be awarded a bursary to attend the 2020 CILIP conference. Having started my first permanent library post at the University of Edinburgh's Centre for Research Collections in January, it hasn't been quite the year I'd imagined back then. Nine weeks in the library was followed by sixteen weeks working from home and my carefully curated calendar of CPD opportunities and events had all but disappeared. However, this conference was finally the real opportunity to listen, learn, and network that I'd been hoping for.

Appropriately titled "Reimagined," this conference was a little different from those of previous years and took place on a virtual platform called Pheedloop. I logged on promptly at 9am and found myself in the central "lobby" from which you could explore the separate areas – or "rooms" to continue the metaphor – of the conference. A "Sessions" tab provided details of all the talks and speakers and allowed you to create a personalised schedule. The "Exhibit Hall" contained stalls for you to browse, with options to download a leaflet, watch live presentations, or chat one-to-one with exhibitors. The "Networking" tab had a constantly-running video call which you could join at any time to chat with other delegates. There was also the option to message individuals, perhaps a speaker who had inspired you or a delegate who had made a particularly insightful comment that you wished to follow up. Navigating back to the "Sessions" tab, I clicked on the page for the opening keynote and waited in anticipation for the conference to begin.

Richard Ovenden's opening keynote acted as an urgent warning against the spread of misinformation, both historically and currently. Drawn from his recently-published work, *Burning the Books: A History of Knowledge Under Attack* (Harvard University Press, 2020), he presented examples of the deliberate destruction of knowledge, from the dissolution of the medieval library at Glastonbury Abbey during the Reformation, to the 'fake news' of Donald Trump's presidency. To avoid an Orwellian future, he implored, libraries and archivists must act to preserve truth, by providing a fixed-reference point for fact, supporting lifelong learning.

My morning sessions were equally focused on action and activism within the profession. "Libraries for Sustainability – the role of librarianship in a Green Economy," considered the increased role cultural organisations could play in building an eco-centric society.

I was divested of my assumptions that libraries, as circulators of borrowable and thus reusable materials, are already inherently environmentally-friendly and shown library projects that had taken their green credentials even further. Petra Hauke, a visiting teacher at the Berlin School for Library and Information Science, talked of the UN's framework of seventeen Sustainable Development Goals and showcased the IFLA Library Map of the World (<https://librarymap.ifla.org/>), which publishes the stories of libraries worldwide that have tackled one of these goals. By searching the map for SDG 13, climate action, I can find the library of University College Cork, who formed their own "green team" and piloted an energy saving scheme with great results. I can also find the Regional Children's Library in Lviv, who held 150+ "Garbage Hero" events to teach children and their parents about waste reduction and partnered with a game developer to create a mobile app which teaches children how to sort waste. It is truly inspiration-on-tap for the environmentally-conscious librarian.

The next session introduced some everyday activists of our profession who are driving positive social change. Marilyn Clarke of Goldsmiths talked of their "Liberate our Library" initiative, which aims to address the lack of diversity and de-centre whiteness in the collections with a targeted acquisitions budget, as well as book plates and library displays which highlight BAME authors and catalogue tags which allow students to easily search for items in this collection. Adenike Johnson, a library manager in Islington, introduced her methods to make public libraries more inclusive spaces, including expanding events about Black history beyond the dedicated month and considering diversity when making decisions about stock and displays. Discussions in the comments during this talk highlighted how these strategies could be employed to increase inclusion for other underrepresented groups, including the LGBTQ+ community and people with disabilities. Finally, Angela Short explained how the combination of the new computerised Universal Credit system and widespread digital illiteracy had left many people struggling to claim. As Digital Inclusion Officer for Stirling Council she had established free IT workshops in public libraries to address this skills gap. Following the talk, I ruminated how the multiplicity of identities contained within the role of "library professional" that I had been building up since the morning keynote – preserver of knowledge, environmentalist – had now widened to include activist.

During the lunch break there was time for a circuit of the exhibition hall and a discussion of the morning's revelations in the networking area, before the presidential address and afternoon keynote. CILIP President Judy Broady-Preston dissected the meaning of "professional" within the framework of identity theory and illustrated how the shared values and group culture of CILIP binds us together as a diverse collection of specialised professionals. This was an especially welcome topic in a year that has felt, at times, professionally isolating and where the personal/professional has become uncomfortably merged as we brought our work into our homes.

Tracie D. Hall, Executive Director of the American Library Association, then delivered the most galvanising talk of the day. She explained how information redlining and the digital racial gap leads directly to the disenfranchising of poorer communities. Disinvestment in an area leads to the closure of public libraries and subsequently, increased illiteracy, (a leading factor in incarceration and homelessness) and decreased economic mobility. Thus, Hall argues, keeping libraries open is a social justice, public health, and even a human rights issue. It was a rousing call to arms to fight back against information poverty and provide access to all. She closed her talk by asking, "What alternate future can we imagine that allows libraries to have a greater impact than ever?" This provided food for thought long beyond the close of the conference.

My final session of the day saw an international panel of library professionals in India, Ghana, Germany, and Denmark discuss the role of libraries in times of crisis and how they had adapted their services to the challenges of the pandemic. There were many parallels; an increased demand for digital access to collections and the creation of temporary mobile libraries and home-delivery services in particular. Dr Helena Asamoah-Hassan demonstrated the direct connection between libraries and public health by describing how AfLIA, (African Library and Information Associations and Institutions) had put together a Covid-19 prevention alert fact sheet in several languages and posted it online, urging African libraries to disseminate them to their communities. This led to a discussion of the importance of libraries as providers of reliable information in terms of crisis, coming pleasingly full-circle with the themes of the opening keynote.

Overall it was an incredibly informative day with several persistent themes throughout. Ideas of knowledge and information appeared in each talk; both combating misinformation and information poverty and the necessity of sharing information within the profession in a new way whilst we are physically separated, in events such as these. Themes of change were also reoccurring, most obviously the radical global changes of the past year, but also how library services can effect change on a macro and micro scale. Changes in policy, changes in the climate, or a single change in the life of an individual, all with far-reaching effects. Finally, health, of the individual and of the planet, was on the minds of all the speakers, as it has been for most of us more than usual this year, and the role which libraries can play in guarding and improving it.

My experience with the online platform, Pheedloop, was also very positive overall. The design was ergonomic and easy to navigate and I didn't encounter any problems or obstructions. Each talk took place in a Zoom call which appeared in the sessions tab at the designated start time. I had some loss of connection, during the more highly attended talks in particular, but a quick page refresh usually sorted this out and it did not hamper me greatly. Although networking could never be what it is at an in-person conference, the chat function and networking area worked well to keep me feeling connected to other attendees. The biggest downfall was the inevitable screen fatigue and I felt there could have been longer breaks throughout the day to allow me to rest my eyes. On the plus side, all the talks were recorded and are now available for delegates to re-watch, meaning I will be able to see sessions which didn't fit into my schedule on the day, a benefit unique to the virtual conference.

Although not quite how I imagined my first conference to be, nevertheless it was a very rich experience and it only remains for me to thank the organisers at CILIP and the LIHG for their generous bursary which allowed me to attend.

Daisy Stafford is originally from Hertfordshire, but moved to Edinburgh to pursue an MSc in Book History and Material Culture in 2016. She now works as a library assistant in the University of Edinburgh's Centre for Research Collections, providing access to the rare book and archive collections.

# REPORT: SEMINAR IN THE HISTORY OF LIBRARIES

## The Bradshawe Library of Marple

Another meeting of the University of London's Seminar in the History of Libraries was held on Tuesday 1 December 2020 when Professor Alan Nelson (University of California, Berkeley) spoke on "The Bradshawe Family Library of Marple, Cheshire, 1600-1784". Inevitably the seminar took place on Zoom and was none the worse for that. The technical aspects of a "remote" seminar worked well (the illustrations were excellent), and there were 52 participants.

Professor Nelson set himself the task of determining which members of the Bradshawe family had acquired particular books in their library. The family's books were eventually sold off and have ended up in a multitude of different libraries, while forty bound volumes of pamphlets were acquired by the collector and philanthropist, Adolph Sutro, and now rest in the Sutro Library, the San Francisco branch library for the State of California. These pamphlets form the basis for Nelson's present research and are largely political, legal, or religious tracts. They originally belonged to John Bradshawe, the judge and regicide, who died in 1659 and was then hung at Tyburn after his death following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Many carry the signature of Henry Bradshawe, John's brother, a colonel in the Parliamentary Army, to whom John sent them from London, and some have the latter's annotations. Most tracts with this provenance date from the 1640s and 1650s.

But, as Nelson discovered, there were no less than five Henry Bradshawe's, successively heads of the family from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, and all lived at Marple. Nelson painstakingly examined the signatures appearing on the pamphlets and on surviving books elsewhere in order to discover which volumes each Henry, or Henrie, Bradshawe had added to the library. Many works had been acquired before the period of Henry Bradshawe III, the regicide's brother, but the story is complicated by Henry V who signed his own name in many volumes, regardless of whether he had acquired them himself; he died in 1736. Particular attention was paid in the talk to a copy of Edmund Plowden's *Abridgment des tout les cases* (1597?), a collection of law reports in the Middle Temple Library which bears the signature of both Henry I (dated 1600) and Henry V. Another important book examined



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was a second folio edition of Shakespeare (1632) inscribed by Henry IV.

The library descended to the female line and was sold in 1784 by James Edwards, the Halifax bookseller, though the collection was said to have been damaged by mice and damp. The pamphlets were bought by the Manchester bookseller, James Crossley. Professor Nelson's talk was a masterly display of patient bibliographical investigation and was thoroughly well-researched.

This series of seminars is organised by the University of London's Institute of English Studies and Institute of Historical Research, and sponsored by the Warburg Institute and the Library & Information History Group. More talks by Zoom will be organised for early next year, and details will appear in due course on their websites.

Keith Manley is Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, where he was Assistant Librarian for 29 years. He is joint convenor of the Seminar in the History of Libraries held jointly at the Institute of English Studies, Institute of Historical Research, and the Warburg Institute. He edited the journal *Library History*.

## Works in Progress

Following the success of the first lockdown talks, LIHG convened another Works in Progress event on 27th November 2020, hosted by Jill Dye and Eve Lacey.

The event featured ten-minute talks, followed by ten minutes of questions. Kristine Chapman, Principal Librarian at Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales introduced a project involving donations made by former members of staff; Dr Nadine I. Kozak, associate professor in Information Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, presented her research on store libraries in the United States, Britain, and Canada; David Shaw, volunteer at Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library, presented a selection of printed ephemera; Emma Laws, Director of Collections and Research at Devon and Exeter Institution, detailed her collection review funded by the National Lottery; Dr Robert Whan, Director of Armagh Robinson Library, explained the history and treasures of the Library's collections; Olin Moctezuma, PhD student and Gates scholar in the History and Philosophy of Science Department, University of Cambridge, presented her research on 'the list' as technology; Alistair Black, Professor Emeritus, School of Information Sciences, University of Illinois, analysed librarians in cinematic productions; Dr Katie Halsey the work on PhD student Isla Macfarlane on Innerpeffray Library Visitors books; and Dr John Crawford, Chairman of Leadhills Heritage Trust, presented awareness raising strategies for the world's first library for working people and Britain's oldest subscription library.

## Back Matter

The LIHG newsletter is produced twice a year. It contains short articles, news items, exhibition and conference announcements, notices of awards and bursaries, and reports on conferences, exhibitions and site visits. We also highlight a selection of new publications. We are always looking for feature articles in the field of library and information history; descriptions of little-known historic libraries; information about projects with a significant historical component; new resources (print and digital); news items; and calls for papers. We also welcome reports on conferences on any subject in library and information history and reviews of exhibitions. Recent graduates are invited to submit brief descriptions of their research projects. Please contact the editor, Eve Lacey, if you would like to have news, events, exhibitions or calls for papers included in the newsletter:

[lihgnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:lihgnewsletter@gmail.com)

Proposals for feature articles (length of article max. 2000 words) and descriptions of graduate research projects (max. length 750 words) should be accompanied by short CV.

Deadlines for contributions:

7 May 2021 (Summer 2021)  
10 September 2021 (Winter 2021)

Information about events, conferences and bursaries is also disseminated via the CILIP website:

<http://www.cilip.org.uk/about/special-interest-groups/library-information-history-group>

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