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Library & Information History Group

News from the Chair

This winter issue of the LIHG newsletter comes to you at a period of change and, we hope, renewal. It marks the final issue edited by Eve Lacey, who has put together these newsletters so fabulously for the last two years. I am pleased to say that Eve is staying on the LIHG committee and taking on the role of bibliographer for the group's journal, *Library and Information History*. We are delighted to welcome Alex Kither as the new newsletter editor; please get in touch with Alex (contact details in the back matter) if you have any news, events, or articles that you would like us to feature.

The committee also recently welcomed Professor Nadine Kozak to the team as co-editor of the journal. Nadine is Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and some of you may recognise her from her excellent paper on department store libraries at our work-in-progress events in November 2020. You will have the chance to meet Nadine and hear her speak again at our forthcoming online AGM scheduled for March 2022 (date TBC).

As well as our AGM, the committee is also busy planning our 2022 conference which usually takes place in early July. We do not yet know whether or not it will be able to have any in-person elements, but we are hoping to make it a sociable occasion fit for this year's theme: Space & Sociability in Library & Information History. A call for papers, outlining various contingencies for in-person/online attendance, will be announced soon.

Jill Dye
Chair, CILIP Library & Information History Group

Table of Contents

ISSN 1744-3180 Winter 2021 Series 3, no. 50

The Revolutionary in Disguise

Lenin and Mao as Library Workers

Figure 1. A government-issued photograph from China (1969). During the Cultural Revolution, all libraries were closed, and public and private reading circumscribed. Only a single book, the 'Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung' was safe to be seen with.

At 6am, on a cold Saturday in early May fifteen years ago, I arrived in Minusinsk. I'd been teaching late the night before, so left Krasnoyarsk around ten, and bumped across south-central Siberia in a Soviet-era minibus. For a while, we broke down, in the middle of nowhere, snowbanks and trees all around, the road looking like a track into a horror film. Later, in the early dawn, we passed a prison; rifle muzzles above a high wall seemed to track our vehicle, the only one on the road. I didn't sleep. I needed coffee when we finally arrived, and found a bar, just opening. A handful of broken men shuffled in, asking for vodka and boiled potatoes.

Minusinsk is a town of about 70,000 people, at the confluence of two important rivers. It's an interesting place, but in 2005, seemed to lie half in ruins, its glory days long past. It had, however, an extraordinary museum. In a room of natural history specimens, an old woman pointed toward two large bookcases in a corner. "That's the library," she said. "That's where Lenin worked."

In 1896, Vladimir Illyich Lenin, a young barrister's assistant living in St Petersburg, the leading member of a small revolutionary socialist cell, was arrested and sentenced to three years' exile in Siberia. He lived out this time in the small town of Shushinskoe, about fifty kilometres south of Minusinsk.

In the first thirty years of the Soviet Union, twenty million people passed through to the Gulag; perhaps one in ten died there. Lenin's Siberian life could not have been more different: he hunted, fished, read a great deal, and wrote his first important book. He got married. When I toured his house, another old woman pointed to a wide alcove above the stove and said "That's where Lenin's servant slept."

Lenin also arrived in Minusinsk on a cold day in early May. The next morning, he too visited the museum, where several left-wing exiles had gathered in the library to meet the latest member of their community. Neither the museum's website nor its Russian Wikipedia page note its association with socialist revolutionaries, but it was an obvious home from home for radicals. Like Nikolai Martyanov, who founded the museum in 1877, most of the city's exiles had grown up in the provinces, attended university in Moscow or Petersburg, haunted cultural institutions, and believed in science as a route to social progress. They were obsessed with books. When Alexander Ulyanov, Lenin's brother, was arrested trying to assassinate the Tsar, his group was found to have hidden its bomb inside a copy of Grinberg's *Dictionary of Medical Terminology*. Martyanov did not sympathise with the politics of this rabble of banished intellectuals, but they hardly seemed likely to overthrow an authoritarian polity that had, after all, seen off Napoleon's Grand Army. In the Museum library, he let the young exiles talk politics and gossip. But did Lenin do more there?

"That's where Lenin worked." Is Vladimir Lenin an unappreciated member of our profession? For a long time, I thought he might be. Later Soviet propaganda about the museum seemed to support my assumption. But the evidence is not there. The propaganda is wrong, and the old woman was either mistaken or I misunderstood her. Lenin certainly visited the museum library when he could, and read voraciously, but he was no librarian. And yet, his experiences in Shushenskoe and Minusinsk may have had a profound effect on the libraries serving the third of the world's population who lived under Marxist-Leninist rule in the second half of the twentieth century.

Lenin's idyllic life in Siberia was a singular break from the affairs that otherwise occupied his life. Among these activities was a constant need to read and acquire books, and almost daily visits to libraries. In Shushenskoe, there were neither books nor libraries, and Lenin's frustration can be sensed in letters to his mother and sister. Early on: "I am surprised that you do not write a word about sending me the remainder of the books. It would be a pity if they have not yet been sent." He ends: "Send me all sorts of catalogues, especially of second-hand books, and especially of foreign books." In his next letter to his sister, he mentions his books eighteen times, and asks that she join several Moscow libraries, to borrow their books and post them to Siberia. The badgering continues in almost every letter he wrote in 1897. On September 7th: "What is the library situation like?" On October 12th: "Again about the library." On December 21st: "I did not understand your sentence 'To get into the jurists' library… you must be a jurist.'"

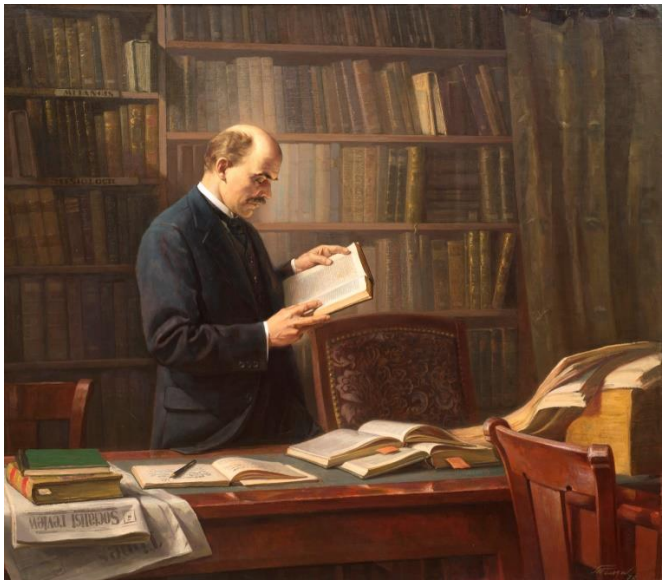


Figure 2. P.P. Belousov, 'Lenin working on the book "Materialism and Empiro-Criticism" in the Geneva Library.' Leningrad, 1978. Copyright: Russian State Historical Museum.

"That's where Lenin worked." After his Siberian exile ended, and his European one began, visiting libraries did seem like Lenin's profession. His wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya, responsible for the central control of libraries in the early

Soviet Union, recalled that when in London, "he spent half his time [in the British Museum], attracted… by the world's richest library and the facilities it offered for study." In Geneva, without tables and chairs, they used as furniture the packing cases which held Lenin's books. There, wrote Krupskaya, Lenin "joined the Société de lecture, where there was a vast library and excellent facilities for work." A bad library experience could turn Lenin off an entire city. Krupskaya wrote of Paris how "the library closed at lunch time. There was a lot of red-tape in the arrangements for ordering books, and Ilyich swore at the library, and while he was at it, at Paris in general." They moved on to Krakow, where the libraries stayed open all day. In his peripatetic life between 1900 and 1917, Lenin used libraries everywhere he went: Berlin, Munich, London, Paris, Geneva, Zurich, Berne, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Krakow.

The young Mao was certainly interested in politics, though his affluent family (unlike Lenin's) were not political. But Mao's affiliations drifted in his teens and early twenties—through republicanism, liberalism, different forms of socialism, and militaristic nationalism. Lenin's reading, as everything in his life, was methodically dedicated to furthering the overthrow of capitalism. Mao's catholic tastes ranged through geography and poetry, from Darwin to Mill. Books kept him from boredom, and granted him freedom in a world of imposed regimentation. Books were always work for Lenin—he didn't read novels. Books were a pleasure for Mao, who wrote poetry throughout his life. Reading was a public activity for Lenin, a very private one for Mao.

Mao moved to Beijing in 1917. Penniless, he wrote to an old teacher, Yang Changji, who wrote in turn to Li Dazhao, the Peking University Librarian, later co-founder of the Communist Party of China. Li appointed Mao "assistant librarian," but his tasks were menial: registering, fetching, and reshelving newspapers. He spent most of his time on the job reading, again without plan or purpose. He read British economists, and was impressed enough to turn his nationalist ire from Europe to Japan. He read Bakunin and became, briefly, an anarchist.

Li took advantage of naïve, impressionable young men from the provinces, paying them almost nothing. Another hungry assistant librarian confided to Mao that the director had said he was "privileged to be able to devour learning. I should not need to eat melons as well." The University's scholars treated Mao worse. He would later say that "to most of them I did not exist as a human being." When Mao attended their lectures, according to sources which may not be trustworthy, China's intellectuals mocked him for his regional accent, and refused to answer his questions. Years later, demonstrating his authoritarian and dehumanising tendency, he told biographer Robert Payne: "I knew then that there was something wrong. For hundreds of years the scholars had moved away from the people, and I began to dream of a time when the scholars would teach the coolies, for surely the coolies deserve teaching as much as the rest."

Li was a key figure in establishing Mao's politics, and there has been a recent upsurge in interest in him in China. It was Li who invited Mao to attend the University's Society for the Study of Marxism (which he had founded), Li who introduced him to Marx's *Communist Manifesto,* and Li whose nascent idea that in a pre-industrial, agricultural society, the peasantry must form the revolutionary vanguard, that formed the backbone of Maoism in future years. But Mao didn't stay long in the library. After less than a year, he left, for a life of revolutionary activity.

In Lenin and Mao's library "work"—Mao the librarian who seemed to care nothing for the library, its users, its collections, or doing his job; Lenin the crypto-librarian who loved precision, organisation, classification—it is possible to see the leaders they would become, the policies they would pursue, the people they had sympathy for, and the people they thought were dangerous.

Immediately on taking power, the Bolshevik government began to centralise, control, network, and expand the nation's libraries. By the outbreak of World War Two, the Soviet Union contained a quarter of a million libraries, containing 450 million books. The USSR had more librarians per head of population than

any nation in history, and Lenin sat at the spiritual and organisational heart of the entire endeavour. Writing on Soviet Librarianship in 1970, Fonotov claimed that "librarians of all ages 'consult' Lenin as they would a colleague living today… every librarian sees in Lenin, the man, the scholar and the politician, an exemplary and undying example of the deep love of books and libraries." The Soviet National Library was named for Lenin. Now renamed, it is still called the Leninka by its users.

On the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, there were only 391 libraries in the country. During the 1950s, under the influence of moderate Premier Zhou Enlai, libraries were built, expanded and organised, mostly on Soviet models. Rural libraries were a particular area of development—the Government decreed that by the end of 1956, there should be 182,960 of them, though nothing like this number were built. Facing resistance by librarians, in 1957, libraries were purged of "bad elements" under the "anti-rightist" movement initiated by Mao. There was also a nationalist, and ethnically-tinged, element to library expansion – the first public libraries in Tibet and Qinghai were not set up until 1958.

But it was during the Cultural Revolution, between 1966 and 1976, that Mao's hatred of intellectuals, born in his experiences as an assistant librarian, reached its apotheosis. The closure, and later destruction, of libraries pales next to the human toll of those years. The Cultural Revolution was a devastating anti-intellectual movement which took inspiration from Mao's theory of continuing revolution and his demands to search out real, potential, and imagined revisionists and counterrevolutionaries. Between 1966 and 1970, all libraries—supposedly the "paradise of the capitalist class"—were shut. Historical and foreign texts were burned. Librarians, labelled the "watch dogs" of imperialism, were shamed and murdered. Chinese-American scholar Lee-hsia Hsu Ting has written how "the Cultural Revolution did almost irreparable damage to Chinese libraries."

Librarianship today is an overwhelmingly left-wing profession. In a New York Times study of political contributions, by profession, to the Bush and Kerry presidential campaigns of 2004, donations by librarians to John Kerry outnumbered donations to George W. Bush by 223 to 1. Might this have something to do with the association between libraries and Mao, Lenin, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Panizzi, and other left-wing radicals? Perhaps. But anti-communist J. Edgar Hoover's first job was at the Library of Congress. Andrew Carnegie, poster boy for the robber capitalists, built more libraries than anyone.

The libraries of Mao's China and Lenin's Soviet Union ended up reflecting the minds of the two men more than any of the Marxist principles the two authoritarian socialist regimes were supposedly founded upon. But arguably, a connection runs the other way too, with the libraries they haunted as young men influencing the political paths their nations would take a generation later.

Dr. Colin Higgins
Librarian, Fellow, and Custodian of Artworks
St Catharine's College, Cambridge University

Seminar in the History of Libraries

The 2020/21 seminars of the University of London's Seminar in the History of Libraries, sponsored by the Institute of English Studies, Institute of Historical Research, Warburg Institute, and the Library & Information History Group, successfully took place on Zoom, with audiences ranging from 35 to 68. Recent seminars have included Professor Timothy Whelan (Georgia Southern University) speaking in March on "Circulating Libraries and Private Networks: Locating Sources for Mary Hays's Female Biography, 1795-1803." He investigated how a single woman of average means gained access to so much non-fiction while compiling the 300 biographies in her work. Brought up as a dissenter, she could

afford to buy books, but when she moved to London's Covent Garden she was close to several dozen circulating libraries; ten of their catalogues were analysed. A close friend was the daughter-in-law of Thomas Hookham, who ran one of the largest such libraries in the metropolis, and Mary may have encountered like-minded people in other libraries.

In April Dr. Alexander Lock (British Library) and Tim Pye (Libraries Curator, National Trust) described "The Melford Hall Manuscript of John Donne Poetry." This hitherto unknown seventeenth-century manuscript of the poems of John Donne was discovered in Melford Hall, Suffolk, and has been acquired by the British Library. He was one of the most transcribed poets of his age, but it is unclear whether this transcription was for private reading or was read aloud.

Meghan Constantinou (Librarian, The Grolier Club, New York) spoke in May on "Private Library Catalogues as Sources for Library History." These represent underutilised resources in library history, not just documenting a particular owner's books, but acting as bibliographies, providing information on lending, organisation, and much more. It was a pleasure to have a glimpse inside this distinguished Club for bibliophiles.

Finally, June saw James N. Green (Librarian, Library Company of Philadelphia) talk on "Memory, Reason, Imagination: Subject Classification in the 1789 Catalogue of the Library Company of Philadelphia." This printed catalogue of the first (and still flourishing) private subscription library in the world features in a curious allegorical painting commissioned by the Library in 1792, and hanging above its card catalogue. The catalogue's unusual subject arrangement is ascribed to Thomas Jefferson and apparently derived from the mathematician Jean d'Alembert's classification of human knowledge according to the three fundamental faculties of the mind. The picture portrays a woman sitting near the catalogue against a background showing emancipated slaves. A thought-provoking composition in a library context.

K. A. Manley

The Library: A Fragile History

LIHG Newsletter Editor's interview with authors Arthur der Weduwen and Andrew Pettegree

This is a sweeping history, a tour-de-force. How did you plan your research to cover so many centuries in one volume, and is there anything you wanted to include but couldn't squeeze in?

This was not our first book writing together, so we could rely on a tried and tested method. We came up with the table of contents over a drink at our favourite St Andrews pub, and later revised it on an airplane journey. We then divided up the responsibility for writing the first draft of the chapters between us, each taking half. We were conscious from the beginning that we could not do justice to every library culture in the world, spread over more than two millennia, and that there would be readers of our book who would be disappointed that we did not mention their favourite library. The truth is that most of the libraries described in our story provide enough interest to fill an entire volume themselves. We therefore tried to pick those libraries that allowed us to explain the broader themes and developments of the library world. We also tried to do justice to the breadth of different types of libraries, ranging from great

institutional libraries to small personal libraries, and everything in between. Of course, we wanted to tell the story of the likes of the Bodleian and the New York Public Library, but we were also keen to complement these with lesser-known examples such as the university library of Tartu (Estonia), the Kirkwood libraries of the Highlands of Scotland, as well as numerous personal libraries, lost and dispersed, that readers could never visit or even imagine. The choices were sometimes difficult, but ultimately we wanted a readable book, one that could still fit within 500 pages.

***When it came to building library provision for rural areas, America once again leads the story, partly because it had by far the largest rural hinterland of the countries that were approaching universal literacy by the twentieth century. France also had a profound sense of its rural identity, but to some extent evaded the issue by offering villagers access to school libraries.* (362)**

Did you come across any examples of library provision coming before universal literacy—rather than swiftly on its heels—in places where a significant proportion of the population couldn't read but nevertheless participated in library life, whether through reading aloud, or lessons, etc?

There have been many examples of library provision preceding widespread literacy. The notion that "if there are books, we will create readers" is one that was extremely attractive to European missionaries in the Americas and Asia, as well as to temperance societies in the goldfields of California, Canada and Australia. It is questionable how successful this notion was and there is little indication that the illiterate participated to a large extent in library life. Libraries sustain readers, but it is schools (and parents) that create them.

You quote Sir Frederick Banbury MP describing libraries as somewhere where, *if the weather is cold, people go in and sit down and get warm* (375) and note that, in sixteenth-seventeenth century Netherlands the first public libraries were *invariably unheated and often ill lit* (188). How often have you found libraries valued for the space and environment rather than their collections?

Very often. When people think of libraries, one of the first things they think of is a building: magnificent stacks, great halls, perhaps a domed ceiling. Libraries are indeed often imposing buildings, but the building does not necessarily tell one much about the books kept on the shelves. From the days of ancient Rome, libraries were often constructed as a lasting memorial to the collector, rather than a public resource (even though the building was frequently sited prominently in public space). The great baroque monasteries of the eighteenth centuries were designed to be awe-inspiring temples, not places where one could read books; much the same could be said of many other institutional libraries. Invariably, the libraries that valued the reader experience over fine frescoes were the best frequented: here we can think of the commercial circulating libraries that allowed borrowers to take books into their own homes, or the subscription libraries equipped with comfortable reading rooms that also functioned also social clubs. The London Library, a subscription library founded in 1841, was established partially because so many readers who visited the British Museum Library could never get a seat.

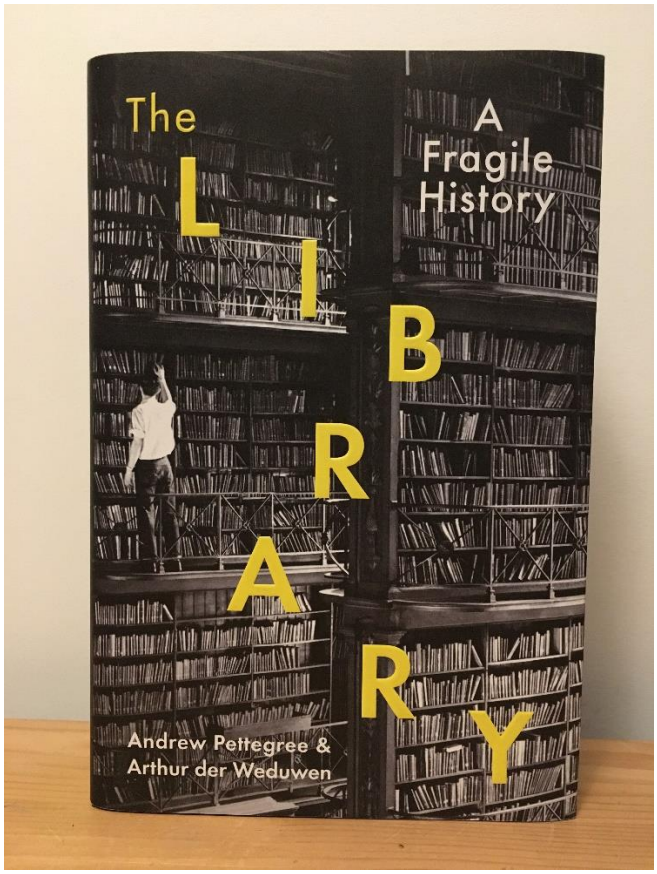
Much of the fragility in library history comes from proximity to disaster: fire, earthquake, war. It is reassuring, in times like these, to hear that *a repeating cycle of creation and dispersal, decay and reconstruction, turns out to be the historical norm* (3). How do you think the pandemic might figure in this pattern?

While we are happily historians of the past, and not prognosticators of the future, the past two years of the pandemic have already provided us with some indications of what lies ahead. First is the fact that the book is doing rather well out of the pandemic: bookshops and publishers are reporting excellent sales, and while we are all spending more time behind computer screens in Zoom meetings, we are also reading more than before the pandemic. Personal libraries are growing and thriving; so too are many community ventures,

such as the Little Free Libraries, housed in old phone boxes or outdoor cupboards, in many suburban and country locations. The picture is less rosy for some institutional and public libraries. Many branch libraries throughout the UK have had their opening hours cut considerably due to the pandemic; when hours are cut, usage usually drops too, and these statistics provide ammunition for further cuts in the future. University libraries have been affected in a different way: although they are used more than ever, they are under increasing pressure to accession e-books rather than physical books. This might seem sensible (students need access to texts, and when lockdowns close buildings, they have few alternatives), but the long-term implications of this shift to digital resources are unknown, and rather menacing. Digital content is often ruinously expensive for institutional customers, and digital reading has been proven to be less effective for student performances and general information retention. Investing in digital rather than physical texts bodes ill for a future in which we will have to watch our energy usage ever more carefully. Who can use an e-book when the lights go out?

You record Boots book clubs working in parallel with pharmacies (377) and early circulating libraries that were attached to bookshops in eighteenth century United States (262). Libraries today are often blended with other services in "community hubs"—what other shops and services, other than pharmacies, have they partnered with throughout history?

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there were many corner shop libraries that were attached to tobacconists or other convenience street stalls. Very often the proprietors of these shops would also lend books out as part of a circulating scheme. Before we began to split libraries from archives, and libraries from museums, these three elements were often part and parcel of the same institution: a princely library was often kept in the same chamber as a cabinet of curiosities, or a chest of valuable muniments. The British Library was until 1972 still formally the British Museum Library; in many other places, the separation of libraries and museums had taken place earlier in the twentieth century. But this should be a reminder that for much of their history, libraries have co-existed happily with other services, public and commercial: the current transformation of libraries into "community hubs" is therefore only the latest incarnation of this tradition.



Pettegree, Andrew and Weduwen, Arthur der, *The Library : a Fragile History,* London: Profile Books, 2021

Finally, I was intrigued to see that Better World Books was included in your acknowledgements. Thank you for drawing attention to the afterlife of library books on second-hand book-selling platforms, and of the value of withdrawn titles as source material for researchers. How does this figure in your observations on neglect and redundancy as constant themes in library history?

The second-hand book trade is a critical pivot in the lifecycle of many libraries. The presence of such a trade often stimulates the building of personal libraries, but also promotes the dispersal of those same libraries. There are few

people who are content to inherit the entire libraries of their family members; libraries can be burdens as much as blessings. Without the second-hand trade, as well as charity shops, it is difficult to conceive how we would recycle the mass of books that we gather in our homes today; institutional and public libraries could never take in even a fraction of them. A lesser-known aspect of the second-hand trade is that there are many books that are never successfully recycled into hands of new owners. When books have sat on the bookshop shelves too long, some booksellers will sell them by weight (generally by the ton) to waste recycling companies. So redundancy continues to shape the fate of books: even with a well-functioning second-hand trade, natural selection will still ensure that many books will not get a second chance.

Prof. Andrew Pettegree
Bishop Wardlaw Professor, University of St Andrews

Dr. Arthur der Weduwen
British Academy Fellow, University of St Andrews

James Ollé Awards

James G. Ollé (1916-2001) was an active teacher and distinguished writer in the field of library history; the Library and Information History Group has offered awards in his memory since 2002 with the intention of encouraging a high level of activity in library and information history.

Individuals may apply for an award of up to £500 each year for expenses relating to a library history project. Examples of what an Award might be used to fund include:

- Access to primary resources, e.g. travel, procurement of scans/photographs, one year's subscription to databases or credits for sources such as birth/marriage/death records.
- Procurement of secondary sources e.g. key reference texts, inter-library loan fees.

Please note that the award is not intended to support conference attendance.

Anyone with a keen interest in Library and/or Information History is encouraged to apply, regardless of academic affiliation, but recipients must be members of the CILIP Library and Information History Group (already, or willing to join upon receipt of an award).

James Ollé Award recipients will be asked to write a report (maximum 1000 words) of the work undertaken for inclusion in the LIHG's Newsletter, and may be invited to present a short paper at an LIHG conference or meeting, such as the AGM.

To apply for the award, please send a short CV, statement of plans and draft budget to the LIHG's Awards Manager. Applications may be made throughout the year.

Potential applicants are welcome contact the Awards Manager with any queries about the award, or to request sample statements/budgets to help with their application.

Dr Dorothy Clayton, Awards Manager, LIHG
Tel: 0161 826 3883; or 07769658649
Email: dorothy.clayton@manchester.ac.uk

Our Region Revealed at the Devon and Exeter Institution

planning and implementing a digitisation project in a small historic library

Figure 1. Almhouses, Exeter

Context

The Devon and Exeter Institution, founded in 1813, was Exeter's first museum as well as a library. Our early members collected artefacts and natural history specimens, including seaweeds, shells, fossils, and even a sledge from Baffin Island. Members also had a keen interest in fine art and amassed a large collection of prints and drawings, most depicting the West Country. The Institution's artefacts transferred from 7 Cathedral Close to Queen Street in 1868 (with other transfers made in 1871 and 1872) to establish the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, or RAMM as it is known today. The books, paintings and works on paper remained at the Institution. The Institution issued a variety of book catalogues and shelf lists, the earliest in 1816 with another published in 1863 on its fiftieth anniversary. The subject categories and shelf locations remain largely the same today—evidence of the earliest members' wide-ranging interests in science, mathematics, engineering, natural history, voyages and travel, art and architecture, history, philosophy, law, and religion. At some point towards the end of the twentieth century, card catalogues were digitised, and their holdings added to records hosted on the University of Exeter's library management system. In November 2020, we

became a member library of JISC, and our books are now searchable on JISC Library Hub Discover. Information on our prints and drawings, however, is somewhat sketchy in comparison. The collection of about 9000 works on paper was never fully listed, numbered, or catalogued and, though previous librarians and members must have rummaged through the artworks from time to time, the collection remained unsung for many years.

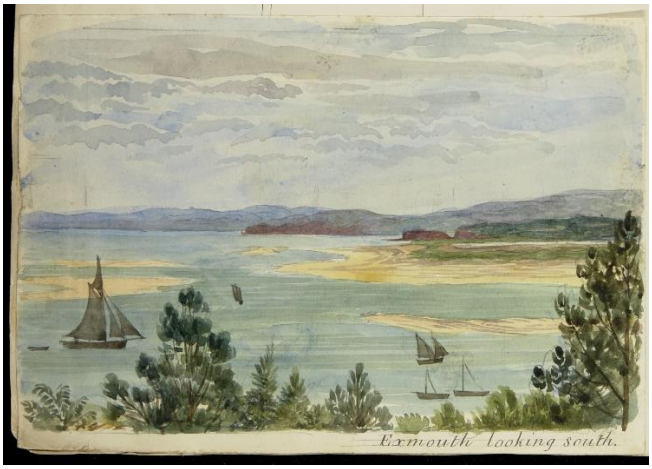


Figure 2.
Exmouth, watercolour by Edward Ashworth

Like many small independent libraries, we operate with a tiny professional staff team, supported by about fifty enthusiastic volunteers of all ages, drawn from the membership. Students come to us for work experience, looking to progress to graduate roles in the heritage sector. Retirees enjoy opportunities to remain connected to their career specialisms—and to find a friendly community of people with shared interests. At the very beginning of our project, a retired local history librarian began to compile an inventory of the artworks on an Access database, recording basic information such as the name of the artist and/or engraver, the date and the subject depicted, and assigning a unique object number and location to each artwork. Other volunteers worked at the conservation studio at the Devon Heritage Centre, cleaning the artworks and placing them in melinex sleeves. However, a far more ambitious project was needed to widen access and participation.

Phase One: the pilot

In the early stages of our project, we were helped by notable local historians who, through the course of their research, had identified pockets of significance within the collection and were able to draft letters of support for our project. With an initial grant from The Pilgrim Trust, we employed a part-time fixed-term Digitisation Project Coordinator and put in place the digital infrastructure to digitise and catalogue the prints and drawings collection, including purchasing PastView, our online collections explorer supplied by digitisation specialists, TownsWeb Archiving. We used data from our Access catalogue to populate the inventory records and employed TownsWeb to undertake a pilot digitisation of 274 artworks and seven sketchbooks—including some of our most important artworks and certainly the most challenging in terms of image capture. We packed up the artworks in September 2019 and received them back, digitised, shortly before the country went into its first lockdown in March 2020. Behind (literally) closed doors, we embarked on our project to make our prints and drawings collection more accessible than ever. In fact, digitisation underpinned our pandemic response: we used the first batch of images creatively to reach out to our membership and the wider community via our website and social media and to offer opportunities for our members to continue to engage with the collections from their living rooms. Online jigsaw puzzles of artworks in our collections were immediately popular, as well as our pilot research callouts inviting people isolating at home to contribute to what we know about our prints and drawings.

Figure 3.
Exmouth, watercolour by Edward Ashworth

Phase Two: review

During the Covid-19 pandemic, we have had to review our current practices and introduce emergency measures to meet the extraordinary challenges of lockdowns and social distancing. We are certainly not out of the woods but, like many libraries, we have already identified "temporary" measures which have improved the way we engage with our members and other users—for example, operating a bookable research service—and we plan to continue them post-pandemic. Some of our members and volunteers enjoyed writing blogs on the collections during lockdown and have continued to do so; our display for Heritage Open Days was curated by a library volunteer. Involving our members and volunteers in the documentation and interpretation of our collections has helped sustain our community over the past year—it's also hugely beneficial to draw on local people who have knowledge of our region. As we plan the next phase of our project, we are reviewing our cataloguing strategy to ensure we are making the most efficient use of resources. With limited funding and part-time staff on fixed-term contracts, we are prioritising scanning artworks so they can be made available online as soon as possible and we will continue to attach images to basic inventory records - there will be time to go back and add more detail later. In fact, once the artworks are visible online, we hope our users will contact us with information about them. In the meantime, with the help of our volunteers, we have created sample catalogue records to demonstrate the level of detail we hope to achieve as our project progresses—for example, adding dynamic metadata for all creators, as well as free-text descriptions of the artworks to convey the sort of information we might expect to find on an exhibition panel or label. To reduce the time and cost of digitisation, as well as the risks involved in transporting artworks across the country (even post-pandemic), we have purchased an A3 graphic arts scanner from BDM Arcscan with a small grant from the Friends of Devon's Archives (FODA). Staff can now scan and immediately upload images onto PastView so every week we will have a new set of scanned images for our users to explore.

Phase Three: the next chapter

With further grants, we are looking forward to completing the digitisation of our collection over the next two years. With over 7000 artworks remaining, we will certainly be busy. But the next chapter will not only see increased online access to the artworks but also more creative engagement and participation as we look to embed our prints and drawings within our learning and engagement programme. We are looking forward to knowing more about what we have so we can do more with it. If you have any questions about our project, we would love to hear from you.

Please visit our website:
https://devonandexeterinstitution.org/
You can also email us:
library@devonandexeterinstitution.org

Emma Laws
Director of Collections and Research
Devon and Exeter Institution

Publications

Dillenburg, Elizabeth, Howard Paul Louthan, and Drew B. Thomas, eds. *Print Culture at the Crossroads: The Book and Central Europe. Print Culture at the Crossroads.* Leiden: Brill, 2021.

Lear, Bernadette A. *Made Free and Thrown Open to the Public: Community Libraries in Pennsylvania from the Colonial Era through World War II.* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021.

Marcum, Deanna B., and Roger C. Schonfeld. *Along Came Google: A History of Library Digitization.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021.

Werlin, Julianne. *Writing at the Origin of Capitalism: Literary Circulation and Social Change in Early Modern England.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.

Wiegand, Wayne A. *American Public School Librarianship: A History*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021.

Library History Essay Award 2022

The Library History Essay Award is an annual prize for the best article or chapter on library history published in, or pertaining to, the British Isles, within the previous calendar year. Introduced in 1996, the award is organized and sponsored by the LIHG and aims to support the publication of research into library history in the British Isles.

The prize is £350.

Submissions should contain original historical research and be based on original source materials if possible. Evidence of methodological and historiographical innovation is particularly welcome.

Authors may put themselves forward for the prize but may make only one submission per year. Any member of CILIP may also nominate a published essay for consideration.

The entries will be identified and judged by a panel of three:

- Chair of the LIHG
- Awards Manager of the LIHG
- External Assessor at the invitation of the LIHG Committee

Nominations (and any queries relating to the award) should be sent to the Group's Awards Manager:

Dr Dorothy Clayton, Awards Manager, LIHG
Tel: 0161 826 3883; or 07769658649
Email: dorothy.clayton@manchester.ac.uk

Deadline for submissions is 30 September 2022

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, Alex Kither, if you would like to have news, events, exhibitions or calls for papers included in the newsletter: 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:

6 May 2022 (Summer 2022)
14 October 2022 (Winter 2022)

Information about events, conferences and bursaries is also disseminated via the CILIP website:
www.cilip.org.uk/about/special-interest-groups/library-information-history-group

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