



INDEPENDENT LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2018-2019

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ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT LIBRARIES ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019

PRESIDENT

Neil Pearson

OFFICERS & COMMITTEE

Officers

The following officers served during the last year:

Emma Marigliano, Chairwoman

Carl Hutton, Treasurer (The Leeds Library)

Kay Easson, Secretary (Newcastle Lit & Phil)

Committee Members

The following served on the Committee 2018-2019:

Darren Bevin (Chawton House Library)

Lisa di Tommaso, (The Morrab Library)

Melanie Duffill-Jeffs (Bromley House, Nottingham)

Thom Keep (The Portico Library)

Margaret Mackay (Highgate Literary & Scientific Institution)

Louisa Yates (Gladstone's Library)

Gary Butler (Gladstone's Library/Regional Groups Co-ordinator)

Serena Trowbridge (Trustee of Birmingham and Midland Institute) and Philip Marshall (Director of The London Library), joined the Committee as co-opted members during the course of the year.

CHAIRWOMAN'S MESSAGE

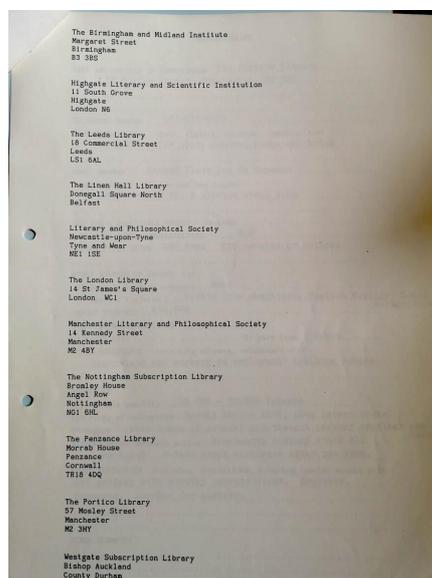
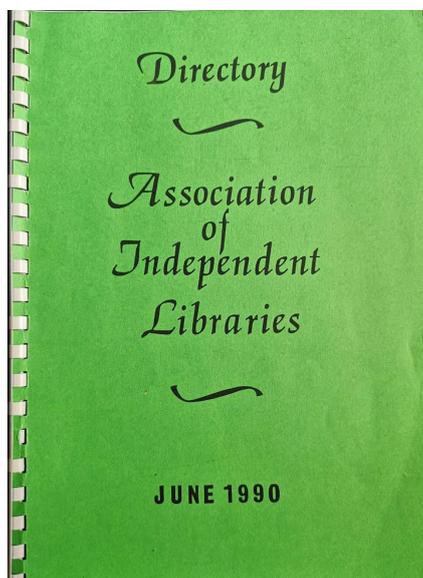
Thirty years ago something quite life changing was created. No, it wasn't the world wide web. It was the Association of Independent Libraries!

Three libraries were at the forefront of the creation of the AIL but, looking through minutes and correspondence, it would seem that Janet Allan, then Librarian of The Portico Library in Manchester, was the driving force behind it all.

I speculate, but I believe that when Janet was asked by the Portico, early in 1989, to visit The Linen Hall Library in Belfast for information gathering she probably thought that this library, along with The Portico and a few others throughout the UK, struggled in isolation. What better, then, than to set up a support group? And this was even before the majority of our libraries liberally used the world wide web and the term 'networking'!

After a few initial meetings between librarians Janet Allan of the Portico, Jo Hunt of the Birmingham and Midland Institute and Geoffrey Forster of The Leeds Library (otherwise known as the Steering Committee) and much corresponding between a number of other libraries it was agreed that an Association of Independent Libraries should be formed and a conference organised. This first formal meeting was held at The Portico Library on 1 July 1989 and a number of libraries were recruited. A questionnaire was sent out to assess what the main issues were for each library but I have not been able to find a copy so far. At this time Janet was not only compiling the first directory but was also arranging a touring (or "mobile") exhibition of photos, objects, books and images to bring about a

greater awareness of the known subscription libraries that came forward and gathering. Unfortunately I've not been able to find any photos of this touring exhibition, nor of the Press Release that Janet sent to all local, regional and national press. But below are photos of that Directory cover and the page listing the first eleven member libraries. I'm delighted to see that all but two are still with us.



The topics for discussion at the conference were Members; Funding; Manpower; Conservation; Publicity; Underuse of our existing resources; Our future role. In today's parlance Manpower becomes Staffing and Publicity becomes PR – and we're still talking about all these things and a few more created by those horizons stretched by our birthday cousins, the World Wide Web, such as Online Catalogues, Digitisation and Access. At this first gathering the name of the association was decided and the Constitution was quick to follow. One of the aims was to attract an influential charitable organisation to champion the Association but what has happened, in fact, is that each library worked to secure their own charity status so that, today, out of thirty five members, thirty four of them are charities.

One or two libraries that were open at the time and were invited to join the AIL have since either closed down or have subsumed into other collections; the Westgate Subscription Library, Co Durham, an early AIL member, closed in 2001 because no-one had visited in three years! The Sion College Library is now housed in Lambeth Palace Library and was the subject of a paper at last year's conference at Innerpeffray.

Jo Hunt was the first Chair, followed less than two years later by Geoffrey Forster (previously Treasurer) who saw the subsequent growth of the Association through more than 25 years. Janet wrote to Geoffrey to let him know that she was stepping down as Secretary as early as 1992 because of other commitments, but Geoffrey's description in his reply to her was that she was "the moving force, with Jo Hunt" and that it was her "drive, enthusiasm, experience and powers of persuasion that had done so much to nurture and sustain [the Association] in these early days." Janet is still an individual member but I think that if she hadn't gone to the Linen Hall Library in 1989 we wouldn't be celebrating our Pearl Anniversary this year. And it can really be said that we've gone from strength to strength and growing still. Our name may have changed but Janet's enthusiasm and drive is still running through our veins as we are being recognised more each day as libraries that are setting standards.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members

As you will see from this, our 2019 Annual Report, it's been a busy year for the Independent Libraries Association. Since last year's Annual Conference, held at the impossibly beautiful Library of Innerpeffray in Perthshire, your Committee has held its regular meetings at member libraries all over the country, most recently -- and for the first time in my Presidency -- at the London Library. I'm delighted that this wonderful institution, in recent years something of a sleeping giant among our members, is now fast becoming, with the participation of Director Philip Marshall and his team, one of the most enthusiastic and active members of the Association. The London Library's help in preparing for the Combined Membership Libraries Group conference, due to take place in London in September with representatives of many sister organisations from the United States in attendance, has been invaluable, and Philip has also taken a keen interest in our ongoing plans for the appointment of a Development Officer to look at ways in which we could co-ordinate a response across our whole membership to the problems presented by the need for both conservation and digitisation which affect us all. I'm very grateful to him. Organisations like ours, with members of widely differing sizes and corresponding influence, can only benefit from the active participation of the very biggest of its brothers.

Our next Annual Conference will be held on June 7th-9th at the Devon and Exeter Institution -- nearly five hundred miles from last year's Conference venue of Innerpeffray. Nobody can say we don't cover the ground. But the ILA Committee is keen to visit still more of its member institutions, and is aware that at the moment the choice of venue for its quarterly meetings tends to be made from the Libraries whose staffs most regularly attend those meetings. Please do get in touch if you don't currently have representation on the Committee but would like to host us in the future: almost all your current Committee members are fully house-trained, and our biscuit requirements are modest. We very much look forward to hearing from you, and to having you play an ever more active role in your Association.

Happy browsing,

And all good wishes,

Neil Pearson

COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2018-2019

Four committee meetings were held during the year in the following institutions: Bromley House, Nottingham, the Leeds Library, the Devon & Exeter Institution and the Newcastle Lit & Phil.

EVENTS

Adventures in Archiving, Winter Symposium, The Portico Library, 16th January 2019

In an ever-evolving digital age, institutions with archives are having to reconceptualise how they develop and catalogue their material, and the ways in which they engage with audiences. We are all grappling with questions that concern how archival collections can remain relevant. For example, how can special collections and historic libraries, which traditionally contain and preserve print-based material, adapt most effectively to the changing digital environment? How can we improve and expand methods of resource discovery to meet the expectations of digitally literate users? In January 2019 The Portico Library held a hugely successful Winter Symposium, sponsored by Heritage Lottery Fund and the Independent Libraries Association, which explored new

developments in the archiving sector and what the future holds for its systems and processes, whilst scrutinising established standards and best practice. The Keynote Speaker was Naomi Korn, specialist in GDPR and archives.

Here are just some of the responses to the day which give some indication of how well it went and, indeed, for the need for our libraries to host most mini conferences on those areas which are most widely called for and, at the same time, form a Regional Group Activity.

- *"Independent libraries are brilliant and the work they're doing to grow in both relevance and accessibility is super cool. Super super cool."*
- *"Cor! What a great day: inspiring case studies, top insider tips, cracking people, exciting future plans, an excellent lunch AND home with a very stiff gin by half-seven. Absolutely glorious work by The Portico: thanks to everyone there today!"*
- *"My head couldn't be more buzzing with ideas, thoughts and new knowledge. Thanks to The Portico and the brilliant speakers for such an open and insightful day. Can't wait to come back and explore the polite literature and occult collection."*

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Association currently stands at 30 institutions. We are currently working hard to recruit new institutional members, as well as individual supporters.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Association returned a net surplus of £1055.40 for the year. This was achieved through modest expenditure incurred during the year. The most significant expenditure was linked to the AGM, delivery of a seminar sponsored by the Association held at the Portico Library in the Winter and maintaining of the ILA website domain name.

An overall increase in subscriptions alongside receipts of £425.00 from fees for last year's AGM assisted in returning the healthy surplus. In response to a query at that AGM, the Association covered a modest increase in expenses incurred by the ILA Committee. It is anticipated that in future years further increases in the payment of expenses will be accommodated as currently the costs of conducting Association business by members of the steering group are absorbed either individually or by the Library or institution that the Committee member represents.

There are 30 institutional subscriptions for the year, an increase of 4 from last year. The balance in our Bank Account for the Association at the end of the financial year was £10,197.28. Detailed accounts are presented on page 22 of this Report.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE & AGM 2018

Thanks to a very generous donation from Sir James Scott of Rotherfield Park we are able to offer bursaries to students and researchers of library history and development. The first two were awarded to Jessica Hudson (Sion Project Cataloguer at Lambeth Palace Library) and Mhairi Roberts (PhD candidate at the University of Stirling) to attend the Conference in June 2018 and an amalgam of the reports they kindly provided is presented here. To read these in full please visit our News and Events on our website.

(Mhairi Roberts' extracts are shown in Italics)

When imagining a weekend conference, the prospective delegate does not usually predicate sitting in the scorching Scottish sun, overlooking the Perthshire hills in the grounds of a seventeenth-century library; yet this was the reality for those of us lucky enough to attend the 2018 annual meeting of the Independent Library Association.

The 2018 Annual meeting of the ILA was this year hosted by [The Library of Innerpeffray](#) and the [Leighton Library](#). Entitled *Past, Present, Future: the People in Independent Libraries*, the general tenor of the conference was one of sharing and collaboration – through networks of librarians and academics, as well as our communities and audiences who help share and engage with our cultural heritage. This year's speakers represented a variety of institutions both large and small, who delivered talks covering numerous facets of libraries and their histories – reflecting the sheer diversity of the bibliographic community.

Opening with Michael Osborne and Robin Davies representing the Leighton Library, we were told of the strenuous efforts being made to serve a growing network of modern users in an historic building. It was interesting to hear how historic libraries face the issues of modern demand and how this could be achieved, such as shaping the physical structure of the space to accommodate growing visitor numbers and initiatives to engage with the wider community (including tourists).

People were at the centre of the first paper by Robin Davis, which followed the twentieth-century rejuvenation of the Leighton. Its restoration was a long drawn out process, which relied on the perseverance of people who wanted it restored, and on the local community.

James Hamilton informed and entertained with his discussion of the [Signet Library](#) and its people. “War is no excuse”, focused principally on the (sometimes comic) attempts of the former Librarian John Minto to recall books from the front during World War I or from the bemused and horrified relatives of soldiers. James reminded us of the rich tapestry of individuals who make up the library community, from fleeting visitors and long-term users to staff.

The importance of understanding and reconstructing the history of individual libraries was stressed in the next paper by Jill Dye. Entitled “For the benefit of...?” Jill shared her research on the borrowing registers of three libraries; Innerpeffray, Leighton and Orkney. She argued that in order to use the registers as evidence of user habits, it is critical to understand the history of a library, the availability of books, and how access to the library impacted the borrowing habits and choices of users. As a PhD candidate working in collaboration with Innerpeffray library, Jill's research also illustrated the benefits of Independent Libraries and scholars working together.

Day two of the conference opened with Neil Pearson (President of the ILA) speaking of his lifelong passion for books. Identifying the challenges faced by libraries, he spoke of his hopes to establish an “across the board initiative” to help members tackle conservation and funding issues by strategizing with the John R. Murray Charitable Trust. *In the coming year Neil is eager to recruit more libraries to the ILA and grow the community.*

Kelsey Jackson William's keynote “Bibliographer's, Book Historians and Independent Libraries” discussed the mutual advantages of collaboration between independent libraries and academics, and the exciting opportunities, growth and future for both, if they work together. Kelsey highlighted the transformative impact of digitisation on how scholars engage with out of copyright texts; the focus on books now goes beyond their content to the book as a physical object. Consequently, the value of independent libraries has only increased as they are rich archives of material evidence, which book-historians and bibliographers would love to work with. Both libraries and academics benefit from access to a different and wider community of people which helps to secure the impact

and future of both. Kelsey's paper brought attention to the importance of the interdisciplinary nature of this year's ILA conference, as people from different professions had the opportunity to discuss their professional priorities and learn from others; the first step towards future projects together.

Sue Clutterbuck's talk "Restoring and Repairing the [Iona Cathedral Trustees Collection](#)" described the projects undertaken to modernise the library. Tracing the library's history from 563 CE to the present, The Iona project gives a flavour of the cross fertilization of living heritage and the role of the library – the place of the library within its community and its ability to both deliver content and grow with its people.

The benefits of reaching out to a larger community were further emphasised in Ken Gibb and Jessica Hudson's paper on "[Sion Provenance Project: Reaching for the Crowds.](#)" Ken and Jess presented a template for libraries with similar project aspirations and detailed the problems they had encountered when starting from square one. Their creative solution to the problem of identifying a high volume of marks of provenance was crowd sourcing for answers in a collaborative online space (a WordPress blog). With the community aspect the project continues to grow and to become a bigger resource as more people become involved and share their expertise.

After the AGM, attendees had the unique and enchanting experience of seeing a live performance of Linda Cracknell's play "The Lamp" in Innerpefferay; the library is inspiration behind the play and where it is set.

Sunday morning began with Louisa Yates's paper on "Gladstone's Friends," which offered advice on starting a friend's group for a library, and the advantages and pitfalls of different models. Louisa demonstrated that a "non-transactional model," whereby friends of the library donate philanthropically and expect nothing in return, is a brilliant way to reach new audiences of people who don't necessarily read but want to contribute to the library. It can also help foster a global community of friends who want to contribute to the survival of a unique and special library, even if they are too far away to visit.

Having restructured, Gladstone's have been able to raise their membership figures from 200 to 2000 as well as pulling in more financial support without imposing financial restrictions (such as minimum donations requests) or incentivising.

John Crawford spoke about the library of [Leadhill's Reading Society](#), founded in 1741 as the first working class subscription library. Charting its history including the establishment of the first rules and statement of mutual improvement in 1743 and the closure of the mines in the 1930s, John gave an overview of the peaks and troughs that the library has endured, before moving on to discuss the modern strategy being pursued to keep it in the public consciousness and safeguard the collections.

A novel concept for custodians of historic libraries is the establishment of an entirely new library, but this is precisely what Helen Williams has had the privilege of doing with the [Library of Mistakes](#). Housed in Edinburgh, the library was founded to promote the study of financial history and it is hoped that it will one day become the "world's best business and finance library".

Lynette Cawthra ended the conference with a paper on the inspiring couple, Ruth and Eddie Frow, who founded [The Working Class Movement Library](#), and the exciting future for the library after receiving Lottery Heritage funding. The couple did not just found a library, but a monument to working class people's drive for improvement, which now inspires Lynette as she collects and purchases new material for the library.

Conferences such as this are fertile ground for development and a fantastic opportunity for everyone from librarians to postgraduate students to create connections – both intellectual and social. It is thereby worth urging others to attend similar events in future.

Overall the conference reminded us that together we can not only learn new strategies to tackle issues facing libraries, but work together to sustain libraries and their collections – keeping them as a valuable and current resource ripe for study. Conferences such as this are fertile ground for development and a fantastic opportunity for everyone from librarians to postgraduate students to create connections – both intellectual and social. It is thereby worth urging others to attend similar events in future.

The two beautiful locations for the conference only further highlighted the unique experiences independent libraries have to offer, and special thanks must be offered to Honorary Custodian of the Leighton Library Michael Osborne, and to Lara Haggerty, Keeper of Innerpeffray Library, and to the volunteers at both libraries who welcomed us.



The Library of Innerpeffray



Leighton Library, Dunblane

To know more about all the Libraries mentioned in and contributing to this report please click on any link (in blue) if reading on-screen.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD AT THE LIBRARY OF INNERPEFFRAY ON SATURDAY 2 JUNE 2018**

Present: Emma Marigliano (in the Chair), Kay Easson, Carl Hutton, Peter Ford, Louisa Yates, Gary Butler, Margaret Mackay, Christine Plummer, Jane Riley, Neil Pearson (President), Jill Dye, Lara Haggarty, Keith Manley, Lynette Cawthra

1. Apologies for absence.

These had been received from Darren Bevin (Chawton House Library), Thom Keep (The Portico Library), Anne Howard (Devon & Exeter Institution), Lisa di Tommaso (Morrab Library) and Melanie Duffill-Jeffs (Bromley House Library).

2. Minutes of the meeting of the AGM held at Chawton House Library on 3rd June 2017

Apart from a minor amendment (inserting Thom Keep's full name) these were proposed as a true and accurate record of the meeting by Margaret Mackay and seconded by Jane Riley.

3. Annual Report 2017-2018

In presenting the Annual Report, the Chairwoman commented on how encouraging the reports from individual libraries were, and that the success and level of activity was very much due to the hard work and commitment of staff.

In response to a question regarding the recruitment of new members to the Association, the Chairwoman and President acknowledged that more should be done in this regard and it was reported that the President would be spending time during his second year in office pursuing possible new members. It was noted that the rebranding of the Association has helped to make more people aware of its existence. The adoption of the Report was proposed by Lynette Cawthra and seconded by Louisa Yates.

4. Annual Accounts 2017-2018

The Treasurer reported that subscription income was lower than anticipated due to some institutions having not yet paid their 2017-2018 fees. Louisa Yates noted that income and expenditure from the 2017 Annual Meeting at Chawton House had not been included. The Treasurer would look into this and in the future these figures would appear in the Accounts. John Osborne (Leighton Library) raised the question of costs not recorded in the accounts, which were absorbed by individual libraries (e.g. posting and photocopying). He emphasised his view that in-kind contributions should be recorded.

The adoption of the Accounts 2017-2018 was proposed by Peter Ford and seconded by Gary Butler.

5. Election of Officers and Committee 2018-2019

The following had presented themselves for re-election:

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| <u>Chairwoman</u> | Emma Marigliano |
| <u>Secretary</u> | Kay Easson |
| <u>Treasurer</u> | Carl Hutton |

Committee:

Darren Bevin, Chawton House Library (eligible for re-election)

Margaret Mackay, Highgate Literary & Scientific Institution (eligible for re-election)

Louisa Yates Gladstone's Library (eligible for re-election)
Melanie Duffill-Jeffs, Bromley House Library, Nottingham (new appointment)
Thomas Keep, Portico Library Manchester (new appointment)
Lisa di Tommaso, the Morrab Library (new appointment)
Proposed by Carl Hutton and seconded by Jane Riley, the Officers and Committee were duly elected.

6. Proposed changes to the Constitution

The Chairwoman explained that these proposed changes reflected discussion by the Committee on the subject of making it clear that the Association wished to encourage existing as well as potential new members to be as relevant as possible in the wider community (i.e. not exclusive). After some discussion, the proposed changes were agreed, proposed by Louisa Yates and seconded by Margaret Mackay.

The changes are as follows (in bold):

[1] The aims of the **Independent Libraries** Association are to *educate and inform* the public of the location and role of independent libraries **and to encourage access to the public wherever possible** *encourage* members to promote themselves as a part of our national cultural heritage and as valuable educational resources *maintain* contact with members **and public alike**

[2] **The objects** shall be to

- *act* in the interests of members of the Association in discussions and negotiations with national, regional or local organizations or other relevant agencies
- *arrange* meetings relevant to members' interests
- **encourage and assist its members in offering access to the public in accordance with the requirements of charity status**
- *assist* where practicable in preserving buildings, books, archives, art and museum collections owned by member organizations
- *encourage* full use and exchange of their special resources to their members **and to the public at large**
- *engage* in lawful activities in furtherance of the Association's objects
- *produce* and issue periodic and other publications
- *promote* and manage appropriate social activities **which may be open to communities of researchers and the public at large**
- *provide* a liaison between members; seek supplementary finance and aid for the conservation of buildings, books, archives, art and museum collections

7. Subscriptions 2018-2019

The suggestion to freeze subscriptions for another year was proposed by Carl Hutton and seconded by Louisa Yates. It was agreed that individuals should be referred to as "individual supporters" in future.

The rates are as follows:

Full Membership: £60.00
Affiliate/Overseas Membership £20.00
Individual Supporters £10.00

Concessions are available on application to the Committee

8. Regional Groups and HLF update

Gary Butler reported that he had an informal meeting with Thom Keep at the Portico Library earlier in the year with regard to the North West group, and this would be followed up with a view to creating an events template that could be rolled out to other regions. Delegates were reminded that events could be shared via the ILA website the Facebook page and that links/information should be sent to Margaret Mackay at the HLSI.

Jill Dye noted that some discussion was needed in relation to the way in which the ILA and the HLF exchanged information about members in the light of GDPR.

9. Future Annual Meetings

There was the possibility of UCL hosting a future AGM and conference on behalf of the London-based ILA libraries. In addition it was noted that the Devon & Exeter Institution had expressed interest in being a host. Anne Howard from the DEI had requested that future meetings should not take place during the English half-term holiday.

10. Any Other Business

Peter Ford expressed concern that many member libraries were not represented at Annual Meetings. This was noted.

Louisa Yates reminded delegates that anyone could approach non-member libraries with a view to encouraging them to join the Association. Carl Hutton suggested that it would be helpful if the benefits of membership could be succinctly articulated. Neil Pearson indicated that he had drafted a letter to be sent to prospective members. This would be discussed/agreed at the next Committee meeting.

The Chairwoman thanked Peter Ford for his many years' commitment to the Association as a committee member, as well as Anne Howard, a more recent member.

She then concluded the meeting with a sincere vote of thanks to all at the Leighton and Innerpeffray Libraries who had made the weekend such a success. Particular thanks were expressed to Jill Dye, Lara Haggerty and Louisa Yates.

MEMBERS' NEWS

The following reports were received from member libraries:

[Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution](#)

The library of the BRLSI has been very fortunate this year to receive two donations which complement the existing collections. The first was a set of eleven volumes of *James Bell's System of Geography*, published in 1833 by Archibald Fullarton & Co, Glasgow. These volumes need a limited amount of conservation so our resident volunteer bookbinder will soon start work on them.

The second donation was from a volunteer of many years ago who contacted us to say that his father had a collection of over one hundred books on Bath and he would be pleased to donate them to the BRLSI in gratitude for the hours of enjoyment he had spent volunteering for us. One very significant book in this collection is John Wood the Elder's *A Description of Bath*, published in 1765. This is in its original binding so we have to decide how best to conserve it. The other books in this donation will be added either to our historic collection where they will be available for research or to the members' library where they will be accessible for loan.

At the beginning of 2019, we held a highly successful two-month exhibition featuring 'Extraordinary Women of Bath', highlighting the achievements of women over a thousand years of Bath's history. This was designed and set up by a talented volunteer to whom we are very grateful. In conjunction with the exhibition, another member has designed a trail which we are selling so that visitors and residents can explore the places in our city connected to these women. This will soon be available in print and digital versions. Both the exhibition and trail were compiled using books only from our library, making use of the extensive range of material we have on Bath.

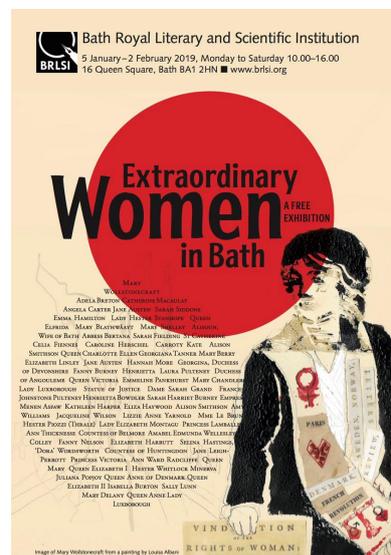
For the BRLSI summer exhibition this year, our Collections Manager, Matt Williams, decided we should invite members to choose their favourite objects from the Collections and present them as our guest curators. This has given us an interesting range of artefacts and interpretations to display, some of them using books from the library.

The volunteer of our Adopt-a-Book scheme, an experienced bookbinder, has set up a display of examples of over twenty different bindings, from John Calvin's *Commentary on the Psalms* of 1564 to Sir John Lubbock's *Monograph of the Collenbola and Thysanura* of 1873. Alongside the books is a set of bookbinding tools with a test piece which demonstrates the different sewing techniques used for turning folded signatures, or sections, into a solid book block prior to covering.

Another of our guest curators, a retired academic pharmacologist, has chosen as his theme 'Materia Medica'. He has selected books and herbaria sheets from our library that illustrate some of the plants used for medicinal purposes, giving a background to their use historically and currently.

One of our Directors has chosen to display framed sheets from our herbarium of the *Ferns of Mussoori*, dated October 1867, but still in excellent condition. From our research, it seems very likely that this is a herbarium compiled by William and John Herschel, grandsons of the famous Bath astronomer, William Herschel, when they lived in India.

The BRLSI is situated in central Bath and if members of the Independent Libraries Association are visiting the city we would be very pleased to show them around our library and, if the room is not in



use, to take them to see our plaster cast of a complete specimen of a Plesiosaur mounted on the wall, one of only three in the world. If they are able to email us in advance we could have the tea and coffee ready. Our email address is reception@brlsi.org.

Rosemarie Davies

Bromley House Library

In 2018-19, we continued progress towards replacing our 268 year-old roof, and thereby securing the fabric of the building for generations to come. We completed the development stage of the work and final funding from Historic England was agreed, with the work scheduled to commence on 1st April and complete before the end of 2019. In addition to replacing the roof, the work gives us an opportunity to refurbish the attic floor, to make it more suitable for books and library members - effectively giving us more space. The work would not be possible without the financial support of Historic England and the generous donations from our members, supporters and local trusts. In anticipation of the building work generating extra interest in the library, we carried out another 'refurbishment project' in 2018 - updating our website and branding.

Another successful year for the library saw us reach a total of 1700 members and we added over 1000 books to stock once again. The library continues to 'buzz' with groups, talks and events - very much a social space as well as a reading space - and just as relevant to the local community now as when we began in 1816. We refreshed our business plan and recruited new trustees to the Board. One significant staffing change during the year was the retirement of our Gardener, Elizabeth Robinson, after over 20 years of service. After the builders vacate the site, we hope to be able to develop the garden, which is one of only two remaining in the city centre and continues to be an oasis of calm and contemplation.

Melanie Duffill-Jeffs, Library Director

Chawton House Library



Our main exhibition at Chawton House for 2018 was 'The Art of Freezing the Blood': *Northanger Abbey*, *Frankenstein* and the Female Gothic. The exhibition marked 200 years since the publication of Jane Austen's and Mary Shelley's novels and also featured other female writers including Ann Radcliffe and Clara Reeve.

In October 2018, a new virtual library was launched (www.readingwithausten.com) that explores the books available to Jane Austen when she visited her brother Edward at Godmersham Park in Kent. As a result, our main exhibition for 2019 (which opened in March) is called 'Jane Austen's Reading' and focuses on books that were available to her and informed her writing including the very books that could have inspired scenes in her novels.

In the library, we also have a display 'Writing Women's Rights' that explores those writers from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that argued for the rights of women. The display includes first editions of Mary Astell's *A Serious Proposal* (1694) and Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).

In February 2019, Chawton House appointed a new CEO, Katie Childs, who led the 2018 First World War Centenary commemoration at the Imperial War Museum and has had a prolific career in the heritage sector.

Dr Darren Bevin, Librarian

The Devon & Exeter Institution

As we prepare to host the Independent Libraries Association 2019 Annual Conference and celebrate its 30th Birthday in our glorious library building, we reflect on the events of the last year.

The Devon and Exeter Institution continues to thrive and 2018 saw a substantial increase in membership. In addition, our membership is now more diverse and increasingly involved in our activities. The DEI is a wonderful building and, housed within it, a unique and authentic research environment. Gradually, different aspects of our collection are being revealed. The collection plays a vital part in our partnership with the University of Exeter and our outreach activities to schools and various visiting community and local history groups.

2018 has seen a consolidation of our partnership with the University. The library team supported second year Geography students undertaking the “Global Lives” module which encourages the students to research the lives of local people whose impact had a wider global reach.

We have also offered internships to University students and this has resulted in interesting research being undertaken for us and, again this year, one of our Interns going on to successful employment as a graduate library trainee at Pembroke Library, Cambridge.

Our focus has been on reorganising the collection of books but 2019 sees a greater focus on the prints and drawings. Work continues on this vast and important collection and for the past few months a team of volunteers supported by colleagues at the Devon Heritage Centre have been cleaning and encapsulating prints, drawings, watercolours and brass rubbings with a protective covering.



Our volunteer team have already counted the items so far located and the grand total to date is 9,000. The next piece of work is the organisation of this collection and we are considering the best structure to ensure that the collection is easily searchable in the future. The aim this year is to digitize this marvellous resource making it accessible to all our members and beyond.

The Saturday programme of talks delivered by members on aspects of the collection that interest them continue to be well attended, as does our monthly Bookworms Junior Members’ club. Our new Saturday Programme for 2019/20 includes an expanded range of events, presentations and displays aimed at attracting both new and established members to visit us on a Saturday.

Turning to our future development, over the past six months we have conducted a number of member consultations. While (thankfully) not a referendum or peoples’ vote, this exercise has certainly given the trustees and staff an indication of how members would like to see the Institution develop, what the priorities are and the aspects of the Institution that people hold most dear.

We have also conducted consultations with our key partners at the Cathedral, Royal Albert Memorial Museum and the University of Exeter and potential members – that is, those attending events at the Institution who have not yet joined us.

We have focussed our attention in three areas: The needs of the programme; the needs of the collection and the needs of the building. We have now created a development proposal and will be approaching grant making bodies this year to assist us in our future aspirations for the Institution.

Anne Howard, Librarian

Gladstone's Library

As I look back on the last report we submitted (2016-17), I see that Gladstone's Library had just submitted an HLF application for a new building, was musing over all things social media and had just moved journals to an open-access space to test usage figures. In 2019 the Library's Warden is still working towards that HLF bid, now reformulated and with new architects; we're looking into live-streaming certain events online; those journals have had a new lease of life in their new home.

Our last report noted a much longed-for rise in collection use, and this continues through a variety of strategies and projects. We're currently in the middle of a three-year, Carnegie-funded digitization project which will see several thousand of Gladstone's letters and books available to browse online. This project has brought about new rights management processes which mean greater clarity for archive access and use: as a result, use continues to climb. With reinvigorated circulation data, the team are now working on a de-accessioning project, weeding the collections for the first time in almost a decade.

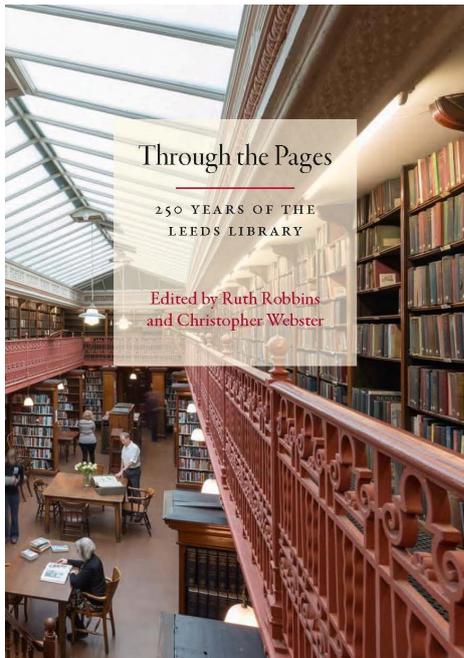
But where would we be without people? Our association with the ILA continues to yield new connections, information, and inspiration, with new members on the committee, at conference and in the wider community. We continue to train recent graduates, helping them to make the transition into library and information studies. That programme is also nearing its tenth birthday and we are extremely proud of the fifty(ish) young people who have gone on to great things from their time at the Library. And of course, we continue to welcome our users. In the last eight weeks over forty people a day have visited the Reading Rooms – and we only have twenty-eight seats! By this time next year, the team are hoping against hope that we can write 'our new building'...

Louisa Yates, Director of Collections and Research

The Leeds Library

The last 12 months have been a momentous period in the recent history of The Leeds Library. 2018 saw the Library mark its 250th Anniversary with a 12 month programme of events, exhibitions, talks, performances, readings and initiatives entitled 'Through The Pages'. Whilst in 2019, the Library led the development of the first ever Leeds Lit Fest which, after taking place in March, was immediately shortlisted for the Best Lit Fest in the national Saboteur Awards, the results of which will be announced on 18 May.

Alongside the celebrations for the 250th anniversary, the Library also made a commitment to preserve its collections with over 700 books being conserved during 2018; to its members in increasing access throughout the building by opening up the Library's basement which contains 40,000 items for full public access; to fully completing the Library Foyer project.



The programme for the 250th comprised over 100 events and included book readings by Simon Armitage, Tony Harrison, Joanne Harris, Gary Younge, and Rob Cowen - whose talk as part of the Wildlines nature writing festival was broadcast live over local radio.

The Library worked closely with several theatre companies to bring a number of unique theatrical performances to the Library. This included Red Ladder Theatre, Visible Fictions, Pure Expression and The Leeds Playhouse which all brought performances inspired by libraries and using the Library building as part of the stage set. The Library also commissioned the award winning poet Mark Pajak to produce and perform a ghostly poetry walk that started and finished within the Library itself. The commission was timed to link into the nationwide Museums at Night Festival and followed a pattern for the year where we scheduled events and projects to tie-in with other local,

regional and national initiatives including Heritage Open Day, National Writing Day, World Book Day, International Women's Day, National Libraries Week and Leeds Light Night - which saw a specially commissioned animated film celebrating 100 years of Votes for Women.

The Library opened up its collections to members of the public like never before. The Through The Pages exhibition ran for 10 weeks including Sundays, and welcomed over 5000 visitors to the Library. Alongside this public exhibition, the Library team curated a series of monthly exhibitions which focused on different aspects of the Collections.

The increased activity, in turn, meant that the Library featured in a number of local and regional media articles and the membership of the Library passed the 1000 members mark for the very first time.

Since the beginning of the year, we have developed a programme of creative writing courses, led the development of the Leeds Lit Festival as mentioned above which has received widespread acclaim, and continued to invest in the Library's collections and ensure that the members of the Library continue to be our primary focus.

Moving forward, plans are also in development for further investment in the facilities, furniture and furnishings of the Library and the Trustees are starting work on assessing the possibility of securing additional city centre premises in order to properly house its collections and further develop the outreach activity that the Library increasingly delivers.

Carl Hutton. CEO.

[The Leighton Library, Dunblane](#)

One of the highlights of 2018-19 was co-hosting the annual ILA Conference in June, together with Innerpefferay Library. The conference was a great opportunity to show off the Leighton Library to visitors from around the UK. We are glad that a few more people now know about us!

We have also benefitted from the attention of a Wikimedian at the University of Stirling. During the summer a Masters student undertook a project to upgrade Wikipedia entries for the University's Archives and Special Collections, as well as the Leighton Library.

There continue to be researchers interested in the Leighton Library's books and manuscripts. The early borrowers' registers are becoming a focus for research, and scholars continue to be interested in the provenance of the books.

The 17th century library building requires considerable maintenance. There are plans for repair work to start in 2020. We have also recently drawn up an emergency plan.

Helen Beardsley, Honorary Librarian

[The Literary & Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne](#)

As ever, the Society presented a wide programme of lectures, readings, concerts and other events. In order to augment benefits of membership, a number of members-only events and activities were arranged during the year. These included a Spanish food and drink evening, a Jane Austen afternoon tea, visits to the Leeds Library and to Palace Green library at the University of Durham, as well as a pre-Christmas social evening in December.

We were one of the many venues for The Great Exhibition of the North, a 12 week festival which took place between June and September 2018. Our contribution was *A Light Bulb Moment*, celebrating the achievement of Sir Joseph Wilson Swan, as well as new technology in the form of graphene lighting.

Running concurrently with the Great Exhibition of the North was the Society's own exhibition, *The Imaginary Museum of the North*. This was a collaboration between the Lit & Phil, November Club, Museums Northumberland and Newcastle Bridges School, and was supported by a grant from the Sir James Knott Trust.

The idea behind it was to celebrate the fact that the Lit & Phil developed the original Newcastle Museum which included natural history specimens and objects hitherto unseen in the North of England. The exhibition blended fact and fiction and was designed to be an entertaining experience for a family audience. The library had 10,000 more visits during the period of the exhibition than the same period the previous year.

The Imaginary Museum's exhibits included items borrowed from the collection of Berwick Museum and Art Gallery. These represented the type of items that would have been found in the original Newcastle Museum: artefacts from ancient Egypt and natural history specimens. There were also objects "left behind" by famous lecturers such as Oscar Wilde, Millicent Fawcett and Gertrude Bell. Many objects on display were loaned by staff, members and friends of the Society, such as Sybil the Dog, Basil the Baboon, various objects allegedly pertaining to the supernatural, and women's shoes from China. Objects created as part of the Creative Journeys project by the Newcastle Bridges School were also integrated into the exhibition.

The Society's pool of volunteers continues to grow and they do much to sustain the life of the Society. The tasks they perform are various and include serving in the coffee hatch, leading tours, greeting visitors, and helping with lectures and concerts.



The Visitors' Book again reflected our global appeal, with entries from people from countries including Venezuela, Vietnam, Moldova, Lithuania, Argentina, Paraguay, Mexico, Ukraine, Slovakia, South Korea, Hong Kong, Hungary, Sri Lanka, Kuwait and Costa Rica.

Kay Easson, Librarian

[The Morrab Library, Penzance](#)

The Morrab Library has seen a significant amount of change in the last twelve months. 2018 saw the retirement of our Librarian Annabelle Read, after thirty years. The new Librarian, Lisa Di Tommaso has been in post since May, arriving slap bang in the middle of the Morrab's bicentenary celebrations. We enjoyed a wonderful and successful 200th year, with a variety of events including lectures, music, story-telling, workshops, book launches, tours and poetry. The Library welcomed a large number of our members to the library and attracted many new ones as well at these events, and enhanced our reputation and recognition across the region. Throughout all of this, we also survived two major floods in the building, causing extensive damage to the structure, but thankfully sparing our collections.

The Morrab also welcomed a new President, Michael Grandage, CBE. Michael is a producer and director who lives and works in Penzance. He runs his own highly successful international company (MGC) directing theatre and film in the UK and the US.

The Library received a generous donation from the Hypatia Trust in 2018. The Elizabeth Treffry Collection, named after the 15th century heroine who repelled French invaders in Fowey, is a remarkable collection of books, manuscripts and archives relating to women in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Library Trustees have approved the project to begin to digitise the library's card index of the book collections. We aim to get all of our book holdings online over the next few years. We believe it is an important and exciting way forward for the Morrab to help ensure its longevity, and is perhaps one of the most significant steps in its history.

We received a grant from the National Archives to engage a qualified archivist to visit and review our extensive archival collections. We enjoyed a visit from Heather Roberts who as well as consulting, also works part-time at the Royal Northern College of Music, who provided a range of useful advice to us as to how to move forward with managing our archival collections, with a particular view to making them available on the National Archives 'Discovery' catalogue. We have recently added our first records to this - a significant achievement!

We are looking forward to building on the work and achievements of the last twelve months and ensuring the Morrab Library remains an important and relevant resource for West Cornwall in the coming years.

Lisa di Tommaso, Librarian

[Plymouth Proprietary Library \(PPL\)](#)

Taking the brave and difficult decision to sell the library's property in North Hill, home to the institution since its original building was destroyed in the War, was only the start of what has proved to be an extremely demanding feat of organisation, physical effort, tenacity and sheer determination. Relocating over 20,000 volumes, removing and refitting heavy oak shelves, cataloguing and rearranging the stock were the major tasks, but there were still the basics – reorganising utilities, insurance, council tax, safety checks, not to mention opening the library to our

faithful members as soon as possible. Thanks to the stalwart members of the committee, however, our wonderful volunteers and the cooperation of the library assistants, we're fully operational and ready to continue as a vibrant, forward looking institution.

Our new home is a large, converted church hall, with lovely Gothic windows and high ceiling, airy, light and with quiet nooks and comfortable chairs for browsing. The books are fully accessible on the ground floor and there's even free parking. Sadly, difficult decisions had to be made regarding reducing the stock, but we now have more focused collections including History, Biography, Classic Fiction and Classic Crime. A new constitution will bring us up to date with contemporary practice and we look forward to continuing and expanding the important contribution the library has made to Plymouth's cultural life since its foundation in 1810.

Elaine Henderson

[The Portico Library](#)

2018 marks The Portico Library's first full year as a charity and what a year it has been. In February, the Library was successful in applying for a Sharing Heritage project with the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). With the guidance of our cataloguer Callum Procter, The Portico was able to tidy, classify and catalogue the Library's archives for the first time. Stored in the attic, situated behind the clock once tended by chemist John Dalton, the archives are now searchable through our online catalogue along with our printed collection. As part of the project, The Portico partnered with the Independent Libraries Association to host a Winter Symposium on the topic of managing small archives. The event proved to be a success, with several representatives from ILA institutions taking part. The Portico is grateful to the Association for its support.

Later in the summer, the Library was successful in a second NLHF bid, but on this occasion for a much larger Resilient Heritage project. The funds have given The Portico the opportunity to plan for a sustainable future by establishing a sound governance structure, scoping out what is needed to preserve the building and options for its use; how much improvements are likely to cost and where we might look to for funding to implement our plans. The final outcome will be a ten-year plan that will be delivered in 2019. Crucially, both projects would not have been possible without our newly acquired charity status and we are grateful to our membership for agreeing to make this happen.

Alongside our NLHF work we began work on our Ecology programme, a Zochonis Charitable Trust funded project to help raise awareness about pollution in Manchester and the importance of environmental education. Working with members of Greater Manchester Combined Authority and local artists we were able to use the Portico's books on natural history, ecology and botany in preparing protest placards for a panel discussion at the Library, which included Mayor Andy Burnham.

In October, the Library hosted the ambitious *Spirited* programme, a charity sponsored exhibition and series of events that celebrated the work of lesser known young women who fought for suffrage. This brought a series of feminist events to the Library and we welcomed several outstanding activists for talks and discussions, including Helen Pankhurst and Nimco Ali. As part of the partnership, the Library was left with legacy materials, notably a new set of bespoke exhibition display units. These versatile frames allow us to exhibit 2D and 3D items and artworks alongside books and other objects.

The Portico Sadie Massey Awards, our reading and writing prize for young people, continued to grow in 2018 and the number of submissions grew to 620 from schools all over the North and even further afield. The accompanying educational workshops also reached over a thousand students in the region. The year also marked an important juncture for The Portico Prize for Literature. Absent

for over four years, successful partnership discussions with The Writing School at Manchester Metropolitan University has meant that plans are in place for it to return in 2019.

Finally, throughout the year our new Quarterly publication shared the results of members' and partners research, upcoming exhibitions and events. Together with our new website, dedicated staff, trustees and volunteers we have been able to encourage a record number of people to join the Library and enquire about The Portico's history and holdings.

Thom Keep, Librarian

[The Working Class Movement Library](#)

Voting for Change, a joint National Lottery Heritage Fund project with the People's History Museum running from 2014 to 2019, has enabled us to acquire materials relating to campaigns such as the one for women's franchise. The gem is the bound volume of *The Woman's Dreadnought*, Volume II covering 20 March 1915 to 18 March 1916, edited by Sylvia Pankhurst, successfully bid for at auction. (this was succeeded by *The Workers' Dreadnought* in 1917, likewise edited by Sylvia, of which we also have volumes) Additionally we have been able to purchase a first edition of Shelley's *Masque of Anarchy*, and many other items.

Our major exhibition of the year celebrated the centenary of (some) women getting the vote, and accompanying events included a day conference, and students from a local secondary school sharing creative reflections on the women's suffrage movement in relation to contemporary female activism with their performance *Forward, Sister Women!* Compared with 2017, the number of Reading Room visitors in 2018 was up by more than a half, email enquiries were up nearly 15%, and events participants up by a similar amount, with 30 different events over the year.

The Library's followers on Twitter have increased to nearly 6,200, and 'likes' on our Facebook page have increased to 5,500. Our Instagram account followers have more than doubled to over 1,000 since last year and our Pinterest followers have also increased significantly. We continue to have a full complement of library skilled volunteers and a waiting list of people seeking work experience.

We were very pleased to get a grant from the Salford University Advantage Fund to undertake a pilot digitisation project over the summer, working on our Spanish Civil War collection in partnership with Salford University students and academics.

Work is still continuing on a major project to eradicate the damp in our cellar. The project will have major benefits such as increasing our storage capacity, as well as ensuring vastly improved storage conditions for the precious material stored on the 0.7kms of cellar shelving. The first phase of the project (installation of a new boiler) has been completed, and the second phase (installation of an environmental management system) is currently awaiting Listed Building Consent. Subject to this being obtained we expect this work to be completed by August 2019.

Lynette Cawthra, Library Manager



INDEPENDENT LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION

| Revenue Account to 31 March 2019 | 2018/19 | 2017/2018 |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| Income | | |
| Subscriptions | | |
| Library | £ 1,650.00 | £ 1,270.00 |
| Individual & Overseas | £ 50.00 | £ 100.00 |
| Annual meeting | £ 425.00 | £ - |
| Events | £ - | £ - |
| Donations | £ - | £ 990.00 |
| Bank Interest | £ - | £ - |
| Miscellaneous | £ - | £ - |
| Total Income | £ 2,125.00 | £ 2,360.00 |
| Expenditure | | |
| Committee expenses | £ - | £ - |
| Meetings | £ 517.06 | £ 94.55 |
| Events | £ - | £ - |
| Publicity (including website) | £ 250.00 | £ 2,230.00 |
| Photocopying, postage | £ - | £ - |
| Grant | £ - | £ - |
| Miscellaneous | £ 302.54 | £ - |
| Total Expenditure | £ 1,069.60 | £ 2,324.55 |
| Surplus/-deficit for the year | £ 1,055.40 | £ 35.45 |

| Balance sheet at 31 March 2017 | 2018 / 19 | 2017 / 2018 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Current Assets | | |
| Cash at bank | £ 10,197.28 | £ 9,141.88 |
| Debtors | £ 140.00 | £ - |
| | £ 10,337.28 | £ 9,141.88 |
| Current Liabilities | | |
| Net current assets | £ 10,337.28 | £ 9,141.88 |
| Financed by: | | |
| Revenue account opening balance | £ 9,141.88 | £ 9,106.43 |
| Surplus/-deficit for the year | £ 1,055.40 | £ 35.45 |
| | £ 10,197.28 | £ 9,141.88 |

Signed:

**I certify that the above Accounts are correct
and in accordance with the books and records
of the Independent Libraries Association.**

Carl Hutton
Hon Treasurer

Date:

Independent Examiner



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