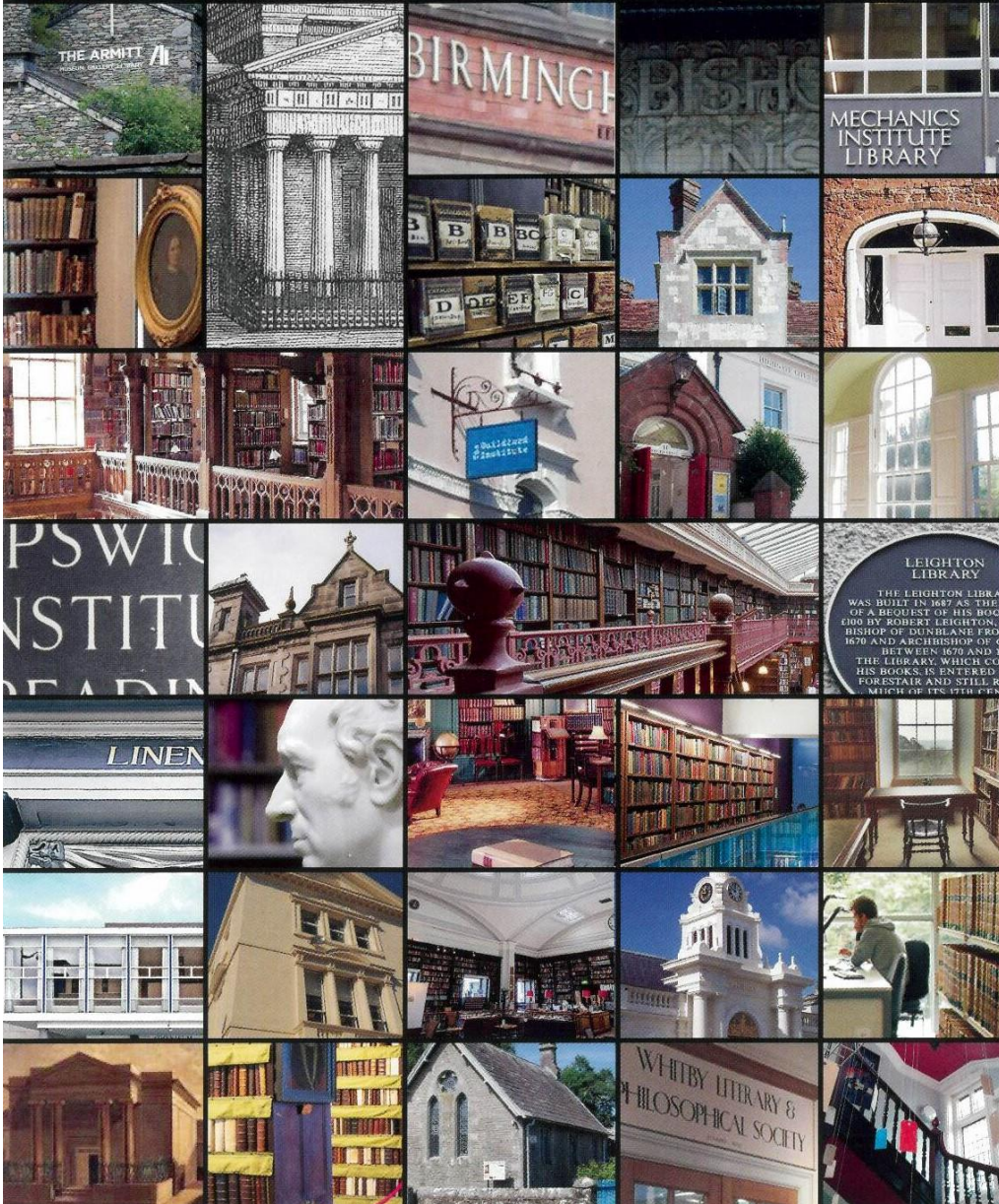


INDEPENDENT LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION



ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2022-2023

ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT LIBRARIES

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

PRESIDENT

Neil Pearson

OFFICERS & COMMITTEE

Officers

The following officers served during the last year:

Emma Marigliano, Chairwoman (to February 2023)

Kay Easson, Secretary (Newcastle Lit & Phil)

Paul Ranford, Treasurer (Supporter/Friend)

Committee Members

The following served on the Committee 2022-2023:

Tom Corrick (Oxford Union Society Library)

Lara Haggerty (Innerpeffray Library)

Melanie Duffill-Jeffs (Bromley House, Nottingham) to June 2022

Thom Keep (The Portico Library)

Philip Marshall (The London Library)

Lisa di Tommaso, (The Morrab Library)

Serena Trowbridge (Birmingham and Midland Institute)

Louisa Yates (Gladstone's Library)

Co-opted: Matthew Brooke (The London Library)

CHAIRWOMAN'S MESSAGE – EMMA MARIGLIANO

And it's 'goodbye' from her.

I'm so sorry I can't join you over the Conference and AGM weekend as an unavoidable and busy family event is taking place at the same time. I would, however, like to share my final 'Chairwoman's Message' with you as I step down from my role and to say 'Arrivederci', which translates literally into 'To seeing you again'.

When I first came to work for The Portico Library in Manchester, way back in October 1987, I was witnessing the birth of the Association of



Independent Libraries (AIL). The Librarian, Janet Allan, was a driving force behind its intended purpose – ‘Aims and Objectives’ as it’s now known – which was simply to give support and recognition to those libraries that, by many, were not really counted as ‘proper’ libraries, as well as the people who worked in them in virtual isolation. Of course, some of that was self-inflicted. Many independent (subscription) libraries still held on to their exclusivity as private and even proprietorial institutions, even whilst they may have held charitable status. But a few of the librarians – from Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Birmingham specifically – saw a future where their collections could be regarded as Special and reflective not only of their own city’s history but also of the emerging awareness of a wider cultural and regional heritage. More importantly, they wanted to open up their collections and their histories. But first of all, they said, let’s get together and be there to support and develop what we do from day to day. The people who help our libraries survive – the staff, committees and users – don’t mirror the administration of public and academic libraries (because of the independent status they enjoyed) and were often out on a limb as to where to go for help and advice. The AIL made it possible for those people to ask, discuss, assist and it grew from its initial 12 or 13 libraries to its current 40. When I became Librarian of the Portico Library in 1996 I was very keen to continue Janet’s work on the AIL and I joined the Committee straight away, enthusiastic to become involved. Much later on Geoffrey Forster, Librarian of The Leeds Library and Chair since the AIL’s early days, stepped down in 2014 after more years than he might care to remember, and I became the new Chair – eager as ever to make the AIL and its member libraries relevant to their communities of readers, users and all visitors, from schools and universities to artists and film-makers.

The change of name came about because the acronym sounded a bit painful – but, admittedly, it now it could sound a bit political (as our President once observed!). Maybe one is better than the other, however, as it’s true to say that some of our libraries are not new to some measure of political intrigues and upheavals. Look at your histories and your people to know more about that! Consider, too, that librarians are often seen as subversive within their role as guardians of a bibliographic galaxy ...

But with the turnaround of letters (ILA) came a turnaround of activity too. Our annual conferences, occasional seminars and workshops – online and on site – became more expansive and have become a welcome feature not only for our own member libraries but also for the growing number of other library professionals who want to share their own experiences and knowledge and to learn from the particular challenges of independent libraries, now acknowledged as part of the wider library community.

The biggest challenge in living memory, of course, was the COVID pandemic. For independent libraries it was that much worse because now, as ever, funding came from their own efforts which depended almost entirely on their activities and usage, which came to a virtual standstill during this time. But we need to remember that the majority of the surviving ILA libraries have been through more than 250 years of revolutions, riots, two world wars as well as an even more deadly pandemic (Spanish Flu) at the start of the 20th century. ‘Challenge’ is not a new concept for our libraries and, more importantly, our libraries have come through some pretty awful setbacks, not to mention the individual ones of

selling, downsizing, haggling and adapting for survival through various financial setbacks. Our libraries are definitely tough cookies!

I've been Chair for a small fraction of independent library history, and through it all it's been such an absolute delight working with everyone on the Committee, meeting colleagues in the very many libraries I have visited (a particular pleasure for me) and I've hopefully made some difference to how the ILA and its libraries are now regarded within the cultural communities and the public at large. But I've decided that nearly 10 years was already two years over the allotted time-span of presidents and prime ministers (!) and it was the right time to step down and give others the opportunity to create innovation whilst meeting different challenges. I have been dedicated in my work for the Association and I will look forward to devoting more time to my other passion of research in the visual interpretation of Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. Certainly more hellish than the challenges of the ILA! I know that my successor will be just as dedicated and will ensure that the Association continues to grow and to do what it set out to do – support its libraries and its people wherever it can – and they will also know that it can only be done with the assistance of its Committee and managers, boards, administrators and volunteers of our many member libraries and all those people who work to make them work as well as the public at large who is becoming ever more aware of the existence of such amazing libraries.

I can't sign off without giving special thanks to Kay Easson (amazing Hon Secretary throughout my time as Chair), Louisa Yates and Lisa di Tommaso (tireless Conference/Event organisers), Paul Ranford (eagle-eyed Hon Treasurer), and Neil Pearson (a real hands-on President and ambassador if ever there was one!) as, without them, my work would have been so much harder.

Finally, I hope I can complete my tour of the ILA libraries – which keeps getting stretched to more than the handful that had been left a couple of years ago – and say hello to you in my 'civvies'.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS - NEIL PEARSON



ILA Conference and Annual General Meeting 2022 at The Birmingham and Midland Institute

SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT INDEPENDENT LIBRARIES

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the second day of the ILA Conference of 2022, hosted wonderfully by the Birmingham and Midland Institute. The Institute was founded in 1854. I was founded in 1959, and it shames me that it's taken me all this time to get here. This is my first visit, and getting to know the library over the course of this visit as I have, I now fully realise this is my loss.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Serena Trowbridge, Samina Ansari and Dan Parsons, aided by their excellent catering staff, for all their work in preparing the venue for our visit and for laying on

our tour last night, and the Conference Team of the ILA, Louisa Yates and Lisa di Tomaso, for organising and presenting such a tremendous programme for this year's Conference, with its theme: Spreading the Word about the Independent Library. As a body, the Independent Libraries Association itself has had some success in this area recently. This year we've recruited another four independent libraries into ILA membership: so welcome to the Centre for Elective Home Education Research and Repository in Exeter; to the MCC Library, based at Lord's Cricket Ground; to the Powysland Club Library in Montgomeryshire, Wales; and to Doctor Williams's Library in Gordon Square, London. These new recruits bring the number of ILA member libraries to forty; and with the MCC library now safely recruited, our half century can't be far away.

I suppose, as President of the Independent Libraries Association, I should be automatically enthusiastic about spreading the word about our libraries. But I have a confession to make: I have to fight the temptation to keep as quiet about them as possible. I love the peace and calm I find in them. I love the renewed ability to think that I seem to acquire when I settle down for the day to work in one of them, or just read in one of them, as I feel myself beginning to decompress. I love the sense of continuity they provide; how they've managed to endure in some cases over centuries; how entire cities have developed and redeveloped around many of them while the libraries themselves continue on their way undisturbed, providing knowledge, and relaxation, and solitude to those precious few who have somehow found out that they're there. That they're still there. As a private user, I love the semi-secret success of our libraries; as your President, I have to fight the temptation not to share the secret with other people for fear of changing them somehow.

Here's another confession. Until I took on this role, most of the ILA's member libraries were a secret to me, too. I knew of the existence of very few of them. I humbly offer two excuses for this: urban camouflage, and geographical remoteness. I've spent a lot of time over the years working in Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool. At no point in all that time was I introduced to, nor did I stumble across, The Portico in Manchester, or The Leeds Library, or the Athenaeum in Liverpool. All three sit right in the middle of their respective cities; all three have been absorbed into their urban, civic centre environments so completely, so seamlessly, that unless you know they're there they're almost impossible to spot. I never did spot them, and in all that time no-one ever told me about them. By no means all of our libraries are to be found in the big cities, of course. During my term of office I've stayed on more than one occasion at the beautiful Gladstone's Library just outside Chester — I mean, a library you can spend the night in, how good is that — and I've also spent time at the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, whose building is only yards from the Bath Theatre Royal where I've often worked without ever having stepped across the road to explore before. I have no excuse for this — but I'm on safer ground when it comes to Innerpeffray, a heart-stoppingly beautiful library in a heart-stoppingly beautiful setting, described on the Library's website as 'a very rural location'. Having been there, I can vouch for this. It is very rural. You really, really have to want to get to Innerpeffray. And you really, really should. So at last, over the last few years and with the secret finally revealed to me, I've got to spend a lot of relaxing and infinitely rewarding time in all these member libraries, and

more — and, President or not, I'll be spending a lot more time in them in the future. So.....why would I want to tell anyone about places that to me are perfect just as they are? Why would I want to encourage more visitors to converge on these areas of outstanding literary beauty? Well, I feel I should do everything I can to overcome my innate selfishness and tell as many people as possible about the existence of these libraries because of the pleasure and enrichment I've enjoyed as a result of someone telling me.

I was a latecomer to the idea of a library as a resource. I didn't go to university which is where, for the library user and undergraduate writer of essays, this idea usually takes root. For a long time into my adulthood I thought of a library not as a resource, but as a sort of glorified stockroom, a place you went to get a book you didn't own, couldn't buy, but wanted to read. This is, of course, one service a library provides, but I took a long time to realise it doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of what a library is, or should be, doesn't begin to scratch the surface of what a library can do. That full realisation came about through three separate encounters with libraries over several years. One happened when I started my rare book business; this revelation was a digital one. As you all know and have known for years, online records, both of individual institutions and massed records gathered together in single search engines from databases of libraries and booksellers and auction houses all over the world have radically changed the way libraries function today, and that's also true of the antiquarian world. I have no time to go into detail on this now, and I'm not sure you'd want me to, but resources like Archives Hub and COPAC and WorldCat and ViaLibri have made so much information available so much more quickly, and so much more comprehensively, that the technology has now redefined the books and other artefacts my business deals in. Being able to know where almost everything is, and in what numbers, and where, and all with a single digital search has redefined, for example, the notion of rarity. Degrees of rarity which used to be indicated through a calibrated series of adjectives — uncommon, scarce, very scarce, rare — are now more likely to include a precise number: 'WorldCat lists six copies', '3 examples in UK'. There is a new — and almost unused — definition of extreme rarity in the antiquarian world: 'No copies online'. But more gratifyingly, I think, other types of information you hope to get from libraries still takes time and application to tease out; word needs to spread from library to library, and then from library to user.

This happened to me in a big way a few years back. Fifteen years ago I wrote a book. Some of you know I collect rare books as well as deal in them, and have a particular interest in the English-speaking writers who were living and working in Paris between the two world wars. I wanted some more information about a particular publisher working in Paris at that time, and went to the British Library to find it. It turned out the book I was hoping to find there hadn't been written; four years later, I'd written it myself. During those years, a legion of librarians in London, Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin, Paris, New York City, New York State, Austin in Texas and London again had all, separately but together, spread the word to me, had all helped show me what libraries, and librarians, can really do when a deep-dive research project meets a library with a holding that's been waiting a long time to meet you. It was brought home to me most memorably, and most movingly, during a week I spent in the library

of Cornell University in New York State. It was summer, school was out, and I had the place pretty much to myself — so it was memorable already. The Paris publisher I was researching had published a book in 1931 called *Jam to-Day* by a writer called Marjorie Firminger. It isn't very good, and Firminger never published another book. Set in the 1920s world of the Bright Young Things, in *Jam to-Day* Firminger lampooned all of her fashionable London friends, all of whom promptly dropped her when the book was published. Now a social exile, Firminger was thrilled and flattered when the novelist and Vorticist painter Wyndham Lewis began to take an interest in her. He was fifty and famous, she was thirty and starstruck, and in a catastrophic oversight, she failed to notice that what she took for a genuine interest in her on Lewis's part was actually just a novelist's desire to fillet her of gossipy information about the people she knew, and little more. She made the effort to read his books, she tried to understand Vorticism, and she basked in what she thought was his attention, and affection, but which was no such thing. What she eventually got in return from Lewis was awful. He used her as the basis for a character called Valerie Ritter in a 1932 novel of his called *Snooty Baronet*, and cruelly lampoons her as a talentless hanger-on, with neither brains nor beauty, and without the wit to work out that her friends don't like her. Not surprisingly Firminger was traumatised by the book. She tried to publish another novel in which she defended herself in the face of Lewis's attacks. But no-one was interested in publishing it, and she put down her pen and ended her literary career at the age of thirty-three. She'd alienated all her friends, and her now ex-lover had humiliated her. Thereafter she lived a long, mostly solitary and rather unhappy life, the late years of which she spent reading histories of the 1920s and searching for mentions of herself. In 1976, when she was in her late seventies, a newspaper article publicly identified her for the first time as the model for Valerie Ritter, and in her old age she was mortified all over again. She died shortly afterwards. Despite Lewis's treatment of her, Marjorie Firminger never completely rid herself of her infatuation with Wyndham Lewis, and for the rest of her life her common sense struggled to overcome a strong streak of emotional masochism.

I'd arrived at Cornell because a librarian elsewhere had alerted me to the presence of a small collection of papers from the estate of Marjorie Firminger which had been placed there on her death. She had no direct connection to the university. The papers had been placed there because Cornell was where Wyndham Lewis's papers had been placed when he died in 1957. Marjorie wanted to place her small collection of personal papers where Lewis's literary archive was kept, in the hope that, since no-one had listened to her during her life, someone might take notice after her death. On my first day at Cornell I called up the Firminger papers: a single manilla folder containing a manuscript with the title *No Quarter*. It had been found in her flat after her death and deposited at Cornell in accordance with instructions in her will. It's undated but seems to have been written in the 1960s, and tells the story — her story — of her affair with Lewis. With hindsight she looks back on what she'd missed at the time: how badly he'd treated her, how silly she'd been, and how, many years later, and in spite of everything, he was still under her skin and somewhere in her heart. Placing this small bundle of pages in the library where Lewis's archive was kept was her way of being with him forever, of creating a

literary mausoleum. She won a small victory in the end, as her papers are now catalogued at Cornell as part of the Wyndham Lewis archive.

At Cornell, when I returned her manuscript to the front desk at the end of the day, I checked the library details for Marjorie's folder. Since it had been placed there more than forty years before I arrived, no-one had ever requested it, no-one had read it before me. No-one had heard Marjorie's account of her relationship with Lewis until a series of libraries spread the word, and introduced her to me. And as a result of that introduction I was able to tell her story for her. She wasn't a good writer, and in all honesty she probably wasn't the brightest. But she didn't deserve Wyndham Lewis — no-one deserved Wyndham Lewis — and I was happy that I got to tell the world, on Marjorie Firminger's behalf, that Wyndham Lewis was a scumbag.

These slower, more low-tech benefits of libraries and library research are what I love most — and what I love most about independent libraries. I know you're all keen to replace your card indexes, for example, but really — take your time. I saw the excitement on your faces last night when you were all let loose among the stacks here, and it wasn't an excitement generated by order and technology. It was an excitement generated by an absolutely incomprehensible cataloguing system that no-one outside this building has ever heard of, and a feeling that anything could be anywhere. Sometimes it's nice to get there slowly. Satnav is great, but you're never going to stumble across a village pub in a pretty, out-of-the-way spot. The chance find is what we lose when we insist on getting there quickly. I had a chance find yesterday, by the way, about five minutes after I got here. Samina took me upstairs to show me the many distressed and disbound volumes. *The Myth of Hiawatha and Other Oral Legends*, published by Lippincott of Philadelphia in 1856 — two years after the founding of the Institute, by the way, so it probably arrived here new. But that's not what was extraordinary about it. That sort of thing doesn't happen online.

My third and final reminder of the importance of spreading the word about independent libraries, of course, has come during my time as President of the ILA. The work you do, for your subscribers and for each other, is extraordinary; the difference you make to your communities is vital and incalculable; and, as this Conference is showing, the sheer enjoyment you get from finding things out, from being curious, from knowing more, is a glorious example of the good you do in your communities, and it's an example I wish more of our species would follow. I hope you find your second day of Conference as engaging and rewarding as the first. Listen, learn, have fun, and thank you for listening.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2022-2023

These meetings were held on 25 April (by Zoom,) 25 July (at the Tavistock Subscription Library and by Zoom), 28 October (at Thomas Plume's Library in Maldon and by Zoom) 2022, 6 February 2023 (at The Leeds Library and by Zoom), and an extra meeting took place on 9 March by Zoom. After the 6 February meeting in Leeds, Nell Hoare from Friends of the National Libraries joined the meeting by Zoom to talk about the funding available from FNL, as well as from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust. It was an extremely interesting and useful session.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022

This took place at the Birmingham and Midland Institute on 13 and 14 May 2022, and it was deemed a great success, with in-person engagement back to pre-pandemic levels. The programme included keynote sessions from Guy Rippon, Head of Foundation and Community Partnerships at Aston Villa Football Club, and Professor Mark Towsey from the University of Liverpool. Both talks emphasised the benefits of partnership, whether that comes through social and community networks or the UK's academic research councils. In addition there was an impressive array of talks from libraries around the world. The full programme can be found on www.independentlibraries.co.uk

Sincere thanks go to the BMI staff and trustees for hosting the AGM and Conference, and to the organisers from the ILA Committee: Louisa Yates, Lisa di Tommaso and Matthew Brooke.

ILA CONNECT

The Recovery Group convened during the pandemic offered support to members via Zoom. Those committee members instrumental in its founding hope that the initiative encourages as many libraries and individuals as possible to come together to not only explore ideas and issues, but to provide support to each other as well. It was launched as ILA Connect at the 2022 conference closing session, and an initial programme of activities was subsequently announced and delivered. Three sessions were held, the first being an update on the Conference for those who could not attend, where highlights of the talks were presented. In October, a well-attended session was held on the subject of cataloguing, and the particular issues for independent libraries. November saw a fascinating discussion about getting started with archiving collections, particularly those specific to libraries – administrative records such as borrowing and membership records. It is hoped that ILA Connect will continue to grow as an important forum for independent libraries to stay in touch, and continue to offer support and advice on a variety of topics.

MEMBERSHIP

At the end of the year membership stood at 40 organisations and 4 individual supporters. During the year, the Association welcomed new members, the World Rugby Museum and the Neilson Hayes Library in Bangkok.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The cash account for the financial year to 31 March 2023 is appended to this Report on page 16.

The Association generated a net cash surplus £1,786.09 for the year, compared to a surplus of £1,534.91 in the previous year. The improvement arose mainly from the collection (as reported last year) of membership subscriptions for the year 2021-22 from member libraries recovering from payment delays caused by the COVID pandemic as well as a generous donation from Sir James Scott (Supporter). Some face-to-face meetings resumed in 2022, although Committee meetings continued to be held with some attending via Zoom, keeping associated travel and subsistence costs down. The balance in the Association's bank account at the end of the financial year was £13,618.26.

Paul Ranford FCA, ILA Treasurer

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

**Draft minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Independent Libraries Association
held on Friday 13th May 2022 in person and via Zoom
at the Birmingham & Midland Institute.**

Present:

Emma Marigliano (in the chair), Kay Easson (Hon. Secretary; Newcastle Lit & Phil via Zoom) Neil Pearson (President), Samina Ansari (The Birmingham & Midland Institute), Matthew Brooke (The London Library), Robert Curphey (Marylebone Cricket Club Library), Alexandra Foulds (Gladstone's Library), Penny Gardiner (Tavistock Subscription Library), Isobel Goodman (Gladstone's Library), Ian Harker (The Leeds Library), Beth Howell (Devon & Exeter Institution), Michelle Johansen (Bishopsgate Institute), Hugh Maguire (Dr Williams's Library), Philip Marshall (The London Library), Paul Ranford (Hon. Treasurer via Zoom), Anje Rohde (Bromley House Library), Lisa di Tommaso (The Morrab Library), Serena Trowbridge (The Birmingham & Midland Institute), Helen Williams (The Library of Mistakes), Emma Yandle (Chawton House), Louisa Yates (Gladstone's Library)

1. Apologies for absence

Nicola Davies (The Royal Philatelic Society London).

2. Minutes of the AGM held at the Leeds Library and online on 24 September 2021.

These were taken as read, their acceptance proposed by Louisa Yates and seconded by Lisa di Tommaso.

3. Matters arising from the minutes: there were none.

4. Annual Report 2021-2022

The Chairwoman noted that the timetable for preparing the report had been tight and several contributions had been last-minute. All contributions had been gratefully received, however, and all demonstrated the wealth of activity taking place across the Association's member libraries. Contributions from new members such as Dr Williams's Library, Powysland Library and the MCC Library were particularly noted. The Chairwoman also noted challenging projects such as the Morrab Library's cataloguing initiative. The Chairwoman concluded her remarks by noting the resilience of the ILA's libraries over the past 2 years, and the wealth of knowledge and experience "in the genes" of their staff.

5. Financial Report & Accounts for 2021-2022

The Treasurer, Paul Ranford, began by complimenting all the libraries that had contributed to the Annual Report, noting that it made inspirational reading. In presenting his report he confirmed that the Association's finances were on a sound footing. At the end of the year the closing balance was £11,832. The year had shown a surplus of £1,534, compared with a deficit of £744 last year. This deficit had been due to the Press Reader subsidy. Subscriptions were continuing to be received. Looking forward, as the Association moved out of the pandemic with hopefully more face-to-face events and meetings taking place, expenditure would likely climb, but such was the current financial situation, the Association had sufficient funds for the foreseeable future.

Neil Pearson asked if the Association was committed to continuing Press Reader subscriptions. The Chairwoman said that was not the case, although she was aware that at least The Portico Library (and possibly others) had taken out a Press Reader subscription.

Approval of the Annual Report and Accounts was proposed by Neil Pearson and seconded by Philip Marshall.

6. Election of Officers and Committee 2022-2023

The following were duly elected:

President	Neil Pearson
Chairwoman	Emma Marigliano
Secretary	Kay Easson
Treasurer	Paul Ranford

Committee:

Tom Corrick, Librarian in Charge, The Oxford Union Society Library

Melanie Duffill-Jeffs, Library Director, Bromley House Library, Nottingham

Lara Haggerty, Librarian, The Library of Innerpefferay

Thom Keep, Librarian, Portico Library Manchester

Philip Marshall, Director, The London Library

Lisa di Tommaso, Librarian, The Morrab Library

Serena Trowbridge, Senior Vice President, The Birmingham & Midland Institute

Louisa Yates, Director of Collections and Research, Gladstone's Library

Co-opted: Matthew Brooke, Director of Collections and Library Services, The London Library

The Chairwoman noted that an additional co-option was possible.

The election of officers and committee was proposed by Hugh Maguire and seconded by Helen Williams.

7. Subscriptions 2023-2024

The Chairwoman reported that the Committee had decided that these should be kept at the current rates. This was agreed.

8. Future Annual Meetings

The Chairwoman was pleased to report that conference/AGM venues for the next three years had been confirmed:

2023 The Linen Hall Library, Belfast (2-3 June)

2024 The Morrab Library Penzance (31 May-1 June)

2025 The Newcastle Lit & Phil (dates tbc)

9. Any other Business

The Chairwoman reported that the Association was in the planning stages, with Anne Welch, of creating free short online courses on various aspects of library work such as cataloguing, book handling and exhibitions. These were seen as very important CPD tools in the independent library sector. There was also a possibility of an in-person course. These had been made possible by the generous donation of Sir James Scott.

The Chairwoman said that further information would be circulated as soon as it became available.

Responding to the above, Louisa Yates said the courses would continue the successful online activity that took place during the pandemic, bringing the independent library community together.

ACCOUNTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2023

	1 Apr 2022 to 31 Period: Mar 2023	1 Apr 2021 to 31 Mar 2022
Income		
Subscriptions - Libraries	2,310.00	1,350.00
Subscriptions - Individuals	40.00	140.00
Donations - Individuals		240.00
Pressreader contributions		200.00
Annual Conference and AGM	750.00	765.00
Total Income	3,100.00	2,695.00
Expenditure		
ZOOM subscription (1 year)	143.88	143.88
Annual Conference & AGM	489.00	628.75
Meetings	260.02	
Website	378.53	342.51
Photocopying, postage	13.60	8.95
Other costs	28.88	36.00
Total Expenditure	1,313.91	1,160.09
Surplus/(deficit) for the period	1,786.09	1,534.91
Bank account balances:		
At beginning of period	11,832.17	10,297.26
Add/(less) Surplus/Deficit for the period	1,786.09	1,534.91
Closing balance	13,618.26	11,832.17

REPORTS FROM MEMBER LIBRARIES

The following reports were received:

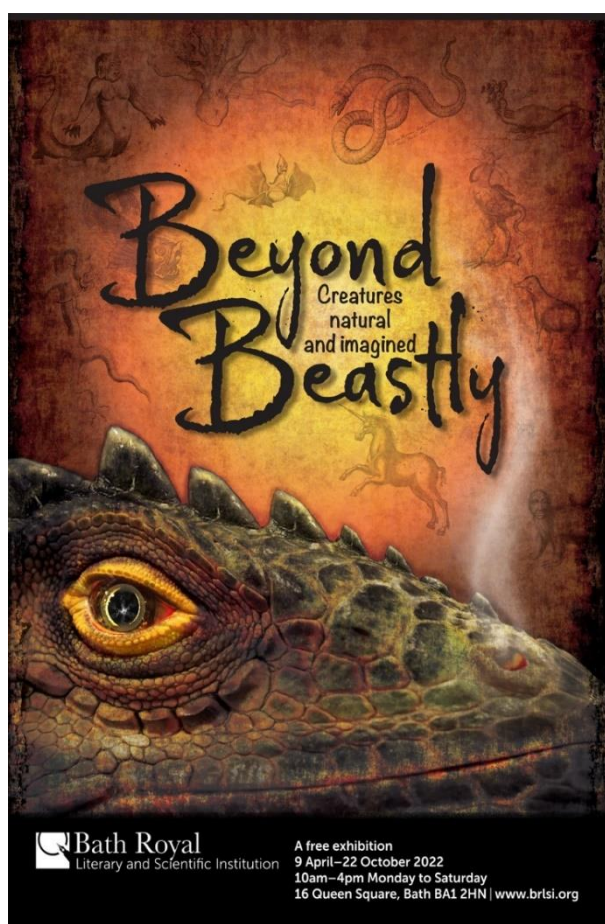
BATH ROYAL LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION

Founded in 1824, the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution promotes and advances science, literature and art for the public benefit. It has over 700 members, maintains a collection of over 150,000 objects (ranging from fossils to geological, ethnographical, and general specimens) and a library of 10,000 historical volumes, and organises over 120 public events every year, many of them hybrid. Every year, it welcomes thousands of visitors to its talks, events, and exhibitions at its home in Queen Square, Bath.

Particular highlights during 2022-23 include:

- 'Beyond Beastly' exhibition which explored the 'beasts' of our myths and imaginations and extraordinary real creatures that inspired them — this was the most popular exhibition we've organised, attracting almost 4000 visitors over six months
- acting as a key venue for Bath Festival and Bath's Children's Literature Festival
- a Christmas lecture by Dr Tristram Hunt, Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum

We strengthened our finances sufficiently to employ a new Operations Manager who is helping us improve our management of room hire, public talks, and other activities. We also began planning in earnest for our bicentenary in 2024.



Ian Gadd, Chair.

THE IPSWICH INSTITUTE

The Ipswich Institute in 2022, like many other organisations, had the first full year of activities since 2019. We returned to a daytime and evening programme of courses with lectures, talks, coach trips and guided walks. We are still not up to pre-pandemic levels of membership or bookings but everything is heading in the right direction after 3 difficult years.



The year also saw the return of the biennial New Angle Prize (NAP) for literature after a two year hiatus and the introduction of a new award, Creative Suffolk Author Award (CSAA), in association with the University of Suffolk. Both awards are part of a partnership between the Ipswich Institute, Suffolk Book League and the University of Suffolk – which also runs the Student New Angle Prize (SNAP), a short story award which any student attending the university can enter. The NAP judges are Sophie Green (author), Keith Jones (chair of the Suffolk Book League) and Liz Trenow (author), the CSAA judges are Ivan Cutting (Theatre Director), Prof Mohammad Dastbaz (Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Suffolk) and Jo Rooks (General Manager of Ipswich institute). The winners of both awards will be announced at an Awards Dinner in September 2023.

Jo Rooks, General Manager

THE LEIGHTON LIBRARY, DUNBLANE

As I write, the 17th century Leighton Library building is undergoing repair and restoration work, both internally and externally. The ground floor (known as the Undercroft) is being restored to provide educational interest to the community, visitors and scholars. It is also hoped to enhance the scenic historic value of the environs of the library. The collections were placed in storage in October 2022 and we hope to reopen in Autumn 2023.



In addition to the building work, there has been a great deal of other activity to report on as well.

We are delighted to announce that The Rt Hon Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, KT GCMG Hon FRSE PC, has kindly agreed to become Patron of the Leighton Library. Lord Robertson, who was Secretary of State for Defence from 1997-1999 and Secretary General of NATO from 1999-2003, is a Dunblane resident who speaks of the importance, both historically and contemporaneously, of the Leighton Library. We look forward to working with Lord Robertson in this exciting new phase of the Library's future.

The Leighton Library Trust has enjoyed hosting visits from the following: Sir Mark Jones (Chair, Pilgrim Trust), Cynthia Holden (American Women's Society of Central Scotland), Mrs Margaret Moss (Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust), Helen Creasy (The Scottish Conservation Studio), William McGrew (Emeritus Professor of Evolutionary Primatology, University of Cambridge), Agumi Inaba (Hon Professor of Psychology & Neuroscience, University of St Andrews), Baroness McConnell of Glenscorrodale, Sir Drummond Bone (Chair, National Library of Scotland) and Amina Shah (CEO, National Library of Scotland), Murray Pittock (Bradley Professor and Pro Vice-Principal, University of Glasgow), among many others.

As a result of publicising the conservation and renovation works the number of guides and volunteers has grown, enabling the Library to open for longer on Saturdays and into October. We are building on

this success which will allow greater access to the Library and an increase in the number of visitors and resultant donations.

In May 2022, and as a result of the generous donations from the Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust and the Dunblane Windfarm and conservation treatment by The Scottish Conservation Studio, the Trust hosted the successful American Atlas Exhibition of 11 of the maps in Thomas Jefferys' *American Atlas* of 1776. Opened by Cynthia Holden (American Women's Society of Central Scotland), the maps were displayed together with a number of early editions about North America. The Exhibition continued throughout the month and the Trustees are grateful to Dunblane Museum for the use of the Gallery Space.

Digital versions of the maps from the American Atlas have also made available online by the University of Stirling through a collaboration with JSTOR - see <https://www.jstor.org/site/stirling/> and select 'Leighton Library, American Atlas, 1776'.

Towards the end of October the Honorary Librarian was contacted by John and Beverley Ellis who kindly donated their limited edition facsimile copy of the American Atlas 1976 produced by Times Newspapers. This will allow the Trust to display to visitors a fine copy, restricting any damage to the original and now conserved maps. We are most grateful to Mr and Mrs Ellis.

In June the Trust took a stand at the Dunblane Fling and in October held a coffee morning in the Cathedral Halls.

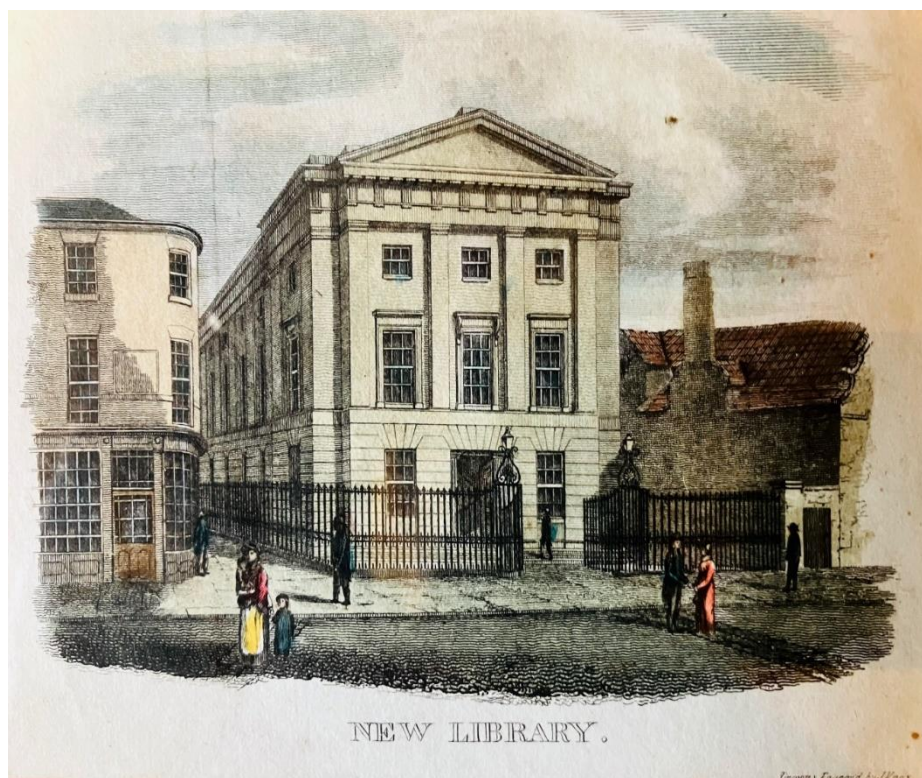
Since the beginning of March two sixth formers from the local High School who are completing their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Awards, have been assisting with the promotion of the Library particularly within their peer group to encourage interest and involvement. This has been very successful with many coming to experience and enjoy the Library's contents and learning about the importance of a national treasure on their doorstep. They were involved with the successful American Atlas exhibition, the Dunblane Fling and organised the popular coffee morning in the Cathedral Halls which raised nearly £500.00.

During the year the Trust has ventured into the sale of merchandise and has raised £811.00. Further research is being conducted with a view to increasing the offering and revenue.

There have also been some developments relating to the catalogues of the Leighton Library. Thanks to the University of Stirling, the Leighton Library now has its own online catalogue: https://librarysearch.stir.ac.uk/discovery/search?vid=44UST_INST:LEIGHTON. The manuscripts catalogue, which had previously only been available in print format, has now been digitised. Catalogues can all be accessed from <https://libguides.stir.ac.uk/archives/leighton>. We are also currently getting Leighton holdings added to the Universal Short Title Catalogue <https://www.ustc.ac.uk/>.

Helen Beardsley, Honorary Librarian

THE LITERARY & PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE



The Lit & Phil saw membership increase to pre-pandemic levels after the decline of 2020 and most of 2021. Activities are now back to pre-Covid levels, with lectures, readings, concerts, classes and launches once again populating the programme. The Board of Trustees decided to embark on a major capital project which will, funds permitting, include a lift to the first floor, refurbishment of the downstairs meeting rooms and general redecoration. An architect has been appointed and the fundraising appeal has been launched. Much work lies ahead for the Society, and the hope is that the bulk of the project will be completed in 2025 by the 200th anniversary of the opening of our current home.

Kay Easson, Librarian

THE LONDON LIBRARY

The London Library has had a very positive year which has seen the 5th year of membership growth in a row, an exciting public events programme (often now a combination of in-person and online thanks to lessons learned from the pandemic) and successes in fundraising that will help move some significant projects forward in the coming year.

We have been reviewing our classification scheme to identify outdated terminology so that we can make the collection more navigable and remove terms that may cause offence. We continued the move of low-use journal material to off-site store. The space created will allow us to put more of our eighteenth-century books into secure shelving.

We carried out a procurement process for RFID book security and self-service, due to go live in July 2023 which is an exciting development for the Library.

The Archivist has continued to extend the inventory, which now stands at c. 4,000 items. In particular, she has worked on identifying suffragettes, suffragists and anti-suffrage members in the Library's membership history and found over 80 active suffragettes/suffragists and 20 antis. We received a donation to the archive of a Georgian manuscript cookbook, including recipes for dressed pig, venison pasties and 'whipt' syllabub.

We hosted 26 school visits, supporting pupils working on EPQs.



Matthew Brooke, Director of Collections and Library Services

MORRAB LIBRARY, PENZANCE

Morrab Library has moved from strength to strength in the last twelve months. Welcoming over 800 members (its highest ever number), our work in welcoming a more diverse range of the Penwith community continues.

Our 72 volunteers continue to inspire us with their hard work and support. They range in age from 10 to 92, undertaking everything from cleaning and repair of the collections, cataloguing books and archives, working at the front desk, digitising our historic photo collections, managing second hand book sales, running children's events, as well as undertaking specific projects which included an audit of the art collection

We were fortunate to receive a grant of £10k from the Pilgrim Trust, which allowed a specialist conservation cleaner to spend three weeks removing historic dust and mould from our precious rare book collection.

Our volunteers have completed digitising the catalogue to our fiction book collection and have now begun on the non-fiction - a significant step for Morrab Library.

The library created the Patricia Eschen Poetry Competition, which saw more than 3000 entries across the globe culminating in an awards ceremony which was the library's first ever hybrid (in-person and online) international event.

We also enjoyed hosting our artist-in-residence, Karen Lorenz, who created an amazing animation and sound installation, based on her feelings and experiences of the library, and enjoyed hosting a multitude of talks on topics as varied as technology ethics, Daphne du Maurier and the Scott expedition. The library also hosted workshops on poetry, philosophy, stoicism, creative wellbeing, bookbindings, creative writing, Shakespeare, and astrology.

We consolidated our partnership with the Penzance-Concarneau Twinning Society, welcoming representatives from the town in Brittany to the library for a tour and an exchange of library books with Concarneau's public library, and enjoyed visits from many other different groups and institutions too over the year including schools, colleges, universities, book groups and more.

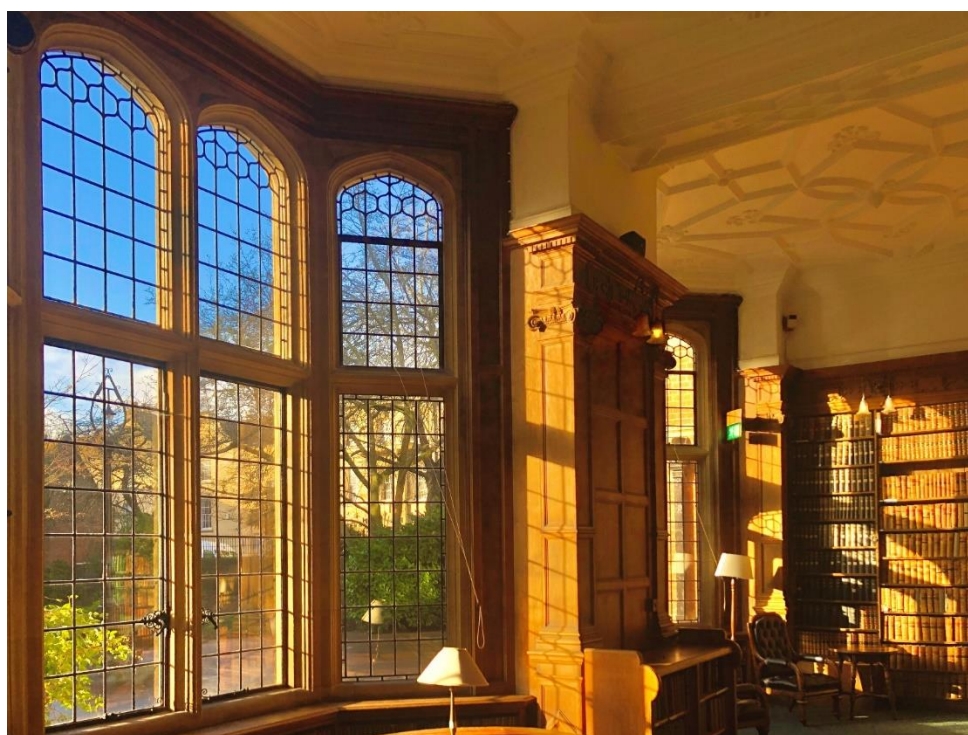


Lisa Di Tommaso, Librarian

THE OXFORD UNION LIBRARY

Looking back on the previous year, it's strange to think that we've now cycled through our first cohort of members who joined us post-Covid. We've had the opportunity to engage with new members who have completely 'new eyes' on the Union and the Union Library and wouldn't have known the place as it was before the shutdowns of 2020-2021. The upshot is that we have been able to strike out in new directions and forge new partnerships.

2023 marks the 200th year of the Union Society's formation and the Union has embarked on an ambitious fundraising campaign focusing on our three pillars of accessibility, heritage, and freedom of speech. The library has been central to this effort and the library team have been hard at work opening up the historic collections of the Union as well as curating exhibitions and displays on the Union's history. We received funding to digitise and preserve thousands of audio recordings featuring one-of-a-kind speeches made by extremely high profile speakers. We've also received funding to digitise some of our unique collections and to create a website to showcase these items and open them up to researchers, going live next month.



On a day-to-day level also we've seen positive changes: We've been very privileged to take on a Graduate Trainee this year, a long-standing fixed term post which was put on hold last year. It's been rewarding supporting this new member of the team in the first steps of their career. The library remains at the heart of the Union and our Library Committee continue to do sterling work around our collection development.

There has been much to reflect on and the year ahead is shaping up to be one of the most important in our history so far.

Tom Corrick, Librarian-in-Charge

PLYMOUTH PROPRIETARY LIBRARY

This has been my first year as Library Manager at the Plymouth Proprietary Library. My main aims have included increasing the number of talks and events throughout the year, and promoting the library within the local community and beyond in order to increase membership numbers. Between April 2022 and March 2023 the PPL hosted twelve talks on a variety of subjects with many on local historical, geographical and cultural themes. Further talks on the 200 year history of the PPL have taken place at the library and elsewhere. In June 2022 we began a monthly poetry evening with respected headline acts which have



proved very popular and have featured regularly in local newspaper articles. A play on climate change was performed at the PPL and more plays are planned for the future.

The PPL has promoted itself in a variety of ways. The library website is kept up to date and a monthly newsletter goes out via e-mail to over 200 subscribers. The PPL is also promoted almost daily via various social media channels. We extended our opening hours during Heritage Open Days which featured local talks and an exhibition that explored the PPL's history. There is also a display on the PPL's history and origins that has been running since January 2023 at The Box in Plymouth.

Since April 2022 extra shelving has been installed in various open access areas to cater for the continuing development of the collection. A budget for purchasing new books goes alongside many donations from members and supporters. Books are repaired and cleaned by a newly-appointed team of volunteers who also support the honorary Librarian in accessioning new acquisitions. Very recently, the PPL was awarded funding of £250 to help conserve and protect our rare archives.

Darren Bevin, Library Manager

NOTES



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