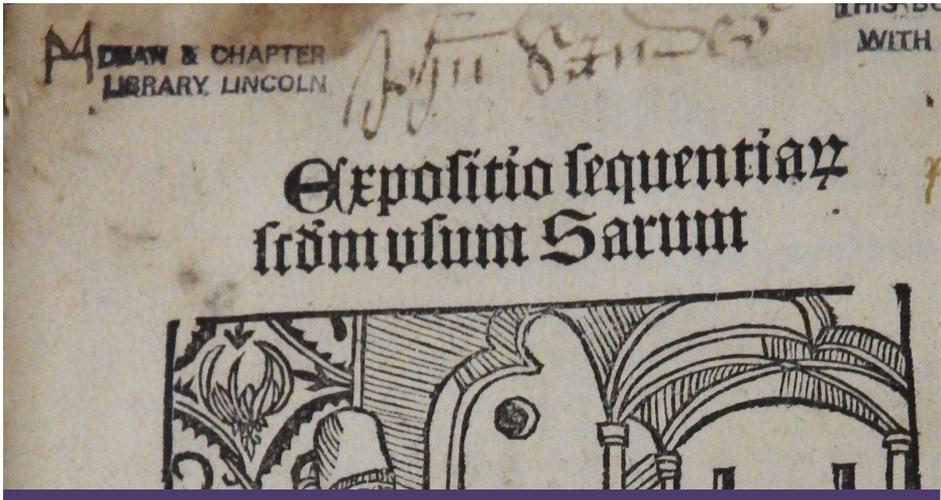

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL

LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2016



HOORAY FOR HONYWOOD

One of the books on display in the Wren Library during October has a very interesting recent history. The book in question is "Expositio hymnorum et sequentiarum" a book of hymns and sequences (chants sung or recited during the Eucharist). Printed in Cologne in 1496, it is one of the Cathedral's earliest printed books or "Incunabula". In 1912 it was found to be missing from the Library and was presumed stolen by a Mr Tinkler who

had been convicted of book thefts having stolen books from both Lincoln and Peterborough Cathedrals. It had then been purchased by Mr W.M. Voynich, a London dealer in early printed books, who intended to sell it on in America.

The Dean and Chapter claimed the return of the book and took Mr Voynich to court in May 1916. In court, Canon Johnston, the Chancellor of the Cathedral said that if the book belonged to Lincoln

Cathedral Library, it could well be one of the many books collected by Dean Michael Honeywood and that "it might very likely be that the dean's initials MH would be found in it". Mr Voynich, after looking at the volume in dispute admitted "It's your book". The Judge, Mr Justice Ridley agreed and Mr Voynich immediately returned the book to its rightful owners. The book has since been stamped clearly with "Dean & Chapter Library Lincoln" to make doubly sure!



WREN LIBRARY STOCK CHECK

After almost 2 years the stock check of the books in the Wren Library is complete. Two members of the NADFAS team have worked from one end of the library to the other, checking that every book is in the right place and has been catalogued correctly. They have also noted each book's condition and the language in which it was written so that the online catalogue can then be amended accordingly. Along

the way they found many anomalies, principally that there are over 40 books belonging to Michael Honeywood which had not been catalogued as belonging to him. How can we be sure which books were his? As you will already have read, he wrote his initials on the title page of each book. He also often wrote contents lists at the front of his books and because the library has his

manuscript detailing all the books that he bought in Holland while he was in exile there during the Civil War, his handwriting is easily identifiable. Thanks go therefore to Dorothy and Janice who have completed this work for the library and who obviously enjoyed it so much that they are now cleaning the books on the lower shelves which have become very dusty over time.



NEW SIGNAGE

The task of replacing the wall mounted information boards in and around the library has now been completed. First to be changed were those on the stairs which feature some of the library's many treasures. Next, the existing boards at the foot of the stairs were replaced with more eye-catching, up to date ones which include the library timeline and finally the Medieval library pin board was replaced with a more professional looking information board. Thanks go to the team at Ruddocks for producing and fitting the boards. A generous donation from the Lincoln Society of Arts last year enabled us to make these changes.



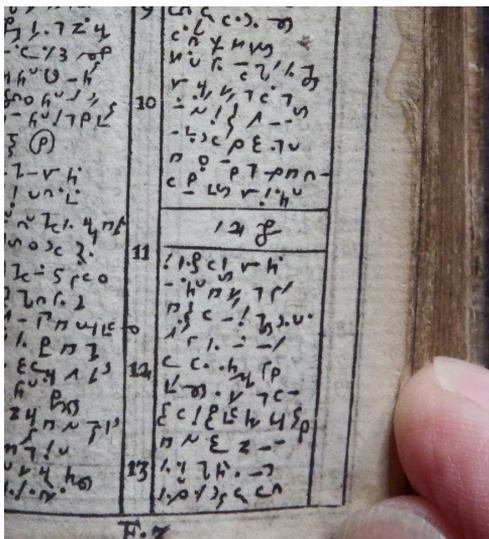
WREN LIBRARY WINDOWS

You may have noticed that the view from the cloister has changed somewhat. The Wren Library is almost completely hidden by scaffolding to facilitate the essential work that needs to be carried out on the windows. Damage that has accumulated over the years is now being repaired: cracked and broken panes have been replaced; vital beading is being fitted to every window to help secure them and the

metal frames and the window sills are having the old paintwork removed in order for them to be repainted. The Cathedral glaziers, joiners and painters are working hard to get the work completed before the end of November. The repairs are not only important for aesthetic reasons but they will also help to maintain the environmental conditions within the library which are so important for the books. Wren designed the

library with lots of windows in order to let in as much light as possible so that scholars sitting at the tables beneath them would be able to see. Now, blinds at the windows keep out much of the light as it can damage the books; and sensors in the library monitor and control the relative humidity levels, which if too high or too low can also lead to mould growth or the books becoming too dry and crumbly.





LITTLE AND LARGE

Currently on display in the Wren Library is our smallest book: "The whole book of Psalms in meter according to the art of short-writing" printed in London in 1673. The whole book is in a form of shorthand, but not one that would be recognisable today. It measures 25mm by 40mm. Next to it is our largest book, a 16th century manuscript copy of an Italian Antiphoner containing the chapters or lessons for the Church year. The latter measures 40cm by 60cm and is so large that it can only be displayed closed allowing us to see the metal fixings on the heavy wooden boards. Both will be on display during the Christmas Market.

AND FINALLY ...

Although the library closes to the general public at the end of October we will be open during the Christmas Market at the following times: Thursday 1st December 1pm-5pm; Friday 2nd 11am-5pm; Saturday 3rd 11am-5pm and Sunday 4th 12.30-2.30pm. On display will be some seasonal books including Gerard's "Herball", Gesner's "Historiae animalium" and William Byrd's "Gradualia".

Work will continue during the winter months to improve and update the visitor information in the Wren and Medieval libraries. Essential cataloguing will also be done and the reclassifying of the many hundreds of pamphlets in the collection will continue in order to provide a more user friendly resource for readers and researchers.

Many of you will have seen Toni Watts' excellent exhibition in the Chapter House during September. Toni spent many hours in the Wren library talking with visitors about her work and demonstrating her skills. It has been confirmed that Toni can continue to work with the library in the future and we are currently in discussion about the format of this work. Watch this space!

A PLACE TO...

EXPLORE

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