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# LINCOLN CATHEDRAL

## LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

### SPRING 2018



## THE YEAR AHEAD

The Wren and Medieval libraries are now open again to the public after the winter break. With the help of the dedicated team of library volunteers we are looking forward to another successful year, with visitors coming from far and wide. During the winter months work has continued behind the scenes. Volunteers continue to catalogue and index journal articles, Orders of Service and Chapter letters; conservation boxes have been made for fragile

documents and seals; and previously uncatalogued sections of books have been added to the online catalogue. Researchers have continued to consult the books and manuscripts throughout the winter. The theme of the Spring exhibition in the library is Flora and Fauna, celebrating the beauty of the natural world around us. The books on display include: John Latham's "A General synopsis of birds"; John Gerard's "The herball or

generall historie of plantes"; Geoffrey Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales"; Conrad Gesner's "Historiae Animalium" and Thomas Moffett's "Insectorum sive animalium theatrum". 2018 marks the 200th anniversary of the publication of Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein", so during June and July the exhibition will be featuring books which include "monsters". Look out for dragons, devils, 3 headed men, monopods and fantastic sea creatures.



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## A WORLD OF MAPS

A popular part of each library exhibition is an early atlas. We are lucky to have several, including those by Willem Blaeu, Abraham Ortelius and Gerard Mercator. Currently on display is Willem Blaeu's "Le theatre du monde ou nouvel atlas" printed in Amsterdam in 1647. It is open at a map of Africa where you can see various native animals including elephants and monkeys.

Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) was a Flemish geographer and cartographer. His "Theatrum Orbis Terrarum", first printed in 1570 was the earliest example of an atlas in the modern sense of the word, in which he attempted to bring together in one volume, maps of every country in the world.

Gerard Mercator devised the technique known as "Mercator's projection", in which the meridians of longitude are shown at right angles to the parallels of latitude. Although he died before his great atlas could be printed, it went through several editions during the half century after his death.



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## LIBRARY POSTCARDS

Although photography is not permitted in the Wren and Medieval libraries for security reasons, we do have a wide selection of postcards on sale which highlight the architecture and the books and manuscripts themselves. We have several new ones this year to add to our collection. This cheeky little devil is from the manuscript of Richard Rolle, copied in about 1400. The pictures throughout this manuscript help to illustrate the battle between good and evil. Another new one is a beautifully coloured map of the British Isles from the atlas of Abraham Ortelius, printed in 1584.



## SPRING CLEANING

Members of the Arts Society are now back in the Wren Library recording, dusting and doing minor repairs to the almost 5,000 rare early printed books kept there. They have spent the last 6 years in Exchequergate arch caring for the collections there. Working meticulously from one end of the Wren library to the other will take about 7 years. The books have become noticeably dusty over the past couple of years,

partly due to the number of visitors and partly because of the recent building work that has been going on near the library. Dust can be abrasive, may contain pollutants and could encourage mould growth and pest infestation, all of which can damage the books, so keeping them clean is a priority. Small groups of library volunteers have kindly offered to come in to help with dusting the books. Armed with soft shaving

brushes, and for once wearing gloves to protect our hands, we are slowly working along each shelf gently brushing the pages, spines and covers of each book. It really is making a noticeable difference but we have several weeks of dusting yet to do. If any other Cathedral volunteers would like to help, please contact the librarian on [library@lincolncathedral.com](mailto:library@lincolncathedral.com) or 01522 561640





## A WELCOME RETURN

Toni Watts the Volunteer Cathedral Illuminator will again be working in the Wren Library this year so that visitors can find out how she creates her beautiful illuminations. Normally this will be on Thursdays but do check the Cathedral website for a list of dates: [www.lincolncathedral.com/education-learning](http://www.lincolncathedral.com/education-learning). If you are interested in attending one of Toni's full day workshops and having a go yourself, please check Toni's website for details: <http://toniwattsartstudio.com/about-me/exhibitions-tuition> The date for our next full day workshop is the 13th June.

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## DID YOU KNOW....?

According to Sir Francis Hill's "Medieval Lincoln" many businesses relating to book production thrived in Lincoln. There was for example a street called Parcheminate where the parchment makers lived. Skinnergate was nearby, providing the sheepskins for turning into the pages of books. These were sold at the skin market on what is now the junction of Michaelgate and Spring Hill. It has been suggested that

outside London, Lincoln was, at the time, the biggest producer of parchment in the country. On Lumnour Lane near what is now St Rumbold Street, lived illuminators, including Henry the Illuminator, whose will is in the Cathedral archives. The Cathedral never had its own scriptorium, as it was never a monastic foundation, but in 2013, during excavations on the High Street, archaeologists unearthed an oyster shell containing

remnants of red paint, later confirmed to be vermilion, which they dated to the 11th or 12th century. Historically such shells were used as palettes by medieval artists and scribes. We can probably assume therefore that a scriptorium or artist's workshop existed nearby and could feasibly have been the location for the production of the Cathedral's Chapter Bible which we know to have been written locally.

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A PLACE TO...

# EXPLORE

4 Priorygate, Lincoln LN2 1PL  
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