
LINCOLN CATHEDRAL

LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2017



EXCHEQUERGATE SPECIAL

This edition of the Library Newsletter is focusing on the work of the library that takes place in Exchequergate Arch, the original medieval entrance to Minster Yard. It houses several library rooms as well as private businesses and it provides a secure home for a large section of the Cathedral's books. Who better to write this than my colleague Claire who is based there for 2 days each week.

My name is Claire Arrand and I am the Special Collections

Librarian at the University of Lincoln, seconded to assist Julie Taylor in the Cathedral library on Mondays and Tuesdays. I have been in post for three and a half years and have enjoyed almost every minute of it.

Working in Exchequergate is quite a challenge but such a privilege to be in a 14th century historic building. The steps require concentration and I worry every time a visitor ventures up the spiral staircase, hoping there are

no mishaps. Carrying rare books and manuscripts is done with great care and very slowly. The temperature can vary from 6.8° C.- 27.7° C. and the humidity from 33.3 – 76.1%. The optimum ranges for the rare books are 13-20° C. and 35-65%, so not ideal. Fingerless mittens, a rug and a hot water bottle are standard equipment in the winter plus a useful hand warmer called a 'Hot Rox' but it is pleasantly cool in the summer, so I cannot complain.

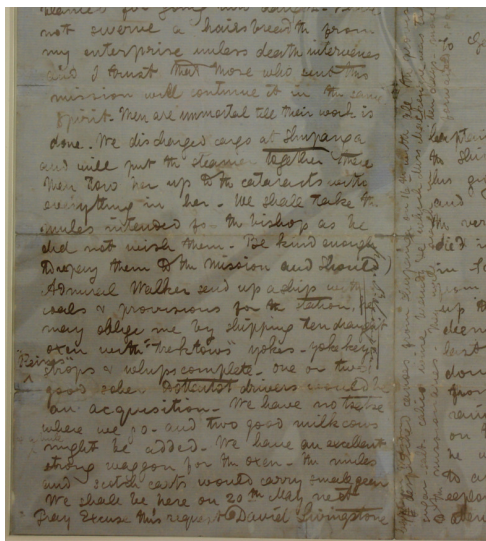


THE ARTS SOCIETY, FORMERLY N.A.D.F.A.S.

On Mondays from March to October I have been joined by a wonderful group of volunteers belonging to NADFAS (the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies, now simply called The Arts Society) who have been documenting and recording the condition of the 5,000 rare books which are kept in two of the seven rooms. Each week they very carefully remove the accumulated

dust, tape loose book covers, add wrappers and make minor repairs following training by the NADFAS conservator, Caroline Bendix. Without their help the books would be in a much worse condition, an inevitability caused by inherent deterioration over time of materials, the conditions within the building and handling. They are now ready to return to the Wren Library to be

looked after by Julie and Mondays will not be the same for me without them. It could be ten years before they return to Exchequergate after giving their attention to the 5,000 rare books in the Wren Library. Work will also start soon on a digital database containing the reports that they produce for every book in the collection so that we can monitor more closely any changes in the condition of each book.



UNUSUAL TREASURES

One of the pleasures of the job is to expose visiting or potential readers to the treasures in the collection. Some of these will hopefully be used in the Cathedral's new exhibition space and until then I shall continue showing them to the small groups who venture up the stairs. Yesterday's find was two arrow heads, not something you expect to find in a Cathedral library. Another unusual item is a letter from David Livingstone to General Wynyard written in 1862 from the mouth of the Zambesi. You never know what you are going to find!

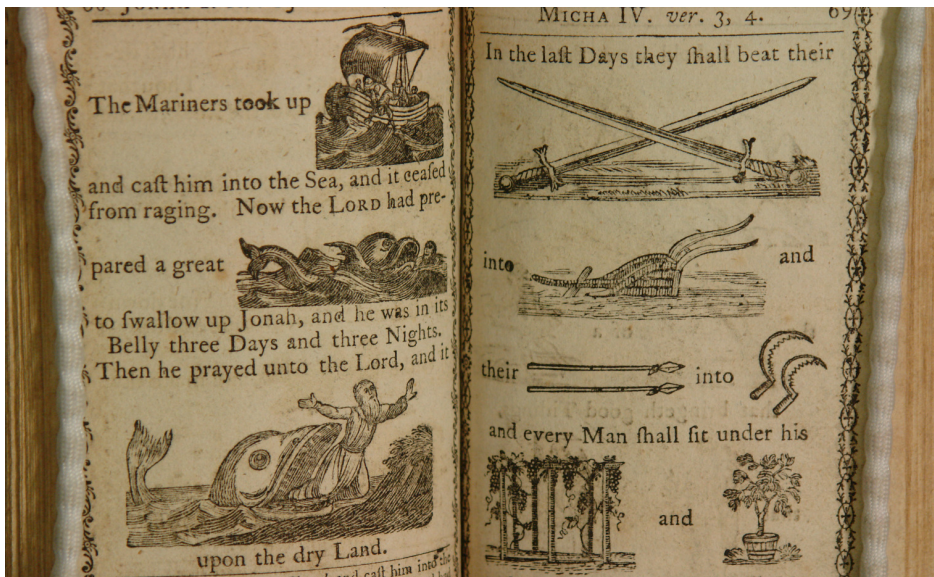


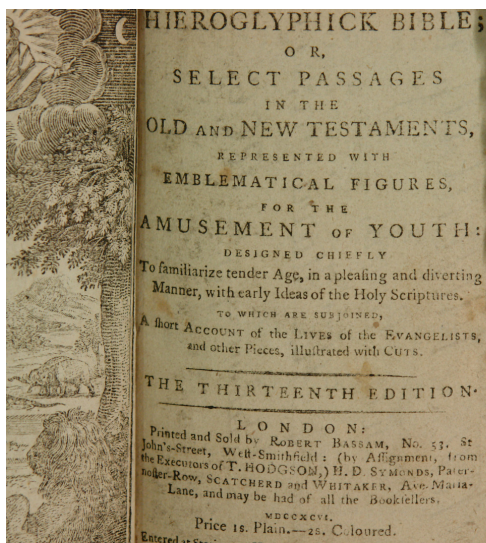
READERS

The Cathedral Library tradition is to offer a warm welcome to our varied readers who request access to see the medieval manuscripts, rare books and the modern reference collection. Over the last 3 years visitors from Japan, Canada, the USA, Austria, Australia, Italy, Holland, Germany and France have visited Exchequergate to study our manuscripts. Groups of history and conservation students are

timetabled annually to visit Exchequergate from the University of Lincoln and the Wren Library is used to display items selected to enhance and aid their study. Lecturers from Bishop Grosseteste University also come to use rare and modern books, then direct their students to use the books and journals from the collection for their essays and dissertations. Local historians, Cathedral staff and volunteers

also make good use of the resources. Our aim is to facilitate study, using our collections and ensuring that the readers have the best possible experience. Often we have been pleased to discover from the knowledge and expertise of our researchers that we hold some unique and extremely rare examples of certain texts, information that we may not otherwise have known.





FAVOURITE BOOK

This is really tricky, as there are so many items which give me great pleasure. I have chosen a hieroglyphic bible, which is a recent find and is now fully catalogued. The first edition was printed in 1783 and it reminds me of the puzzle books I used as a child. A commitment to the "early instruction of children" was considered to be every parent's duty. The Hieroglyphic Bible was to engage young minds and give them an early taste for the Holy Scriptures that would follow them into adult life. Nouns would be replaced with images, hoping to appeal to the inquisitive nature of children and encouraging them to read.

COMING UP....

Toni Watts, the Cathedral Illuminator will continue to work in the Wren Library once a week, while we are open to the public, demonstrating how she creates her beautiful work. Dates are on the Cathedral website in the Education and Learning section: www.lincolncathedral.com/education-learning/the-library/

Toni will also be running another Illuminations

Workshop in the library on Thursday 7th September. Details about the workshop and how to book a place are also on the website at: <https://lincolncathedral.com/forthcoming-events/> Spaces are limited so early booking is essential. During the workshop there is also the opportunity to see some of the Cathedral's own manuscripts.

The Lindsey Scribes will be in the Wren Library again this

year for the Heritage Open Day on Saturday 9th September. This has become an annual event and gives children and adults of all ages the opportunity to try their hand at calligraphy or have a go at paper crafts including card making.

The current exhibition in the library on the theme of Battles & Dynasties runs until the end of August when a new selection of books will be on display.

A PLACE TO...

EXPLORE

4 Priorygate, Lincoln LN2 1PL

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