

## **LIBRARY REPORT**

**For the period January to March 2017**

### **Thomas Manning Archive**

We continue to look for opportunities to promote the Manning Archive. In February we hosted a lecture and exhibition on the collection, to which we invited RAS Fellows as well as members of the South Asia Archives and Libraries Group and the National Committee for Information Resources on Asia. We also displayed a selection of material from the archive (together with material from our Sir Richard Burton collection) to help illustrate the joint lecture on Manning and Burton.

### **RAS Archives**

Archival ordering and cataloguing continues. In particular this quarter has seen the catalogues for the Personal Papers of William Pettigrew, Frederic John Goldsmid and Dora Gordine being added to the Archives Hub online catalogue – the Gordine catalogue having already brought in a researcher to the Reading Room. Work continues on the Brian Houghton Hodgson Personal Papers but the main emphasis of this quarter has been on the RAS Institutional Archives from its beginnings to present day.

Institutional records and archives should be ordered according to the activities that have produced the records. Thus for the RAS, records are produced according to activities connected with, for example, Membership, the Journal and other Publications, Collections, Lectures and Events, Awards and Medals, as well as more generic activities concerned with, for example, governance, finance, personnel and property. We also have material related to allied societies, and Special Collections – archives that have been donated to the Society but do not belong to any single person's Personal Papers. The Archivist is currently undertaking an appraisal of all the institutional archives and sorting these according to the activity area that produced the archive/record. When these have all been sorted and gathered into the appropriate category, then ordering and cataloguing can begin of the historic records, and, subsequently, the modern records can more easily be transitioned to the archives as appropriate. Good progress has been made already this year, but the total sorting will probably take most of 2017 with ordering and cataloguing beginning in the following year.

Our social media presence continues to be profitable in terms of others interacting with the Society – not only gaining 'likes' and 'retweets' but also generating enquiries. For example, recent highlighting of the Baber album of Hindu deities and brahmins brought the collection to the awareness of one of Baber's descendants who then made further enquiries concerning the album. Twitter followers are currently at 3623 and people receiving notification of a new blog post are 275.

The Archivist would also like to express her gratitude to the RAS for allowing her to launch her poetry collection, *Little Blue Hut*, in February. Despite Storm Doris there was a good attendance of family, friends, RAS members and poetry colleagues, meaning many new people discovered something about the RAS. Thank you for allowing this event to happen.

Nancy Charley

## **Donations**

We accepted over 30 duplicates from the British Library, mainly comprising C19-20<sup>th</sup> books published in India on south Indian languages and social and political history, helping to fill some gaps in our collection.

## **Users and enquiries**

The library had 33 visits between January and March 2017 (30 in the same period in 2016), and responded to 74 remote enquiries (2016: 56). The collections consulted most during this period were RAS institutional archives, Indian art collections, books on Indian history, and the Tod manuscript collection.

## **Cataloguing**

Between January and March we added over 700 records to the online catalogue, including 339 pamphlets, 292 books, and 40 manuscripts.

## **Volunteers**

We scheduled the “Show and Tell” RAS Collections Open Evening which will take place on Tuesday 23 May. We hope that this can become a recurring event to promote our collections and the work that is being done with them, not only to catalogue and conserve them, but also how they are being used for research, and ultimately their public impact. The first event will highlight the work of the MA students from Camberwell who conserved items from our collections in 2016, and we are also grateful to RAS President Dr Gordon Johnson and RAS Treasurer Lionel Knight for agreeing to speak about the collections at the event. We hope that the event will be well supported and that it will appeal to RAS Fellows as well as a wider audience.

We continue to have a thriving number of volunteers with those leaving being replaced by new volunteers. Ian Scholey continues to work with the slide collections and is currently listing and repackaging the large collection of slides in the Barbara Ingham Collection. We have said good-bye to Ali Syed, but not before he completed the catalogues for the Personal

Papers of William Pettigrew and Frederic Goldsmid, as well as providing webpages for them and a blog post about his experiences. During his time with the RAS, he applied for, and was successful in gaining, a place on the MA in Archives and Records Management Course at UCL, a necessary requirement being that he had completed some archival work prior to him joining the course. We wish him well as he starts the course in September.

Ginte Serenaite also finished her time with the RAS, other commitments meaning she was unable to volunteer anymore. She had been working on the Personal Papers of Daniel Gogerly, and such was her commitment that she finished the catalogue and wrote a webpage in her own time. Thus we can expect the Gogerly catalogue to be online within the next few weeks.

Roger Parsons and Sarah Burrell continue to catalogue books from our collection. Inma Bowen has joined our NADFAS conservation team. We will look into arranging for Inma to attend book repair training at NADFAS House. Kathy Lazenbatt has continued to add records to the online catalogue for the Whish Collection of South Indian Manuscripts.

Two new volunteers have started work within the Archives. Gehad Quisay is working with the Personal Papers of W.E.D. Allen, which were donated by his son in 1974. Nyima Stewart is working with the Quaritch Wales Collection. She has completed an initial review, sorting and listing the collection into its different categories, and has now begun repackaging and cataloguing the photographs within the Quaritch Wales collection.

We also arranged for Carly Bishop to begin a work placement with us in April. Carly is studying for an MA in Art History and Curation with Photography at the University of Sussex, and over the coming months she will spend 120 hours working on our photographic collections. This is a great opportunity to continue the work that Ruby Rees-Sheridan began last year with the hope to see all our photographic collections properly packaged and catalogued online.

## **Conservation**

The items being conserved by Camberwell College of Arts MA students have been transferred to their studio. There are four projects, as originally projected, but one changed from conservation of Tibetan manuscripts to conservation of two volumes of the *Canton Register*, an early C19th periodical. We are extremely grateful to David Jacobs, who kindly assessed each of the students' treatment proposals, identifying where changes or further consideration was needed.

The conservation will take place over the Spring and the items will be back at the Society by the beginning of Summer.

The two students who conserved items last year are speaking at the upcoming RAS Collections Show and Tell event.

## **Reprographic services**

There were 660 digital copies made from RAS collections during this period, of which 481 were made by staff, for which we charged £747. This included a complete set of 316 photographs of the manuscript RAS Turkish 47, *Kulliyat i Mir 'Ali Shir Nava'i*.

## **Visits and conferences**

The Library was very busy with visits between January and March, hosting:

- Two groups from SOAS, looking at Malay manuscripts and South Asian collections
- Two groups from the Courtauld Institute, looking at Buddhist Art and Persian manuscripts
- Conservation MA students from Camberwell College of Arts
- Martin Randall Cultural Tour, led by Charles Allen
- A special exhibition to mark the lecture on Manning and Burton
- South Asia Archives and Libraries Group visit to see the Manning Archive
- Editorial staff of *Hokkaido Shimibun* to see Japanese collections and other treasures

## **Loans to exhibitions**

The outstanding items from the *Artist & Empire* exhibition in Singapore have returned to the Society, with the exception of *Madhu Rao Narayan, the Maratha Peshwa with Nana Fadnavis and attendants*, whose date of return is being arranged.

The Science Museum has requested the loan of a *Panchanga* from the Tod Collection, for the exhibition on Indian science and technology starting later this year. For the catalogue description of this item by Dr Rima Hooja, see Appendix 4a.

Ed Weech  
Librarian