

## **LIBRARY REPORT**

**For the period January to March 2018**

### **Digital Library**

The Society launched its Digital Library on 31 January. The site featured a diverse array of content at launch and we have added to it over the months since. We held an event to mark the launch of the site at the beginning of April. A detailed account of how the site was conceived and planned was posted on our blog at: <http://royalsocietysociety.org/launch-event-marks-ras-digital-library/>

We received positive feedback to the site and a number of enquiries from other institutions interested in utilizing a similar platform. The site received 1500 visitors in February and March, with over 500 visitors from the UK, 400 from North America, and 100 from India, followed by visitors from Germany, Turkey, France, and Malaysia.

We are looking for opportunities to digitize more material from the collections so that we can continue to add interesting content to the site at regular intervals and increase the usage of the site.

### **Thomas Manning Archive**

The entire Thomas Manning Archive is now digitized and publicly available online via the RAS Digital Library.

In March, the Society's Archivist and Librarian gave a joint lecture on "maverick Orientalists" at the UCL Institute of Archaeology, which focused on Manning, Burton, and Oscar Eckenstein.

### **RAS Archives**

The catalogues for several sets of Personal Papers have been completed in the last few months – the catalogues now being available on Archives Hub. The largest of these are the Papers of Brian Houghton Hodgson with over 700 items in the catalogue, and an important set of unique documents. The other Personal Papers catalogued are those of Bernard Quaritch (a set of correspondence between Quaritch and early orientalists); those of Colonel Sir John Fisher (an early diary of his travels in Turkestan in 1911); and the Papers of William Edward David Allen (correspondence mainly concerned with his publications on Caucasian history). Work will now begin on the catalogues for the Papers of Horace Geoffrey Quaritch Wales, which was listed by one of our Alphawood Interns, and Ram Gharib Chaube. We were pleased to welcome to the Reading Room an expert researcher on Ram Gharib Chaube, who came from India specifically to work on this newly identified material.

The Institutional Archives for the Triennial Gold Medal are now fully catalogued and available on Archives Hub, and work has already begun on the Catalogue for the Public School Medal and University Prize Essay. The Triennial Gold Medal recipients stand as a veritable who's who in the field of oriental studies through the 20th century. The cleaning of the Minute Books for the Council and General Meetings has also been completed.

Our Twitter following continues to grow, as does the number of people who subscribe to our blog: we have 5244 Twitter followers and 480 blog subscribers as of 17 April 2018.

Nancy Charley

### **Brotherton Library**

We have continued to consult with special collections staff at the Brotherton Library about the ex-RAS books in their collection. A list was drawn up at the RAS in the 1930s with the same aim, and this has now been digitized, which may help the process.

### **Users and enquiries**

The library received 49 visits from researchers between January and March, an increase on previous years (2017: 33; 2016: 30). It also replied to 80 remote enquiries over the same period (2017: 74; 2016: 56). The collections generating most interest were RAS archives, Indian art, JRAS, and the Digital Library.

### **Cataloguing**

We added 803 new records to the online catalogue, including 482 books and 254 pamphlets. This is an increase on the same period for last year (702). The Society's main pamphlet collection is now almost completely catalogued, embodied in the form of almost 4,500 records.

### **Volunteers**

For the third year we have a placement student from Sussex University's MA in Art History and Curation course. Laura Morris-Kingham is working on our photographic collections, caring for previously uncatalogued collections to repackage and catalogue them. She has already catalogued an album of Japanese tinted prints, in addition to several smaller collections, and the fascinating albums of Colonel Sir John Fisher Turner. She is now working on material belonging to John Frederick Baddeley. Laura has already written one blog post for us and put together a display for the Launch event of the Digital Library.

Fu Yang, who recently finished a PhD at SOAS, commenced volunteering with us and has been translating some of our Special Collections Chinese materials. Tabitha Deadman has also started volunteering and is working on the Papers of Richard Morris.

Ian Scholey has continued with repackaging and listing our slide collections, while Nyima Stewart is working on the Quaritch Wales photographs. Roger Parsons and James Povey have continued to make progress with the cataloguing of our printed collections; James has catalogued some particularly challenging and obscure texts in Persian and Syriac.

Kathy Lazenbatt has finished cataloguing and repackaging the Whish Collection, and identified manuscripts which need more attention from experts with specific language skills (such as Malayalam). In the meantime, Kathy was able to create records for every item in the collection – a remarkable contribution.

Our NADFAS volunteers have continued to visit to carry out book repairs, and are looking for one or two new people to join the team.

We agreed to take a placement student from the UCL Library and Information Studies MA in April.

### **RAS Digital Library launch event**

We held an event to launch the RAS digital library at the beginning of April, which featured a talk about the genesis of the Digital Library, as well as a display of some of the original material which is now featured online. We are very grateful to everyone who attended, and to everyone who has generously supported the development of the site and the digitization of our collections.

### **Reprographic services**

There were 477 digital images taken from RAS collections between January and March, including 137 images made by RAS staff, for which we charged £140.

### **Visits and conferences**

The Library hosted a number of visits between January and March, including a group of MA students from Camberwell College of Arts, and South Asian Studies students from SOAS. Librarians from several institutions visited to discuss digitization after we launched the Digital Library, including from the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, and the Wellcome Library.

We also welcomed Stephen Serpell to the Library for a discussion about his website project, the Islamic Painted Page, which now links to material from the Digital Library.

The Library also hosted some filming, which saw Bettany Hughes interview Phiroze Vasunia about Sir William Jones and the transmission of classical culture between Greece and India. This formed part of a BB4 documentary which aired in early April.

### **Loans to exhibitions**

Our two loans to the *Illuminating India* exhibition at the Science Museum are due for return on 27 April.

The Director oversaw the safe return of our manuscripts from the *Tales from the Malay World* exhibition.

### **Loans to the RAS**

The loan of the banner on the Chinese Labour Corps from the “British Lions, Chinese Dragons” exhibition is scheduled to go ahead between 22 May and 18 June. The banner will be in the Lecture Theatre for the duration of this period.

Ed Weech  
Librarian