

## **LIBRARY REPORT**

**For the period January to March 2019**

### **Digital Library**

The Digital Library received 1,500 visits from over 1,000 users between January and March. Approximately half of the traffic came from the UK, USA, and India. The most popular collections during this period were our Malay manuscripts, the Manning Archive, the Hodgson drawings, and the Gulistan (RAS Persian 258).

We added digital images of our collection of 200 glass lantern slides containing photographs from early C20th China. As a result of putting these images online, we were fortunate to receive a considerable amount of new information about the images from Jamie Carstairs at the University of Bristol.

The Librarian was invited to give a presentation about digitization to the Association of Pall Mall Libraries, which is scheduled for their October 2019 meeting.

### **Thomas Manning Archive**

The Librarian was invited to speak on his research on Thomas Manning at the forthcoming conference on *Crossing Borders: Sinology in Translation Studies*, organized by the Department of Translation and Research Centre for Translation, at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 13-15 June 2019.

Robert Manning, who supported the Society's acquisition of the Manning Archive in 2015, passed away in February. Mike Manning, who also shared information about the Manning family history, passed away in March.

### **RAS Archives**

At the beginning of 2019, the Archivist gave her attention mainly to cataloguing. This resulted in many Catalogues being added to Archives Hub. Some of these are only small sets of Papers with one or two items, others are larger, and there are a couple of large Collections added to the Catalogue: those of Horace Geoffrey Quaritch Wales and Edward William West. A complete list of catalogues added is:

- Papers of James Caulfeild
- Papers of Samuel Davis
- Papers of Alexander Gerard
- Papers of Raymond Head

- Papers of Benjamin Heyne
- Papers of Major J. Stuart King
- Papers of Edward William Lane
- Papers of Robert Millar
- Papers of Thomas John Newbold
- Papers of Iltudus Thomas Prichard
- Papers of Maurice Patrick O'Connor Tandy
- Papers of Walter Melville Wace
- Papers of Laurence Austine Waddell
- Papers of Horace Geoffrey Quaritch Wales
- Papers of Edward William West
- Papers of Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson
- RAS Collections: Research Registrations
- RAS Richard Burton Memorial Medal
- RAS Governance: Minutes of Council Meetings
- RAS Governance: Preliminary Correspondence
- RAS Lectures and Events: Minutes of General Meetings

In addition to these Catalogues, the manuscripts of Richard Morris were cleaned, identified and repackaged, and those of George Edward Fryer are currently undergoing the same process. Further sets of institutional records are also being prepared for cataloguing.

We had some issues with the blog, with notifications not going out to our subscribers; nor were new subscribers added to the list. This is currently in the hands of our IT support and we hope that it will soon be resolved. Our Twitter account continues to flourish and now stands at 6513 (9 April 2019).

Nancy Charley

### **Library Management System**

The transition of our catalogue data to Koha has been smooth and we have experienced no problems with the new site.

We contributed a fresh upload of our catalogue data to JISC in preparation for the launch of the new National Bibliographic Knowledgebase, which replaces the Copac and SUNCAT services.

### **Chinese rare book collections**

The Brotherton Library are moving forward with plans for the cataloguing and promotion of the ex-RAS collection of Chinese books. We have offered to try and provide assistance if they need any.

We separately received contact from the International Sinology Research Center of Shandong University, with regard to the Society's current holdings of Chinese rare books. The Center specifically expressed interest in the Hoppisley Collection, and there may be possibility for extra cataloguing or digitization.

### **Users and enquiries**

The library received 37 visits from researchers between January and March, down from 49 during the same period last year. However, the number of remote enquiries received was up, from 80 to 100.

The collections which generated the most interest were RAS institutional archives, Manning Archive, photographic collections, and Persian, Malay, and James Tod manuscript collections.

### **Cataloguing**

We added 204 records to the online catalogue between January and March, and have now finished the cataloguing of our main book sequence. This means that our main sequences of books, pamphlets, and periodicals are all now electronically catalogued. Our ongoing projects are now dedicated to the cataloguing of oversized books, Tracts (bound volumes of pamphlets), and special collections (eg, Hoppisley Collection).

### **Volunteers**

Thanks to the efforts of Roger Parsons, we have completed the cataloguing of our main book sequence, which contains over 20,000 books. Roger has moved straight on to begin cataloguing our oversized books, which also contains several thousand books, including many rare works.

Our volunteers continue to work hard with the Collections. Ian Scholey completed the work on the new slides of the Marsh Arabs, and then undertook the listing of our map collection in an Excel spreadsheet from its card index. This will make it much easier to search and use our maps. Ian is now listing letters in a book of Correspondence from the beginnings of the Society. Again, this will enable these to become more accessible to researchers.

We recruited two volunteers, Zhu Liang and Harriet Gemmill, to catalogue the Alfred Hippisley collection of Chinese books that we have on loan from the London Library. Zhu Liang is currently doing her PhD in Sinology at SOAS, and Harriet is starting her PhD this autumn. So far, they have made excellent progress cataloguing this collection. We are grateful to Prof. Bernhard Fuehrer for introducing us to Zhu Liang and Harriet.

Ian Herbertson began volunteering with us. He is beginning a cataloguing audit of our artworks, checking which ones still need to be added to the online catalogue.

Yaren Sabah Sahilli began a work placement with us: she is the fourth student from the Sussex University MA in History of Art and Museum Curation to carry out a placement at the Society. Yaren has started to add records for our Ottoman manuscripts to the online catalogue.

Innoka Bartlett started as a volunteer, resuming the cataloguing of our photographs of South East Asian antiquities.

Amy Matthewson returned to undertake the digitization of our China glass lantern slide collection. These are now available on our Digital Library.

Our NADFAS volunteers have continued to visit and carry out book repairs.

### **Palm Leaf Manuscript digitization project**

The photography of the Whish/South Indian Sanskrit collection is complete, comprising 224 digitized manuscripts on the Internet Archive website. The Internet Archive has since started to digitize our Burmese collection. This is progressing more slowly as some of these manuscripts are very large.

The digitized manuscripts have been viewed on archive.org approximately 6,500 times.

### **Other digitization projects**

We purchased a desktop scanner, which is easy to use and delivers high-quality images. The first collection we digitized was 200 glass lantern slides of photographs from early C20<sup>th</sup> China, which were scanned by Amy Matthewson.

We have arranged for Art UK to photograph the Society's sculpture collection in early May. The images will go online on the Art UK website, but we will receive copies of all images and will retain copyright.

### **Conservation**

Two students from Camberwell College of Arts, Rebekah Harbord and Arantza Dobbels, selected items from the Society's collections to conserve for their MA Conservation final projects. The items in question are RAS 058.001-002 (miniature paintings of Layla and Majnun), 037.177-178 (genealogical trees from the Tod Collection), and 073.001-004 (drawings of the bridge and island of Sivasamudram, ca. 1830).

The Director and Librarian both registered in writing their objection to the University of the Arts with regard to recently announced plans to close down the long-running and internationally-respected Conservation MA.

The Society announced a fundraising campaign towards the conservation of RAS Burmese 86 and its *sazigyo* braid, which we promoted via our blog, Twitter, and email. We also approached other heritage organizations and asked them to publicize the initiative to their members. As of 22 March, we had received some new donations, but were still a long way short of our target. We will make another push for donations after Easter.

### **Reprographic services**

There were 535 digital images taken from RAS collections between September and December, including 399 by library staff. We also provided 124 photocopies from the collections. In total, we charged £217 for these services.

### **Visits and conferences**

The Society hosted a Collections Evening in late March to showcase the work that is being done to conserve and understand the Society's collections. The evening featured talks by Dr Amy Matthewson, Laurent Cruveillier, and Mathilde Renaud, as well as a display of rarely-seen materials from the Society's collection.

We welcomed a delegation from Hampshire County Council, led by Tim Speller, in connection with their HLF-backed project on the legacy of Sir George Thomas Staunton.

### **Loans to exhibitions**

In January, the Society loaned our manuscript Raffles Java 4 to the National Library Board of Singapore. It will be back at the end of April. We are in the process of renewing the Museum of London loan of our painting of the Parsi shipbuilders (RAS 01.007-008).

Iris Yau included a reproduction of a letter from the Society's collections as part of an exhibition at the London College of Fashion. The letter in question is an 1836 letter from Thomas Weeding to Captain Harkness regarding the gift of the "Grand Chop" or clearance document for the *Sarah*, the first ship to arrive in England directly from China after the East India Company relinquished its commercial character.

### **Loans to the RAS**

Deborah Manning placed with us, on loan, three letters from Charles Lloyd to Thomas Manning, in addition to the two she had placed with us previously.

The loan of the Arrow Vase from the Horniman Museum was extended to the end of March, after which it returned to the Horniman.

The cataloguing of the Hippisley Collection is underway.

Edward Weech  
Librarian