

Information for librarians & information professionals working in Edinburgh - February 27th, 2008

RAISING THE PROFILE

The Grand Lodge of Scotland Library

The Library of the Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Scotland (yes that its full title!) can in no way be described as an ordinary Library. Why would a so called 'secret society' have a library which is open to the public? Of course Freemasonry is not a secret society, it is listed in the telephone directory has, a public museum, has a large and growing web site (www.grandlodgescotland.com) and hosts an International Conference on the History of Freemasonry (ICHF), see www.ichfonline.org



Although Freemasonry has been in existence for at least 400 years and almost certainly originated in Scotland, it was the 18th century that saw a dramatic increase in the number of gentlemen members many of whom were involved in the Scottish enlightenment and many of whom had a variety of antiquarian interests. Indeed, David Stewart Erskine, 11th Earl of Buchan (1742 – 1829), was Grand Master Mason (1782 – 1784) taking up the most senior position within Scottish Freemasonry a year after he had founded the Society of Antiquaries. It is of little surprise that gentlemen such as these would bring their own interests to Freemasonry which was, and is, complex in its structure, philosophy and objectives. A pre-requisite for the study of the organisation, its history and development, was a library which was founded when the Grand Lodge of Scotland purchased St. Cecilia's Hall, Niddry Street, Edinburgh in 1809. The library was founded without fanfare but was established, it is recorded, when one of the members donated a book. The title is not mentioned!

Since then the library has grown organically, without ever having employed a qualified librarian, and although almost all the volumes (in excess of 10,000 – they have never been counted or comprehensively catalogued) deal with the subject of Freemasonry in some (occasionally vague) way the volumes are presented in an unusual manner – by geographic location. Some shelves are devoted to Freemasonry in North America, England, and the Middle East etc. Books which do not fall easily into such a cataloguing method are shelved according to type (not subject) and so there are places devoted to journals, modern books and the proceedings of the organisation. Finding the exact location of material is reliant on the memory of the Librarian!

The present library, housed on the second floor, of Freemasons' Hall, 96 George Street, Edinburgh. Was placed there in 1912 when the present building was completed. The volumes are housed in oak, glass fronted cases, and is very reminiscent of that found at one time in large country houses. There is insufficient space in the room designated as the library and many books are stored

elsewhere in the building. The library has been neglected for some time, in terms of maintenance, replenishment of stock and cataloguing. However, steps are now being taken to address these problems.

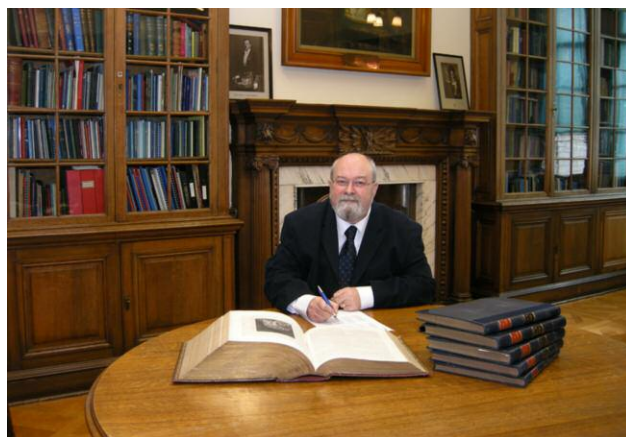
The 'Jewel in the Crown' of the library is the Morison Collection, named after Dr Charles Morison (1780 – 1849) of Greenfield, near Alloa, Clackmannanshire. The last 27 years of an interesting and active life were spent as a resident in Paris where he devoted much time and energy gathering together a large collection of books on Freemasonry and related subjects. On his death his widow bequeathed the collection of slightly more than 2000 volumes, mainly in French, to the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

Freemasonry, is a subject that has recently attracted the attention of the academic world especially by institutions outwith Scotland and the library and associated materials are mainly consulted by researchers interested in subjects as diverse as the Scottish Diaspora, Scottish (as opposed to any other form) Freemasonry and its impact on colonialism and the British Empire, the part played by Scottish Freemasons in the tobacco trade and their effect on independence movements in places such as India.

At the same time as that increasing academic interest so is Freemasonry in popular culture. Known as the 'Da Vinci Effect' the library deals (daily) with enquiries from lay people from all over the world on matters relating to Rosslyn Chapel, the Knights Templar (ancient and modern), Freemasonry and of course the Da Vinci Code. There is consequently some considerable strain on the library resources.

The library is for reference only and access to *bona fide* researchers is by appointment only.

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TACIT - Information for librarians & information professionals working in Edinburgh

NEWS FROM THE CABIN

The ELISA Working Groups are working particularly hard at present, developing their respective projects and helping with the future strategy of ELISA. Forthcoming dates include:



The ELISA Full Committee are meeting on 3rd March to discuss current developments and future directions

Access Group meeting on 3rd March to work on the Edinburgh Library Passport and the Book Prescription schemes

Staff Development Group meeting on 4th March to look at current library science training curricula and to discuss the ELISA Open Day programme.

The e-Content Group are working on a proposal to put forward to the ELISA Business Committee.

The Web Group met last week and are drawing up a development plan, with a particular view to using the website to promote the Festival of Libraries 2008 and to create more dialogue between ELISA members.

20th March the ELISA Business Committee and the Working Group Convenors are meeting to draw up a realistic, practical and sustainable development plan for ELISA in the light of no further funding being in place for a dedicated post by the end of 2009. The achievements of ELISA to date are not insignificant and the next two years will see further positive results – the various committees and Working Groups are working hard to ensure that these developments can be maintained in the long term by putting agreed structures in place.

Vol.5, No.4 of Widwisawn, a 'webzine' covering various developments in the Scottish library, museums and archives communities is now available via the SAPIENS Electronic Publishing Service at: <http://widwisawn.cdlr.strath.ac.uk/>. This features a contribution by Gordon Dunsire: Depute Director, CDLR, of interest to people concerned with regional co-operative ventures in the national context "Mapping collaboration: library co-operatives in Scotland". This issue also contains an article "Help us make HILT's terminology services useful in your information service" This comes with the following invitation:



The JISC-funded HILT project is looking to make contact with staff in information services or projects interested in helping it test and refine its developing terminology services. The project is currently working to create pilot web services that will deliver machine-readable

terminology and cross-terminology mappings data likely to be useful to information services wishing to extend or enhance the efficacy of their subject search or browse services. The project is also developing an associated toolkit that will help service technical staff to embed HILT-related functionality into their services. The primary aim is to serve JISC funded information services or services at JISC institutions, but information services outside the JISC domain may also find the proposed services useful and wish to participate in the test and refine process.

The test and refine process is likely to begin towards the end of March 2008 and continue for at least six months beyond that. Individuals or services interested in participating, should begin by joining the HILT-Collaborators email list at <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?SUBED1=hilt-collaborators&A=1>. For further information, please contact: Dennis Nicholson, Project Director, d.m.nicholson@strath.ac.uk

NHS Scotland eLibrary are presenting six half-day national events for public and further education library staff.



The two East-Coast events take place at Edinburgh University Library on 4th March at 10:00 and 13:30. Why not come along?

The aim of these events is to demonstrate how your library can get the most out of the new free public-focussed Health Information website, Health Information Plus (HI+).

Morning sessions will have a public library focus and afternoon sessions will have an FE library focus. However some flexibility can be met.

You'll be given the opportunity to:

- . hear all about HI+ and enjoy a guided tour of the site
- . try HI+ for yourself
- . explore the librarians' online support pack, "Using HI+"
- . meet the developers
- . network with other Public and FE librarians from your area.

If you can't make it to one of the Edinburgh events, events are also being hosted at Glasgow (12th March) and Aberdeen (18th March).

These events are FREE. To book, please email rob.westwood@nes.scot.nhs.uk, specifying which event you would like to attend. (The following line is a live link).

Health Information +

NEWS

2008 Middle East Festival, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1-11 March 2008 www.mesp.org.uk. For more information about forthcoming events, please contact: mesp2008@hotmail.co.uk or telephone: 0131 331 4469.

There is a lot of lively debate on information literacy at present. If you haven't already, join the JISC mailing <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?REPORT=&n=infoliteracy&m=&a=maybe&s=0&X=&Y=&z=3&V=0&q=1>

The January 2008 IFLA Information Literacy Section Newsletter is now available at <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s42/news/IL-Newsletter200801.pdf>

The LILAC conference is taking place on 17th – 19th March: http://www.lilacconference.com/dw/2008/Conference_programme.html

Vacancy: Scottish Agricultural College, Edinburgh SITE LIBRARIAN

Application Closing Date: Fri, 07 Mar 2008

SAC are looking for an enthusiastic, creative team player to work within our Edinburgh Campus Library based at King's Buildings. Your core responsibility will be to provide an efficient and effective library and information service through management of staff and stock, and provision of training to users as required. You should possess a professional library qualification and have demonstrable supervisory experience in a library. You will be fully conversant with current IT developments and will be able to expand the Library's services in these areas.

Further details and application pack available at: <http://www.sac.ac.uk/vacancies/>