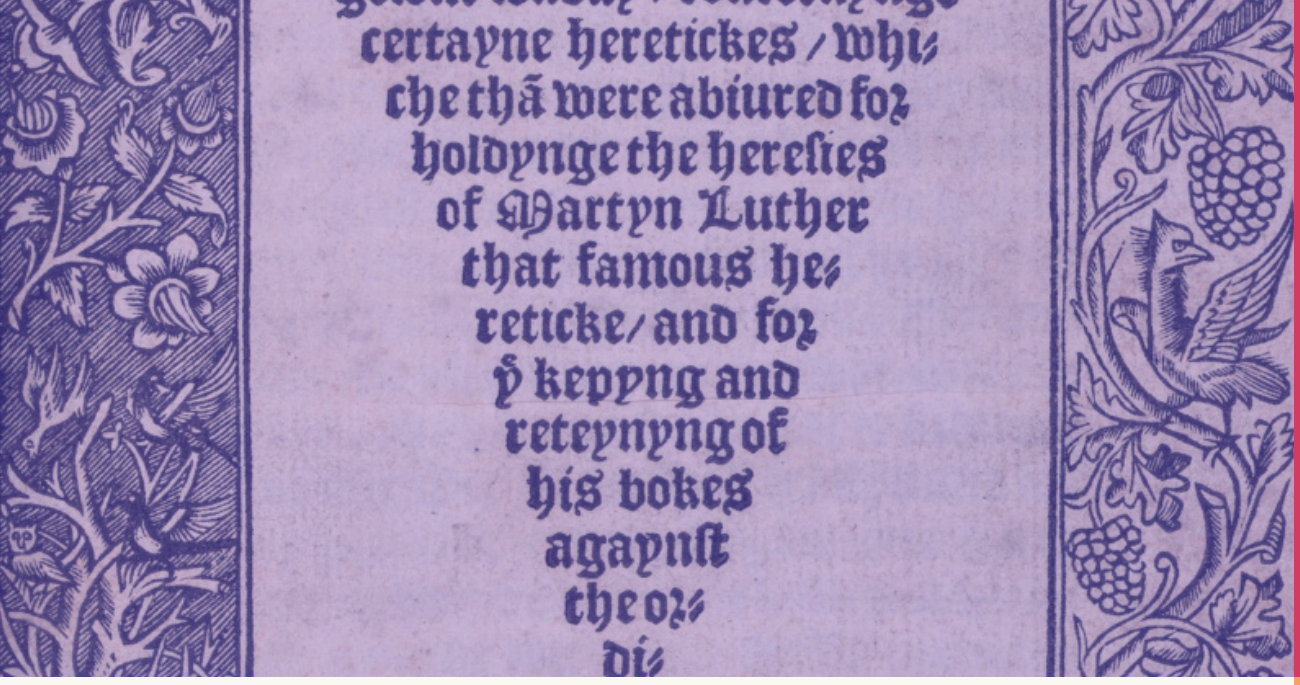


Lambeth Palace Library

Annual Review 2025



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Foreword

Any two days at Lambeth Palace Library are never quite the same.

On one day, colleagues might be helping a researcher analyse medieval manuscripts, retrieving property deeds for colleagues across the church, or conserving a fragile early printed volume. On another, they might be delivering a community workshop in a local school, installing an exhibition, answering an enquiry from the other side of the world, or uncovering a story in the collections that has lain overlooked for centuries.

This variety reflects who we are. As the historic library of the Archbishops of Canterbury and the official repository for the archives of the National Church Institutions, we care for an extraordinary range of material—from medieval codices and early print to modern publications and the living records being created today. We are simultaneously a major centre for research, learning and discovery, and an essential operational service supporting the daily governance of the Church of England.

Our collections grow continuously: the records of today become the archives of tomorrow. Just as our holdings evolve, so too do the questions people bring to them. Readers visit us to study music, art, literature and local history. Others come to trace family roots, investigate challenging aspects of our shared past, explore the church's role in society, or gather evidence to inform contemporary decisions. In every case, these collections help people tell the stories of where we have come from and who we are now.

This review captures that extraordinary breadth. Within these pages, you will find stories of new acquisitions and discoveries, vibrant exhibitions and concerts, cataloguing and conservation breakthroughs, university teaching and community partnerships. It also shines a light on our essential, less visible work: enabling institutional accountability and transparency, supporting colleagues across the church, and ensuring these collections remain secure and accessible for generations to come.

What unites all of this is people. The achievements described here are the result of colleagues from across the Library working collaboratively alongside partners from the wider church and society. They are made possible by the generosity of our supporters and funding partners, the dedication of our volunteers, the curiosity of our readers, and the willingness of collaborators near and far to share knowledge.

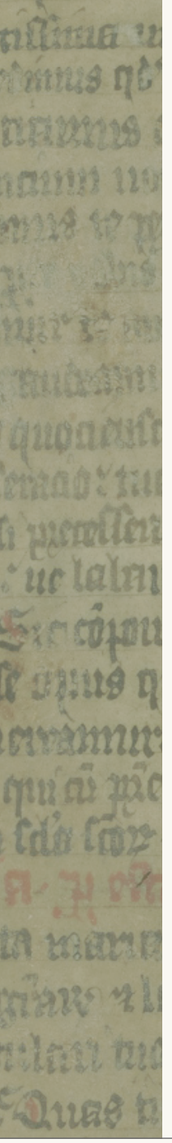
Libraries and archives are sometimes imagined as static storehouses that simply preserve the past. As you will read in this review, the collections in our care are alive. They continue to spark research, creativity, debate and fresh understanding—connecting people across centuries, disciplines and communities. Most importantly, as they have been since 1610, they remain an open resource for everyone.

Thank you for being part of our 2025 story. We look forward to working with you, welcoming you, and discovering more together in the year ahead.

Pip Willcox
Head of Lambeth Palace Library







The Library in Numbers

Behind every manuscript consulted, book catalogued, exhibition launched and record preserved lies a continuous cycle of care, stewardship and access. Whether managing digital records, stabilizing fragile medieval bindings, or welcoming researchers from around the world, these numbers reflect the shared work of our team across 2025.

1,368

Reading Room visits

1 in 4

English Anglican Cathedrals applied to our new preservation scheme

751

new readers registered

>370

boxes of new archives accessioned

12.7 TB

digital collection data collected for preservation

Caring for Our Collections

2,800 historic Parsonage Plans conserved repackaged
>1,100 custom protective enclosures crafted
>2,000 new archival descriptions created
11 rare early printed works reported to ESTC
241 modern scholarly books purchased

The Library at Work

8,021 switchboard calls answered
2,178 property deeds and files circulated
2,621 returned deeds processed for long-term storage
365 diocesan property and legal enquiries resolved
417 administrative documents digitized

Beyond the Library

2,012 exhibition visitors
>400 concert attendees at Lambeth Palace and Arundel
901 attendees at lectures, symposiums and research events
481 tour participants
133 university students taught across 15 classes
Workshops delivered to over **220** primary school-aged children

852,043

total archival records searchable online

3,406

printed books catalogued

84

84 institutional events supported

1,300

records released via annual public release

165,753

printed books catalogue records searchable online

Caring for Our Collections

Caring for more than a thousand years of history requires collaboration across the Library. In 2025, colleagues expanded the collections, stabilised fragile material, improved catalogues, and uncovered new stories in the holdings, ensuring they are preserved and accessible for researchers today and for generations to come.

Enriching Our Collections

Our collections continued to grow throughout 2025, reflecting both the ongoing life of the National Church Institutions and the vital generosity of our supporters. Using our core budget, we systematically expanded our modern research holdings in the history of the Church of England and national ecclesiastical history, purchasing 241 modern scholarly titles.

In contrast, our heritage accessions rely entirely on external philanthropy. Through the crucial support of the Friends of Lambeth Palace Library, the Lambeth Palace Library Trust, the Friends of the Nations' Libraries, and generous individual donors, we were able to secure extraordinary historic items that might otherwise have been lost to public access.

When a fifteenth-century manuscript of devotional texts arrived early in the year, colleagues studied its texts and provenance evidence to gain insight into its early use, and examined its exposed binding structure to plan for its long-term care. Additions such as this, alongside rare books and historic artefacts, help deepen our understanding of the past.

Major Acquisitions and Our Supporters

Fifteenth-Century Devotional Compendium:
Created for personal contemplation on the sufferings of Christ. Purchased with generous support from the Friends of the Nations' Libraries, the Lambeth Palace Library Trust, and the Friends of Lambeth Palace Library.

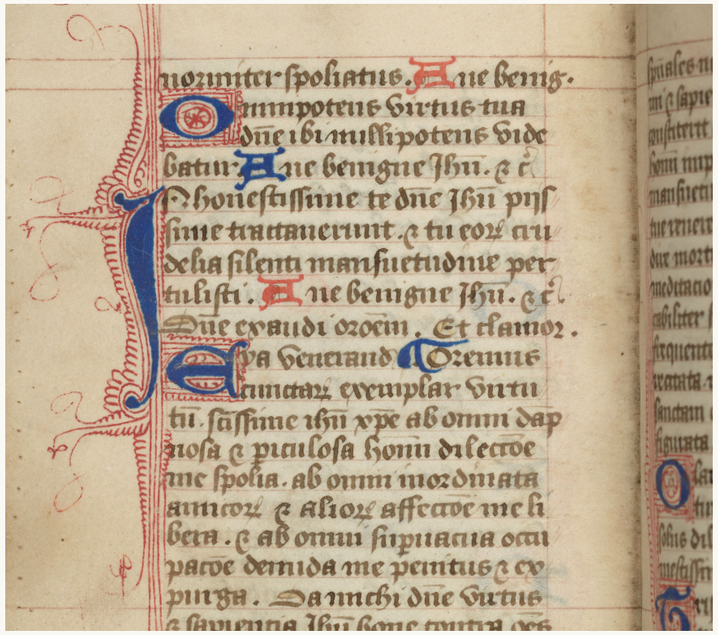
Tudor Reformation Tracts:
A 1531 volume pairing Henry VIII's *A Glasse of the Truthe* with Cranmer's translation of a work on the royal annulment. Purchased with support from the Friends of Lambeth Palace Library, the Lambeth Palace Library Trust, and the Friends of the Nations' Libraries.

John Fisher's Sermon Against Lutheranism (1527):
A rare variant printing of Fisher's St Paul's sermon, acquired with assistance from the Lambeth Palace Library Trust.

Archbishop Hutton's Seal Matrix (1757–1758):
A remarkable silver survival acquired with the assistance of the Friends of Lambeth Palace Library.



Seal and Matrix of Archbishop Hutton, L-2025-4



Devotional texts, L-2025-2

Notable Donations and Gifts

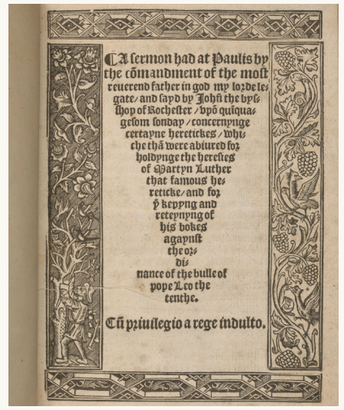
Expanding our holdings through individual generosity.

Campanology and Environment:
The Ranald Clouston collection on campanology and David Shreeve's papers on the Church and the environment.

Antiquarian Printed Books:
Collections from the See House in Coventry, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century volumes from the Cliffe family, and parish periodicals donated by Cliff Webb.

Historic Silver:
A 1937 silver stationery box presented to the Church Commissioners.

Fisher's St Paul's sermon, H5133.F8S3 1527



Preserving Our Collections

Preservation work in 2025 ranged from environmental monitoring and pest management to conservation treatment and the production of protective housing. Colleagues prepared items for research, teaching and exhibition while continuing major projects such as the Parsonage Plans programme and the rehousing of the Sion College collections.

Work continues on both large-scale long-term projects and immediate reactive treatments. From conducting condition surveys of rare textile bindings to managing quarantine procedures that prevent mould and pests from entering the stores, preservation underpins every point of access to the collections.

Preservation in Practice

Highlights of 2025 conservation and collection care projects

The Parsonage Plans Project:
Thousands of historic plans documenting church housing across England were condition-surveyed, flattened, and transferred into custom archival packaging, making them safely accessible for local and architectural historians.

Olaudah Equiano Loan:
The famous eighteenth-century autobiography *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* was conserved for loan to the Jewish Museum Vienna (*Jüdisches Museum Wien*). Heavy previous repairs were removed and delicate paper tears retreated to improve opening for display.

The Sion College Library Store:
Over 800 bespoke protective boxes were made and custom-labelled to protect vulnerable early printed bindings, keeping storage areas clean and improving retrieval for cataloguers and readers.

Mepham Psalter and Pindar's *Olympia*:
High-priority items were stabilised for active use, including the medieval Mepham Psalter for rare book classes and Pindar's *Olympia* for academic research.

Disaster Recovery and Skills Sharing

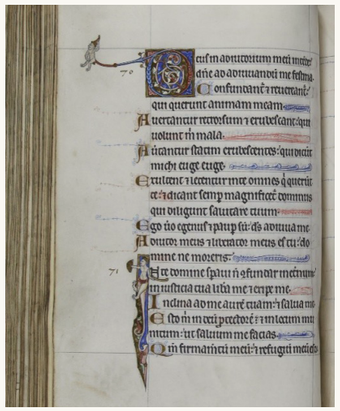
Building resilience across the sector

Library and Cathedral Salvage Training:
In August, the Library hosted a day-long emergency planning and salvage course delivered by Harwell Restoration. Joined by cathedral colleagues, staff engaged in practical exercises dealing with water-damaged books, parchment, photographs and media.

Professional Conservation Standards and ICON:
The Library collaborated with the Institute of Conservation (ICON) for professional conservation services, supporting accredited conservation practice and skills sharing across special collections.

Training Next Generation Conservators:
The Library hosted a six-week placement for a student from the West Dean Degree in Arts (Books and Bindings) and welcomed BA Book and Paper Conservation students from City and Guilds of London Art School to clean and document the Prints collection ahead of digitisation.

The Mepham Psalter,
Sion L40.2 L2

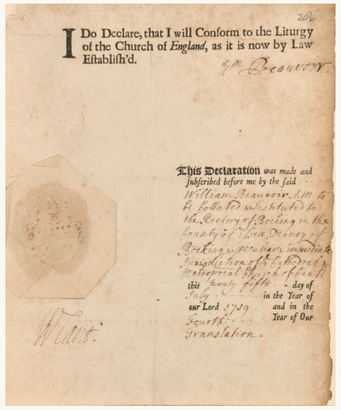


The interesting narrative of the life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African / Written by himself, B79.10_V44

Making the Past Legible

Collections fulfil their purpose when people can discover, understand and use them. In 2025, colleagues improved access to archives, manuscripts and printed books through cataloguing, provenance research and digitisation. With help from volunteers, students and academic partners, the team created thousands of new records, enhanced existing descriptions and made more material available online.

This work draws on specialist knowledge of hand-press printing, manuscript culture, church administration and historical bindings. Along the way, colleagues uncovered new information about the collections while making them easier for researchers to find and interpret.


I Do Declare, that I will Conform to the Liturgy of the Church of *England*, as it is now by Law Eſtabliſh'd.

This Declaration was made and ſubſcribed before me by the ſaid William Beauvoir, A.M. to be collated and inſtituted to the Rectory of Barking in the County of Eſſex, Deanery of Barking, per cessum immediate Naturalis Mortis Dr. Ralph Holingsworth, Clerk, laſt Incumbent, this Ninth Day of July in the Year of our Lord 1709 and in the Seventh Year of Our Translation.

Revd William Beauvoir's correspondence, MS 1557 f.206r

Uncovering Hidden Histories and Rare Prints

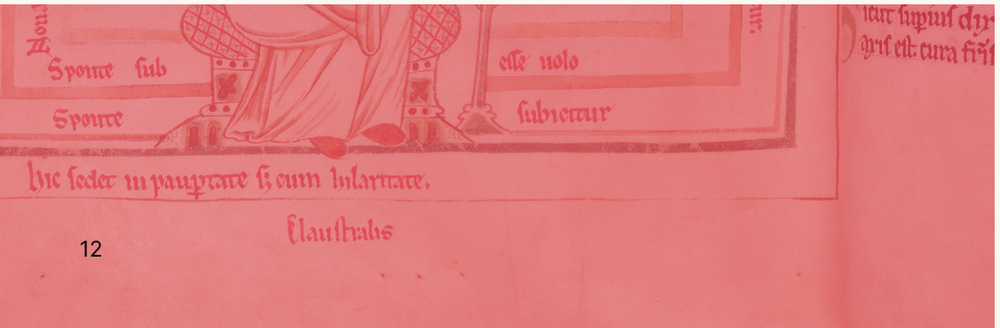
Discoveries through cataloguing and research

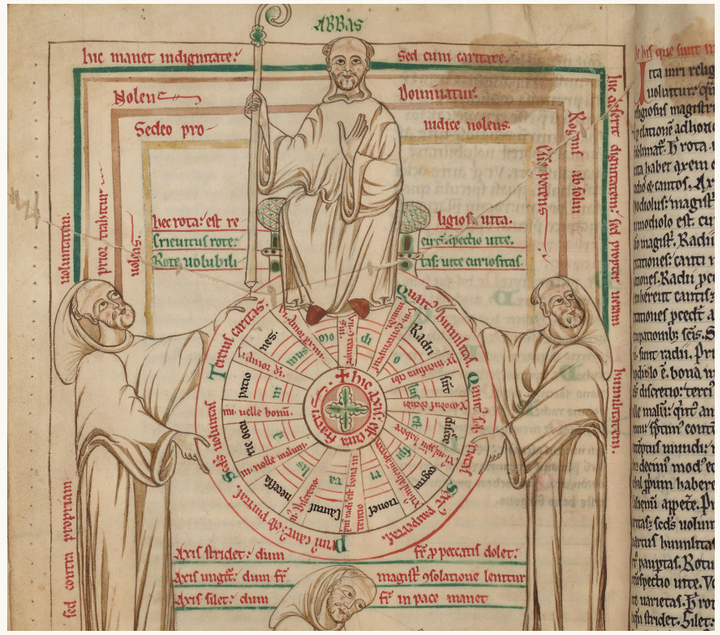
Women's Suffrage Correspondence:
Ahead of the centenary of the 1928 Equal Franchise Act, enhanced catalogue descriptions of Archbishop Davidson's correspondence (1907–1914) now allow researchers to identify campaigners by name, including Emmeline Pankhurst, Millicent Fawcett, Ethel Smyth, and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, as well as anti-suffrage correspondents.

Secrets of the Court of Arches:
Work on eighteenth-century ecclesiastical court records, supported by the Friends of Lambeth Palace Library, captured over 130 unrecorded appointments of guardians for children and admissions of proctors and advocates, as well as identifying numerous witnesses from all walks of life, opening up crucial sources for social historians.

Whitgift Binding Discovery:
A shelf-checking project in the early printed collections revealed that a volume bearing Archbishop Whitgift's arms contained four separate late sixteenth-century visual works, including rare engravings by Jan Collaert, rather than the two previously recorded.

Domestic Life in Eighteenth-Century France:
Cataloguing Revd William Beauvoir's correspondence (MSS 1555–1558) brought to light his clandestine marriage, court gossip, and the daily challenges faced by a Protestant chaplain in Paris.





Hugo de Folieto, The Wheel of True and False Religion, MS 107 f. 84v



Expanding Global Discovery

Funded cataloguing, research, and high-resolution digitisation

Sion College Library Cataloguing:
Supported by funding from the Lambeth Palace Library Trust, cataloguers created detailed online entries for 1,380 early printed volumes. Eleven rare seventeenth- and eighteenth-century works were reported to the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC) as unique to Sion College Library.

Student and Volunteer Research:
A doctoral placement student from Queen Mary University of London produced a comprehensive new catalogue for MS 593, matching Henry Wharton's seventeenth-century notes with surviving medieval originals across UK repositories. A doctoral candidate from the University of Oxford continued her work identifying and describing medieval music fragments found in book bindings. A London Arts and Humanities Partnership (LAHP) placement student developed a workflow for cataloguing the Library's Parish Magazine collection.

High-Resolution Digitisation:
The online image Library grew to over 30,000 records, adding complete digital surrogates of medieval treasures including the twelfth-century *Wheel of True and False Religion* by Hugo de Folieto (MS 107) and the fifteenth-century *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers* (MS 265).

Turnbull Commission and Legal Board:
With support from the Lambeth Palace Library Trust, cataloguers produced detailed catalogues comprising more than 900 entries for these two significant collections. Together, these collections illustrate developments in the governance of the Church of England in the late 1990s and the provision of legal advice on matters affecting both the Church Assembly and its boards, as well as local parish life and wider aspects of local history in twentieth century.

The Library at Work

By assisting researchers in the Reading Room, retrieving legal deeds, answering enquiries and teaching with historic collections, colleagues helped people make practical use of the collections.

In the Reading Room

Supporting research remains central to our purpose. Throughout 2025, the Reading Room welcomed a diverse range of users, from academic historians, local researchers, and family history enthusiasts to clergy, journalists, and international scholars drawn to our unique holdings. Readers consulted archives, manuscripts, and printed books spanning more than a thousand years, exploring topics as varied as medieval religion, family histories, church governance, architecture, music, and social reform.

Our research support extends beyond physical visits: this year colleagues responded to over 2,000 enquiries from around the world, providing expert advice, reference guidance and high-resolution images. This ongoing work supports doctoral theses, academic publications, broadcasts, and public history initiatives globally.

Scholarly Impact and Recent Publications

New research drawing on the collections

34 Modern Scholarly Books:
Acquired in 2025 that explicitly reference our collections.

Most Cited Collections:
The manuscript sequence, Archbishops' Papers (specifically Archbishop Tait and Archbishop Lang), Archbishops' Registers, and the records of the Incorporated Church Building Society (ICBS).

Bestselling and Academic:
Our holdings supported major new publications, including Tracy Borman's *The Stolen Crown*, Grant Gordon's study of John Newton and John Wesley, Timothy Larsen's work on Anglican clergy in the First World War, and Michael Wheeler's biography of Gladstone.

Specialist Studies:
Cited in new research on early medieval homiletic literature, seventeenth-century Cambridge music, eighteenth-century Irish Palatine migration, and early Welsh episcopal acta.



Publications Drawing on Our Collections

New research and bestselling non-fiction based on our holdings published in 2025

- Tracy Borman, *The Stolen Crown: Treachery, Deceit and the Death of the Tudor Dynasty*
- Grant Gordon, *An Instrument of Divine Grace: John Newton Encounters John Wesley*
- Thomas N. Hall and Winfried Rudolf (eds.), *Sermons, Saints and Sources: Studies in the Homiletic and Hagiographic Literature of Early Medieval England*
- Timothy Larsen, *The Fires of Moloch: Anglican Clergymen in the Furnace of World War One*
- Scott Mandelbrote, *Music, Politics and Religion in Early Seventeenth-Century Cambridge: The Peterhouse Partbooks in Context*
- Claire A. McCormick, *European Migrants in Eighteenth-Century Ireland: The Great Palatine Migration of 1709 and Its Aftermath*
- Ann Eljenholm Nichols, *Making Books in Fifteenth-Century Cambridge: William Dyngley's Patristic Project*
- Shaun McGuinness (ed.), *Bangor Episcopal Acta, 1092-1306*
- Richard Raiswell, Michelle Brock and David Winter, *The Routledge History of the Devil in the Western Tradition*
- Michael Wheeler, *William Ewart Gladstone: The Heart and Soul of a Statesman*

Welcoming Visiting Groups

Introducing new audiences to primary sources

Expert and Curator Visits:
Facilitated specialist visits for curatorial teams from the National Gallery, the St Bride's Foundation, V&A's National Art Library, the Wellcome Collection, The National Archives, AMARC, and international groups including Australians Studying Abroad.

Academic Enquiry:
Hosted visiting Syriac scholars from Vanderbilt University and researchers from Northeastern University London as part of the Global Footprints in Urban Archives project.

Pre-Exhibition Show-and-Tells:
Welcomed the Iken Scholars choir to view the Arundel Choirbook (MS 1) in person ahead of their recording sessions for the *Sing Joyfully* exhibition.



Teaching and Learning

Learning with original sources lies at the heart of the Library's educational work. Throughout 2025, colleagues introduced undergraduate and postgraduate students to manuscripts, rare printed books and archives through hands-on teaching sessions delivered alongside academic partners. Students worked directly with primary sources, exploring subjects ranging from medieval devotional texts and early modern censorship to Middle English prose and nineteenth-century church governance.

These classes, together with public lectures and study days, helped new audiences engage with the collections and develop the skills needed to interpret them. A careers open day brought together colleagues from across library, archive, collection care and operations roles, demonstrating the breadth of careers that underpin the Library's work, alongside the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), the Archives and Records Association (ARA) and the Institute of Conservation (ICON).

Higher Education Partnerships and Classes

Welcoming undergraduate and postgraduate seminars

15 Specialist University Seminars:
Hosted across the year, delivering intensive, small-group primary source training to 133 advanced undergraduate and postgraduate researchers.

UK University Partners:
Hosted teaching sessions for institutions including University College London, King's College London, Queen Mary University of London, Royal Holloway University of London, the Courtauld Institute, the Warburg Institute, Northeastern University London, and the London Rare Books School.
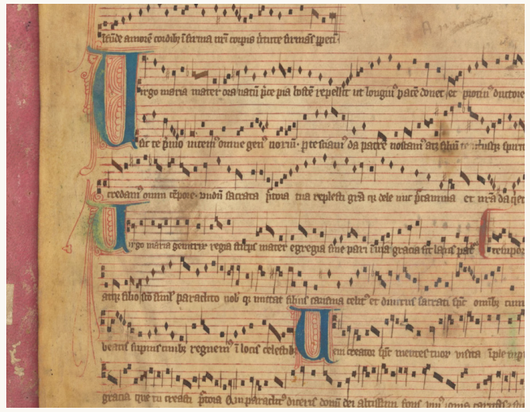
International Seminars:
Welcomed visiting students and scholar groups from international institutions, including Brigham Young University, Vanderbilt University, Oakland University, and Lawrence University.

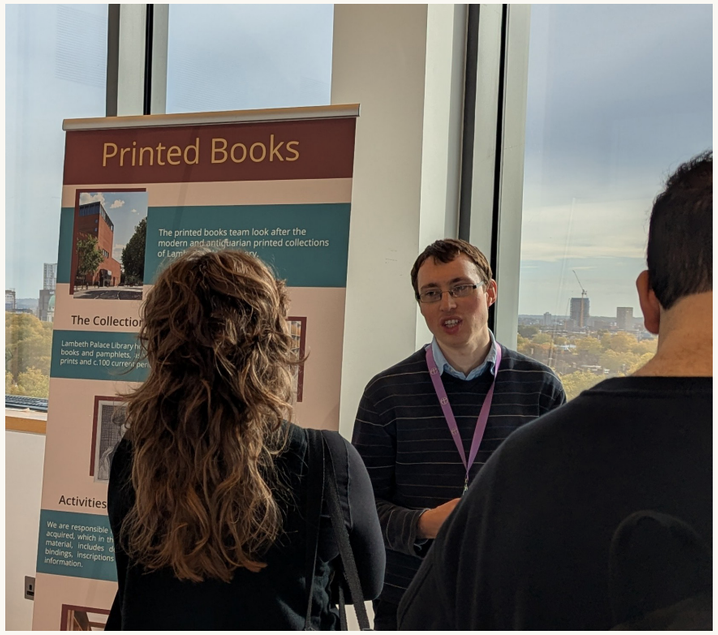
Hands-On History:
Taught classes spanning Greek manuscripts, Middle English Prose Brut chronicles, early modern printing and censorship, medieval almanacs, and historical bookbinding structures.

The Iken Scholars being shown the Arundel Choirbook, MS 1.



Fragment of medieval polyphony, discovered in 2024 and sung for the first time in 2025, [ZZ]1482.5





Careers Open Day

Placements and Professional Development

Nurturing future heritage talent and sector leadership

CILIP Institutional Membership and Sector Networking: Became an institutional member of CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) in 2025 and hosted a CILIP professional networking event at the Library, supporting career development and sector connectivity.

Academic and Professional Placements:
Hosted placement students at Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral levels across a range of disciplines from institutions including Brigham Young University, Queen Mary University of London, and University College London.

Specialist Conservation and Research Roles:
Supported placements in book and paper conservation from West Dean Art School and City and Guilds of London Art School, alongside a doctoral placement funded through the Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded London Arts and Humanities Partnership.

Careers Open Day:
Welcomed early-career participants and students to the Library for a dedicated careers day, sharing pathways into librarianship, archives, conservation, and operational leadership in cultural heritage settings.

Sustaining the National Church Institutions

Beyond our role as a major research library and archive, we serve as the corporate memory, archive, and record office for the National Church Institutions (NCI). In 2025, colleagues managed physical and digital transfers, processed thousands of legal deeds and files, and supported property and governance enquiries across the Church of England.

This work helps ensure records remain accessible and secure, supporting the National Church Institutions' accountability to the communities they serve and maintaining the documentary record that informs decision-making across the Church of England.



Legal deed and file circulation

Corporate Memory and Record Service

Archives and records support in 2025

>370 Boxes of Archives Accessioned:
The majority transferred directly from NCI bodies, reflecting the living administrative history of the church.

Legal Deed and File Circulation:
Processed 2,178 property deeds and administrative files for ongoing legal and property work across church bodies.

2,621 Returned Deeds Processed:
Catalogued, checked, and returned to secure long-term archival storage.

365 Diocesan Property and Legal Enquiries:
Expertly resolved to support parish, diocesan, and central church asset management.

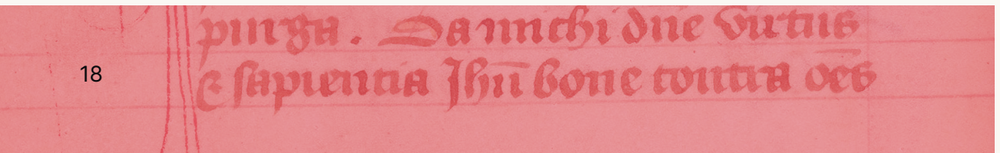
Information Governance and Digital Preservation

Building modern infrastructure for the National Church Institutions' records

12.7 Terabytes of Digital Assets Managed:
Encompassing born-digital administrative transfers and high-resolution master imaging files, working to establish the baseline technical infrastructure and metadata frameworks required to secure long-term digital preservation.

Annual Public Release:
Released 1,300 archival records via the annual public release of official papers.

NCI Digitisation:
Digitised 417 administrative documents for operational use, embedding the Library at the heart of the church's work.





Lambeth Palace Garden

Beyond the Library

Through partnerships with schools, hospitals, cathedrals and heritage organisations, the Library shared its collections and expertise with audiences far beyond Lambeth throughout 2025, extending access to our collections through exhibitions, workshops, training and collaborative projects.

Exhibitions and Music

Exhibitions and public programmes highlight our collections, creating opportunities for people to encounter rare materials, ask new questions, and share extraordinary experiences. Behind every display case is a collaborative effort: conservators assessing fragile items and crafting bespoke cradles, cataloguers bringing historical context to light, and operations colleagues welcoming hundreds of guests through our doors.

In spring 2025, *Unfolding Time: The Medieval Pocket Calendar* brought together one of the rarest groups of manuscripts ever assembled in the UK. Supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Lambeth Palace Library Trust and the Library's Friends, the exhibition displayed seven of the 29 known surviving concertina-fold almanac manuscripts and 3 printed versions, including loans from the British Library, Bodleian Libraries, British Museum, Kresen Kernow, and the Royal Society, the exhibition explored how medieval people understood time, health, and the heavens.

The project reached far beyond the exhibition gallery. Our teams delivered hands-on zigzag calendar workshops in London primary schools, at the Idea Store in Tower Hamlets, and with young patients at the Evelina London Children's Hospital. Hybrid public lectures, expert symposia, and interactive gallery resources ensured the exhibition welcomed both international scholars and local families.

Later in the year, *Sing Joyfully: Exploring Music in Lambeth Palace Library* celebrated 500 years of the Arundel Choirbook (MS 1), one of only two major choirbooks to survive from the reign of Henry VIII. Supported by the Lambeth Palace Library Trust and the Library's Friends, it featured nearly 50 musical treasures—including newly identified fragments of fourteenth-century polyphony—the exhibition was paired with live performances. Sold-out concerts in the Great Hall of Lambeth Palace and at St Nicholas' Church in Arundel brought music from our collections to life for new audiences.

Beyond the Exhibition Gallery

A Global Digital Legacy for Unfolding Time

When *Unfolding Time: The Medieval Pocket Calendar* closed its doors in May, its impact continued to spread. Our team collaborated with international partners to author global care and curation guidelines for fragile folded almanacs.

To ensure long-term research access to these rare and fragile books, bespoke facsimile box sets of select concertina-fold almanacs were distributed to holding institutions across Europe and the United States, complemented by an interactive 3D online exhibition, video guides, and teaching resources that remain accessible online.







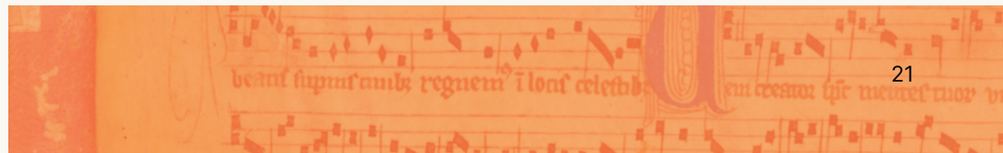
Polyphony Across Time

First Recording of unique pieces from the Arundel Choirbook

To mark the 500th anniversary of the Arundel Choirbook (Lambeth MS 1), the Library commissioned the first commercial recording of seven anonymous Tudor compositions preserved within its pages.

Sung by the Iken Scholars under the direction of Matthew Dunn and recorded in the chapel of Lambeth Palace, *The Lambeth Anonymous* is an evocative recording that brings this music from its 500-year old pages to a listening public. Supported by the Friends of Lambeth Palace Library and Angel Early Music, the album was released internationally on CD and streaming platforms, earning critical acclaim in Gramophone, BBC Radio 3, and international music journals.

Images 1 and 2: Exhibition room at Lambeth Palace Library. Image 3: The Iken Scholars recording The Lambeth Anonymous album in the Lambeth Palace chapel.



Working with Cathedrals and Communities

Colleagues worked with cathedrals, community groups and schools across England in 2025, providing conservation advice, emergency planning support, training and outreach activities. These collaborations created opportunities to share knowledge, learn from others and build stronger professional networks, helping to improve collections care and resilience across the sector.

Cathedral Preservation and Partnerships

Supporting church collections nationwide

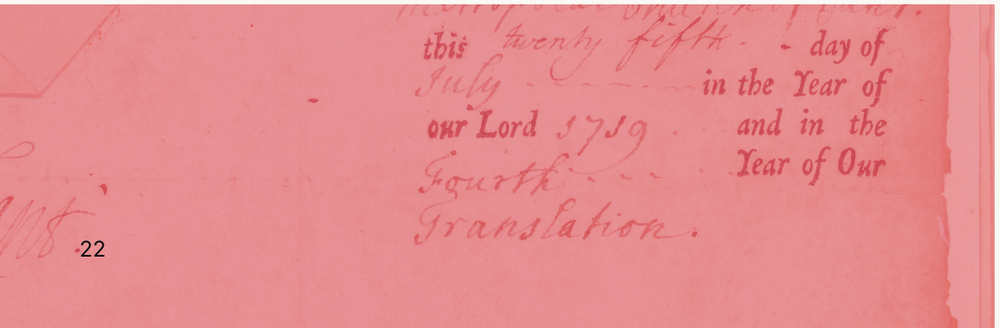
Cathedral Preservation Scheme:
Launched a major new initiative, supported through additional investment from the Church Commissioners, with one in four English Anglican cathedrals applying for specialist preservation advice, condition assessments, and collection care support.

National Emergency Salvage Training:
Hosted an emergency planning and salvage training day delivered by Harwell Restoration, bringing together cathedral colleagues and Library staff for hands-on exercises in dealing with water-damaged books, parchment, and media.

Cathedral Networks and CALCA:
Active participation in CALCA, collaborating with cathedrals nationwide to share collections expertise, provide advice, and facilitate historic loans.



A colleague preparing for the Cathedral Support Programme





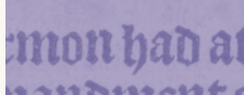
Colleagues at the Library and Cathedral salvage training day

Sustainability in Practice

Enhancing carbon literacy for library and archive collections

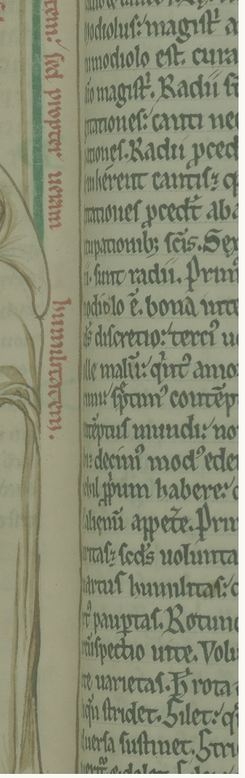
In support of the Church of England's ambition to achieve net-zero carbon by 2030, colleagues completed accredited Carbon Literacy for Archives, Records and Special Collections training in 2025.

Developed through a partnership between The National Archives and the Archives and Records Association (ARA), and offered across the archives sector, the programme has equipped our team to evaluate the environmental footprint of daily collection care, storage, and events. As part of a growing nationwide network of certified heritage professionals, we are seeking to embed sustainable choices into every aspect of our work—ensuring we care for our shared environment as thoughtfully as we care for our historic collections.



Lambeth Palace Garden





Challenging Histories

Libraries and archives are not neutral spaces. The ways in which historical records were created, collected, and preserved reflect power, privilege and exclusion. This year, colleagues worked to examine complex histories within our collections.

Central to this commitment is ongoing work examining the Church of England's historical links with African chattel enslavement, colonial expansion, and imperial governance. Through critical scholarship, inclusive approaches to cataloguing, and collaboration with researchers, community partners and the Church Commissioners' Engagement team, we are working to understand the historical context of these collections and to improve access to them.

African Chattel Enslavement Research and Project Spire

Uncovering historical links to chattel enslavement

Project Spire-Archives Collaboration:
Supported ongoing research into the Church Commissioners' historic endowment fund, facilitating detailed study of eighteenth-century ledgers from Queen Anne's Bounty, South Sea Company investments, and plantation archives.

Routes in the Records:
Hosted major collaborative workshops bringing together researchers, archivists, and community representatives to develop accessible research guides, examine colonial-era metadata, and create contextual pathways into complex archival series relating to transatlantic chattel slavery and global mission networks.

Preserving Rare Advocacy Records:
Stewarded historic primary sources documenting resistance and advocacy, including a 1723 anonymous petition for freedom written by an enslaved person and an 1808 redacted missionary Bible edited to withhold passages on liberation.

Developing Ethical Standards for Archival Description

Global Footprints in Urban Archives:
Collaborated with researchers from Northeastern University London to explore new methods for describing colonial-era archives and identifying hidden voices within historic collections.

Enhanced Catalogue Descriptions:
Re-described seventeenth- and eighteenth-century colonial records to improve findability, address outdated terminology, and highlight Indigenous and enslaved individuals mentioned in administrative papers.

Community and International Engagement:
Facilitated research visits for scholars and community representatives from across the UK, North America and the Caribbean, supporting ethical access to transatlantic histories.





Acknowledgements and Team Changes

The achievements of Lambeth Palace Library across 2025 were made possible through the generosity, guidance, and dedication of our supporters, governance bodies, volunteers, and partner institutions, alongside the work of colleagues. We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone whose contributions helped safeguard our collections, advance research and share knowledge.

During the year, the trustees of the Friends of Lambeth Palace Library and the Lambeth Palace Library Trust continued work towards bringing their activities together within a single charitable incorporated organisation. We are grateful to the trustees of both organisations for the time, care and commitment they have devoted to this transition, and for their shared support of the Library and its collections.

New Faces and Fond Farewells

We were delighted to welcome Dr Annabelle Gilmore and Kwesi Ochosi, who joined the Library as part of Project Spire, the Church Commissioners' initiative exploring the Church of England's historic links to African chattel enslavement and supporting wider engagement with these histories. We also welcomed Natalie Beddows and Vincenzo Falchi who both joined the Operations Team to support engagement and outreach, Jonny Davies, who leads our Imaging Services, and Sholem Lenkiewicz who joined the Archives team.

We said farewell to Dr Julia King, who left the Library after two and a half years as Rare Books Librarian, Lara Artemis who left after six years as Senior Conservator, Lizzie Hensman and Katie Small, Assistant Archivists who left after four years and three and a half years respectively, Aidan Cahill, who completed his appointment in the Operations team after eleven months, and Barbara Penfold who retired from the Library after 43 years.

Governance Body

- The Church Commissioners for England's Bishoprics and Cathedrals Committee, chaired by the Third Church Estates Commissioner, Sir Robert Buckland

Supporters, Trusts, Grant-Making Bodies and Major Donors

- Angel Early Music
- The Cliffe Family
- The Friends of Lambeth Palace Library
- Friends of the Nations' Libraries
- The Lambeth Palace Library Trust
- The National Lottery Heritage Fund
- David Shreeve
- Cliff Webb

Professional Bodies and Sector Partners

- The Archives and Records Association (ARA)
- The Association for Manuscripts and Archives in Research Collections (AMARC)
- The Cathedral Archives, Libraries and Collections Association (CALCA)
- CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals)
- Harwell Restoration
- ICON (Institute of Conservation)
- The National Archives
- The Religious Archives Group (RAG)

Exhibition Lenders and Borrowers

- The Bodleian Libraries
- The British Library
- The British Museum
- Jewish Museum Vienna (Jüdisches Museum Wien)
- Kresen Kernow
- The Royal Society
- Royal College of Physicians

Academic, Heritage and Community Partners

- City and Guilds of London Art School
- The Courtauld Institute of Art
- Evelina London Children's Hospital
- The Idea Store, Tower Hamlets
- The Iken Scholars
- King's College London
- Lawrence University
- London Rare Books School
- The National Gallery
- Northeastern University London (Global Footprints in Urban Archives)
- Oakland University
- Queen Mary University of London
- Royal Holloway, University of London
- St Bride Foundation
- St Nicholas' Church Arundel
- University College London (Institute of Education, Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Library and Information Studies)
- University of Edinburgh
- Vanderbilt University
- The Warburg Institute
- West Dean College of Arts and Conservation

We also offer our warm thanks for the dedication and generosity of volunteers, placement students, and NCI colleagues whose daily support underpins every aspect of our work.


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