

The building

The Minster Library is situated in Dean's Park, on the north side of York Minster. The building which now contains the 'Old Library' and the Library's loan collections was built c.1230 by archbishop Walter Gray as a private chapel for his York palace.

This fell out of use in the 16th century, and the derelict chapel was restored about 1810 to accommodate the Library, then comprising approximately 6,000 volumes, which had outgrown its old quarters in the Minster.

A major new extension, opened in 1998, contains a new reading room, a special collections room, an archive strong room, a conservation studio, and staff offices.

The collections

York Minster Library is the largest cathedral library in the country, with a collection of approximately 120,000 books, tracts and pamphlets. Over 25,000 of these were printed before 1801, including 115 incunables. York Minster Archive contains a variety of archive and manuscript collections, which are detailed below.

Subject coverage

The main subject coverage of books in the Library is theology (all periods), history (particularly medieval and ecclesiastical), art (especially stained glass), religious literature (all periods), York and Yorkshire history.

Opening hours

Monday-Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm

Closed on public holidays and at Christmas and Easter.

Access

Reader admission is through the Reader Enquiry Desk staff (**Tel:** 01904 625308). Prospective users of pre-1801 printed books, printed music, playbills, and printed topographical and biographical prints should make an appointment with the **Librarian**. (**Tel:** 01904 625308)

Prospective users of archives, manuscripts, manuscript music, photographs and microforms should make an appointment with the **Archivist**. (**Tel:** 01904 611118)

Wheelchair access is via a ramp. A disabled lavatory is on the ground floor. There is a lift to the Reading Room.

Further contact information is given on the back page.

Borrowing

Many of the modern books can be borrowed. Application for a borrower's ticket (£20.00 per annum) may be made to the Librarian. Members of the University of York may have a free borrower's ticket on production of a current University of York Library card. The loan period is three weeks. Up to six books can be on loan at any one time.

Catalogues

The online catalogue includes records for the Library's main, early and special printed book collections, parish libraries, pre-1850 printed music, monographic series, periodicals, and newspaper titles (mainly from the 18th and 19th centuries). It is available through the University of York Library catalogue via the Internet at:

<http://libcat0.york.ac.uk/F>

Access to the Minster Library's holdings by subject, provenance, bibliographic source, and imprint (date of work, place of publication, and printer) is available through York Minster Library's discrete catalogue via 'Other Library Catalogues' on the University of York Library's search options page.

There is a card catalogue of music, supplementing the two published catalogues (see below), catalogues of the topographical and biographical prints, a printed catalogue of the mediaeval manuscripts (1992) and catalogues and indices of the archives. The latter will be on-line by 2004.

Rare books and special collections

The '**Old Library**' collections include incunables (works printed before 1501); early printed to eighteenth century books on theology and many subjects in the humanities; a significant collection of sermons and tracts dating from the 17th century; and pre-1801 liturgical works partly from the collections of the Reverend Dr Marmaduke Fothergill (d.1731) and Canon T.F. Simmons (d.1884).

The **Yorkshire collections**, now totalling some 20,000 books and pamphlets, incorporate the most comprehensive collections of earlier material for Yorkshire, with York and Yorkshire printing; Civil War tracts (c.2,000 items) mostly relating to York and Yorkshire; Yorkshire local history, mainly from the Edward Hailstone (d.1890) and William Foot Walker (d.1995) collections; Yorkshire acts, Yorkshire newspapers, and (as yet un-catalogued) playbills.

The **Yorkshire parish library collections** include East Harlsey (c.300 volumes), Hackness (c.112 volumes), and Stainton in Cleveland (c.300 volumes).

Archives and manuscripts collections

The largest **archive** collection is that of the Dean and Chapter's own archive, c.1150 to the present, and those of related bodies: the College of the Vicars Choral, c.1200-1936, the Song School; the archaeological archive of excavations of the Minster 1967 onwards.

Other **documentary** collections include that of the antiquarian Edward Hailstone: the Hailstone collection (12th-19th centuries, predominantly deeds) is largely West Riding, but has very broad coverage for most of Yorkshire. There are a large number of smaller deposited collections, all Minster or Yorkshire related

The **manuscript** collection comprises: 101 mediaeval manuscripts, including theological, medical and liturgical works, particularly the Use of York from the Fothergill Collection. The post mediaeval collection is extensive and includes items in the Walbran, and Hailstone collections.

Non-manuscript material includes: maps and plans of Yorkshire; architectural plans of the Minster and its properties; and photographs, mainly Minster and York.

Music collections

These include: Manuscript and printed music, with some mediaeval liturgical music, mainly of the use of York. Otherwise, mostly 16th-20th centuries, containing many rare items, such as the unique printed copy of Byrd's *Gradualia* (1605), and manuscript and printed music by Purcell; the Minster choir repertoire from c.1600 to the present day and compositions by Minster organists; collections given by Marmaduke Fothergill (includes manuscripts copied by Matthew Hutton (d.1711)), William Priestly and Catherine Sharp.

Publications

C.B.L. Barr, 'York Minster Library' in: *A history of York Minster*, ed. G.E. Aylmer and R. Cant (Oxford, 1977).

D.Griffiths, A catalogue of the music manuscripts in York Minster Library (York, 1981).

D. Griffiths, A catalogue of the printed music published before 1850 in York Minster Library (York, 1977).

N.R. Ker and **A.J. Piper**, *Medieval manuscripts in British libraries*, vol. IV [contains York Minster Library] (Oxford, 1992).

K.M. Longley, A guide to the archives and manuscript collections in York Minster Library (York, 1977).

J. Raine, A catalogue of the printed books in the library of the Dean and Chapter of York (York, 1896).

Yorkshire Family & Local History Database

There is a biographical database of over half a million entries on Yorkshire men and women before 1550. A search for a surname and its variants costs £12.50. There is no charge for an unsuccessful search. More sophisticated searches are available by arrangement. Enquiries, with a cheque made payable to the **Dean and Chapter of York**, should be sent to: 'The Yorkshire Family & Local History Database', York Minster Library, Dean's Park, York YO1 7JQ.

History of the Library collections

The original Minster Library was started c.A.D. 750, under the impetus of successive archbishops, especially Egbert and Albert, and of the Master of the School, Alcuin, who was in charge of the Library, c.778-81. Unfortunately, nothing from these early collections survives today: what was not burnt by the Danes in the 860s was destroyed by the Normans in 1069.

For a large part of the middle ages there was no cathedral library, as secular (i.e. non-monastic) cathedrals had no statutory provision for such an establishment, although it was an automatic provision in any sizeable monastery. Minster clergy had their own collections of books, and several made bequests to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. This changed in the early fifteenth century.

The present collection has its origins in 1414, when the Canon treasurer, John Newton, bequeathed 40 volumes of manuscripts to form a library. Other gifts and bequests followed, and by the beginning of the 18th century there was a small fund for book purchases.

In 1629, the library developed from the then modest size of about 100 volumes, to a collection of national significance, with the gift of Archbishop Tobie Matthew's (d.1628) collection of some 3,000 books. Further gifts and purchases have increased the Library to its current size.

The Dean and Chapter provides a book fund so that the collection can be developed and updated. Purchasing of new and second-hand material covers a wide range of subjects, including theology, history, especially local and church history, literature, art history and architecture.

The Minster Library is administered by the Dean and Chapter of York and has a close association with the University of York. The Minster Archive is solely administered by the Dean and Chapter of York.

Further information

York Minster Library
Dean's Park,
York YO1 7JQ

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Email enquiries: enquiries@yorkminsterlibrary.org.uk

Librarian, rare books & special collections,
and general enquiries: 01904 625308

Archivist, archive and manuscript
enquiries: 01904 611118
Fax: 01904 611119

Library contact

Mr John S. Powell, BA, MA, MCLIP

Archivist

Mr Peter Young, BA(Hons),
Dip in Archive Administration

Internet access

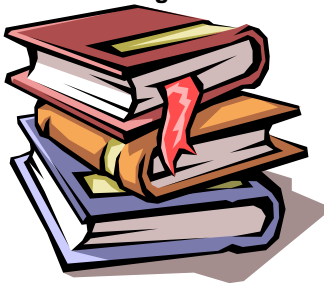
The new web-based Library catalogue is available at:

<http://libcat.york.ac.uk>

You can also visit the York Minster web site at:

<http://www.yorkminster.org>

OLD LIBRARY AND EXHIBITION VISIT FEE: £2.00 per adult
Children and young adults up to 16 years of age: Free of charge
Usual hours: Monday-Thursday: 10.00-4.00; Friday: 10.00-12.00
ANNUAL LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP FEE
Borrowers: £20.00 (for up to six books on loan)
U. of York readers, free with UY library card.
Loan period : three weeks.
Readers: Free of charge



OVERDUE BOOKS CHARGES

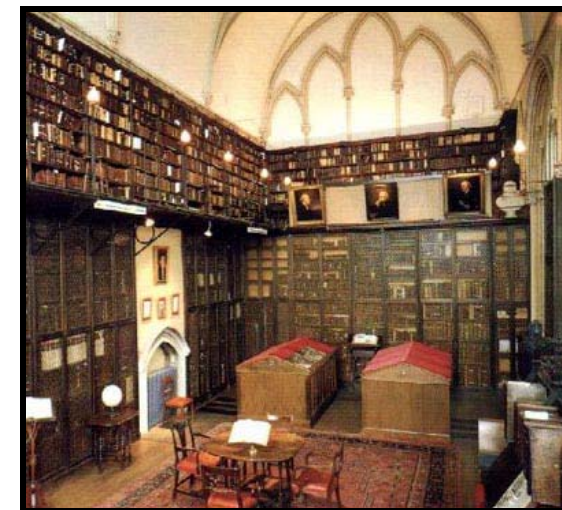
20p per book for each working day the book is overdue

JSP 9/05

DEAN AND CHAPTER OF YORK



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Collections and Information