

N.B. THIS INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL TO STEWARDS ONLY

Locations

The library has been housed in its present room since the 1880's. Formerly at the east end of a building at the south-west corner of the nave, the west end of which housed the Minster School. In Aug. 1784 the Chapter (with only 4 canons present) decreed that the Ven. Peter Packard should hire a room in Red Prebend for the purposes of the school, take down the building, and use the materials for a new library.

This was built south of the quire, with access through the doorway in the south transept. This building was demolished in 1825, and the library moved to what is now the Pilgrims' Chapel, which also served as a vestry and a song school.

In the 1880's Ewan Christian moved it to its present room, previously a sacristy.

Its origins and growth

1369 6 books mentioned "belonging to the altar."

1548 the books were valued at £12

1645 ransacked by Scots soldiers: books and charters were scattered and few survived.

1690 present library started with a donation from Edward Lee of Norwell of a collection of books.

More were gradually given, mainly by canons and vicars, and the Chapter bought some.

1716 It numbered 368 books, most of which have survived.

1726 " " 396 "

1736 " " 742 "

1809 " " 1500+

Today 2200, + 400 in the local history collection.

Of these, 600 are pre 1700; the oldest printed book 1502.

The Librarian's role

The main task: care of the books.

1986 British Library gave a grant of £13,000 negotiated by Richard Beaumont as Librarian. The work put in hand with this grant is not yet completed and will require a further £4000.

1609 the Chapter decreed that "all the books should be called over twice by every residentiary, once 10 days after coming and once 10 days before going"!

He was to check title pages, maps and indexes, and the decree was to be affixed to his study door. The Chapter also made an allowance for coals, and instituted some fire precautions.

Local History Collection: books can be borrowed by serious students. They include a full set of Transactions of the Thoroton Society, except for the 1959 volume which is missing.

Archives kept separately. They include:-

Minster accounts from 1600; +(in north porch room) 500 packages of bishops' transcripts 1600-1838;

maps and plans;

thousands of old photographs, including some glass negatives, copies of which, on 35mm film are in the County Library;

leases from 1524

chapter acts to 1872

visitations and corrections to 1853

eg. we know from a newspaper article which published the Latin original that in 1596 10 youths tried to plough up the churchyard on Plough Monday, and were brought before the Chapter; but the document is missing.

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) all with some gaps
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Scattered material

Some material from our archives is in Reading University library via Prof. Stenton's will; but it is hoped they may return it. 1600 William Byrd, then organist at Lincoln, composed some music for the Minster. The original is now at St. Michael's, Tenbury.