The Library and Archives of The Royal Society
1660–1990

Marie Boas Hall
THE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY
1660–1990

Marie Boas Hall

The Royal Society
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The Royal Society Library now occupies very elegant Reading Rooms with offices for library staff and quarters in the depths of the building for storage which include two specially constructed Archive Rooms for the most valuable books, manuscripts and artefacts. The Society has maintained a library from its earliest years and appointed the first 'Library Keeper' in 1678. Dr Hall's scholarly account describes the various changes that have taken place since the inception of the library over 300 years ago. She also gives us a vivid account of the personalities involved. Differences of opinion sometimes led to serious disputes between the Officers of the Society and the Librarians and there were occasional dramatic moments. During the eighteenth century there was a case of peculation by a Librarian and in the following century one Librarian was dismissed for bringing a lady into his apartment and a dispute over a catalogue resulted in a claim of unfair dismissal.

The first Library Committee was appointed in 1678 and thereafter its representatives inspected the Library from time to time and made recommendations for improvements. Even when its proposals were accepted the same problems turned up again, year after year and century after century. Nearly all its reports said that readers borrowed books and did not return them for years; the books were in a poor state and should be rebound; the Library needed a new catalogue, more space, more shelving, more staff and more money.

The present Library is not only a treasure house for historians of science but is also a centre for up-to-date information on science policy at home and abroad. With increasing use of modern technology the Library has been able to widen the use of its facilities. The comfort of the Reading Rooms today is far from the position in 1678 when no fires or candles were allowed, although in 1775 the Librarian was instructed to look after any Fellow wishing to read and to provide a fire when the weather required it.

Dr Hall's fascinating account of the history of the Library and Archives of the Society will be read with immense pleasure by Fellows, historians of science and many others, and on behalf of the Royal Society, I should like to thank Sir Edward Abraham, F.R.S., and the EPA Cephalosporin Trust for their generosity which has made the publication of this history possible.

Patricia H. Clarke, F.R.S.
'The Library of an institution is one of its most valuable possessions'
Sir Charles Sherrington, F.R.S., 1938

'The Library is, together with the Archives, the chief outward visible manifestation of the Society's continuity'
Dr D.G. King-Hele, F.R.S., 1968

'The Archives of the Royal Society are a priceless inheritance for which the Society is the custodian for future generations'
Royal Society Working group on Archives Policy, 1988

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PREFACE

At a meeting of the Royal Society's Library Committee on 16 October 1990 the Librarian produced a short draft guide to the Library summarizing its history, antecedents and use, compiled by the Library staff. The Committee approved the guide in principle, but suggested that the historical section might be enlarged and made into a booklet which could be given to visitors and be of interest to Fellows and readers. I was, with others, asked to assist and as a consequence drafted a ten-page summary of the Library's history as far as I then knew it. The Librarian, Mrs Sheila Edwards, encouraged me to attempt a longer version, having found that the Officers would be in favour of such a venture. The result (of which a draft of all but the final section was approved by the Library Committee on 11 October 1991) is what follows.

I am more than grateful for the help and support given to me in this work, especially by Sheila Edwards and Alan Clark of the Library, by the Library Committee and by the Officers of the Society, as well as by Professor Patricia Clarke, a former Chairman of the Library Committee, who kindly agreed to write a Foreword. Many helpful suggestions came my way, especially from Norman Robinson, Librarian until 1988, who has offered me friendly help ever since I first set foot in the Royal Society's Library, now more than 40 years ago. I should also like to thank warmly all the members of the Library staff present and past who have given me willing, friendly and efficient assistance over the years, and my apologies to them here for not having named them individually. I thank the Officers and Council of the Society who have given me permission to work in the Library over these many years and have encouraged my work in various ways, not least by making me a member of the Library Committee.

Since this work will, I hope, be read by both Fellows and non-Fellows, I should like to explain that I have deliberately avoided a number of linguistic uses characteristic of the Society which might be puzzling to those not familiar with the Society's usage. Thus I have always referred to 'the Council' rather than to 'Council', have used calendar years, rather than dating from the Anniversary Meeting, and have often treated the Archives as part of the Library, whereas strictly speaking they are a separate entity.

My thanks go to all who answered my queries, and especially to Dr Frank Smithies for information about the London Mathematical Society. My special thanks go to those who read earlier drafts and made useful suggestions, notably to Sheila Edwards, to Alan Clark whose knowledge of the Library over the past 23 years was immensely helpful, and to Sir William McCrea who suggested the title.

Marie Boas Hall

(vii)
INTRODUCTION

The Royal Society, although not yet under that name, came into being in late November 1660, intended 'for the promoting of experimental learning'. This its members proposed to do by means of weekly meetings in which there should be discussion, the presentation of papers or accounts of experiments and, as far as possible, the performance of experiments. These meetings were held in rooms belonging to Gresham College in the City of London, at first in those belonging variously to the Gresham Professors of Astronomy, Geometry and Physic, later in separate rooms loaned to the Society by the College. In almost every way its aims and function were the very opposite of academic bookishness, in conformity with its motto of 'Nullius in verba', its intention being that in everything possible the members should accept nothing as true but what they could see and touch with their own hands. Yet within a very few months members were expressing the need for a library to be filled with books appropriate to the Society's aims and to include books donated to it by its members or others. Records of what was done at meetings were to be kept in Journal Books, all these carefully entered and preserved from that time on.

In July 1662 Charles II granted a detailed Charter to what was then first called The Royal Society, in which were specified various Officers—a President, a Treasurer and two Secretaries—as well as a Council, all these to be elected yearly on St. Andrew's Day (now more usually Anniversary Day) the 30th of November, and the Council Minutes to be kept as were the minutes of the meetings in a special 'Book'. The Second Charter of April 1663 for the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge, as it was now to be called, reinforced the First Charter and allowed the Council to draw up Statutes from time to time. Among the first Statutes was a specific provision for the careful keeping of manuscript 'Books' by a clerk or amanuensis. All these were later to constitute a valuable part of the Archives. For printed books there was as yet no specific provision.
On 8 May 1661, five months after the first meeting, ‘A motion was made for erecting of a library for the use of the Society’. In the strictest sense this was never done, for no special building was ever provided, but soon books began to accumulate. Later that same month (28 May 1661) Sir Kenelm Digby’s ‘relation of plants and animals’ so pleased the meeting that ‘he was desired to publish it,’ whereupon ‘it was resolved, that every member, who hath published or shall publish any work, give the Society one copy’. The first to obey this resolution, which has been largely although far from completely honoured ever since, was Digby himself, with *A Discourse concerning the Vegetation of Plants* (1661) not quite seven months after his reading of it to a meeting of the Society. He was to be followed later in the same month by Robert Boyle, who punctiliously continued to present the Society with copies of his numerous works as they appeared. Soon the Society possessed a considerable number of books presented both by Fellows obeying the rule and by foreigners anxious for election to the Royal Society, for the Society’s approval for their writings or even to obtain the Society’s imprimatur and perhaps assistance in publication. All donations were, and still are, preserved.

The first sizable addition to the Society’s store of books, an addition which qualified it to possess a Library in the true sense of the word, came in 1667. In that year the Society was dispossessed of its rooms in Gresham College—not through any ill will, but because the Great Fire of London in 1666 had created a critical shortage of space for the Lord Mayor and the City Corporations, all of whom moved into Gresham College, which had survived intact. Fortunately Charles Howard (F.R.S. 1662), brother of Henry Howard, later sixth Duke of Norfolk, both of them friends of John Evelyn, offered accommodation in the Howards’ Arundel House in the Strand, much on the present site of King’s College and commemorated by Arundel Street. Henry Howard (F.R.S. 1666), and then a member of the Council, went further in the family benefactions by giving (2 January 1666/7) almost the whole of the Arundel House Library to the Society. This was one of the finest private libraries in Europe, notable for manuscripts, incunabula, a wide range of books on astrology, navigation and geography as well as many classical and literary works. (He was later to withdraw from his gift the books relating to genealogy and heraldry, presenting them to the College of Arms, which certainly found them more useful than the Royal Society would have done.) The Society was grateful, regarding it as a munificent bequest, although Evelyn, who had instigated the gift, thought that Howard cared nothing for the books, commenting ironically in his Diary (9 January 1666/7) that ‘This gentleman had so little inclination to books, that [the donating of them] was the preservation of them from embezzlement’ by casual visitors. But subsequent events suggest that he at least cared to have the books preserved under
the Norfolk name, for they were now to be stamped 'ex dono Henrici Howard Norfolciensis.'

To be glad to own the books was one thing; what to do with them another. The Council immediately appointed a Committee to oversee the preparation of a catalogue, but in the way of committees, then as now, little was done for some years. True, William Balle (F.R.S. 1660 and a former Treasurer) made a beginning, but although often 'desired' by the Council to get on with the job, with Robert Hooke (Curator of Experiments, F.R.S. 1662) and others asked to assist him, neither Balle nor Hooke nor John Aubrey (antiquary, F.R.S. 1663) nor John Collins (mathematician, F.R.S. 1667), all of whom were urged to work on the catalogue, seem to have made any progress, and not a great deal was known about the gift's contents. In 1668/9 (8 February) there was a fleeting idea of giving some of the manuscripts to the University of Oxford, but the Committee appointed to consider it decided against, recognizing that the manuscripts were valuable, if not obviously useful. Some Fellows wished to use the collection, so that it was decided (20 December 1669) that any borrower should post a bond of £100, as was in fact done (27 February 1673/4) by Edward Bernard (F.R.S. 1673), Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford. When the Society moved back to Gresham College in December 1673 both the Norfolk Library and the Repository or museum collection were left in Arundel House, presumably for lack of room in the new quarters. A year later (25 January 1674/5) Hooke was instructed to move both 'as soon as he could ... [and then] to perfect the catalogue of both, according to a former order'. The Repository was moved in a year's time, but not the Library, which must have reverted to its former neglect, for by January 1676/7 the Duke of Norfolk—the Henry Howard who had made the gift—was demanding that the Library be 'better looked after'. As a result, a committee was appointed 'to secure that library from damage', and Hooke, now Secretary of the Society, was asked (13 September 1677) to arrange for Mr Forster (or Foster), a bookseller, to make a catalogue of the Arundel House Library, which he seems to have done. Thus when the Council learned that the Duke was, quite literally, pulling down his house, Hooke was instructed (13 June 1678) to give the catalogue to him and at the same time request permission for the Society to remove the books to Gresham College. According to the entries in Hooke's Diary, negotiations took up most of the summer, but at last on 16 September 1678 Hooke could record 'Removd 3 Cartloads of bookees from Arundell to Gresham Colledge'.

At last the Arundel Library had a proper home, adjacent to the rest of the Society's Library, now growing. Donations from authors continued, from Fellows according to Statute and also from non-Fellows anxious for the Society's recognition of their work, while in 1679 George Ent (F.R.S. 1677), lawyer son of the more famous Sir George Ent, physician and Original Fellow, bequeathed the whole of his considerable library to the Society, a library of some 350 volumes on a wide range of topics. Sometimes, indeed, books were bought so that altogether the Society by 1679 had
a significant collection of a size commensurate with that of a wealthy gentleman. And this library now had a proper home as well as a proper recognition of its needs, so that the years 1678-79 mark the real beginnings of the Royal Society's Library as it now exists. The Council for the first, but by no means the last, time drew up 'rules for keeping of the library', drafted by Thomas Gale (F.R.S. 1677) a literary scholar, at this time High Master of St. Paul's and soon (1679-81) a Secretary of the Society. These rules demanded two 'exact' catalogues, one for the Arundel Library and one for all the other books; no book was to leave the Library, which was to be surveyed annually by a Committee. Soon (27 February 1678/9) the Council framed rules for a 'library keeper': the post was to be offered to Hooke but if he refused to William Perry (F.R.S. 1678), who in the event became the first Royal Society Librarian. Perry (c. 1650-96), a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, was to serve on the Council several times as well as acting as a diligent librarian. Hooke alone professedly disliked him, although he often records going to Coffee Houses in his company. Perry served until his death, so he presumably obeyed the 'duty and obligation of the library-keeper' as agreed by the Council. These stated that he was to attend two days a week, on Tuesdays from 9 to 12 and on Thursdays from 9 to 12 and from 2 until the weekly meeting began; he was to lend no book without an order from the Council; he was to give security for the books, in case any should be lost; he was to have no fire nor candle in the Library room; he must 'be provided always of pen, ink, and paper'; and he was to 'make a perfect catalogue of the printed and manuscript books', that made by Mr Forster presumably being not 'perfect'. On the positive side, Perry's first tasks were to catalogue the Arundel Library, to secure possession of the books left by Ent as ordered by the Council on 30 September 1679, and to catalogue them, tasks which he fulfilled promptly. On 27 November 1679 the Council was able to desire him to print 'his catalogue' of the Norfolk Library, while on 11 November 1680 he could show the Council his catalogue of Ent's books. These were printed together in Bibliotheca Norfolciana (London, 1681) divided into classes but the two collections separately listed; to these was added a list of other books donated to or purchased by the Society. Now that it was clear exactly what the Society's Library contained, the Council decided (23 March 1680/81) that a new Statute should be drawn up for the future management of the Library, its terms contained in the previously drawn up 'rules' (1677) which specified 'the duty and obligation of the Library-keeper', a statute whose provisions changed hardly at all, except in respect of the provisions for borrowing books, for a century to come. Moreover, Perry was directed to see that Henry Hunt, Hooke's assistant, should 'assort the books', which had presumably not been arranged in any order after their move from Arundel House, and that Michael Wicks, the amanuensis, should write out lists to affix to the presses so that the books should be easy to find.

As a result of all this work, the Fellows interested themselves more in the Library than had been the case earlier, suggesting libraries that were being sold as a result
Orders concerning the Government of the Bibliotheca Hippolitiana

1. That the long Gallery in Grecian college be the place for the Library, if it may be procure.
2. That an Inscription in Letters of Gold be set up in some convenient place in honor of the Benefactor.
3. That there be an exact Catalogue of all the Books of the Bibliotheca Hippolitiana made apart, and also of all the Books not Shall accrue.
4. That for securing the books to hinder their being imbezelled not book shall be sent out of the Library to any from whatever.
5. That such person or persons as shall desire to use any books in the Library shall return it into the hands of the Library keeper entire and sure.
6. That the Library shall be surveyed once in the year by a Committee chosen by the Council to the number of six any three of which to be a Quorum.

The first regulations governing the Library, from Council Minutes of 26 December 1678.
of the owners' deaths as possible sources of increase. Presumably also they became more eager to borrow books, for the Council ordered (18 May 1681) the purchase of a stamp to be placed in all new books and those which could be borrowed, while borrowers were to provide a bond of £10 for books and £50 for manuscripts. Christopher Wren, then President, 'promised to give the Society £5 to be expended on books of geometry' (16 November 1681) whereupon the Council was stimulated to propose the spending of £10 a year on 'philosophical books', the very first commitment by the Society to enlarge the existing stock other than by gift. More cataloguing seems to have been ordered, for in 1685 Mr Forster was paid 4 shillings per diem for the time it had taken him to catalogue books (4 January, 22 April). And all during Perry's term of office the Library seems to have been well cared for: the books and manuscripts were inspected from time to time and new books were bought: in February 1687/8 this was by exchange for copies of the beautiful but unprofitable Book of Fishes published by the Society.

When Perry died in 1696 Henry Hunt, who had already worked in the Library as well as assisting Hooke, was chosen as Library-keeper, a post he was to fill until his death in 1713, to the satisfaction of the Council in this as in all else. His most arduous duty must have been the transference of the Society's books and papers, the Library and the Repository to Crane Court, when the Society moved from Gresham College in 1710.7 An important precedent was set at this time, that books should not be sold or exchanged, a precedent followed for well over a century. The occasion was the proposal of the Earl of Sunderland (F.R.S. 1698 as Lord Charles Spencer), a bibliophile, that he should give the Society 'modern' editions of classical authors in return for the old editions—in-cunabula and sixteenth-century printing—which they possessed and which he must have coveted; the Council refused with dignity, the minutes (12 July 1711) recording that 'It was thought it might be very prejudicial to the Society to alienate such Books by hindering Benefactions of this kind for the future'. Evidently the Council had at last become proud of its Library and recognized its value.
Hunt's death in 1713 was to create a change of procedure, whereby the offices of Library Keeper, Keeper of the Repository, Housekeeper and Clerk were to be combined in one man. The choice of the Council fell on Alban Thomas (c. 1686-1771), an Oxford graduate, Librarian of the Ashmolean Museum since 1708, who had worked as reader at the University Press in Oxford and was to take the M.D. degree at Aberdeen in 1719—an altogether suitable man to be Library Keeper. As the Council Minutes reveal, he was expected to attend carefully to that part of his job: he was to try to secure the return of books borrowed by Fellows, some ‘for several years’ and to lend no more without specific leave from the President or one of the Vice Presidents (12 March 1714/15); he was to catalogue the books left to the Society in 1715 by Francis Aston (F.R.S. 1678, Secretary 1681–85), for which he received six guineas in 1716 (14 June); he was later (19 February 1718/9 and 23 April 1719) to catalogue other books; and he was to allow no one in the Library in his absence (23 April 1719). He seems to have given satisfaction in all his posts in the ten years in which he served the Society. But in 1723 he was apparently involved in Jacobite plots and was forced to go into hiding: the Council Minutes tactfully record only that he had ‘absented’ himself and was thereby deemed to have given up his position (21 March 1722/3 and 4 April 1723). Debating a future appointment, the Council considered a number of names before drawing up a short list for interview. The qualifications demanded were legible handwriting, linguistic abilities, natural or historical knowledge, ‘conversation’ in libraries and books, and finally financial backing for a bond, this last, like the first, less for the post of Librarian than for that of Clerk, since the Clerk collected admission money and dues. Although many applicants were better educated, the Council (9 May 1723) chose Francis Hauksbee the younger (1688–1763), nephew of the Francis Hauksbee (F.R.S. 1705) who had been Curator of Experiments from 1703 to 1713 and who had served Newton (President 1703–27) so faithfully in that post. The younger Hauksbee was an instrument maker and lecturer on experimental philosophy, work he clearly combined with his posts at the Royal Society. As customary, a committee was appointed ‘to inspect the State of the Library and Repository’, and, also as too commonly, it found (27 June 1723, 30 November 1724) that many manuscripts and ‘valuable books’ needed repair and rebinding and also that ‘two large Manuscripts’ recently offered for sale belonged in fact to the Arundel Library, whence they had been allowed to stray. This was the first of many eighteenth-century Library Committees, even though not yet so called, appointed from time to time to oversee the Library, as had been the intention since 1678; regrettable, such committees mostly found that libraries need constant maintenance and that, unfortunately, the Clerk–Librarian had seldom asked for money for repairs, which they were then forced to recommend him to do. An important development in the Library’s
acquisitions policy, if it can be dignified by that name, was the suggestion of Dr James Jurin (F.R.S. 1714, Secretary 1721-27) that it would be of great Service to the Society to furnish their Library with all Journals or Memoirs of such Societys as are of a like institution for propagating Natural Knowledge, that the Secretaries may be Apprised as soon as may be of any new Invention or Improvement made or discovered by the Members of such Academys which benefit they are now deprived of in great Measure by not having some of those Memoirs in their first and Original Editions and by not having others continued up to the present time, and by entirely wanting the whole Set of some such Journals.

This was the beginning of the policy, followed ever since, of keeping up to date the journals of similar scientific societies and academies, although now not exclusively for the use of the Secretaries!

The death of Newton in 1727, followed by the election of Sir Hans Sloane (Secretary 1693–1713, subsequently a Vice President) resulted in a generally more formal approach to administration than had customarily been the case. The Library Committee appointed in 1724 had not apparently been subsequently active. Now (24 June 1728) John Machin and Dr William Rutty, the two Secretaries, were asked to report on the state of the Arundel Library and to see to the rebinding and repair of books where necessary, suggesting that Hauksbee had not been very active as Librarian. They were also to see to the completion of the Journal Book and Council Minute copies and to having the original Letter Books and the Register copied as well. In 1729 the Library Committee was revived and directed to pay attention not only to the Library but to the Repository, which it found in an unsatisfactory state and with catalogues not brought up to date. Dr Thomas Stack (F.R.S. 1727), assisted by Hauksbee, who was paid extra for the work, slowly copied out the Journal and Register Books between 1730 and 1735 and in 1733 undertook to compile a general index, a labour which seems to have taken him nine years. The Society was at this time setting aside a considerable sum for the maintenance and improvement of the Library and Archives: Stack was paid over £100 for his work and many volumes were rebound. Ambitiously, in 1739 (31 January) Stack and Dr Cromwell Mortimer, a future Secretary, were asked to devise a plan for the publication of the Society’s papers and books, a project partially realized for the years 1660–1687 by Thomas Birch’s History of The Royal Society (1756–57) but not to be fully realized until the age of microfilm, nearly 250 years later. More usefully, Mortimer surveyed and reported on the stocks of books which had been printed at the Society’s expense in the seventeenth century; it was decided that they were to be disposed of to booksellers after the Fellows had been allowed to purchase what they wanted. More manuscripts were bound into guard books, and the death of Edmond Halley (F.R.S. 1678), astronomer, publisher of Newton’s Principia and the Society’s first Clerk, produced a ‘lost’ copy of the first edition of Galileo’s Siderius Nuncius, which he had borrowed and never returned (21 June 1742). Mortimer was also responsible
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for suggesting that the *Philosophical Transactions* be sent regularly to all societies which sent their own journals to the Society; this appears to be the beginning of the useful exchange system which has made the Library a repository for society and academy journals throughout the world.

On 30 November 1741 Sloane was replaced as President by Martin Folkes (F.R.S. 1714 and a Vice President in Newton’s later years) who seems to have been keenly interested in the Archives of the Society and the Library generally. On 12 July 1742 the Library Committee (formally called “The Committee appointed to take a view of the State of the Books and Papers of the Society”) reported to the Council, as it had been requested to do, having obviously taken great care in the survey. The report not only explained in detail the improved state of the Society’s papers, letters, Register Books, Journal Books and Council Minutes, presumably as a result of Stack’s work in the previous decade, but also some defects: previously there had been much confusion in the arrangement of books, some volumes ‘which by their Nature more properly seem to belong to the Society’s Library’ were now listed and given to Hauksbee to place on the Library shelves; it is not clear where they and the Archives had been previously. The Report concludes with an anonymous recommendation by one member of the Committee for the future ordering and preservation of the Society’s papers. The next summer (14 June 1743) yet another Library Committee was appointed, primarily to see to the completion of the Library catalogue, while just over a year later when the President reported that ‘the Library room below stairs’ needed proper furnishing ‘for the better preservation and security of the Books’. This rather dismally suggests that in the absence of presses they lay about in heaps and hence the Committee was charged to see to it. When a year later (5 November 1744) it was found that there was still a ‘deficiency of chairs and other furniture’ the President provided them, along with a catalogue of books, for all of which he was warmly thanked (30 November 1744). In the next year (28 June 1745) it was found that there were in this lower Library room many duplicates ‘altogether unnecessary to be kept’ which were disposed of, so that other books could be bought; clearly one way and another the Library was steadily growing, a little by purchase and more by donation. So many books were donated in this decade that (19 July 1753) the Secretaries were ordered to prepare a special list of those presented since the catalogue had been made by Folkes in 1744.

In 1752 Folkes was succeeded as President by the Earl of Macclesfield, an astronomer who in the previous year had been very active in the change of the British calendar from Old Style (Julian) to New Style (Gregorian) as adopted long since on the Continent, a chronological revolution comparable in popular opinion to the late twentieth-century proposals for the adoption of Continental time. During most of Macclesfield’s term of office there was little change in the Library. A number of books were purchased at auction and (19 February 1756) Hauksbee was asked to produce a list of Fellows who had borrowed books—and no doubt in many cases
failed to return them—as well as the titles of the books themselves. A couple of years later (29 June 1758) there was a bill for binding books, suggesting that the upkeep of the library was not being neglected. When Hauksbee died in January 1763 the Council suddenly realized that although the offices of Clerk, Librarian, Housekeeper and Keeper of the Repository were customarily combined in one person, the election of the Clerk was, by Statute, in the hands of the Fellows, while the other offices were at the discretion of the Council—but this never seems to have created any problem. There were as always many applicants, by no means all of whom possessed the qualifications demanded. The choice of the Council (17 February 1763)—and subsequently the Fellows—fell on Emanuel Mendes da Costa (F.R.S. 1747), undoubtedly the best qualified, for he was an accomplished naturalist, who had published several papers in the *Philosophical Transactions*, mostly on fossils, and was an excellent linguist. But a consequence of his election as Clerk was his compulsory resignation from the Fellowship. At the same time, as was by now usual, a Committee was appointed ‘to inspect the state and Condition of the Library and Repository’. Almost immediately (17 March, 21 April 1763) there was presented to the Council a ‘Plan of the Duty of the Clerk, Librarian, Keeper of the Repository, Housekeeper and Mace-bearer’ which was to be a revision of the Statutes for this many-faceted post. This plan stipulated that there be appointed annually three Inspectors (Fellows) for the Library, who were to keep an eye on the books, see that they and the Society’s manuscript records were kept catalogued, rebound where necessary, and made available by the Librarian twice a week; he was also to keep up to date the list of ‘benefactors’ with their donations. The Committee did not in fact meet until the end of the summer; then da Costa, he said, had to give the Library a thorough clean before the Inspectors could see the books properly, so neglected had it been. But nevertheless, da Costa was not, he said, ‘quite prepared’ to give the Council a coherent account of its true state as late as January 1764.

Lord Macclesfield died in March 1764 and James Douglas, 14th Earl Morton, (F.R.S. 1733) also an astronomer, was chosen in his stead. As usual, it was intended that the President should receive the copies of the Council Minutes and Journal Books prepared for the use of successive Presidents, and da Costa (8 May 1764) was asked to report on the state of the original Council Minutes and Journal Books. There were difficulties in obtaining the Presidents’ set of copies from the Dowager Lady Macclesfield (8 May, 14, 28 June, 13 September, 4 October 1764) which Morton does not seem to have received until December 1764. This is also the date of a remarkably detailed analytical list ‘delivered in’ by the President himself (12 June 1765), covering Letter Books, Register Books, Journal Books and Council Minutes, probably made with da Costa’s help. This showed that volume 17 of the Letter Book covering the years 1713–1722 was altogether missing, a gap having been intentionally left in the numbering during the 1740s to take care of the possibility that missing letters might turn up at some time. It also revealed that the original Letter Books for
The many arrangements in my new office have hitherto so absorbed my time that contrary to my promise made to the respect of your letter, I have been incapacitated from acquainting you of what Literary discoveries occurred since your departure from the Metropolis.

Two interesting discoveries were made by the Society last Summer. One was near the City, the other in Oxford. (That I might proceed with ease in putting the Museum and Library in Order), I sent, by a kind friend, three inspectors for each department, viz. Mr. Charles Wcheidly, Mr. Robert Harris, and Mr. Henry Collison for the Museum.

Since I proceeded to work, but not was the part taken by the Inspectors and museum. It is now ascertained that, the large Museum was not sufficient, and that it was observed that the large Museum was no more adequate for the Museum.

The other Eleven had been thought of, but it was not the case. The large Museum was not sufficient, and it was observed that, the large Museum was no more adequate for the Museum.

The Society have also entertained a scheme of setting up a Museum of their own. The proposed scheme is to erect a building near the Museum and to fill it with specimens of all kinds, and to construct a library and museum.

The Royal Society have 13th September 1763.
the seventeenth century were by no means complete; to improve the situation a Letter Book Supplement had been created for the years 1664–1669, a useful although incomplete remedy. The Register Book was found to be complete up to 1738 in 21 volumes and to possess the ‘Generall Index’ made by Waller, which was commended with the remark that ‘the form seems to be well contrived’; this index made it easier to locate past papers read to the Society.

Matters seem to have gone on quietly until 1767; then, only four years after his appointment, da Costa was found to have been guilty of major peculations as Clerk, at first thought to be ‘upwards of five hundred pounds’ and later found to be nearer fifteen hundred. On examination da Costa prevaricated, but finally admitted that, not content with the modest commission he was allowed when collecting admission money and dues, he had pocketed the whole, a sum exceeding the amount of his ‘security’. It took the Council many agitated meetings to ascertain the exact amount and to discover what could be done to collect the debt. Meanwhile da Costa was barred from the Society’s rooms, and a new Clerk, Librarian and Housekeeper sought. When the new applicants for the post were interviewed (21 December 1767) they were firmly told that they could expect no perquisites but must be content with the salary offered: this, according to the new Statutes, was to be £40 a year, out of which the Porter was to be paid, although the Society agreed to clothe this functionary.

The Council’s choice fell on John Robertson (1712–76; F.R.S. 1741) who had taught mathematics at Christ’s Hospital and the Royal Navy Academy at Portsmouth, was the author of several books and of articles in the Philosophical Transactions; by the new Statutes the Council chose the person to be Clerk, Librarian, Keeper of the Repository and Housekeeper. The duties of the Librarian as regards both attendance and lending of books and manuscripts were minutely specified and he was to be carefully supervised by the Council. He was also to enter into a Catalogue ‘all Books presented or bought by the Society’ immediately after they became the Society’s property. The Norfolk Library was kept in a separate room, where no candles or fire were allowed. The Statutes repeated earlier regulations in regard to the regular appointment of a Library Committee, specifying the appointment of six Inspectors (all Fellows) yearly, three for the Library and three for the Repository; they were to examine all the books, make sure that they were properly shelved and in good condition and entered into the Catalogues. They were to meet at least once a year, reporting to the Society and, when action was required, to the Council. The first of such reports to the Council was on 7 June 1768: the Inspectors had met on 25 February when, as so often in the past, they had ‘found much disorder’ in the arrangement of the books, some of which were missing and ‘many in a ruinous state for want of binding’, although the manuscripts seem to have been in better state. The Inspectors pursued their work very seriously, meeting six times in 1768 and were far from having completed their work when they reported on 9...
June: as they then noted there was much that needed doing, especially in regard to the state of the books and the incompleteness of the catalogues. They therefore asked the Council to authorize the necessary expenditure for rebinding, to which the Council agreed. In the event, since Robertson told the Inspectors that binding was now very dear 'on account of the scarcity of leather', it was decided that half-binding would suffice, about twenty volumes at a time being sent to the binders who regularly returned them within a week. In the next year, 1769, the Inspectors in their report of 6 April were chiefly concerned about defects in the catalogues of both the Norfolk Collection and the Society's purchased and presented books, for the manuscript catalogue of 3250 books made by Martin Folkes when President only covered the years up to 1747, no proper additions having been made since. The Council, not for the first time, ordered the Librarian to correct this catalogue and bring it up to date, an order to which Robertson probably paid more attention than previous Librarians had done. It was agreed (13 April 1769) that the Inspectors should see to altering the shelving so that the Librarian could shelve the Norfolk Library in a more rational fashion than the existing one.

In November 1769 James West (F.R.S. 1726/7) became President and during his three years of office took considerable interest in the Library and its problems. For example, learning that papers of John Flamsteed (1646–1719; F.R.S. 1676/7), the first Astronomer Royal, had recently been found, he persuaded the Commissioners of Longitude to buy them; when sorted by Robertson they were divided between the Society and Greenwich Observatory as he told the Council (29 November 1771). In 1770 the archives were enriched by the presentation to the Society of the Boyle Papers, a collection of manuscripts of unpublished and published books, notes and letters belonging to Robert Boyle (1627–91; F.R.S. 1663). They were donated by the widow of Henry Miles (F.R.S. 1743) into whose possession they had come earlier in the century. Miles was the effective editor of The Life and Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle (5 vols. 1744, 6 vols. 1772) of which Thomas Birch, the Society’s Secretary from 1762 to 1765, was the titular editor; Miles also supplied the materials from which Birch wrote his biography of Boyle (1744). Birch was neither methodical nor careful and manuscripts he used both for his work on Boyle and later for his History of the Royal Society (1756–57), which derived from the Society’s Council, Journal and Register Books, remained in his possession to be bequeathed by him to the British Museum where they have remained in the Birch Manuscripts, now as part of the British Library.

Robertson was concerned with trying to improve the arrangement of the books and by the time that the Inspectors reported to the Council in 1770 (25 January) had diligently entered all the titles of the catalogued books on slips with shelf references, and pasted appropriate slips on each shelf for ease of finding the books; sadly, this admirable exercise had revealed that a number of books were missing. He had also rearranged the Norfolk Library as directed, thereby freeing shelving which, he
suggested, could be used for books currently being shelved 'in the two closets in the Meeting Room', a fact which powerfully demonstrates the inconveniences under which the Library had been labouring. The next year, 1771, there was available a 'New Library' in an addition to the existing Crane Court house, which must have eased conditions greatly. An interesting incident in this year was the calling upon of the Librarian to supply historical information, as was to be a regular part of the Librarians' duties in the twentieth century: in this case a Mr Ludlam, presumably William Ludlam (1717–88), Cambridge mathematician, asked for the reference in the minutes to Newton's paper on his marine sextant, which had been given to the meeting of the Society on 16 August 1699.

Robertson was to prove an exemplary, hard-working servant of the Society in all ways, and as Librarian was to show initiative in improving the Archives. In 1772 (9 July) he was able to show the Council that he had collected together all the certificates for the election of Fellows and pasted them into Guard Books, while in 1773 (22 April) he reported that he had found in a sale a manuscript Register of the Fellows of the Society which had been presented to the Society by Folkes and 'since, by some accident, taken from the Society' and which he had bought on his own responsibility, extended to the end of 1772 and indexed. The Council was so pleased to have this that a copy was ordered to be made for the President, yet another chore for Robertson. Again, in November 1773 (14th) he presented to the Council 'a Vol. of the late Wm Jones Esqr F.R.S. [1712] containing part of an intended index to the Philosophical Transactions and other papers of the Society, viz. Indexes of Author's names and subjects treated, to the Letter Books and Register Books' for which he was thanked. He also regularly saw to binding and rebinding where required. So well had Robertson acted as Librarian that (21 January 1773) he was to 'be permitted to show to such persons as he thinks proper any printed book of the Society upon application to him', a degree of trust never shown to previous Librarians. Two incidents in this year suggest that the Council valued its possessions more than had been the case in earlier years. The first (21 January) was the Council order that three dozen 'Canvas bags, with the initials of the Society upon them, be provided against the accident of Fire'; no more is mentioned about them, so one can only speculate whether these were intended for the Archives, the books, the pictures, or the collection of instruments and other valuables, but it does show a care and forethought not unlike a modern outlook. The second is clearer and a more striking testimony to increased realization of the importance that the Library was occupying in the minds of the Council Members: when the Inspectors of the Library reported to the Council in 1773 (24 June) they were chiefly at pains to consider the content of the Library and its consequent virtues and defects as constituting the Library of the Royal Society, the first such survey. They reported that it was 'exceedingly defective in the most careful and curious books, in the different branches of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy of the last two centuries, and is far from being complete in those
Petrus de Alliaco. Cócordátia astronomie cu theologia ... 1490. [Incunabula from the Norfolk Library, with Library stamp.]
of a later date,' and recommended the expenditure of £25 a year to improve the situation. As usual, they also found some books borrowed and never returned and now proposed new regulations to prevent this. Robertson’s reward for diligence in his many posts was to be given yet another duty to perform, that of making daily meteorological observations, although it is not obvious that this should have been part of either the Clerk’s or the Librarian’s normal occupations; in the past it had been the task of the Operator. These observations were to be kept until 1826, published annually in the Philosophical Transactions from 1774 onwards; in 1831 the task was transferred to King’s College, London, by decision of the Council (5 May). Meanwhile, Robertson received a small gratuity for his extra work.

Increased attention to the Library on Robertson’s part coincided with increased attention by the Society itself. The President now proposed (23 December 1773) and the Council agreed by ballot ‘that besides the Annual visitation of the Inspectors of the Library, which was ordered to be held on the Thursday preceding Passion week, three other Meetings be held by them’ in January, April and June, ‘for the business of superintending the impression of the Catalogue & other affairs relating to the Society’. Robertson’s diligence was further shown when the Inspectors first met in 1774 (24 March): then, for the first time ever, they were able to report that all the books borrowed in the past year had been returned—although this satisfactory state of affairs did not prevent their producing new recommendations: that a printed book-plate bearing the Society’s arms should be pasted in every book, that no Fellow should keep a book longer than six weeks ‘without leave of the Council’ and that no book be borrowed for a week after its presentation. But there was nothing said about printing a catalogue, nor do they seem to have met more than this once during the year. As a result of the improved state of the Library, more Fellows made use of it, so that in 1775 (9 February) the Council instructed Robertson to be regular in his attendance, to look after any Fellow wishing to read, to provide a fire ‘when the weather requires it’, to attend to no other business during these hours and to keep the reading room quiet, this being the ‘triangular room up one pair of stairs’ which was to be for the use of Fellows only during the times when the Library was open.

In 1776 the Government offered the Society rooms in Somerset House, with the Society of Antiquaries to be in adjacent rooms. This was a far grander setting than Crane Court and although many in the Society disapproved vehemently of the Society’s giving up its own premises it was soon, not without some public controversy, decided that the offer should be accepted. But there then arose the problem of the space allocated to the Society, in particular the lack of adequate space for the Library. The Council noted (9 May 1776) that ‘The Room intended for the Society’s Library is much too small to contain their Books’ and there was no room for the Repository; the reply that the Library room might be divided into two rooms and the Repository put in the attic was not very satisfactory. But since the Society
was further told that a decision must be made immediately, the Council accepted (18 May 1776).

At the end of 1776 Robertson died suddenly, leaving a widow and a family of mostly young children. He had been a valued servant of the Society and the Council was clearly determined to do what it could to help. The widow, Mrs Mary Robertson, was elected Housekeeper and the eldest son, another John Robertson, was elected Librarian, Keeper of the Repository and subsequently Clerk, all with the usual bond; his salary was to be increased by his being allowed to keep the profits arising from the sale of any copies of the President’s anniversary speeches after they had been distributed to all the Fellows. The younger Robertson seems to have followed his father in being an adequate Librarian, for the Inspectors’ Report for 1779 (15 April) records that his account of books borrowed and returned was satisfactory. Their chief recommendation was that some books needed ‘lettering’ on the backs, a recommendation which the Council decided to defer putting in hand until plans were laid for the removal of the Library to Somerset House. But the younger man could not emulate his father in initiating action. Meanwhile his burden was to be lightened, for it had been decided (29 January 1779) that in view of the lack of space in the new apartments to display it properly the Repository, now more usually called the Musaeum, should be offered to the British Museum—then, it must be remembered, containing what in the next century separated off as the Natural History Museum. This decision was confirmed after the move (1 March 1781).

Meanwhile, on Anniversary Day 1778, Sir John Pringle had resigned the Presidency and Joseph Banks (F.R.S. 1766) been elected, so that it was under his reign, as it became in the course of the next forty-two years, that the Society moved to Somerset House in 1780. Banks was a dominant and dominating President, who had some, but not a great influence upon the Library. Because he preferred it, the time of the Society’s weekly meetings was changed from afternoon to evening; they were (3 July 1780) to be at 8 o’clock and ‘continue about an hour at the discretion of the President’ which inevitably somewhat altered the Librarian’s hours of attendance on that day, although the Norfolk Library at least could never be open in the hours of darkness. Banks himself had a large library and from 1782 was to employ the Swedish botanist Jonas Dryander (1748–1810) as his librarian, now (5 April 1781) Dryander was requested to oversee the removal and arrangement of the Society’s books, which were first inspected for the safe return of all those borrowed. The Society was to be well satisfied with his work and the Council duly voted him a financial reward upon its completion. A few months after the completion of the move (6 June 1781) the usual Inspection Committee was appointed to review the state of the Library, but no report survives. No doubt it was overlooked during the concurrent acrimonious dispute over the Foreign Secretary’s duties, a dispute which was destined to be turned into a public power contest between Banks and the supporters of the incumbent, Charles Hutton (mathematician, F.R.S.)
1774), which generated heat and printed pamphlets but which Banks won comfortably, never to be challenged again. In any event, a different Committee was appointed two years later (13 February 1783) 'for inspecting the Library and for reporting to the Council what may be further necessary for the final arrangement of it'. When this Committee reported (3 April) it appeared that both the President and one of the Secretaries had been members of it, which no doubt accounts in part for the relative lavishness of its recommendations: these included the purchase of new furniture—a library table, chairs, ladders and steps and a stove—the hanging and refurbishing of pictures and prints and, besides this, a new Catalogue 'of the whole Library' to be made, books to be rebound whenever they required it and, strikingly, 'as they seem to be very numerous, an annual sum be allocated for that purpose' and 'proper stamps be approved'. Not surprisingly, in view of the fact that the President had helped to formulate these proposals, they were promptly approved by the Council. They were presumably carried out with the evident exception of a new catalogue which, as so often, hung fire.

There is no further mention of the Library in the Council Minutes until 1785, and then only peripherally. In that year it was found that Robertson had been guilty of 'Neglect' in his duties as Clerk, a fact noted by the Council on 13 January. His resignation was accepted a fortnight later, when no grounds were stated, but both he and his mother, as Housekeeper, clearly found it extremely difficult to keep proper accounts, a difficulty, as the Council admitted to itself (27 January), increased by the fact that the Clerk was paid partly by fixed salary, partly by payment for specific services, and partly by 'allowances'. There is no suggestion that the Robertsons intentionally defrauded the Society in any way—and Mrs Robertson was able to return £50 to the Society after her resignation—except that he seems to have spent too much time on non-Society, but presumptively remunerative, occupations. Indeed it was decided that Mrs Mary Robertson 'in consideration of her and her late Husbands Services to the Society, and the largeness of her Family, which there is reason to think has little other support but what this Corporation may grant her' be allowed £50 a year 'during the pleasure of the Council' which in fact lasted for many years. Financial rationalization was now put in hand, the Housekeeper was to be given a fixed sum above the normal salary to provide for a maid for cleaning the Society’s rooms and the porter was to be chosen and paid by the Council. The Clerkship being vacant, applicants for the post were considered and two examined by the Council on 17 February to be voted upon a week later. The two were Thomas Coppard who, as he pointed out, had 'of late' assisted Robertson 'in his office of Librarian', in what capacity is not specified, but presumably a lowly one since he was poorly educated, and George Gilpin, who said he had left school at 14 when however he had learned some Latin and a little Greek and had since learned Italian; he was aged thirty and a 'practical Astronomer' who admittedly knew nothing of libraries. Both names were laid before the Society when Gilpin was elected Clerk,
to become Housekeeper as well when Mrs Robertson resigned (9 March). He seems to have served faithfully in both capacities, the positions together being regarded as constituting a full-time post. Gilpin was never elected Librarian; this post went to Dryander (28 April 1785) who was certainly the best qualified Librarian for some time; he had by this time been Banks's private librarian for three years and had clearly given satisfaction four years earlier when supervising the transfer of the Library from Crane Court to Somerset House. In the next six months he managed to spend over £28 for bookbinding, which suggests both that little had recently been done in that line and that Dryander took his position seriously (17 November 1785).

Over the next years the Council Minutes regularly mention recommendations which the Librarian was to carry out, but there is no specific mention of the usual annual committees, so just possibly Dryander was allowed to initiate his own recommendations. At any rate there was activity. In 1786 (4 May) the Librarian was to provide three stamps for use to distinguish books of different origins, namely 'Reg: Soc: Lond:', 'Ex dono Henrici Howard Norfolciensis', and 'Ex Dono Authoris' and this he presumably did, as such stamps were certainly in use thereafter. On the same day Banks was given permission to take possession of three seventeenth-century duplicates in exchange for three eighteenth-century works which the Library did not possess. The next year (25 January 1787) Dryander presented ten books to the Library. In 1788 (8 May) the form of a letter to be sent to Members who had borrowed books and not returned them was considered and the Librarian authorized to have such a letter printed. Bookbinding bills continued, while (19 February 1789) an extra £100 was voted by the Council for binding and repairing, which Dryander seems to have expended over the next few years. In 1795 there was a major donation to the Society’s collection in the shape of many ‘Oriental’ (mostly Indian) manuscripts, the collection of Sir William Jones, son of the William Jones who had made a manuscript donation to the Society in 1773; the younger Jones (1746–94; F.R.S. 1772) was a distinguished orientalist and made his collection after becoming a judge of the high court at Calcutta in 1783. He had sent the manuscripts to Banks for safekeeping by the Society which he hoped would keep them in its Library and look after them, as Banks agreed to do. Jones thought of his collection as for use, writing to Banks that ‘should I die, you will deposit them in the library of the Royal Society, so that they may be lent out without difficulty to any studious man, who may apply for them’. The Council agreed as to their being placed in the Library and directed that they should be catalogued. It was possibly as a direct result of the Jones donation that (17 March 1796) the Council decided that anyone not a Fellow who borrowed a book or manuscript should give a bond for its safe return. Three years after Jones’s death the Council (6 April 1797) accepted the offer from Lady Jones to give more oriental manuscripts to the Society’s Library with the proviso that they be kept separate from other books and manuscripts and be specially labelled; these too were catalogued.
A curious duty devolved on Dryander in 1800, when a Select Committee of the House of Commons upon Records of the Kingdom asked for an account of public documents held in the Society's Archives; this Dryander seems to have done to the Council's satisfaction (13 March 1800 and 15 July 1802) by listing deeds and their copies, but not Society documents, which were not 'public'. Once again, in 1802 (15 April) the Council considered the conditions under which the contents of the Library might be accessible to readers desiring to use it and decided that it would allow borrowing only of such books and manuscripts as were replaceable, while scarce and rare material was always to be read in the Library rooms at Somerset House. By 1806 the Library had social as well as intellectual uses, being regularly used for the service of tea after meetings, about 9 p.m., when Banks as President was usually present—the only lively part of the weekly meetings in the opinion of many.43
THE LIBRARY IN A CHANGING SOCIETY, 1810–1847

In 1810 the posts of Clerk, Housekeeper and Librarian were once again united after the deaths of Gilpin, in April, and Dryander, in October, by the appointment of Stephen Lee (F.R.S. 1798) as decided by the Council (15 November 1810 and 10 January 1811). He was clearly of a better educated and more scientific background than Gilpin, with his chief interest being in astronomy. There are few references to the Library in the Council Minutes for the next ten years, but presumably it continued to grow because when the Society approached the Treasury (16 November 1820) to request more space in Somerset House, this was said to be chiefly to provide room for books and instruments.

The death of Banks in June 1820 and the election of Sir Humphry Davy, distinguished chemist at the Royal Institution, was to have a considerable and steady effect upon the Society at large and also on the Library in particular. In 1821 (8 March), as so often before, the Council called for the completion of the Library catalogue and its printing, the first a task for the Librarian, the second for a Committee, appointed 4 July 1822, to include the President and both Secretaries; not only was this Committee to oversee the making and printing of the Catalogue, but it was to see to the introduction of lighting into the Library so that it could be open in the evenings on meeting days—since Banks’s choice of 8 p.m. for meetings continued—though whether this was so that Fellows could use the Library for reading or for the drinking of tea after the meeting is not clear. The Committee was reappointed on 15 May 1823, now called ‘Committee for superintending the Affairs of the Library’ with the President once again as Chairman; its chief business was consideration of the catalogue and such problems as whether special cataloguers should be employed and how best to print the work when completed. As a result of its original deliberations the Committee, once again merely the Library Committee, had reported to the Council (21 June 1823) that two persons suitable for compiling an alphabetical catalogue had been found, who would need to be paid £12 per thousand titles. The Council thereupon ordered the work to proceed ‘under the exclusive direction of the Library Committee’, which possibly excluded Lee. It was later decided, however, that the Librarian should correct all proofs, at the rate of two corrected sheets per week. By 6 March 1824 it was possible to produce a sample proof, with plans for 250 copies to be printed. It was published as Catalogue of the Library of the Royal Society in 1825, a simple alphabetical sequence of author entries.

But before the catalogue could progress to the printing stage, Lee was forced to resign his post as Librarian and Clerk as a consequence of his private astronomical interests. In 1825 he incautiously ignored the protocol of his official position, writing a letter to the Admiralty which severely criticized the Greenwich Observations for 1821; these were printed under the Admiralty, being the work of the Astronomer...
Royal, John Pond (F.R.S. 1807), whom Lee attacked bitterly. A Royal Society committee was set up to examine Lee’s criticisms and Pond’s reply (16 June 1825); it was found that Lee was correct as to matters of fact, for there were many errors in the Observations, which were technically the fault of Pond who had not properly supervised his assistants. But Lee’s attack was thought too severe and in any case it had been, it was said, ‘highly indecorous and improper’, since he had written direct to the Admiralty rather than addressing his complaints to the Visitors to the Greenwich Observatory, who were then all representatives from the Royal Society. The Council expressed itself as ‘extremely indignant’ at the form of the attack, ordering Lee either to apologize or explain his case at the next Council Meeting. He did the latter, but refused to apologize and the Council (15 December) felt that his explanation was unsatisfactory, leaving Lee no recourse but resignation.46

Meanwhile a new Assistant Secretary, as the Clerk had been called since 1823,47 was clearly required and in 1826 James Hudson was appointed, first (9 March) on a probationary basis and then permanently after Lee’s formal resignation (6 April). Hudson was to be kept busy in the next few years, for he must have had to assist the many committees being formed from time to time in response to varied pressures. There were many Government requests for scientific and technical advice, as had been increasingly the case ever since the later eighteenth century. Then too the Society of these and later years was to become increasingly if insensibly a more determinedly scientific society than it had been earlier, although there were still many Fellows elected whose chief interest in scientific matters was that of a dilettante, while many had no interest in natural science, being rather antiquarians, historians, economists and so on, as if the Royal Society was an academy of arts and sciences rather than a society devoted solely to the promotion of natural philosophy. The scientific Fellows, especially the younger ones, were anxious to change all that, to reform the Society particularly in the matter of the admission of Fellows; committees were set up to discuss reforms and the Council debated the question at length. The chief proposals involved stricter scrutiny of candidates’ qualifications than had ever been the case previously, with the aim of seeing that all candidates should have scientific qualifications beyond mere interest in science. But nothing concrete came of these proposals, leaving many Fellows angry and frustrated, with real changes not to take place for another twenty years. Meanwhile, the resignation of Davy in 1827 and the election of Davies Gilbert (M.P., F.R.S. 1791) completely blocked all changes, for Gilbert was implacably opposed to all reform in whatever sphere, and indeed had reason to fear it, for his Cornish constituency was abolished in the wake of the Reform Bill of 1832, so that, ironically, he lost the power to press for Parliamentary concern for scientific matters such as the reformers wished for.

It might be thought that all this would have had little effect upon the Library, but such was not the case, for the Library was the one sphere within the Society where increased emphasis on the scientific nature of the Society was to be realized. Under
Gilbert’s Presidency (14 May 1829) there was appointed a Committee to examine all the manuscripts in the Library with a view to exchanging with the British Museum those not thought relevant to the Society’s interests in return for books of a scientific nature. Since these were all Arundel manuscripts permission was required from the Duke of Norfolk which, it was reported to the Council (19 June 1829), he rapidly gave. The Council authorized the Committee to undertake negotiations with the British Museum for the valuation of the manuscripts and whether the Museum was to offer duplicates in return or cash; in any case, the Committee was to ensure that the result was an increase in strictly scientific works in the Library. Confusingly, all books resulting from the donation of the manuscripts were to be marked with the Norfolk Library stamp, as was later noted. It was possibly the sudden increase of Library business, although more probably the increasing number of Society committees for which secretaries were required, which made the Council decide (19 June 1829) that Hudson required an assistant, who would be paid £100 a year. This was to be J.D. Roberton who seems to have acted in effect as Librarian under Hudson, who was in spite of this to find it difficult in the next few years to cope with his many duties.

1830 was to be a year of crisis in the affairs of the Society. First, after a series of public criticisms, mostly embodied in scientific treatises, by several of the younger Fellows, all physical scientists—Babbage, John Herschel, David Brewster—came Babbage’s bitter printed attack, Reflections on the Decline of Science in England. The concept of the ‘decline of science’ which he and they claimed to exist in a marked degree was hardly flattering to themselves or to their contemporaries when one considers that Faraday was an almost exact contemporary of Babbage, while Wollaston, Young and Davy were only recently dead. Although all these were, or had been, Fellows of the Royal Society, Babbage attributed the alleged decline almost entirely to the Society and its membership, claiming that it had too many non-scientists among its Fellows, it was wrongly governed by a self-perpetuating Council, and it connived, in a manner not very clear, with the Government in failing to reward scientists with honours and awards, resulting in a lack of professionalism in science. Even the Society’s disposal of its non-scientific manuscripts to the British Museum had been wrong—not because it had been done, for of that Babbage approved, but for the manner of doing it since, he believed, more money for scientific books could have been obtained by selling the manuscripts on the open market. The book created a great stir and considerable indignation; indeed some Fellows wished to deprive Babbage of his Fellowship, but, wiser, the President and Council decided to ignore the whole affair, perhaps Gilbert’s most sensible action as President.

Then, during the autumn of 1830, Gilbert began a number of private negotiations for a possible successor to himself as President, his choice being the Duke of Sussex, a younger son of George III, who was known to be interested in such a post.
Private negotiations, as is their way, soon became public thanks to rumours, the press and various open attacks on Gilbert as President and the Society as a whole, with the result that for the first time in its history the Royal Society experienced a contested election for the Presidency, the candidates being Sussex and John Herschel (F.R.S. 1813, Secretary 1825–27, the astronomer son of the better known William Herschel, F.R.S. 1781). Sussex won, by a narrow margin, to the utter disgust of Herschel’s supporters, and was on the whole to be a successful President in a modest way, presiding over useful administrative reform, although the violent revolutionary change desired by Herschel’s supporters had to wait until 1847.

The Duke of Sussex (F.R.S. 1828, President 1830–1838) intended, as he declared, to improve the state of the Society and raise its reputation. Unlike his opponents, he saw that the first step was to create a more business-like and efficient administrative structure to ensure that day-to-day affairs ran smoothly. In this he was largely to succeed, advised by George Peacock (F.R.S. 1818) a friend and Cambridge contemporary of Babbage and Herschel. And in this the Library was not forgotten. To begin with (20 January 1831) the Council agreed to send a letter to all the Fellows explaining the reasons behind the decision concerning the Arundel manuscripts. Then (26 February 1831) it decided to request Henry Ellis (F.R.S. 1811), Principal Librarian, corresponding to the modern Director, of the British Museum, to supervise the arrangement of the Library and to oversee the arrangement and classification of the Society’s books, papers and minutes, presumably by Roberton. This no doubt made negotiations with the British Museum easier, since Ellis could act for both sides, and certainly the Council soon (7 July 1831) was to accept an offer of £956 from the Museum—with the Arundel Committee, assisted by Ellis, to effect the transfer and choose the new scientific books. Once again there was a call for the composition of a proper catalogue; this time an outsider was to be employed for the purpose, but there were the usual delays. Meanwhile (3 November) new Library regulations were reviewed: the Secretaries and Treasurer were to constitute a management committee, showing that the Library was being taken more seriously than had usually been the case, their chief concern the problems arising from the borrowing of books and, often, their not being returned promptly. More novel was a discussion by the Council of the fact that there were known to be letters from Newton in the Archives, which the Treasurer was to examine to ascertain whether they were, as it was thought, hitherto unpublished.

From this time onwards, reflecting the more systematic administrative policy initiated under the Duke of Sussex, the Library Committee was regularly reappointed once a year, normally at the first Council Meeting after the Society’s Anniversary Meeting, when Officers were elected. Once again, steps were taken to put in hand the construction and printing of a systematic catalogue, now (9 February 1832) to be not alphabetically by author, but as a 'classed' catalogue, i.e. alphabetically within broad subject divisions. The work was to be superintended by a Committee,
consisting of the Library Committee plus four, later 12, extra members (9 June 1832). And it was to be a catalogue of scientific books only, reflecting the new aspect of the Library as primarily oriented towards science, although by no means all of the non-scientific Arundel books had as yet been disposed of. It would appear that Roberton was to help the Library Committee for, although Hudson’s complaint (3 November 1831) that Roberton was not really very useful resulted in his being given three months’ notice (24 November), this was rescinded later (12 April 1832) because Hudson then reported his efficiency improved, and certainly he was soon to be seen as being much more familiar with the Library than was Hudson.

In 1832 the Council, as it later reported to the Society at the Anniversary Meeting, was generally concerned to make the Library more effective than it had been over the years, partly by buying more scientific books (the sum of £1600 was to be expended), partly by rearrangement and cataloguing. Indeed it was during this year that the Committee for Superintending the Publication of the Catalogue of the Library began to meet systematically. No doubt at least partly as a result of the appointment of Ellis to the Committee, it was realized that the proper cataloguing of such a Library as the Society’s required the services of a professional, with careful advice from appropriate Fellows as to the division of the books into classes when scientific books were involved. It was thought that the class of ‘miscellaneous’ (non-scientific) books would present few problems. After considerable discussion it was decided (October 1832) to engage Anthony Panizzi (1797–1879), no doubt on Ellis’s recommendation, for Panizzi had recently been appointed an assistant librarian at the British Museum. Panizzi had had a romantic youth: although a trained and youthfully successful lawyer in his native Modena, he had in 1830, that year of revolutions, joined the Carbonari, so that two years later he was regarded by the authorities as so dangerous that he was imprisoned and subsequently, after his escape to Switzerland, condemned to death in absentia. He then went to England, ever sympathetic in those days to Italian revolutionaries; he gave Italian lessons in Liverpool, where he had friends devoted to Italian literature, and met and impressed Lord Brougham, the Lord Chancellor, whose influence made him Professor of Italian in the new London University, later University College London, and soon after secured him the apparently more lucrative post at the British Museum. In subsequent years he was to rise to become first Keeper of Printed Books and subsequently Principal Librarian, in which posts he conceived and oversaw the construction of the Library reading room (the Round Reading Room) and the storage space beneath, in what had been the courtyard of the old Montagu House, as well as designing and constructing its first systematic catalogue. His appointment indicates the close link which existed then between the Society and the British Museum, and not only was Ellis a member of the Catalogue Committee but Panizzi’s immediate superior, H.H. Baber (F.R.S. 1816), had been appointed a member in June 1832 (9th). Panizzi was to be made free of the Library and, at his own request,
to have Roberton for his assistant, since he was, Panizzi found, the only person who knew the Library well enough to help.\textsuperscript{59}

During the next two years Panizzi and the Committee worked together harmoniously enough: for example the Committee recommended and the Council approved (13 June 1833) the recall of all books borrowed and attempts to trace all those not promptly returned. Panizzi was utterly appalled at what he found in the Library: many books in such disrepair, especially the non-scientific books which he estimated as one third of the whole, as to be virtually useless, and there was lack of arrangement, lack of proper shelf space and so on. He was instructed to set aside books of doubtful utility, that is those very decayed, odd volumes, imperfect volumes and those which were ‘totally useless’,\textsuperscript{60} and to write catalogue slips only for the sound volumes. These were to be divided into scientific and non-scientific with assistance from Baber and from Richard Sheepshanks (astronomer, F.R.S. 1830). In accordance with the Council resolution of 9 February 1832, the Committee determined (9 December 1833) that the scientific books were to be divided into classes, the books listed alphabetically by author within each class. The Committee members would have liked a subject index as well, but this Panizzi rejected. He sought and readily obtained advice on the classes themselves—was acoustics to be a part of mechanics? should agriculture come under botany? or alchemy under chemistry? and so on—and under what class difficult books should be placed. To make his task easier the Society managed to obtain more room for the Library, partly by building a gallery with shelving, partly by obtaining extra space in Somerset House, as the Society was told at the Anniversary Meeting in 1835.\textsuperscript{61}

In November 1834 Hudson resigned from the post of Assistant Secretary, alleging ‘tyranny’ on the part of J.W. Lubbock (F.R.S. 1829, Treasurer and, as senior Vice President, chief executive officer for the Duke of Sussex).\textsuperscript{62} Hudson was not evidently greatly regretted: J.G. Children (F.R.S. 1807), one of the Secretaries, had long complained of his conduct, of which in 1832 he had written to Lubbock that ‘He has not shewn the slightest symptom of regret’ although it [the conduct] ‘was really most improper’, while later Children grumbled that Hudson and Roberton both ‘seem to consider their time their own out of office hours’—which were short—demanding extra pay for work on the Catalogue when there was some thought of Hudson’s working on the class ‘Mechanics’. When Hudson resigned, Children told Lubbock, he made ‘insinuations to [Lubbock’s] prejudice’, both to P.M. Roget (F.R.S. 1815), Children’s fellow Secretary, and to others. It is clear that Hudson had done little work in the Library or Archives, leaving that side of his post to Roberton, who was certainly kept busy at it.\textsuperscript{63} So much so that, in spite of Hudson’s earlier complaints about him—perhaps because he was so much involved in Library work as to leave other affairs to his superior—the Council quickly chose Roberton to succeed Hudson as Assistant Secretary (officially from April 1835).\textsuperscript{64} The Council also, perhaps rather strangely in view of Roberton’s experience under
Hudson, decided to return to the late eighteenth-century practice of having a Librarian who was not appointed to help the Assistant Secretary in his other duties. The man appointed, also in April 1835, was W.E. Shuckard (1802–1868) who was greatly to improve the state of the Archives. In the course of the next eight years he collected together all the early letters (mainly 1657–1737) in the Society’s Archives and compiled an alphabetical index to them, published in 1840, a most useful aid to subsequent historians of the Royal Society. Panizzi had also applied for the post and was clearly better qualified as a librarian, but Shuckard was preferred probably because he was an entomologist and although Fellows might not necessarily yet have scientific qualifications, staff were thought to need them. Panizzi not only had no obvious interest in science but was later to show himself positively anti-scientific. Presumably Shuckard regularly assisted Panizzi as well as looking after the Library and Archives; certainly in 1836 (3 March), when Panizzi reported to the Council that something ought to be done about maps and charts, the job was given to Shuckard.

In 1835 Panizzi was working at sorting the books into classes and writing out bibliographic slips so industriously that by May he had formulated the proper procedure for going into print, as he told the Catalogue Committee. He was then, he explained, ready to send slips to the printers, but he stated firmly that he and he alone was responsible for the proofs, and in negotiating with the printer had told him that no one must interfere with either his original slips or the proofs. Now the Committee expected him to adhere to the rule promulgated earlier (23 December 1833) that all proofs should be sent to all the members of the subcommittee for correction and comment and almost certainly Panizzi had failed to gain their approval for his forms of entry. Here was the basis for much dispute and dissent and hence began what can only be called ‘the Panizzi affair’ which was to reach its height the next year and drag on for some years thereafter. The subcommittee’s reaction (25 April 1836) when its members did see proofs was outrage: Panizzi had definitely made it his catalogue, producing what the subcommittee thought to be over-long entries with a number of comments which were found to be totally unacceptable. When he was told this Panizzi rebelled, declaring that he could not be expected to get on with the Catalogue if he were subject to interference, and that he needed at least four revises if he were to get the entries correct, which he could not do if the members of the Committee changed things at an early stage. The Council tried to placate him (23 June, 7 July) by indicating that he should regard the Committee’s rules as advisory only. But this did not satisfy Panizzi, who now refused to have anything to do with the Committee, even to attend its meetings. He asked Roget to speak to the Council so that he might be protected from any interference from the Committee, which of course had been set up by and was answerable to the Council. As a result the Council (14 July 1836), after careful consideration, decided that the situation was impossible: the only thing to do was to dismiss Panizzi—which was
done—and to ask the Catalogue Committee to deal directly with the printer after having first scrutinized, corrected as necessary and approved the slips class by class. This took some time, but it was done and the result was the Catalogue of the Scientific Books in the Library of the Royal Society, published in 1839.

So far so good, but that was not the end of the Panizzi affair, for Panizzi refused to accept his dismissal gracefully. He not unfairly asked for pay for what he had done, but although he received what the Council thought his due—he had had some monies in advance—it was not as much as he thought he had earned. He was affronted that the President (Sussex) in his Anniversary address of 1836, printed in the Society’s Proceedings, spoke of the Catalogue as being composed and revised by the members of the Catalogue Committee, and he complained that he had been unfairly dismissed and underpaid. He went to the trouble and expense of two printed pamphlets in order to seek redress. In November 1837 the Council Report, apologizing for the ‘unexpected’ delay in the publication of the Catalogue, was detailed, defensive and exculpatory about its handling of the affair, insisting that Panizzi had been paid generously, more than originally offered. Panizzi openly disagreed. Fortunately a change of President helped to calm matters: Sussex resigned in 1838, to be succeeded by the Marquis of Northampton (F.R.S. 1830), a geologist of some standing. When Panizzi wrote politely, the Council (13 December 1838) gave an emollient reply, proposing that the matter go to arbitration, as it did a year later. It had all been a very unfortunate interlude, giving the Society poor publicity; perhaps worse, it probably gave the Library Committee a mistrust of professional librarians.

Under Shuckard the Library continued to function normally in spite of the problems arising from the preparation of the Catalogue. So in 1836 (28 July) the Council routinely voted for further bookbinding. Shuckard was careful to consult the Council as to the form in which they wished the catalogue of early letters to appear (27 June, 25 July, 8 August 1839), work for which he was to be paid extra, at the rate of £10 per 1000 entries. His eventual remuneration was authorized (6 February 1840) at £42 for 4200 entries. At the end of 1839 (12 December) the Council authorized the Library Committee to spend the sum of £250 on purchase and binding. Meanwhile (17 October), J.O. Halliwell (F.R.S. only five months earlier, at the age of 19) presented to the Council a catalogue of 120 manuscripts in the Library, many of them medieval; he asked for no remuneration even when the catalogue was printed (1840), but rather permission to print the letters of Henry Oldenburg, one of the original Secretaries, to John Milton, permission which he promptly received. He also wanted to catalogue the Jones collection of oriental manuscripts which he was authorized to do the next year (6 February 1840). To complete the Catalogue of Scientific Books (1839) it was resolved (17 December 1840) that an alphabetical catalogue of ‘the books which do not relate to science’ be printed; this was to be the Catalogue of Miscellaneous Literature in the Library
of the Royal Society (1841). Now that both catalogues were printed, Shuckard proposed rearranging the Library by sizes and by classes, at a cost for his extra time of £150, to which the Council agreed (10 June 1841); when the Council reported this to the Society at the Anniversary Meeting of that year it was reckoned that there were 19,000 bound volumes, about 8,300 being scientific books, excluding periodicals, still a Library apparently dominated by the Arundel collection. As Shuckard went about his rearranging he found it not at all easy, reporting (6 October 1842) that he was hampered by defects in the Catalogue, especially with regard to the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century books, so much so that he felt it necessary to ‘complete’ the Catalogue in this regard, for which he was (10 November 1842) given an extra £100. By these means he became so familiar with the Library’s contents that (1 June 1843) having read the account of the Catalogue in the Quarterly Review he was able indignantly to deny the writer’s claim that the Catalogue showed that there were many missing books; they were safely in the Library, in fact, but had been omitted by Panizzi. The Council took his word, and one of the Secretaries was told to write to the editor of the Quarterly Review to correct the statement.

Shuckard had obviously been a competent and hard-working Librarian. But it appeared that he had a weakness, in fact what he called his passion for entomology, to which he ascribed his bankruptcy in the autumn of 1843. Bankruptcy in the mid-nineteenth century was regarded with the same horror as moral turpitude, and so, although Shuckard could assure the Society that he had passed unopposed through the Insolvency Court, there could be no question of his remaining in the Society’s employ. Almost immediately after his resignation came Roberton’s unexpected death on 13 November 1843, noted at the Society’s regular meeting ten days later. Roberton had not been a favourite with the Secretaries on account of his tendency, as they saw it, to begrudge time spent on Society business outside what he regarded as his regular duty. The Council now decided (7 December 1843) that in future the post of Assistant Secretary be made a full-time position by combining it with the post of Librarian. The salary was to be £200 a year with free apartments, coals and candles—the Assistant Secretary was still in effect Housekeeper—the required bond remaining £1000 as it had been in the previous century. And, as often before, but more firmly, it was determined that there should be no ‘perquisites’ for extra duties since the salary was predicated on the position being a truly full-time one. The choice of the Officers and Council (14 December 1843) was C.R. Weld (1813–69) who had been Secretary of the Statistical Society since 1839 and was a barrister; he is best remembered for his History of the Royal Society (1848), although his later vocation was to be the writing of travel books. Perhaps surprisingly, his qualifications did not include any considerable scientific knowledge. Although his was to be a full-time post it was decided by the Council (29 February 1844) that, like previous Assistant Secretaries, he needed help in his duties, or, as the Council Minutes put it, it would be ‘expedient’ to appoint an assistant to the Assistant
Secretary at a salary of £80 a year, his duties to include his acting as ‘sub-librarian’. Walter White (1811-93)—later himself to be Assistant Secretary and the author of very interesting, entertaining and revealing journals, published by his brother in 1898—was appointed as ‘the Attendant’, later to be called ‘the Clerk’. He was given a formidably particularized set of duties.71

Weld was to prove a diligent Assistant Secretary, notably interested in the history of the Society. In the first few months of his appointment he was able to make a survey of the Library—White did the actual work of checking the shelves—and, as Weld reported to the Council (11 October 1844), he found many books missing. Regrettably, this was still the case in the spring of 1846 when, he reported to the Council (MC 4, no. 129), he had found a guardbook of letters (K) not entered in Shuckard’s catalogue, had found books and manuscripts in a box labelled ‘soap and candles’ and had failed to find guardbook OB (letters between John Beale and Henry Oldenburg) which fortunately did turn up later. A practical reason for Weld’s interest in the Society’s history is revealed in the Preface to his History, namely that he found himself being frequently asked by Fellows for information about the Society’s manner of proceeding in the past. This resulted in his presenting a paper to the Society (30 April 1846) entitled ‘The History of the Mace’, a paper subsequently printed in the Society’s Proceedings. It is remarkable for the fact that it was to be almost unique in the history of the Society that an Assistant Secretary should present a paper at a meeting. Now Weld was, clearly, a man with a natural turn for history, but why, it may be asked, were so many Fellows suddenly interested in the past workings of their society? The answer lies in the movement for reform begun in the late 1820s, now rapidly gathering sufficient strength to be successful. The Council Minutes (7 May 1846) suddenly record that ‘It is expedient to revise the Charters of the Society’. So the Council at first thought, only to find, as the Society’s legal advisers pointed out, that Charter revision would be far too costly and troublesome. Hence the Charter Committee appointed to look into the matter wisely settled for new Statutes as they advised the Council, a procedure undoubtedly more acceptable to the majority of Fellows (probably including the President, the Marquis of Northampton) than giving up Charles II’s Charter would have been. The proposed new Statutes were presented to the Council for approval on 10 February 1847 and accepted the next day at a Special General Meeting of the Society, as recorded in the Proceedings.

The principal changes in the Statutes of 1847 concerned the limitation of the number of new Fellows elected in each year, the manner of their election and their qualifications. As before, Fellows were to be free to propose candidates at any meeting, but these were no longer to be voted on ‘ten several ordinary meetings after proposal’. Rather, once a year the Council was to present a list of 15 candidates selected as the most eligible among those proposed, eligibility to be defined as distinguished by contributions to or promotion of natural science, and on this list the
Fellows were to vote. The Council was to be elected at the Anniversary Meeting, again from a list prepared by the sitting Council, but the Council was not to be entirely self-perpetuating since only half of any of the existing Council was eligible for re-election. The Officers were to be elected at the same time, all to be drawn from the Council. All this, as some later Presidents complained, was to give the Council the deciding voice in the Society’s affairs. The emphasis on making the Royal Society almost exclusively scientific was clear and plain. As far as the Library was concerned, the new Statutes proved that the Society had become genuinely interested in using it. The Library was now to be opened ‘from Eleven in the morning to Four in the afternoon’ except for Sundays, Good Friday, and Christmas and Easter weeks, and the Assistant Secretary or, presumably, his assistant was to be in attendance during those hours. All books were to be stamped, and might be read in the Library not only by Fellows but by anyone who received the written permission of either the President or a member of the Council; only Fellows might borrow books, up to four at a time, except for any book restricted by the Council, while manuscripts might be borrowed only by Fellows, and that only by permission of the President and the Council. To ensure the return of all books, a day was to be set for their return once a year and the Library closed for a period, presumably so that they could be checked and returned to the shelves. The Assistant Secretary was also in charge of the Archives, and he was still, as formerly, required to attend all meetings of the Society and the various committees. Hence, and since the Library continued to grow, it was indeed ‘expedient’ that he have an assistant.

In view of all these changes in the Society, it is not at all surprising that Weld chose to end his History in 1830, feeling that ‘late events are too fresh in memory, to be impartially judged’, especially while the participants were still alive. His is therefore a history of the unreformed Society. But to modern eyes, 1847 is a more natural break, for in 1847 the Society became truly oriented towards natural science rather than towards learning in general. With Weld’s History also begins the at least semi-official connection of the Society with history of science, for the study of which the Library had been furnished over the previous 40 years with printed aids, as well as more genuinely historical Archives.
THE LIBRARY IN A REFORMED SOCIETY, 1848-1885

The Marquis of Northampton had steered the Society through successful reform, to make it a truly scientific society. When he had been President for ten years, which he felt to be long enough, he resigned in favour of Lord Rosse (F.R.S. 1831), whose important work on the astronomy of nebulae was begun and continued during his five years in office. From his time onwards the Presidents were all to be distinguished men of science and what J.D. Hooker, (F.R.S. 1831; President 1873-1878) called the ‘crowned heads of science’, although it was from now on the Council which, as Rosse complained, dominated the administrative side of the Society. The Council was now entirely composed of professional scientists and this meant that, ultimately, the Library was to be oriented more or less exclusively towards science.

As it became more scientific and ever more active in advising the Government, the Society was increasingly short of room, a matter of concern. Indeed in 1852 (15 June) the Council, noting that even the Library was overcrowded, urged the President to ask the Government for more room in Somerset House or even elsewhere, and if elsewhere preferably in conjunction with other learned societies. Room was clearly urgently needed, but not so urgently as to tempt the Council to accept anything but a central site: when there were reports that the Government might offer societies land adjacent to Kensington Gardens, north of the site of the Great Exhibition of 1851, a special Council Meeting (26 November 1852) noted that the locality was ‘exceedingly inconvenient and unsuitable’. Not until 1856 was the matter settled. The Royal Society moved to Burlington House in Piccadilly—to the central wing, later to be occupied by the Royal Academy—in May 1857. There had been for the past year a Committee for the Removal to Burlington House, which did consider the needs of the Library, but clearly the burden of the remove rested on Weld and White. The Committee found that there was a ‘fire proof room’, although one needing modification; it called for cloth to cover cases and new cases for the books. However, no sooner had the Society settled into its new quarters than it learned that it was to be ousted in favour of the Royal Academy, as was to occur in 1866. The Society was assured that it would be provided with a purpose-built new building, as part of a new wing on the east side, where there were then trees and lawns. While this was being built the Society had to make do until 1873 with temporary accommodation in the Courtyard; no mention is made of the Library, which presumably managed as best it could for the next few years.

But with all the moves and the inevitable disruptions, affairs relevant to the Library were not neglected. Of great importance, and soon to take on a life of its own under the jurisdiction of the Library Committee and the librarians, was a semi-international enterprise which resulted in The Catalogue of Scientific Papers, a listing, alphabetically by author, of papers in all the principal journals of the world on ‘all branches of Natural Knowledge for which the Royal Society was instituted’.
The Library at Burlington House.
It ultimately covered the whole of the nineteenth century, proceeding in four stages. In 1858 (7 January) the Library Committee recommended that work begin by having a manuscript catalogue made of all periodicals in the Society’s Library, covering all the natural sciences, and to this end (14 January) £250 was voted for paying assistants.\(^7\) First two, then four and more boys were hired,\(^8\) with White to direct their work. To anticipate, the first volume was published in 1867, the first six volumes covering papers published between 1800 and 1863 were completed by 1872, and it was then decided to carry on the project for successive decades, with, in 1902, a supplementary volume covering papers missed for the period 1800 to 1883. The vast enterprise continued under the Society’s control, and largely at its expense, until 1900, after which future coverage became an international undertaking, the Library Committee ceased to have jurisdiction over it, and in principle, although not in fact, the Society was no longer financially responsible, while still acting as publisher through the Cambridge University Press. After 1900, as the subject-classified *International Catalogue of Scientific Literature*, it was to become a victim of the Great War: it ceased to appear in 1916 and was officially wound up in 1922.

The Library of necessity accommodated the staff involved in the *Catalogue*, an ever-increasing number of assistants, at first boys, later also young women. But at the same time normal Library work continued. By 1859 (31 March) Weld was able to present his *Descriptive Catalogue* of the pictures, mostly portraits, which had always been in the Librarian’s charge, together with a proposal by ‘Captain James’ to photograph all the portraits for inclusion with the Catalogue when printed; the proposal was referred to the Library Committee, whose report does not survive. This was Colonel, later Sir, Henry James (1803–77; F.R.S. 1848), director general of the Ordnance Survey, who was at this time applying photography to ordnance maps.\(^9\) As already noted, under Weld’s influence the Society was increasingly conscious of its past history, and in particular of its possession of many papers by or associated with its great President 1703–1727, Sir Isaac Newton. This Newtonian interest had been stimulated by the presentation to the Society in 1844 of six large volumes of Newtoniana, together with Newtonian relics, by the Reverend Charles Turnor. A decade later interest was further aroused by the authoritative biography of Newton by David Brewster in 1855, which printed and/or utilized many previously unpublished documents. Now in 1859, no doubt spurred on by Weld, the President, Sir Benjamin Brodie (F.R.S. 1810), wrote to the Earl of Portsmouth, who owned many of the documents used by Brewster.\(^10\) Brodie told the Earl that, as a result of attempts to put the Society’s Archives in better order, copies of some of Newton’s manuscripts made by Samuel Horsley for his 1785 edition of Newton’s works had been discovered and compared with those in Brewster’s biography, mostly made from manuscripts in the Portsmouth Collection. As a result, Brodie said, the Council of the Society thought that ‘a Committee of Persons well acquainted with Newton’s
history’ should examine the Portsmouth manuscripts. Would the Earl continue what Brodie called his services to the history of science by consenting to such a Committee and giving its members access to his collection? The answer was yes, but only when the papers had been put into better order. As is well known, the papers were finally entrusted to Cambridge University a dozen years later, when those regarded as strictly scientific were retained for the University Library. The Society’s Archives were, from this time onwards, of greater general interest to historians, whether Fellows or not, the non-Fellows requiring permission from the Council to consult them. However, the Archives were not always wholly seen as an asset to be steadily increased, for in line with the Society’s rejection of non-scientific books went the feeling that non-scientific manuscripts should be disposed of: hence in 1876 the Library Committee recommended and the Council approved (18 May 1876) that the Secretary of State for India be asked if he would be willing to accept, technically on indefinite loan, the Jones collection of oriental manuscripts. T.H. Huxley (F.R.S. 1851), then Secretary of the Society, undertook negotiations for the transfer of the manuscripts to the India Office, a transfer effected, in 67 parcels, on 4 March 1883. This was a sensible act, for the purpose intended by Jones was better served in the India Office, familiar to Oriental scholars, than in the Royal Society of this era.

In 1861 Weld, who had done so much for the Society’s awareness of its own history and had been generally a highly satisfactory Assistant Secretary, was forced to resign—not because of dishonesty or inefficiency, but because he had ‘introduced a lady’ into the apartments of Burlington House where, of course, he lived; under what circumstances and how detected does not appear. Walter White, who presumably carried on immediately after Weld’s resignation, was soon (2 May) formally promoted to the rank of Assistant Secretary at £300 a year and apartments, the first man to attain this post by working up to it from a lowlier position; but the Assistant Secretaryship was now seen to require administrative skill rather than a scientific background, of which White had none. He was by this time thoroughly familiar with the work of the Society and its Officers, and no doubt his assistance in helping to organize the first stages of the great project for the Catalogue of Scientific Papers had demonstrated his abilities in this line as well as his knowledge of the Library. As the Council then noted, he needed a successor as attendant or assistant, the post being now called Clerk. H.B. Wheatley (d. 1917) was appointed, not as titular Librarian but with particular interest in Library affairs, with which he was especially concerned during all his term of office of 18 years; during this time also he had become a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, an expert on Pepys and his Diary, and a well-known bibliophile. From this period onwards, the Assistant Secretary was increasingly kept busy with attending the Society’s committees, which had proliferated since 1847, so that his assistant was more and more concerned with the Library, for which White now had less and less time, although he never relinquished all interest.
The Library continued to grow, by both purchase and donation. In 1861 the Council voted to allow the Library Committee £500, twice the sum normally voted for purchase of books, if it was thought desirable to purchase books from the library of Humboldt then being sold, although there seems to be no record of whether the Committee utilized the grant, and in 1864 Henry Dircks, a civil engineer who was keenly interested in seventeenth-century science, wrote to inform the Society that he was donating 29 late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century books to the Library,88 while in 1867 there were hopes that Henry Cavendish’s papers might be offered to the Society.89 The preparation of the Catalogue of Scientific Papers occupied much of the time of both White and the Library Committee, but the work of copying out titles was done by the boy assistants, overseen by White, so that Wheatley was able to proceed with more exclusively Library business. About this time (1870) there was printed, perhaps as a trial and presumably by Wheatley, a catalogue of the journals in the Library. This was of use in the copying out of titles, and also no doubt a basis ten years later for the more extensive catalogue then published (1881).

By the beginning of 1871 Wheatley had prepared and presented a catalogue of the Archives from 1768 onwards, to supplement the work done earlier by Shuckard. At the same time the Library Committee (2 January 1871) was instructing White and Wheatley to make preparations for a new edition of the general catalogue of the Library, Panizzi’s being now out of date. White (14 January 1871) promptly reported to the Committee that it would take some months to sort out the early Archives, presumably for cataloguing along with the books. The Library Committee discussed the proposal, which was made in connection with the proposed printed catalogue of books, that thought should be given to clearing out duplicates ‘by sale or otherwise’ and also ‘works of general literature which may be regarded as out of place in a scientific library’, this disposal being related to the projected move into the ‘new house’. The sale of duplicates, which cannot have been many, was authorized by the Council (26 October), the decision being (16 November) that they should be offered first to Fellows and then to booksellers, the sale in fact producing £47.8.6. But the sale of non-scientific books was to be postponed, while the Library Committee circularized its members as to what books, if any, to retain from the category of ‘miscellaneous literature’.90 When (14 June 1872) the Committee came to consider the matter further, it was realized that the problem was a complicated one: the 1841 printed catalogue was examined for titles and the list of borrowings compared with it showed that, on the one hand such books were rarely used by Fellows, while on the other hand it was seen that there were numbers of early printed books which were rare and should, it was thought by Fellows, be kept. Moreover, it was noted that ‘A considerable Part of the Miscellaneous Books belong to the collection presented to the Royal Society in the sixteenth [sic] century by ... [the] Duke of Norfolk’ to be kept intact. It was true that ‘some years ago’ (1829) the
Society had exchanged most of the manuscripts with the British Museum for their estimated value; this sum had been laid out in printed books which were then marked with the Norfolk stamp. It was thought that any of these could be disposed of with the Duke of Norfolk's permission. But presumably many, even most, were in fact scientific books. Nothing was officially done at this time, and the 'rarities' were retained for the next 50 years, in spite of the fact that, as the Council noted (18 February 1875) a bookseller offered £50 for Dürer's autograph.  

No doubt the desire to clear the Library of little-used books arose partly from increased efficiency, partly from the initiation of a new catalogue and partly from the projected move into the Society's final Burlington House quarters, a move achieved in 1873. White was to report to the Library Committee that the move, which had occupied three weeks from 29 September to 18 October, had been helped by the sale two years earlier. The Library now occupied a spacious room on the first floor, well lit by large windows and, at night, by gas, with three tiers of stacks along the inner wall, a gallery above the windows and racks in the basement for journals. The basement also housed the staff of the Catalogue of Scientific Papers. It should be noted that this staff, which was involved in general Library work when required, had grown considerably since the project's inception: Henry White, hired initially as a boy copyist, was now in charge under the general supervision of Walter White while, among others, Henry's son Alfred Hastings White was in 1873 to join the staff as one of the boy copyists and his father's assistant.

In the new Library the books were, as far as possible, arranged by subject with the journals also shelf-marked, but it was not until 7 May 1873 that Walter White could report to the Library Committee that all the books were at last accessible. He optimistically believed that there was room for 20 years' growth; in fact the Library was faced with the expansion of some 90 years before the next move, an expansion only made possible by increased shelving, the abandonment of the Catalogue of Scientific Papers as a Society responsibility at the end of the century, and storage of some material. White did not describe where the Archives were then kept—they were later in the basement and scattered through offices—nor what provision he had made for any increase. In fact they did increase, slowly by the mere passage of time, more rapidly by bequest and even occasional purchase. Thus in 1873 the valuable papers of George Boole (mathematician, F.R.S. 1857) were donated by his widow in a somewhat informal manner: she left them in a bag with the Burlington House porter, so that it was not clear to the family whether they were donated or merely left on deposit, nor is it clear whether Mrs Boole sent the papers she found the next year to the Society or not. In 1889 his daughter was to write to Mrs Rix, whom she knew, explaining that she would like to borrow the papers for the use of friends who were planning to republish Boole's Laws of Thought (1854); she was given permission to do so, but the Society had great trouble in getting them back and did not succeed for nearly ten years. More important for the Society's own history was
the donation, by J.E. Gray (F.R.S. 1832), accepted by the Council (29 October 1874), of a collection of letters relating to the election of the Secretary in 1847.

In 1879, as already noted, Wheatley resigned as Clerk, to be replaced by Herbert Rix, a classics graduate of the University of London, competent in science, who had been a schoolmaster; he was clearly better educated and more literate than most of his predecessors. He was ultimately to serve the Society for 18 years to its eminent satisfaction. At the same time the Council (15 May 1879) instructed Henry White to stop work on the Catalogue of Scientific Papers of which he was in charge in order to assist in the compilation of the new Library Catalogue of Scientific Books. Part I: Transactions, journals, observations and reports, surveys and museums, which appeared in 1881 and Part II: General catalogue of books in 1883. Henry White died suddenly in 1880 with his task incomplete, leaving it to his son Hastings White to see the catalogue volumes through the press, as he ably did. The book catalogue was to serve the Society for 99 years, supplemented after 1920 by a card index. With the Library Catalogue completed and in the press the Council (18 January 1883) decided to resume work on the Catalogue of Scientific Papers, discontinued for four years so that the Library staff could devote its energies to the Library’s own catalogue, and work then began for the decade 1874-1883. It is thus evident how closely the Catalogue of Scientific Papers was integrated into the work of the Library staff and how Hastings White, beginning work on one catalogue and then turning to the other and back again, could still be closely identified with and dedicated to the historical side of the Library in years to come.

The fine new Library in the east wing of Burlington House made a splendid background for Conversaziones, today called Soirées, now that these were Society functions, not privately given by the President in his London home, which most Presidents no longer possessed.
TOWARDS A PURELY SCIENTIFIC LIBRARY, 1885–1925

At the beginning of 1885 Walter White resigned for reasons of age and ill health; he had been an efficient and hard-working Secretary who was on excellent terms with the Officers, always ready and willing to assist them in their ever-increasing duties in a Society that had developed far more administrative activity than had been the case 40 years earlier, at the time of reform. His departure resulted in the promotion of Herbert Rix to the post of Assistant Secretary and Librarian, while Hastings White continued his work—to which he had returned in 1883, after completing the two Library catalogues—upon the Catalogue of Scientific Papers, still the chief preoccupation of the Library Committee. It was to remain so for the next five years, until in 1890 a special subcommittee was established by the Council to oversee its compilation and publication, its work diminishing at the end of the century and ceasing during the First World War. Production of a series of subject indexes was abandoned after volume III (1914).

Rix, having been particularly interested in the Library in previous years, took his duties as Librarian very seriously, as appears from his report—far more formal and business-like than Walter White’s had been—in November 1885 to the Library Committee. It was a thorough, somewhat gloomy account of Library affairs, suggesting that the work of the Assistant Secretary was so great as no longer really to permit a joint appointment with the Librarianship, although the joint appointment continued for another 45 years; certainly Rix felt that the Library had been neglected in previous years. Moreover, he was clearly anxious to make the Library more efficient and be seen to do so, showing the real need for more staff. The report began ‘The Assistant Secretary desires to call the attention of the Library Committee to the large amount of work required in the library to put it into working condition’, a sufficiently portentous statement, and continued by insisting that the existing staff could not possibly accomplish this work on top of ‘the daily work of the office’. It then listed in detail the deficiencies which needed correction. First in importance in Rix’s view was the lack of any shelf catalogue. He did not say that this made it difficult to locate books, but rather that when a space was seen on the shelves it was impossible to tell what volume was missing, for in any case books were given only fixed shelf numbers, often reflecting no systematic arrangement. However, this applied only to books, not periodicals of which the Library still chiefly consisted, which explains why Rix in his six years as Assistant Librarian had detected only 22 examples out of an estimated 115,000 volumes in the Library. He added that ‘The insistence upon the annual recall of all books lent from the Library has been so strict’ that the gaps could not result from failure to return borrowed books, an indication of the increasing efficiency of the Library system during the previous decade. Besides the lack of a shelf catalogue, other catalogues were needed urgently, many previously called for but none attempted since the move to final quarters in
The Library and Archives of Burlington House: these were catalogues of manuscripts, maps and charts and miscellaneous literature. Further, many volumes needed rebinding. Rather than asking that extra money be sought from the Council for the purpose, Rix cleverly added, knowing the opinions of most of the Fellows concerned with Library affairs, that ‘if the Old Classics’ (usually called the Miscellaneous Literature) were to be sold, the proceeds might be spent on binding the scientific books, of which he estimated ‘some hundreds’ were in need. This work, however desperately required, could not, he emphasized, be done with existing staff.

The Committee agreed with all that Rix had proposed. It was clear to its members that the Library needed rationalizing, especially in regard to its large stock of periodicals. In that respect it was resolved that ‘a list of duplicates and deficiencies be drawn up’ to be sent to the Society’s corresponding societies ‘with a view to effect exchanges’; if broken series could not be completed in this way Rix was authorized to do so by purchase. The question of books must await the proposed new catalogues. But meanwhile Rix was authorized to continue binding volumes where required when these were of manuscripts in the Archives, especially contributions to the Philosophical Transactions. To achieve the results Rix proposed, the Committee resolved to recommend to the Council that he be allowed to engage an assistant at not more than three guineas a week, which he had done by the beginning of 1886. The man chosen was Arthur Soper, but when the Council learned of this appointment (15 April 1886) it in turn resolved to appoint instead Hastings White at a salary of £130 a year, considerably less than Soper was to be paid, ‘to assist the Secretaries in the work of publication ... together with other matters pertaining to the office of Assistant Librarian’. White was to be highly efficient and to learn to know and love the Library and to help many Fellows in their work with the Archives, but he was never given time to devote himself to it as he would have wished, since the publication work increased greatly as the century wore on. Hence it was left to others to compile the various catalogues required.

To begin with, Soper was rehired in 1887 to compile the shelf catalogue, a work completed by 1890; he also sorted and collated the manuscripts of the Philosophical Transactions, checked the archival manuscripts with Halliwell’s catalogue, arranging them in alphabetical order in the Archives Room, boxed and catalogued Horsley’s Newtonian manuscripts, finished the catalogue of Miscellaneous Literature and catalogued some ‘bundles of MS.S. in the Store Room’. Soper left in 1890 with some tasks still not completed, notably the making of a catalogue of the maps and charts, always apparently left until last, the collating and assembling of the later Proceedings manuscripts, and the further collating of other manuscripts. For this a Mr Fuller was hired; he completed the above needs—except, again, for the maps and charts—by 23 October 1890, together with a catalogue of portraits.

Some idea of the overcrowding of the Library, only a dozen years after Walter White had thought that there was room for 20 years’ growth, appears from the reports
on Soper's work. Books were widely scattered: in the main library on the first floor, in various rooms on the ground floor including the Secretaries' room, in the 'annexe', in the 'Archives Room', 'in the clock case' (rare books), in the Store Room. No wonder that it was decided that the only possible solution was the disposal of duplicates and of unwanted books and journals. However the Council decided on 15 April 1886 that no books from the Norfolk Library nor any gifts from 'recent' donors were to be disposed of. By 1887 some 50 duplicate volumes had been given to other libraries; at the same time Rix's list of some 200 volumes which were judged to be not relevant to the Society's needs—a list revised by the Treasurer, Sir John Evans (F.R.S. 1864, archaeologist and numismatist), and Charles Tomlinson (F.R.S. 1867), long interested in the problem—was sent to various scientific and learned societies, along with a list of unwanted and often incomplete runs of journals, an exercise repeated the next year. 102 Soper had also found about 250 volumes of tracts 'of a literary nature', not in the printed catalogues, while by the end of 1888 he had found between 600 and 700 non-scientific volumes. By June 1889 the volumes of Miscellaneous Literature had not only been removed from the shelves in the main library but partially disposed of, for 141 volumes selected by the Treasurer and Professor T.G. Bonney (F.R.S. 1878, geologist) had been presented to other libraries, an exercise repeated the next year. Two years later (24 March 1892) it was agreed that the literary series of publications of academies which published these separately should be given to other libraries—this was done by 12 July 1894—and that booksellers should be allowed to buy individual memoirs from the Society's stock of its own periodical literature, which occupied much space. Further, in 1894, consideration was given to the possibility of disposing of out-of-date scientific textbooks, the Officers to judge which should be retained. For the moment there was now room in the Library to expand, which it did chiefly in respect of journals which accumulated relentlessly every year.

The Library did not change in the 1890s only in regard to increased shelving and better cataloguing, but physically as well. In 1887 'lanterns', presumably electric, replaced 'naked lights' now forbidden, thus greatly decreasing the risk of fire as well as improving the atmosphere. 103 New bookcases were purchased: Rix had long wanted better cases for the Archives, preferably, having taken advice from the British Museum, cases with glass doors 'as soon as the finances of the Society admit of it'. What he got (24 January 1889) was a mahogany bookcase—he had hoped for oak—'for the more valuable Manuscripts and Archives'. 104 Then in 1891 the Library received a valuable addition in the shape of a donation of books and manuscripts (papers) on protozoa, bequeathed by H.B. Brady (1835–91; F.R.S. 1874) with a gift of £300, the income to be used to increase the collection, 105 which was to be housed in a special case, as it always was in Burlington House. Today it is kept securely in a locked Book Room. To the Librarian's dismay, this case displaced several shelves of books which had to be reshelved in the Map Room in the upper annexe. But by
the 1890s the Library had been rationally reshelved and there were adequate shelf and Archive catalogues, as well as catalogues of the ancillary contents of the Library, this latter having been reduced by the elimination of many unwanted volumes, especially of periodicals. It is a measure of the increasingly formal administration of the Society and of the general change in office procedure in London at this time that by 1894 the Assistant Secretary’s report to the Library Committee was typewritten and pasted into the handwritten minutes, while by 1897 the minutes themselves were typewritten.

In 1897 Rix resigned from the post of Assistant Secretary and Librarian to be replaced by R.W.F. Harrison. Harrison, a graduate of the University of London with a degree in physical science and a barrister, had worked for the Society in 1881, serving as Secretary to the Transit of Venus Committee; he had then become friendly with Rix who suggested that he apply for the post, one of 84 applicants. Harrison immediately instituted reforms in the interest of increased efficiency and modernization, as typified by the typing of minutes. He also added to Hastings White’s work by instituting the Year-Book in 1897; this contained reports by the President and Council previously published in the Proceedings and hence also contained information about the Library. So it was as well that Harrison was able to increase the Society’s staff generally, notably from the point of view of the future of the Library by the appointment of a new 14-year-old boy, H.W. Robinson, as assistant to the chief clerk and Librarian. He was destined to spend the rest of his working life in close association with the Library. Reforms in the Library meant new regulations for readers, duly published in the Year-Book for 1899.

In spite of all the work done in the preceding decade, in the new century the old familiar deficiencies were being noted in reports to the Library Committee (notably 17 July 1902), deficiencies only to be corrected by yet more new catalogues and increased shelf space: the Catalogue of Serials was out of date and needed new staff to revise it, and the Library shelves were so overcrowded that some books were being damaged. Seven years later the situation was, not unnaturally, even worse, with shelving added along the passage and corridor in the basement. As a remedy (11 November 1908) the Committee decided to seek the Council’s approval for possible storage elsewhere of the Society’s stocks of its own publications, then in the basement. As Harrison reported to the Council (8 July 1909) he had found that Messrs W.H. Smith & Son were willing to provide storage space for a modest £50 a year; the acceptance of this offer released space in which steel shelving could be erected capable of accommodating 21,000 volumes, as was done by October 1909. Some idea of the problem can be gathered from Harrison’s report to the Library Committee (7 November 1908) that 244 volumes, almost certainly mainly periodicals, had been added since the previous meeting.

In 1908 the Committee learned from the Treasurer of an anonymous donation of £500 to be used for Library purposes. It was resolved to use part of this for the
preparation of a new catalogue of serials, to be listed from the shelves by 'a suitable person' to be specially engaged for the purpose. This had to wait for the transfer of the stored Society publications and the subsequent reshelving of the Library's volumes, but it was successfully completed by the end of 1911, to be published in the next year. This very thoroughly indexed Catalogue of the Periodical Publications ... was not to be superseded for 80 years.108 It is tempting to guess that the anonymous donor was Arthur Church (1834–1915; F.R.S. 1888) who had been busy in the Archives on voluntary work: in 1904 the Council (25 February) thanked him for his presentation of a copy of the list of Fellows as of 1677, while in 1906 he undertook, with the Council's permission, the transcription of Evelyn's Sculptura from the original manuscript in the Archives, for publication by the Clarendon Press. He certainly later gave the Society money to establish the Church Fund, to be used for the preservation of the Archives (Council Minutes 13 June 1907, 22 October 1908), but even more important was his invaluable work in detailed cataloguing of portions of the Archives and in having author-indexes to the catalogues printed and privately published. These were The Royal Society; some account of the 'Classified Papers' [1660–1741] (1907) and Some account of the 'letters and papers' of the period 1741–1806 in the archives (1908), works still indispensable for the historical scholar.109 This left uncatalogued what was called 'the small collection of rare books remaining from the Norfolk Bequest' which, Harrison reported, he had asked Henry M. Mayhew of the British Museum to inspect with a view to the preparation of a catalogue. With the Council's approval (28 October 1909 and 28 April 1910) Mayhew began this task, completed after his death by R. Farquharson Sharp, also of the British Museum, and elegantly printed in 1910, to be sold to the public and Fellows and given to institutions. Yet another compilation was an index to volumes 1–75 (1800–1905) of Proceedings, compiled by H.W. Robinson, since 1910 officially Library Assistant, and published in 1913, a task which he apparently found congenial to judge by his future work.

It is a little difficult to know how much actual work in the Library Harrison had time for;111 probably most was done under his supervision by White,112 Robinson and perhaps others. Certainly when Harrison reported to the Library Committee (12 December 1912) that the Librarian had found omissions from the Catalogue of Periodicals, remedied by pasting in appropriate slips, one imagines that it was the staff, rather than he himself, who had discovered this. But he was in charge, and so it was he who was instructed to try to fill the gaps revealed by the new Catalogue of Periodicals and he who raised the question of whether Fellows of other scientific societies should be allowed to use the Library, the Committee deciding that they might read but not borrow. And it was Harrison who was in charge during the war years 1914–18 when the Library Committee did not meet, and who saw to binding and purchase—not much of either—during these years. It is notable that, when the Committee met on 6 August 1919 after a lapse of nearly seven years, the total amount
spent on books had not been more than £10 for the years 1913–18, while far too little had been spent on binding of periodicals, now urgently needed once more.

But the real requirement, as so often before, was for a new author catalogue, so a subcommittee was appointed to look into means of preparation. To everyone’s surprise, as reported to the full Library Committee on 4 January 1919, it was found that, on his own initiative, Robinson, though absent on army service 1914–18, during which years he rose from private to staff captain, had foreseen the need and pasted all the entries from the old catalogue onto slips in preparation for possible printing. But as a complete catalogue would, it was estimated, require some 7000 further entries, for acquisitions since 1881, one man’s time for a year, and cost over £1000 to print, it was decided that a card catalogue would serve the Library’s needs adequately. Here again Robinson, also on his own initiative, had made such a good start that he had finished the first letter of the alphabet. The Library Committee sensibly recommended that a card catalogue be undertaken immediately, ‘that the preparation be assigned to Mr Robinson, under the supervision of Mr White the Assistant Librarian and that the necessary cards and cabinet be purchased forthwith’. It was noted that a card catalogue of periodicals was then almost completed. This was H.W. Robinson’s first major contribution to the Library, a task he pursued vigorously, which must have made him particularly familiar with the contents of the Library. He instituted, in addition, an interleaved and updated copy of the 1883 printed catalogue of books which remained in use until 1969, while, continually enlarged, his card catalogue was to remain current until 1982.

Meanwhile Harrison, then in ill health—although he lived on in retirement to the age of 87—resigned his post (officially 31 March 1920). Edwin Deller was appointed Assistant Secretary in his place, to serve for less than a year and to be replaced by F.A. Towle who served until 1932. It was possibly Harrison who had planned the new regulations brought in under Deller, whereby the Library hours were shortened (11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays, shorter on Saturday mornings) but the former summer closure was abolished, the Library to remain open for readers, although no volumes were to be borrowed from the first of August, when all borrowed volumes were to be returned, until the shelves had been checked.

It was in 1920 that the Chairman of the Library Committee mentioned possible disposal of the more important non-scientific books in the Library, inevitably now including the Norfolk Library books. The matter was deferred, to be seriously debated in the coming months and resolved only in 1924. The attitude of the Society may have been a trifle ambiguous, for in 1923 (16 February) the Library Committee asked the Secretaries, W.B. Hardy (1864–1934; F.R.S. 1902) and James Jeans (1877–1946; F.R.S. 1906), whether two rare Hebrew books deposited in the India Office Library should be recalled; the answer was that they should be, since they were probably valuable. But in conjunction with the fact that at the same time the Council was again considering the disposal of all non-scientific books by sale,
Library bookplates

Left: As used until the eighteenth century. Right: Current bookplate.
'valuable' presumably means of monetary value. The possible disposal of such books was soon known outside the Society and excited interest: thus in October 1923 A.E. Cowley (Bodley’s Librarian) wrote to the President, C.S. Sherrington (F.R.S. 1893), enquiring about the possible disposal of rare books; he was told that the Council was then (18 October) considering the matter, as indeed it was. Very soon the Secretaries, as reported to the Council (1 November and 6 December) were having the rare non-scientific books valued; at the same time W.B. Hardy ‘gave notice’, as was proper, ‘that at the next meeting he would move a Resolution proposing the sale of these books’, as he did (17 January 1924). It was then decided that the British Museum should be asked whether it wished to purchase any volumes; the Museum requested (21 February 1924) a volume of early sixteenth-century Italian tracts, certain fifteenth-century tracts and two fifteenth-century editions of Ovid, four volumes in all for which it offered £160, which was accepted (3 April 1924). It was then realized that permission should be sought from the Duke of Norfolk for disposal of his ancestor’s bequest, or rather of much of what remained of it, since some had been disposed of a century earlier. Permission was granted by the then Duke’s guardian and the way was paved for the sale by Sotheby’s (May 1925) the proceeds to go into a separate fund to be called the Arundel Fund, to be used for Library purposes. It still exists. The sale realized £14,749, of which £7,477 came from books never in the Norfolk Library.114 There had been some criticism in The Times (26 March 1925), promptly responded to by Sherrington as President, but while bibliophiles must regret the dispersal of the famous collection, of which only the scientific portion remains in the Royal Society Library, the bequest itself had been a drain upon Library funds, the books had been mostly unused and a portion of the original bequest already dispersed. Nor would the Society have felt itself wealthy enough to give the whole collection away, while it is clear that the British Museum did not want it. Fortunately, the 1683 catalogue still exists to provide information about the original collection, while the Arundel Fund, not all derived from the sale of the original bequest, for the proceeds of the sale of other non-scientific books were included in it, has been invaluable in the development of the Library.

Very many Fellows, like Charles Tomlinson in the nineteenth century and W.B. Hardy in the early twentieth century had found it anomalous that the Library, unlike the Royal Society, should not be purely scientific in character and content. The sale of 1925 completed a process begun a century earlier, of purging the Library of non-scientific books. As far as the Library was concerned, the reforms of 1847 were finally completed in 1925.
SCIENCE, HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND SCIENCE POLICY, 1926-1990

With the non-scientific part of the Norfolk Library and the ‘Miscellaneous Literature’ disposed of, and with new books being acquired at only a modest rate, it might have been expected that the old complaints about shortage of space on the shelves and lack of money for rebinding would have been at an end; but this, in fact, was never the case. The Arundel Fund was used for binding; in 1930 (3 April) the Chairman of the Library Committee (Sherrington) offered to inspect the older books and report on their state, which resulted in more rebinding; and attempts were made from time to time after this to keep up with the problem. But, undoubtedly because of the rapid build-up of journals, space and money for binding was always short, so much so that all who used the Library were aware of it: for example, in 1928 (20 December) the Library Committee considered a letter from Dr R.T. Gunther—then in the midst of publishing his series Early Science in Oxford (1923-45), some volumes of which drew extensively on Royal Society archives—in which he drew attention to Library congestion which he found so great as to be distressing. Moreover, the Library was being valued increasingly by Fellows for its older books and periodicals, and less for up-to-date subject-specific journals for which they turned to their own specialist societies. At the same time, the 1920s and 1930s saw a very considerable development of interest in history of science by, almost entirely in this period, successful scientists. A notable example was Clifford Dobell (1886-1949; F.R.S. 1918), a distinguished protozoologist, who always looked for the historical origins of all aspects of his subject. This led him quite early in the century to a particular interest in the Dutch microscopist Antoni van Leeuwenhoek (F.R.S. 1679/80), on whose work he wrote a number of articles before compiling his magistral work, Antony van Leeuwenhoek and his ‘Little Animals’ (1932). For this he used the Society’s store of original letters from Leeuwenhoek in which he first announced his discoveries, many, but not all, published in the Philosophical Transactions of the times. Dobell later paid tribute to the unrivalled knowledge of the literature of the period of Hastings White, never, he said, too busy to share this knowledge with interested readers. These, it should be noted again, were still mainly Fellows, although non-Fellows, like Gunther, were increasingly to seek permission to use the Archives and to copy and publish its contents. Dobell, as a Fellow, was even given permission to borrow the original Leeuwenhoek letters, but with a bond for their return of £50. The retirement of White in 1930 was less of a loss to readers than might have been expected, for he was given the title of Consulting Librarian and for a number of years was able to keep in touch with the Library by more or less regular visits, sharing his knowledge with readers; he was made C.B.E. in 1937. H.W. Robinson was made Assistant Librarian in his place, with fewer editorial responsibilities, now recognized as needing a special member of staff; he had been thoroughly imbued with White’s knowledge of old books and
was indeed about to launch out as an editor of old scientific literature and a promoter of history of science.\(^{118}\)

When in 1932 the Library Committee (Council Minutes 14 and 21 April) once again considered Library policy and how to keep up with acquisitions of periodicals, so costly in both money and space, historical subjects were, for the first time, given special attention, which meant primarily more attention to books as against journals. The report began ‘Until the early years of the nineteenth century the policy of the Society with regard to its Library could be simply defined as the acquisition of every scientific publication of importance’, whether book or journal. But this had absorbed nearly the whole of the General Purpose Account, while very many specialized journals were never consulted, being more easily available elsewhere. The Committee concluded that a large part of the Society’s ‘duty, to the world of science in general’ was to maintain ‘its valuable heritage of older scientific books in good condition’ and this it had not been able to do. Nor had it been able to acquire ‘important scientific books and monographs’ as they appeared, and so much was this the case that Fellows, it was found, no longer presented copies of their own works to the Library, wrongly believing that the Society did not wish to add to its book stock. So the Committee now recommended that the intake of periodicals be restricted to (i) the publications of national academies and similar institutions, (ii) important general scientific journals, and (iii) specialized journals not easily available elsewhere, while the system of exchange should be restricted to the journals which lay within this range. This is indeed very much the policy which has continued ever since, although with, necessarily, ever more stringent restrictions. The Committee then further recommended that a least £100 be spent annually on old and new ‘books of historical interest’ and that the Library should endeavour to acquire all the works of Fellows, by gift or by purchase.\(^{119}\) But five years later only six of the 1937 additions listed in the 1938 Year Book were purchases: four books and two historical journals, a low rate of purchase quite general in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the wake of this decision, the Committee decided (8 January 1934) to ask the Council for an increased grant for binding, to bring the books into good condition. It was estimated that £7000 would be required, while the Council felt able to vote only £1000; hence (3 July 1934, 20 November 1935) it was decided to sell incomplete runs of journals to which subscriptions had been discontinued. This realized slightly over £600 (22 April 1936) while many early copies of the Philosophical Transactions were found, which could also be sold. As a result, some 10 000 volumes were rebound at a cost of some £3000 and, as the Council was told, by 30 April 1936 current binding was no longer in serious arrears. Not only so, but now at last the Council had been brought to recognize the Library’s real needs. By 1937 (23 June) the Library Committee was informed that the Library budget was now to be £500 a year, of which £100 was to be for book purchases, £170 for periodical
subscriptions and £210 for binding, although in fact half the book allocation had, regrettably, to be used for binding.

Presumably as a result of the new policy and resultant increased use, the Library Committee (11 July 1935) decided that the Library should be kept open during the month of August when books might also be borrowed. More important was the fact that in this year the Assistant Secretary, Ronald Winckworth, professed himself too occupied with other Society business to attend to the needs of the Library. As a result Robinson was appointed Librarian, a post which was from then on to exist in its own right. However, Robinson was also expected to attend to the organization of Soirées, the Anniversary Dinner and, most time consuming of all, and still a responsibility of the Library staff, business involved in the election of Fellows. Like White before him, he had a deep knowledge of the contents of the Library acquired through cataloguing, and again like White, he had a kindly interest in readers, whether Fellows or the as yet rare scholars. To assist him for the next few years there was J.C. Graddon, appointed February 1932 as Library Assistant, to serve until 1938.

In 1937 the Archives began to receive more attention. There was even a proposal to film the manuscripts, but although the Librarian was asked to look into the possibility nothing was to come of the project for another 40 years. Otherwise, the Librarian’s report (23 June 1937) was encouraging, for a card catalogue of the manuscripts had been begun. Thanks to the generosity of Sir Arthur Church 17 collections of letters dated before 1800 had been cleaned, guarded and bound, over 21,000 letters in all. But this left virtually all the letters dated 1800–1900 still in parcels, never sorted or indexed, letters comprising the ordinary correspondence of the Society, the Sabine correspondence (Edward Sabine, 1788–1883; F.R.S. 1818, Treasurer 1850–1861 and President 1861–1871) and reports of referees of papers submitted after 1830. The Library Committee directed that further progress should be made as fast as possible. There had also been a modest interest in the acquisition of more manuscripts, especially letters: for example, the Library Committee learned at its meeting of 13 October 1937 of the purchase (for £18.10.0) of a collection of early nineteenth century letters by such Fellows as Wollaston, Davy and Faraday and of Sherrington’s presentation of a ‘scrap book’ as well as some letters and manuscripts by Fellows. In the next year (1938) the Library Committee for the first time discussed the possible publication of the correspondence of Isaac Newton, a project to make little progress until after the Second World War.

Some measure of the increased importance of history of science in the Society’s activities came coincidentally from a ‘suggestion that the Fellows should be kept more fully informed of the activities of the Society’ than had previously been the case. This resulted initially (1937) in the publication of Occasional Notices, to be followed in 1938 by a proper journal, Notes and Records of the Royal Society which included not only general information about Society affairs but also ‘information of historical interest’ not suitable for publication in either the Philosophical Transac-
This has over the years become a journal for articles dealing with the history of the Society and its Fellows with, since 1980, general information about the Society's affairs published in Royal Society News. The first issue of Notes and Records contained a number of short historical articles, notably a survey of the history of the Library by Sherrington, then Chairman of the Library Committee, in which he remarked that the Fellows were often familiar with only the small part of the Library which related to their particular scientific interests, and hence, he stressed, 'A particular care of the Library is the getting together of books bearing immediately on the history, internal and external, of the Society, both in the present and in the past.' To this end, as he twice pointed out, Fellows could contribute by presenting copies of their books on publication. This point was to be reiterated by chairmen over the years, for example at the meeting of the Library Committee on 4 April 1968 with the National Committee for the History of Science, Medicine and Technology. Sherrington also particularly mentioned one section of the Archives, the Society's valuable collection of manuscripts belonging to past Fellows, but without appealing for more, although, as noted above, he himself had presented a number of letters the previous year, as well as valuable early books from time to time. In this volume of Notes and Records the Library figures prominently: there is a record of the fact that the Society had become a member of the Library Association, the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux and a corporate member of the British Society for International Bibliography, all steps towards formalization and professionalization of the Library, while articles here and later by Robinson entitled 'Gleanings from the Library' emphasized the historical contents of the Library and helped to make its historical riches known to Fellows as well as to those few scholars, who, without being Fellows, were then fortunate enough to have access to Notes and Records, usually from holdings in libraries at home and abroad. In confirmation of the interests stressed by Sherrington, the Library Committee the next year (15 March 1939) determined to ask permission of the Council to spend an extra £50 on the purchase of manuscripts or books 'of special interest to the Society' and an attempt was made to negotiate the purchase of manuscripts of both Newton and Banks from booksellers offering them for sale. Moreover the existing Archives were, slowly, being improved: the early referees' reports had, during the previous year, been arranged, cleaned and bound, thanks to work by staff and money from the Church Fund.

With the outbreak of the Second World War the position of Burlington House in the centre of London's West End gave cause for alarm, and indeed the offices were temporarily evacuated to Trinity College, Cambridge, only to return at the end of March 1940. Before the end of 1939 the Archives, paintings and foreign academy publications were all removed to Wales and the Herefordshire border; the Library Committee at its meeting on 2 September 1941 also decided that printed books published before 1800 and sets of periodicals dating from before 1914 should be
removed, it was hoped to the Bodleian Library in Oxford, which did accept them. The Library thenceforward remained open only for relatively recent books and journals. Robinson went to Aberystwyth where the National Library of Wales sheltered the Archives and was able for six months to work quietly on the transcription of Newton letters for the projected publication of Newton’s correspondence. After this he was recalled to work on the Central Register, Scientific Section, compiled initially at the instigation of the Society but transferred to the Ministry of Labour during 1941. 128

Robinson returned to the Society in 1943 and by the next year the Library Committee, with E. N. da C. Andrade (F.R.S. 1935) now as Chairman, was meeting regularly and planning normally for the future. The two chief points of discussion were the future contents of the Library and the accommodation of an ever-increasing number of volumes, foreseen as providing a desperate situation when books and journals were returned from safe-keeping at the end of the war. The chief novelty was a decision to increase the Library’s holding of mathematical books, partly by accepting some part of the London Mathematical Society’s surviving store, partly by purchase of books and journals. 129 This naturally added to the perennial problem of shortage of shelf space; hence it was decided, after consultation with the Bodleian Library, to equip the basement of Burlington House with extensive shelving. The Library Committee during this period also proposed various plans for emphasizing history of science, varying from the recommendation that there be ‘a certain number of annual lectures of the History of Science’ to preparations for the Royal Society Tercentenary celebrations (2 May 1947) to the setting up of a ‘Newton Room’ (24 March 1944). Of these only the Tercentenary plans and those relating to the edition of the Newton Correspondence (published 1959–1977) were to continue. But it may have been these resolutions which prompted J.D. Griffith Davies, Assistant Secretary 1937–1946, to establish the Wilkins Lecture in 1947, a lecture on history of science given every three years.

During 1945 all books and periodicals were returned to Burlington House and shelved, an immensely greater task than it had been in 1873. With more books being purchased and with runs of journals ever increasing, shelf space was at a premium, the situation being only slightly eased by the gradual sale over the next few years of specialist journals and incomplete sets. Space continued to be short, especially now that policy dictated the purchase of history of science books and journals, while the Archives were growing by both donation and purchase. 130

In 1948 Robinson retired, an event to be marked by a tribute in the Library Committee minutes (10 February 1948) and commemorated in Notes and Records, the first time that staff had been specifically mentioned in the minutes or their departure officially noted, a tribute to Robinson’s work but also to the increasing importance which the Society was now and henceforward to give to the Library and Archives. He remained active in the Library, continuing his work of transcribing
Newton letters and assisting in the editing of them under the direction of the first editor, H.W. Turnbull, virtually until his death in 1960 as well as offering friendly advice to readers. The new Librarian was I. Kaye; he had come to the Society in 1939 and, after working on the Central Register during the wartime years became, first (1945–47) assistant to the Assistant Secretary and then (from 1947) Assistant Librarian. To his normal duties was added responsibility for all matters relating to the election of candidates to the Fellowship. Kaye was a correct and punctilious man who, although he had a quiet sense of humour, was normally extremely formal in his approach to readers, demanding that even staff seek permission to use the Library. Meanwhile, Robinson’s son, N.H. Robinson, had obtained a post in the Royal Society and, after Kaye’s appointment as Librarian, became Assistant Librarian in his stead, the two men sitting at desks facing one another in the anteroom to the main Library in Burlington House, with shelving behind them reaching to the ceiling. In the same year Andrade was given the title of Honorary Librarian in recognition of his interest in the Library, a post he held until 1971. Andrade spent much time in the Library, working on historical subjects, and continuing as Chairman of the Library Committee until 1970; his presence did not altogether please the Library staff on whom he kept a strict eye when present, insisting that readers—other than himself—should maintain silence. From 1961 to 1964 he received £30 a year travelling expenses from the Council (18 May 1961) in recognition of his work on behalf of the Library.

At the end of 1949 the increased importance being placed on the Archives was recognized in a very practical way thanks to a three-year grant from the Pilgrim Trust, a grant sought at the urging of the Tercentenary Celebrations subcommittee, appointed in 1947. This resulted in the appointment of an Archivist, not yet so called, the reason for the appointment having been the dismay with which the members of the subcommittee saw the disarray of the Society’s manuscript collections. The man appointed was R.K. Bluhm, who spent nearly a dozen years sorting, collating, calendaring and describing various collections, in the course of which work he acquired professional library qualifications. Bluhm’s ‘pilot catalogue’ of the Archives was approved by the Library Committee in 1951 (5 July) and he was urged to complete it, now that the Archives were in place and rehoused. In the same year he assisted the rest of the Library staff in mounting an Isaac Newton exhibition (August 1951), which called attention to some of the archival sources available, while in succeeding years the displays at Conversaziones (always partly held in the Library) nearly always contained some historical exhibits. For example in 1965 the June Conversazione was partly designed to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Philosophical Transactions with a display mounted by Andrade and the Library staff. During these years the Library Committee continued to confirm its belief that historical works should be given priority in book purchase, now increased over that of previous decades; as if to emphasize this, in 1952 (Vol.
Notes and Records began publishing annually a "Bibliography of recent Books and Articles dealing with the History of the Royal Society or its Fellows". This continued until 1979 (Vol. 33), compiled by N.H. Robinson, who rapidly became involved in all activities concerned with the history of the Society, of which he developed an extensive knowledge.

By the later 1950s it had been resolved that the Library should openly welcome scholars pursuing research on historical subjects relating to the Society's holdings of books and manuscripts, whereas previously, as noted above, such scholars had worked in the Library only with the formal permission of the Council and few, especially those from overseas, had known of the possibility or the procedure. During this decade there arose the perennial problem of out-of-date catalogues of books and periodicals, as so often in the past; they were now brought up to date as far as possible, although severe overcrowding meant that new acquisitions had to be housed where they could be fitted in, not where they logically belonged. As a result, in 1954 the Library Committee selected a number of books housed in the so-called Map Room for possible sale and with the Council's concurrence they were sold the next year (1 July 1955) for £505. By then further 'redundant books and journals' had been identified, some 'of particular American interest', and these were later (26 June 1956) sold to a New York dealer for almost £1250. Since conditions continued to be difficult the Librarian suggested in 1964 (30 June) that some books then in the top gallery on the West side of the main Library room be stored elsewhere as a temporary measure, a suggestion approved by the Library Committee. The Archives presented even more of a problem as they too continued to grow, although slowly. Manuscripts were stored in the basement, the more valuable in the Officers' rooms—the numerous volumes of the Boyle Papers were kept in the President's office—and wherever space could be found, while the Archivist had to work in the basement. Bluhm left the post of Archivist in 1960 to be succeeded by L.P. Townsend, also a trained Librarian who later succeeded N.H. Robinson as Assistant Librarian; he worked in the basement with the Archives he was charged with sorting and cataloguing. But however much the staff and the books were overcrowded, readers were not: the Library's half a dozen tables were seldom all occupied, even in the days when H.W. Robinson was transcribing Newton and Andrade was occupying a table on the other side. The room itself was lofty and spacious and remote from traffic noises, since it looked out only over the Burlington House courtyard where blackbirds sometimes sang and parking was not great, while the aged and slow-moving duster of books (Harold Whitehouse) was usually proceeding around the overhead stacks and gallery almost soundlessly and with frequent rests. There was little sense for readers of active contact with the busy world of the Society or the outside world of London.

Fortunately for the Library's problems of overcrowding, the Society's growing staff was also grossly overcrowded. Consequently, after the normal Council discus-
sions and planning, the Society left Burlington House, whose east wing it had occupied for 94 years, moving in April 1967 to its present Carlton House Terrace site. Here the Library had two spacious reading rooms on the first floor, with more room for readers and for display of current periodicals, and large semi-basement and basement areas for book stacks, journal stacks and Archives. There were also rooms for staff; separate offices for the Librarian and, initially, for the Assistant Librarian, and a room for other staff and a secretary, while the Archivist could come up into daylight. A duty librarian was now always in attendance in the main reading room, although it was some 20 years before the librarian on duty was provided with a telephone. Since the Librarian and his staff in any case faced the daunting task of shelving afresh all the books, it was decided that they should be reclassified and arranged under new broad subject headings. This was a major task, involving the examination of every book to determine its rightful place under the new system of classification and the alteration of every entry in the main catalogue to reflect the changes. As a result of this rationalization, it was decided that what was then required was no less than a complete recataloguing of all the books to more detailed and uniform standards. An increase in staff was clearly essential and in 1968 the Society advertised for a cataloguing assistant who was to be a trained librarian who ‘must be able to type own catalogue cards’. As a result, A.J. Clark took up his duties on 6 January 1969, to remain in the Library into the 1990s, in the same manner as A.H. White and H.W. Robinson in their time, rising to the renamed position of Deputy Librarian (1982) with special concern for the acquisition and cataloguing of books. The reclassification of existing stock, with the Dewey Decimal system applied to all scientific books published after 1949, was completed by 1972, after which complete recataloguing was begun, to proceed steadily alongside the regular work of the Library.

The rearrangement and reclassification emphasized the historical slant of the Library, and books on historical subjects, biographies and works belonging to the early period of the Society’s existence were shelved in the reading rooms, along with reference works. The increased historical policy of the Library was further emphasized at the joint meeting of the Library Committee and the British National Committee for the History of Science, Medicine and Technology on 28 February 1968, designed to consider Library policy in these fields. The Librarian was then in favour of reducing the number of mathematical and physical journals, retaining the journals of national academies and similar bodies and increasing the holdings in historical subjects relating to the Society’s interests. It was agreed (4 April 1968) that this should be a recommendation to the Council if more money could be provided or if other libraries could supply the Society’s Library with their duplicates and that philosophy of science should be included. The Council, considering these proposals (17 July 1969), reported that, with the agreement of the Department of Education and Science, money from the Library Assistance Grant-in-Aid (about
£3000 in all) could and should be used to support history of science, partly for the
Library’s use—purchase of books and periodicals and employment of a new staff
member—and partly for grants for research in history of science to be carried out in
the Library of the Royal Society or in the libraries of other societies. In 1970 there
was a profitable sale of unwanted periodicals which established a Library Fund.
This, after 1975, was used one third for the preservation of manuscripts, one third
for purchase of history of science books published before 1900 and one third in
binding.136

Early in 1972 Kaye retired, to be naturally and happily succeeded by his Assistant
Librarian, N.H. Robinson, who had since 1948 worked half time on the card
catalogues and half time on other Society business, working with Kaye on candidates
for the Fellowship, and also on Notes and Records and on various committees.
Robinson continued the process, which he had long encouraged as much as he could,
of bringing the Library up to date in line with modern library practice: thus he had
(1967) instituted the use of the Dewey Decimal system of classification; he had
begun the International Relations Library; and later managed to increase staff, badly
needed because when Kaye retired no new junior member of staff was added, so
that the appointment of Clark as cataloguing assistant in 1969 was then effectively
cancelled as far as staffing level was concerned. Subsequently he instituted the
publication of a biannual booklet ‘Additions to the Library’ and in the 1980s
recognized the importance of linking the Library to certain available computer bases.
Thanks to Norman Robinson’s keen interest in the Society’s history and the welcome
he always extended to readers the Library became a more relaxed place in which to
work than it had been in the past—and, incidentally, a more colourful one inasmuch
as dust jackets, previously always discarded, were now retained on newly-acquired
books. The increase in staff was all the more urgently needed because of an
ever-increasing demand on staff time required for replying to queries, whether
personal, telephonic or written. Before he retired Kaye had told the Library Com­
mittee (1 March 1972) that whereas 20 years earlier the number of inquiries about
the Archives was no more than two or three a month, it had increased to that many
a day, while the Archives were growing so rapidly that he ‘believe[d] that
in 25 years’ time we shall possess an archive with a library not the reverse way round
as before’. This demand was to continue, while the scope of the inquiries widened.

In his first report to the Library Committee (29 November 1972) Robinson
mentioned more demands for borrowing books, partly as a result of sending out the
List of Additions, as well as an increasing use of microfilms in response to numerous
requests; microfilm, although demanding of staff time, saved overuse of the manu­
scripts and space for readers. Additions of books and manuscripts, however, required
the expenditure of more money for purchase and for binding, while a new catalogue
was urgently needed. In 1977 (16 February) he reported to the Library Committee
an unexpected proposal for the printing of a new book catalogue as a photographic
reproduction of the revised current card catalogue it would replace, together with a catalogue of manuscripts, both suggested by an American firm. It was agreed that this would be highly desirable, although, as the Librarian said, completion of catalogues to a deadline for printing would necessitate more staff; it was reckoned that with a temporary full-time assistant the book catalogue, begun in 1972, could be completed in 15 months. A year later (22 March 1978) the Committee was told that an assistant had been employed since 14 November 1977 and Clark had been released from regular Library duties to concentrate on the recataloguing, of which he had previously done about one third. Revision was reported as virtually complete by 12 January 1981, although in fact it continued to Anniversary Day, 30 November 1981. Production then began, to result in the five-volume *Book Catalogue of the Library of the Royal Society*, published in 1982 by University Publications of America. This was a notable work, to which even Panizzi would have given approval, although one which, inevitably, almost immediately required supplementing with a card catalogue of books acquired since November 1981. Less than ten years later computerization began to overtake even this catalogue and by 1988 it was clear that a task for the 1990s would be complete computerization. The plan for a printed manuscript catalogue was left to await full cataloguing of the Archive on cards.

By 1981, in addition to its traditional and primary role of providing valuable source material for historians of science, and information on past and present Fellows and Foreign Members, the Librarian was increasingly being asked to provide information and to acquire documents to support the Society’s growing involvement in science policy, both national and international. A collection of the publications of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) and of bodies related to it had been instituted in 1959, and from 1962 the Society published a quarterly *Bulletin of the Royal Society International Scientific Information Services* which incorporated lists of additions to this collection. The *Bulletin* ceased in 1974, but the Library continued to acquire ICSU-related publications.

A collection of science policy documents and a related current awareness information service was started in 1981 by Sally Grover, the first qualified woman librarian to join the staff of the Library. The collection of documents comprises UK official publications, relevant items published by independent bodies, European Community publications and overseas government and international organizations’ publications, as well as ephemeral documents, such as press releases. The collection is used extensively by the Officers and staff of the Society, and a monthly listing, *Science Policy Information*, is circulated not only to Officers and staff, but also to a growing number of interested people outside the Society. Most recently the current awareness service has included access to external on-line databases.

In 1982 Robinson reminded the Library Committee (22 July) that Library funds had not been increased since 1972/73 and urged the Committee to recommend to
the Council a doubling of the Library's allocation of funds. The Council approved this demand, but failed to take account of inflation or the fact that the increase was largely devoured by the backlog of purchases required. The situation was however considerably and fortunately relieved in 1984 by a grant from the EPA Cephalosporin Fund, a grant so generous that it provided money to clear this backlog, to rebind oversize books, to enter the cards of the post-1981 Library Book Catalogue on the Society's computer and to leave over half to be added to the Special Library Capital Fund. A further sum (over £7000) was gained in 1987 and 1988 by the sale at auction of duplicate books, listed in the Library Committee minutes of 4 March 1988.

In 1983 (7 September) the Librarian told the Library Committee that in his opinion the Library was undervalued by Fellows. It was true that it was increasingly used by historians of science who were demanding on the time of the staff but were always welcome. Even more demanding were outside queries, as had long been the case; it was now reckoned that there were five or six inquiries by post every day and an equal number by telephone, many requiring considerable staff time and effort. This demand continued to grow in future years, so much so that the Library Committee was told in 1989 (27 September) that enquiries then averaged about 100 a week, the peak month being November. The Library was also increasingly used by the Society's staff to consult the growing reference and science policy collections, to read journals and newspapers, or even to find a quiet place in which to work. All this was excellent, but after all the Library belonged principally to the Fellows, and it was felt that they should be encouraged to utilize its resources. The Chairman, Professor Patricia H. Clarke, agreed to do this in various ways.

The increase in the number of scholars working on historical subjects in the Library was matched and partly caused by the very great expansion of the Archives after 1945, as Kaye had noted in 1972. There were many new collections of correspondence by and to former Fellows, mostly by donation but some by purchase. To readers this meant a rich new mine of historical sources, but to the Library staff it meant a major problem of cataloguing and arranging. This was relieved in the case of papers belonging to modern scientists by the assistance of the Contemporary Scientific Archives Centre in Oxford and its successor, the National Cataloguing Unit for the Archives of Contemporary Scientists in Bath. In 1985 the Society was approached by University Publications of America seeking permission to microfilm the early administrative Archives. It was decided (Library Committee minutes 3, 15 April, 27 November 1985, Council Minutes 16 January 1986) that this firm, which had produced the Book Catalogue, might microfilm for publication the Journal Books for the period 1660–1800, the Council Minutes 1668–1880 and the Miscellaneous Manuscripts, these latter a treasure-trove of possibilities, filed in order of receipt. This work was to be followed later by the Early Letters, the Classified Papers, the Letters and Papers of Sir John Herschel (25 February 1987).
and those of Robert Boyle. This was a profitable venture for the Society and again saved the manuscripts from overuse, besides making the material available to scholars not able to come to the Society’s rooms.

The state of the ever-growing Archives aroused alarm in 1985, and consideration, as so often in the past, was urgently needed. This was no longer the result of sheer neglect, but from a combination of shortage of staff and of new understanding in the field of conservation, demanding an environment for storage far exceeding anything in the past. Robinson sought advice from a conservator, Alan Howell, who had been working on the conservation of manuscripts for some of the learned societies in Burlington House. Howell made a preliminary inspection of the Archives in March 1985 which was reported to the Library Committee (15 April 1985). The Committee recommended a full survey which was carried out during the summer. Meanwhile the Council had invited the Chairman, Professor Clarke, to lead a Working Group on Archives Policy. The terms of reference of the Group were:

To formulate an archival policy for the Society in the future with reference to its current acquisition and filing policy, its need for the conduct of good business, and its responsibilities to future historians of science, and to report to the Officers of the Society.

At the next meeting (19 November 1985) the Committee was informed about the Working Group and received Howell’s report. The report stressed that numerous changes were needed, not only for rehousing and cleaning the manuscripts, but for drastic improvement of the rooms in which they were stored, with respect to air conditioning, lighting and dust-proofing. It was decided to recommend to the Council that Howell’s advice should be accepted, and that a trained Archivist should be appointed to oversee the immediate conservation work, and to ensure that the Archives continued to be properly maintained. The Council accepted these recommendations on 27 November 1985.

These improvements were necessarily a long-term project for the next decade. Keith Moore, a qualified Archivist, was appointed quickly (2 April 1986) and cleaning, conservation, and rehousing of the manuscripts in acid-free containers was commenced. The Working Group felt that it was most important that steps be taken ‘to preserve the Society’s Archives as an element of national cultural scientific heritage and to ensure that the maximum benefit is gained from the Archives by historians of science, by the wider scientific community and by the Society itself’. This was perhaps the first time that the Society, in considering its Archives, had looked to the future and had been forced to formulate a policy in respect of the Society’s ‘Books’ and administrative records.

The Archives Working Group met six times between April 1986 and submitted its report to the Council in May 1988. All its major recommendations were accepted, the most important being that the construction of a new Archive Room should start at an early date. Construction started early in 1989 and was completed about 18
months later. Although the disruption to the Library storage areas was considerable, during these months the staff still managed to achieve a near normal service for users of the Library.

In 1988 N.H. Robinson retired and in his place Sheila Edwards was appointed Head of Library and Information Services. This title reflects the growing place of technology in Library affairs, as well as the demands of the Society for access to information relating to current scientific affairs, both national and international, demands increasing steadily at the end of the century, reflecting the increasingly active and important role of the Society in promoting science in the United Kingdom, and close relations with scientists world wide. As had happened so often in the past, the new Librarian rapidly absorbed the special atmosphere of the Royal Society Library and developed a keen interest in its history and that of the Society. With the support of the Library Committee history of science has retained its paramount place in library development. Under Sheila Edwards the Library maintains the tradition established under her predecessor of a warm and cheerful welcome given to readers, while acquiring more formal and conventional library procedure. She was to oversee the completion of the new Archive Room, planned under Robinson, and the rehousing of the Archives. She also formulated a five-year Library Development Plan (presented to the Library Committee 19 October 1988) which clearly indicated the roles of each of the then five members of staff, a Library Disaster Plan and (27 September 1989) a Library Acquisition Plan which was mainly concerned with the problem of journal shelving space. There were (1990) proposals for easier access for readers to the Archives by means of the compilation of a revised guide to the Archives, plans for a new catalogue of journals based on computerized records and for the book catalogue also to be computerized and kept up to date. At the same time the number of readers and even more the number of those seeking information by post, telephone, fax or in person increased enormously. The Library in 1990 was a far busier place than in the past.

As Fellows, staff and outsiders who use the Royal Society’s Library agree, it has for many years been unique among libraries. As the library of a Society, it belongs to the Fellows. As the library of a national institution, it has wider responsibilities. Even when entry for scholars was strictly regulated they were, when admitted, treated with extraordinary generosity and the quickest possible service. The tradition of friendly staff assistance has survived into the age of computerization and there is fortunately no reason to think that it will ever be lost.
LIBRARIANS

1678/9–1696 William Perry (c 1650–1696) Library Keeper
1696–1713 Henry Hunt (1667–1713) Library Keeper
1713–1723 Alban Thomas (c 1686–1771) Library Keeper*
1723–1763 Francis Hauksbee (1687–1763) Library Keeper*
1763–1767 Emanuel Mendes da Costa (1717–1791) Library Keeper*
1767–1776 John Robertson (1712–1776) Library Keeper*
1776–1785 John Robertson the Younger Library Keeper*
1785–1810 Jonas Dryander (1748–1810) Librarian
1810–1826 Stephen Lee (1777–1835) Librarian†
1826–1835 James Hudson (1804–1859) Assistant Secretary
1835–1843 William Edward Shuckard (1802–1868) Librarian
1843–1861 Charles Richard Weld (1813–1869) Librarian‡
1844–1861 Walter White (1811–1893) Clerk/Clerk§
1861–1879 Henry Benjamin Wheatley (1847–1917) Librarian\†
1861–1885 Walter White Librarian\†
1879–1885 Herbert Rix (1850–1906) Assistant to Librarian/Clerk
1885–1897 Herbert Rix Librarian\†
1886–1930 Alfred George Hastings White (1859–1945) Assistant Librarian
1897–1920 Robert William Frederick Harrison (1858–1945) Librarian‡
1920–1921 Edwin Deller (later Sir Edwin) (1883–1936) Librarian‡
1921–1932 Francis Alexander Towle (1874–1932) Librarian‡
1930–1935 Henry William Robinson Assistant Librarian
1930–1945 Alfred George Hastings White Consulting Librarian
1932–1935 Ronald Winckworth (1884–1950) Librarian‡
1932–1938 John Courtney Graddock Library Assistant
1935–1948 Henry William Robinson Librarian
1948–1972 Norman Henry Robinson Assistant Librarian
1950–1960 Robin Kenneth Bluhm Archivist
1960–1972 Leslie Patrick Townsend Archivist
1969–1982 Alan James Clark Cataloguing & Library Assistant
1972–1988 Norman Henry Robinson Librarian
1972–1982 Leslie Patrick Townsend Assistant Librarian
1982– Alan James Clark Deputy Librarian
1986–1991 Keith Moore Archivist
1988– Sheila Marion Edwards Librarian
1991– Mary Eileen Sampson Archivist

* Also Clerk, Keeper of the Repository and Housekeeper
† Also Clerk and Housekeeper, after 1823 Assistant Secretary
‡ Also Assistant Secretary
§ Acting as Assistant Librarian
A NOTE ON SOURCES

The Royal Society kept careful records from its inception. These ‘Books’—Journal Books (minutes of meetings), Council Minutes (after 1662) and Register Books (copies of significant papers read to the meetings)—were in bound volumes; in the eighteenth century copies of the minutes were made to be kept by successive Presidents for their own use. In 1830 it was decided that the Council Minutes should be printed—and indeed initially no other minutes were preserved—while all papers read to the Society should be printed either in the Philosophical Transactions or, either in full or in abstract, in Proceedings. These in effect replaced the Journal Books, since the Proceedings between 1830 and 1896 (Vols 3-60) contained general information about the Society; from 1897 this information was transferred to the Year-Book.

Committees, appointed at intervals since 1661, were supposed to keep minutes and to report to the Council (after 1662); many such reports, although not all, survive in the Archives. From the beginning, in addition, incoming letters were generally kept—bound into guardbooks in the nineteenth century, alphabetically by writer—and those judged important were usually copied into bound Letter Books until 1740, sometimes with the Secretary’s replies. Later Secretaries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries often retained many letters in their own hands, regrettably. For the nineteenth century incoming letters were gathered chronologically into 17 volumes of Miscellaneous Correspondence (MS MC) and outgoing letters by Officers into the Presidents’ Letter Books (MS 425–7), 1830–1885, and New Letter Books (MS NLB 1–74), 1885–1931.

NOTES

1 Unless otherwise specified, this section is based upon the minutes of the meetings until the granting of the First Charter in 1662, and after that on the Journal Books and Council Minutes, all as conveniently available in Thomas Birch, *The History of the Royal Society*, 4 vols (London, 1756–7), facsimile reprint ed. A.R. Hall (New York and London, 1968) which contains a few additional minutes. (Birch was a Secretary from 1752 to 1765, F.R.S. 1735.) For the period after 1687, where Birch stopped, I have used the Council Minutes in the eighteenth-century copy prepared for the use of successive Presidents.

2 It contained books given to earlier members of the family, books collected in his travels by the Duke of Norfolk’s father, many purchased in Germany, some from a royal Hungarian library; Evelyn gave a summary of the contents in his *Diary* under the date 29 August 1678. It was later reckoned to consist of about 2700 printed books and 570 manuscripts.


4 On 20 November 1676 the Council authorized the purchase of two books by Dr Marcus Meibom published in 1655 and 1671, the latter edition reviewed soon after publication by Henry Oldenburg (Secretary 1662–77) in his *Philosophical Transactions* 6, 307, 1–4.

5 He was appointed Professor of Music at Gresham College in August 1681. According to John Ward, *Lives of the Professors of Gresham College* (London, 1760), 'he is thought to have hastened [his death] by an improper use of cold bathing, when under a scorbutic disorder'.

6 That is, *Historia Piscium* (Oxford, 1686) by Francis Willughby and John Ray, published by the Royal Society, which lost a considerable sum of money as a result. By 1684 there were over 600 books which had been donated or purchased. In November 1694 the Society bought for the Library the latest publications of the Académie Royale des Sciences, for £7.12.0.

7 At various times (25 November 1696, 28 November 1698, 11 and 25 January 1698/9, 8 February 1709/10, 17 June 1710) the Council gave Hunt specific orders about keeping a register book for books borrowed, about recalling books after six weeks, about replacing any lost, and so on, while (8 February 1709/10) Newton as President proposed that the original letters and papers of the Society should be pasted ‘into a Book with Guards’, which Hunt was to do. The Repository was the Society’s collection of rarities, all donated, catalogued by Nehemiah Grew when Secretary in *Musaeum Regalis Societatis* (London, 1681). They were later (1779, 1781) given to the British Museum. Although a paid employee, Hunt was able to make a series of loans to the Society in the years 1710–12, a total of £650 in all, at a time when its finances were in difficulties. It is not clear that the Society was ever able to repay this amount. See *Notes and Records* 4 (1946), 196–7.

8 Dr John Thorpe (F.R.S 1705) had been appointed Clerk in 1707, when he resigned his Fellowship, as specified in the Statutes, to be reinstated when he resigned the Clerkship in 1713 to practise medicine. The most useful secondary source for the 18th and early 19th centuries is C.R. Weld, *A History of the Royal Society*, 2 vols (London, 1848).
They were promptly bought back. Stray books and manuscripts belonging to the Society had not infrequently turned up in this way, most understandably after Hooke's death.

12 May 1726. This suggestion led to the continuation of the run of the Mémoires of the Académie Royale des Sciences in the original Paris, not the reprinted Amsterdam edition, the Journal des Scavans to be brought up to date and continued, and a complete set of the Giornale de' Letterati to be purchased and continued. On 4 July 1750 the President reported that the Society had received 69 volumes of the works of the Académie, on which duty of £3.1.4 had to be paid, and a set of 'treatises' from the Swedish Academy. The President sent his own set of the Philosophical Transactions to Paris in return, after the Council had agreed to purchase a set for the purpose.

The purpose was to secure the records against loss. The President was always to keep the copies, passing them on to his successor as quickly as possible.

Council Minutes for 3, 17 July, 6 November and 11 December 1729.

Stack was paid nearly £150 for copying and indexing over the next five years at varying rates (in 1734 at a guinea a week) while Hauksbee also was paid for copying, his last bill being presented on 12 July 1742. It was later found that Richard Waller (Secretary 1687-1709) had indexed all the 'Books' of the Society to 1695; this 'Generall Index' and its copy are now (1992) kept with the Journal Books.

In the Council Minutes for 12 November 1739 is the following list:

126 copies Willughby's Historia Piscium of 1681, to be offered at 1/5/0 ('cuts' only at 10/6)
60 copies Malpighi's Opera Posthuma of 1697, 4 shillings
38 copies Wallis's Algebra (1685) 10 shillings
25 copies Ray's Historia insectorum (1710), 4 shillings
41 copies Baker's Geometrical Key: or the Gate of Equations Unlocked (of 1684) 2/6
5 copies 'Collins's Commercium Epistolicum' (1722) to be kept for presents.

On 22 December 1742 the Council discussed the sale of some books (probably the unsold copies of the above) and it was agreed that they be offered to a bookseller for 70 guineas.

E.g. those of Collins, used by Newton for the Commercium Epistolicum, as noted on 4 February 1741/2.

It has not been possible to determine who this was, but perhaps the President (Folkes) himself, since he took a very active interest in the Library. The Committee's report makes it plain that there was much room for rationalization: although the members approved the preservation of all original letters and papers, including rough minutes of meetings, it suggested that it was not necessary to copy into the Letter Book papers which were printed in the Philosophical Transactions. It ordered the binding up of all originals and copies intended for preservation as duplicates, saw to the copying and binding in five volumes of letters by writers with names beginning A to L as a Supplement to the Letter Books: these were early letters not previously entered, a valuable addition as some of the originals have since been lost, but unfortunately not continued to the end of the alphabet, with a duplicate oddly running only from A to H. The Committee noted the existence of a general index to all the Society's 'Books' made by Waller up to 1695 (see note 13), of which there was a copy to 1689.
Later this manuscript catalogue was always attributed to Folkes himself.

In 1756 the Society spent nine guineas in the purchase of catalogues of manuscripts and printed books in the French Royal Library which were sold along with Folkes’s library (he had died in 1754), as noted in the minutes of 19 February and 26 March.

For details of da Costa’s life, see the Dictionary of National Biography. The other applicants knew mathematics, the physical sciences and scientific instruments, the best known to history being James Ferguson who had already published four books based upon his lectures and was to publish half a dozen more, all popular. Evidently the office of Clerk, not yet a full-time position, was a reasonably prestigious one; possibly also the career of scientific lecturer was not all that lucrative or secure. Ferguson was well known in the Society, having lectured to it under the patronage of Folkes and was to become F.R.S. in 1763, but his only language was English and he knew no natural history—a requisite for the Keeper of the Repository.

According to da Costa in a letter dated 15 September 1763 (MS. 783.63). By this time the inspection had been completed. From internal evidence the letter was probably to the Treasurer, James West (1704?-72; F.R.S. 1727, President 1768-1772). He was an antiquary with a keen interest in manuscripts and rare books.

The first mention of da Costa’s peculations was on 3 December 1767; they were further discussed on 11, 14, 16, 17 and 18 December 1767, 28 January 1768 and 7 July 1768, when the Council was informed that the Society could sue da Costa for the £492 thought to be the excess over and above the £1000 for which his guarantors, to their dismay, were liable. He was sued, resulting in his imprisonment for debt for five years, during which he was, curiously, said to have supported himself by writing and lecturing.

4 January 1768; on 7 January it was voted to repeal the old Statutes and enact new ones.

He was of course obliged to resign his Fellowship on appointment as Clerk. In 1767 he was unemployed, having been dismissed from his post at Portsmouth through, as he presumably claimed, a cabal and intrigues against him (Dictionary of National Biography). Curiously, having applied on 24 December 1767, he withdrew on 4 January 1768, saying that he thought that the Council had already decided on what would now be called an internal candidate, but obviously this withdrawal was overlooked as he was appointed Librarian on 7 January 1768, having already been elected Clerk by the Society.

He was to lend no book without ‘Orders of the Society or Council, nor any manuscript without a Bond in such penalty, as the Society or Council shall direct’, and all books and manuscripts were to be called in ‘every 6 weeks’, cases of non-compliance to be made known to the Society or Council.

As usual, the Inspectors were chosen for their knowledge of, or interest in books and manuscripts. Their report is in MS. 389, along with a few later reports. They were at this time diligent, meeting on 2 February, 29 March, 12 and 25 April and 23 June 1768. The corrected catalogue of the Norfolk Library they ordered was made by Robertson, who numbered the manuscripts as revealed in an interleaved copy of the original catalogue still in the Library. This was further amended in the 1790s by either Gilpin or Dryander.

The Society possessed two houses in Crane Court and up to this point certainly occupied only one; there may at this time have been some building, for certainly (2 May 1771) the
Council authorized payment to a builder of some £405, and a week later the extension of water from the New River for what is called 'the new added house'.

27 Jones (1675-1749) edited several mathematical tracts by Newton and collected a large number of manuscripts relating to seventeenth-century mathematicians in general and Newton in particular. He bequeathed them to his patron, the Earl of Macclesfield. Very many were published in *Correspondence of Scientific Men of the Seventeenth Century* in 1851 by S.J. Rigaud, building on the work of his father, S.P. Rigaud (F.R.S. 1805).

28 The report of the Inspectors is in MS MM 4.26.

29 The report is MS MM 4.27.

30 As before, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Thursdays (meeting days) from 4 to 5 p.m.

31 MS MM 14.148.

32 The report of 16 March 1780 merely records that the Librarian’s account of books borrowed and returned had been ‘examined’.

33 When the British Museum accepted the valuable addition to its own collection. A list of objects not transferred may be found in *The Record of the Royal Society*, 4th edition (London, 1940), pp. 165-6.

34 According to Weld (see note 8) the move was made in 1780 and certainly the Anniversary Meeting of 1780 was held there, although the rooms were not formally handed over to the Society until 15 February 1781.

35 It is said that the resignation of his predecessor and the election of Banks was the result of Royal influence, George III having been much displeased at the Royal Society’s backing for pointed lightning conductors, as recommended by the American rebel Benjamin Franklin, rather than blunt-ended ones. Certainly Banks had enjoyed much Royal favour since his return from taking part in James Cook’s voyage around the world 1768-71 and was to be made a baronet in 1781. Banks’s interest in natural history as well as his role as scientific patron and his international reputation greatly influenced the Royal Society in the long period of his Presidency (1778-1820). For the 19th century portion see M.B. Hall, *All Scientists Now* (Cambridge, 1984), Chapter 1.

36 Dryander succeeded in this post his fellow-countryman Daniel Carl Solander (1733-82) who was a friend and colleague of Banks and was with him on Cook’s voyage; he had become F.R.S. 1764 and from 1763 had held a post at the British Museum. He is remembered in the library world as the inventor of Solander cases. Dryander was never F.R.S. but was an original Fellow, together with Banks, of the Linnean Society, and its first librarian.

37 He was ‘rewarded’ with 25 guineas (25 April 1782), the removal itself having cost £19 (7 February 1782).


39 By Lister, Grisley and Marsigli. Four years later (28 January 1790) he wanted a duplicate—unspecified—in exchange for a work by Linnaeus and several other books.

40 All by Linnaeus.
The correspondence between Jones and Banks was read to the Council on 14 May 1975. See MS MM. 3.45–6.

The Jones catalogue, compiled by Charles Wilkins (F.R.S. 1788), was printed in two instalments, in *Phil.Trans* 88 (1798), 582–593; 89 (1799), 335–342.

John Barrow, *Sketches of the Royal Society and Royal Society Club* (London, 1849), p. 5. Conversaziones in Banks’s time, as in Pringle’s before him and Davy’s later, were private affairs held in their respective houses. The regular meetings only lasted for an hour, when a paper was read by one of the Secretaries and no discussion or comment was permitted.

Gilpin left a large family, and as he had been a faithful servant of the Society the Council at first thought of appointing his eldest son to succeed him (10 May) but finding that the young man was settled as a clerk in the Navy Office and the second son had only just left school, decided to give Mrs Gilpin £100 a year ‘for the time being’ and continued to do so until her death in 1827, when a final £50 was paid to her daughters (6 November). In 1822 the Council voted £25 to Mrs Ann Coppard, although Coppard had been only a minor employee in the time of the younger Robertson.

Minutes in CMB 1.89–91. William Nicol, bookseller, of 58 Pall Mall, and printer to George III, was consulted and ultimately printed the *Catalogue* in 1825. The Committee suggested the names of H. Tross and J. Payne on 21 June as suitable compilers.

It was decided (15 December 1825) that Lee’s letter to the Council should not be entered into the minutes ‘in consequence of the offensive expressions which it contains’. Although his letter of resignation (MS DM 2.110 and see also DM 2.94–109) was only read to the Council on 6 April 1826, it was clearly expected some weeks earlier. Lee, who had perforce resigned his Fellowship on his appointment, was never reinstated as a Fellow.

As a result of Statute revision that spring (see especially the minutes for 20 March) the Assistant Secretary was to be appointed by the Council, whereas the Clerk had been appointed by the Society at large. As Assistant Secretary, Hudson was also Librarian and presumably Housekeeper and very much the servant of the Council, whose permission he had to ask when he wished to marry. This was a least partly so that the Council could make it clear that his widow would have no claim on the Society, partly so that she could be inspected to ascertain if she could act as Housekeeper. Hudson’s previous career has not been traced, but he apparently had some knowledge of the physical sciences. He was young at this time, being 55 at his death in 1859, when he had served for 20 years as first Secretary of the Royal Agricultural Society.

By the Library Committee of 18 June. See also MS CMB 47c, meeting of 14 June 1872. But in fact the British Museum met at least part of the value of the manuscripts by exchange; some of the books were found to be duplicates or not wanted by the Society, so the Library Committee was authorized to sell them to assist in the purchase of useful scientific books (12 April 1832).

Misunderstanding the nature of the Institut de France and the place in it of the Académie des Sciences, and admiring Napoleon’s relations with scientists during the period in which he grew up, Babbage (b. 1792) professed to believe that the Royal Society’s proud independence of Government was an evil which lowered the prestige of science in England.
Since the Society advised the Government to pay for the construction of Babbage's first difference engine (calculating machine) to the tune, in the end, of £17,000, an enormous sum in those days, this attitude was, to say the least, ungenerous. For more detail, see Hall, *All Scientists Now* (note 35), pp. 45–51.

51 *Decline of Science*, p. x, footnote.
52 See *All Scientists Now* (note 35), pp. 52–62; in 1827 Gilbert had similarly intrigued in an attempt to secure Robert Peel as President (*ibid.*, pp. 32–7).
53 His supporters were inept at canvassing and organizing, being over-confident.
54 On 28 July 1831 the Arundel Committee recommended scientific books only, with none on voyages and travel. The Council heard details of possible booksellers both foreign and English, while a subcommittee was appointed for choosing titles. The catalogue was made by a Mr Mackenzie, probably Charles Mackenzie, F.R.S. 1815, who was paid £10 for the catalogue and on 7 June 1832 a further £15 and had his Fellowship reinstated. (Letter Book 425.136, 142.)

55 The Treasurer was J.W. Lubbock (1803–65), a Cambridge mathematician and son of a wealthy banker. All changes relating to the Library were summarized in the Council’s report to the Society at the Anniversary Meeting (Proc. 3, 87 (30 November 1831)), when it was announced that the Library would be enlarged and open longer hours.
57 Minutes for 16 July, 19 September, 3, 16, 31 October 1831 are to be found in MS CMB 1, 256–64, supplemented by the Committee’s reports to the Council (now in the printed Council Minutes) for October and November 1832 and in MS CMB 47a, which contains the Committee Minutes for 1832 and 1833. Subsequent Committee Minutes for the rest of the century are in CMB 47b. The President’s Letter Book for the years 1830–40 (MS LB. 425.236) contains copies of outgoing letters which indicate (13 October 1832) that the Council consulted the Society’s legal adviser (Few) as to the legality of disposing of Norfolk books by sale.
58 Cf. MS CMB 1 under 19 September 1832.
59 Library Committee Minutes for 31 October 1832 (CMB 1); the Committee thought that Robertson would have to serve in this way without extra pay, but the Council (8 November 1832) decided in response to a further plea from Panizzi to award Robertson £10 for his work in the previous summer and agreed to his continuing to assist Panizzi. MS CMB 47a contains a summary of the minutes in CMB 1 with excerpts from relevant Council Minutes (as printed) continued in CMB 47b, essentially a file on the Panizzi affair.
60 Library Committee minutes CMB 47a for 16 August and 24 September 1833.
61 Secretary’s Report for 1835 in *Proc*. 3, 348–9 which also reported the change of Assistant Secretaries.
62 The source for details is to be found in Lubbock Letters, vol. 8, Children to Lubbock, C 130 (8 May 1832), C 155 (21 September 1832), C 157 (28 September 1832) and C 204 (18 December 1834).
63 In October 1832 the Library Catalogue Committee had thought it ‘desirable’ to have made a catalogue of original manuscripts and letters, but nothing seems to have been done, as one Fellow was to complain (A.B. Granville, *The Royal Society in the XIXth Century*). In 1836
Hudson had complained of the number of his duties to Children, asking for an increase in his salary.

Lubbock Letters, Vol. 8, C 210 (7 February 1835) and C 211 (9 February 1835). The Duke of Sussex wanted the room formerly used by Hudson as the President's private room, so it was decided that Roberton should keep the room he had been using as his sitting room and have another room for bedroom—he was of course now Housekeeper and expected to live on the premises. (C 212 of 11 February 1835 and C 213 of 25 February 1835.) Roberton asked for an increase in salary, but it is not clear from the minutes that he received it immediately.

Lubbock Letters, Vol. 30, 52-61; he there declared that unless a librarian was appointed he would need a third cataloguer, showing that Roberton and perhaps Hudson had assisted him.

MS CMB 47a (25 May 1835) contains a copy of Panizzi's letter of 18 May 1835.

MS CMB 47a, minutes for 25 April 1836, when the Committee resolved that 'notes expressing matters of opinion on the articles in the Catalogue be omitted', and only the condition of the books be added to simple bibliographical details, the notes not to be in the first person. The Catalogue was to be complete to the end of April 1836, Panizzi was to make all alterations 'pointed out' by Committee members and revises were to be sent to all the Committee members. A proof copy printed in April 1836 is now preserved in the Library office.

Observations on the Address by the President and on the Statement by the Council (1837) and A Letter to his Royal Highness the President of the Royal Society on the New Catalogue of that Institution now in Press (1837/38). It is perhaps this affair which explains Panizzi's subsequent hostility to science and his successful endeavour to separate the natural history collections from the rest of the British Museum. See also D.L. Emblen, 'Roget vs. Panizzi: a collision' Journal of Library History 4(1969), 9-38; Peter Mark Roget, London, 1970, especially Chapter xiv.

Halliwell had had an interest in books and manuscripts from the age of 15; he edited and printed very many, ranging from early scientific manuscripts to Shakespearean treatises, becoming a recognized Shakespearean expert. It is not clear why another catalogue of the Jones manuscripts was necessary.

Shuckard's exculpatory letter of 9 November 1843 is in MC 3, no. 310.

White was entirely self-educated; he had begun his working life as a cabinet maker, emigrated briefly to America and then gradually turned to writing, to become a successful contributor to a wide variety of journals, including Chambers' Journal. For his duties as Attendant see the Council Minutes for 14 March 1844. He noted in his Journals (1 March 1844) that he was learning much about the Library by looking for lost volumes. In August (7th) he copied a manuscript of 'Papin's treatise on the Vacuum' to send to Blois for use in a biography of Papin published in 1849.

But not entirely scientific, for there remained until 1874 a Privileged Class of Fellows, princes, peers and privy councillors, who were to be voted on when proposed, corresponding to the more limited group of the twentieth century, elected under Statute 12 as having either
‘rendered conspicuous service to the cause of science, or are such that their election would be of signal benefit to the Society’ as the 1939 Statutes read.

73 Journals of Walter White, entry for 20 April 1847.

74 History of the Royal Society, II, 461.

75 In a letter to Darwin of 12 January 1873; L. Huxley, Life and Letters of Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker (2 Vols, London, 1918), II, p. 133.

76 In letters to the Council. See Hall, All Scientists Now, p. 236 notes 3 and 4 for references.

77 See Hall, All Scientists Now, pp. 98-9 and 188-92. The minutes of the Committee for removal to Burlington House are MM 13.59-78 (1857-72). White noted in his Journals that the last meeting in Somerset House was on 30 April 1857 and the first in Burlington House on 7 May. Other societies were later to follow.

78 Preface to Vol. I (London, 1867) which contains a brief account of the pre-history of the project, begun as an idea in the United States for physical science only; it was taken up by the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1855 but nothing was done until after it was brought to the notice of the Royal Society by E. Sabine in 1857. See Council Minutes for 5 March and 18 June 1857.

79 See MS 47c, passim. No Library Committee minutes seem to have been preserved from the end of the Panizzi affair (where MS 47b ends, 1833) until 1858.

80 The first boy assistant employed to copy out titles was Henry White (only distantly connected with Walter White), paid £1.15.0 per week; he was followed by C.W. Vincent, who was soon replaced first by one of Walter White’s sons, and then in 1861 by Alfred Wallis. From 1861 to 1865 Cornelius Fisher was employed—he resigned through illness—and, temporarily because he could only copy English titles, Augustus Pemberton, both of whom received 18 shillings a week, while at this time Henry White was advanced to two guineas a week. But German titles remained a problem until later in the century when there were more copyists.

81 He had the maps printed by photozincography.

82 The letter is dated 26 February 1859 and is in the President’s Letter Book for 1840-79 (MS 426.149). The Council discussed the matter on 24 February 1859. Portsmouth’s reply, MS MC.6.17, is dated 5 March 1859.

83 See the President’s Letter Book for December 1864 (MS 426.220-2), when Samuel Smiles was seeking permission to consult the papers of Papin and Savery for the history of the steam engine; he received it from the Secretary, G.G. Stokes, on condition that he consult the minutes as printed by Birch first. Three weeks later F.B. Smith was permitted to consult the Archives for his researches into the early history of photography (30 December 1864).

84 The President’s Letter Book contains Huxley’s letter to the Marquis of Salisbury dated 17 June 1876 (MS 426.449). The India Office Catalogues of Jones MSS. appeared in 1902-03.

85 The quoted words are from a letter written by Sabine (then Treasurer and so senior Vice-President) to Dr William Sharpey, Secretary, (MS MM 19.25) of 26 March 1861. The horror aroused by Weld’s misconduct is very evident in what Sabine says. He added, ‘In my last interview with W. Weld he seemed anxious to explain to me that the Lady in question
is a Lady of independent fortune!' Not surprisingly, Sabine thought this last irrelevant. But it
was agreed to continue Weld's salary until November.

Wheatley reviewed the latest edition of the Diary in The Academy in 1875, published Samuel
Pepys and the world he lived in in 1880 and in 1885 became the editor of the last edition
of the Diary before the great twentieth-century edition (ed. R. Latham and W. Matthews)
of 1970-83. When he resigned as Clerk he became Assistant Secretary to the Royal Society
of Arts. In 1894 he gave a lecture entitled 'The early history of the Royal Society' to a
meeting of the Sette of Odd Volumes, subsequently privately printed (1905).

The most important of these was the Government Grant Committee; since 1849 the
Government had annually provided a sum of money which the Royal Society was to use to
encourage science by means of research grants. It soon became necessary to have subcom­
mittees for each of the main areas of science. Moreover, there was an ever-increasing
number of committees investigating questions raised by government departments seeking
expert advice from the Society. The Assistant Secretary attended all these committees and
took minutes.

MS MC.6.52, Dircks to Walter White. Dircks was then finishing A Biographical Memoir
of Samuel Hartlib, a pioneering study published the next year.

MS MC.8.59, letter from Charles Tomlinson (F.R.S. 1867) of 18 June 1867. In 1851 Sir
William Snow Harris told Herschel that he had seen some of Cavendish's papers sent to
him by the Earl of Burlington; he sent a lengthy abstract, but the papers never arrived. (MS
MM.16.124 and 125.)

See the President's Letter Book for 24 February 1872 (MS 426.358).

But in 1904 Herbert Rix, successor to Wheatley and White, reported to his successor, R.W.F.
Harrison, that he was 'told' that a number of these books 'presumably' on the authority of
the Library Committee 'were disposed of by Walter White to Quaritch and he did this one
July when Wheatley was gone for his holiday'. (MS MC.04697.) This is partly confirmed
by the fact that Quaritch did make an offer for some books in 1873 (MS MC.10.5). As was
to be reported at the Anniversary Meeting in 1880 (see Proc. 31, 78) the Council was then
still considering what to do with the non-scientific books, some of which were recognized
to be valuable.

For details, see MS MM.13.59-78, minutes of the Burlington House Committee and MS
CMB.47c for White's reports on the move itself.

For White's career at the Royal Society, see H.W. Robinson, 'Alfred George

See MSS MC.9.501 and MM 21.74; Mrs Boole was said to have 'left a bag with the porter'
in 1873 and the next year found more papers, which she may or may not have given to the
Society. The later planned reprint never took place. Augustus De Morgan, mathematician
and historian of mathematics, when consulted deemed that the manuscripts were not
publishable, both because they were in very rough state and because they antedated Boole's
published work, and this might confuse readers. (MS MM.16.34.)

In 1884 Michael Foster (Secretary 1881-1903), urging Lord Rayleigh to accept the post of
Secretary in place of Stokes—he did accept but served for one year only—declared that the
post was not so onerous as Stokes had claimed to have found it, for 'Mr Rix is a very
competent person, and can be entrusted with much more than he now has'. (R.J. Strutt, *John William Strutt, 3rd Baron Rayleigh, O.M., F.R.S.* (London, 1924), p. 168.) For Rix’s original application and testimonials see MS MC.11.348.

Council Minutes for 15 January 1885 and *Proc.* 39 (1885), 298, White had been so very satisfactory an Assistant Secretary that he was given a pension of his full salary. Rix’s post of Clerk was filled by Theodore James, who was, apparently, not much concerned with the Library; he continued as Clerk for many years.

MS CMB 47d, 12 November 1885.

At this meeting Rix showed the Committee a specimen of a printed card signed by him as Assistant Secretary, to be used to notify ‘foreign and colonial’ institutions of the Committee’s recent decision (26 February 1885) to send its publications through the post, rather than through agents.

Soper may possibly have been employed on the *Catalogue of Scientific Papers*, for in 1888 he was given the task of making an ‘Index Rerum’ to the Catalogue. Hastings White’s salary was increased to £140 from 1 January 1888 (Council Minutes 15 December 1887), later to £200 and in 1897 to £220 (Council Minutes 4 March).

As the Library Committee recognized (8 December 1887).

For Soper’s departure see Council Minutes for 22 May 1890, with the Library Committee’s report of 8 May. Fuller’s catalogue (published in 1892) distressingly revealed two missing portraits. That of Sir John Chardin had only been presented in 1887; as it is now in the Society’s rooms it must have been temporarily mislaid. The other was a portrait of Sir Christopher Wren’s father which had, it was then said, been once part of a joint portrait with his son, later separated by order of the Council. This has never re-appeared.

The minutes of the Library Committee for 13 January 1887 contain detailed lists of duplicates and the libraries to which they were given, as do those of 26 January 1888 and 24 January 1889.

It has been said (see note 106 below) that these were gas, like the lighting in the rest of the building, which was replaced by electricity in the early years of the twentieth century under Harrison. But C.W. Siemens (F.R.S. 1862) had first offered a dynamo to permit electric lighting for the meeting room to assist particularly the optical illustration of lectures at the suggestion of the President, Sir William Spottiswoode, as early as 1879 (*Proc.* 29 (1879), 415) while the Society of Antiquaries was offered electric lighting from the Society in 1887 (Council Minutes 3 November) and (15 December) the Chemical Society applied for ‘the use of their [the Royal Society’s] electric lighting plant’, all of which suggests that by 1887 a quite large system was in use.

See also 16 December 1888. It had been pointed out in 1880 by C.M. Ingleby and C.J. Monro that the Newton–Leibniz manuscripts were in disarray, to which they attributed the fact that Newtonians had been so unfavourably disposed towards Leibniz. Rix, who dealt with their report and had it published with his comments and additions was well aware of this. See *Report on Leibnitz-Newton Manuscripts in the possession of the Royal Society of London* (1880).

MS CMB.47d, 2 July 1891.

107 The draft was presented to the Library Committee on 16 December 1898; the hours of opening were to be 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturdays 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., with reduced hours during August and September, the Library still being closed for borrowing during at least part of August and a more strict account being made of all borrowings. Non-Fellows might read in the Library only on presentation of a written introduction from a Fellow.

108 It was compiled by Luxmoore Newcombe, Assistant Librarian of University College London and L. Ellston and was handled by the Oxford University Press.

109 Arthur Herbert Church was a highly versatile chemist, successively Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, where he worked on plant and animal pigments and became interested in archaeological remains (leading later to investigation of the chemistry of porcelains, of which he became a collector) and (1879) at the Royal Academy which led to investigation of the chemistry of pigments and pottery. Art had been his first love and he assisted in the preservation of the 19th century frescoes in the Houses of Parliament (which presumably was the reason for his knighthood). His cataloguing of the Society’s Archives was obviously a labour of love. His two detailed MS catalogues remain (1992) in daily use.

110 It was decided by the Library Committee on 8 December 1910 to charge the public five shillings and Fellows one shilling.

111 According to a member of staff who served under him, Harrison regarded 1912 as ‘the peak of his period of service to the Society’, although he later experienced much responsibility as Assistant Secretary during the War years, with reduced staff and increased Society work. (See note 106, p. 118.)

112 On 15 February 1917 the Council voted White a £25 gratuity in consideration of his having served 30 years as Assistant Librarian.

113 Harrison had been ill in 1915 (Council Minutes 21 February); the next year the Society needed more office space presumably because of work connected with the war and (24 February 1916), ostensibly in view of his 20 years’ service, Harrison was authorized to live away from Burlington House, with financial provision for increased expenditure. His letter of resignation (Council Minutes 6 November 1919) resulted in his being given leave of absence from the Christmas vacation to 30 March 1920, his pension being £600 p.a. The new Assistant Secretary was to receive £750 p.a. with annual increments of £25 up to a maximum of £1000, a very good salary for the time. The candidates, who included James and White, were interviewed in January; Edwin Deller, appointed 22 January 1920, left in the autumn to become Assistant Registrar of the University of London, to be replaced by F.A. Towle, Secretary to the Government Grants Committee since 1902.

114 For the Council decision, see its report for 1924, Year-Book for 1925, p. 171. There has, apparently, been no modern survey to see what books from the original Norfolk Library remain in the possession of the Society. It should be noted that there are some books in the Library stamped as belonging to the Arundel Collection that do not do so, having been acquired in the nineteenth century—for Rix noted in 1904, in a letter to Harrison arising from a Press Cutting for the Daily Chronicle recording that a correspondent owned a book
stamped with the Norfolk stamp and marked 'sold', that when he first went to the Society the stamp 'ex dono Hen. Howard Norfolciensis' was still in the stamp-box, and I was told that office-boys to whom the stamping had been entrusted had used the stamp freely for all sorts of books'. (Rix noted that he had then removed this stamp.) MS. MC.04697. The Council report to the Society (Year-Book for 1925, p. 171) specified that the Society intended to sell 'the relics of the Collection presented to the Society in 1666 by Henry Howard, afterward Duke of Norfolk', the Oriental manuscripts, and other non-scientific volumes, the British Museum having purchased four volumes.

115 Library Committee Minutes 20 December 1928. Permission to publish all the manuscripts Gunther wished to reproduce was not given, as he publicly complained. (Early Science in Oxford, VI: Life and Work of Robert Hooke (Oxford, 1930), pp. xviii–xix.)

116 Quoted by H.W. Robinson; see note 93 above.

117 Library Committee Minutes, 5 December 1923.

118 For Robinson's career, see 'Retirement of Mr H.W. Robinson, Librarian to the Society', Notes and Records 6 (1948), 71–2, and his obituary notice, 'Henry William Robinson' by E.N. da C. Andrade, Notes and Records 16 (1961), 243–46, with bibliography. Robinson helped to found Annals of Science in 1936 and took part in the foundation of the British Society for the History of Science in 1947. He became particularly interested in Robert Hooke, and he, not Gunther, was to be given permission to transcribe and publish (with W. Adams) Hooke's Diary for the years 1672–1680 (London, 1935). Gunther published in his vol. 10 (1935) some earlier and later diary entries from Sloane manuscripts in the British Museum, now the British, Library.

119 In the Year-Book for 1933 the Council report summarized those recommendations, which it had adopted, and asked Fellows to present their works whenever possible. Also recorded was an important purchase in 1932 for the Archives: a large collection of letters addressed to Martin Folkes, 234 items in all, now MS.250.

120 The card-index to 1800 was made by Graddon, Library Assistant 1933–37; see also 'The Retirement of Mr J.C. Graddon, Assistant Editor to the Society', Notes and Records 27 (1973), 325–26.

121 The 'Scrapbook' was presumably the little collection bound as 'Items touching the Royal Society', now (1992) classified as Tracts RS 1. Sherrington had previously presented a smaller Collection (Tracts RS 2) in May 1934. Further, on 22 April 1936 the Library Committee resolved to try to purchase twenty volumes of the correspondence of Joseph Banks covering the years when he was President of the Society—presumably the so-called Dawson–Turner transcripts now in the Natural History Museum Library—unless the Natural History Museum wished to purchase them, while (23 June 1937) the Librarian was to look at the manuscript collection of H.C. Bastian (neurologist and bacteriologist, F.R.S. 1968), then being offered at Sotheby's (which was not acquired).

122 The Committee recommended to the Council (20 October 1938) that a Newton Letters Committee be set up composed of Sir William Dampier (then Librarian of Trinity College, Cambridge, F.R.S. 1901), E.N. da C. Andrade (F.R.S. 1935), Professor H.C. Plummer (F.R.S. 1920), G.N. Clark, Oxford historian, and Sir Thomas Heath (F.R.S. 1912), all except Plummer, an astronomer, being then well known for their writings on history of science.
Robinson was soon enlisted to help in finding and transcribing manuscripts in the Society’s possession.

123 *Notes and Records* 1 (April 1938), 1.

124 ‘The Society’s Library’, *Notes and Records* 1, 21–27, signed C.S.S., i.e. Sherrington.

125 *Notes and Records* 1 (1938), 92–95, and 2 (1939), 68–70. Volume 3 consisted of no. 1 (April 1940) and no. 2 (September 1941) after which publication was suspended until 1946; wartime exigencies made Vol. 3 no. 2 mainly historical in content.

126 Unfortunately, nothing further appears in the Library Committee minutes about these manuscripts, of which the Newton items were offered by Francis Edwards; the Banks manuscripts were offered for £5, which was thought so excessive that it was decided to offer only £2!

127 *Notes and Records* 3 (April 1940), 71.

128 The Central Register involved the listing and allocation of skilled men to appropriate wartime jobs. See also *Notes and Records* 3, 107.

129 The London Mathematical Society had been in chronic financial difficulties for a number of years, a situation only altered by a substantial bequest from G.H. Hardy (1877–1947; F.R.S. 1910). By 1950 the L.M.S. had recovered as regards books but the Royal Society’s purchase of mathematical periodicals continued for some time. (See Library Committee Minutes for 3 July 1957.)


131 The first volume (1959) was edited by H.W. Turnbull, who in his preface paid tribute to the work of Robinson and ‘other members of the staff’. Subsequent volumes were edited successively by Turnbull, J.F. Scott and A. Rupert Hall and Laura Tilling.

132 See Edward Salisbury, ‘The Retirement of Mr I. Kaye Librarian to the Society’, *Notes and Records* 27 (1972), 165. Kaye was a reserved, self-contained and correct man, not without a secret dry sense of humour who, in spite of the fact that he had not, unlike Hastings White and H.W. Robinson, grown up with the books, soon became thoroughly conversant with the Library and worked hard to maintain its catalogues and its manuscripts.

133 See R.K. Bluhm, ‘A Guide to the Archives of the Royal Society and to other Manuscripts in its Possession’, *Notes and Records* 12 (1956), 21–39; the prehistory of this work is described in a preliminary ‘Note by the Editor’ [of the journal], pp. 21–22.

134 This reclassification marked the end of the centuries-old system of fixed shelf location. The headings were mainly those of the then Sectional Committees of the Society, that is, broad scientific divisions. Those in use in 1981 are listed (p.viii) in each of the five volumes of the 1981 *Book Catalogue*.

135 British National Committees (founded in 1966) were intended ‘to advise Council on policy with regard to ICSU’; they included one for the history of science, medicine and technology. This latter committee later assessed applications for grants for research in the subjects of its title. These committees were abolished in 1989, and the history of science committee replaced by the History of Science Grants Committee.

136 From 1983, ‘before 1900’ became ‘before 1950’, as noted in the Library Committee minutes for 19 October 1983; the division was established by the Library Committee on 2 December
1975. 'The preservation of manuscripts' was to include microfilming. In 1982 (22 July) the Committee recommended the preservation of certain journals on microfiche 'in order to save staff time, library space and binding costs'.


138 See also Library Committee minutes for 30 March 1987, and for the report of the Working Group on Archives Policy, see minutes for 10 October 1988.

139 She had previously been Head of Business Information in the British Library, Science Reference and Information Service.
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