

Conservation, preservation and access



Many items in the Wollaton Library Collection, both manuscript and printed, are very fragile. Conservation staff have undertaken a two-year programme to repair critical damage, relax distorted leaves, consolidate pigments, and improve protection with customised boxes.



Several of the bound manuscripts preserve an unusual level of evidence of their medieval construction. Conservation measures have attempted to strengthen their sewing structures, thus protecting and retaining their historic features in preference to rebinding. These manuscripts can only be handled with great care and for exceptional reasons.

Please note that access will usually be offered to surrogate copies in the first instance.

Detailed descriptions of the collection

Brief descriptions of the medieval manuscripts and ephemera are found in the Manuscripts Online Catalogue <http://mssweb.nottingham.ac.uk/catalogue/>

Published works appear in The University of Nottingham Library Online Catalogue (UNLOC) <http://aleph.nottingham.ac.uk>

An online resource on the theme of women draws on the collection. This is accessible on the Manuscripts and Special Collections website: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/learning/medievalwomen>

Location

Manuscripts and Special Collections is located at King's Meadow Campus, about 3 miles from the centre of Nottingham and 1 mile from the main University campus. Detailed instructions of how to find us are on our website: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections>

Directions

From M1 motorway:

Leave motorway at Junction 25 to join the A52 to Nottingham. Turn right at the Queens Medical Centre roundabout (about 5 miles from M1) following signs to Grantham. After going over the flyover get into the left hand lane marked A453 City Centre then turn left after the footbridge, signposted Lenton Lane Industrial Estate. Turn left at the T-junction and King's Meadow Campus is about a quarter of a mile on the right.

From Nottingham (approximately 3 miles):

There are regular Link 1 buses from the Victoria Centre, the Broadmarsh bus station or Nottingham train station. Alight at the Clifton Bridge North stop, then walk north along Lenton Lane via the subway. The Campus is about half a mile on the right. Nottingham City Transport's website provides timetables and information about other routes.

There are taxi ranks throughout the City Centre and immediately adjacent to the main railway and bus stations. The journey to the campus takes about 15 minutes.

From the main University campus:

The University runs free Hopper bus services between its main Campuses. Timetables are available on the University website: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk>

Access

Researchers must make an appointment in advance of their proposed visit to ensure that the material they wish to consult is available. **The medieval manuscripts from the Wollaton Library Collection are not usually made available to researchers in their original form; access to surrogates will be offered in the first instance.**

Access is allowed to all bona fide researchers at the discretion of the Keeper. The University reserves the right to refuse admission. Applicants must provide proof of identity and complete a registration form.

Facilities

Refreshments are available from a coffee bar in the King's Meadow Campus building.

Facilities for the disabled

Wheelchair access is provided to our Reading Room and the coffee bar. Special toilet facilities are also available. Advance notice of other special needs is advisable.

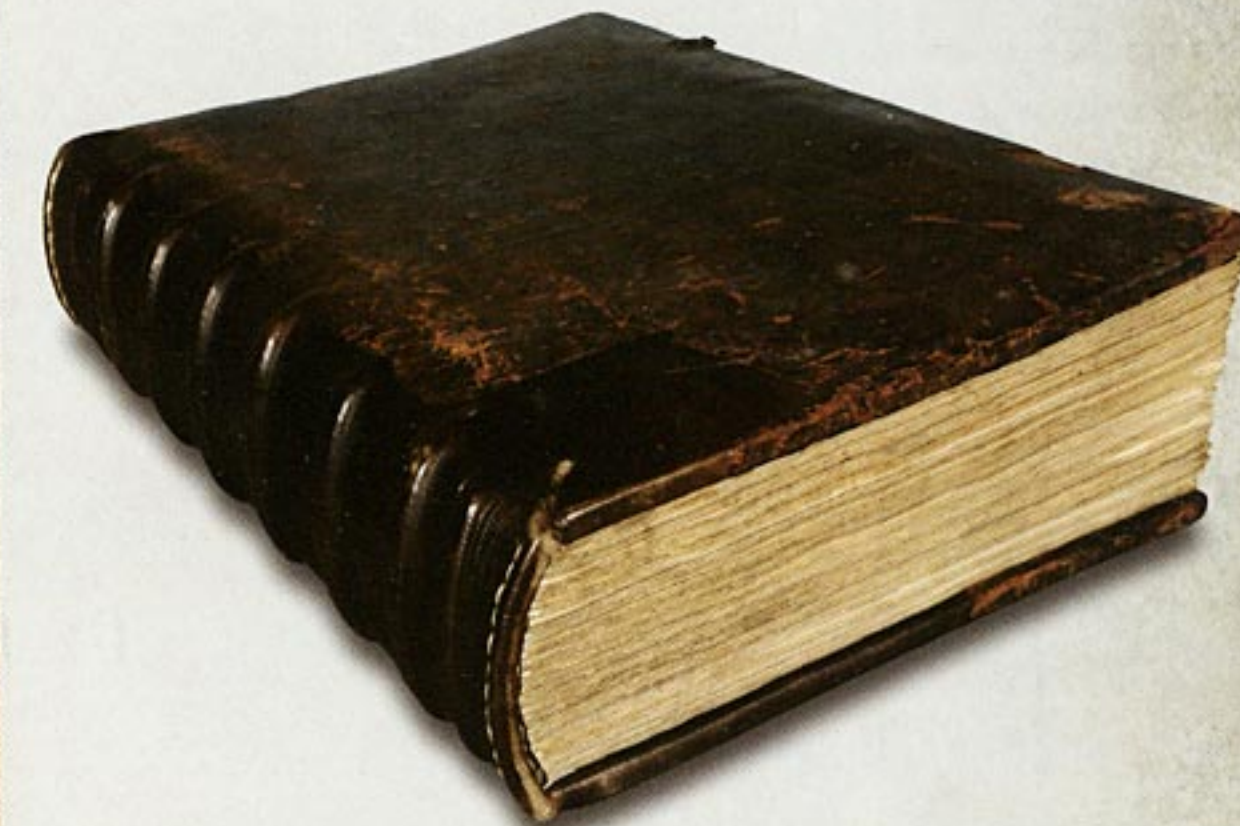


The Wollaton Library Collection of Medieval Manuscripts and Early Printed Books



Introduction

The Wollaton Library Collection consists of medieval manuscripts and early printed books which originally formed part of an important private library. This was built up over many centuries by the Willoughby family of Wollaton Hall, near Nottingham. The bulk of this magnificent collection was dispersed in various ways over the years, the majority of it by sale in 1925.



The Collection was acquired for The University of Nottingham in 2007 with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and a programme of conservation, research and development was launched, with the primary objective of making safe the medieval manuscripts and increasing access to them through study, online resources and display. Digital images will assist preservation, increase access and support research.

A parallel research project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, has studied the manuscripts both individually and as a group. Researchers investigating the medieval origins of the Wollaton Hall Library have made extensive use of the family archive (Middleton Collection) which is also held at The University of Nottingham. Essays and detailed codicological descriptions of the WLC/LM texts can be found in *The Wollaton Medieval Manuscripts: Texts, Owners and Readers*, ed. Ralph Hanna and Thorlac Turville-Petre (Boydell and Brewer, expected publication 2010).

The Manuscripts (WLC/LM)

Stories in French



Romances and Fabliaux, early 13th century, 351 folios (WLC/LM/6)
Seven Romances are present, including the unique copy of *Le Roman de Silence* by Heldris de Cornuälle, Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie, Ille et Galeron* by Gautier d'Arras and *La Chanson d'Aspremont*. There are seven fabliaux by Gautier le Leu. The stories are illustrated with 83 miniatures.



Lestoire del Saint Graal, early 13th century, incomplete, 76 folios (WLC/LM/7)
The collection of Arthurian prose romances in French, known as the Vulgate Cycle, begins with the account of the adventures of Joseph of Arimathea and his companions, as they carry the Holy Grail from country to country, eventually arriving in Britain.

Anglo-Norman devotional works

Robert de Gretham, *Mirur*, mid 13th century, unbound and incomplete, 101 folios (WLC/LM/3)
A series of verse sermons for Sundays and feast days, intended for both clergy and laity.



William of Waddington, *Le Manuel des péchés*, with Robert de Gretham, *Mirur*, second half of 13th century, unbound and incomplete, 171 folios (WLC/LM/4)

The Manuel is a work of instruction in verse, composed c.1220-1240. With many illustrative examples, it gives advice on the consequences of sin and advocates living a moral life.



Middle English poems and prose



***Speculum Vitae* and *The Lay Folks' Catechism*, early 15th century, 260 folios (WLC/LM/9)**
The *Speculum*, a long devotional poem, composed 1350-1375, gives guidance in the Christian faith based on the Ten Commandments, the seven sacraments, and the seven deadly sins. This copy, in its original binding, survives with John Gaytryge's *Lay Folks' Catechism*, composed in 1357, another verse text of doctrinal instruction.



John Gower, *Confessio Amantis* and other works, c.1425, 205 folios (WLC/LM/8)
The text gives the revised version of Gower's late 14th century English masterpiece in a handsome copy, though lacking its planned decoration. This allegory in verse form describes a dream confession made by an ageing lover (Amans) to a priest of Venus. It is bound together with Gower's French poem *Traitié pour essampler les amantz marietz* and his Latin poem *Carmen super multiplici viciorum pestilencia*.



Fragments recording the life of St Bridget from the *South English Legendary*, early 14th century (WLC/LM/38)
These fragments illustrate the chance survival of texts in paste downs or binding supports of volumes originally in the library.

Fragment of an English Life of St Zita, c.1450-1475, 1 folio (WLC/LM/37)
A single paper leaf is the only surviving evidence of an English translation of the life of the Italian St Zita of Lucca (d. 1272), who was venerated by housewives and servants.

*þe familiar woman
: fore did leve Cithre
re pyfan and for
mposith to do tise
je make vulefult
e gattise luffed. Cithre*

Liturgical volumes in Latin

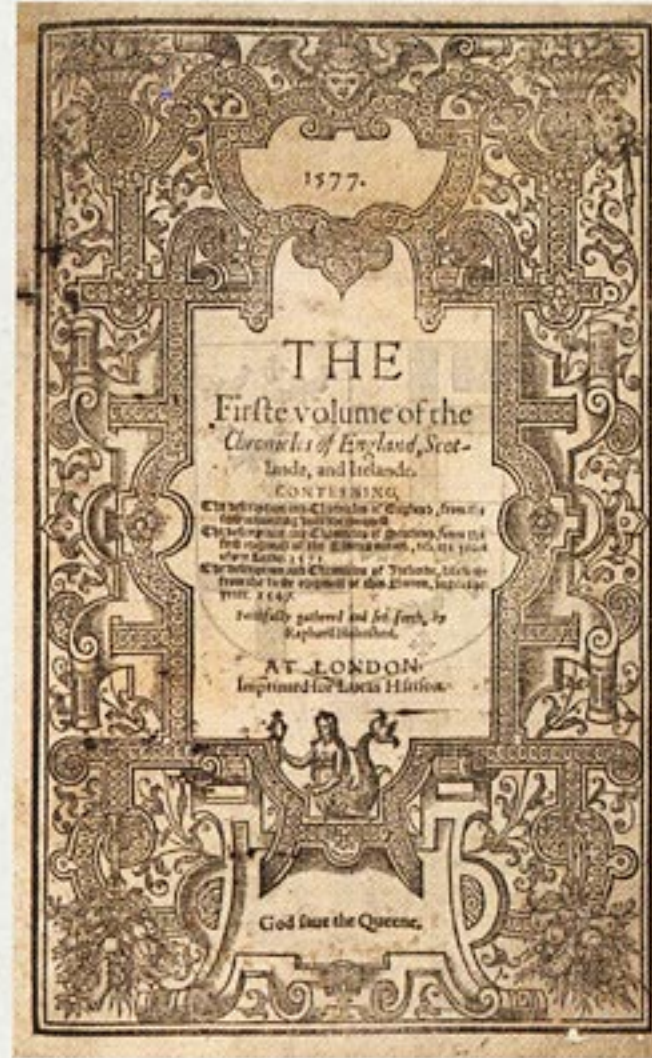


Breviary, late 12th-early 13th century, incomplete and unbound in 38 folios (WLC/LM/1)
Readings, prayers and anthems from the sanctorale section in an English service book are accompanied by musical notation.

Prayer book, second half of 15th century, 44 folios (WLC/LM/11)
A devotional book containing prayers. Only the first folio is illuminated. The binding can be identified as the output of an Oxford workshop in the 1470s.



Published Works, 1531-c.1897 (WLC/P)



A series of published titles includes about 50 works in volumes and a further 60 items in pamphlet or loose sheet form. Although only a fraction of the historic collection, its range in date and subject matter reflects the library's original character and strengths.

The earliest title present is a first edition of Thomas Elyot's *The boke named the Governour* (London: 1531). Other 16th-century titles include R. Holinshed, *The first volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (London: 1577) and William Covell, *Polimanteia, or the Meanes Lawful and unlawful, to judge of a Commonwealth* (Cambridge: 1595).

The multi-volume edition *Purchas his pilgrikes, containing a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Land Travel by Englishmen and Others* (London: 1625) illustrates the strength of travel literature in the Collection. Other titles describing foreign countries include the following:



- Samuel Collins, *The present state of Russia* (London: 1671)
- J.M. Wansleben, *The present state of Egypt* (London: 1678)
- Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Collection of travels through Turkey into Persia and the East Indies* (London: 1684)
- Guy Tachard, *A relation of the voyage to Siam ... in the year 1685* (London: 1688)
- Christopher Frick & Christopher Schewitzer, *A relation of two several voyages made into the East-Indie* (London: 1700)
- J. Churchill, *A collection of voyages and travels* (London: 1704)

Ephemera, 1738-c.1912 (WLC/X)

A small group of printed papers survives with the library collection, and provides examples of printed ephemera, primarily from the East Midlands area, from the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Items illustrate the activities of societies, churches, schools and hospitals. A number contain appeals for philanthropic assistance or report on the work of bodies depending on voluntary subscription.