

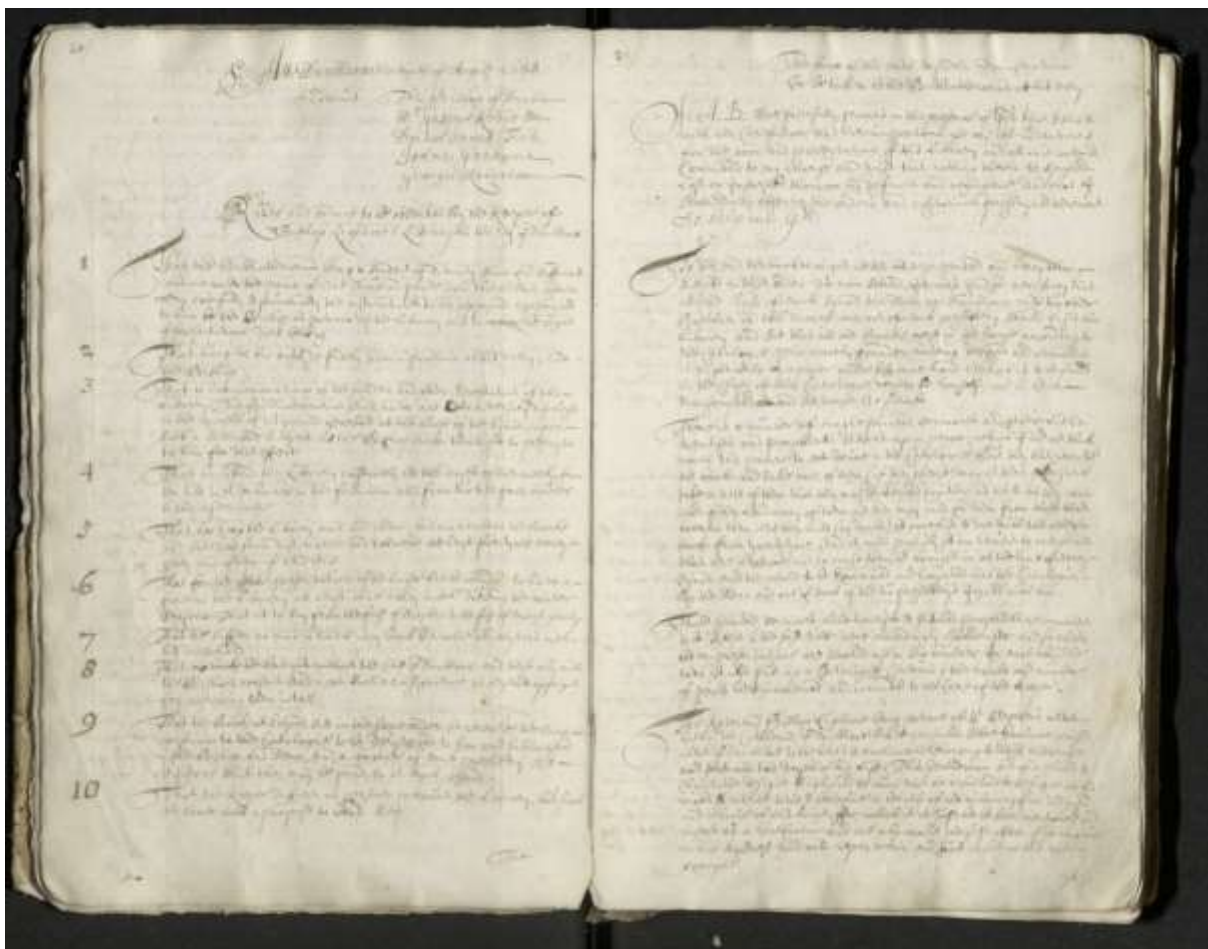
Leighton Librarians, by Helen Beardsley

Throughout its history, the Leighton Library has been served by a succession of Librarians. When the library was built, Robert Leighton's executors donated £200 to help maintain the library. It was intended that the interest on this sum would be used to pay a salary for a librarian.

When the library first opened, Bishop Robert Douglas (c. 1630-1716) determined that the Librarian would be a Divinity student, "a young man that were pious and sober, trusty, and of good behaviour" and that he would serve for three or four years. It would have been an attractive role for a Divinity student, offering easy access to books for study.

Bishop Douglas drew up rules for the Keeper of the Library, which included:

- Being present in the library every day from 10am – 12 noon and 2 – 4pm.
- Keeping the library tidy and cleaning the books and shelves at least four times a year.
- Having a fire in the library at least once a week in the winter.
- Not allowing visitors to take books from the shelves. Only the Librarian could do this.
- Keeping the books in the same order.
- Permitting "no persones to haunt the Library but such as come with a purpose to read, &c."



The Librarian had to swear an oath on appointment, that he would use his best endeavours for the good and preservation of the library.

The salary of the first Librarian was £10 a year. He also had the use of the cellar under the library, but he wasn't necessarily expected to live there. He was permitted to rent out the space and take the income from this. At first, the Librarian was expected to pay for coal for heating the library, though this arrangement was later relaxed.

As things transpired, only the first Librarian, John Littlejohn (b. 1664), was a Divinity student. Subsequent Librarians were clergymen and schoolteachers, who carried out the role on a part time basis. Some served for many years.

What was the Librarian's job like?

Some of the Librarian's responsibilities could be quite demanding. Getting books back which had been borrowed but not returned could sometimes be difficult. From the earliest days of the library, an annual inspection was carried out, to make sure all books were accounted for.

In 1734 the Leighton Library started collecting an annual subscription from readers. This would have meant more work for the Librarian – not just collecting subscriptions, but also dealing with readers who failed to pay.

In 1691 Bishop Douglas created a list of books in the library in shelf order. Many books were added to the collection in later years, by donation and purchase, which meant that the catalogue needed to be updated regularly. This was a significant task in the days before computerised library catalogues.

Maintaining the building and books in good order was a constant challenge. Books which were borrowed regularly became damaged and needed to be repaired or rebound. Keeping the library warm and dry enough to preserve the books was often difficult.

Who were the Librarians?

Early years of the Leighton Library

The first Librarian, **John Littlejohn**, was appointed in 1688 but only served for a year or so. He was an Episcopal Divinity student, who gave up his post when the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1689 established the Presbyterian order.

Rev. Robert Douglas (d. 1746) was appointed as Librarian in around 1691. He was the son of Bishop Douglas and he had also suffered the loss of his ministerial post in 1689. He ended up serving the library until his death in 1746. He left some of his books to the library.

Leighton Library as a subscription library

William Coldstream (d. 1786), who was the Schoolmaster in Dunblane, took over as Librarian in 1746 and served until his death in 1786. He was succeeded by his son, **Malcolm Coldstream**, also Schoolmaster. The Coldstreams served the library for more than 80 years in total and were responsible for the addition of many important new publications to the library collection in the 18th and early 19th centuries.



Mid 19th to mid 20th century

A number of Librarians served during this period. **Rev. Dr. James Hutchison Cockburn** (1882-1973) was Librarian from 1919 – 1954 and continued to be involved with the library until his death in 1973. He oversaw the publication of a new library catalogue in 1940 and was instrumental in commissioning vital work to preserve the books and library building.



1: Elliott and Fry, 'James Hutchison Cockburn', bromide print, © National Portrait Gallery, London.

1970s onwards

Since the 1970s, the Leighton Library has had a formal relationship with the University of Stirling. A librarian at the University now acts as Honorary Librarian of the Leighton Library and provides professional advice to the Leighton Library Trust. Researchers may consult books from the Leighton Library at the University Library.