



## Leighton Letter

Newsletter of the Leighton Library

No. 2 / August 2020

Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter. 'Leighton Letter' is our new name for the newsletter - thanks to Friend and former guide Jennifer MacLellan for that suggestion.

The newsletter aims to provide a forum for spreading the word about our national treasure, and for keeping Friends, guides, volunteers and others up to date about developments.

In this edition, the Trustees report on the need to restrict access to the Library this season and give us an update on maintenance and development plans and Library finances.

You can also read about an interesting addition to the collection, and the project to restore the American Atlas of 1776, which has long been a favourite of guides and visitors.

May 2020 marked the 30 years since the Leighton re-opened as a 'Tourist Attraction'. In what we hope will become a regular feature, 'Leighton People' will tell the stories and share the memories of the many people who have supported the Library over the years. Frances has been researching Bill Moore's leading role when the Library re-opened in the 1990's.

Regarding Leighton himself, do check out the recent addition to the Library website that we told you about in the last newsletter, the very readable account of Robert Leighton and his times by Bill Inglis. You can access it via the website page on Leighton [here](#).

We would love to hear your thoughts on any item in the newsletter, suggestions for future articles, and ideas for promoting the Library. Please email us at [leightonfriends@gmail.com](mailto:leightonfriends@gmail.com), or post your ideas and comments on the contact page at [Library website](#) or [Facebook page](#).



### News from the Trustees

One of our responsibilities is to ensure that the Library and those who visit and work there are safe and well cared for. Regrettably, we have accepted that the Library cannot open safely to the general public in 2020. However, any requested private visits, when approved, will be hosted by Michael Osborne, Honorary Custodian, within social distancing and hygiene rules.

There is always much interest from Friends, guides, volunteers and others to help in the support of our Library, and the Trustees have decided to form a small **Executive** to deal with management of the Library's day to day activities and to promote its presence, with recourse to the Trustees for any major decisions when necessary. The Executive will comprise a Trustee, an 'in loco' Trustee, the Hon. Custodian and the Hon. Treasurer.

The Executive will manage implementation of a **Maintenance Plan** to ensure regular oversight of the building and its contents, and a **Development Plan** to consider how best to promote the Library. Ideas on these matters will always be welcome – see the contact details above.

## Restoration and Renovation

In December, the Trustees submitted a grant application to Historic Environment Scotland. Unfortunately given these difficult times, we are still waiting to hear whether the application has been successful. The Trustees will however undertake any necessary works to ensure the conservation of the Library. We will keep you posted.

## Finances

In an average season visitors contribute £300 per month over the five summer months toward our annual running cost of £6,000. Closure of the Library for the season means that this income is lost. We were fortunate to receive a grant of £10,000 in recognition of this via Stirling Council from the Scottish Government Coronavirus Business Support Fund.

We recently received a generous bequest from Gerry Goddard, who was a committed volunteer guide and a long-standing friend of the Library. We are most grateful to Gerry and are considering how best to commemorate her support and involvement.

## Letter from a visitor

Hon. Treasurer Chris Onslow heard recently from a past visitor from south of the border: “I am in debt to your library in that you permitted me to visit it in the ‘closed’ season. My abiding memories are of being shown your beautifully bound Cosmographia and seeing that children are encouraged to visit the library. My second debt is for returning my farmer’s stick left behind in my haste. It was returned in an extended cardboard tube and is now doing capital service on a local stock farm! With best wishes for the success of your library....”

## News about the Books

It’s worth keeping an eye on the Library’s [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter page](#), which post regular items about books in the Library. You can also access those pages via the [Library website](#).

This picture is from a recent post about the smallest book in the Library: **Thomas à Kempis: “De Imitatione Christi”** (The Imitation of Christ). It’s said that this was one of Leighton’s favourite books. He made many notes in this book – in tiny handwriting for the tiny book!



The 4 July post was about the **American Atlas** (published 1776), which has always been a favourite of guides and visitors. Constant reference to the folded maps started to cause severe damage and the Atlas had to be removed for safekeeping.



Helped by generous donations from the Dunblane Development Trust and the Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust, the Trustees asked The Scottish Conservation Studio to carry out a full-scale restoration of the atlas. They tell us that the repairs are nearly complete and we’re looking forward to seeing the finished product. More on that in the next Leighton Letter.

## Additions to the Collection

### Ignatius Trauner

A welcome donation in 2019 was a work by Ignatius Trauner “*Geistliche Seelen-Jagd, das ist Anderes Dominicale*” from 1690. Ignaz von Trauner, OSB (1638-1694) was a Bavarian Benedictine monk noted for his substantial printed collections of original and translated sermons. This volume belongs to the former category and was designed as a manual and sourcebook for priests.



Dr Kelsey Jackson Williams, Lecturer in Early Modern Literature at Stirling University, comments: “The edition itself is comparatively common (30 plus copies in public collections worldwide), which is what you would expect of a large book like this, but its real interest derives from the absolutely fabulous south German decorated pigskin binding with its lovely clasps.”

We believe this is the only copy in the United Kingdom. We are very grateful to the Macintosh family who brought it out of Germany in 1938 and have now given it into the care of the Leighton.

As a contemporary, Trauner is very much in the category of books that Bishop Leighton (1611-1684) might have purchased for his library had he lived into his ‘80’s.



Talking about the bindings, the variety and richness of some of the bindings have always been one of the attractions of the Library. Barty’s “History of Dunblane” (1944, republished 1994) records in his chapter on the *Bibliotheca Leightoniana*:

“The bindings...were carefully examined (in 1934) by J.B. Oldham, Librarian, Shrewsbury School. He found that one book bore the arms of James VI of Scotland and may have come from his library; that another book came from the library of William Kerr, Earl of Lothian, and a friend of Leighton who in his early days was minister at Newbattle; a third book bears the arms of Cambridge University; and another the arms of the town of Zealand.”

### Dr James Hutchison Cockburn

Very recently, we received two 20<sup>th</sup> Century works by Dr James Hutchison Cockburn, D.D. D.Theol. F.S.A. (Scot), a former Chairman of the Leighton Library Trust and Founder Member of the Society of Friends of Dunblane Cathedral. In 1954, the Society of Friends published his work “The Celtic Church in Dunblane”, and followed this in 1959 with his final book “The Medieval Bishops of Dunblane and their Church”. The ‘Celtic Church’ reviews the spread of the Christian religion in Scotland and the evangelism of Saint Blane, whilst the second book brings that narrative forward to the 1500’s, into that century before Bishop Leighton’s appointment to Dunblane in 1661.

Although Dr Cockburn was closely involved with the Cathedral, the Museum and the Library, these are the first of his books that we have received. This has suggested the aim of collecting his complete works. The catalogue of the National Library of Scotland provides a good check-list from which we can start. Any assistance with this project – books or research time - will be welcome, including duplicate copies, perhaps signed by the author, perhaps more attractive editions than the ones we now hold. Copies of his out-of-print titles are available from Internet sellers, and we may have to go in that direction to build our collection.

### **A Request**

The Leighton would like to hold the Journals of the Society of Friends of Dunblane Cathedral. This has been issued in annual parts down the years. If you are clearing shelves, please consider a donation to the Leighton. Don't assume there are other copies out there - you may be giving us the last extant loose copy!

### **Leighton People - Bill Moore**

Whilst out walking and appreciating our town anew during your daily exercise over recent months, you may have wondered about the people who were responsible for the continued existence of our local treasure.

Our first Honorary Custodian following the re-opening of the Library in 1991 was **Bill Moore**. In his January 1992 update to The Friends of Dunblane Cathedral, Bill reported visitor figures for the two years following the re-opening (1991-1992) of 3,301 and 4,381 respectively. His report ended with the words *'The Leighton library after so many years of gentle slumber has now taken its rightful place in the life of old Dunblane.'*

Many readers will remember Bill fondly as an enthusiastic and active volunteer and supporter of the Library. Bill's wife, Margaret, remembers how 'utterly involved' Bill was during that time. An Industrial Chemist by profession, the Leighton was one of his many passions. Margaret said with a laugh that she sometimes wondered if he had lost his vocation given his enthusiasm and commitment to Leighton activities – 'I would often have to ask him if it was possible for us to go somewhere – but *not* if there was 'Leighton business' on.

Margaret remembers Bill out at the top of the library steps beaming broadly as he coaxed unsuspecting passers-by inside so he could share its treasures. Indeed, flicking through Leighton correspondence of that time, a letter was found from a grateful visitor thanking Bill for 'scooping her up' that day as she passed by. Margaret said that if she ever popped in, invariably Bill would be atop a ladder retrieving a book, or with a visitor showcasing a book that he loved. Margaret said the Library was a welcoming place and there was always a vase of fresh flowers on the table, often picked from their own garden.



The Library's files contain many 'thank you' letters received from visitors; letters asking 'Do you have a book on ...?', and invariably there would be, and with a fulsome response from Bill; and copies of letters sent by Bill to libraries across the world introducing them with pride to the Leighton.

Gordon Willis, who undertook the mammoth task of cataloguing the Leighton's books during the years prior to 1990, allowing access via the University of Stirling Library, recalls Bill's obsession for uncovering different languages within the books, so that visitors from across the globe could be shown words on the page written in their own tongue.



Margaret said that every week he would come home and share stories of another find or a book he had read part of that day, and she would be tasked with typing up the little 'book summary cards' on her typewriter into the wee small hours.

Research invariably uncovered other treasures too, lost between the pages – hand embroidered silk bookmarks, shopping lists and love letters. In 'Life and Work' magazine dated April 1993, another Bill quote gives a sense of his well-kent humour, but above all his constant sense of wonder at the books – '. . . the library is very much like a chocolate box, you can keep dipping in and it's non-fattening as well!'

Did he have a favourite book? 'No. He loved them all', Margaret said, 'I honestly don't think he had a favourite. Everything in the library absorbed and fascinated him. Even after he retired from Leighton duties the library still held him in its thrall'.

*Do you have a memory of the Leighton you would like to share in a future newsletter? If so, please email us at [leightonfriends@gmail.com](mailto:leightonfriends@gmail.com).*

### **Controlling the Environment in the Library**

One essential for the book collection is to maintain a stable environment: warm, but not too hot – and dry, but not arid. The recommendations are for a temperature close to 16°C and humidity in the range 45-60%. In June, we are close to or within these parameters.

For some years, we have had monitors that were read and recorded manually. We now have two "data loggers" – small measuring instruments that take frequent readings of air temperature and humidity. The loggers read and store information continuously. Ours are set to take a reading every four hours. We now have digital records from May 2020 onwards.

This will give us precise information on how the various influences interact, including through the winter: the effect of the night-store heaters and the dehumidifier, and the influence of the external air temperature on the fabric of the building and on the collection.

Recording the atmosphere in the Library and in the vault will give us base-line data against which we can assess the changes that will occur when the exterior concrete render is removed and replaced with a lime-mortar render (as has been done by the Museum at the Deans' House).

The heaters are not particularly effective. In January the temperature in the Library can drop below 10°C. We need to investigate new forms of heating, perhaps better electric heaters, perhaps a "green" alternative like "air source heat pumps". If you are interested in joining the working group on this, please email the Hon. Custodian via [leightonfriends@gmail.com](mailto:leightonfriends@gmail.com).

## Raising the Profile of the Library

Jade Reid-Harper, an MSc student at Stirling University, is working on a research project which will produce recommendations on how to develop the interpretative aspects of the Library. She is looking at how best to present the story of the Library over the various periods of its existence, from Leighton's own time, the setting up of the Library, its use in the early years, right through to the re-opening of the Library and its present use. Jade surveyed guides and others and is also drawing on experience from elsewhere. We look forward to seeing the results of her research later this year.

Earlier in the year, Library supporter David Chisolm met representatives of Stirling Council to discuss how the Leighton can be more prominently included in their tourism promotion materials. That has had to be put on hold for the moment, but we look forward to renewing those discussions as things begin to open up again.

People who walk by the Library and see the low doorway to the Undercroft that was the Librarian's residence may wonder what that part of the building contains. If it is possible financially, legally, practically, and safely, how could we adapt the Undercroft to encourage more people to enjoy the whole of the Leighton Library? All thoughts welcome.

### **What you can do:**

1. Do pass this newsletter on to people who might be interested.
2. Do recommend to people to visit the Library's website where they can watch the excellent nine minute video on Leighton and the Library and find information on the history of the Library, Leighton himself, and the books: [www.leightonlibrary.org.uk](http://www.leightonlibrary.org.uk).
3. Encourage people to check out our Facebook page and Twitter page, to 'like' the pages, and to share them.
4. If you know of someone who might like to sign up as a Friend of the Leighton Library, please let them know to email [leightonfriends@gmail.com](mailto:leightonfriends@gmail.com) for an application form. The annual subscription remains at £20. Friends receive the newsletter and will receive invitations to Leighton events when that becomes possible again. The subscriptions help to fund annual running costs of the Library.

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*We plan to issue the newsletter three times a year – one before the season starts, one in mid-season, and one following the end of the season.*

*Thanks to all contributors to this second edition of the newsletter.*

*If you have comments on the newsletter, ideas for future articles, or would like to write something for the newsletter, we would love to hear from you.*

*Editorial team: Frances Ainslie, Hugh Grant, Hazel Wilson*