

Sacred Treasures: Christian heritage centre, Stonyhurst

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Libraries re-open after phase II of work to conserve treasury of Catholic history

Stonyhurst College is endowed with three beautiful historic libraries – the Arundell, Bay and Square Libraries, which contain more than 60,000 books and manuscripts, many of international importance.

The Arundell and Square Libraries have just re-opened after three years of building conservation, and the Bay Library is on course for re-opening in the Spring of 2017.

This work has been part of the second phase of the Christian Heritage Centre project at Stonyhurst, which is dedicated to preserving the college's unique and remarkable collections of books, manuscripts and artefacts, many of which pre-date the Reformation and tell the story of English Catholicism from the early Middle Ages onwards.

The Arundell Library, as the name suggests, houses the important collection of books and manuscripts bequeathed to the college by James Everard Arundell, 10th Baron Wardour, in 1837. He had been a pupil at the college, arriving in 1796, and was devoted to his old school.

The books include a copy of Shakespeare's First Folio, a substantial collection of early printed volumes and significant recusant holdings from the 17th century. The library also displays many rare and historic artefacts, such as a set of paintings depicting the Incas of Peru, a large collection of works by Albrecht Durer and objects from Ancient Rome, Greece, Egypt, the Far East and India.

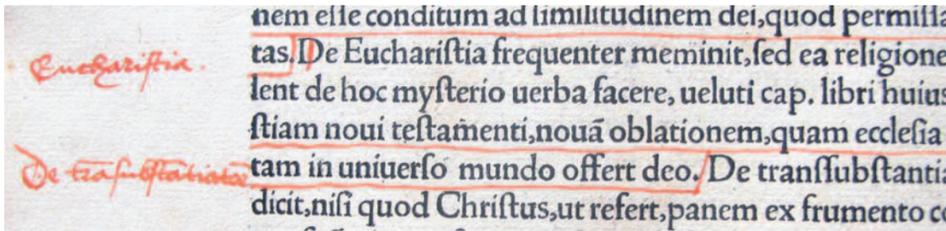
The library was built in 1856 specifically to house the 4,000 books from Lord Arundell's collection and, following recent extensive refurbishment, has been returned to its original appearance. It is a popular place for the pupils and for visiting schools, and children are able to have first-hand experience of working with museum artefacts under the guidance of the college curator.

The First Folio is currently on loan to Washington DC as part of a Christian Heritage Centre exhibition illustrating the life and times of Thomas More and his legacy. It will return in March of next year. There are thought to have been around 750 folios printed in 1623; the first time Shakespeare's plays had been collected and printed as a group including eighteen which had never appeared in print at all.

Without the Folio, there would have been no *Macbeth*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *The Tempest* or *Twelfth Night*. Two hundred and thirty-six copies of the Folio are known to have survived to the present day.

Stonyhurst College's direct ancestor, St Omers College, owned another copy of the First Folio, when the school was located in France between 1593 and 1762; this was left behind when the Jesuits were expelled from France and was recently rediscovered in the public library in the town of Saint-Omer.

Another book of note in the Arundell Library is William Caxton's 1483 publication of *The Golden Legend* - a best-selling medieval collection of the lives of the saints. It was one of the first books to be printed in English,



translated by Caxton himself. It sits alongside the *Nuremberg Chronicle* of 1493. This lavishly illustrated book is the first printed human history of the world, commencing with the creation of the Universe from Genesis and listing major events in the succeeding 1500 years of Christian history, such as Wat Tyler's Peasants' Revolt and the regular appearance of Halley's Comet.

Some of the woodcuts were worked by the youthful Durer, who was apprenticed to the publisher, Michael Wolgemut. The Arundell copy is printed in German of which about 300 copies survive to the present day.

Next to the Arundell Library is the Square Library, fitted out with elegant oak and brass, on two floors with a winding wrought-iron staircase connecting the two.

This contains the college's theology collection, including a great number of 16th century Catholic publications connected with the Reformation, several small recusant family collections, some rare 17th century Jesuit reports from the missions in Goa, Japan, China and South America. This library was, until relatively recently, the Common Room of the Jesuit community at Stonyhurst, including

Bernard Vaughan, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Martin d'Arcy, and whose legendary sherry cabinet provided hospitality for numerous guests such as Graham Greene, GK Chesterton, Evelyn Waugh and JRR Tolkien.

The Bay Library contains the Humanities collection dating from the days when Stonyhurst was England's Catholic university. From 1840 until the introduction of conscription in 1916, Stonyhurst College was affiliated to the University of London, allowing Catholics from Britain, as well as Europe, India and the Americas to study for their degree under Jesuit professors drawn from the great universities of Europe. For British Catholics, Oxford and Cambridge were forbidden because of their Anglican associations.

The undergraduates at Stonyhurst could study in a Catholic environment and graduate through the secular University of London. In the beautiful two-storey Victorian library, notable characters such as Joseph Mary Plunkett, the Irish signatory of the declaration of Independence, Franz Carl of Austria, cousin of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and George Herbert Walker the grandfather of President George Bush I and founder of both the Walker Cup and the Stonyhurst Golf Course, sat and studied.

In addition to these three historic libraries are a number of smaller collections - a rare grouping of 15th and 16th century English texts, including a translation of Irenaeus's 2nd century book on Heresy, which was owned and annotated by both Thomas Cranmer and Anthony Babington.

The college's own printing press was founded at St Omers in 1608, and the libraries hold a substantial number of St Omers and other secret press books including works by the English martyrs Edmund Campion and Robert Southwell. These volumes of Catholic devotional work were distributed secretly and provided much solace to Catholics trying to maintain their faith. Several small collections from English recusant houses have been placed at Stonyhurst, providing invaluable insights into the spiritual life of Catholics surviving the Penal Laws.

The newly restored Arundell Library at Stonyhurst is pictured at the top, with images from the many books and documents held at the college. They include a woodcut by Durer of what appears to be the Veil of Veronica, bottom left, and other illuminations from the *Nuremberg Chronicle* of 1493, right. One of just 300 copies that survive today, it was the first printed history of the world. Above is an extract from a translation of Irenaeus's 2nd Book of Heresy, which was owned and annotated by both Thomas Cranmer and Anthony Babington



The Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst is home to unique Catholic collections – items which draw on this country's Christian story. This registered charity is currently creating accommodation for scholars, retreatants and those wishing to deepen their Christian Faith. Theodore House will be followed by a Visitors' Centre which will enable parishes, schools and the general public to have even greater access to these amazing collections. If you wish to learn more please and to support please visit www.christianheritagecentre.com or contact anton@christianheritagecentre.com