

= British Library =

The British Library is the national library of the United Kingdom and the largest library in the world by number of items catalogued . A Grade I listed building , the library is a major research library , holding around 170 million items from many countries , in many languages and in many formats , both print and digital : books , manuscripts , journals , newspapers , magazines , sound and music recordings , videos , play @-@ scripts , patents , databases , maps , stamps , prints , drawings . The Library 's collections include around 14 million books , along with substantial holdings of manuscripts and historical items dating back as far as 2000 BC .

As a legal deposit library , the British Library receives copies of all books produced in the United Kingdom and Ireland , including a significant proportion of overseas titles distributed in the UK . It also has a programme for content acquisitions . The British Library adds some three million items every year occupying 9 @.@ 6 kilometres (6 @.@ 0 mi) of new shelf space .

The library is a non @-@ departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Culture , Media and Sport . It is located on the north side of Euston Road in St Pancras , London (between Euston railway station and St Pancras railway station) and has a document storage centre and reading room near Boston Spa , 2 @.@ 5 miles (4 @.@ 0 km) east of Wetherby in West Yorkshire .

In 1973 , the British Library Act 1972 detached the library department from the British Museum , but it continued to host the now separated British Library in the same Reading Room and building as the museum until the library moved to a purpose @-@ built building at St Pancras , London .

= = Historical background = =

The British Library was created on 1 July 1973 as a result of the British Library Act 1972 . Prior to this , the national library was part of the British Museum , which provided the bulk of the holdings of the new library , alongside smaller organisations which were folded in (such as the National Central Library , the National Lending Library for Science and Technology and the British National Bibliography) . In 1974 functions previously exercised by the Office for Scientific and Technical Information were taken over ; in 1982 the India Office Library and Records and the HMSO Binderies became British Library responsibilities . In 1983 , the Library absorbed the National Sound Archive , which holds many sound and video recordings , with over a million discs and thousands of tapes .

The core of the Library 's historical collections is based on a series of donations and acquisitions from the 18th century , known as the " foundation collections " . These include the books and manuscripts of Sir Robert Cotton , Sir Hans Sloane , Robert Harley and the King 's Library of King George III , as well as the Old Royal Library donated by King George II .

For many years its collections were dispersed in various buildings around central London , in places such as Bloomsbury (within the British Museum) , Chancery Lane , Bayswater , and Holborn with an interlibrary lending centre at Boston Spa , Wetherby in West Yorkshire (situated on Thorp Arch Trading Estate) and the newspaper library at Colindale , north @-@ west London .

Initial plans for the British Library required demolition of an integral part of Bloomsbury ? a seven @-@ acre swathe of streets immediately in front of the Museum , so that the Library could be situated directly opposite . After a long and hard @-@ fought campaign led by Dr George Wagner , this decision was overturned and the library was instead constructed by John Laing plc on a site at Euston Road next to St Pancras railway station .

From 1997 to 2009 the main collection was housed in this single new building and the collection of British and overseas newspapers was housed at Colindale . In July 2008 the Library announced that it would be moving low @-@ use items to a new storage facility in Boston Spa in Yorkshire and that it planned to close the newspaper library at Colindale , ahead of a later move to a similar facility on the same site . From January 2009 to April 2012 over 200 km of material was moved to the Additional Storage Building and is now delivered to British Library Reading Rooms in London on request by a daily shuttle service . Construction work on the Newspaper Storage Building was completed in 2013 and the newspaper library at Colindale closed on 8 November 2013 . The

collection has now been split between the St Pancras and Boston Spa sites . The British Library Document Supply Service (BLDSS) and the Library 's Document Supply Collection is based on the same site in Boston Spa . Collections housed in Yorkshire , comprising low @-@ use material and the newspaper and Document Supply collections , make up around 70 % of the total material the library holds . The Library previously had a book storage depot in Woolwich , south @-@ east London , which is no longer in use .

The new library was designed specially for the purpose by the architect Colin St John Wilson . Facing Euston Road is a large piazza that includes pieces of public art , such as large sculptures by Eduardo Paolozzi (a bronze statue based on William Blake 's study of Isaac Newton) and Antony Gormley . It is the largest public building constructed in the United Kingdom in the 20th century .

In the middle of the building is a six @-@ storey glass tower inspired by a similar structure in the Beinecke Library , containing the King 's Library with 65 @,@ 000 printed volumes along with other pamphlets , manuscripts and maps collected by King George III between 1763 and 1820 . In December 2009 a new storage building at Boston Spa was opened by Rosie Winterton . The new facility , costing £ 26 million , has a capacity for seven million items , stored in more than 140 @,@ 000 bar @-@ coded containers , which are retrieved by robots , from the 162 @.@ 7 miles of temperature and humidity @-@ controlled storage space .

On Friday , 5 April 2013 , Lucie Burgess , the British Library 's head of content strategy , announced that , starting that weekend , the Library would begin saving all sites with the suffix .uk (every British website , e @-@ book , online newsletter , and blog) in a bid to preserve the nation 's " digital memory " (which as of then amounted to about 4 @.@ 8 million sites containing 1 billion web pages) . The Library would make all the material publicly available to users by the end of 2013 , and would ensure that , through technological advancements , all the material is preserved for future generations , despite the fluidity of the Internet .

The building was Grade I listed on 1 August 2015 .

= = Legal deposit = =

In England , Legal Deposit can be traced back to at least 1610 . The Copyright Act 1911 established the principle of the legal deposit , ensuring that the British Library and five other libraries in Great Britain and Ireland are entitled to receive a free copy of every item published or distributed in Britain . The other five libraries are : the Bodleian Library at Oxford ; the University Library at Cambridge ; the Trinity College Library at Dublin ; and the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales . The British Library is the only one that must automatically receive a copy of every item published in Britain ; the others are entitled to these items , but must specifically request them from the publisher after learning that they have been or are about to be published , a task done centrally by the Agency for the Legal Deposit Libraries .

Further , under the terms of Irish copyright law (most recently the Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000) , the British Library is entitled to automatically receive a free copy of every book published in Ireland , alongside the National Library of Ireland , the Trinity College Library at Dublin , the library of the University of Limerick , the library of Dublin City University and the libraries of the four constituent universities of the National University of Ireland . The Bodleian Library , Cambridge University Library , and the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales are also entitled to copies of material published in Ireland , but again must formally make requests .

In 2003 the Ipswich MP Chris Mole introduced a Private Member 's Bill which became the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 . The Act extends United Kingdom legal deposit requirements to electronic documents , such as CD @-@ ROMs and selected websites .

The Library also holds the Asia , Pacific and Africa Collections (APAC) which include the India Office Records and materials in the languages of Asia and of north and north @-@ east Africa .

= = Using the library 's reading rooms = =

The Library is open to everyone who has a genuine need to use its collections . Anyone with a

permanent address who wishes to carry out research can apply for a Reader Pass ; they are required to provide proof of signature and address .

Historically , only those wishing to use specialised material unavailable in other public or academic libraries would be given a Reader Pass . The Library has been criticised for admitting numbers of undergraduate students , who have access to their own university libraries , to the reading rooms . The Library replied that it has always admitted undergraduates as long as they have a legitimate personal , work @-@ related or academic research purpose .

The majority of catalogue entries can be found on Explore the British Library , the Library 's main catalogue , which is based on Primo . Other collections have their own catalogues , such as western manuscripts . The large reading rooms offer hundreds of seats which are often filled with researchers , especially during the Easter and summer holidays .

British Library Reader Pass holders are also able to view the Document Supply Collection in the Reading Room at the Library 's site in Boston Spa in Yorkshire as well as the hard copy newspaper collection from 29 September 2014 . Now that access is available to legal deposit collection material , it is necessary for visitors to register as a Reader to use the Boston Spa Reading Room .

= = Material available online = =

The British Library makes a number of images of items within its collections available online . Its Online Gallery gives access to 30 @,@ 000 images from various medieval books , together with a handful of exhibition @-@ style items in a proprietary format , such as the Lindisfarne Gospels . This includes the facility to " turn the virtual pages " of a few documents , such as Leonardo da Vinci 's notebooks . Catalogue entries for a large number of the illuminated manuscript collections are available online , with selected images of pages or miniatures from a growing number of them , and there is a database of significant bookbindings . British Library Sounds provides free online access to over 60 @,@ 000 sound recordings .

The British Library 's commercial secure electronic delivery service was started in 2003 at a cost of £ 6 million . This offers more than 100 million items (including 280 @,@ 000 journal titles , 50 million patents , 5 million reports , 476 @,@ 000 US dissertations and 433 @,@ 000 conference proceedings) for researchers and library patrons worldwide which were previously unavailable outside the Library because of copyright restrictions . In line with a government directive that the British Library must cover a percentage of its operating costs , a fee is charged to the user . However , this service is no longer profitable and has led to a series of restructures to try to prevent further losses . When Google Books started , the British Library signed an agreement with Microsoft to digitise a number of books from the British Library for its Live Search Books project . This material was only available to readers in the US , and closed in May 2008 . The scanned books are currently available via the British Library catalogue or Amazon .

In October 2010 the British Library launched its Management and business studies portal . This website is designed to allow digital access to management research reports , consulting reports , working papers and articles .

In November 2011 , four million newspaper pages from the 18th and 19th centuries were made available online . The project will scan up to 40 million pages over the next 10 years . The archive is free to search , but there is a charge for accessing the pages themselves .

= = Electronic collections = =

Explore the British Library is the latest iteration of the online catalogue . It contains nearly 57 million records and may be used to search , view and order items from the collections or search the contents of the Library 's website . The Library 's electronic collections include over 40 @,@ 000 ejournals , 800 databases and other electronic resources . A number of these are available for remote access to registered St Pancras Reader Pass holders .

= = Digital Library System = =

In 2012 , the UK legal deposit libraries signed a memorandum of understanding to create a shared technical infrastructure implementing the Digital Library System developed by the British Library . The DLS was in anticipation of the Legal Deposit Libraries (Non @-@ Print Works) Regulations 2013 , an extension of the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 to include non @-@ print electronic publications from 6 April 2013 . Four storage nodes , located in London , Boston Spa , Aberystwyth , and Edinburgh , linked via a secure network in constant communication automatically replicate , self ? check , and repair data . A complete crawl of every .uk domain (and other TLD 's with UK based server GeoIP) has been added annually to the DLS since 2013 , which also contains all of the Internet Archive 's 1996 @-@ 2013 .uk collection . The policy and system is based on that of the Bibliothèque nationale de France , which has crawled (via IA until 2010) the .fr domain annually (62TB 's in 2015) since 2006 .

= = Exhibitions = =

A number of books and manuscripts are on display to the general public in the Sir John Ritblat Gallery which is open seven days a week at no charge . Some of the manuscripts in the exhibition include Beowulf , the Lindisfarne Gospels and St Cuthbert Gospel , a Gutenberg Bible , Geoffrey Chaucer 's Canterbury Tales , Thomas Malory 's Le Morte d 'Arthur (King Arthur) , Captain Cook 's journal , Jane Austen 's History of England , Charlotte Brontë 's Jane Eyre , Lewis Carroll 's Alice 's Adventures Under Ground , Rudyard Kipling 's Just So Stories , Charles Dickens 's Nicholas Nickleby , Virginia Woolf 's Mrs Dalloway and a room devoted solely to Magna Carta , as well as several Qu 'rans and Asian items .

In addition to the permanent exhibition , there are frequent thematic exhibitions which have covered maps , sacred texts , the history of the English language , and law , including a celebration of the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta .

= = Business and IP Centre = =

In May 2005 , the British Library received a grant of £ 1 million from the London Development Agency to change two of its reading rooms into the Business & IP Centre . The Centre was opened in March 2006 . It holds arguably the most comprehensive collection of business and intellectual property (IP) material in the United Kingdom and is the official library of the UK Intellectual Property Office .

The collection is divided up into four main information areas : market research , company information , trade directories , and journals . It is free of charge in hard copy and online via approximately 30 subscription databases . Registered readers can access the collection and the databases .

There are over 50 million patent specifications from 40 countries in a collection dating back to 1855 . The collection also includes official gazettes on patents , trade marks and Registered Design ; law reports and other material on litigation ; and information on copyright . This is available in hard copy and via online databases .

Staff are trained to guide small and medium enterprises (SME) and entrepreneurs to use the full range of resources .

Since 2012 , Stephen Fear is currently the British Library 's Entrepreneur in Residence and Ambassador .

= = Document Supply Service = =

As part of its establishment in 1973 , the British Library absorbed the National Lending Library for Science and Technology (NLL) , based near Boston Spa in Yorkshire , which had been established in 1961 . Before this , the site had housed a World War II Royal Ordnance Factory , ROF Thorp Arch , which closed in 1957 . When the NLL became part of the British Library in 1973 it changed its

name to the British Library Lending Division , in 1985 it was renamed as the British Library Document Supply Centre and is now known as the British Library Document Supply Service , often abbreviated as BLDSS .

BLDSS now holds 87 @. @ 5 million items , including 296 @, @ 000 international journal titles , 400 @, @ 000 conference proceedings , 3 million monographs , 5 million official publications , and 500 @, @ 000 UK and North American theses and dissertations . 12 @. @ 5 million articles in the Document Supply Collection are held electronically and can be downloaded immediately .

The collection supports research and development in UK , overseas and international industry , particularly in the pharmaceutical industry . BLDSS also provides material to Higher Education institutions , students and staff and members of the public , who can order items through their Public Library or through the Library 's BL Document Supply Service (BLDSS) . The Document Supply Service also offers Find it For Me and Get it For Me services which assist researchers in accessing hard @- @ to @- @ find material .

In April 2013 , BLDSS launched its new online ordering and tracking system , which enables customers to search available items , view detailed availability , pricing and delivery time information , place and track orders , and manage account preferences online .

= = Sound archive = =

The British Library Sound Archive holds more than a million discs and 185 @, @ 000 tapes . The collections come from all over the world and cover the entire range of recorded sound from music , drama and literature to oral history and wildlife sounds , stretching back over more than 100 years . The Sound Archive 's online catalogue is updated daily .

It is possible to listen to recordings from the collection in selected Reading Rooms in the Library through their SoundServer and Listening and Viewing Service , which is based in the Rare Books & Music Reading Room .

In 2006 the Library launched a new online resource British Library Sounds which makes over 60 @, @ 000 of the Sound Archive 's recordings available online for UK higher and further education and the general public .

= = Newspapers = =

The Library holds an almost complete collection of British and Irish newspapers since 1840 . This is partly because of the legal deposit legislation of 1869 , which required newspapers to supply a copy of each edition of a newspaper to the library . London editions of national daily and Sunday newspapers are complete back to 1801 . In total the collection consists of 660 @, @ 000 bound volumes and 370 @, @ 000 reels of microfilm containing tens of millions of newspapers with 52 @, @ 000 titles on 45 km of shelves . From earlier dates , the collections include the Thomason Tracts , comprising 7 @, @ 200 17th @- @ century newspapers , and the Burney Collection , featuring nearly 1 million pages of newspapers from the late 18th and early 19th centuries . The section also holds extensive collections of non @- @ British newspapers , in numerous languages .

The Newspapers section was based in Colindale in North London until 2013 , when the buildings , which were considered to provide inadequate storage conditions and to be beyond improvement , were closed and sold for redevelopment . The physical holdings are now divided between the sites at St Pancras (some high @- @ use periodicals , and rare items such as the Thomason Tracts and Burney collections) and Boston Spa (the bulk of the collections , stored in a new purpose @- @ built facility) .

A significant and growing proportion of the collection is now made available to readers as surrogate facsimiles , either on microfilm , or , more recently , in digitised form . In 2010 a ten @- @ year programme of digitisation of the newspaper archives with commercial partner DC Thomson subsidiary Brightsolid began , and the British Newspaper Archive was launched in November 2011 . A dedicated newspaper reading room opened at St Pancras in April 2014 , including facilities for consulting microfilmed and digital materials , and , where no surrogate exists , hard @- @ copy

material retrieved from Boston Spa .

= = Moving image services = =

Launched in October 2012 , the British Library 's moving image services provide access to nearly a million sound and moving image items onsite , supported by data for over 20 million sound and moving image recordings . The three services , which for copyright reasons can only be accessed from terminals within the Reading Rooms at St Pancras , Colindale or Boston Spa , are :

BBC Pilot / Redux : A collaboration with BBC Research & Development to mirror its archive which has , since June 2007 , been recording 24 / 7 of all of the BBC 's national and some regional broadcast output . BBC Pilot includes 2 @. @ 2 million catalogue records and 190 @, @ 000 playable programmes , but unlike BBC Redux it does not include any broadcasts beyond 2011 .

Broadcast News : Since May 2010 , the British Library has been making off @- @ air recordings of daily TV and radio news broadcasts from seventeen channels , including BBC , ITV , Channel 4 , Sky News , Al @- @ Jazeera English , NHK World , CNN , France 24 , Bloomberg , Russia Today and China 's CCTV News . Many of the programs come with subtitles , which can be electronically searched , greatly enhancing the value of the collection as a research tool .

Television & Radio Index for Learning & Teaching (TRILT) : Produced by the British Universities Film & Video Council (BUFVC) , TRILT is a database of all UK television and radio broadcasts since 2001 (and selectively back to 1995) . Its 16 million records , growing by a million per year , cover every channel , broadcast and repeat .

= = Philatelic Collections = =

The British Library Philatelic Collections are held at St Pancras . The collections were established in 1891 with the donation of the Tapling collection , they steadily developed and now comprise over 25 major collections and a number of smaller ones , encompassing a wide range of disciplines . The collections include postage and revenue stamps , postal stationery , essays , proofs , covers and entries , " cinderella stamp " material , specimen issues , airmails , some postal history materials , official and private posts , etc . , for almost all countries and periods .

An extensive display of material from the collections is on exhibit , which may be the best permanent display of diverse classic stamps and philatelic material in the world . Approximately 80 @, @ 000 items on 6 @, @ 000 sheets may be viewed in 1 @, @ 000 display frames ; 2 @, @ 400 sheets are from the Tapling Collection . All other material , which covers the whole world , is available to students and researchers . As well as these collections , the library actively acquires literature on the subject . This makes the British Library one of the world 's prime philatelic research centres . The Head Curator of the Philatelic Collections is Paul Skinner .

= = Highlights of the collections = =

Highlights , some of which were selected by the British Library , include :

Diamond Sutra , the world 's earliest dated printed book printed in 868 during the Tang Dynasty

Codex Sinaiticus , the major portion of the world 's second @- @ oldest manuscript of the Bible in koine Greek (4th century) .

Codex Alexandrinus , an early manuscript of the Bible in koine Greek

Lindisfarne Gospels , an illuminated Latin Gospel book from Anglo @- @ Saxon Northumbria

St Cuthbert Gospel , a Northumbrian gospel book with the oldest Western binding

Two Gutenberg Bibles , two copies of a Latin Bible printed at Mainz , Germany (1450s)

Giant medieval bibles such as the Worms Bible , Stavelot Bible , Parc Abbey Bible and Floreffe Bible

Schuttern Gospels , an early illuminated gospel book produced in Baden , Germany

Bible from Moutier @- @ Grandval Abbey , one of three illustrated bibles made in Tours in the 9th century

Two 1215 copies of Magna Carta

The sole surviving manuscript copy of the poem Beowulf

Bedford Hours a richly illustrated late medieval book of hours once owned by the Duke of Bedford

Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander , 1355 ? 56 , the most important medieval Bulgarian manuscript .

Codex Arundel , one of Leonardo da Vinci 's notebooks .

William Tyndale 's 1534 English translation New Testament , the personal copy of Anne Boleyn .

Original manuscript of Handel 's Messiah

Manuscript of Alice 's Adventures Under Ground by Lewis Carroll (given to the British Library by a consortium of American bibliophiles " in recognition of Britain 's courage in facing Hitler before America came into the war ")

= = Collections of manuscripts = =

= = = Foundation collections = = =

The three foundation collections are those which were brought together to form the initial manuscript holdings of the British Museum in 1753 :

Cotton manuscripts

Harley manuscripts

Sloane manuscripts

= = = Other named collections = = =

Other " named " collections of manuscripts include (but are not limited to) the following :

Arundel Manuscripts

Egerton manuscripts

King 's manuscripts

Lansdowne manuscripts

Royal manuscripts

Stefan Zweig Collection

Stowe manuscripts

= = = Additional manuscripts = = =

The Additional Manuscripts series covers manuscripts that are not part of the named collections , and contains all other manuscripts donated , purchased or bequeathed to the Library since 1756 . The numbering begins at 4101 , as the series is considered to be a continuation of the collection of Sloane manuscripts , which are numbered 1 to 4100 .

= = Chief Executives of the British Library = =

Sir Harry Hookway , the first Chief Executive (1973 to 1984)

Dame Lynne Brindley (2000 to 2012)

Roly Keating (2012 to present)