

WARRINGTON LIBRARY

David Rogers

Introduction

If you were allowed behind the scenes at Warrington Library, you could be forgiven for describing it as a "quart in a pint pot". Despite extending on the same site in 1877, 1930 and 1965, the service still suffers from lack of space but perhaps it is not surprising for a town centre library which has been collecting and growing since 1848. For a north-west industrial town of its size (68,000 before new town development status in 1971) Warrington has truly remarkable collections of antiquarian books and local history sources. This is due to long-serving curators and librarians having a keen interest in local history, a persistent attitude to the collection of artifacts and documents, and the enthusiastic support of talented local historians.

History

With words chosen very carefully, Warrington claims to be "the oldest rate-supported public library in England", a claim not conclusively disputed by Canterbury (first to adopt the Museums Act but did not include books) and Salford whose library dates from 1849. Warrington provided free

public access but only for reference purposes. Books were only for loan to subscribers. Despite having less than half a dozen people who were rated £500 and upwards a year, the fledgling Borough Council (1847) decided in 1848 to levy a rate of a halfpenny in the £ to support a combined museum and library which opened its doors on 1st November, 1848.

The first Public Libraries Act did not receive Royal Assent until August 1850 but Warrington used their own interpretation of the powers of the 1845 Museums Act – which had been passed "to promote the establishment and extension of museums of art and science in large towns, for the instruction and amusement of the inhabitants thereof" – to include specimens of literature as well as science and art. In other words, they provided a library as a department of the museum. The post of curator/librarian remained a dual responsibility until two separate appointments were made in 1920.

The public library of 1848 was based upon the Warrington Circulating Library which had a chequered history from its inception in May 1760, numbering amongst its subscribers in 1762 and its committee in 1763 one Joseph Priestley, tutor at Warrington Academy, later famed for his experiments and the discovery of oxygen. A large proportion of



Later photograph of the premises in Friars Gate rented for the new Museum and Library 1848.

the books inherited from the Circulating Library survive today in Warrington Library.

The establishment of the library followed the circulation of "printed proposals" for taking over the Town Library (previously known as the Circulating Library) and a public meeting chaired by John Fitchett Marsh, first Town Clerk (part-time!) of Warrington. Under the proposals the Borough Council were to be permitted the use of the library "for a probationary period of seven years, provided the Council shall in each year levy a rate ... of not less than a farthing in the pound". Subject to the terms and conditions laid down, the library was "to become the absolute property of the Council" after seven years.

In order to ensure success it was decided to seek patrons who would guarantee the necessary minimum £600 per annum. The amounts promised are staggering when the following figures are approximated to today's values:

William Beamont, local solicitor and first Mayor, £200; Joseph Stubs, file and tool manufacturer, £100; Gilbert Greenall, M.P. and brewer, £50; William Allcard, railway engineer, £25.

Although the library was rate-supported, the payment of a subscription in order to borrow books was required until 1891 when, after much agitation, particularly in the correspondence columns of the *Warrington Guardian*, it became a free public library in the true sense by virtue of a Local Act of Parliament. Had it not been so, free loans of books would have become compulsory under the Public Libraries Act of 1892. Between 1848 and 1891 non-subscribers were allowed reference access only on certain evenings of the week. Even so, demand for this restricted use was always high from the beginning. The problem was often aired in meetings of the Museum and Library Committee, e.g. on 26 September 1854 they resolved once again to approach the Mayor and the Watch Committee, "230 having attended on the previous evening, the Secretary to apply for a policeman on public nights".

There were other problems with the rented premises first occupied by the new museum and library, not least the fluctuations in rent and difficulties with the garden. In 1855 the foundation stone was laid for the present building which opened in 1857. This purpose-built museum and library bore a remarkable resemblance to the rejected plans of Mr Frank Dobson, notable architect and famous son of Newcastle, whose plans were dismissed as too expensive with a projected costing of £2000. After some prevarication, Mr Dobson withdrew and wrote asking for £150 for the work he had done but the committee pleaded lack of funds and offered 100 guineas. Dobson eventually settled for £125 compensation. The 1857 building is obviously a cheaper version of Dobson's plans (see his drawings preserved in Warrington archives) but it did not alleviate the crowd problems. The Watch Committee continued to ignore repeated requests for a policeman "to attend in the evenings" and eventually and reluctantly, on police advice, Thomas Callan was appointed as "attendant" at a fee of three shillings a week.

In 1848 the Curator was to reside on the premises rent free, with coal and gas provided, at an annual salary of 50 guineas. In 1857 the curator moved to a house and garden

provided at rear of the new building, a site cleared and occupied by the lending library and bookstore.

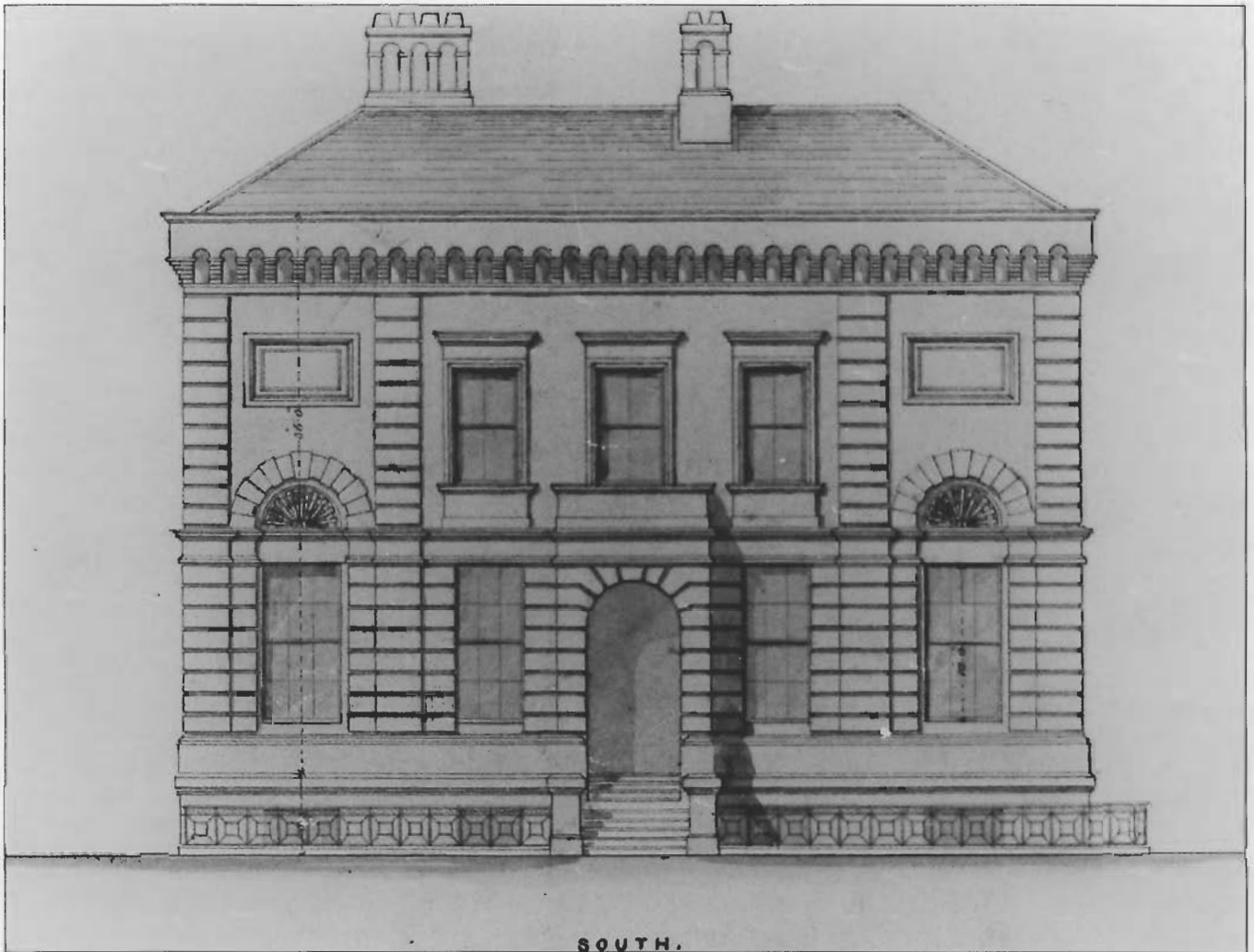
Mention was made earlier of the long-serving curator/librarians and it would be remiss not to name them. Apart from a break in service between 1852 and 1855, James Cooper served from 1848 until 1874.

To digress for a moment, in order to illustrate that interesting details can be derived from dull old minute books and, perhaps more significantly, to show the value of a remarkable local history collection, the following notes relate to the period 1852 to 1855 when James Cooper was otherwise engaged.

Various members of the Museum and Library Committee pushed their own nominees for the post: a number of Committee meetings were held when candidates were present, including one John Fletcher (more later) and one who brought samples of stuffed birds.

Meetings were adjourned awaiting "a missing application". No doubt someone was rooting for him because eventually the application from Henry Bellairs of Leicester turned up, accompanied by testimonials. Bellairs was given the job but he did not arrive as promptly as expected and temporary arrangements were made for "Martha West to sweep out the museum" and for "Joseph Clare to be in charge until Mr Bellairs arrives next week". Martha West was soon after made permanent cleaner, cleaning twice per week on Tuesdays and Thursdays (the days following the public evenings) at 1s 9d per week, "finding her own brushes and soap". Mr Bellairs was obviously in post by January 1853 because it is recorded that he was paid for "sundries". However, in February he asked for his testimonials back and then resigned in March without explanation. His replacement, one John Fletcher, did not arrive until October 1853. At a specially convened meeting of the committee in December 1854 it was reported that Fletcher had been before the town's magistrates for ill-treating his wife and so he was sacked and James Cooper, whose private business was not doing very well, was re-appointed. When he retired in 1874 he was still on the same salary and conditions of employment as applied on appointment in 1848, his daughter being his unpaid assistant for most of the time.

The post was advertised with a salary of £150 per annum, with reservations about the house and garden. His successor must have negotiated because Charles Madeley (founder member of the Library Association), who served from 1874 until 1920, was appointed at £140 per annum with house, coal and gas provided. The conditions did not include annual leave but the minutes record that on 13th August 1875 Mr Madeley asked for, and was granted, one week holiday. In subsequent years he had always to submit a formal request, but by 1890 the minute books began to record that Madeley be granted "his customary two weeks holiday". The local history and reference collections owe much to Madeley's efforts and methodical ways of working, only marred during the period of his deep mourning at the loss of his only son, Benton, killed in action in the First World War, three weeks after his marriage and enlistment. Charles Madeley's original application for the job in 1874, with eight testimonials appended, is available in the archives and it is an interesting glimpse of Victorian master and servant relationships, e.g. "Gentlemen, I beg to apply for the situation of Curator and



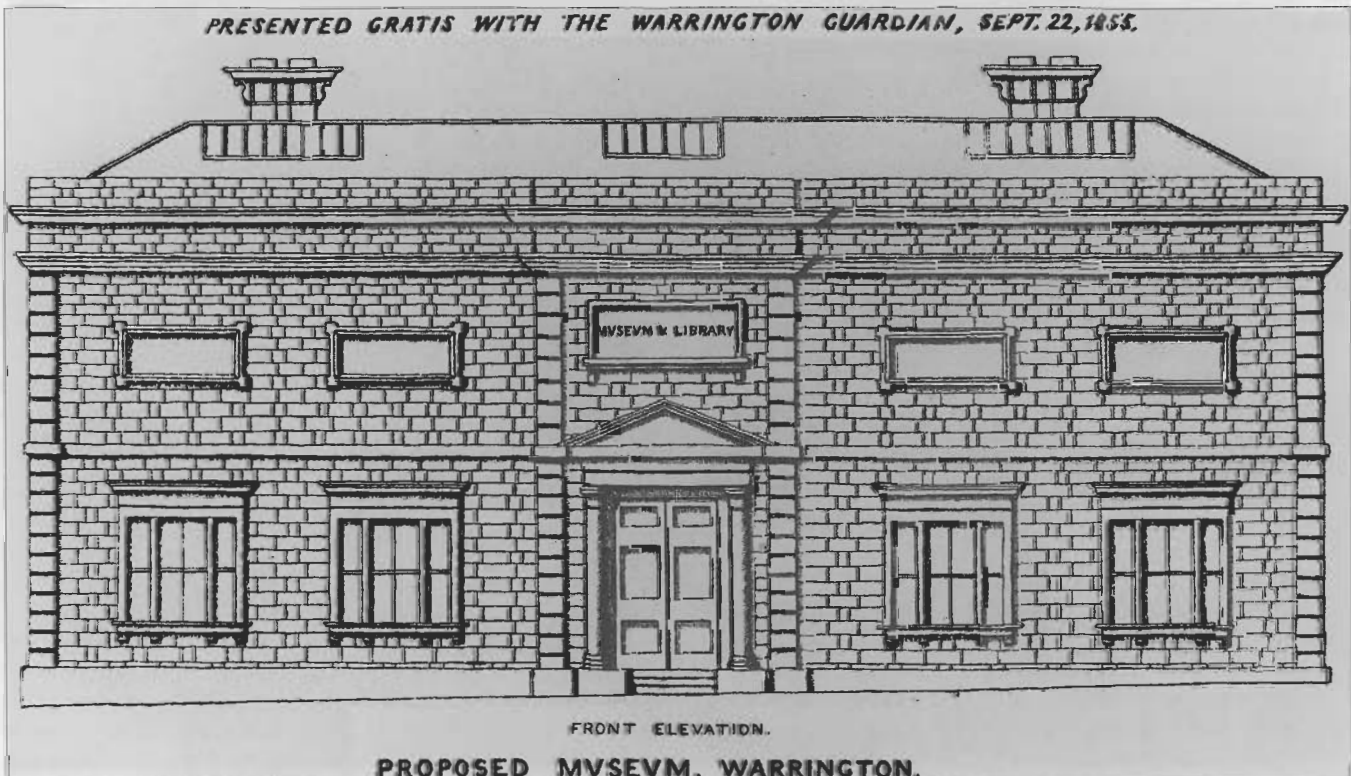
The front entrance to Dobson's proposed building



An artist's impression of Dobson's proposed building



Engraving of the new building seven years after opening. The School of Art was on the top floor of the Museum until getting its own



The local newspaper has always taken a keen interest, evidenced by this free gift to readers

Librarian," and, "I am, Gentlemen, your obedient servant ...". Madeley died on the premises in 1920, still in post at the age of 71, having been ill for six months. The Borough Council had been reluctant to dispense with his services and had just granted him an extra month's leave in the hope that he would be able to carry on.

In 1920 John McAdam was the first to be appointed to the post of Chief Librarian when the job was separated from that of curator. The library was extended considerably in 1930-33 by the addition of the glass-topped lending library, a bookstore, offices and staff rest area, but perhaps the most significant development in McAdam's time was the conversion of the lending and children's libraries to "open access". He served until 1947 when he was succeeded by his deputy, George Arthur Carter, a much-respected post-war librarian and keen local historian, who was Chief Librarian and Clerk to the Committee until 1973 when he became a deputy director of Cheshire Libraries and Museums in anticipation of Cheshire County Council taking over the historic Warrington Library in April 1974.

Modernisation and rapid expansion took place between 1948 and 1965. To celebrate the centenary of the library in 1948 the reference library was the subject of major alterations which included the provision of a separate study, the addition of a two storey bookstore, and reducing the floor to ceiling bookstacks (ladders constantly necessary!) to a reachable height of six feet ten inches. The reference library, closed since April that year, was officially re-opened on 1st November 1948, exactly one hundred years from the start of the service.

In 1951 the lending library was reorganised and two new counters were installed which separated borrowers into two queues depending upon which counter they had left by on their previous visit, one counter stamping books in red and the other in violet ink. The simplest ideas are often best and this ingenious device halved Saturday morning long queues!

In 1965 the library was extended, the lending library was completely refurbished and a branch library was built at Orford. The extension added 3,565 square feet to Warrington Library and incorporated a new separate local history library and store, a large book exchange area for the schools library service, an additional strong room for archives, improved storage for reference material and a new staffroom. The older parts of the library were re-wired and the exterior of the 1857 part of the building was cleaned.

The reference and lending libraries, hitherto separate, were linked in 1988 by cutting arches between them. The lending library returned books desk was installed in the reference area and the book issue desk installed in the former entrance hall in order to create space for the rapidly expanding audio-visual collection and to allow children's books to be shelved in the adult lending area. The latter was done in acknowledgment of the fact that very young children were now using libraries and in an effort to keep them closer to parents using the lending library. The traditional reference library atmosphere was sacrificed in the process but compensation was given by providing a study in the room built for local history in 1965. The local history library was moved to a larger room and yet another strongroom, twice

the size of the 1965 one, was added, making a total of three strongrooms for archives.

The enquiry desk became an "information point" in 1994, combining the usual reference enquiries with Cheshire County Council information and access.

In the latest round of local government reorganisation Warrington reverted to single tier status, and the former children's reading room, also popular as a meeting room for local societies and useful as an "income generator" for budgets under pressure, was lost to provide office space. This room was the original library entrance and office of the 1857 building.

Despite the many alterations and extensions, Warrington Library continues to have its own unique atmosphere and to provide a vibrant, welcoming service, not least a surprisingly wealthy local history source which continues to grow. The careful attention to detail and the enthusiasm of successive librarians culminated in 1971 in recognition by the Master of the Rolls as an approved repository for manorial and title documents. Consequent upon this honour, the Library and Museum Committee agreed to change the name of the local history library to "Local Studies Library and Record Office". In 1997 Cheshire County Council secured a British Library grant for the appointment and influence of a qualified archivist and, although the appointment was for ten hours only per week for six months, specifically for work on the papers of William Beamont, it was perhaps a good indicator of the strength of the collection. After completion of the project the appointment was extended and will now run until the year 2001 as part of the service level agreement between Warrington Borough and Cheshire County Councils. As a result, the improvement of storage and the programme of preservation begun in 1990 by archivists from Cheshire Record Office has been able to continue.

Special Collections and Unique Items

It is extremely difficult to choose items when looking over the contents of an Aladdin's cave and the following selection includes personal preferences discovered during 26 years at Warrington Library. Reference numbers are included where possible.

Minute Book of the Warrington Circulating Library (MS 1)

Commencing in May 1760, this is the official record of the library upon which Warrington Library was founded in 1848 and gives the details of library management one would expect. It contains some surprising facts, e.g. committee meetings were held weekly and members were allowed up to two hours in which to be late before being fined! Perhaps more significantly, books were always discussed and ordered or rejected. The majority of books ordered can still be seen today in Warrington Library.

Houghton Papers (MS 6)

A collection of Civil War papers belonging to the Constable at Houghton Green, three miles north of Warrington and not far from Padgate (of postwar teacher training fame). They are dated between 1642 and 1646, a period when Warrington was a prime military target due to Warrington Bridge being the strategic key to south Lancashire and north

rectly into a single volume, probably for, or on, presentation. They are a unique part of Priestley's world and copies have been supplied worldwide.

Illuminated Manuscript fragments (MS 1024-1032)

These are mainly leaves from books of devotions and hymnals and, together with some fragments of a block book, they are interesting, fine examples of the pre-printing era. It may be surprising to find such items in a town library, but, due to good recording of provenance, one discovers that they were astute purchases by the librarian/curator in 1912 using the rules of the "Local Book Fund" (made up of donations for the purpose) which gave him discretion to spend on other items when no local items were available. Some additional provenance, including price, in the form of extracts from the bookseller's printed catalogue is appended to the reverse of most of these beautiful examples.

Overseers of the Poor Papers (various nos., notably MS 104-126)

This is an extensive collection including the workhouse books 1729-1807, relief paid to families of men in the militia 1798-1802 and in Ireland 1798-1799, and the minute books of the Overseers up to 1925. Many interesting scraps of paper are to be found between the pages of some ledgers, left there because the clerk did his sums on the reverse. These may be bastardy orders, or notes from a commanding officer certifying a man was serving with the militia at a certain camp, e.g. Brighton (looking out for Napoleon?). The later workhouse books and other poor law documents have not been traced despite being kept in offices approximately 100 yards from the library. Legend has it that they were disposed of in the 1940s, post Beveridge.

Papers of overseers of other districts of Warrington are also available, particularly where the contents of a parish chest have been deposited.

Beamont Papers (see guide compiled by archivist)

William Beamont's own copies of his printed books contain many later manuscript additions and inserts, revealing something of his character. His extensive collection of hand written manuscripts include abstracts and calendars of local deeds and pedigrees of local families. It seems that Beamont was given access to the deeds for research but he must have persuaded their owners to deposit them since the originals are now the oldest Warrington archives, possibly dating from 1200.

Beamont's diaries date from 1816 when he was 19 years old to 1885, four years before his death. The last pages appear to have been torn out, maybe by himself because the standard had fallen due to his failing faculties, a fact which he complains of in the later years. There are some gaps in the diaries and he noted occasionally that he must do better. The diaries lack personal information although they often state his views on events and politics. Their format, like many of his notes, reveal his thrift, despite him being the most generous benefactor of the town and its people, individuals or otherwise. The second volume of the diaries was made by cutting all the pages from a book, "Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society 1823-24", leaving about one-inch stubs to which he attached scrap paper to reform a book. Despite giving away thousands

during his lifetime, Beamont, a local solicitor, left a fortune estimated at today's value to be between £1.5 and £2million. His second wife died in 1915, surviving him by 26 years and continuing their charitable work until her death. The Beamont Charity is still administered by what was originally Beamont's law firm, rendering assistance to "well conducted persons who have known better days".

The variation in format of Beamont's papers presented problems in their cataloguing and preservation. The last remaining items, literally on scraps of paper, comprising mainly his notes and prompts for some of the many public speeches he made, were only catalogued in recent years.

For more information, see the guide to Beamont's papers prepared as a result of the British Library grant, available at Warrington Library.

Sibson Papers (MS 735-768 & MS 1645-1646)

The Reverend Edmund Sibson, vicar of St Thomas's at Ashton-in-Makerfield in the 19th century, filed all correspondence he received. Bound into 36 subject volumes, the letters and enclosures (envelopes and stamps included after their invention) are dated between 1806 and 1847, although earlier documents Sibson acquired are included. The subject of each volume is of his choosing, e.g. letters from pupils and friends, Sunday school, mathematics, etc. and they give great insight into the man and his work.

Report Book of the Inspector of Nuisances (MS 1218)

This may seem to be a strange selection but it is my personal favourite. A serious document in its day, it now appears to be quaint and amusing, particularly since a check on the subsequent career of the Inspector shows that he later fell from grace and was imprisoned for fraud. His reports are interesting details of public health and living conditions in a northern industrial town in the middle of the 19th century. The volume, painstakingly compiled by a man obviously lacking education, consists of his weekly reports to committee of the many breaches of regulations and the dangers to public health which he discovered or was called upon to check, e.g. "investigated the foul smell in Friars Gate, complained of by Alderman Beamont", and also the many occasions which he reported, with names and addresses, the people who "kept pigeons in the rooms in which they live", despite previous warnings from him.

Broadsides Collection (separate index, not fully catalogued)

This nearly 27,000 strong collection of ephemera, cleverly named, probably by Charles Madeley, contains the usual posters, illustrations, programmes, postcards, photographs (some as old as the invention), invitations, menu cards, passes for the VIP enclosures on royal visits, and the first and last tram tickets issued in Warrington, etc., never ceases to surprise the enquirer. In particular and fittingly, items relating to the library and museum are represented in great detail, having been preserved with great enthusiasm since 1848. There are also collections relating to Lancashire and Cheshire and a general collection which contains some interesting items, not least the 56 Japanese prints purchased for a few pounds in 1916 and now worth a small fortune. The posters relating to the cholera epidemic of 1832 have been bound into a separate volume and they are accompanied by the notes of a local doctor (and local history

WARRINGTON MUSEUM AND LIBRARY.

The Committee of Management find themselves under the necessity of taking steps to prevent the inconvenience arising from the pressure of the crowds of persons seeking admission on the evenings on which the institution is open to the public, and to limit the gratuitous admission of the public to two days per week, instead of three, in order to allow more time to the Curator for performance of the duties required from him at present, in preparing and preserving specimens.

The Committee therefore give notice that for the present the institution will not be open on Mondays, except to Subscribers. It will be gratuitously open every Wednesday and Saturday, from 10 o'clock in the forenoon to 4, and from 6 to half-past 9 in the evening, under the same regulations as hitherto, except that between the hours of 6 and half-past 9 o'clock in the evening the public will only be admitted on production of a ticket, procured from the Curator previous to 4 o'clock on the same day.

Signed by order of the Committee,

JOHN FITCHETT MARSH, Hon. Sec.

Warrington, 27th November, 1848.

HADDOCK & SON, PRINTERS, WARRINGTON.

Poster illustrating the heavy demand on public evenings

enthusiast, of course!) so that one is able to see the general course of the disease together with the recorded illness and death of individuals as witnessed by their doctor!

Access to the broadsides is through an imperfect index. There is no substitute for viewing the individual subject folders, if allowed to do so.

Antiquarian Books

Warrington Library has a vast collection of rare and antiquarian books, benefiting from the original collection which it inherited from the Circulating Library and from various donations and bequests since its inception. John Fitchett Marsh, first Town Clerk, began the tradition in 1848 and there have been a number of significant benefactions of individual items and collections since, not least the John Jackson collection purchased and given in 1877 by the town's prospective M.P., Mr G. McMinnies. John Jackson, a 19th century Quaker, was an eccentric schoolmaster who spent all his money buying old books, relying on his friends for food and clothing. Living much closer to the date of the invention of printing than us, he was able to obtain fine and varied examples of early printed books, all of which now are housed at Warrington.

The following is a brief list of antiquarian and rare books at Warrington. Bibliographical details are omitted since these are readily available elsewhere and most items may be familiar:

John Gould's 'Monograph of the Trochilidae or humming birds' (vols. 1-14 only, lacks vols. 15 & 16 and 5 supplementary vols.) containing beautiful hand-coloured illustrations of birds. at every opening.

Collected works of Duns Scotus (Scottish equivalent of

Chaucer) edited by Friar Thomas Penketh (a monk at Warrington Friary and mentioned by Shakespeare as a supporter of Richard III in act iii scene v of the play). This is the oldest printed book (1474) in the library.

John Howard's "State of the Prisons", printed by Eyres Press in 1777 when Howard paid a number of visits to Warrington. Howard's visits are commemorated in the brickwork above Boots store in Bridge Street as the site of the silversmith's shop where he lodged. His book led to the reform of prisons and the beginnings of the Howard League for Penal Reform.

'Poems of Wil. Shakes-peare, Gent.', 1640 (first edition). This small volume was bound in leather about 80 years ago but it is perhaps the most valuable in the library on the evidence of the price paid at a Sotheby's auction in 1973.

'History of the Earls of Warren and Surrey' produced by Eyres Press, 2 vols., described by Gilbert Wakefield (1756-1801, scholar, controversial writer and tutor at Warrington Academy from 1779 to 1783) as "perhaps the most accurate specimen of typography ever produced by any press".

Adam Smith's "Wealth of the Nations", first edition, a book which changed the study of political economy into a science.

Curtis's Botanical Magazine, vols. 1-20, bound in 10 vols., lavishly illustrated with hand-coloured prints. These handsome volumes were donated by a local doctor in 1954.

Nuremberg Chronicle, 1493, the first attempt at encyclopaedia style presentation of information, mainly history and geography. Some evidence of cheating by the printer, short of woodcut blocks, using some twice with different captions!

Eyres Press books are well represented in the collection as expected, since William Eyres of Warrington was a printer of national repute in the 18th century producing many well known books. He was also the librarian of the Warrington Circulating Library and the collection was housed at his shop for many years.

For more examples and details of Warrington's antiquarian collection consult the pre 1974 card catalogue of the reference library. Some short cuts exist, e.g. the printed reference catalogue of 1898 and supplement 1908, and the pamphlet describing the John Jackson collection shortly after its presentation in 1877.

Theses and Books Based on the Warrington Collection

The collection has been used at all levels of research and enquiries have been regularly answered for correspondents in the U.S.A., Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In common with other good sources of family history, any family history enquiry involving research now has to be referred to volunteers in the local family history society or to paid professionals due to the enormous growth in this field. Between 1947 and 1995, despite the lack of designated local history librarians, detailed research was undertaken by the staff and dispatched to grateful enquirers in various corners of the world. Some of the international enquirers

have been known to turn up months later, waving their letters from Warrington Library, expressing their amazement and gratitude and eager to follow up suggested lines of research!

Acknowledgments have appeared regularly in popular and serious works, ranging from the biography of former champion jockey Steve Donoghue (famous for two decades following the First World War, and born in Warrington) by Michael Seth-Smith (former journalist and BBC radio commentator on horse racing, including the Grand National), published in 1974, to scholarly works on 18th century women poets by Professor William McCarthy of Iowa State University, published in the 1990s.

The following examples are some which used Warrington as a primary source:

ASPDEN, G. 'Up in the Gallery: a study of Warrington's music hall and theatre from its beginnings to the outbreak of the First World War'. A thesis submitted to Padgate College of Education in 1973, drawn mainly from theatre posters and newspapers.

BOSCOW, H. 'Warrington: a Heritage', 1944. A general history aimed at schools and the general public.

CARTER, G. A. 'William Beamont and the town of Warrington in the 19th century', a dissertation presented at Liverpool University in 1983 for the Diploma in Local History.

CARTER, G. A. 'Warrington and the Mid-Mersey Valley', published by Morten, 1971 (ISBN 0 901598 2 59), previously published as newspaper articles on local parishes, churches and streets in the Warrington Guardian, 1968-70.

CHARLESWORTH, R. 'A History of Education in Warrington', 1933. A typescript of 273 pages, possibly prepared as a thesis but no indication given.

CROWE, A. M. 'Warrington, ancient and modern: a history of the town and neighbourhood', 1947, reprinted by Cheshire Libraries and Archives 1994.

JOHNSON, D. C. 'Industry and employment in Warrington 1890-1982', thesis presented for a master's degree at Manchester University, 1983, 6 vols. An intensive study of local industries and companies. Warrington ref. MS2797.

MCCARTHY, W. and KRAFT, E., editors. 'Poems of Anna Letitia Barbauld', University of Georgia Press, 1994. ISBN 0 80203 1528 1.

O'BRIEN, P. (M. D.) 'Warrington Academy 1757-86, Its Predecessors and Successors', Owl Books, 1989 (ISBN 0951 4333 0 X). The acknowledgments to this scholarly work opens by paying tribute to librarians and then says, "We are most fortunate in Warrington to have an incomparable Local History Library, which owes its origin to the staff and associates of Warrington Academy".

O'BRIEN, P. (M. D.) "Eyres' Press (1756-1803): an embryo university press", Owl Books, 1993. ISBN 1 873888 45 7.

WARRINGTON
MUSEUM AND LIBRARY.

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT.

THE CEREMONY OF LAYING THE

FOUNDATION
STONE

OF THE NEW MUSEUM, IS INTENDED TO TAKE PLACE

On Thursday, 20th September,
Instant, at Half-past Twelve o'clock.

THE STONE WILL BE LAID BY

WILLIAM BEAMONT, ESQ.,
AND A

PROCESSION

IS INTENDED TO BE FORMED ON THE OCCASION.

SOCIETIES and PUBLIC BODIES desirous of joining it are requested to communicate with the MUSEUM COMMITTEE at a MEETING to be held at the Museum, in Friars Gate, on Wednesday the 12th instant, at half past Seven o'clock.

Further particulars of the proposed arrangements will appear in a future Advertisement.
SIGNED BY ORDER OF THE MUSEUM COMMITTEE.

JOHN FITCHETT MARSH,
TOWN CLERK.

HADDICK & SON, PRINTERS, WARRINGTON.

Poster announcing the foundation stone ceremony in 1855. The photographs of the ceremony, housed in the local collection, are themselves significant in the history of photography

PROFFITT, G. M. A. 'The River Mersey: its contribution to the (economic) growth of Warrington in the last 300 years', Thesis, 1969, ref. MS1969.

'WARRINGTON 100', centenary handbook of Warrington Borough Council, nominally edited by the Town Clerk, J. P. Aspden, but actually edited by G. A. Carter, Chief Librarian, whose 'History of Warrington to 1847' forms the first half of the book. Published by the Borough Council in 1947 as part of its centenary celebrations, this is probably the most concise, definitive history of the town ever produced.

WHITE, O. 'A hundred years of poor law administration in and around Warrington, Lancashire, previous to the formation of the Warrington Union (1837)', thesis presented for a master's degree at Manchester University, undated, probably 1932, ref. MS1381.

Current Information

Postal address:

Warrington Library,
Museum Street,
Warrington,
WA1 1JB.

Telephone: 01925 442889 (Lending),
01925 442890 (Reference).

Fax: 01925 411395.

Opening hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Friday 9.30am to 7pm
Wednesday 9.30am to 5pm
Thursday 9.30am to 1pm
Saturday 9am to 1pm.

Email: Library@warrington.gov.uk.

Contact: Janet Hill, Librarian and Information Services Manager.

Local history collection currently includes: 12,900 manuscripts, 9,600 books, 27,000 broadsides including photographs, approximately 2,000 photographs of a partial photographic survey 1970-76, 350 maps, together with microforms and audiovisual items.

The local history collection is reinforced by an environmental studies collection containing many books and periodicals on Lancashire and Cheshire.

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