

Borrowing from Morley's Library: Changing patterns over the centuries

Dr Andrew Thomson follows on from his article, *Bishop Morley and his Library* in the October 2022 edition of *Record Extra*, with this analysis of the borrowing data from the Cathedral's Morley Library. Andrew is a leading scholar on George Morley, with his biography, *Bishop Morley of Winchester 1598-1684: Politician, Benefactor, Pragmatist*, published in 2019.

'Neither or borrower not a lender be'. When Shakespeare wrote those words, he was thinking about money, not libraries. It turns out that this was Morley's view as well but his concern was books. George Morley, Bishop of Winchester 1662-84-was a generous benefactor. In his will, drawn up in July 1684, he bequeathed his books to Winchester Cathedral and, when he died the following October, promise was fulfilled. Morley, ever the micro manager, laid down the rules for the future running of the library: including the stipend of the librarian, opening and closing hours, summer and winter, and even its cleaning. He continues, however, that the Dean and Chapter were 'to take care that none of the above said Bookes be lost, or lent or carried out of the library by any person on any pretence whatsoever'.¹

How that squares with lending practice is difficult to say. The survival of two borrowing books shows that lending took place regularly over the next three centuries.² The first book starts in 1728 and records regular borrowings until 1860 (possibly 1862); the second book runs from 1862 to 1953; at which point there is a short-lived return to the first book. The precentor/librarian in the 1860s was Henry Wray and his book has proper columns for title, borrower, and dates taken and returned; and clearly reflects a desire for order and system.³ It is also fairly easy to surmise reasons for the change in 1953. The second book was running out of space by the 1950s which meant either a new book or use of the spare pages in the old book. Cost, diminished borrowing, even possibly a decision to stop borrowing altogether while, perhaps, allowing exceptions, may explain revival of the old book. Most surprising, in

¹ PCC, 1684, Prob 11/377.

² HRO, DC/F5/2/1, DC/F5/2/2.

³ Henry Wray is described as minor canon 1858, precentor 1859 (HRO, DC/F5/1/5-7); precentor, librarian, no dates, (HRO, DC/K1/2/9); as minor canon and precentor 1859-77, **Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Part II 1752-1900, edit. J.A. Venn, Cambridge, 1954).

view of Morley's peremptory instruction, is the practice of borrowing at all. No policy decision either to start it or to stop it has been found so far, in cathedral minutes, for example, so whether borrowing began in 1685 or 1728 is not clear; and whether there was ever any official decision about lending in the later twentieth century, or whether the practice was simply allowed to die, is not clear either.⁴

This article seeks to compare lending patterns during the first 25 years of book one – from 1728 to 1753 – with those of the last 25 years – from 1928 to 1953 – of book two. What does the first book tell us? First, the scale of activity – borrowing – in the library: 358 books were taken away and, mostly, brought back over the 25 years from 1728 to 1753. The number of titles comes to 203, some borrowed more than once, hence 358 borrowings; but, as the titles of at least another 60 books could not be identified and allowing for overlaps, another 40 or 50 titles could have been borrowed.⁵ A total of 358 borrowing suggests about 14 borrowings a year over the 25 years and, as there would have been about 2000 titles in the collection at this time, borrowing of, perhaps, 240 titles suggests, similarly, somewhere between 10 and 12 per cent of the titles were borrowed during the same time frame. Activity on that scale can only be described as modest.

Second, the popularity of books and subjects: a substantial number of books could not be classified⁶ but, of those which could, history (65 out of 358 borrowings over 25 years) and theology (38) were the most popular. Bibles show strongly; and geography, law, and philosophy all have more than ten borrowings. It was a law book, Gibson's *Codex*, with 11 borrowings of either vol. 1 or vol. 2, which was one of the most popular books. A book about the laws and constitutions of the Church of England is not light reading but it has its amusing moments, e.g. minute regulations such as the type of night cap a clergyman was to wear in

⁴ The cathedral said, in answer to a question from the Cathedrals Commission c.1925-26, 'the practice (i.e. borrowing) has ceased' (HRO, DC/M4/8/20A); but that conflicts with the evidence in both books of borrowing continuing to at least the 1950s and 1960s.

⁵ Counting of titles is problematic: some are incomplete titles (e.g. 'History' appears several times) and it is not clear whether they are the same or different books; others are 'multi-volume' and some of these, with related content, e.g. Gibson's *Codex*, have been counted as one title while others, e.g. *Opera* (Cicero), probably contain unrelated content and have been counted separately.

⁶ Categorising books has also proved difficult when either titles are incomplete or 'inscrutable'.

bed, and cases meriting excommunication of clergymen include wearing armour or fighting or brawling the church or churchyard – and if he used a weapon he could have his ear cut off.⁷

Thirdly, the borrowers: 26 borrowers have been identified over the 25 years but missing names and illegibility prevent a complete count and the total number of borrowers may have been around 30. Identified borrowers were overwhelmingly cathedral clergy (deans or canons) – 24 of the 26 altogether. One archdeacon⁸ and one layman make up the number to 26.⁹ Six of the 24 were minor canons who had duties at the cathedral but who retained a parish as well and, moreover, they were the only parish priest borrowers out of some 340 in the diocese.¹⁰ This is hardly fulfilment of another of Morley's express orders in his will that, as well as the higher clergy, 'Country Parsons Vicars and Curates of my Dyocese as have not a sufficient stock of Bookes of their own, nor of money to buy them' should have access to his collection. It should be remembered, however, that in his will Morley had discouraged borrowing and there would have been many other clergy who came and read in the library. Of these there is, apparently, no record.

While all this tells us there was very little borrowing from the library, it should be said that there were some voracious readers. Canon Morgan and Dean Pearce both clocked over 40 books apiece and Canon Nash borrowed 55; but the prize goes to Canon Sykes who took out 66 books over 13 years (1740-53) and he continued for several years beyond this survey.

To turn to the second book and an analysis of the last 25 years (1928-1953): by then the 'landscape' had completely changed in terms of population, agriculture, industry, and not least concerning the Diocese of Winchester which had lost Southwark (1905), Portsmouth, and Guildford (both 1927). All this had a bearing on the library and on the three aspects of borrowing so far discussed. All this had a bearing on the library and on the three aspects of borrowing so far discussed.

⁷ *Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani*, edit. E. Gibson, Oxford, 1761, vol. 1, pp. 161, 168, 192.

⁸ Robert Lowth, Professor of Poetry at Oxford 1741-51 (*Alumni Oxonienses 1715-1886*, vol. 3, edit. J. Foster, Oxford, 1888), Archdeacon of Winchester 1750-56 (*Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, vol. 3, edit. J. Horn, London, 1974, p. 87); he also held two parishes in turn for short spells but borrowed – nine books – as professor and as archdeacon.

⁹ James Worseley esq, identity not established with any certainty, for whom canon Garrett borrowed a book (DC/F5/2/1, p. 1).

¹⁰ A. Thomson, *Clergy of Winchester* (Lewiston, 2012), pp. 181-283.

First, the changing scale of borrowing: 126 borrowings over 25 years (1928-53), down from 14 to five a year; and, likewise, 92 separate titles, down from 200 or so, while the library had grown from 2000 to 3000 or 4000 books.

Second, the changing popularity of subjects: history and biography were still there, given a boost by the appearance of Florence Goodman's transcription of Dean Young's *Diary*¹¹ (1928) and George Bell's life of Archbishop Randall Davidson (1935), once of Winchester.¹² These swelled, or skewed, borrowing activity in those categories, momentarily, and were the most popular books (*Diary* four; Davidson 11 borrowings of either vol. 1 or vol. 2). The presence of Canon Goodman,¹³ husband of Florence and Cathedral Librarian, meant more artificial inflation of the administrative or archival category, as he was one of the most regular borrowers among the cathedral community. The appearance of music and architecture with engineering is the most striking. The rebuilding of the organ in the late 1930s may explain precentor Hetherington's borrowing of *The Organs of Winchester Cathedral*.¹⁴ The coronation of George VI (1937) aroused Dean Selwyn's interest in the details of the service and its music.¹⁵ Growing concerns for conservation of furnishings and fabric of the building, the stained glass, screens, bosses, etc, may have concerned the 'virgers' and assuredly had a similar effect on two surveyors of those times, Thomas Atkinson and Wilfred Carpenter Turner.¹⁶

Thirdly, the changing type of borrower: at first sight, there was no change: cathedral clergy still formed the largest block (one dean and 10 canons, residentiary and minor). There were

¹¹ *Diary of John Young*, edit. F. R. Goodman (London, 1928).

¹² G. K. A. Bell, *Randall Davidson*, 2 vols, (Oxford, 1935). Davidson was Bishop of Winchester 1895-1903 and Archbishop of Canterbury 1903-28. (*Handbook of British Chronology*, edit. E. B. Fryde, D. E. Greenway, S. Porter, I. Roy (London, 1986), pp. 235, 278).

¹³ A. W. Goodman: Winchester Cathedral, honorary canon 1924, assistant librarian 1923-33, librarian 1933-47/8 (*Winchester Cathedral Kalendars/YearBooks, Crockford's Clerical Directory*). Goodman was the first editor of *Winchester Cathedral Record*, 1932-34.

¹⁴ J. G. Hetherington was precentor 1935-39 (HRO, *Winchester Diocesan Year Books; Crockford*).

¹⁵ E. G. Selwyn was dean 1931-58 (*Times*, London, 12 June 1959); he borrowed *Coronation Form with Music* in May 1937 (DC/F52/2, p. 217). Selwyn was the founder of the Friends of Winchester Cathedral in 1931.

¹⁶ Three, possibly four, virgers borrowed *Camden Miscellany XVI*, 1936, which contains an inventory of cathedral furnishings, including items in the vestry, in 1635; T. D. Atkinson and W. J. Carpenter Turner, both described, first, as 'architectural surveyor', Atkinson from 1921, Turner from 1937; both becoming 'architect', Atkinson retiring in 1948 and Turner in 1973 (*Winchester Cathedral Kalendars/Year Books, Hampshire Chronicle*, 1 January 1949, 8 May 1981); see also, for these last two, tributes in *Winchester Cathedral Record*, vols 18 and 43.

also two bishops¹⁷ and sadly, only three parish priests and their identities are questionable.¹⁸ Worse, although the diocese had been reduced in area, the numbers of parish clergy had risen from some 350 in the early eighteenth century to as many as 500 in 1928 (though they fell back again, after WW2, to about 350).¹⁹ The good news was that there were now ten laymen (mainly 'virgers')²⁰ and, most striking of all and reflecting the slowly changing role of women in society, three females.²¹ It should also be recalled again that others, male or female, clerical or lay, canons residentiary or 'country parsons', were using the library 'in person'.

The most voracious borrower, incidentally, was still a canon, Arthur Goodman, the 'runaway' borrower this time (30 books over 25 years), but Dean Selwyn (17) and surveyor Atkinson (13) put up an impressive show.

Finally, length of time borrowers held onto books has aroused some interest among visitors. Most borrowers kept a book for weeks or, at most, a few months whether in the eighteenth or the twentieth centuries. For 18 books in the years 1728-53, however, there is no evidence of return at all out of 358 borrowings; likewise for 28 out of the 128 borrowings between 1928 and 1953. This could be careless record keeping or, no doubt, forgetfulness on the part of lenders or borrowers.

To go back to the 1730s, none compares, however, with Dean Charles Naylor.²² He took out *Gibson's Codex* in December 1731 and 'restored' it in May 1740, eight years, five months later. Nor did he return it in person, as he had died and either the librarian ordered its return or Naylor's family or his executors returned it voluntarily. It did come back, it is clearly visible on

¹⁷ Arthur Karney and Edmund Morgan, both Bishop of Southampton in the 1930s and 1940s (*Crockford*).

¹⁸ G. T. Andrewes, borrower 1939, rector of Chilcomb 1891-1931, honorary canon 1928 (*Crockford*), buried 10 February 1941 (HRO, 56M81W PR23, p. 9); P. H. Osmond, borrower in 1928-30, rector of Avington from 1912-42 but living into the 1960s; E. G. Wainwright, borrower 1946, vicar of Otterbourne 1937-40, honorary canon 1927-50 (both the latter *Winchester Diocesan Kalendars/Year Books*, *Crockford*).

¹⁹ These calculations are estimates drawn from relevant editions (1930s-50s) of *Winchester Diocesan Year Books*; and it may be worth repeating that Winchester had lost Southwark, Guildford, and Portsmouth by this time, smaller in area but with many more clergy and people.

²⁰ 'Virgers' 5, teachers 2, surveyors 2, organist 1.

²¹ The three women were 'Irene Conybeare', possibly a missionary; 'Mrs Morony', possibly E.M. – Myra – Morony who, if properly identified, was daughter of a Bishop of Salisbury (Neville Lovett) and whose interests lay in the Mothers' Union and pageants; and 'Miss Pesel' was probably Louisa Pesel who was an embroiderer employed by the cathedral (HRO, DC/F5/2/2, pp. 216, 218, 219). I owe the information on Mrs Morony to David Rymill (archivist at HRO); the other two from searching the internet.

²² Dean of Winchester 1729-39 (Horn, *Fasti*, p. 85).

the shelves, but he had another book – in three volumes – and there is no evidence of its return in the borrowing book.²³

²³ The book was Isaac Barrow's *Sermons*, 3 vols; it is in the original catalogue as Isaac Barrow, *Sermons*, 2 vols (not 3), 1678.