

**German Studies  
Library Group**



# **G Newsletter**

**Issue no. 53  
(Winter 2025-2026)**



**GERMAN STUDIES LIBRARY GROUP  
NEWSLETTER**

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No. 53  
Winter 2025-2026

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## German Studies Library Group

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**GERMAN STUDIES LIBRARY GROUP  
NEWSLETTER**

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## EDITORIAL



Both 2025 and 2026 are important years for the German Studies Library Group. Forty years ago, a group of librarians, academics, and others met at the British Library to discuss German studies in libraries across the United Kingdom. The success of this conference would lead directly to the founding of the German Studies Library Group the following year.

Forty years on, that initial group is still going strong—as shown by the range of interesting events we organised this year. A particular highlight was, of course, the annual Graham Nattrass Lecture in June, where the GSLG welcomed Prof. Roger Paulin to the British Library for his interesting lecture on the Marian visionary and mystic Anna Katharina Emmerich (1774–1824).

Later in the year—almost exactly forty years after the original conference—we commemorated our anniversary with a memorial conference on German Studies. In December 2025, a range of librarians and academics gave talks about interesting collections across the country, about changes in the field of German Studies, and about how the role of the librarian has drastically changed in recent decades due to recent developments in technology. If that wasn't enough, later in 2026 we will be further marking our anniversary with a very exciting conference in Switzerland in September—one that will most definitely build on the success of our previous conference in Salzburg two years ago.

Read on to discover more about our events this year, our upcoming conference, and more exciting developments in the field of librarianship in Germany and the UK. Thanks must also be given to Ulrike Blumenthal for all of her work as editor of this newsletter and the excellent articles she has written over the last few years—this newsletter is the final issue that she will help to edit and she will be missed.

Forty years after its foundation, the German Studies Library Group looks forward to 2026 and beyond. We will continue to celebrate and promote German Studies and German Studies librarianship in the future and, of course, are already looking forward to our 80th anniversary conference in 2065!

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**7TH GRAHAM NATTRASS LECTURE  
A ROMANTIC SURVIVOR? ANNA KATHARINA EMMERICH'S "DAS  
BITTERE LEIDEN UNSERES HERRN JESU CHRISTI" (1833)  
ROGER PAULIN**

**24 June 2025**



*Prof. Paulin delivering his lecture*

Last summer, the German Studies Library Group was pleased to welcome Prof. Roger Paulin—the Schröder Emeritus Professor of German at Cambridge University—to deliver the seventh Graham Natrass Lecture at the British Library. A specialist in German literature from 1500–1900, with a particular interest in the *Goethezeit* and Romanticism, Prof. Paulin was well-placed to speak about his chosen subject: Anna Katharina Emmerich (1774–1824).

The lecture itself was divided into three strands. To begin with, Prof. Paulin provided some useful background information about Emmerich. Although relatively unknown in the United Kingdom today, he explained that Emmerich became famous throughout Germany—and beyond—as a Marian visionary and mystic. Born in Dülmen in Westphalia and an Augustinian nun, Emmerich lived a life of extreme poverty, living almost entirely without nourishment. Her visions of the Passion and her manifested bleedings—consistent with the stigmata of Christ—attracted the attention of the Church and she became the focus of a devotional and

visionary cult amongst Catholics worldwide. This cult was particularly spread through the written word, with many different texts printed to publicise her life to a global audience. Despite some controversy surrounding her visions—medical professionals even at the time cast some doubt onto the precise cause of her wounds—she was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 2004.

The second strand of the lecture focused on one specific book from the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, which Prof.

Paulin had brought with him to London. This book contained three bound volumes, all related to Anna Katharina Emmerich. Paulin first explained that the first of these volumes was the earliest edition of *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi*, the volume that first publicised Emmerich's life (Sulzbach, 1833). Edited by the Romantic poet Clemens Brentano, this text is today extremely rare and is the only copy of the text currently in the United Kingdom.

The second text in this bound collection, *Das letzte Abendmahl unseres Herrn Jesu Christi* (Sulzbach, 1834) was a separate printing of the first edition of *Das bittere Leiden* and intended as a supplement for it ('Für die Besitzer der ersten Ausgabe des Buches')—also the only copy of this text currently in the UK. Finally, the last item in the bound collection contained pieces of secondary material relating to Emmerich's life, written by the philosopher and theologian Heinrich Pabst. This final text has the title *Ein Wort über die Ekstase. Veranlaßt durch die Schrift: Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi. Nach den Betrachtungen der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerich* (Sulzbach 1833) *und über eine über dieselbe ergangene Recension* (Köln am Rhein: M. Dumont-Schauberg 1834).

Paulin ended his lecture by discussing what this bound book and its context can tell researchers today about religious publication in the early 1830s and its importance for book history. Firstly, it is important to note that the combination of these three

GRAHAM NATRASS LECTURE

# A ROMANTIC SURVIVOR?

ANNA KATHARINA EMMERICH'S  
"DAS BITTERE LEIDEN UNSERES HERRN JESU CHRISTI" (1833)

Prof. Roger Paulin  
Emeritus Schröder  
Professor of German  
Cambridge University

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DRINKS RECEPTION: 5.30PM  
LECTURE: 6PM

The poster advertising the exhibition

works in one volume is unique. Secondly, Paulin delved into the volume's significance as part of a dedicated collection at Trinity College Library. It forms part of around 8,000 volumes donated to the college by the widow of Julius Hare (1795–1855). An English theologian with an interest in German literature, Hare had spent the winter of 1804/05 in Weimar where he met both Goethe and Schiller. Although the lecture focused on one volume in this collection, it is without doubt an interesting collection worthy of further study.



*The drinks reception before the lecture*

As can be seen from the photograph above, this seventh Graham Natrass Lecture was very well attended. The GSLG would like to thank Prof. Paulin for his interesting talk and for taking the time to bring the bound volume to London so it could be seen by lecture attendees.

Lecture summarised by Will Shire, Deputy Librarian, New College, Oxford

## **GSLG ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025—GERMAN STUDIES, UK RESOURCES, 40 YEARS ON**

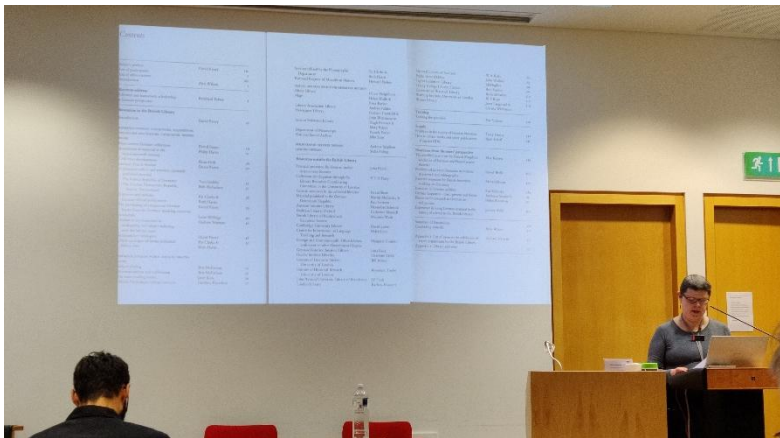
On 15 December 2025, Susan Reed organised a special conference to celebrate German resources at libraries in the United Kingdom. The conference took as its starting point the 40th anniversary of the colloquium ‘German Studies—British Resources’ held at the British Library in 1985, which led to the founding of the GSLG the following year. The 2025 event was designed to look at some of the changes in the past forty years and to highlight library collections acquired, catalogued, or digitised during that period.

The event was a huge success, with 17 speakers from institutions across the country delivering many fascinating talks on collections at the British Library, the University of Oxford, the German Historical Institute in London, and at Senate House Library. These talks were combined with additional talks on the future of cataloguing and metadata and, indeed, librarianship itself as the profession reacts to technological change.

In this edition of the newsletter, we mark this successful conference by reproducing Susan’s opening talk in full, followed by summaries of the individual talks throughout the day. We hope it will prove interesting both as a reminder to those GSLG members who could attend and an interesting summary to those that could not join us back in December at the British Library.

## GERMAN STUDIES, UK RESOURCES, 40 YEARS ON: INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

In September 1985, a group of 88 librarians, academics and others in the field of German Studies came together at the British Library for a three-day colloquium on resources for German Studies in the UK.<sup>1</sup> This was one of a series of such events organised by the BL between 1983 and 1989 on resources for specific geographical or subject areas. The main organiser and editor of the proceedings, David Paisey, saw the colloquium as having two functions. First, to provide information about German holdings and collection policies in a range of UK institutions, to raise awareness of collections, and to open up dialogue among librarians and users; and second, to offer a case study of library provision for research in the humanities. The colloquium certainly did open up dialogue as it led to the foundation of the German Studies Library Group in the following year.



*Susan delivering her lecture*

The four decades that have passed since then have seen many changes in the world of librarianship and of German studies—changes in library organisation, in language education, in the way we access and consume information, and in

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<sup>1</sup> The papers were published the following year as David Paisey (ed.), *German studies: British resources: Papers Presented at a Colloquium at the British Library 25-27 September 1985. Organised in Conjunction with the Institute of Germanic Studies of the University of London* (London: The British Library, 1986). British Library Occasional Papers; 8.

technology. In December 2025, the GSLG marked the anniversary of the 1985 colloquium with a smaller and less ambitious event, but one that will hopefully contribute to that ongoing dialogue.

Despite being billed as an event about ‘British Resources’, the focus of the 1985 colloquium was very London-centric. The only non-London based institutions featured in individual presentations were the university libraries of Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester, and Warwick, the National Library of Scotland, and the—not at all British—Trinity College Library in Dublin. However, the Goethe-Institut, which at the time had branches in Manchester and York as well as London and Glasgow, and the national project of the Cathedral Libraries Catalogue added some more geographical variety, and some of the more general papers on acquisitions, usage, and training also took a wider view.

Forty years on, after decades of cuts and austerity, it is heartening that almost all the institutions named survive in some form. However, the Goethe-Institut has lost its York and Manchester branches, and the National Library of Scotland no longer collects continental European material at any scale. The Institute of Germanic Studies has been subsumed into what is now the Institute of Languages, Cultures and Societies, and its Library is now based in Senate House. However, the Wiener Library has moved into and substantially renovated the Institute’s old home at 29 Russell Square, and there have also been some new foundations in the subject area, such as the Institute for German and European Studies at Birmingham and the Centre for German & Austrian Exile Studies within ILCS. And many collections have been acquired, or made more widely available, through cataloguing and digitisation projects, in the past 40 years.

Thinking about changes in provision for German Studies since 1985, my first thought was to compare the number and range of undergraduate degree courses available then and now. I chose to focus on undergraduate degrees because they probably account for the vast majority of users served by university libraries, and are slightly easier to assess than postgraduate studies where language use and a language-based department may not correlate so simply. The comparison is not an exact science, since different sources give slightly different information, and obviously more information is available for current courses. There are also a couple of other caveats—I have not gone into detail about *ab initio* courses versus those with A level requirements, and I have excluded the work of university language centres—but I hope I have succeeded in creating a fairly reliable picture of what was available then and now.

First I turned to the guides to German undergraduate degree courses in the UK from 1985, or as close as possible to that year.<sup>2</sup> In 1985 there were 46 Universities (all but three in the country) that offered German and/or German Studies courses, and some 466 university courses offering German alongside other languages or subjects. There were also 20 Polytechnics (out of 34) offering German and/or German Studies courses and some 59 polytechnic courses combining German with another subject. Polytechnics were almost completely overlooked at the 1985 colloquium, but in another major change since 1985, following the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992, the surviving institutions that were polytechnics then are now universities.

According to the current UCAS website,<sup>3</sup> there are 41 universities (out of over 160) offering German for undergraduate entry in 2026. Of these, 22 offer a single honours German degree or an option to specialise in German, and there are 637 courses available that combine some level of German with another subject or language. That sounds quite impressive until we consider that there was a total of 66 universities and polytechnics offering German in 1985. And perhaps more shockingly, when I carried out a similar review of the UCAS site in 2022 while compiling the BL's Content Development Plan for German, there were 52 institutions offering some 800 courses with an element of German, so there has been a loss of 7 institutions and over 200 courses in that short time. Bearing in mind that far more 18-year-olds go on to higher education today than in the 1980s, the overall proportion of those studying or able to study German is even smaller. This, like the recent news of threats to language departments at Nottingham and Leicester, is a reminder of how much modern languages are under threat today in higher education – indeed in the education sector as a whole.

I had, perhaps naively, assumed that things would have looked rosier in 1985, but when I turned to John Flood's paper on financial provision for German Studies in University libraries, I read that "since [April 1985] the prospects for universities

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<sup>2</sup> Alan Jamieson, *Your Choice of Degree & Diploma: a Guide to University, Polytechnic and Colleges - Where to Study, Courses and Careers, How to Apply*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Hobson, 1985); *The Compendium of University Entrance Requirements for First Degree Courses in the United Kingdom 1986-86* (London: Association of Commonwealth Universities, 1985); *A Guide to Language Courses in Polytechnics and Similar Institutions, 1982 and 1983* (London: Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, 1982).

<sup>3</sup><https://digital.ucas.com/coursedisplay/results/providers?pageNumber=1&searchTerm=german>

generally and for the humanities in particular have declined markedly”<sup>4</sup> The publication that year of the Jarratt report, advocating greater efficiency in higher education, and a Green Paper on the development of higher education into the 1990s had caused wide consternation in the higher education sector as a whole and especially in the humanities.<sup>5</sup> The Jarratt report is widely seen as responsible for introducing a more business-oriented approach in the sector. The Green Paper, in language that seems all too familiar today, stated that arts provision should be “concentrated in the interests of cost effectiveness”, and the Education Secretary Sir Keith Joseph is quoted as saying that arts-based subjects lend themselves to “flabbiness” in teaching and research. Professor Flood also cites damaging cuts at a range of institutions, and highlights the way that individual language departments are being replaced with “schools of modern languages”—a concept so familiar today, however, that it seems strange to think that it was ever seen as new or threatening.

So the scene in 1985 was hardly one of sunlit uplands and an assured future, and while the fears sparked by the Jarratt report and Green Paper may not have been fully realised in the 1980s, it is a salutary reminder that the current crisis in humanities in higher education has deeper roots than we might think.

Both John Flood’s paper and another by May Katzen of Leicester University<sup>6</sup> quote researchers who discuss the financial constraints that prevent both themselves and their institutions’ libraries from buying sufficient research-level material. A general opinion seems to be that, outside the BL, Oxford and Cambridge, most institutions struggle to provide a high-quality research library for academic staff. Again, this was something that I thought would have been different in 1985, but that has certainly only become more of a problem in the decades since.

The time taken to process books, especially in larger institutions, was also something that troubled users in 1985 as it still does to some extent today. “What use is the Bodleian Library ... to students who are expected to complete a PhD in

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<sup>4</sup> John L. Flood, ‘Financial Provision for German Studies in university libraries’, *German Studies: British Resources* pp. 84-96 (84).

<sup>5</sup> Steering Committee for Efficiency Studies in Universities (Chairman Sir Alex Jarratt). Report.

(London CVCP, 1985); the full text can be found here: <https://www.education-uk.org/documents/jarratt1985/index.html>); Green Paper, ‘The Development of Higher Education in the 1990s’ (Department of Education and Science, 1985)

<sup>6</sup> May Katzen, ‘The availability and use by United Kingdom academics of German and French source material’, *German Studies: British Resources*, pp. 244-262.

three years, when it takes 28 months for a book to get into the catalogue?” mused the historian Richard Evans.<sup>7</sup> As he hoped, “computer cataloguing” and deriving records has helped to speed this process, but, at least as far as the BL is concerned, the 2023 cyberattack and its long aftermath have similarly deprived researchers of access to new material in our reading rooms for over two years. But for all the justified concerns, there are some unrealistic expectations. David Wells of the MHRA suggested that the BL should acquire “all publications in all fields published by two dozen or so of the leading German academic publishing houses” and that “once volumes arrived some would be housed in London institutions other than the British Library” and does not consider this scenario to be “excessively utopian”!<sup>8</sup>

A change in many university libraries since 1985 has been the disappearance of subject specialists. A paper given by Eric Vickers at the 1985 colloquium discusses the ideal training for a German studies subject librarian;<sup>9</sup> the detail he goes into was probably an unrealistic proposition even then, and much would have been learned on the job rather than at library school, but it is clearly rooted in the idea that a subject librarian role would be that of a highly trained specialist. Of course, even in the 1980s not every library could afford or justify posts for individual language specialists, but I remember that in my early days of attending GSLG meetings in the 1990s, many more members than today were responsible solely for German collections or for German and perhaps one or two other languages.

Looking at the websites of university libraries, today, this appears to be a luxury effectively reserved for the BL, Oxford, and Cambridge. Even within the BL, the German section, like most European language areas, is now reduced to a single curator. This is due in part to the move of cataloguing to the Boston Spa site in 1997—and we have skilled German-language cataloguers in the team there—but also to a succession of restructures and cuts over the years. Some institutions such as Senate House or Bristol have what is usually called a liaison librarian for all modern languages, but it is more common for these roles to include a wider range of subjects, or to cover the whole of the arts faculty. Some even cross faculty boundaries –Greenwich University has a liaison librarian covering Criminology, History, Politics and Social Sciences, Law, Literature, Language and Theatre. Other university libraries such as Sheffield, Lancaster, and Leeds make no mention

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<sup>7</sup> Richard Evans, ‘Research resources for British historians working on Germany’, *German Studies: British Resources*, pp. 277-281 (278).

<sup>8</sup> David Wells, ‘Problems of access to literature in relation to research and bibliography’, *German Studies: British Resources*, pp. 263-276 (273-4).

<sup>9</sup> Eric Vickers, ‘Training the specialist’, *German Studies: British Resources*, pp. 226-235.

of subject support but have generic help pages online or offer support for research skills.

The decline in language and subject specialisms within university libraries has naturally also had an impact on the GSLG. A look at conference reports from the Group's Newsletter over the years shows how the numbers attending have fallen. In 1991, 35 members attended a conference in Nottingham. Later in the decade numbers were generally around 25. More recent conferences and AGMs have been more sparsely attended still, and retired members have on occasion outnumbered those still working. Although the actual membership has not fallen as drastically as this suggests, there are now fewer members whose employers are willing or able to fund travel costs for an event that relates to only a small part of their work.

Going back to 1985, some of the concerns of the colloquium belong to a different world. Microforms loomed large, both as surrogates and catalogues. The commercially published edition of the BL's pre-1975 catalogue was still coming out, having reached the letter R. The BL's current catalogue was subject indexing material using Preserved Context Indexing System—PRECIS—devised in the late 1960s, but never as widely adopted as had been hoped, and abandoned by the mid-1990s. Two papers focused on collecting from the German Democratic Republic. Ruth Sielaff from the Government-owned Leipzig firm of Buchexport discussed the issues around acquiring such material, including the fact that the GDR had in 1984 joined the ISBN system, making international trade and cooperation easier.<sup>10</sup> Martin McCauley of SSEES and Ray Scrivens of Cambridge UL presented the results of a survey of different libraries' holdings of GDR material, incidentally one of the few papers to take polytechnics into account.<sup>11</sup>

But of course the biggest and most obvious change since 1985 has been the rise of IT. Online catalogues already existed in 1985, but were the exception rather than the rule. At the colloquium David Lowe of Cambridge UL described their new online catalogue as a "resounding success" with readers, and Richard Parker reported that Warwick University Library had started work on retroconversion of their card catalogue, but most other institutions described in detail were still wholly reliant on microfiche, card, or even guardbook catalogues. The BL's BLAISE system is mentioned by both BL and non-BL speakers, but this was primarily for library staff behind the scenes, with a subscription model for professional users outside the BL. Within the BL, staff in the language sections were not cataloguing

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<sup>10</sup> Ruth Sielaff, 'How to obtain books and other publications from the GDR', *German Studies: British Resources*, pp.238-9.

<sup>11</sup> Martin McCauley, Ray Scrivens, 'Material published in the German Democratic Republic', *German Studies: British Resources*, pp.108-113

directly into BLAISE, but still creating handwritten records which were then sent for keyboarding.

Some technologies have come and gone in the 40 years since the colloquium, notably the CD-ROM. This was launched in 1985 and became a popular form for reference books, catalogues, and digitised texts, and as accompanying media to printed books. Although many libraries no doubt still hold CD-ROMs, the capacity to play them is much harder to come by today.

The irresistible rise of the Internet was unlikely to have been foreseen by any of the delegates at the 1985 colloquium, but since the 1990s it has offered many benefits to the profession of librarianship. Leafing through the pages of the 1985 proceedings, I can look up pretty much any institution online, discover whether they still exist in the same form, consult their catalogues, find out about opening hours and services offered, find contact names, and learn something of their history. The work of researchers has of course been transformed by the huge number of online versions of standard reference books and the development of born-digital reference sources, and by the growth of e-books, online journals, and the mass digitisation projects of early printed and manuscript sources. Administratively too the internet has changed the way we work beyond recognition with email, websites, social media, and online forms being the first port of call for most functions.

However incredible and utopian this may have sounded in 1985 the online world is of course not without its downsides. The increase in online resources has in some ways been a threat to libraries with the lazy belief that “everyone and everything is online” used as an argument for cutting resources for physical library facilities, books, and even staff. However, the proliferation of online sources of information—and misinformation—makes the role of trained information professionals more important than ever, especially as we move into the world of Artificial Intelligence. Online resources are also imperfect in some practical ways, often involving expensive subscriptions and limits to user numbers. E-books can be hard to cite as pagination can vary according to chosen font size or the device being used. Although digitisation projects such as Google books or Europeana have made vast amounts of material freely available online, such projects take time and money, and copyright restrictions obviously prevent the digitisation of more recent material.

Then there are the vulnerabilities of technology. I have mentioned the cyberattack on the BL and although that was an extreme event, it nonetheless illustrates how quickly information can disappear. Such losses need not be the result of criminal activity: earlier this year the contents of the BL’s extensive range of blogs was nearly lost when the third-party platform we used announced its closure with one

month's notice. At the time of writing, staff are still working to complete a permanent fix that will ensure that the original hyperlinks, which have been widely shared and published, take users to archived posts. Technology becomes obsolete faster than printed or even microform sources in terms of both hardware and software, as we have seen with the example of the CD-ROM above, and one doesn't have to be a conspiracy theorist to believe that big tech firms have a commercial interest in planned obsolescence. In forty years' time, every piece of technology used in the planning and presentation of this event may seem as quaint as the technology of 1985 seems to us.

But my aim in this paper and in organising the conference was neither to predict the future, nor to idolise the past, but to give a broad overview of what has changed and what has not since 1985. One thing that has been consistent is the dedication of librarians to defending and developing German studies collections, often against the odds. Whatever the challenges have been over the last 40 years, the spirit that inspired the 1985 colloquium and created the GSLG lives on today, and I hope will continue to do so.

Susan Reed, Lead Curator, Germanic Collections, British Library

**GERMAN STUDIES, UK RESOURCES, 40 YEARS ON:  
TALK SUMMARIES**

**SECTION ONE: MUSIC AND MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION IN THE BL**

**Paul Hirsch and his Music Collection: Insights from his Personal Papers /  
Chris Scobie and Frankie Perry (British Library)**

The first talk of the day focussed on the Paul Hirsch Music Library, which is one of the most outstanding collections of music held at the British Library. In their talk, Chris and Frankie gave an introduction to the collection and the life of Paul Hirsch (1891-1951), the son of a German-Jewish industrialist who established a unique music library in Frankfurt in the early 1900s. The library contains an estimated 18,000 items, mostly printed music and music theory texts from the earliest incunabula to scores published during Hirsch's lifetime. His favourite composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, is particularly well represented through a large number of early and rare editions. Hirsch was forced to leave Nazi Germany in 1936, settling in Cambridge. His music collection was then sold to the British Museum (later the British Library) in 1946. An overview of Hirsch's collection can be found here: <https://www.bl.uk/stories/blogs/posts/the-paul-hirsch-music-collection>.

The second part of their talk discussed a recent cataloguing project around the Paul Hirsch Papers (MS Mus. 1946), which were a later donation from Hirsch's widow, Olga Hirsch, in order to complement and contextualise Hirsch's collection of printed music and books (separately, the British Library acquired Olga Hirsch's own collection of decorated papers). These professional papers provide invaluable context for Hirsch's collecting practices, and demonstrate his wide-reaching musicological and bibliographic networks. While the Papers are professional in nature, they also shed light on the personal circumstances of his family and friends, during and after their forced emigration. More information about the Paul Hirsch Papers can be found here: <https://www.bl.uk/stories/blogs/posts/cataloguing-the-paul-hirsch-papers>.

**The Stefan Zweig Collection at the British Library /  
Sandra Tuppen and Pardaad Chamsaz (British Library)**

The second talk of the day highlighted a unique collection of autograph manuscripts and books belonging to Stefan Zweig, one of the most famous German-speaking authors of the twentieth century. In their talk, Sandra and Pardaad highlighted the importance of this unique collection, which was only donated to the British Library in 1986.

The collection is notable for its many autograph manuscripts written by well-known composers, such as Mozart, Bach, Haydn, Handel, and Brahms. Among the literary and historical works in the collection are also works by figures such as Goethe, Heine, and Hölderlin, and works by Zweig's contemporaries, many of them presented to Zweig by the authors themselves, including Émile Verhaeren, Roman Rolland, Rilke, and Hesse.

It is particularly useful for scholars today because Zweig deliberately collected drafts and works in progress. It is also a very diverse collection—the oldest item, for example, is a copy of the *Schwanengesang* by the German Baroque composer Heinrich Schütz, dating from 1671. Although the vast majority of the items in this collection were purchased by Stefan Zweig, his heirs continued to develop the collection after his untimely death by suicide in 1942.

**The Michael Hamburger Archive at the British Library /  
Eleanor Dickens and Lara Mayr (British Library)**

The final talk of the first section of the conference introduced the Michael Hamburger Archive—a very recent arrival to the collections at the British Library that was only acquired in 2013. Michael Hamburger, who was born in Berlin in 1924 and relocated to the UK in 1933, was notable as a poet and translator, translating much German poetry into English for the first time.

Consisting of around 200 archival boxes and over 800 files, this collection is being catalogued by Lara thanks to the British Library's *Unlocking Hidden Collections* programme. This collection is of particular interest for German speakers, as there are not many collections in German in the Contemporary Archives and Manuscripts department at the British Library.

Today, the archive is useful both from its historical perspective—Hamburger describes in detail visits to both East and West Berlin—and for its personal level, revealing Hamburger’s inner thoughts about his career and his life split between the UK and Germany.

## SECTION TWO: LECTURE

### **Footnotes of Exile: Reassessing Writers’ Libraries in UK Collecting Institutions /**

**Stefanie Hundehege (National Art Library and University of Oxford)**

Until recently, marginalia left by writers in their books have received little scholarly attention. In her lecture, Stefanie Hundehege showed that this is beginning to change, focusing on how this shift can be observed in the libraries of German-language exiles that are today held in institutions in the United Kingdom (or were held there temporarily in the past). She placed particular emphasis on the libraries of two prominent literary figures.



*Stefanie delivering her lecture. On the slide, you can see a photograph of the Yates Thompson Library at Newnham College in Cambridge. Books belonging to Stefan Zweig were kept in cupboards in this library.*

First, she discussed the library of Hugo von Hofmannsthal, which was held in Britain between 1946 and 1968. As Michael Hamburger (introduced in the previous talk), noted, it is essential to understand Hofmannsthal's library and the way he used his books to fully appreciate his work. Second, she turned to Stefan Zweig's library, who emigrated to the United Kingdom in 1934. A small part of this library is today held in the library of Newnham College, Cambridge.

Her lecture thus offered a fascinating introduction to a new dimension of bibliographical research, highlighting the importance of studying collections as coherent wholes.

### **SECTION THREE: PRINTED COLLECTIONS IN LONDON AND OXFORD**

#### **Promoting the Seton-Watson Collection at New College Library, Oxford / William Shire (New College Library)**

In this talk, Will Shire spoke about the Seton-Watson collection at New College in Oxford—a collection of around 3,000 items bequeathed by the historian, writer, and political activist Robert William Seton-Watson (1879–1951).



*Will speaking about the Seton-Watson Collection*

An alumnus of New College, Seton-Watson became an expert on the political situation in the late Austro-Hungarian Empire and advocated strongly for the independence of Czechoslovakia. Will discussed how New College Library is seeking to actively promote this collection through a physical exhibition, the publication of scholarly research about it, and through promotion of its contents on the Library's social media channels.

**Continuity, Change, and Collecting across the Channel: The German Historical Institute Library 1985-2025 /  
Matthias Ammon (German Historical Institute, London)**

Matthias Ammon, Head Librarian at the German Historical Institute in London, provided a short history of his library in the next talk. Funded by the German government as part of the Max Weber Foundation, the Library of the German Historical Institute is a specialist research library that focuses on German history from the Middle Ages to the present day as well as British-German relations and European history more widely. It is a public library, accessible to anyone with an interest in German history. The Library has grown significantly over time, from around 30,000 items in 1985 to over 85,000 in 2025—with these physical texts supported by a range of electronic subscriptions.

**The St George's Church Collection /  
Dorothea Mieke (British Library)**

Christopher Skelton-Foord, librarian at New College Library in Oxford, gave the next presentation on behalf of his wife, Dorothea Mieke, who was unable to attend the conference due to illness. In this talk, Christopher introduced the St George's Church Collection, a fascinating collection of mainly theological material that belonged to St George's Lutheran Church in London.

Founded in 1792, this church is the oldest surviving German Lutheran Church in the United Kingdom. The Library contains much rare material from the 18th century, making it an interesting time capsule of the German-speaking community in London in this period. The Library was transferred to the British Library for safe-keeping in the 1990s and was one of the first collections that Dorothea Mieke worked with at the British Library.

**SECTION FOUR: LECTURE**

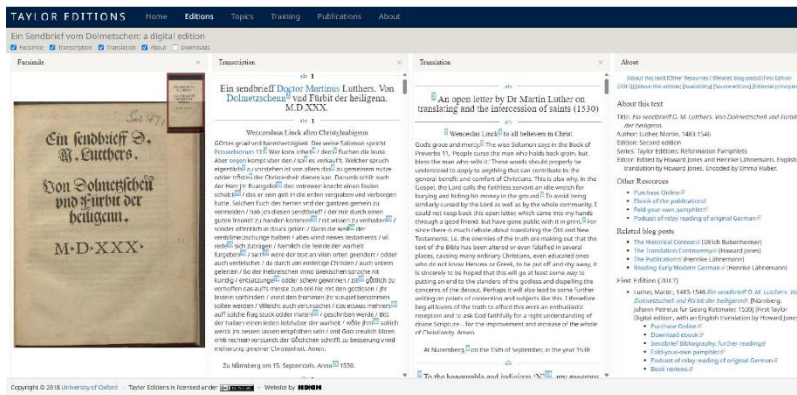
**Taylor Editions: From Library to Open Access Publisher /  
Emma Huber (Taylor Institution Library)**

Emma Huber, the Subject Librarian for German at the Taylor Institution Library in Oxford, gave an engaging lecture on the Taylor Editions project she works on with

Prof. Henrike Lähnemann. A partnership between the library and the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages at Oxford, this project publishes books about other books, usually items from special collections, in a range of formats (both print and online) and then disseminates this research in a variety of ways.<sup>1</sup> This allows students to actively engage in research activities, create a citeable publication, and engage with existing collections.



The front covers of two printed reformation pamphlets.



A screenshot from the digital version of a Reformation Pamphlet on the Taylor Editions website. To see this online, visit <https://editions.mml.ox.ac.uk/editions/sendbrief/>

<sup>1</sup> For more information about this project, please visit the Taylor Editions website: <https://editions.mml.ox.ac.uk/>

To highlight this process, Emma gave an example of a book published through this project. In 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the Taylor published a new edition and translation of a Reformation Pamphlet. Thanks to the project, the book is now available online, in print via a print on demand service, and promoted through a number of engagement events. The conference participants even had a go at one of the hands-on activities enjoyed by students—Emma had brought with her photocopies of a reformation pamphlet and attendees had the chance to fold and bind their own pamphlet.

Emma then wrapped up her talk by giving more detail about the practicalities of running a project like Taylor Editions, mentioning how the library arranges the printing of its publications and how the labour in this project is divided between library and faculty staff.

## **SECTION FIVE: CATALOGUING AND METADATA**

### **Curator to AI Assistant? The Changing Role of the Metadata Creator / Janet Ashton (British Library)**

Janet Ashton, the Cataloguing Team Manager for West European languages at the British Library, explored both the recent history—and the future—of cataloguing in her talk. She mentioned that a combination of a decline in language teaching and the end of freedom of movement had reduced the number of available cataloguers in the UK and that cataloguing budgets had been stretched in recent decades.

At the same time, the growth of digital technology had fundamentally changed the cataloguing process in a short amount of time. This process, she mentioned, was only going to accelerate in the future, as artificial intelligence gains an ability to generate metadata about a book as accurately as a human. The cataloguer, therefore, may change their role from creator of metadata to reviewer of generated metadata.

### **Reflections on Inclusive Metadata / Pardaad Chamsaz (British Library)**

Although collections and their usage are ever changing, catalogue records are only updated infrequently. As such, older catalogue records can include outdated and

offensive language that has not reacted to changes in wider society. In his talk, Pardaad spoke about the DE-BIAS project, which developed a tool to detect, address, and contextualize harmful language in heritage collections. He mentioned that it is important for librarians to not make assumptions about what readers want to see.

### **The Undiscoverability of Translation / Christophe Fricker (University of Bristol)**

In the penultimate talk of the day, Christophe Fricker spoke about his research concerning the recording of translation in library catalogues. A professional translator, Christopher has noticed that there has been inconsistency in the way that translators are included in metadata records. Some records have full information, with dedicated fields for translation, whilst others are incomplete.

As such, translation has a visibility problem—it is not always possible to tell, for example, how many items in a library's collections are translations. In addition, discovery layers do not index translation-related metadata. Even when cataloguers have entered it, it is not picked up—a result of the way that the search engines in library cataloguers are configured.

Going forward, he suggested it is important to work with library professionals and providers of library software to ensure consistency across metadata records where possible and to improve search interfaces.

## **SECTION FIVE: LECTURE**

### **Scenes from the Underground: The Senate House *Alternativpresse* Collection in Context / Paul Buchholz (Emory University)**

The final talk of the day provided an introduction into a fascinating and unique collection of underground and alternative periodicals, now kept in the collections of Senate House Library. These periodicals—often published by the nascent environmental movement in Germany—are unusual in that many issues present in this collection have not survived elsewhere.

Due to the ephemeral nature of these periodicals, library acquisition of them has been patchy, even in Germany itself. Currently, the collection is kept in storage near Royal Holloway and only partially catalogued. Paul demonstrated, though, that it is most definitely worthy of further study—providing a fascinating glimpse into counter-cultural groups in Germany during the second half of the twentieth century.

*After an interesting and engaging selection of talks, the conference finished with a very welcome drinks reception. The GSLG would like to thank all of the conference speakers and attendees for making the conference such a success, and, of course, to give special thanks to Susan Reed for organising everything so well.*

Conference talks summarised by Will Shire, Deputy Librarian, New College

## WIKISOURCE ENTDECKEN: GEMEINFREIE TEXTE FÜR FORSCHUNG UND BIBLIOTHEK

Im Sommer dieses Jahres haben wir in der Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts Paris ein Pilotprojekt durchgeführt, um zu erkunden, wie wir Spezialbestände mithilfe der Wikimedia-Plattformen besser sichtbar und nutzbar machen können. Das Wikiversum und insbesondere Wikisource ist jedoch nicht nur eine Plattform für die Bereitstellung eigener Bestände, sondern vor allem eine wertvolle Ressource für die tägliche Recherchearbeit. Es handelt sich—wie auch bei Wikipedia, Wikimedia Commons oder Wikidata—um ein gemeinnütziges, vollständig unabhängiges Projekt, das nicht von kommerziellen Interessen gesteuert wird. Getragen wird es von einer Gemeinschaft an freiwilligen Mitarbeitenden, die Texte transkribiert, prüft, strukturiert und kontinuierlich erweitert.



# WIKISOURCE

Wikisource ist ein Projekt der Wikimedia Foundation und wurde 2003 mit dem Ziel gegründet, gemeinfreie oder frei lizenzierte Texte allgemein zugänglich zu machen. Während Wikipedia primär als Enzyklopädie fungiert und Wissen in Artikelstruktur bereitstellt, konzentriert sich Wikisource auf Originalquellen: Neben zahlreichen literarischen Texten sind vor allem Flugschriften und Einblattdrucke der Frühen Neuzeit oder Langzeitprojekte wie die *Gartenlaube* (1853–1944) hervorzuheben, die dort zu finden sind. Dieses illustrierte Familienblatt, das als erstes erfolgreiches deutsches Massenblatt über einen Zeitraum von fast 100 Jahren veröffentlicht wurde, stellt eine ebenso umfassende wie für viele historische Untersuchungsfelder unverzichtbare Quelle zur deutschen Kulturgeschichte dar.

Ein zentraler Vorteil von Wikisource liegt in seiner völligen Kostenfreiheit und einfachen Zugänglichkeit. Sämtliche Inhalte stehen ohne Registrierung, ohne institutionellen Zugang und ohne zeitliche Beschränkungen zur Verfügung. Dies bietet nicht nur Bibliothekar:innen eine niedrigschwellige Rechercheplattform, sondern ermöglicht auch Studierenden und Forschenden den Zugriff auf Texte. Die Nutzung von Wikisource gestaltet sich intuitiv. Die Plattform bietet eine Volltextsuche, mit der sich gezielt nach Werken oder Autor:innen suchen lässt. Darüber hinaus laden Kategorien, Autorenverzeichnisse und thematische Übersichten zum Stöbern ein.

Außerdem existieren zur Erschließung der auf Wikisource vorhandenen Texte eigene Seiten zu 8.602 Autoren, 678 Themen, 1.885 Zeitschriften und 927 Orten oder Regionen (Stand Dezember 2025). Auch das Vereinigte Königreich hat eine eigene Themenseite, darunter spezifische Übersichten zu London und Manchester, auf denen Texte und Quellen mit entsprechendem inhaltlichem Bezug verlinkt sind: Der Ratgeber *Wie lebt man billig in London. Ein Handbuch für Reisende* aus dem Jahr 1846 beispielsweise lässt uns wissen, dass es schon im 19. Jahrhundert dringenden Bedarf an finanziellen Überlebensstipps für die englische Hauptstadt gab. Da jedoch ausschließlich gemeinfreie oder frei lizenzierte Texte aufgenommen werden dürfen, fehlen aktuelle Werke oder solche, die noch urheberrechtlich geschützt sind.

The screenshot shows the Wikisource interface for the page 'Seite:Schiller Musenalmanach 1796 101.jpg'. The page title is 'England und Deutschland.' and it is marked as 'Fertig' (finished). The text of the poem is displayed in the center, and a thumbnail of the original manuscript page is shown on the right. The poem's text is as follows:

( 101 )

England und Deutschland.

Stolzes Britannien, du! du raubst von Osten und Westen  
 Köstlich duftendes Reis, das dich in Flammen verzehrt,  
 Glänzender Phönix! Wir, die deutsche fleißige Biene,  
 Sammeln auf jeglicher Flur Honig, und wissen nicht, wem? E.

The thumbnail image shows the original manuscript page with the same text and a decorative border.

Praktisch ist zudem die Kennzeichnung des Bearbeitungsstatus: Texte, die vollständig geprüft und korrigiert wurden, sind entsprechend markiert, während andere noch im Entstehungsprozess stehen. Dies ermöglicht eine transparente Einschätzung der Textqualität und unterstützt die zuverlässige wissenschaftliche Nutzung. Sobald ein geeigneter Text gefunden wurde, lässt er sich problemlos zitieren, verlinken oder herunterladen, was besonders für bibliothekarische Schulungen oder Rechercheberatungen hilfreich ist.

Als kostenfreie Alternative zu kommerziellen Volltextdatenbanken kann es insbesondere Studierenden und Forschenden empfohlen werden, die außerhalb institutioneller Netzwerke arbeiten oder schnellen Zugriff auf digitale Quellen benötigen. Bibliotheken können zudem eigene Bestände mit entsprechenden Wikisource-Einträgen verknüpfen, etwa durch Verlinkungen im OPAC. Dies erhöht nicht nur die Sichtbarkeit freier Quellen, sondern erleichtert Nutzenden die Orientierung im digitalen Informationsraum. Die aktive Community hinter dem Projekt—bestehend aus Freiwilligen, darunter auch zahlreiche Bibliothekar:innen und Fachwissenschaftler:innen—steht bei Fragen zur Verfügung, nimmt Hinweise entgegen und arbeitet fortlaufend an der Verbesserung und Erweiterung der Sammlung. Dementsprechend lebt das Projekt von der individuellen Bereitschaft, beizutragen—ganz gleich ob als private Nutzerin, als Forscher oder als Bibliothekarin. Ob durch das Melden von Fehlern, das Ergänzen von Literaturangaben, das Korrigieren von OCR-Texten oder das Hochladen weiterer gemeinfreier Quellen—jeder Beitrag stärkt die Qualität des Projekts und kommt unmittelbar der wissenschaftlichen Gemeinschaft zugute. Diese Offenheit macht Wikisource nicht nur zu einer Ressource, sondern auch zu einem Ort der aktiven Mitgestaltung.

Insgesamt ist Wikisource ein wertvolles Werkzeug für alle, die mit deutschsprachigen Texten arbeiten—sei es in der Literaturwissenschaft, der Geschichtsforschung oder der bibliothekarischen Erschließung. Die Plattform verbindet offene Zugänglichkeit mit inhaltlicher Tiefe und ermöglicht es, historische und literarische Dokumente auf unkomplizierte Weise zu entdecken, zu nutzen und in die eigene Arbeit zu integrieren.



Ulrike Blumenthal, German Historical Institute Paris

**SAVE THE DATE: GRAHAM NATTRASS LECURE, 2026**

**PREFAB  
ATMOSPHERES**

**EAST GERMAN MODERNIST  
MASS HOUSING IN FILM**

Dr Stephan Ehrig, University of Glasgow  
Graham Natrass Lecture

**BRITISH LIBRARY**

17 JUNE 2026  
THE FOYLE SUITE  
BRITISH LIBRARY  
AGM:  
16:00  
DRINKS  
RECEPTION:  
17:30  
LECTURE:  
18:00  
RSVP:  
DOROTHEA.MIEHE  
[AT]BL.UK

GERMAN STUDIES  
LIBRARY GROUP  
**GSLG**

Our annual Graham Natrass Lecture and AGM has been confirmed for Wednesday 17 June, held as usual at the British Library in St Pancras. The event will be held in the Foyle Suite and refreshments will be served.

The topic of the lecture is as follows:

**‘Prefab Atmospheres: East German Modernist Mass Housing in Film’**

The lecture will be delivered by Dr Stephan Ehrig, Lecturer in German at the University of Glasgow. Dr Ehrig’s research interests focus on interdisciplinary

approaches to diversifying the research on East German cultural production pre- and post-1990, as well as on 19th to 21st century literature, theatre, and film. Before working in Glasgow, he spent four years in Dublin as Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the UCD Humanities Institute and School of Art History and Cultural Policy, preceded by posts at Durham University, and the Institute for Languages, Cultures and Societies at the University of London.

There is no charge to attend the Lecture—which is open to all—but places are limited.

If you intend to come, please email Dorothea Mieke, Chair of the German Studies Libraries Group ([dorothea.mieke\[at\]bl.uk](mailto:dorothea.mieke@bl.uk)).

## REGISTER YOUR INTEREST: GSLG 40TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE, 15-19 SEPTEMBER 2026

GSLG 40th Anniversary  
Conference

# Switzerland

15-19 September 2026

Main Location:  
Basel

Additional Visits:  
Bern and Zürich

**REGISTER BY  
31 MARCH 2026**

EMAIL [DOROTHEA.MIEHE\[AT\]BLUK](mailto:DOROTHEA.MIEHE@BLUK)

**GSLG**

We are very much looking forward to our 40th anniversary conference in Switzerland later this year! Our main base for the conference will be Basel, but we spend time visiting a range of different libraries across the country.

The planned itinerary includes:

- 15.9.2026 - Arrival in Basel
- 16.9.2026 - Basel (University Library and Paper Mill Museum)
- 17.9.2026 - Bern (University Library and National Library)
- 18.9.2026 - Zürich (Bibliotheksverbund Swiss Library Platform and the Zentralbibliothek)
- 19.9.2025 – Departure

Library and institutional visits will provide an opportunity for professional dialogue with colleagues; the programme will include a focus group on subject librarianship (with our Swiss colleagues also participating), and a talk on LIS qualifications and routes into the profession in Switzerland.

The conference fee is £60. If you would like to attend, please email the GSLG Chair Dorothea Miehe (dorothea.miehe[at]bl.uk) by no later than **31 March 2026**. If you have any questions, please visit our website for more information and for contact details: <https://gslg.org.uk>

We look forward to seeing many members in Switzerland in September!

**SPREAD THE WORD:  
JOIN THE GERMAN STUDIES LIBRARY GROUP**



If you know anybody who would be interested in joining the German Studies Library Group, please do spread the word! We are always looking for new members and membership is open to anybody with an interest in German studies—fluency in German is very much not a requirement.

Through our events and conferences, the group is especially of benefit to younger professionals, giving them an opportunity to speak to librarians working in a range of different institutions across the UK and covering all aspects of the profession.

As seen above, future events planned include what will certainly be another interesting Graham Natrass lecture later this year and another conference in Germany in September 2026. The group is very open to organising other events as well, so please do get in touch if you have any ideas.

More information about membership can be found on our website: <https://gslg.org.uk/about-us/membership/> and we are, of course, very happy to answer any questions from potential members.