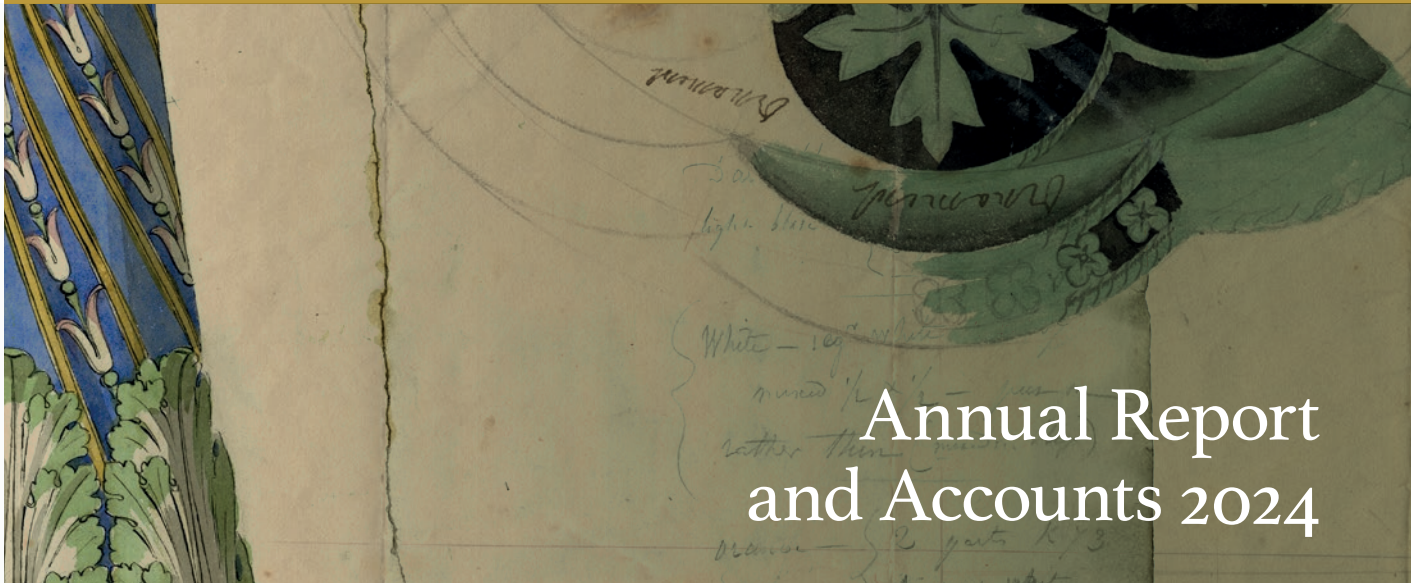




NM
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National Manuscripts
Conservation Trust



Annual Report
and Accounts 2024

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Registered Charity: 802796

Annual Report and Accounts
for the year to 31 December 2024

Reference and Administrative Information

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Registered Charity: 802796

Patron

Rt Hon. Lord Waldegrave of North Hill

Trustees

Professor David McKitterick FBA FSA, Chair

Charles Sebag-Montefiore CBE FSA FCA, Treasurer

Caroline Checkley Scott ACR (*to 19 June 2024*)

Dr Norman James FRHistS

Gabriel Sewell MA MA

Victoria Stevens ACR (*from 19 June 2024*)

Philip Tansey FCA (*from 26 November 2024*)

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CAF Bank Limited

25 King's Hill Avenue, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

Chair's Introduction and Review of the Year

Samuel Johnson's venomous definition of a patron is often quoted when historians discuss the concept: 'Commonly a wretch who supports with insolence, and is paid with flattery.' However, this is actually his second definition. The first, by contrast, is far more generous and much more fitting for the NMCT: 'One who countenances, supports, or protects.'

With that phrase in mind, on this occasion we warmly thank Sir Keith Thomas for his many years as our patron, unseen to most people who have benefited from our grants but a person who has always given us reassurance, support and counsel. We are deeply grateful to him. As his successor, it is an especial pleasure to welcome Lord Waldegrave of North Hill, and to look forward to many years of his company. As new trustees, we welcomed Victoria Stevens, who brings a wealth of experience as a conservator, and considerable knowledge of many of this country's collections, and Philip Tansey, whose financial experience promises to be of very great help in the future.

Further, as always, we thank our supporters, both those named elsewhere in this report and also those who remain anonymous. Once again, we have benefited from regular advice by the staff of The National Archives. Without all this help, our work would be impossible.

The earliest projects this year went back in one case to the beginnings of a long-standing institution. The Charterhouse letters patent of 1611 relate to the foundation of an almshouse and school. For the Salters' Company, there was a group of documents, relating to properties and other matters and dating from the 16th and 17th centuries.

The wealth of this country's industrial records ranged this year from designs for Minton's colourful majolica ware, preserved in Stoke-on-Trent, to a modest but absorbing group of waybills recording 19th-century goods traffic on the narrow gauge railway in the Glyn Valley. Though a comparatively small part of North Wales slate mining, these contain a vast amount of information about a community's daily needs. In South Wales, the vestry books of Llansawell, another tiny community, provide records of a more social kind.

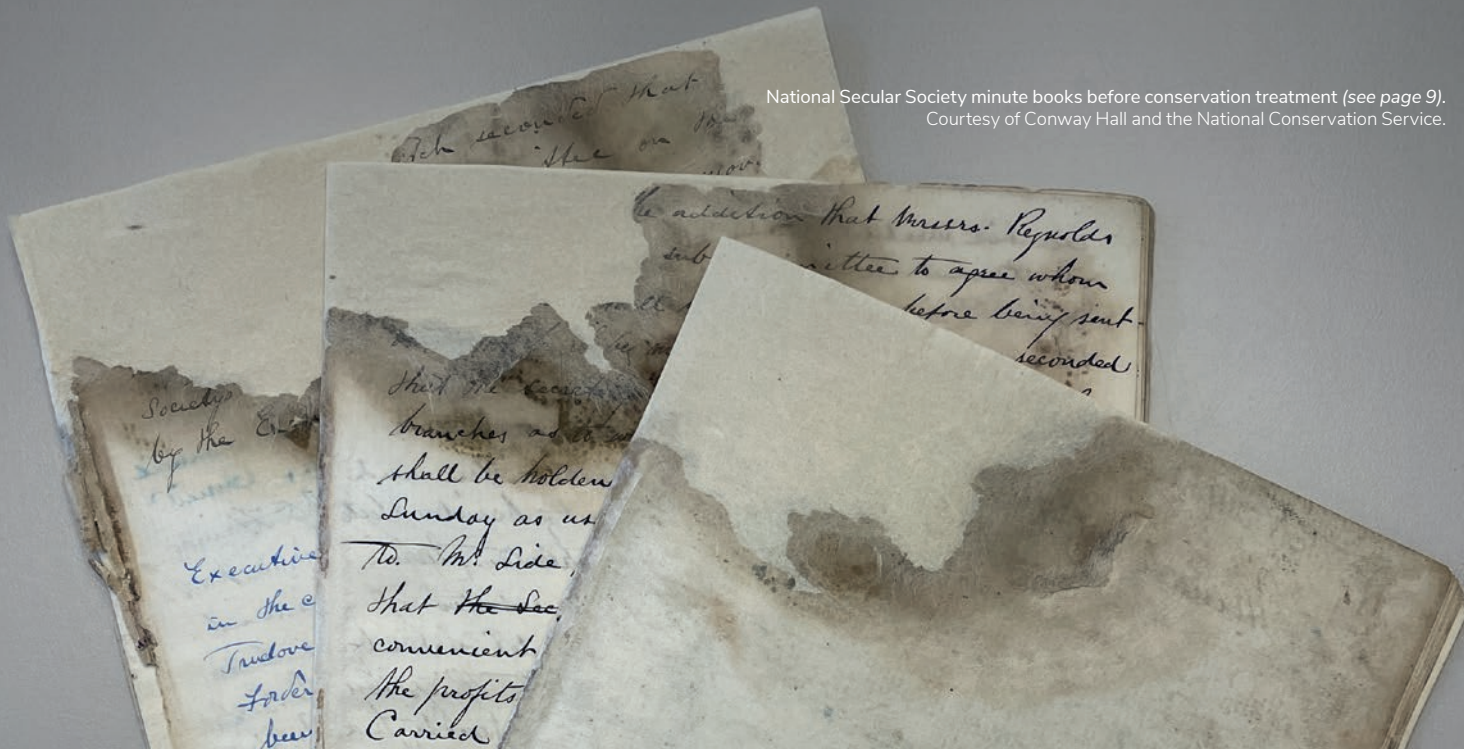
Like many records of daily work, the Glyn Valley waybills (*image page 4*) were simply pasted into large albums, which over the years have become awkward to handle safely. It is a common problem, as methods of preservation and conservation have changed. Scrap-books of all kinds, originally designed and intended to preserve their contents, deteriorate with use and age, to the point where their very nature poses a threat. Some of the same kinds of challenges were also to be found in the bulging albums of Canon Jackson at the Society of Antiquaries, where Jackson had inserted all kinds of notes and transcripts, doing his best to maintain an order, in his case topographically. The result was that the records were preserved, but became less and less easy to use as glue and paper deteriorated. Conservation work always involves questions of use and of display, whether of originals or of likenesses of various kinds.

As always, some of our grants have been for single documents, not always complicated, and some have been contributions to much larger programmes. At one extreme was the single letter from Sir Joseph Banks relating to the fruitless search for the Northeast Passage. At another were the many bundles of letters from the Gladstone family, relating to its interests in slavery: not surprisingly, these are now of increasing interest to historians. An important group of manuscripts from Conway Hall, some involving names long familiar to historians, cast another light on 19th-century politics.

Professor David McKitterick
Chair



4 The National Manuscripts Conservation Trust



National Secular Society minute books before conservation treatment (see page 9).
Courtesy of Conway Hall and the National Conservation Service.

The Trustees are indebted to these partners and funders for their support of NMCT's work in 2024.

Pilgrim
Trust

 All Souls College
University of Oxford

Conservation  Resources


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government


T. S. ELIOT FOUNDATION

 TRINITY
COLLEGE
CAMBRIDGE

And a number of generous individual donors.

NMCT's current level of grant-giving is possible thanks to our ongoing fundraising efforts. In 2010 we were able to give total grants of under £70,000.

Since then nearly £1.4m has been raised from many generous funders which has transformed our ability to support manuscript conservation projects.

Awards by the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust 2024

CARMARTHENSHIRE ARCHIVES

The conservation of the Llansawel parish vestry book, 1821-1875

Project cost: £2,917

Grant award: £2,917

Hayden Burns, Head of Carmarthenshire Archives writes: Prior to 1894, responsibility for local parish administration was held by the vestry with the proceedings of their meetings were recorded in a bespoke minute book.

The Llansawel vestry minute book contains the transactions of routine parish business including the appointment and accounts of various officers such as the churchwardens, surveyors of the highway, overseers of the poor, and collectors, etc. The early entries also record individual cases of poor relief, with settlement decisions, bastardy cases, and apprenticeships noted. As such, this volume is an important source for researching the history of the parish during this period.

Sadly, the minute book is in a very poor condition and cannot safely be consulted in our public search room. For example, both of its covers and spine are detached from the text block and much of the lining is loose. In addition, several pages are torn, with extensive water damage and evidence of mould throughout.

Thanks to this generous grant from the NMCT a conservator will now be able to clean, stabilise, and repair the Llansawel vestry book. This work will not only prevent further damage to the item but will also enable us to make it accessible to all who wish to research the history of Llansawel parish and its inhabitants. The completion of the conservation work will also allow valuable opportunities for community engagement and education.



The vestry minute book before treatment. Courtesy of Carmarthenshire Archives.

CHARTERHOUSE, LONDON; CHARTERHOUSE SCHOOL, GODALMING; AND THE LONDON ARCHIVES, LONDON

Preserving our Legacy: the conservation of the 1611 Letters Patent for the foundation of Sutton's Hospital in Charterhouse

Project cost: £3,010

Grant award: £2,300

Myles Myers, Collection Care Manager at TLA, Maria Lopez-Monis, Development Manager at the Charterhouse, and Catherine Smith, Charterhouse School Archivist, write: The London Charterhouse's historic archive, which is held in trust by The London Archives (TLA), charts the story of the Charterhouse from the foundation of Sutton's Hospital by Thomas Sutton in 1611, telling the story of its role both as an almshouse and as a school, prior to the school's move to Godalming in 1872.



The Letters Patent of the Charterhouse, dated 22nd June 1611, is an important historic document for both institutions, as it established the aims and purposes of the Charterhouse as an almshouse and school, and made James I the first Royal governor of the institution, a tradition that continues to this day. The document is tightly rolled and vulnerable to damage so its access for consultation and research has had to be restricted, it is also difficult to display and could not be reproduced or digitised. The generous grant from the NMCT is enabling the team at TLA to clean the document and its royal seal, flatten the parchment, and create a new display mount to facilitate consultation and display. It will also allow us to create print facsimiles (without the seal) to be available at both Charterhouse in London and Charterhouse School, thus improving public engagement opportunities.

We are very grateful to the NMCT for their support of this exciting project that enables us to bring back to life such an important testimony of the history of Sutton's Hospital in Charterhouse.

The Letters Patent (left) and the bespoke box (below) before conservation. Courtesy of The London Charterhouse.



CHIDDINGSTONE CASTLE

(The Denys Eyre Bower Bequest),
EDENBRIDGE, KENT

**Conservation of High Street House parchments,
17th century**

Project cost: £7,290

Grant award: £7,290

Naomi Collick, Curator, writes: The support of the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust has given us the opportunity to conserve a pair of 17th-century parchments with ink drawings. The parchments depict the North and South prospects of 'High Streat House', the home since the 16th century of the Streatfeild family. Chiddingstone Castle was known as High Street House before it was transformed into a castle-style building in the 1800s. The parchments are an important resource for our understanding of the appearance of the house and its position on the high street of Chiddingstone village. They capture a rare impression of the house, gardens, and surrounding countryside before the Streatfeild family diverted the high street and built a lake in their grounds. The parchments are a unique and important part of the archive at Chiddingstone Castle.

The parchments have been on display in frames and have unfortunately suffered from recurring mould damage, distortions, and discolouration due to light exposure and poor environmental conditions. The conservation treatment focussed on removing them from their current mounting, cleaning and treating the mould damage, repairing any damaged areas, and preparing them for storage in an archival box.

Facsimiles were made of the parchments which will be displayed in the current frames. This has allowed us to continue to display the images of High Street House for visitors, to illustrate the history of Chiddingstone Castle. The original parchments are accessible to researchers by appointment with the Curator. We are very grateful for this grant from NMCT, which has ensured their future preservation and enable access to them for study.



Top: The conserved parchments in bespoke box. Above: The North prospect, before conservation. Courtesy of the Dennyys Eyre Bequest, Chiddingstone Castle.

CONWAY HALL ETHICAL SOCIETY

Insights into three Victorian radicals

Project cost: £11,772

Grant award: £6,436

Holly Elson, Head of Programmes writes: Conway Hall Ethical Society is the oldest surviving freethought organisation in the world and holds the largest and most comprehensive humanist research resource in the UK. Since 1886, Conway Hall Library and Archives has been a haven for the radicals, political and social reformers and freethinkers who dared to dream of a better world.

With generous funding from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust, we have been able to conserve ten vitally important archival objects that relate to three influential Victorian freethought radicals: William Lovett, William Johnson Fox and Charles Bradlaugh.

The documents include original handwritten and annotated autobiographies of Lovett (1876) and Fox (1860), beautiful illuminated manuscripts of Fox (1842) and Bradlaugh (1874 and 1887), and the earliest handwritten minute books of the National Secular Society (1875 – 1898), headed by Bradlaugh. All were in dire need of conservation. Several of the objects had suffered from mould and moisture damage, and all needed cleaning and rehousing in secure and stable bindings to protect them.

In addition to the conservation treatments, all of the objects are also being fully digitised, which will allow us to make these unique historic works widely accessible and allow further opportunities for research and education relating to these Victorian radicals who shaped the freethought movement in the UK. We are deeply grateful to the NMCT, without whose support this project would not have been possible.



Charles Bradlaugh manuscript undergoing cleaning. Courtesy of Conway Hall and the National Conservation Service.

CUMBRIA ARCHIVES, CARLISLE

Conserving the Thomas Mawson design archive for gardens at Curwen Woods, Burton-in-Kendal

Project cost: £10,954

Grant award: £10,554

Erika Freyr, Senior conservator writes: Cumbria Archives holds the Thomas Mawson archive of garden plans and architectural drawings. Mawson's early 20th-century landscape design and urban planning records are regularly requested by both national and international researchers, but due to the widespread use of tracing paper for the architectural plans, and that material's inherent fragility, the collection is highly vulnerable and difficult to handle.

With our NMCT-funded pilot project to conserve bundle WDB 76/118 due to begin in December 2024, preparations started in September with the project conservator, Claire Dean, attending the Tracing Papers Workshop at The London Archives with Hildegard Homburger to learn all about conservation methods and best practice for preserving tracing paper. This helped broaden our understanding of the impact of production, use and storage on the preservation of different types of tracing paper.

The Curwen Woods plans are a small part of the larger archive of Mawson work, and it is our hope that this project will allow Claire to upskill and trial various methods of conservation to apply to the whole collection in the future.

In October 2024, Claire gave a five-minute presentation on the project's aims and the importance of stabilising tracing paper prior to digitisation at a networking event held at Carlisle Archives, which was attended by staff from archives and museums across the north. Full work on the project started in early December 2024.

Claire began work on listing and condition assessing the plans in WDB 76/118. The bundle contains a range of tracing paper, paper and cellulose acetate plans with pencil, ink, and watercolour designs. The tracing paper displays particularly widespread deterioration, including staining and fragmenting, significant tears, and losses. The plans were also found to have sustained historic pest damage. This initial project work was undertaken alongside work to repackage the entirety of the Mawson collection due to mould outbreak in the strongroom in which the collection is stored. The conservation work is now well underway and we look forward to being able to make these plans accessible.



Claire Dean unrolling a Mawson watercolour to check for mould damage. Courtesy of Cumbria Archives.



Rolled tracing papers prior to conservation. Courtesy of Cumbria Archives.

GLADSTONE'S LIBRARY, HAWARDEN

The conservation of 30 bundles of letters linked to the Gladstone family's role in enslavement in the Caribbean, 1817-1881

Project cost: £76,494

Grant award: £8,500

Alexandra Foulds, Archivist, writes: Gladstone's Library's Glynne-Gladstone Archive contains 223 bundles of letters relating to the enslaved and later indentured labour plantations owned by William Ewart Gladstone's father, Sir John Gladstone, in Jamaica and British Guiana. In each bundle between 20 and 170 letters have been tightly folded horizontally and tied together with cotton tape.

Since 2021 these have been amongst our most requested items, with researchers using them to uncover information about living conditions on the plantations, the lobbying that John Gladstone was involved in relating to the abolition of slavery and bringing indentured labourers

from India to the Caribbean, the involvement of John Gladstone's sons in his plantations, and how the money John Gladstone received from compensation following the abolition of slavery became used to build the political careers of his children.

Currently, however, users struggle to work with the bundles as they require a great deal of handling to open, which risks damage, and they do not easily lie flat. This generous grant from NMCT will allow us to flatten and repair damage to 30 of these bundles and to store them in new acid-free folders and boxes. This will preserve the bundles for the future and enable us to make them available to researchers; we also plan to increase access through digitisation. This project will also serve as a pilot for future projects to conserve the rest of the bundles.



Four bundles of letters regarding the finances of the Gladstone estate. Courtesy of Gladstone's Library.

GWENT ARCHIVES

Labour's 'Welsh Terrier': preserving the papers of Paul Flynn, MP

Project Cost: £7,747

Grant award: £6,545

Lisa Snook, County Archivist, writes: This is a large uncatalogued collection from Paul Flynn, Labour MP for Newport West from June 1987 to his death in February 2019, and the records cover the entirety of his time in the role. In 1996 Paul was named the Spectator's Backbencher of the Year, and The Guardian obituary described him as 'the quintessential backbencher of his generation'. He was an energetic, outspoken and sometimes controversial campaigner and his archive reflects his interests over a distinguished parliamentary career.

A selection of newspaper cuttings from the collection with images of Paul Flynn MP. Courtesy of Gwent Archives.



Currently stored in large non-archival boxes and plastic containers, wallets and folders the collection (ref: Accession 6489) contains hundreds of files, the contents of which are fixed with metal staples and paperclips. The metal fixings are already rusting and the packaging does not protect the contents from dust, pollutants or water ingress. The grant is funding the decanting of the collection to archival boxes and replacement of non-archival folders with archive-standard packaging and metal fastenings with brass paperclips. There is a very clear structure to the collection, and an Archivist will be available to advise on maintaining the original order as it is being repackaged.

We are grateful for the grant from NMCT, which will fund a part-time Preservation Assistant for four months to carry out the work, plus the materials needed to replace the existing packaging and fixtures. Once preserved, the collection will be catalogued and made available for research and outreach activities.



KEBLE COLLEGE, OXFORD

The conservation of John Keble's sermons, c.1818-1864

Project cost: £7,320

Grant award: £7,320

Peter Monteith, Archivist and Information Manager, writes:

The Oxford Movement ('Tractarians') revolutionised the Church of England and, arguably, Christianity across the world, with John Keble's assize sermon in 1833, titled 'National Apostasy', recognised as the start of the movement. Their philosophy, which reclaimed the primitive roots of the Church, was guided by Keble's religious thoughts, and those of his associates.

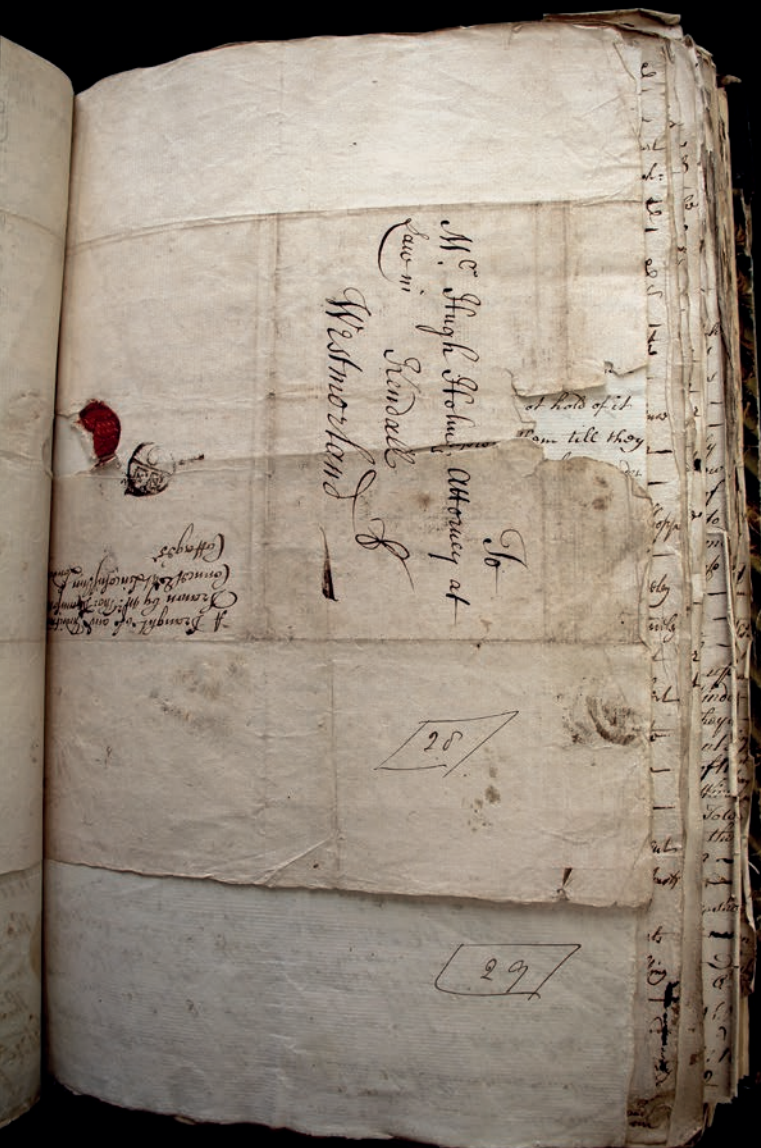
Together, Keble's sermons, his extensive correspondence (including Newman, Pusey, Coleridge, and the Keble family) and his poetry, offer a unique insight into the development of Keble's religious philosophy, not least because the sermons are annotated with the dates and locations preached.

A conservation survey was undertaken on John Keble's sermons by Oxford Conservation Consortium (OCC) in 2019, categorising the material by condition, from condition 1 (minor repairs) to condition 3 (severely damaged). The conservation of the bulk of the category 1 items was undertaken between 2019 and 2023 and work on the remaining condition 1 sermons is underway. The NMCT grant will allow the OCC to offer a paid work placement to a student conservator to gain practical experience working on the more challenging condition 2 sermons under supervision from an accredited conservator.

This project is intended to prepare the sermons so that they can be an integral part of the College's marking of the 200th anniversary of the publication of John Keble's famous book of poems, *The Christian Year* (1827).



Detail showing the variety of threads and one pin used to hold the pamphlets together. Courtesy of Keble College.



TOWNEND FARMHOUSE, WINDERMERE, NATIONAL TRUST

The conservation of seven volumes of the Townend Bound Archive, dating from the 17th and 18th centuries

Project cost: £20,140

Grant award: £10,000

Emma Wright, Collection and House Manager, writes:
Dating from 1525 to 1940, the Browne family documents, which form the Townend Bound Archive, illustrate an extraordinary and rare insight into the social history and intricacies of rural life. Nationally significant for its extensive nature, the 16 volumes contain a diverse collection of handwritten paper documents ranging from legal papers to shop receipts, notebooks and family letters.

The level of detail about ordinary farming practices amassed by generations of the family over 400 years provides a rare view into the intricacies of life for this yeoman family and their community. It is regularly consulted and referenced by historians of agriculture, buildings, consumer behaviour, identity, literature and many other subjects.

Several of the volumes are in poor condition and are unstable which has resulted in their removal from public access until conservation is complete. All treatment will be carried out in situ due to their fragility and our desire to retain originality.

Over the last few years there has been increased academic interest in the Townend Archive and it is the subject of an ongoing research relationship with Oxford and Newcastle Universities.

NORTH EAST WALES ARCHIVES, FLINTSHIRE

The Glyn Valley Tramway waybill book

Project cost: £28,295

Grant award: £14,000

Claire Harrington, Principal Archivist, writes: The Glyn Valley tramway was built in 1873 to connect slate quarries at Glyn Ceiriog with the Ellesmere Canal. All traffic going up the Ceiriog Valley was recorded and weighed before continuing its journey to Glyn Ceiriog. For each load a waybill was completed. The bills were kept in a large book (65 x 53cm and comprising 156 pages) with the waybills pasted into it.

Although covering only three years of operation (1881 to 1883), the book is a unique record of what the then residents of the Valley consumed from the outside world – from boots and bricks to gunpowder and quarrying equipment. It is not known that any of the other books which must have existed during the tramway's life (1873-1935) still survive. Searching TNA Discovery returns few results for waybills and none for waybills kept in the format of this book, which makes this item an extremely rare survival.

The volume is composed of thin paper to which waybills have been pasted, overlapping, on both sides. Damp and rodent attack have left the binding, pages and waybills weak and damaged. Overlapping pasting-in also makes it impossible to consult the waybills without further damage. In this condition we cannot allow access at all. However, the information contained is potentially of great interest to historians of the local area, whether of transport, industry or social conditions.

Each page of the volume and the individual waybills will be cleaned and repaired as required. The binding will be conserved, boards repaired and cloth re-attached. Finally, a phase box will be made to house the volume. All stages of the process will be fully recorded photographically to ensure accurate re-creation. It is important to retain the original structure and format of the book, especially given its rarity.

Once the individual items have been digitised, a full and accurate catalogue description will be possible. The digital copies will allow wide public access to the information the waybills contain.

This project will have the added benefit of enabling the volume to be used as a key part of our engagement programme with schools. Literacy, numeracy and digital competence are mandatory cross-curricular skills within the new Curriculum for Wales. We believe this volume has great potential to contribute to the development of numeracy skills in young people in a novel and exciting way: it presents an opportunity for students to engage with the heritage of their local area within a humanities or mathematics setting. Our Community Engagement Officer is very excited at the prospect of having this material available as a basis for some interesting project material.

As soon as the volume came into the office we realised its value but also the enormity of the task required to make it accessible. We are very grateful to NMCT for making this project possible.



Documents adhered on top of each other (see also image on page 4).
Courtesy of North East Wales Archives.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF SCULPTORS, LONDON

Conserving the Story of Sculpture

Project cost: £19,905

Grant award: £10,000

Caroline Worthington, Director, writes: The Royal Society of Sculptors' archive tells the story of sculptors and sculpture from our founding in 1905 to the present day. It is a nationally important collection according to The National Archives because it documents the history of the Society and our members' contribution to sculpture and public art in Britain and internationally across the 20th century.

The collection includes leather-bound minute books which record how busy sculptors were in the years after the First World War. Paperwork in box files documents the awards and prizes the Society runs and there are also records, in the form of letters, press cuttings, exhibition catalogues, slides and photographs, for over 1,000 members ranging from founding member Sir Thomas Brock, to Sir Antony Caro and Dame Elisabeth Frink.

For the past 45 years the archive has been kept in dire conditions in the basement at our home, Dora House, spread across three rooms with no environmental control and with much of the material being kept in mouldy boxes.

We began moving the archive off-site as a temporary, emergency measure in 2020. This wonderful grant will now enable the Society to conserve and rehouse the Royal Society of Sculptors' archive before it returns to Dora House in 2026 (the 50th anniversary of Cecil Thomas' gift of his home and studio to the Society) where it will be stored in a purpose-designed archive space.



One of the better corners of the archive before the collection was moved offsite prior to conservation. Minute books. Images courtesy of the Royal Society of Sculptors.

THE SALTERS' COMPANY, LONDON

Salters' Company Archives: Noteworthy property records and an intriguing legal copy book, late 1500s to 1840s

Project cost: £4,880

Grant award: £3,980

Katie George, Archivist, writes: The Salters' Company is one of the Great Twelve City of London livery companies, with an archive dating back to 1216. We are very grateful for the generous grant from NMCT which will enable us to conserve a late-16th century legal copy book, three mid- to late-17th century leases relating to the Salters' third Hall and a late-17th century plan of another Salters' property in the City of London, an early 19th-century rental of all the Salters' properties, and two 19th-century plans and elevations of the Salters' almshouses and grounds in Maidenhead.

This small selection of archives provides valuable snapshots of Salters' Company activity and of wider nationally significant themes. As well as legal documents, the copy book includes intriguing and miscellaneous Bible quotations, prayers and a list of women from classical mythology with a precis of their qualities, making it relevant in key historical study areas of law, literature, religion, classical reception and women. The leases, rentals and plans provide a good source for the study of London's historic buildings and streets. The leases focus on the period before and after the Great Fire of London in 1666, an ever-popular study theme! The Salters' Maidenhead almshouses, built in 1661, still stand today, giving special significance to the early 19th-century rental.

NMCT's grant will allow for safe and more frequent handling and viewing of the archives, along with digitisation opportunities, enabling much wider and more remote public access.



Maidenhead almshouses plans, 1805. Courtesy of Katerina Powell ACR and the Salters' Company.

...of Six months next
of or in the premises within the tyme and space of Six months next
above limited or mentioned **And further** The said Thomas
and one and Coially their Heirs and assigns by their pnt Chas the
same for assigne or sblow this pnt Lease or his state interest or tene
disfiant of the clute or Registry as of shes for the tyme being first he
and one and Coially their Heirs and assigns by their pnt Chas the
said Mr Wardens and Coially their Heirs and assigns for every tyme
ing selling granting aliening bargaining or doing away of the said
to any pson or pson whatsoever for any tyme or tyme whatsoever dur
ment. The said Chas being willing to make and make the same
take for the same Chas as that he the said Thomas should the

...any difference shal be
his or other things belonging to the said
to the Judgement and ending of the
trappon the said pnt out of forty pound
to be paid as above being carefully de
pured from all causes and amended for
the saying amending thereof that the
into the said hereby demised pnt missd and
and the younger his exors and assigns
to the contrary notwithstanding **And**
younger his exors and assigns by their pnt Chas the
ounded and pforment of the Cobenants hereunto
of peaceably and quietly heib hold occupied
the cause of the said house
or to sayund

...the said Thomas
my for or touting and
ward and of the said
the said pnt reserved to
nded at the pnt of
to tyme
alwaies within the
at any tyme after in
every or any pnt thereof
assigned and all other the
And The said Mr Wardens and
that the said
and Comptrol
and enjoy the
The said Mr Wardens
during the
Common

Lease of third Salters' Hall in Bread Street, City of London, 1676.
Courtesy of Katerina Powell ACR and the Salters' Company.

**SIR JOSEPH BANKS SOCIETY, HORNCastle,
LINCOLNSHIRE**

**The conservation of a letter written by Sir Joseph
Banks (1743-1820) in 1773**

Project cost: £980

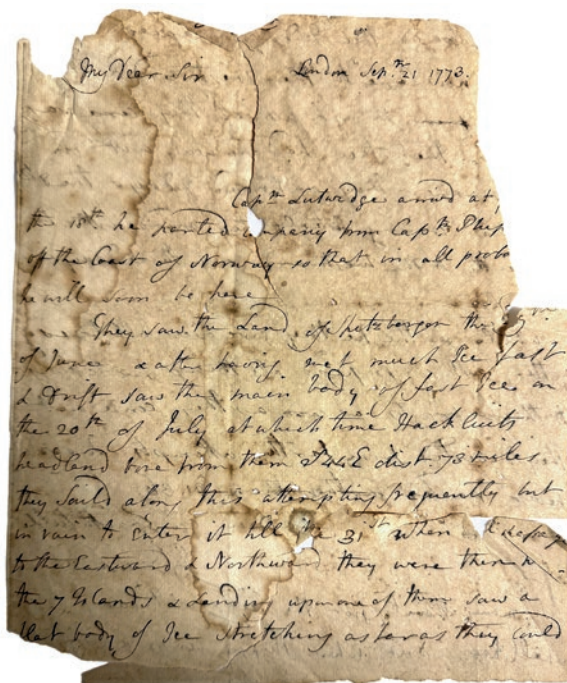
Grant award: £980

Paul Scott, Chairman, writes: This newly discovered letter to an unknown recipient (possibly the Rev. John Lightfoot) describes the 1773 Polar expedition to find the Northeast Passage. *HMS Racehorse* and *HMS Carcass* were to break through the ice to see if there was open sea beyond Spitsbergen that might provide a route to the Bering Strait and the Pacific. The expedition was under the overall command of *HMS Racehorse's* captain Constantine Phipps, who took with him a ship's doctor, an astronomer and a naturalist. The astronomer was Israel Lyons, who taught Banks Botany at Christ Church, Oxford. *HMS Carcass* was commanded by Captain Skeffington Lutwidge and his midshipman was a young Horatio Nelson.

Joseph Banks was a school friend of Phipps and had accompanied him on his Newfoundland expedition. Banks had originally planned to accompany Phipps on the Polar expedition but, for some reason, changed his mind. However, he provided Phipps with useful information regarding sea conditions around Spitzbergen. He also suggested items the expedition might collect on his behalf, including a white bear. Nelson reputedly fought a Polar Bear on this expedition, an act of rashness for which he was severely reprimanded.

The expedition was unsuccessful in finding the Northeast Passage, like so many attempts that followed it.

Thanks to the NMCT grant the letter is currently undergoing conservation after which it will feature in a temporary exhibition at the museum in autumn 2025.



The letter written by Banks in London on September 21, 1773, shown before conservation. Courtesy of the Joseph Banks Society.

ward they Judged comrades
now came to the westward & the
passage from through which they came was
stop so that they had no way out in
this manner they continued 7 days the 8th
the wind coming Easterly they moved with the
ice gently to the westward & in three days
were clear

while in the ice they gave over all hopes of
getting out so prepared all things for taking
to their boats as soon as they came out
they desisted from further attempts having
now reached farther than 81.36.

Dear your Faithfull
J Banks.
As many thanks for the letter of today I
shall keep more when ships comes & will write

SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF LONDON

Conservation of the collection of Wiltshire material of J E Jackson

Project cost: £17,540

Grant award: £17,540

Kat Petersen, Archivist, writes: Canon J E Jackson FSA (1805-1891) was rector of Leigh Delamere as well as librarian to Lord Bath at Longleat. He was a keen antiquary and local historian, and collected a large amount of material relating to Wiltshire, with a view to writing a history of the county.

This material – notes, press cuttings, printed ephemera, drawings and sketches as well as some original medieval deeds, engravings and correspondence – was donated to the Society of Antiquaries on Jackson's death as a vast number of loose items. Rev. C.W. Shickle FSA arranged the collection in the 1920s and chose to mount the items into 14 huge double-foolscap sized (17in by 27in) volumes.

Over time these volumes became very damaged and worn as the pages were so heavy that the spine could not support them. This additionally caused the lower edge of the pages to sag against the shelf, while the many pasted-in items fanned out the pages, allowing dirt and dust to enter. All of this contributed to the gradual deterioration of the material.

As the Society does not have an in-house conservator, we worked with the paper conservation course at the City & Guilds of London Art School (CGLAS). A team of seven second-year students were recruited to carry out the project, led by their tutor Graeme Gardiner ACR, who is also a freelance conservator. This not only gave the students valuable experience but we were able to pay them!

Kinvara Tims, one of the students, said: 'This has been a really brilliant opportunity for all of us from CGLAS. We have gained valuable experience managing a large volume of work within a tight deadline, and the responsibility of working on a collection outside of university has also been a great learning experience. We have all really enjoyed our time at the Society of Antiquaries, and were so proud to see the collection laid out in its new archival boxes when we were finished. I am so grateful to the Society and to the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust for this opportunity and for the trust that they have placed in us as conservators, and I hope that future CGLAS students will be able to have similar experiences.'



Graeme Gardiner ACR demonstrating the disbinding of a volume.
Courtesy of the Society of Antiquaries.

The Society closes every year for the month of August to carry out behind-the-scenes tasks, which gave us the time and space to carry out this project in a very short period, as we converted four large library desks into makeshift conservation stations.

Each volume was disbound and the folios cleaned. Basic repairs such as flattening creases and mending small tears were carried out. Each folio was then put into an archival-quality paper folder.

Inevitably the dis-binding and repackaging converted each volume into between two and four boxes, the contents of which have since been listed by an archive volunteer. In addition to making it easier for researchers to access specific items in the collection, it is now much easier for staff to retrieve a reasonably-sized box instead of a large and unwieldy volume weighing up to 12 kilos!



Top: Cleaning of folio. Right: Close up of original volumes before treatment. Courtesy of the Society of Antiquaries.

STOKE-ON-TRENT CITY ARCHIVES

Majolica Mania Conservation Project: Art and design work for Majolica ceramics pieces, c1850-c1910

Project cost: £39,710

Grant award: £15,550

Rebecca Jackson, Archive Services Manager writes:

The Minton Archive was donated to the City of Stoke-on-Trent in 2015 following a public campaign, led by the Art Fund and supported by the Pilgrim Trust and many others, to save this important collection for the nation. In the same year NMCT generously supported the City Archives with a conservation grant. The conservation intern recruited thanks to that grant conducted a pilot study and made a conservation assessment of the Minton art and design folios on which the Majolica Mania Conservation Project is based.

Now, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the collection's return to Stoke, and to coincide with the City of Stoke-on-Trent's 2025 centenary celebrations, the City Archives has launched the Minton Majolica Mania Project. This comprises the programme of conservation, funded by NMCT, alongside packaging and documentation of the art and design folios, which is funded by the Majolica International Society. The conservation focuses on the vibrant and fantastical majolica designs for which Minton was famous. The wider project provides training opportunities for volunteers and staff in basic preventive conservation and preservation, raising the profile of heritage skills in the City.

Stage one of the project has been completed. This involved moving the art and design folios into new flat-drawer storage in the City Archives' new premises in The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery. Conservation is now underway.

Staff began the cataloguing work at the end of the year and repackaging and cleaning by staff and volunteers under the direction of the Archive Service's conservator begins in 2025. The conservation project supported by this NMCT grant also begins in 2025.

Bottom: Minton Art and Design folios awaiting cleaning, repackaging and conservation. Below: A Minton design by A.W.N. Pugin and the finished piece. Courtesy of Stoke-on-Trent City Archives.



ARCHIVES: WIGAN AND LEIGH
(Wigan Council, Greater Manchester)

The Towneley Manuscripts

Project cost: £5,877

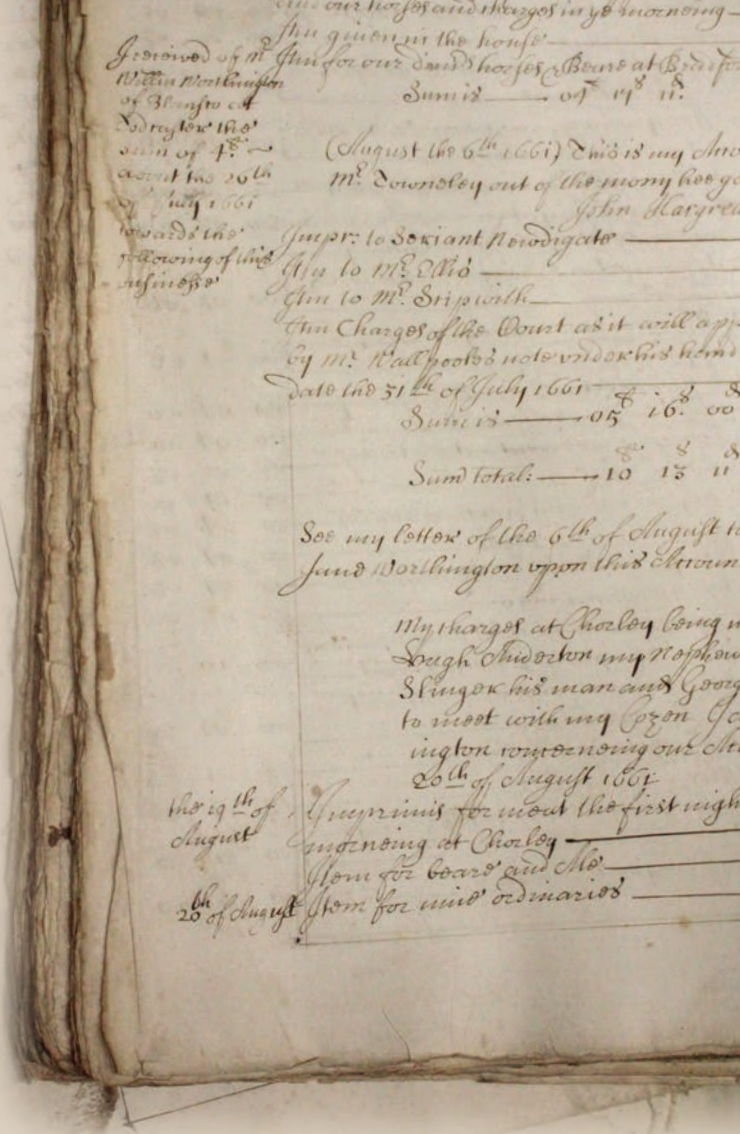
Grant award: £5,183

Helen Raymond, Archives Manager, writes: The Towneley manuscripts were written by Christopher Towneley (1603/4 – 1674), an antiquarian known as ‘The Transcriber’. He spent many years transcribing public records, deeds, cartularies, genealogies and other documents relating to the history of Lancashire, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and the ancient, noble Towneley family of Towneley Hall, Lancashire, of which he was a part.

These have been drawn upon heavily by many later historians, including the authors of the Victoria County History of Lancashire. Although the manuscripts were compiled in the 17th century, some of the transcribed documents date from the Tudor period and earlier making it a source of interest to a variety of scholars studying these large, pivotal counties.

There are several volumes of his work held by a number of institutions with Archives: Wigan & Leigh holding seven. Four have received conservation treatment, but the remaining three are in poor condition, with lost bindings, mould and water damage, and corrosion from iron gall ink.

This generous grant will fund the conservation of these three volumes, and the digitisation of the whole collection. A conservator will stabilise the structures and sympathetically address the damage, making the volumes available for safe consultation in the public searchroom. The documents will be digitised and hosted online to allow wider access.



Detail of one of the manuscripts before conservation.
Courtesy of Wigan Council.

THE WORDSWORTH TRUST, GRASMERE

Re-housing the Dove Cottage Manuscripts

Project cost: £7,000

Grant award: £6,000

Melissa Mitchell, Curator, writes: There is nothing quite like seeing a manuscript for the first time. For many visitors to the Wordsworth Trust's library, this eagerly anticipated moment is preceded by a carefully conducted sequence: a box is brought to the Reading Room table, a folder is lifted out, paper wrappers are removed, and then – finally – the manuscript is revealed. At that point, the audience gives little further thought to those storage materials – but they are vital to the long-term preservation of the precious materials they enclose.

The Wordsworth Trust cares for 33,000 manuscripts, all of which form part of its Designated collection. They include the greatest collection of Wordsworth family papers anywhere in the world. Over the last five decades, the Wordsworth Trust has implemented an ongoing conservation programme which has seen thousands of these documents conserved and housed in its repositories.

Thanks to the generosity of the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust, storage materials for 12,500 manuscripts in the Wordsworth Trust's care are now being upgraded. The manuscripts include a significant collection of letters between the Wordsworth family and their friends, legal and financial papers, correspondence with publishers after the Wordsworth's death, and much more. These are now being transferred to new paper wrappings, folders and boxes: a rewarding process, not only in preserving the condition of these unique documents, but also in adding to the legacy of manuscript conservation at the Wordsworth Trust.



Melissa Mitchell, Curator, working with manuscripts in the Wordsworth Trust's Reading Room. Courtesy of the Wordsworth Trust.

William Wordsworth – letter to Dorothy Wordsworth, 1812.
Courtesy of the Wordsworth Trust.

Collaborative Conservation Internships: supporting emerging conservators

The Trustees of NMCT are always keen to support conservation training with their grants, encouraging applicants to include a training element (such as a student placement or internship) in their projects where it is feasible, bringing added value to each conservation grant.

In 2023 a meeting was held with between several trusts, including the NMCT, the Pilgrim Trust, the Radcliffe Trust, Idlewild Trust and the Anna Plowden Trust, all of which fund heritage conservation among other activities. All agreed on the importance of post-training conservation internships which enable new conservation graduates to hone their skills in a paid position that offers supervision from an experienced conservator, professional development and the chance to work as a team member in a museum or library conservation department. Today, internship opportunities are very scarce but they offer an ideal start to a new conservator's career. However, internships are costly to support and most of the funders at the meeting were not able to cover the cost of an internship from their own resources alone.

After much discussion it was agreed that the funders would raise £75,000 to provide three internship grants, each of £25,000; the funders contributed varying amounts, with NMCT providing £7,500. It was agreed that the three Collaborative Conservation Internships would be in book and library materials conservation, horological conservation and musical instrument conservation, the latter being a field with very few practitioners. The funders also contracted the Institute of Conservation (Icon) to help with the administration of the grant programme.

At the time of writing, the first two internships are being advertised and the conservators should take up their posts in the Summer of 2025. Senate House Library will host the books and library materials intern and Edinburgh University the musical instruments intern. We look forward to reporting on their progress on our website, social media and in our next Annual Report.



Following conservation, materials worked on by the intern will be available to view by the public by appointment in the Special Collections Reading Room.

All images: © Senate House Library, University of London.

The Collaborative Conservation Internships scheme's partners are:



Idlewild Trust

JULIA RAUSING
— TRUST —

NM National Manuscripts
CT Conservation Trust

Pilgrim
Trust



THE RADCLIFFE TRUST

The partners are now hoping to raise the balance of funds needed to offer a fourth internship grant, the focus of which is likely to be industrial heritage.

This collaboration is delivering benefits that none of the funders could offer alone. It is a novel and productive way to address needs and create opportunities and all hope that it will continue and that other funders will join our fruitful collaboration.

The Lasting Benefit of NMCT Grants

The NMCT has helped institutions to conserve important manuscripts and collections for thirty years. In this section we give some examples of projects that would not have been possible without NMCT's support.

JOHN RYLANDS RESEARCH INSTITUTE AND LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER **Conservation and Re-Housing of Demotic Papyrus 9, 513 BCE**

Project Cost: £53,997

Grant Award: £10,184 in 2022

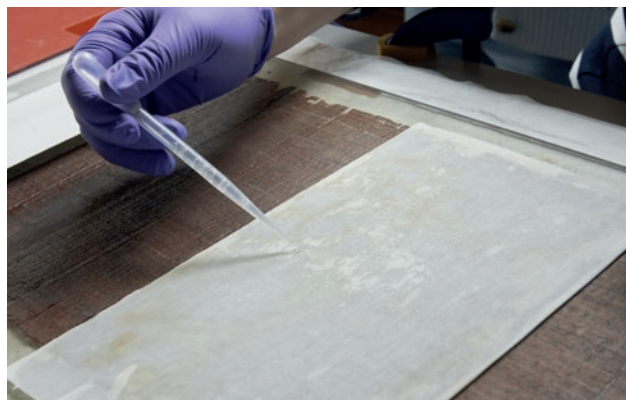
Elisabeth Carr, Collection Care Manager, writes: This NMCT funding facilitated the conservation treatment of an important papyrus scroll, allowing it to be made accessible for the first time in decades. In the process, new treatment techniques were developed, and a new translation of the papyrus was made.

Demotic Papyrus 9, also known as the Petition of Petiese, is a 4.2m papyrus scroll comprising 32 kollemas (sheets). The text covers the entire recto and most of the verso. In 1899, it was housed in a solid oak frame, sandwiched between glass. In 1967 it underwent a damaging treatment involving sunflower oil, acacia gum, and other harmful substances. To add to its problems, the top glass was broken at some point, with shards becoming stuck to the, now oily, surface of the papyrus.

In 2019, the papyrus was surface-cleaned to remove dirt, debris and the more significant glass shards. Mass spectroscopy confirmed sunflower oil on the papyrus, which was continuing to weaken it. This analysis helped inform the plan for complete conservation treatment, which, in turn, enabled us to apply to NMCT for a grant.

In 2022, the NMCT-funded conservation treatment began. Multispectral imaging (MSI) confirmed that the ink was carbon-based and, importantly, it helped to reveal the text that had faded with time and then been obscured by the 'treatment' done in the 1960s.

Surface-cleaning under magnification removed the fine glass shards, debris, and loose fragments. Further research allowed the conservation plan to be refined: a complex and time-consuming three-phase enzyme treatment offered the best potential for good results. In effect, the enzyme helped to draw pollutants from the papyrus, which were then rinsed away, and the papyrus was dried. This process had to be repeated three times.



Enzyme treatment in progress. Courtesy of the University of Manchester.



In 2022 the NMCT-funded
conservation treatment began.

The entire 4.2m scroll is adhered to the glass; in this image conservators are undertaking pH and conductivity tests on the accessible side of Demotic 9.
Courtesy of the University of Manchester.



Dr Marina Escola-Poveda, Papyrologist, aligning fragments with the help of a guide created in Photoshop. Courtesy of the University of Manchester.

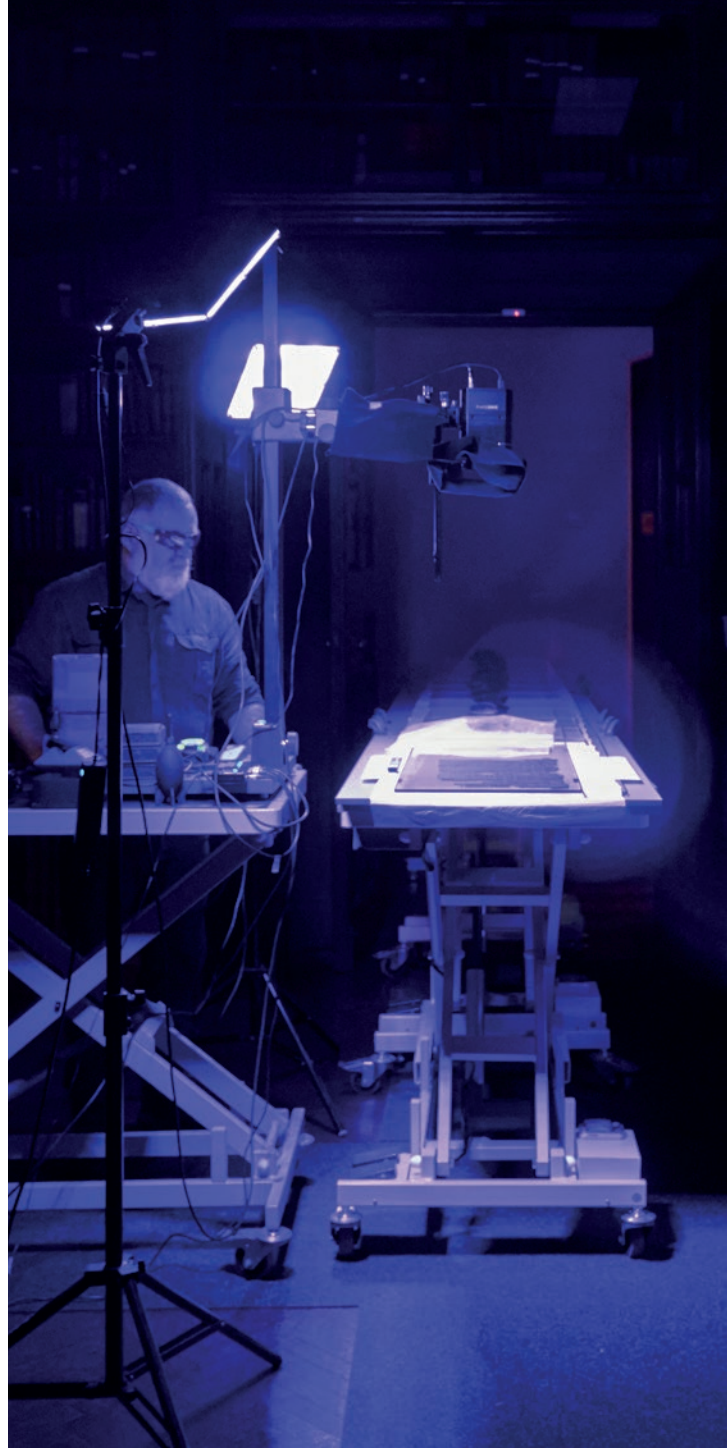
A Papyrologist then used Photoshop to align fragments digitally, providing the conservators with a 'map' to help them place and help align the fragments correctly, securing them with Japanese paper tabs. The solid oak frame was treated and modified - the velvet lining fabric was removed and a spacer inserted to ensure a sufficient gap between the two layers of new, toughened glass.

The only previous English translation of Demotic 9 dates from 1909. New imaging with the latest multispectral technology allowed an updated translation of Demotic Papyrus 9 to be made. As our understanding of Egyptian languages and culture has advanced immeasurably since 1909, this new translation is much more accurate.

The innovative conservation treatment that was developed and applied by Elisabeth Carr and the Collection Care team has stabilised Demotic Papyrus 9 and has provided a new approach – using enzyme treatments on these very fragile objects. This work was a multi-disciplinary collaboration of conservators, scientists, imaging specialists and students, together with a Papyrologist and a frame conservator. This team is now working on a book, which will include the historical significance of the scroll, the updated translation, as well as details of the conservation treatment, the multispectral imaging and other analysis undertaken.

Scholars and the general public can at last access the papyrus directly, nearly 60 years after the initial, disastrous treatment and damage.

More information can be found at: [Rylands Lunchtime Seminar Series: Ancient and Modern Lives of an Ancient Egyptian Papyrus.](#)



Multispectral imaging in progress. Courtesy of the University of Manchester.

SOUTHWARK ARCHIVES

The conservation 18th-century dye books of the Crutchley family dyeing business

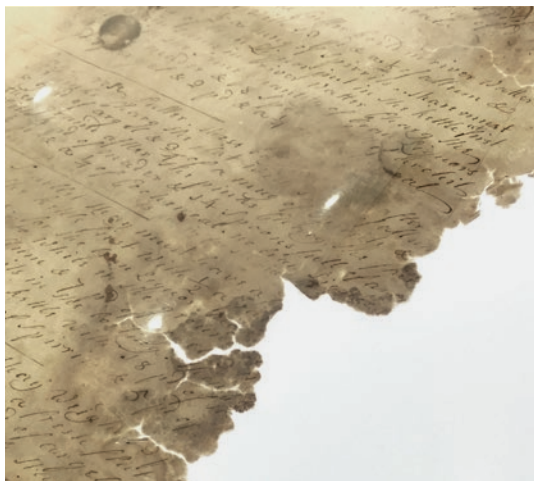
Project Cost: £30,096

Grant Award: £20,000 in 2018

Dr Patricia Dark, Archivist, writes: When the Crutchley Archive – a collection of 15 early to mid 18th-century volumes of business records from a local family-owned dyeworks – arrived at Southwark Archives in 2011, they were a colourful curiosity. In 2014, a visit by Professor Anita Quye of the University of Glasgow started to uncover the collection's true importance. In fact, the Crutchley Archive contains a snapshot of the entire business. Nine books containing some 1,000 individual dyeing instructions, most with samples of dyed fabric attached, as well as two cash books, give details of specific orders – and thus a view into the contemporary textile and fashion industries. The remaining books are computation books used in the dyehouse – with the stains to match! – that provide invaluable details about the specifics of a dye order, including the type of cloth and even water used to produce the given result.

It is essentially unique, both here and in the wider world, for the insights it gives into the practices of the pre-industrial dye industry, and for its clear and enduring ties to a single family and workplace – a workplace that is, incidentally, less than half a mile from the archive searchroom. The NMCT grant in 2018 highlighted the collection's importance. In 2020, the Archive was inscribed in the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register. This programme seeks to acknowledge – and thereby protect – the most unique and important record collections for British history.

The NMCT-funded conservation project, undertaken by our partners at Zenzie Tinker Conservation, took much longer than planned. In part, this was down to the effect of COVID-19 lockdowns on the studio's ability to operate at full capacity. But it was also a much more involved job than any of us thought it would be! The original project plan for the three volumes chosen for conservation (our reference numbers 1, 7, and 8) involved cleaning the fabric samples, cleaning the paper and repairing it as necessary, refixing the samples (and gathering those that could not be matched to a site in the book), and rebinding them.



Example of damaged page after cleaning, prior to support.




Conservator Rachel Rhodes surface cleaning after irradiation.

Images on pages 34-37 all courtesy of Southwark Archives and Zenzie Tinker Conservation.



Conservator Minny Close Brooks adds paper hinges to reattach loose samples.

A close-up photograph showing a conservator's hands working on a manuscript. The conservator is using a white, tapered tool to apply a bonding agent to a piece of paper. The paper is laid over a larger, aged manuscript page with visible cursive handwriting. The conservator's right hand is holding the tool, while the left hand, adorned with a gold ring, rests on the paper. The background is a light-colored surface.

View of conservator Minny Close Brooks bonding support into position.

The NMCT grant in 2018 highlighted the collection's importance. In 2020, the Archive was inscribed in the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register.

Once in the studio, however, it quickly became clear that the paper of each volume had been weakened to the point where it could not support rebinding. The plan needed to change. Instead, after the pages were cleaned and repaired, they were repackaged. For volumes 1 and 8, which were larger, each leaf was placed in between tissue leaves and set into a custom-built flat tray with foam edge flaps; a sheet of Melinex and the flaps keep the leaf in place in the tray while allowing access if necessary. These trays stack into specially-built boxes for storage; they are stored in bound order. The leaves of volume 7 were attached to fascicules, which were assembled in page order, then stored in a collection of archival card packets. These packets in turn are housed in a specially-built box for storage. At the same time, the volumes were digitised both before and after conservation. All in all, the project took more than twice as long as originally planned.

The COVID-19 pandemic also led to Southwark Archives being closed to the public for some 22 months – with obvious knock-on effects to its public engagement capacity. However, Southwark Council opened the Southwark Heritage Centre in April 2021, which gives the archive service an avenue to reach new audiences. The current 'Making Southwark' exhibition highlights the borough's past and current industry. The Crutchley Archive is a highlight of this exhibition, one that is featured in its press coverage. We look forward to developing partnerships with academics and creatives to unlock the innovative potential of this collection.

The pandemic had much less effect on the research into the collection, however. Professor Anita Quye, Dr Dominique Cardon, and Jenny Balfour-Paul's 2023 paper *Dye-house notes from the Crutchley Archive, 1716 to 1728: detailed descriptions of the five stages of 'grain' dyeing for red colours on woven wool fabrics* is a fascinating deep dive into the workings of the Crutchley dye-house.

Their research suggests that the firm used careful control of the pH of their dye vats to produce good colourfastness even when using light-sensitive 'out of grain' dyestuffs. They also recycled their dye baths not only to save money, but to produce interesting and varied results.



An example of a conserved page from Book 8 in the bespoke storage box.

Trustees' Report

The Trustees of the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust present their Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2024.

Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

The National Manuscripts Conservation Trust (NMCT) was established on 9th January 1990 by a declaration of trust executed by three Trustees: John Ehrman, representing the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts (HMC); Henry Heaney, representing the British Library board (BL) and Lewis Golden, representing the private benefactors. Since 1 April 2003, the HMC has formed part of The National Archives (TNA), whose Chief Executive is the sole Historical Manuscripts Commissioner.

Trustees

Both the HMC (as a constituent body within TNA) and the BL each appoint one Trustee, and the two Trustees so appointed are empowered to appoint up to four further Trustees, none of whom shall be a member or an officer of, or employed by, either the HMC or the BL.

The Trustees as at 31st December 2024 are listed at the front of this report. Four served throughout the year, namely Professor David McKitterick (Chair), Charles Sebag-Montefiore (Treasurer), Dr Norman James (who has specialised knowledge of the library and archive sector in the UK) and Gabriel Sewell (College Librarian at Christ Church, Oxford). Victoria Stevens ACR (an experienced library and archive conservator who is Subject Leader for Books and Library Materials at West Dean College) was appointed a Trustee on 19 June 2024. Philip Tansey (an experienced chartered accountant) was appointed on 26 November 2024.

New Trustees are provided with a detailed induction to the charity and to their responsibilities as Trustees, in line with charity best practice.

Administration

The administration of the NMCT is provided by Mrs Nell Hoare, whose address, together with other administrative information, is given on page 2.

Risk Management

The Trustees have identified the principal risks that might affect the NMCT and believe that appropriate action has been taken to manage them. The Trustees continue to review the adequacy of the procedures in place.

Objectives and Activities

The chief objective of the NMCT is to advance the education of the public by the provision of financial assistance towards the cost of conserving manuscripts, which, in the opinion of the Trustees, are of historic or educational value.

Applications for grants can be accepted from all county record offices, non-national libraries and museums and other similar publicly funded institutions including local authority, university and specialist record repositories throughout the United Kingdom, and from owners of manuscript material exempt from capital taxation or owned by a charitable trust. National libraries and institutions that are directly funded by the government are not normally eligible for grants from the NMCT. In deciding whether an application merits a grant, the Trustees assess the significance of the manuscript or archive, the suitability of the storage conditions, the applicant's commitment to continuing good preservation practice, and the requirement for reasonable public access.

The NMCT's website www.nmct.co.uk provides full information for applicants on how to apply for a conservation grant, as well as case studies on supported projects; a full list of recent grants, together with information about the Charity and its Trustees.

Since 1990 the NMCT has awarded grants of over £4m towards projects with a total value of over £7.5m, which have helped to preserve important historical, literary, scientific and other documents. Many of the manuscripts conserved with our help were fragile and completely inaccessible before treatment. As a result of the NMCT's grants, these documents have been preserved and can now be made accessible to researchers and the public.

The Trustees have had regard to Charity Commission guidance on public benefit. The Trust's core objective is to support the conservation of manuscripts by archives, libraries, universities, museums and specialist collecting institutions. The public benefits that flow from this are:

- i. Prolonging the life of locally, nationally and internationally significant manuscript material for the nation;
- ii. Making it possible for the public and researchers to access manuscripts that would otherwise be inaccessible or lost to the public domain;
- iii. Supporting the nation's libraries and archives, and enabling them to conserve their collections, which would be beyond their resources without our support.

In addition, many of the conservation projects that NMCT supports provide a training benefit.

The Trustees believe this financial support greatly benefits the recipient institutions, researchers and others who access and engage with their collections, and also the public realm. These benefits are clearly demonstrated by the short case studies in this Annual Report.

Achievements and Performance

Grants

Grants are normally awarded in June and November each year. In 2024 the Trustees considered 20 applications (2023: 21). They awarded 17 new conservation grants (2023: 16) giving to university libraries, local record offices and other eligible applicants the aggregate sum of £142,545 before adjusting for overprovisions in earlier years (2023: £148,850).

Full details of grants awarded in 2024 are given in the Review of the Year (pages 6 to 27).

Our partnership with the Museums Archives and Libraries Department (MALD) of the Welsh Government to support conservation projects in Wales continues to flourish. Librarians in four libraries and archive services submitted applications, which we were delighted to support to a gross value of almost £32,000. We are grateful to colleagues in MALD for their work in raising awareness to these grant opportunities, offering free advisory visits to applicants where necessary and arranging for expert advice to be given on every application from Wales. At the end of the year we were delighted to have confirmation of an additional grant award of £30,000 from MALD/ The Welsh Government that will ensure that our valuable partnership continues to thrive.

In recent years, NMCT and the Scottish Council on Archives (SCA) have worked increasingly closely to raise awareness of NMCT grants in Scotland and to increase the funding available for Scottish conservation projects. In addition, SCA arranges for expert advice to be given on all applications from Scotland.

Meanwhile, colleagues at The National Archives generously contribute their expertise and advice on all grants from England and Northern Ireland. Their contribution and that of colleagues in Wales and Scotland ensures that the Trustees can make very well-informed decisions on all grant applications. We are also grateful to each of our partners for offering advisory visits to applicants where necessary.

Financial Review

In 2024 the Charity's aggregate income reached £175,980 (2023: £199,563). Seventeen grants for conservation were approved in 2024, amounting to the aggregate sum of £142,545 before adjusting for overprovisions in earlier years (2023: £148,850). The 2024 sum includes the grant of £7,500 towards the Collaborative Conservation Internship scheme. All these grants are set out in more detail on pages 6 to 27, with details of the internship on pages 28-29.

The Charity enjoys two streams of income – investment income, which rose from £107,663 in 2023 to £110,080 in 2024, and donations, which amounted to £65,900 (2023: £91,900), all of which was unrestricted.

Aggregate operating expenses rose from £23,255 to £25,688. The cost of administration increased in 2024 because of the time needed to establish the internship scheme. Other costs include the investment manager's charges (£5,950), fundraising for the Trust (£1,369), producing the annual report (£2,625) and the independent examination fee (£1,440).

The balance sheet at 31 December 2024 recorded total net assets of £2,634,811 (2023: £2,517,785). The increase is explained largely by unrealised investment gains. Further details of the investment portfolio are given in note 9.

Current assets amounted to £231,268, all represented by cash. Current liabilities, mostly grant commitments, amounted to £147,791 giving net current assets at the end of 2024 of £83,477 (2023: £60,043).

Investments and Reserves

The Trustees have adopted a total return investment policy, intended to maximise total returns whilst accepting a medium degree of risk. To this end the NMCT's portfolio is invested in the Cazenove Sustainable Multi-Asset Fund. This is a long-term investment fund with a diversified strategy investing in equities, bonds, property and alternative assets. The Fund aims to provide income and capital growth in excess of the Consumer Price Index + 4% per annum (net of fees) over rolling ten-year periods.

Other than the Unrestricted Fund and the Restricted Fund, all the Trust's reserves are regarded as endowment funds, which are normally represented by investments in order to produce a reasonably predictable and regular level of income. The Trustees regard this as necessary to maintain and support the Charity's operation.

Any annual deficit on the Unrestricted Fund is made good by a transfer from unrestricted funds brought forward. Grants awarded from the Restricted Fund are limited to donations received by the Charity and their defined, restricted purpose.

Plans for Future Periods

The Trust's objectives for 2025 are to continue to seek to maximise investment income and grants receivable and again to award conservation grants of around £150,000 unless incoming resources turn out to be significantly greater than in 2024.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and with regulations made under the Charities Act 2011.

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year. In preparing financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Independent Examiner

Scott Harrower of Galloways Accounting was reappointed as the Trust's Independent Examiner during the year.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Professor David McKitterick

Chair

25 April 2025

Independent Examiner's Report

To the Trustees of The National Manuscripts Conservation Trust

I report on the accounts of the trust for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on pages 38 to 49.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts (under Section 145 the 2011 Act);
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under Section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Acthave not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Scott Harrower, FCA

Chartered Accountant

Galloways Accounting
Ridgeland House, 15 Carfax,
Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1DY

28 April 2025

Statement of Financial Activities

For the year ended 31 December 2024

	Notes	Endowment Fund 2024 £	Unrestricted Fund 2024 £	Restricted Fund 2024 £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Income from						
Investments	2	–	110,080	–	110,080	107,663
Donations	3	–	65,900	–	65,900	91,900
Total income		–	175,980	–	175,980	199,563
Expenditure on						
Charitable activities	4	–	110,615	22,183	132,798	148,850
Administration & fundraising	5/6	–	25,688	–	25,688	23,255
Total expenditure		–	136,303	22,183	158,486	172,105
Operating result		–	39,677	(22,183)	17,494	27,458
Gains/(losses) on investments						
Realised	9	41	–	–	41	29
Unrealised	9	99,491	–	–	99,491	64,689
Net income/(expenditure)		99,532	39,677	(22,183)	117,026	92,176
Transfers between funds		–	–	–	–	–
Net movement in funds		99,532	39,677	(22,183)	117,026	92,176
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		2,222,249	272,354	23,182	2,517,785	2,425,609
Total funds carried forward		2,321,781	312,031	999	2,634,811	2,517,785

Balance Sheet

As at 31 December 2024

	Notes	£	2024	£	£	2023	£
<hr/>							
Fixed Assets							
Investments	9			2,551,334		2,457,742	
Current assets							
Debtors	10		–			–	
Cash at bank and deposits			231,268			240,807	
			231,268			240,807	
Creditors: falling due within one year	11		(147,791)			(180,764)	
Net current assets				<u>83,477</u>		<u>60,043</u>	
Net assets				<u>2,634,811</u>		<u>2,517,785</u>	
Representing							
Endowment fund				2,321,781		2,222,249	
Unrestricted income fund				312,032		272,354	
Restricted fund				<u>999</u>		<u>23,182</u>	
				<u>2,634,811</u>		<u>2,517,785</u>	

Approved by the Trustees on 25 April 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Professor David McKittrick
Chair

Notes to the Accounts

For the year ended 31 December 2024

1. Accounting policies

a. Basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) *Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* and with regulations made under the Charities Act 2011. A summary of the more important accounting policies is below.

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern nor any significant risk that that uncertainty over estimates made for the purpose of these financial statements may cause a material adjustment to the carrying value of assets and liabilities.

The Charity is a public benefit entity.

b. Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity.

c. Income

Dividends are recognised in the period in which the dividend becomes payable.

Donations and legacies are recognised in the period in which they are received or when there is otherwise certainty of receipt. Other income is recognised in the period to which it relates.

d. Expenditure

Expenditure is allocated between charitable activities, raising funds and support costs.

Expenditure on charitable activities comprises grants made for the conservation of manuscripts that, in the opinion of the Trustees, are of historic or educational value. These costs are charged, as appropriate, to the unrestricted or restricted funds when they have been committed.

Expenditure on raising funds comprises chiefly the investment manager's charges and the fundraising element of the work of NMCT's Secretary.

Administration and support costs are those costs which are not attributable to a single activity but provide the necessary organisational support for all the Charity's activities. They include the administration element of the consultant's costs, the independent examiner's fee, the cost of printing the annual report, the expenses of the website and of holding trustee meetings.

e. Fixed assets

Investments held as fixed assets are re-valued at mid-market value at the balance sheet date and the gain or loss credited to or deducted from the Endowment Fund.

2. Investment income

	2024	2023
	£	£
Dividends received from investments	104,732	103,752
Interest received on deposits	5,348	3,911
	<u>110,080</u>	<u>107,663</u>

3. Voluntary income

	2024	2023
	£	£
Donations (unrestricted)	65,900	84,900
Donations (restricted)	–	7,000
	<u>65,900</u>	<u>91,900</u>

4. Direct charitable expenditure

	2024	2023
	£	£
Grants from unrestricted funds	120,362	117,638
Grants from restricted funds	22,183	31,612
Grants approved in year	142,545	149,250
Under/(over)-provision in previous years	(9,747)	(400)
Net cost of grants	<u>132,798</u>	<u>148,850</u>

5. Expenditure on raising funds

	2024	2023
	£	£
Consultant's fees for fundraising	1,369	3,000
Investment management fees	5,950	5,784
Total fundraising costs	7,319	8,784
Administration and support costs (from note 6 below)	18,369	14,471
Total expenditure	<u>25,688</u>	<u>23,255</u>

6. Administration and support costs

Consultant's fees for administration	13,656	8,900
Annual report	2,625	3,000
Independent examination fee	1,440	1,200
Meeting costs	331	419
Website expenses	221	703
Bank charges and sundry costs	96	249
Total support costs	<u>18,369</u>	<u>14,471</u>

7. Transactions with Trustees

No Trustee received any remuneration (2023: £nil) or any reimbursement of the cost of travelling to meetings (2023: £nil).

8. Taxation

As a charity, the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within Part 10 of the Taxes Act 2007 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the Charity.

9. Investments

The Trust's investment portfolio consists of a single holding in the Cazenove Sustainable Multi-Asset Fund, a long term investment fund with a diversified strategy investing in equities, bonds, property and alternative assets. The Fund aims to provide income and capital growth in excess of the Consumer Price Index + 4% per annum (net of fees) over rolling ten-year periods. The portfolio as at 31 December 2024 is summarised in the following table:

	Cost	Market value	Annual income (prospective)	Yield on market value
	£	£	£	%
Sustainable Multi-Asset fund	2,639,136	2,551,334	104,496	4.1%
	<u>2,639,136</u>	<u>2,551,334</u>	<u>104,496</u>	<u>4.1%</u>

An additional analysis is given below:

	2024 £	2023 £
Market value at 1 January	2,457,742	2,398,860
Proceeds of sale	(5,940)	(5,836)
Cost of purchases	—	—
Realised gains/(losses)	41	29
Unrealised gains/(losses)	<u>99,491</u>	<u>64,689</u>
Movement in year	<u>93,592</u>	<u>58,882</u>
Market value at 31 December	<u>2,551,334</u>	<u>2,457,742</u>

10. Debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Other debtors	–	–
	–	–

11. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Grants payable	146,471	179,564
Sundry creditors	1,320	1,200
	147,791	180,764

12. Analysis of net assets between funds – 2024

	Endowment fund	Unrestricted fund	Restricted fund	Total
	£	£	£	£
Investments	2,551,334	–	–	2,551,334
Net current assets	(229,553)	312,031	999	83,477
Total assets	2,321,781	312,031	999	2,634,811

Analysis of net assets between funds – 2023

	Endowment fund	Unrestricted fund	Restricted fund	Total
	£	£	£	£
Investments	2,457,742	–	–	2,457,742
Net current assets	(235,493)	272,354	23,182	60,043
Total assets	2,222,249	272,354	23,182	2,517,785



Before conservation: four bundles of letters regarding Gladstone estate finances (see page 12).
Courtesy of Gladstone's Library.



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Conservation Trust

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Registered Charity: 802796