

## Scientific manuscripts and archives at the Bodleian Libraries

The diverse resources for the history of science, technology and medicine in Special Collections encompass books and manuscripts from the medieval period to the present day. The following overview focuses particularly on post-medieval manuscript and archival collections.

### Early modern collections

For the early modern period the Library holds papers of many individuals of note in the fields of science and medicine. Holdings for the 17th and first half of the 18th centuries are particularly strong, and several came to the Library as part of major antiquarian collections including MSS. Ashmole and MSS. Radcliffe Trust. Descriptions of these papers are to be found predominantly in the printed Quarto and Summary Catalogues, and the following categorized list provides an overview of the principal individuals represented, including antiquaries whose papers are of relevance in this field.

#### *Natural history*

- Jacob Bobart (1641-1719) botanist
- Edward Lhuys (1660-1709) naturalist and antiquary
- Martin Lister (1638-1712) zoologist
- Richard Richardson (1663-1741), botanist
- William Sherard (1659-1728) botanist

#### *Physical and mathematical sciences*

- Edward Bernard (1638-1696) astronomer and scholar
- James Bradley (1692-1762) astronomer
- John Dee (1527-1608) mathematician and astrologer
- Sir Kenelm Digby (1603–1665) natural philosopher and courtier
- Simon Forman (1552-1611) astrologer
- Samuel Foster (d.1652) mathematician
- Thomas Hornsby (1733-1810) astronomer
- Thomas Lydiat (1572-1646) chronologer
- Stephen Peter Rigaud (1774-1839) astronomer
- Sir Henry Savile (1549-1622) mathematician
- John Wallis (1616-1703) mathematician

#### *Medicine*

- John Bainbridge (1582-1643) physician and astronomer
- William Musgrave (?1655-1721) physician and antiquary
- Thomas Sydenham (1624-1689) physician

#### *Antiquaries*

- Elias Ashmole (1617–1692), antiquary and astrologer
- John Aubrey (1626-1697) antiquary and topographer

### Nineteenth century collections

Descriptions of these papers are generally located in the Summary Catalogues, with some fully available online.

#### *Natural history*

- William Baxter (1787-1871) botanist
- Brian Houghton Hodgson (1800-1894) naturalist
- Sir Henry Alexander Miers (1858-1942) mineralogist
- George Wareing Ormerod (1810-1891) geologist

#### *Physical and mathematical sciences*

- William Vernon Harcourt (1789-1871) chemist
- Ada Lovelace (1815-1852), mathematics
- Mary Somerville (1780-1872) science writer and mathematics expositor

#### *Medicine*

- Sir Henry Wentworth Acland (1815-1900), physician
- Frederick Augustus Dixey (1856-1934) physiologist
- Mabel Fitzgerald (1872-1973) physiologist

## The twentieth century onwards

The Bodleian holds the archives of a number of contemporary (20th and 21st century), most having a strong connection with Oxford University.

- Edward Penley Abraham (1913-99) biochemist
- John Randal Baker (1900-1984) cytologist
- Thomas Brooke Benjamin (1929-1995) mathematician and physicist
- Geoffrey Emmett Blackman (1903-1980) agronomist
- Sir Walter Bodmer (b. 1936) and Lady Julia Bodmer (1934-2001) geneticists
- Edith Bülbring (1903-1990), pharmacologist and physiologist
- Sydney Chapman (1888-1970) mathematician and geophysicist
- Theodore William Chaundy (1889-1971) mathematician
- Sir Wilfrid Edward le Gros Clark (1895-1971) anatomist and anthropologist
- Charles Alfred Coulson (1910-1974) theoretical chemist
- Cyril Dean Darlington (1903-1981) cytologist and botanist
- Charles Sutherland Elton (1900-1991) animal ecologist
- Edmund Brisco Ford (1901-1988) geneticist
- Sir Alister Clavering Hardy (1896-1985) zoologist
- John Laker Harley (1911-1990) forest scientist
- Geoffrey Wingfield Harris (1913-1971) anatomist
- Dorothy Mary Crowfoot Hodgkin (1910-1994) chemist
- William Hume-Rothery (1899-1968) chemist and metallurgist
- Sir John Cowdery Kendrew (1917-1997) molecular biologist
- Nicholas Kurti (1908-1998) physicist
- Ida Mann (1893-1983) ophthalmologist
- Kurt Alfred Georg Mendelssohn (1906-1980) German physicist and author
- Edward Arthur Milne (1896-1950) astrophysicist and cosmologist
- Noel Joseph Terence Montgomery Needham (1900-1995) biochemist and Sinologist
- Alexander George Ogston (1911-1996) biochemist
- Sir Rudolf Ernst Peierls (1907-1995) physicist
- Sir Rudolph Albert Peters (1889-1982) biochemist
- Sir David Chilton Phillips (b.1924) biophysicist
- Rodney Robert Porter (1917-1985) biochemist
- Herbert Marcus Powell (1906-1991) chemical crystallographer
- John William Sutton Pringle (1912-1982) zoologist
- Sir Rex Edward Richards (b.1922) chemist
- Frederick Soddy (1877-1956) chemist
- Christopher Strachey (1916-1975) computer scientist
- Leslie Ernest Sutton (1906-1992) molecular chemist
- Nikolaas Tinbergen (1907-1988) ethologist
- Sir John Sealy Edward Townsend (1868-1957) physicist
- Donald Devereux Woods (1912-1964) microbiologist

Many of the above collections were catalogued by the NCUACS (National Cataloguing Unit for the Archives of Contemporary Scientists) in Bath University, and the resulting online catalogues are available through the Discovery search provided by The National Archives.

The document references in these catalogues may look unfamiliar. They are those allocated by NCUACS - the Bodleian's hard copies of the catalogues are annotated with Bodleian shelfmarks.

## Organisations

Four major archives of organisations of relevance to the history of science, technology and medicine are held, together with those of some smaller bodies, usually having an Oxford connection.

### [British Association for the Advancement of Science](#)

The BAAS was founded in 1831 to strengthen the relationship between science and the public interest. The archives of the Association cover all aspects of its work over most of its existence, with the records of the annual meetings predominating. Over one third of the papers relate to these meetings, the bulk of them ephemeral printed material. For the 19th century formal papers, like minute-books and ledgers, supplement the papers of the annual meetings. From the early twentieth century there are further files of back-up papers and correspondence.

### [Society for the Protection of Science and Learning](#)

The SPSL was founded in 1933 as the Academic Assistance Council, which aimed to provide short-term grants for refugee lecturers from Nazi Germany, and to help them in finding new employment. In 1936 the Council was re-established as the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning. Thereafter the scope of its activities varied according to circumstance; it is now known as the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA). The papers include personal files on scholars assisted by the Society, which form the core of the archive. They are arranged alphabetically within subject discipline and include many scientists, a number of them being eminent scholars in their fields.

### [Marconi archives](#)

The Marconi Collection of archives and historic equipment was donated to the University of Oxford in December 2004. The Archives are under the care of the Bodleian Libraries, while the equipment is housed at the Museum of the History of Science nearby.

The extensive Archives encompass records of a number of electrical companies covering the late nineteenth to early twenty-first centuries, including those of:

- Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company Ltd., later the Marconi Company Ltd.
- The Marconi International Marine Communication Company Ltd.
- The Vulcan Foundry Ltd.
- The English Electric Company Ltd.
- British Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company Ltd.
- Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Company Ltd.
- British Thomson-Houston Ltd.
- Associated Electrical Industries Ltd.
- The General Electric Company Ltd., later Marconi plc/the Marconi Corporation plc.

All these were ultimately absorbed into the General Electric Company, which latterly changed its name to Marconi. Together they provide key documentary resources for the history of the electrical industry in the UK and elsewhere. A particular strength is the history of wireless telegraphy and its applications from its earliest days, and especially Guglielmo Marconi's personal contribution.

### [Oxfam GB archive](#)

Founded in 1942 as the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, Oxfam has confronted health issues all over the globe from its earliest days. The accumulated archive reflects Oxfam's international significance, and offers historians of medicine a wealth of resources, whether they are interested in examining the evolution of disease control in humanitarian emergencies or in studying specific health education programmes.

### [Other scientific organisations](#)

Archives of other scientific organisations include those of the British Biophysical Society, the Oxford Medical Society, the Oxford Enzyme Group, the Oxford Diabetes Trust, and various Oxford University Scientific and Medical Societies.

### Financial support to explore some of our collections

Some of the above archives were catalogued with the generous support of the Wellcome Trust, and are therefore eligible for the Wellcome Trust Research Bursaries scheme which provides support to individuals working on small and medium-scale research projects that focus on library or archive collections supported by the Wellcome Trust.

Archives eligible under the scheme:

- Sir Walter Bodmer (b. 1936) and Lady Julia Bodmer (1934-2001) geneticists
- Mabel FitzGerald (1872-1973) physiologist
- Oxfam GB archive

See <https://wellcome.ac.uk/funding/research-bursaries> for further information.

### Read about our work in progress

Find out more about ongoing work with our scientific archives and manuscripts on our blog at <http://blogs.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/archivesandmanuscripts/> .

### Using the collections

For guidance on using our collections, see <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/weston/using/guidance> .

### Developing the collections

To propose additions to the collections, please contact Susan Thomas, Head of Archives & Modern Manuscripts at [susan.thomas@bodleian.ox.ac.uk](mailto:susan.thomas@bodleian.ox.ac.uk) .