



THE FELLOWS' LIBRARY

INFORMATION FOR VISITORS

The first library at Jesus was built in the 1620s, near the site of the present Hall between First and Second Quads. It was pulled down around 1639 by the ambitious Principal Francis Mansell, and the bookcases and benches stored above the Hall, while the books were given to Fellows for safekeeping. A local carpenter had drawn up a floor plan in order to reinstate the furniture, but the Civil War intervened and the new Library was not completed until 1679.

During the Civil War, the College received a bequest of 900 books from Lord Herbert of Cherbury and a further 600 from Principal Mansell. The gallery was added to house these substantial collections. The books were unchained in the 18th century, after which a local bookseller organised them by subject.

The Fellows' Library was refurbished in 2007–2008 with the generous assistance of Old Members. The roof was repaired, the gallery reinforced, and the woodwork treated against dry rot and death-watch beetle. Underfloor heating was installed for readers' comfort, together with temperature and humidity monitoring, UV filters on the windows, and a modern security system.

Detailed information on the 11,500 early printed books in the Fellows' Library is available in the University's library catalogue, SOLO. Subjects include theology, classics, and philosophy, as well as law, history, astronomy, and medicine.

Jesus College's traditional connection with Wales is supported with early books in the Celtic languages, such as Bishop Morgan's translation of the Bible into Welsh, donated in 2009 by an Old Member. The oldest work in the Library, attributed to Saint Augustine, was printed in 1467.

Please do not touch the books. Non-commercial photography is permitted.

To make an appointment to consult a book from the Fellows' Library, please contact the Librarian well in advance of travelling to Oxford.

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