

# About the Collections

## • Books & pamphlets

The library collection holds over 150,000 bound volumes.

The vast international collections date primarily from the foundation of the Society in 1830 onwards.

Our special collections include the following:

- **audio recordings** of Society lectures
- **Andrews** - early works on cartographical history and exploration  
Michael Corbett Andrews was a prominent line manufacturer in Belfast but his main passion was for medieval and early modern maps. Over the course of his life he built up a collection of over 600 photographs of these maps. He joined the Society in 1916 and on his death in 1934 the whole of his extensive library was transferred to the Society
- **Brown** - volumes on travel in Morocco and some neighbouring territories  
Born in 1842, Dr Robert Brown studied at Edinburgh University. In the 1860s, he took part in a number of exploring expeditions in North America and Greenland. For many years Brown took his holidays in North Africa and among his more important works is the 'Bibliography of Morocco', a collaboration with Sir R. Lambert Playfair. He died in 1895.
- **Feilden** - primarily books and pamphlets on the polar regions, especially Arctic  
Henry Wemyss Feilden was a Fellow of the Society from 1875 until his death in 1921. He served on Sir George Nares's North Polar Expedition as naturalist. His findings appear in Nares's official account of the expedition. In 1906, he presented his extensive collection, consisting of over 600 items on polar literature, to the Society
- **Fordham** - 17th-9th century road books  
Sir George Fordham, born in 1859, produced many publications describing the maps and road books of the British Isles and France and donated his personal road book collection to the Society. The Society triennially awards the 'Sir George Fordham Award for Carto-bibliography', a 'term introduced by him for the cataloguing of maps on systematic plan'
- **Gunther** - special emphasis on volcanoes and antiquities of Southern Italy  
Robert Gunther was born in 1869. His early years were spent at the British Museum, where his father was Keeper of Zoology, and at Kew. He read natural science at Oxford, whence a biological scholarship took him to Italy in 1893. There he worked in the field of geology and pioneered underwater archaeology. The books relating to his Italian research were given to the Society after his death in 1940
- **Hotz** – special emphasis on Persia and her neighbouring territories  
Albertus Hotz was born in Rotterdam in 1855. As a young man he went to Persia, working on behalf of his father's company. Between 1876 and 1895, he travelled frequently to Persia on business, particularly Basra and Isfahan. He gave up business in 1895 and was appointed Consul in Beirut, 1909-16 and 1917-21. On his death in 1930, part of his collection of books and maps was given to the Society
- **Rennell** – special emphasis on Asia, the Middle East and Africa  
This collection consists of books collected by Major James Rennell (1742-1830), Lord Rennell of Rodd (1895-1978) and other members of their family. The collection contains books on travel in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Lord Rennell's books and offprints on Africa, especially the Sahara, and many rare antiquarian books such as Gabriel Sionita's 'Geographica Nubiensis' of 1619
- **travel guides**  
2000+ historical travel guides, many published before WW1, form the basis of this collection. They include Baedekers from the 1870s, Guides Bleu, Murray's Handbooks, Black's Guides, and Guide Joanne. The historical guides are complemented by their modern counterparts, including Rough Guide and Lonely Planet