

Cathedral Archivist Emily Naish and John Glen MP examine a book from the collection Graham Trott

Thousands of rare books, some nearly 600 years old, are set to be catalogued thanks to £73,500 of National Lottery funding.

The three-year project will create a searchable digital catalogue online of more than 10,000 books – most for the very first time.

John Glen, Heritage Minister and MP for Salisbury, said: “I am delighted to learn of this significant HLF grant to Salisbury Cathedral. The money will be used to open up a historically fascinating collection of over 10,000 books to a much wider audience. This is a brilliant example of where National Lottery players are helping to support our national heritage.”

Literary heritage

The Cathedral library was built in 1445 and has books on topics from mathematics and astonomy to medicine and religion. However, many of the collection's books are undocumented and their conditions unrecorded.

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Collection highlights include:

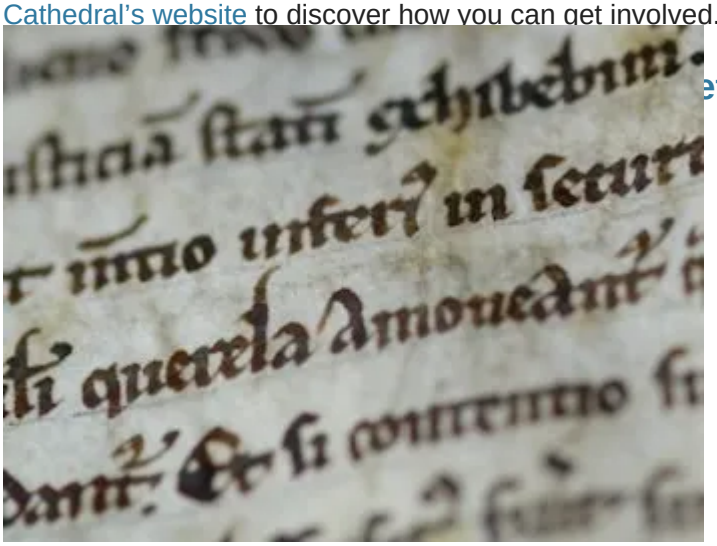
- A 1611-13 copy of Edmund Spenser's *The Fairie Queene*
- A 17th-century account of the coronation preparation for James II
- A Catholicon or biblical dictionary from 1497 which re-used waste pages from a William Caxton print and contains notes that are amongst the earliest evidence of late medieval court dances
- A beautifully bound 16th-century book by Martin Luther, with the author's image on the front cover

Books from Sarum College Library and Gillingham parish will also be part of the project. Volunteers will play a key role alongside staff protecting their literary heritage and will receive training in cataloguing, cleaning rare books and creating condition records.

Entering a modern era

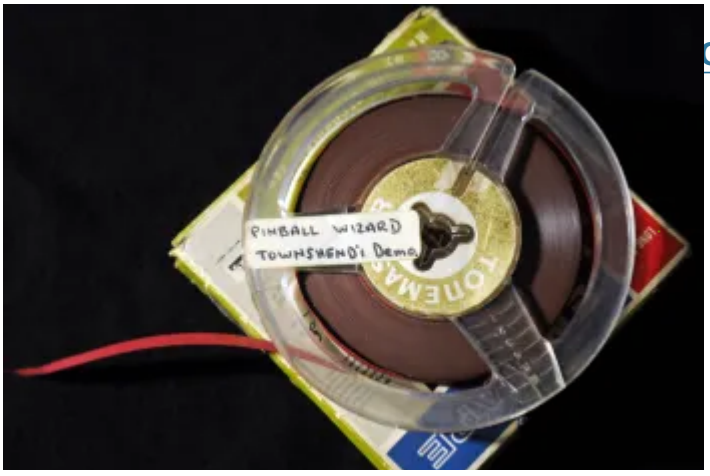
Emily Naish, Salisbury Cathedral archivist, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity to really transform our knowledge of and access to the Cathedral's library and archive collections. Up until now we have relied on an out of date catalogue compiled in 1880 so this project will finally allow us to enter the modern era. With the help of volunteers we are really looking forward to finding out more about our books and documents and also sharing them locally and nationally."

Public workshops, tours and talks will enable people of all ages to delve into the stories and collections. Visit Salisbury Cathedral's website to discover how you can get involved.



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Close-up of the 1215 Magna Carta at Salisbury Cathedral Copyright Ash Mills



Carta project

British Library pledge to save the nation's sounds secures £9.5m HLF boost