Provenance indexes available in UK libraries – a selective update

This list is based on, and supplements, the listing of provenance indexes in UK libraries found in chapter VII of *Provenance research in book history: a handbook* (London, 1994, reprinted with addenda 1998). It is selective, concentrating on academic and major research libraries with significant historic collections, and does not cover all the libraries listed in the book; it has been assembled partly to indicate how access to provenance data has developed during the last decade. It is concerned only with provenance information in publicly accessible catalogues (automated or manual) and not with other published or unpublished sources. The details have been gathered largely by email correspondence with many librarians during the summer of 2005, to all of whom I am very grateful for their help in answering queries.

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September 2005

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Aberdeen – University Library

1994: The Library maintains provenance indexes to its older collections, held partly in ledger and partly in sheaf form, although these do not cover the collections comprehensively. Provenance data is now added to records in the automated catalogue, but it is not yet possible to retrieve it.

2005: Provenance data is now increasingly available and searchable through the OPAC (http://www.abdn.ac.uk/diss/library/catalogue.shtml) although to date only a small proportion of the provenance data relating to the Library's early printed books is covered, less than 10%. Plans are being developed to systematically recatalogue all the early collections, beginning with the 17th century.

Aberystwyth – National Library of Wales

1994: The Library has provenance indexes, held on cards, covering incunabula; 16th c foreign books; STC/Wing books (incomplete). Provenance information has been added to automated catalogue records created since 1986.

2005: The manual indexes are still available and occasionally added to. Provenance data is selectively added to automated catalogue records but it is not currently searchable.

Birmingham – University Library

1994: A provenance index covering most of the special collections is held on cards (12 drawers).

2005: the card index has continued to be maintained and added to; provenance data has been added to some automated records using the 561 field, but this is not displayed or searchable via the OPAC.

Cambridge – Christ's College

1994: The Old Library was recatalogued ca.1990, on cards. Donors' names, and bookplates, are noted, but not indexed.

2005: Online cataloguing of the Old Library began in 1998; automated records are being added to Newton (http://collan-newton.lib.cam.ac.uk/), with provenance data included, searchable by keyword or name heading. To date only a small proportion of the collection has been covered (about 250 books out of 25,000).

Cambridge – Corpus Christi College

1994: *Archival sources, and printed catalogues, only.*

2005: the early printed books in the Parker Library are being recatalogued to a high standard, as a special project; automated records are being added to Newton (http://collan-newton.lib.cam.ac.uk/), with provenance data included, searchable by keyword or name heading.

Cambridge – Emmanuel College

1994: Archival and printed sources only, and a manuscript index made in 1938.

2005: the 1938 index is still in use. The Sancroft Collection is in the process of being catalogued, in automated format, with provenance data recorded and searchable; this is not yet publicly available but can be accessed by staff to answer queries.

Cambridge – Gonville and Caius College

1994: Archival sources, and printed catalogues, only.

2005: a small proportion of the Old Library has had automated catalogue records created, which have been added to Newton (http://collan-newton.lib.cam.ac.uk/); these include provenance data, which is searchable by name heading. So far, this covers one bay of the Old Library, together with new acquisitions and material which has been recatalogued. Provenance data will continue to be added to all newly created or upgraded catalogue records.

Cambridge – King's College

1994: Early 20th c donors' index, with later ms indexes of bookplates and armorial bindings.

2005: Automated catalogue records have been created for many early printed books, although coverage is not yet complete; these are added to Newton (http://collan-newton.lib.cam.ac.uk/) and include provenance data which is searchable by keyword.

Cambridge – Magdalene College

1994: Archival sources, and printed catalogues, only.

2005: as in 1994.

Cambridge – Pembroke College

1994: Archival sources, and printed catalogues, only.

2005: As in 1994.

Cambridge – Peterhouse

1994: A comprehensive provenance index to the Perne Library, on cards, was completed in 1992.

2005: as in 1994.

Cambridge – Queens' College

1994: Work is in progress on a provenance index for the Old Library.

2005: As in 1994; it has not yet been possible to complete this, or to automate any catalogue records for early books, through lack of resources. Costings have been developed for a project to recatalogue the Old Library, online.

Cambridge – St Catharine's College

1994: Archival sources, and printed catalogues, only.

2005: The card catalogue for early printed books is gradually being automated, as resources permit, with records put into Newton (http://collpw-newton.lib.cam.ac.uk/). Provenance data is included and searchable by keyword. To date there are a little under 100 records retroconverted in this way.

Cambridge – St John's College

1994: An incomplete provenance index on cards (one and a half drawers) was compiled during the 20th century.

2005: A recataloguing project for the Upper Library (where the bulk of the historic collections are concentrated) began in 2001 and will run to 2006. The automated records all include provenance data which is searchable by name heading or keyword; records are added to Newton (http://collpw-newton.lib.cam.ac.uk/) where many can now be found. The Library website includes in the Special Collections pages a section of examples of interesting provenances and bindings (http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library/special_collections/).

Cambridge – Sidney Sussex College

1994: The Library is currently being recatalogued in automated format and provenances are indexed and searchable.

2005: Over 80% of the early printed books have now been recatalogued, with records added to Newton (http://collpw-newton.lib.cam.ac.uk/). Provenance data is included and searchable by keyword.

Cambridge – Trinity College

1994: A provenance index was begun by H.M. Adams, running to several hundred entries, but it has been added to little since Adams's time.

2005: A project to automate catalogue records for early printed books began in 1995 and ca. 70-80% of the holdings are now covered, with records available on Newton or via the College Library OPAC. Provenance data is not included, however.

Cambridge – Trinity Hall

1994: Archival sources, and printed catalogues, only.

2005: As in 1994.

Cambridge – University Library

1994: A partial handwritten provenance index made by Charles Sayle (d.1924) is available as Add.Ms.6450. The Rare Books Room has two card indexes relating to provenance, covering only a very small proportion of the bookstock, with two further drawers of owners and donors available for manuscripts.

2005: as in 1994, although provenance data is now included in newly created catalogue records for early printed books.

Canterbury – Cathedral Library

1994: All the printed books pre-1901 were recatalogued in automated format 1978-83 and provenances were recorded; access to this data is via printouts from the system.

2005: The Cathedral Library catalogue is available online as part of the OPAC of the University of Kent at Canterbury (http://opac.kent.ac.uk), and the comprehensive provenance information which was included in the recataloguing exercise is fully searchable.

Colchester – Harsnett Library

1994: Reference to the printed catalogue of 1888 only.

2005: The collection was transferred to Essex University Library in 2002, and recatalogung in automated format began the following year. This project is scheduled to run to the end of 2005. Provenance data is being included in the records.

Dublin – Trinity College

1994: A provenance index on cards was begun in 1970 and covers all material acquired since then (70 drawers).

2005: The card index has been closed and all the data has been transferred to the automated catalogue (www.tcd.ie/library), where the provenance headings can be searched and displayed (with the statement "former owner"). All books catalogued since 1968 should be covered in this way (estimated at about 17% of the Library's total holdings). A major retroconversion project for the older books in TCD is currently beginning but the first phase will not involve full recataloguing with book in hand; it is hoped that this might be done as phase 2, when full provenance data would be included, but there is not as yet any timing or funding for this.

Durham – Cathedral Library

1984: The pre-1801 books were recatalogued 1978-82 and there is a comprehensive provenance index available in the Library, in sheaf binders.

2005: the manual provenance index created during the recataloguing project remains available onsite; it has not yet been possible to automate this and make it available online, although there are plans to do so.

Durham – University Library

1994: A provenance index in sheaf binders was begun in the 1940s and provenances of all newly acquired or recatalogued material have been incorporated since then; runs to ca.10,000 entries.

2005: many of the historic printed collections have been fully catalogued online during the last two decades and comprehensive provenance data is included, and searchable in the OPAC (http://library.dur.ac.uk) via the keyword option.

Edinburgh – National Library of Scotland

1994: A file of provenance information on printed books has been maintained since the 1960s. The main file is held in four large sheaf binders and the entries include transcriptions of, and notes on, the inscriptions. The index of names currently runs to eight sheaf binders. Most entries relate to pre-1800 Scottish inscriptions. A separate index of bookplates is also maintained. It is hoped that provenance information will be included, and searchable, in the online catalogue sometime during the 1990s. Dr Brian Hillyard's file on Scottish book collectors is available on request in the South Reading Room.

2005: Since mid-1996 all records in the online catalogue (www.nls.uk/catalogues/index.html) for new accessions of older books have incorporated descriptions and indexing (by name) of provenance information, and the retroconversion of earlier card catalogue records for older books follows the same procedures in cases when the work is carried out book-in-hand. At the time of writing approximately 5,000 records for pre-1901 books include information of this kind. It is still necessary to refer to a manual file of provenance information (mostly relating to pre-19th-century Scottish inscriptions) which was maintained in the Manuscript Collections Division from the 1960s to the late 1990s, comprising four large sheaf binders of transcriptions (with notes) of inscriptions, arranged by shelfmark of book, and an index of names in eight sheaf binders. There is also a separate sheaf index of bookplates. Brian Hillyard's working draft of a directory of pre-1900 Scottish book collectors is available on request to Rare Book Collections.

Edinburgh – University Library

1994: A provenance index for printed books currently occupies nine sheaf binders, with a separate index for provenances of manuscripts. Since 1985, new acquisitions have been catalogued online.

2005: As in 1994. Automated records for early books do not include provenance data.

Glasgow – University Library

1994: Several separate provenance indexes are available in sheaf binders, for printed books and manuscripts. Since 1986, new cataloguing has been done online, with provenance information recorded but not yet retrievable.

2005: The sheaf binders are no longer maintained or publicly available; the data has all been transferred to the online catalogue, and further provenance data has been added as books have been catalogued or recatalogued. Former owners are searchable in the OPAC by name heading; there is a special index option in the catalogue for "provenance, printers and places" (http://eleanor.lib.gla.ac.uk/search/e).

Lampeter – St David's College

1994: Reference to the printed catalogue of 1975 only.

2005: a provenance index on cards has been developed, although there are no immediate plans for automating it. Provenance data was added to all automated records created during the RSLP-funded projects which covered early pamphlets, and 19th/20th-century Welsh-associated items.

Leeds – University Library

1994: A provenance index on cards is maintained for the Brotherton Collection, covering all material acquired since 1952 (ca.2000 entries); a provenance index has recently been started for other Special Collections.

2005: As in 1994. Automated records for early books do not usually include provenance data.

Liverpool – University Library

1994: A provenance index on cards was begun in the early 1970s, and covers material acquired since then, with some earlier coverage; it currently runs to 6 drawers and covers about a third of the Special Collections.

2005: As in 1994. Some information on former owners has been added to the collection descriptions on the website.

London – British Library

1994: Archival sources, and printed catalogues, only.

2005: as in 1994.

London – King's College

1994: no entry.

2005: Provenance data has been systematically added to all records for special collections since 1996 and is searchable in the OPAC (www.kcl.ac.uk/iss), which includes a dedicated search option for provenance headings. About 50% of the Library's holdings of early printed books and special collections are now catalogued to this level.

London – Lambeth Palace Library

1994: The author catalogue for printed books (on cards) includes a limited amount of provenance information. Plans for computerization include a field for the indexing of provenance.

2005: the catalogue has been automated and now covers all the Library's holdings of printed books except for the Sion College collection. Provenance data is included and searchable via a dedicated "provenance" search option in the OPAC (www.lambethpalacelibrary.org).

London – National Art Library

1994: The recataloguing of the Library's special collections, in automated format, began in 1991. Provenances are thoroughly recorded and are searchable through the online catalogue.

2005: the policy of comprehensively recording provenance when cataloguing special collections has continued. Since 1994, the two major foundation collections of early printed books (Dyce and Forster) have been completely recatalogued, with provenance recorded and searchable in the OPAC (www.vam.ac.uk/nal/catalogues/index.html).

London – Senate House Library

1994: Reference to printed catalogues only.

2005: provenance data has been included in catalogue records created for early printed books since the mid 1990s, including those for several major collections which have been comprehensively recatalogued (Goldsmiths', Durning-Lawrence, Sterling, Price, De Morgan). Former owners can be searched and displayed in the OPAC (www.shl.lon.ac.uk) by heading or keyword.

London – University College Library

1994: Reference to a printed catalogue only.

2005: provenance data has been included in catalogue records for early printed books for some years, indexed and searchable in the OPAC (www.ucl.ac.uk/library), and a growing number of such records will be found there. Additional separate indexes of bookplates and other provenance data are available on request.

London – Wellcome Library

1994: Reference to printed catalogues only.

2005: The Library's early books are all now catalogued online but most of the records were created via retroconversion, and it was not possible to add provenance data. Records for all newly acquired or recatalogued books, since the early 1990s, do include provenance data which is searchable in the OPAC (library.wellcome.ac.uk/catalogues.html) by keyword.

Manchester – Chetham's Library

1994: Archival sources, and printed catalogues, only.

2005: A 5-year project to recatalogue the Library in automated format began in 1998 and approximately 85% of the pre-1801 books are now covered. Full provenance data is included, and searchable by name heading (www.chethams.org.uk/opac.htm). Significant features relating to ownership history are also indexed, and searchable according to the RBMS thesauri.

Manchester – John Rylands University Library

1994: Partial access to provenances in the John Rylands collection is provided by a series of indexes in sheaf binders.

2005: as in 1994, but some provenance information is now available in the OPAC records for both the pre-1972 John Rylands collections, and for other collections (www.library.manchester.ac.uk).

Oxford – All Souls College

1994: Archival and printed sources only.

2005: The early printed books are progressively being catalogued online, with records added to OLIS (www.lib.ox.ac.uk/olis). Provenance data is included and is searchable by keyword in General Copy Notes, and displayable in OLIS by selecting the Full Display option. To date many of the pre-1800 foreign books have been covered (ca. 50% of 11,000 titles), but English material is much less well advanced.

Oxford – Balliol College

1994: Archival sources, and printed catalogues, only.

2005: The early printed books are progressively being catalogued online, with records added to OLIS (www.lib.ox.ac.uk/olis), and ESTC where appropriate. Provenance data will be added later, and will be searchable by keyword, and displayable in OLIS.

Oxford – Bodleian Library

1994: A provenance index on cards (4 drawers) is kept in Room 132; it is far from comprehensive. Since 1989, catalogue records for special collections items have been created on OLIS; provenance details are included, but are not yet indexed or searchable.

2005: provenance data on OLIS (www.lib.ox.ac.uk/olis) is now searchable by keyword in General Copy Notes, but only a very small proportion of the Library's holdings of early books is catalogued to this level of detail.

Oxford – Christ Church

1994: A provenance index in an exercise book, covering about two-thirds of the Library's early printed books was compiled in the 1930s and is available in the Library.

2005: automated catalogue records for over 30,000 early printed books have been added to OLIS (www.lib.ox.ac.uk/olis), and include provenance data which is searchable using the keyword in General Copy Notes option. Addition of further records is ongoing. The Christ Church Library web pages also carry detailed information and guidance on provenance research within the collections – see "Resources for provenance research" at http://www2.chch.ox.ac.uk/library/public/library.html, which includes a separate "provenance index of books catalogued on OLIS".

Oxford – Corpus Christi College

1994: Archival sources only.

2005: The early printed books are progressively being catalogued online, with records added to OLIS (www.lib.ox.ac.uk/olis). Provenance data has selectively been included, searchable by keyword in General Copy Notes and displayable in OLIS by selecting the Full Display option. To date nearly 70% of the pre-1800 foreign books have been covered (ca. 6,280 titles), and about a third of the English material (ca. 9,920 titles).

Oxford – Exeter College

1994: A provenance index on cards is available in the Library, covering most of the pre-1701 books; it is still being added to.

2005: The early printed books are progressively being catalogued online, with records added to OLIS (www.lib.ox.ac.uk/olis). Provenance data is included and is searchable by keyword in General Copy Notes, and displayable in OLIS by selecting the Full Display option. To date about half the pre-1800 foreign books have been covered (ca. 50% of 3,080 titles), but no English material is included.

Oxford – Jesus College

1994: The card catalogue to the Old Library includes half a drawer of "autographs"; coverage is not systematic or comprehensive.

2005: The early printed books (ca.10,500 items) have all been catalogued online, with records added to OLIS (www.lib.ox.ac.uk/olis). Provenance data is included and is searchable by keyword in General Copy Notes, and displayable in OLIS by selecting the Full Display option.

Oxford – Magdalen College

1994: Archival sources, and printed catalogues, only.

2005: The early printed books are progressively being catalogued online, with records added to OLIS (www.lib.ox.ac.uk/olis). Provenance data has been included for some records and is searchable by keyword in General Copy Notes, and displayable in OLIS by selecting the Full Display option. To date all the pre-1800 foreign books have been covered (3676 items), and about 70% of the 4750 English imprints.

Oxford – Merton College

1994: There is a card index (one drawer) of owners and donors, incomplete, and added to occasionally.

2005: The early collections are progressively being catalogued online, with records added to OLIS (www.lib.ox.ac.uk/olis). The foreign imprints (4700 items) are largely complete, and work is ongoing on English imprints. Provenance data is included and is searchable by keyword in General Copy Notes, and displayable in OLIS by selecting the Full Display option.

Oxford – New College

1994: A provenance index on cards was begun some years ago, but it has not been possible to complete it; there are ca.100 entries, neither comprehensive nor systematic.

2005: The early collections are progressively being catalogued online, with records added to OLIS (www.lib.ox.ac.uk/olis). Provenance data is included and is searchable by keyword in General Copy Notes, and displayable in OLIS by selecting the Full Display option. About 20-25% of the College's holdings of early books are now catalogued in this way.

Oxford – Oriel College

1994: Archival sources only.

2005: as in 1994.

Oxford – Pembroke College

1994: Archival sources only.

2005: as in 1994.

Oxford – Queen's College

1994: There is a provenance index on cards (2 drawers), but coverage is not complete.

2005: The early printed books are progressively being catalogued online, with records added to OLIS (www.lib.ox.ac.uk/olis). Provenance data is included and is searchable by keyword in General Copy Notes, and displayable in OLIS by selecting the Full Display option. To date just over 50% of the pre-1800 foreign books have been covered (ca. 10,000 items), and 35% of the English material (ca. 8350 items) .

Oxford – St John's College

1994: Archival and printed sources only.

2005: The early printed books (ca.11,300 items) have nearly all been catalogued online, with records added to OLIS (www.lib.ox.ac.uk/olis). Provenance data is included but is only searchable from within the College, as the records are suppressed from public view in OLIS.

Oxford – Trinity College

1994: A complete index of donors of books has been compiled, available as a typescript in the Library, together with a card index of donors (but not owners who were not donors).

2005: The early printed books are progressively being catalogued online, with records added to OLIS (www.lib.ox.ac.uk/olis). Provenance data is included and is searchable by keyword in General Copy Notes, and displayable in OLIS by selecting the Full Display option. To date many of the pre-1800 foreign books have been covered (ca. 90% of 1780 titles), but no English material.

Oxford – Wadham College

1994: A separate handlist of donors is available in the Library; there are no indexes available covering owners who were not donors.

2005: as 1994.

Oxford – Worcester College

1994: Archival and printed sources only.

2005: as 1994.

Reading – University Library

1994: The Library has a provenance index on cards, although coverage is incomplete. It is maintained and added to as new material is acquired.

2005: Provenance data is now added to online catalogue records for early printed books, using the MARC 561 field with added entries made for names (www.library.rdg.ac.uk).

About 50% of the Library's 55,000 rare books are now catalogued online, and work is in progress towards the aim of completing the coverage.

St Andrews – University Library

1994: A provenance index to printed books has been maintained for some time, in sheaf binders; coverage is not comprehensive, but currently runs to 8 binders.

2005: The manual indexes are no longer updated but are available if requested. Detailed provenance data is now added to automated catalogue records for early printed books, which can be retrieved via headings or keywords (the OPAC interface for Special Collections includes options to search for provenance, see http://www-library.st-andrews.ac.uk/). Ca. 30% of the early printed collections are now catalogued to this level of detail.