

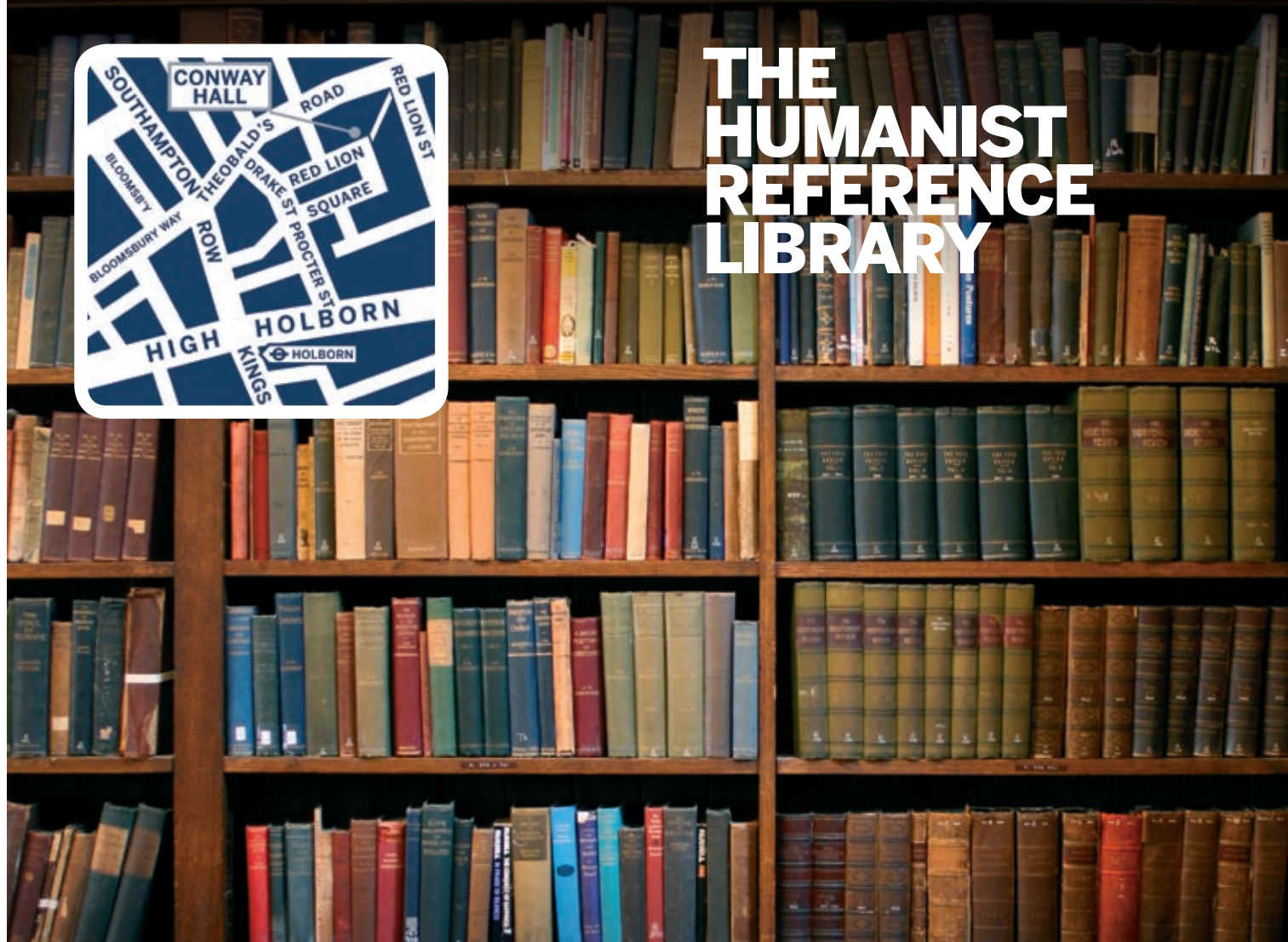
THE HUMANIST REFERENCE LIBRARY



THE HUMANIST REFERENCE LIBRARY strives to be the national research library for Humanism and closely related subjects. It is the foremost resource of its kind in Europe and the only library in the UK solely dedicated to the collection of Humanist material. It is a reference library accessible to the general public. The catalogue is being computerised and we hope it will be available online by the end of 2011.



THE HUMANIST REFERENCE LIBRARY



SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY

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SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY

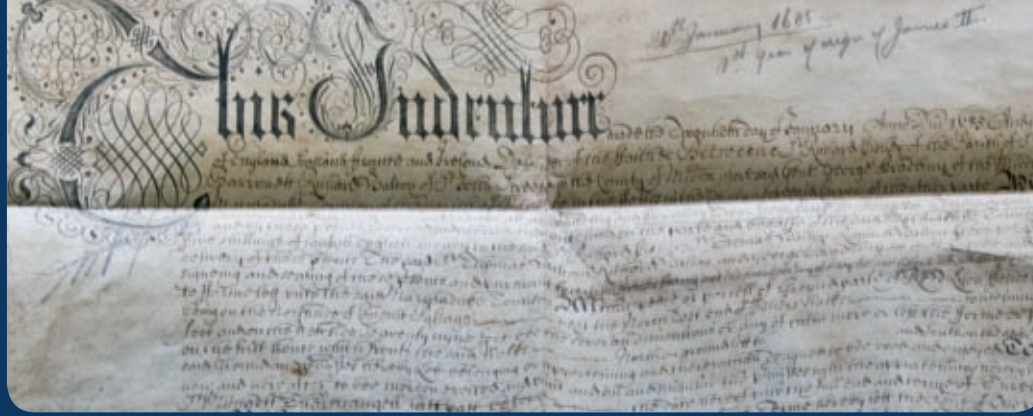
The Collection

The book collection comprises approximately 10,000 volumes, combining those of the South Place Ethical Society Library, the Rationalist Press Association Library, the Coit Memorial Library and the National Secular Society's collection. The Library originated in the nineteenth century as a general lending library for members, but now specialises in subjects relating to ethics, humanism, rationalism and philosophy. Among the subjects we collect are free speech, education, environmental issues, animal rights, health issues, medical ethics, family issues, lifestyle choices, business ethics and civil rights. Particular areas of interest include the history of science and religion, genetics, evolution and consciousness, the history of ideas, biographies of eminent freethinkers, and the history of ethical and humanist organisations.



Periodicals

The Library houses runs of many important nineteenth century freethought serials, including *The Freethinker*, *The National Reformer*, *The Republican*, *The Agnostic Journal*, *The Literary Guide*, and *The Secular Review* which researchers may consult. Our own journal, *Ethical Record*, has been comprehensively indexed.



Archives and Manuscripts

The Library holds the archives of the South Place Ethical Society and its predecessors, including deeds of the Conway Hall site dating from 1685/6, and much of the correspondence of Moncure Daniel Conway (1832–1907). Manuscript materials include the autobiographies of the Chartist leader William Lovett (1800–1877) and the preacher and politician William Johnson Fox (1786–1864). Most of the archival material has yet to be electronically catalogued, but access is possible through various finding aids.



Art Works

The Library's collection of artworks includes portraits of luminaries such as philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), biologist Thomas Huxley (1825–1895), and the freethought writer Chapman Cohen (1868–1954). We have sculptures of political author Thomas Paine (1737–1809), designer and socialist William Morris (1834–1896), and the freethinker George Jacob Holyoake (1817–1906), amongst others, as well as numerous photographs from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



Hawkins Chamber Music Collection

Music has been an integral part of SPES since 1878, when the famous Sunday Concerts began. Frank Hawkins collected nearly 2,000 pieces of sheet music of principally classical and romantic chamber music. In 1929 it was given to the Society. It is out of copyright and is free of markings. The collection has been catalogued, but it is not open to the public. The purchase of copies can be arranged.



Family History

We have membership records dating from 1895, giving names and addresses of members, and offices held within SPES, as well as activities and obituaries.

Facilities and Services

A photocopier, power sockets for laptops, and wi-fi access are available. Digital photography is permitted. Staff are happy to help with enquiries.

Access

The Library is open to researchers and members of the public on weekdays from 10.00 – 17.30, and evenings by appointment, at no charge. It would be appreciated if users could inform the Librarian of their intention to visit. We regret that the Library is situated on the first floor and there is no wheelchair access. Alternative arrangements can be made for disabled users.