

## Cataloguing Hans Sloane's Natural History Albums

Reference: 2021-WH-Sloane

<b>Supervisor (name &amp; role)</b>	Alexandra Ault (Lead Curator Manuscripts 1601–1850) Zoe Louca-Richards (Curator Manuscripts 1601–1950)
<b>Department &amp; Site</b>	Modern Manuscripts, London (St Pancras)
<b>Start date/Timeframe</b>	Start time flexible from May 2021 onwards, but preferably June 2021
<b>Duration</b>	<b>3 months</b> (or part-time equivalent) For a part-time placement, the student would be required to spend a minimum of <b>2.5 days a week</b> on site at the Library
<b>Suitability for remote working</b>	A small amount of research could be undertaken remotely, but the majority of the work is expected to be completed on site.

### Context for placement

Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753) collected books, manuscripts and objects from around the world, numbering over 71,000 items, which were bequeathed to the nation. Sloane's collection formed one of the foundation collections of the British Museum and was subsequently, dispersed across the Natural History Museum, the British Museum and the British Library.

The Library's Modern Archives and Manuscripts department is responsible for western manuscripts dating from 1601 to 1950, including 4,000 manuscripts from Sloane's collection. The Sloane manuscripts include a number of albums of natural history drawings and works on paper, from botanical illustrations to anatomy studies.

Selected albums have recently been catalogued and digitised as part of research projects, but many remain either uncatalogued or only partially listed online. A number of printed and manuscript catalogues exist for these albums. This placement will build on recent work by reviewing, identifying, and cataloguing these volumes. The work will help facilitate digitisation, conservation and improve access to the material for researchers.

In 1687 Sloane travelled to Jamaica as physician to the English governor. On his return, he married an heiress to sugar plantations in Jamaica which were worked by enslaved people. The profits from these plantations contributed substantially to Sloane's income and financed his collecting. One of the aims of this project is to make visible areas of Sloane's collection which have hitherto been absent from online catalogues. Updating and adding geographical markers and place names within the catalogue will ensure that these objects are set within a wider global historical context.

### Expected tasks and outcomes

- Use agreed terms to describe album contents
- Familiarise yourself with recent research projects and articles relating more broadly to Sloane such as the Enlightenment Architectures project
- Undertake broad research into Sloane's collections and more specifically, into collections and individuals relating to the British Library albums

- Catalogue albums to the agreed template in the Library's manuscript catalogue (IAMS), including folio count, page count, and description of physical and illustrated content
- Create name and place authorities to current cataloguing standards
- Research, where possible, provenance of album contents
- Ensure that existing place names, geographical markers, location and name authorities are correct and reflect current cataloguing standards
- Flag condition issues to the curator
- Write at least one blog post
- Write a summary collection report on the albums at the end of the project
- Draft a page for the British Library website on the Sloane Natural History volumes

### Training and development opportunities

All placement students are welcome to access the Library's offer of workshops, talks and training. For further details please refer to the [Application Guidelines on the British Library website](#).

In addition, this placement project will offer opportunities to:

- Work with original manuscripts and primary sources in an archive and library environment;
- Develop research and cataloguing skills for manuscripts, bound volumes and works on paper;
- Gain knowledge of Library cataloguing systems and standards for manuscripts and works on paper;
- Gain basic experience in archival collection management and care;
- Obtain valuable insight into day-to-day operations of a major national library, research organisation and cultural hub, highlighting different potential future career paths;
- Work with Library staff with a range of expertise, including other visual arts specialists;
- Publish blogs on the British Library website.

### Required knowledge and skills

Please ensure that you are aware of the general expectations for all applicants, as detailed in the [Application Guidelines on the British Library website](#).

For this specific project, the following additional criteria apply:

- Knowledge of and interest in visual art (materials, language and techniques) (essential)
- Familiarity with online and printed reference tools (essential)
- Interest in Natural History or the History of Science (desirable)
- Experience of handling works on paper, manuscripts, rare books or archival collections (desirable)
- Experience compiling catalogue records, preferably for manuscripts, rare books, archives or visual art (desirable)
- Relevant historical knowledge (desirable)

Application deadline: 5pm on Friday **18 December 2020**

Further information on eligibility, conditions and how to apply is available on the British Library website: <https://www.bl.uk/news/2020/october/phd-placement-adverts-2020>