

TO BUY, OR NOT TO BUY?

MARKET FORCES AND THE MAKING OF THE SHAKESPEARE BIRTHPLACE TRUST'S COLLECTIONS

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THE SHAKESPEARE BIRTHPLACE Trust is a small charitable organization, formed in 1847 through the direct action of market forces, when a public subscription campaign succeeded in raising £3,000 to save Shakespeare's Birthplace for the nation. This campaign was instigated in response to the demand "to rescue it at all events from the desecrating grasp of those speculators."¹ This referred to attempts by the American showman P. T. Barnum to purchase and dismantle the historic building for transfer to America.² Since 1847, the Trust has grappled with market forces, finding itself in direct competition with wealthy collectors and well-resourced collecting organizations for items within its collecting remit.

As the Trust has never had a surplus of disposable income, all purchases have had to be carefully budgeted for and gifts received with gratitude. This helps to explain the nature of the Trust's collections and the patterns of acquisition that have developed over 175 years. In this chapter this pattern of acquisition will be considered for the period 1890–1945, with a focus on medieval documents, which have been a feature of the Trust's collections almost from its creation. This is due, in part, to the Shakespeare family being active in a locality whose institutions (Stratford Borough and Holy Trinity Church) created and kept records during the medieval and the Early Modern periods. This paper focuses on documents up to 1600, but with a permitted extension to 1623, in honour of an iconic product of this time of transition: Shakespeare's First Folio.³

1 "Editorial," *The Times* (London), July 21, 1847, 5.

2 Roger Pringle, "The Rise of Stratford as Shakespeare's Town," in *The History of an English Borough: Stratford-upon-Avon 1196–1996*, ed. Robert Bearman (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), 160–74 at 171.

3 William Shakespeare, *Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (London: Jaggard and Blount, 1623).

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Collections at the Trust

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is charged with preserving Stratford-upon-Avon's historic sites and landscape associated with William Shakespeare and his family. An Act of Parliament directs us to maintain manuscript, library, and museum collections relating to the life, times, and works of William Shakespeare.⁴ Given our focus on Shakespeare the historical person and literary figure, the Trust's collections are generally known for Early Modern and later items, but we also have a sizeable medieval collection. This reflects our location in the medieval new town of Stratford-upon-Avon, its sometimes-tense relationship with the pre-existing settlement of Old Stratford, and the direct involvement of the Shakespeare family in the affairs of both.

Taking the Manuscript Accession Register as a guide, the pattern of acquisitions for the period 1890–1945 has been examined and is summarized in the Appendix (Table 17.1).⁵ Of 133 accessions in that time, twenty-seven relate to the twelfth to sixteenth centuries (representing 20 percent of the Trust's total acquisitions in the studied period). The items range from individual pieces to collections of estate papers, where cartularies, surveys, and correspondence coexist with accounts and what would now be categorized as operational records. The distribution of these medieval holdings across the centuries shows a preponderance of collections relating to the sixteenth century (nineteen out of twenty-seven), with an almost even split across the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries.

Shakespeare's Folios: An Early Modern Interlude

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is honoured to care for three First Folios, the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays, which were collated and published in 1623, seven years after his death.⁶ Whilst they are landmarks of the Early Modern period and underpin a seventeenth-century publishing phenomenon, their individual printing histories ensure that each copy can be regarded as a unique item whilst their separate provenance profiles reflect the varied acquisition patterns that have shaped our collections.⁷ The first of the three First Folios to be received was the Wheler Folio, named after Robert Bell Wheler, a Stratford antiquarian who purchased this copy for his own collection in about 1820.⁸ It is appropriate however to also regard the Wheler Folio as being named for his sister, Anne (Figure 17.1). She donated this copy to the Trust in 1862. This generous act laid the foundation of what would become a collection of eighteen Folios across four editions cared for by the Trust (Appendix, Table 17.2).

⁴ Shakespeare Birthplace, &c., Trust Act 1961, The Charities (Shakespeare Birthplace Trust) Order 2017.

⁵ An internal document of the SBT.

⁶ "Shakespeare's First Folio" BL, www.bl.uk/collection-items/shakespeares-first-folio, accessed May 5, 2023.

⁷ "How is Each Folio Unique?" Folger Shakespeare Library, www.folger.edu/shakespeare/first-folio/faq, accessed May 5, 2023.

⁸ SBT, SR - OS - 37/1623, 8300002X.

Our second First Folio is the Ashburnham Folio.⁹ Its early provenance is not yet fully understood, but it was acquired by the fourth Earl of Ashburnham, for his private collection, in about 1830. The Earl was a passionate collector and he paid £52 10/- for the volume (estimated now at about £2,500). His son, the fifth Earl, sold the collection in stages and in 1898 Sotheby's offered this First Folio for sale. The Trust raised funds via public subscription and Henry Sotheran, the rare book dealer, purchased it on behalf of the Trust. The price was now £585 (now over £36,000).¹⁰ Such values reflect the changing market in which the Trust operated.

The third First Folio cared for by the Trust is the Halliwell Folio owned by the Royal Shakespeare Company and placed on deposit with the Trust.¹¹ This volume was also sold at Sotheby's, in 1889 from the sale of James Halliwell-Phillipps's library, when it raised £95.¹² It was purchased by Charles Edward Flower, a Stratford brewer. Flower donated the volume to the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, now the Royal Shakespeare Company.

These three First Folio examples show the distorting effect of market forces, but also how public-spirited donations, together with formal deposits have helped organizations like the Trust, develop a wide range of collections. In general, for the period 1890–1945, it depended on donations (63 percent of all accessions), contrasting with purchases (31 percent) and deposits (just 6 percent). However, for medieval manuscripts, the acquisition pattern for the same period is mainly purchases (45 percent), then donations (33 percent), with deposits making 22 percent, a notable difference from the overall pattern. This pattern is summarized in the Appendix (Table 17.1) and will be examined in detail below, but it worth considering the Shakespeare Documents first.

The Shakespeare Documents

The Shakespeare Documents are key archival sources for understanding William Shakespeare's life.¹³ These manuscripts, dating from Shakespeare's lifetime, name him and provide an evidential basis for understanding the narrative of his life and how this inspired and influenced his creative works. They provide glimpses into his personal life, family affairs, property, and business dealings, as well as his context within a period of history that saw major changes in cultural, religious, and socio-political contexts.

⁹ SBT, SR - OS - 37/1623, 83000011.

¹⁰ *Book-Prices Current* 12 (1898): 457, no. 5039; Anthony James West, "Sales and Prices of Shakespeare First Folios: A History, 1623 to the Present (PART ONE)," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 92 (1998): 465–528 at 526; "Searching for Shakespeare's Book: The Ashburnham folio" Explore Shakespeare blog, SBT, www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/blogs/searching-shakespeares-book-ashburnham-folio/, accessed May 5, 2023; West (following Sidney Lee) indicates that this First Folio was purchased by Sir Arthur Hodgson on behalf of the Birthplace Trustees. Hodgson was a five-time mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon.

¹¹ SBT, SR - OS - 37/1623, 81000014.

¹² West, "Sales and Prices," 525.

¹³ "The 'Shakespeare Documents', a documentary trail of the life of William Shakespeare," UNESCO, <https://en.unesco.org/memoryoftheworld/registry/257>, accessed May 5, 2023.

The importance of the Shakespeare Documents is recognized by their being inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. They consist of ninety manuscripts, held by a range of institutions, including the British Library, The National Archives (United Kingdom), and the Folger Shakespeare Library (Washington, DC).¹⁴ The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust holds a third of these, mainly acquired by donation or deposit. An important donation made by Anne Wheler is the Quiney Letter of 1598, the only known example of a letter addressed to William Shakespeare.¹⁵ This was written by Richard Quiney in London, seeking a loan, but it was not sent.¹⁶ An equally significant deposit is the composite Parish Register deposited with the Trust by Holy Trinity Church.¹⁷ This volume records many of the life events of the Shakespeare family, including the baptism and burial of Shakespeare himself.¹⁸

In exceptional circumstances, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is prepared to purchase examples of the Shakespeare Documents when they come to market, but usually with major financial assistance.

Falling outside the main focus of this paper, but illustrating the point well, is the example of the Warwick Shakespeare Deed. Dating from 1602, this conveyance of 107 acres in Old Stratford to William Shakespeare was deposited with the Trust in 1970, as part of a varied group of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century documents. The depositor subsequently withdrew these documents, offering them for sale at Sotheby's in 1997. Having failed to reach the auction's reserve price, the Warwick document was subsequently sold to a private, overseas buyer, but a temporary export bar was placed on it by the UK government. The Trust succeeded in securing funds from the V&A Purchase Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund (now the National Lottery Heritage Fund), to save the War-



Figure 17.1. Photograph of Anne Wheler, © Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Courtesy of Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

14 The "Shakespeare Documents" are held by the British Library, College of Arms, Folger Library, London Metropolitan Archives, The National Archives (UK), SBT, and Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology Service, detailed in "UNESCO gives 'Shakespeare documents' cultural status on its Memory of the World register," *Shakespeare & Beyond*, Folger Shakespeare Library, <https://shakespeareandbeyond.folger.edu/2018/01/19/unesco-shakespeare-documents-cultural-status-memory-of-the-world/>, accessed May 5, 2023.

15 SBT, ER27/4, *Richard Quiney to William Shakespeare 1598*.

16 Stephen Porter, *Shakespeare's London. Everyday Life in London 1580–1616* (Stroud: Amberley, 2011), 120–21.

17 SBT, DR243/1, *Composite register of baptisms, marriages and burials 1558–1776*.

18 Michael Wood, *In Search of Shakespeare* (London: BBC Books, 2003), 32, 377.

wick Document, although only one other record from the group was recovered for the Trust (a list of plays performed at the Cockpit Theatre, Whitehall in 1638).¹⁹

Acquisition by Purchase

In 1896 the Trust purchased the Will of Edward Measty (1584) at Sotheby's.²⁰ This will is part of a much larger collection purchased, relating to the English Midlands, originally amassed from various sources by the self-confessed biblio-maniac Sir Thomas Phillipps and now known as Phillipps Miscellanea.²¹ The Measty Will is one of twelve purchases out of twenty-eight in the period 1890–1945, which contain documents dating from before 1600 (43 percent, compared with just 31 percent of all accessions purchased during this time (see Appendix, Table 17.4). This level of purchases underlines both the Trust's interest in medieval documents, and its commitment to, and integral position within, the antiquarian movement.

Whilst items relating to Shakespeare studies were the mainstay of Trust acquisitions in this period, an increased focus on local and family history saw much effort put into wider purchases. Four purchases were from specialists and eight were arranged privately. Of the specialists, the Measty Will purchase from Sotheby's has already been referenced. Maggs Brothers sold a warrant signed by Queen Elizabeth I to the Trust, whilst Birmingham-based Lowe Brothers sold a View of frankpledge with little court for the manor of Rowington, 1529–1530.²² Thomas Thorp, Bookseller of Guildford, sold the Trust a transcript of the Bushley Registers.²³ Indeed, documents purchased from Sotheby's, Maggs, Lowe and Thorp, along with the similarly named London bookseller Thomas Thorpe, feature in many of the Trust's collections.²⁴

Of the eight purchases arranged privately, three main themes are notable. The vendors were all men (but see below for the important role of women in the acquisition of medieval documents in this period). Only four men were involved and one of these sold four of the five transcripts bought by the Trust (see below). The private vendors were W. H. Charles, seller of Warwickshire Miscellanea,²⁵ R. Hyde Linaker, (the Aston Family Papers),²⁶ Cecil Ralph Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton (the Ferrers Family Papers),²⁷ and Reverend James Harvey Bloom, an antiquarian. Harvey Bloom regularly sold items to the Trust and of his five medieval sales in this period, the only original documents

¹⁹ SBT, DR232, *Shakespeare Documents 1602–1658*.

²⁰ SBT, ER47/1/1, *Will of Edward Measty; Bibliotheca Phillippica...Which will be Sold by Auction... 10th day of June, 1896* (London: Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 1896), lot 1294.

²¹ SBT, ER47, *Phillipps Miscellanea*.

²² SBT, ER115 *Warrant to supply tabard to Ralph Brooke 1592*; SBT, ER10 *Rowington Manorial*.

²³ SBT, ER105 *Bushley Registers*.

²⁴ Thomas Thorpe, Bookseller, 5 Old Bond Street, London.

²⁵ SBT, ER65 *Warwickshire Miscellanea*.

²⁶ SBT, ER112, *Aston Papers*.

²⁷ SBT, DR3, *Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton*.

were those signed by Henry Carey and his son Robert, relatives of Queen Elizabeth I.²⁸ These Carey Documents had a national perspective and appealed to the Trust because of Henry Carey's patronage of William Shakespeare.²⁹ Harvey Bloom's other offerings had a more local appeal, being transcripts of medieval documents held by a range of institutions. His antiquarian interests led Harvey Bloom to produce transcripts of Stratford Charters, ca. 1196–1547, Stratford Manorial Documents, 1520–1552, the Bishop of Worcester's Registers, 1310–1598, and Whitchurch Manorial Documents, 1566–1696.³⁰ Such transcripts collectively formed a research-effective resource by making accessible in a single location material that strongly augmented original documents held by the Trust. Transcripts were also cost-effective, permitting the Trust to expand its medieval resources, in line with the prevailing antiquarian ethos of producing, collecting, and using transcripts.³¹ This dual impact of transcripts helps to explain their appeal for the Trust, which also purchased transcripts of the Bushley Registers from Thorp. Even in the internet age, transcripts of historic documents have an enduring attraction, although their cost-effectiveness must be assessed against contemporary market forces. A recent example is the 2021 auction sale of a transcript produced in 1836 of Shakespeare's Marriage Licence Bond, dated November 11, 1582. With an auction estimate of £200–300, strong bidding resulted in the transcript being sold for £8,500 plus costs.³²

Women and Medieval Manuscripts at the Trust

Although all the private vendors of medieval items in the period 1890–1945 were men, women were interested in and actively collected medieval manuscripts. Constance Wellstood made a significant contribution to the development of the Trust's collections while serving as Secretary (1942–1945).³³ Wellstood had worked closely with her husband Frederick, whilst he was Secretary and Librarian to the Trust and replaced him on

28 A. J. Loomie, "Carey, Robert, first earl of Monmouth (1560–1639), courtier," *ONDB*, version September 23, 2004.

29 SBT, DR11, *Carey Family Documents*; Alan H. Nelson, "His Literary Patrons," in *The Shakespeare Circle*, ed. Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 276–79.

30 J. Harvey Bloom's transcripts are: SBT ER56 Stratford Manorial Documents, ER58 Whitchurch Manorial Documents, ER61 Stratford Charters, ER63 Bishop of Worcester's Registers.

31 A discussion of the reconstruction of a now lost cartulary by antiquarians is contained in the pre-publication note for David Crouch ed., *The Metham Family Cartulary: Reconstructed from Antiquarian Transcripts* (Leeds: Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society, December 20, 2022).

32 Lot 244, Dominic Winters Auctions, South Cerney, Cirencester: Shakespeare (William). Transcript of Bond for Marriage Licence 1836 (Relating to Bond now at Worcestershire Archives dated November 28, 1582). This transcript was provided by the Worcester Registrar at the request of Sir Thomas Phillipps, "The Saleroom" The Saleroom, home of art and antique auctions, www.the-saleroom.com/en-gb/auction-catalogues/dominic-winter-book-auctions/catalogue-id-srdom10167/lot-412009a6-2ab7-4494-b91d-acef00fab7fc, accessed March 29, 2021.

33 Constance Wellstood became interim Secretary in 1942, after the death of her husband.

his death, overseeing significant medieval deposits from the Lords Leigh (see below) and the Rainsford and Dighton families. Both these deposits contain estate papers relating to former monastic lands acquired after the dissolution of the monasteries, respectively Stoneleigh Abbey and Evesham Abbey for the Leigh family,³⁴ and Gloucester Abbey, for the Rainsford and Dighton families.³⁵

During the period 1890–1945, Women made four of the nine “medieval” donations. The Trust’s debt to Anne Wheler has already been noted, not least because of her generosity with regard to the Wheler Folio. This was specifically bequeathed to Anne by her brother, at a time when the market value of Shakespeare’s First Folio was widely known and understood. Yet Anne chose to donate this financially valuable asset to the Trust, seemingly prioritizing its cultural and symbolic significance to the organization charged with honouring Shakespeare’s life and works in his home town.

Janet Ryland similarly donated material collected by another, in this case her late husband, John William Ryland, F. S. A. As an antiquarian and historian of Rowington and neighbouring parishes in the Arden, Ryland amassed an important collection of manuscripts relating to this part of Warwickshire. Following her husband’s death in 1928, Janet organized a series of donations to the Trust. Amongst the earliest, made in 1930, is the account book of John Hall’s Charity, 1553–1589.³⁶ Such donations should not be construed as passive transfers of her husband’s work. The pattern of donations by Janet Ryland over four years indicates that she was actively engaged in the process, ensuring that each donation reflected key aspects of her husband’s research.³⁷ Also, as if following the example of Wheler, Janet Ryland chose to prioritize the cultural and symbolic significance of an early printed book to the Trust, in this instance “Holinshed’s Chronicles,”³⁸ recognized as a source for many of Shakespeare’s works including Macbeth and King Lear.³⁹ Like Wheler, Ryland chose to place books closely associated with Shakespeare’s creative output in a location closely associated with portrayals of his life. This points to decisions by both women that were informed by what are now recognized as markers of signification and cultural valuation, framed within narratives of place.⁴⁰ Both women chose not to capitalize on market values, which in the case of Ryland’s copy of *The Firste*

34 Andrew Watkins, “The Medieval Abbey: Its Lands and its Tenants,” in *Stoneleigh Abbey. The House, Its Owners, Its Lands*, ed. Robert Bearman (Stoneleigh: Stoneleigh Abbey, in association with the SBT, 2004), 198–213.

35 SBT, DR33, *Rainsford and Dighton Families of Clifford Chambers*.

36 SBT, ER95/2, *Account Book of John Hall’s Charity, Rowington, 1583–1589*.

37 Donations by Janet Ryland include SBT ER95 *Rowington Papers* (1930); SR - OS - 93/ *Holinshed’s Chronicles* (1933); ER110 *John W. Ryland’s Research Papers* (1934); ER113 *Bidford-upon-Avon Church Wardens’ Accounts* (1934).

38 SBT, SR - OS - 93/, 83026207.

39 SBT, SR - OS - 93/, 83026207; John Julius Norwich, *Shakespeare’s Kings* (London: Faber & Faber, 1999), 4–5.

40 Nicola J. Watson, *The Author’s Effects. On Writer’s House Museums* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 96.

Volume of the chronicles of England, Scotlande and Irelande by Raphael Holinshed (1577), was enhanced by a detailed provenance record for the period 1598–1933.⁴¹

Mrs. M. A. Ellis of Redditch provided the Trust with a remarkable donation of medieval and Early Modern records in 1940. Covering the period 1250–1696, the Cookes Family Papers contain many deeds with seals intact, a notable and marketable feature of medieval collections, where working documents were not always handled and stored as well as they could have been.⁴² Little information is currently available for Mrs. Ellis, nor for our final women donors, Mary and Katherine De Winton, highlighting the need for further research to ensure that their contribution to medieval collections at the Trust, and potentially elsewhere, is fully understood and documented.

The De Winton sisters from Brecon, Wales, made a notable donation in 1938, providing the Trust with a copy of *Leicester's Commonwealth*, a 1594 version of the original from a decade earlier.⁴³ This donation is worth considering as a further example of vendors rejecting market values when deciding to dispose of assets. Like Anne Wheler and Janet Ryland, the De Winton sisters donated material which represented both the Middle Ages and the Elizabethan age of transition towards the Early Modern period. However, their donation of the *Commonwealth* points to the religious and social turmoil of this era. It is widely seen as a Roman Catholic attack on the morals and standing of Robert Dudley, first Earl of Leicester and provides a contentious example of Reformation era propaganda. The pattern of their donations suggests a wide interest in the Reformation period.⁴⁴ Acquisition patterns by the Trust also indicate its increasing interest in later history, for instance the 1936 purchase from Maggs Brothers of the Proclamation of the main Gun Powder Plot conspirators.⁴⁵ Researchers and collections professionals need to thank Anne Wheler, Janet Ryland, Mrs. Ellis, and the De Winton sisters for their generous donations of medieval manuscripts, as well as their male fellow-benefactors. Without such generosity and public spiritedness, the Trust would have had a much narrower pattern of acquisition, given the market forces driven by individual collectors and larger collecting organizations.

41 The Ownership and Custodial History record shows: Francis Douce, April 6, 1598; Jo. Seymour, 1670; John Edge, April 26, 1714; John Edge, 1737; Paulin Abingdon, 1884; Donated by Mrs J. W. Ryland, 1933. SBT, SR - OS - 93/, 83026207.

42 SBT, ER139, *Cookes Family of Tardebigge*.

43 SBT, ER131, *Leicester's "Commonwealth."*

44 Donations by the De Winton sisters include STRST: SBT 1930-2, *Bust of Dean Balsall, warden of the College of Stratford 1495–1490* (the Collegiate Church of Holy Trinity) (1930); ER131, *Leicester's Commonwealth 1594* (1938).

45 SBT, ER123, *The Gunpowder Plot Proclamation*. Published in 1605, this purchase has been included in the main total, not the "medieval" totals.



Figure 17.2. Detail from illuminated charter of “Inspeximus,”
Elizabeth I, DR10/803, © Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.
Courtesy of Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

Acquisition through Deposit

The Trust holds the Gregory Papers, a significant deposit dating from 1150 until 1920.⁴⁶ This consists of the estate and family papers of the Gregory (later Gregory-Hood) family of Stivichall, near Coventry. It contains over 2,600 items, with a strong focus on medieval cartularies, deeds, and devotional material (including a thirteenth-century illuminated calendar).⁴⁷ An illuminated inspeximus charter with an image of Elizabeth I, of 1572, demonstrates the continuing relevance of medieval documents in Shakespeare's time, as the queen confirmed claims to lands whose previous ownership was traced to the twelfth century (Figure 17.2). As a formal deposit, this collection represents a form of acquisition that developed in 1919–1939, was turbo-powered by the Second World War, and would become a significant element of collection acquisition in the post-war period. To clarify, individuals or organizations placing items on deposit with the Trust, retain ownership of those items.

For the Trust, nothing was received on deposit until 1934, when a series of Early Modern deeds were transferred through the good office of the British Records Association. The first deposit of medieval manuscripts was received in 1935, from the former Lords of the Manor of Clifton-on-Dunsmore.⁴⁸ Dating from 1544, this included a range of quasi-judicial and property records, including Views of Frankpledge with Court Baron and rentals. Not until 1939 was another deposit received, when the Throckmorton Family Papers and the Vyner Estate Papers were deposited, dating respectively from the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁴⁹ From 1940, there was a flurry of very large deposits, due to the threat posed by enemy action. Such action impacted the Gregory Papers, when the old estate office was bombed during the Coventry Blitz, resulting in the loss of most eighteenth and nineteenth century estate records.⁵⁰ By 1945, the Trust was caring for medieval and later papers of families associated with historic houses and their estates, including the Ferrers at Baddesley Clinton, Throckmortons at Coughton Court, Fetherstons at Packwood House, and the Lords Leigh at Stoneleigh Abbey.⁵¹ This pattern continued after the Second World War, further strengthening the Trust's holdings of medieval manuscripts and establishing formal deposits as a cornerstone of its acquisition model.

⁴⁶ SBT, DR10, *Gregory of Stivichall*.

⁴⁷ The calendar is SBT, DR10/1406/b.

⁴⁸ SBT, ER119, *Clifton-on-Dunsmore Manorial Records*.

⁴⁹ SBT, DR5, *Throckmorton of Coughton*; SBT, DR4, *Vyner of Eathorpe*.

⁵⁰ SBT, DR10, *Gregory of Stivichall*.

⁵¹ SBT, DR3, *Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton*; The Fetherston Papers were one of the few estate collections donated to the Trust: SBT, DR12, *Fetherston of Packwood*; SBT, DR18, *Leigh of Stoneleigh*.

Saved for the Nation

Market forces and their distorting effect on the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's operating environment have been features of its collections since its inception. So too has the totemic impact of Shakespeare's associations with national identity, with public subscriptions having helped the Trust at key moments, for example in 1847 when the historic Birthplace building itself was threatened and in 1898 to purchase the Ashburnham First Folio.⁵² The Second World War introduced an alternative means of manuscripts being "saved for the nation," through salvage activities on premises directly or indirectly affected by enemy action. Documents were recovered by salvage crews and placed with relevant record offices. In the Trust's case, a collection of papers recovered from a damaged solicitor's office covering the period 1561–1925 were donated by Stratford-upon-Avon Salvage Officials.⁵³ Since the Second World War, formal fund-raising activities have continued, augmented in specific cases by government fiscal initiatives. The Throckmorton Papers provide an interesting example, as whilst noted above as being an early deposit, in 1997 ownership of this collection of 3,400 items transferred to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. This occurred when the Commissioners of Inland Revenue accepted the collection, in lieu of inheritance tax, and the Minister of the Arts allocated ownership to the Trust.⁵⁴ This is a case of market forces dictating a specific monetary value for medieval manuscripts, well beyond the Trust's financial resources, but with approved fiscal arrangements enabling the Trust to retain the collection "for the nation." Generally, however, the Trust is required to counter market forces by focusing wherever possible on donations, and, from 1934, formal deposits.

Conclusion

In an era of immense demand for books and documents by and about Shakespeare, particularly from America, the case of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust sheds light on the movement of manuscripts away from the market and the glare of associated press coverage. The collection provides insights into how definitions of what pertains to Shakespeare are shaped, in part, by the institution that holds them: in this the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust finds a parallel in the Folger Library, in Washington, DC. Yet in contrast to the Folger Library, the Trust's holdings are substantially the result of donations and deposits by people whose names are not now well-known. Among these are a significant number of women, as well as people with connections to the local region. The Trust therefore plays an important role in preserving manuscripts (as well as the more famous Folios) for the town as well as the nation, making them available to the research community.

⁵² Pringle, *Rise of Stratford*, 171; SBT, *Trust Minutes Volume 2*, TR2/1/2, 1898.

⁵³ SBT, DR27, *Robert Lunn & Lowth*.

⁵⁴ SBT, DR5, *Throckmorton of Coughton*.

APPENDIX

Table 17.1: Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Acquisition Pattern 1890–1945.

	All acquisitions	Medieval acquisitions
Donations	84 (63%)	9 (33%)
Purchases	41 (31%)	12 (45%)
Deposits	8 (6%)	6 (22%)
Total	133	27

Table 17.2: Summary of Shakespeare’s Folios cared for by Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

Edition	Donated	Purchased	Deposited by Royal Shakespeare Company	Total
First Folio (1623)	1	1	1	3
Second Folio (1632)	2	0	5	7
Third Folio (1664)	3	0	1	4
Fourth Folio (1685)	1	0	3	4
Total	7	1	10	18

Table 17.3: Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Donations of Medieval Items 1890–1945.

Year	Type	Ref.	Title	Dates
1896	Donor (male)	ER46	Fillongley Register Transcripts	1538–1652
1898	Donor (male)	ER49	Abstracts of Wills – Transcripts	1530–1631
1930	Donor (female)	ER95	Rowington Volumes	1553–1837
1933	Donor (male)	ER109	Gibbs/Solihull Manorial	1551–1745
1934	Donor (female)	ER113	Bidford Churchwardens	1583–1681
1938	Donor (female)	ER131	Leicester’s Commonwealth	1594
1940	Donor (female)	ER139	Bentley Papers	1250–1696
1941	Donor (male)	DR12	Fetherston of Packwood	1407–1849
1943	Salvage	DR27	Papers from solicitor’s office	1561–1925

Table 17.4: Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Purchases of Medieval Items 1890–1945.

Year	Type	Ref.	Title	Dates
1896	Auction	ER47	Phillipps Miscellanea	1567–1819
1904	Private Sale	ER56	Stratford Manorial (Tr. – Transcript)	1520–1552
1907	Private Sale	ER58	Whitchurch Manorial Documents (Tr.)	1566–1696
1909	Private Sale	ER61	Stratford Charters (Tr.)	ca. 1196–1547
1911	Private Sale	ER63	Bishop of Worcester's Registers (Tr.)	1310–1598
1913	Private Sale	ER65	Warwickshire Miscellanea	1583–1831
1933	Dealer	ER105	Rowington Frankpledge	1529–1530
1933	Dealer	ER107	Bushley Registers (Tr.)	1535–1812
1934	Private Sale	ER112	Aston Family Papers	1447–1753
1934	Dealer	ER115	Warrant of Queen Elizabeth I	1592
1939	Private Sale	DR3	Ferrers Family and Estate Papers	1200–1900
1939	Private Sale	DR11	Carey Family Documents	1591–1618

Table 17.5: Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Deposits of Medieval Items 1890–1945.

Year	Type	Ref.	Title	Dates
1935	Deposit (male)	ER119	Clifton-on-Dunsmore Manorial Records	1544–1878
1939	Deposit (male)	DR4	Vyner Family Papers	1528–1890
1939	Deposit (male)	DR5	Throckmorton of Coughton	ca. 1200–1880
1940	Deposit (male)	DR10	Gregory of Stivichall	1150–1920
1942	Deposit (male)	DR18	Leigh of Stoneleigh	1100–1999
1945	Deposit (male)	DR33	Rainsford & Dighton Families	1544–1769

