



## Video transcript

### Literary print culture: digitising the Stationers' Company archive

Located in the City of London and in close proximity to St. Paul's Cathedral, the Stationers' Company has represented booksellers, scribes, printers and publishers for over 600 years.

Becoming a livery company in 1560, following the granting of its Royal Charter by Queen Mary Tudor in 1557, the Stationers' Company was a key agent in the process by which the book trade was regulated and thus it is widely regarded as one of the most important sources for studying the history of the book as well as publishing history, the history of copyrights, and the workings of an early London livery company.

A substantial part of this rare archive is now online following a collaboration between the Stationers' Company and Adam Matthew Digital. Researchers can explore documents relating to the establishment of the livery company and its rules and regulations, legal requirements for publishing and copyrights, key financial records, and material relating to the company's publishing arm, the English Stock.

Literary Print Culture provides access to one of the most important archives for understanding the workings of the early book trade, the establishment of legal requirements for publishing and copyright provisions, and the history of book binding.

Explore extremely rare documents dating from 1554 to the twenty-first century in this invaluable resource of research material for historians and literary scholars.

Researchers will benefit enormously from being able to access the Stationers' Company's archive online. By moving the records onto a digital platform, we're creating new opportunities for research. Although the primary source collection consists of a number of separate record types, such as the book registers, the membership records, and the court minute books, in its digital form the archive will be cross searchable and we look forward to Literary Print Culture being used in this way.

Conservation and digitisation ensure that future researchers will still have access to the original material in the new archive reading room at Stationers' Hall, as well as being able to access it online from anywhere in the world.

There are about eight different kinds of record. There are various membership records which actually are quite difficult to use, and to find out how they interlock, but there are very good printed ones which are easy to use. And then there are the entry books and copyright registers, there are the minutes of the Court of Assistance which is the governing body of the Company, and they go from 1604 right up to the present day, and they are still written out by hand even today, although the draft ones are now of course typed or rather done on a computer.

The draft minutes from 1666, we have none before that, are very interesting because they are what the clerk actually wrote during the meetings and some of them are quite different, particularly during the late seventeenth century when, at the Restoration, when the spotlight was on the Company, and they would make decisions in the waste books as they are called.



There are various kinds of financial records as you would expect, and then we had a kind of publishing company called the English Stock, because it printed books in English, popular books, and the members of the Company had shares in it, so it was a joint stock company, and it started in 1606, ended in 1961, and we have all the records for that, and they're very interesting indeed.

Then we have a whole lot of miscellaneous documents as you might expect. We have a great number of property deeds and that sort of thing, and then about 15,000 loose items covering almost anything you could imagine.

These unique documents are supplemented by additional features, including an interactive chronology, scholarly essays, interviews with members of the Stationers' Company and a split-screen image viewer to enhance searchability.

Through the careful conservation and digitisation of these rare documents, the rich history of the Stationers' Company is now available online to enhance teaching and research.