
Falk Library A Great Synagogue Treasure

The Great Synagogue, the mother congregation of the Australian Jewish community, is a magnificent heritage building which holds a formidable collection of treasures. Not the least among them is the Rabbi L. A. Falk Memorial Library, established in 1956. It contains more than 6,500 books based on a collection amassed by Rabbi Falk who served the congregation in the mid-20th century. The books are in Hebrew, English and a variety of European languages.

Within the collection is a group of around 200 old and rare books, both leather and vellum bound, some dating from the early 16th century. They include some notable early printed bibles, 1667 editions of works by John Calvin, a very rare treatise on the Kabbalah from 1517 and renaissance era editions of Josephus in various European languages.

The collection includes serial titles, newspaper collections and genealogical papers which are also on microfilm and provides information on Jewish laws and customs, Hebrew learning resources, modern and historic material on Jewish communities and novels. More than 3,700 of its titles

are in English.

The rare and old books held by the library were described soon after its opening by Dr J.E. Fletcher of the University of Sydney as "unique and irreplaceable". According to Dr Fletcher, it is a "rich quarry for the study of the Jewish people, thought and religion and of comparative religions" and complements the other strong theological collections in Sydney at St Patrick's College, Moore College, and the State Library of NSW.

The collection is catalogued using the New York Public Library Jewish cataloguing system and is now searchable on computer.

The library, housed in a dedicated space within the Great Synagogue, can be accessed at any time during the working day. It is a reference rather than lending library and students are encouraged to work in the library.

An honorary librarian, Pearl Cutter, works part time and is assisted by volunteers. Rabbinic and office staff are available to help with inquiries.

WHAT DO LIBRARIANS SAY ABOUT....?

We would like to receive responses from our readers to the following:

1. When I'm at a party and someone asks what I do "for a crust", their next question is:
2. When I told my parents I wanted to be a librarian, they said:
3. If I were stranded out in the desert (or on the proverbial desert island), the five books I would most like to have with me would be:
4. When it comes to the people who use our library, my pet hate is:
5. If money were no object in the library budget, I would love to buy:

Send your responses, by **1st August**, to: The Editor ANZTLA Newsletter, C/- Adelaide Theological Library, 34 Lipsett Tce., Brooklyn Park 5032, or Val.Canty@flinders.edu.au