

## Sarah Sophia Banks's guide to her 'Ceremonies & c p = print'

Reference: 2025-WH-SSB

<b>Supervisor(s)</b>	Felicity Myrone, Lead Curator Western Heritage Prints and Drawings, with Maddy Smith, Lead Curator Printed Heritage Collections 1601-1900
<b>Team(s) and department(s)</b>	Printed Heritage
<b>Start date/timeframe</b>	Earliest start: June 2025  Latest end date: March 2026
<b>Duration</b>	<b>Three months</b> (or part-time equivalent)
<b>Part time/Full time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Full time only <input type="checkbox"/> Part time only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full time or part time  Minimum days/week if undertaken part time: Minimum 2.5 days a week on site at St Pancras if undertaken part time
<b>Location/Working arrangements</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can only be offered on site at St Pancras.  The project will involve manuscripts and rare books which can only be consulted at the Library under controlled conditions.
<b>Application deadline</b>	Friday 21 February, 17.00 GMT

Eligibility criteria, funding information and details of how to apply are available on the British Library website: [Research collaboration - The British Library](#)

### Context and nature of placement project

Extensive materials collected by Sarah Sophia Banks (1744-1818), one of the most important antiquarian collectors of her time, are now divided across the British Library and Prints and Drawings and Coins and Medals at the British Museum. Varying departmental and institutional interests and practicalities have impacted their visibility, and the focus of scholarship to date has been on the holdings at the Museum and her prints and ephemera in nine albums in the Library (L.R.301.h.3-11). At the Library her manuscripts have basic catalogue entries, but her books are generally not identified as such. Both are often illustrated by prints she inserted which remain unlisted.

Banks wrote catalogues of her own collections and kept notes regarding provenance. One list held in printed books (460.d.13.) has been repeatedly noted (eg. Leis, 2013) while Add MS 6304 is an overlooked entry point to Banks's library. This small manuscript contains a timeline of ceremonial events dated 1251 to 1818, referencing the books, magazines, manuscripts and particularly prints, marked 'p', in which they are described or depicted. It was Banks's own tool, a reference guide she created to enable her to navigate her library. She includes notes of where the works listed were stored in her home, and in some cases where and how she acquired them.

The student will transcribe folios 1-94 of this manuscript and start to match its entries with the books, prints and manuscripts as they are found in the Library and Museum today. This research could lead to re-identifying collection items and enhancing catalogue records. They will work under the guidance of the supervisors and with support as needed from colleagues across the Library. The placement will initiate a larger research project on Banks planned by Felicity Myrone, Lead Curator for prints and drawings in the Western Heritage departments at the Library.

### Tasks and outcomes

The focus of the placement will be to transcribe S.S. Banks's catalogue and to create a spreadsheet based on this data.

This will enable the student, under the supervisors' guidance, to

- match the works Banks lists to the Library's holdings
- extract current cataloguing from Library catalogues order the physical works and examine them, recording undescribed copy-specific data which could be used to enhance catalogue records (such as insertions, annotations, stamping).

The main outcomes envisaged for this placement are:

- A full transcription of an unpublished archival source
- A project-specific spreadsheet which can be used to identify and enhance the cataloguing of Sarah Sophia Banks' collection.

We would also encourage the student to engage in supervised social media activity reflecting their discoveries. They could, for example, write blogs for Untold Lives.

### **Training and development opportunities**

PhD placement students are welcome to access a wide range of workshops, talks and training available at the Library. Supervisors will offer advice on which opportunities may be of particular relevance. Depending on availability, these wider training opportunities may include, for example, the Digital Scholarship Training Programme, Cultural Property Training, Research Roundtables, Business & IP Centre workshops and staff talks.

In addition, this particular PhD placement will provide the following opportunities:

- applying research skills for a practical purpose that supports the needs of a national library
- transcribing an unpublished manuscript
- handling collection items
- identifying and describing a wide range of prints, in different media and mainly dating from the 16th to the 18th centuries
- developing knowledge of historic prints, print collecting and the history of the Library collections
- creating and enriching MARC and IAMS catalogue records via an Excel spreadsheet
- taking part in daily curatorial life at the Library, attending staff meetings, training courses etc. as appropriate
- writing for a broad public audience
- using social media to engage audiences in research

### **Required knowledge and skills**

All applicants will be expected to demonstrate the following:

- Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing, internally and externally
- Working knowledge of Microsoft Office applications and online meeting tools
- Ability to follow instructions and policies, in particular with regard to Health & Safety and the safe use of collections
- Ability to work effectively with others while also completing tasks independently
- Clear reasons for applying to a specific placement and good understanding of the project purpose

In addition, this specific placement project requires the following:

- Excel skills and an interest in collections-based research
- The ability to read clear 18th century handwriting is essential
- A demonstrated interest in print history, visual art and collecting history would be advantageous, but not essential
- Experience of handling and using manuscripts, archives or other special collections for research.