

The In & Out Club Library

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The Club's Library is relatively new, and relatively normal, in terms of size and shape and books and clients and era. However, all around the world there are extraordinary libraries, all going along happily - save for the first two of the following.



The very first was the 2nd century Library of Celsus, built in Ephesus as a mausoleum for his father by Celsus's son, and containing around 12,000 scrolls, paid for by a legacy from Celsus. Sadly it burnt down in 262 AD, although the restored façade dominates the avenue leading up to it.



The second is rather later; it's a Ford van which, in 1921, was fitted with wooden shelves holding around 900 books and toured the remote hinterlands of Perthshire, bringing novels and learning in its wake. It probably wasn't saved for posterity, which is rather a shame, but at least it's remembered on Twitter.



Chronologically between those two comes the Baroque Klosterbibliothek at Metten Abbey in Germany, built from 1722-26, where extraordinary stucco sculptures bear the gilded and frescoed ceilings, beneath which around 35,000 books (sadly, not the original collection) nestle in ornamental splendour. The Abbey had a brief thirty-year occlusion in the 19th century, when it was decommissioned and its contents sold; however, Mad Ludwig of Bavaria re-established it in the 1830s, and it still runs a school, and the library is still expanding.



Then there is the Biblioteca do Convento de Mafra in Portugal, the palace containing it being built from 1717 to 1755, and now a World Heritage Site. The library has around 36,000 books, including a collection of pre-1500 incunabula and post-1500 Books of Hours, and their upkeep is maintained with the help of a staff of bats, who fly around eating book-consuming pests.



Older, but also much more modern, the Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne was founded in 1289, but now resides in the decorative late 19th century rooms of the Sorbonne building. The whole library possesses between 2 and 3 million books, a slight increase on the 1,000+ of 1289. If you are

interested in these historic collections (and rivals to our own Library), you may like Massimo Listri's *The World's Most Beautiful Libraries...*

