

Wellcome Library

The Wellcome Library (<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/library>) Europe's largest resource for the study of history of medicine houses over 2.5 million items spanning 3,000 years, and occupies two floors of Wellcome Collection. A state of the art conservation studio occupies the fourth floor of the building.

The refurbished Library was opened by author Sebastian Faulks on 18 April 2007.

The Library is open to the public six days a week, free of charge, and welcomes visits from anyone with a research interest in its collections.

The Library's collections were recognised by 'designation' as an outstanding collection by The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) in 2005.

The Library provides easy public access to more of its collections, an attractive and spacious Rare Materials Reading Room, 44 workstations, viewing rooms, and an E-Learning room. The entire Library space of 23,000 square feet will be WiFi enabled and open six days a week.

New Book: Cures and Curiosities: Inside the Wellcome Library

A new book, *Cures and Curiosities: Inside the Wellcome Library*, introducing readers to the hidden stories which lie behind some of the Library's collections was published in June by Profile. Short, self-contained chapters offer a lively snapshot of the diversity of the collection, lavishly illustrated with more than 150 photographs, and punctuated by personal observations from some of the authors who have used the Library, including **Kathryn Hughes**, **Philip Hoare** and **Gillian Tindall**. The book has been edited by the well known writer **Anthony Gould**, with a foreword by **Sebastian Faulkes**. *Cures and Curiosities: Inside the Wellcome Library* is sold at Wellcome Collection and all good bookshops, price £15.00.

Wellcome Images (<http://images.wellcome.ac.uk>)

Previously called The Wellcome Trust Medical Photographic Library, Wellcome Images is a digital image collection of 200,000 images depicting medical and social history as well as contemporary healthcare and biomedical science. Images can be downloaded for use and reuse under a Creative Commons licence for non-commercial use.

Uncover; the Virtual Library

Uncover is a dazzling touchscreen installation which will allow browsers to explore the Wellcome Library's collections 'virtually' – to create their own 'exhibition'; go on a 'tour' of the collections; magnify, rotate and examine items; hear Library staff describe the significance of the item; send comments back to the Library and send images to others. Uncover is located in the Virtual library - on the first floor of Wellcome Collection.

The collections of the Wellcome Library include: 750,000 books; a film and audio collection of 2500 titles; 600 archival collections; 70,000 rare books (published before 1850) and more than 250,000 paintings, prints and photographs. Artefacts range from the 'Nuremberg Chronicle' (1493), a book depicting the history of the world containing 800 woodcut illustrations and fragments of Books of the Dead from ancient Egypt, to 21st century born-digital biomedical archives. The entire material of the collection amounts to over 18 km - equivalent to 187 times the height of Big Ben.

Sir Henry Wellcome and the Wellcome Library

The Wellcome Library is founded on the collections formed by Sir Henry Wellcome (1853-1936), whose personal wealth, founded on the pharmaceutical company which he developed and owned, allowed him to spend the last four decades of his life indulging one of the most ambitious collecting visions of the twentieth century.

Henry Wellcome's primary collecting interest was focused on the history of medicine, which included not only ancillary subjects like alchemy and witchcraft but also anthropology and ethnography. He began collecting books seriously in the late 1890s and by the 1920s and 1930s staff were needed to man his personal library.

In 1945 the Library was moved into the Wellcome Building on 183 Euston Road, and in December 1949 it was formally opened to the public as the Wellcome Historical Medical Library. In 1989 the library was relocated to Bentley House, on the opposite side of Euston Road, returning to Wellcome Collection in a transformed 183 Euston Road in 2007.

Frances Norton, Head of the Wellcome Library, said: *“The collections, although ostensibly medical, cover the breadth of social, psychological, political and scientific history, across all cultures. They speak eloquently to us as people, about our own experience of health and disease, as well as providing evidence of the progress of medicine over time.”*

Author, **Sebastian Faulks**, opening the refurbished library, said: *“I don't think I could have written my novel Human Traces without access to the wonderful resources of the Wellcome Library. Uniquely among libraries I have used, the Wellcome Library seems to genuinely care for its readers and their work.”*