

## Job Description

**Title:** Collections and Access Librarian

**Reports to:** The Librarian

**Contract type:** 2 years

**Salary:** £31,250 per year pro rata (£12,500 per year for 2 days per week)

**Hours:** 14 hours per week (Generally Thursday to Friday, though some evening and weekend work will be required)

**Closing date:** 11 October 2021

**Interview date:** 22 October 2021

## The Portico Library and Newsroom

The Portico Library is one of Manchester's longest-running institutions. It is a subscription library and newsroom in the city's centre where the public are welcome to enjoy free exhibitions, take part in events and workshops, dine in the café, and immerse themselves in the inspiring Regency-period building. Members' services include special events and full access to the historic collection of over 25,000 books and archives spanning 450 years. The Portico became a charity in 2017 and strives to widen public interest in literacy, and in artistic, scientific, and technical matters.

## About the Collection

The Portico Library's collection of over 25,000 mostly 19th-century books includes many first editions and represents the interests of some of Manchester's most influential Georgian and Victorian people. Our books and archives offer a tangible insight into the literary, intellectual and cultural mindset of Industrial Revolution Manchester at the height of the colonial era, and cover a wealth of subjects with a particularly strong focus on travel, biography, science, poetry, history, and maps. Unusually for a 19th-century special collection, there is also a fine representative selection of fiction. The Portico has a growing archive of institutional and personal records that are in good condition but underused.

Everyone who visits the Portico Library can view a selection of books and archive items in our free public exhibitions. For those who wish to delve deeper, there are three ways to access the collection: by becoming a Member, a reader, or a researcher. There is no cost to becoming a researcher and reader cards can be purchased for weekly or monthly timeframes. Members can enjoy access and borrowing rights to our historic collection, plus a handpicked selection of the most exciting and relevant recently published volumes.

Many of the important and fragile items in the Portico Library's historic collection require care and conservation to ensure that they are available for future generations to read, use, and enjoy. The Library runs a popular Adopt-a-Book scheme that has helped conserve and restore thousands of volumes and hosts a volunteer collection care team led by world-renowned book conservators.

The Portico uses the Library Management software Heritage Cirqa to catalogue its collection and archive.

The Portico continually looks to increase access to the collection, using innovative and collaborative ways to conscientiously contextualise and interpret the Library's fascinating, but also sensitive texts. We look to empower new generations of users, researchers, writers, students, members and visitors to unearth captivating and often obscured stories within the collection and the Library's history.

### **About the Role**

The Portico is seeking someone with a strong library background and strategic outlook to join our friendly, talented team at a pivotal point in the Library's development. The Portico is at an exciting stage of reimagining its future as a living centre of literature and learning through our substantial development plans that will encourage interaction and widen participation in an open and accessible building. The position will play a key strategic role in helping realise this vision, ensuring that the Library's collection is at the forefront of our ambitious plans for the future, connecting with each area of development.

The role will have two interconnected central objectives:

1. To write and embed a Collections Policy for the Library
2. To maintain the smooth running of the Portico's collection and archive, which will include adding new material to the Library's catalogue.

Taken together, this position will seek to compassionately connect the collection to the communities, members, partners and networks it serves.

The Collections and Access Librarian's work will connect with the Portico's efforts to involve a wider range of people in the Library's collection and commitment to equality, representation and inclusion, keeping in focus the importance of engaging with communities and partners. The ideal candidate will have demonstrable ability for building collections across multiple formats, including the integration of digital assets. This role presents an exciting opportunity to address the gaps and silences in the Portico's collections, and to extend the appeal and reach of our collections to new groups and audiences.

The candidate will have:

- A strong cataloguing record and an appreciation of research interests of and about 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-century history, science and literature
- A passion for building relationships with partners and communities relevant to the Library's growing collection
- The ability to prioritise work in a busy environment
- Good communication and digital skills

- The ability to collaborate well as part of a team as they will be working closely with colleagues, volunteers and Trustees across the whole organisation, providing guidance at a senior decision-making level.

### **Responsibilities and Duties**

The Collections and Access Librarian's main duties and responsibilities will include:

- Writing and embedding the Library's Collection Policy with an emphasis on widening access, conserving the collection and developing a digital strategy
- Maintaining the smooth running of the Portico's collection and archive, including the re-shelving and shelf-sequence of the collection
- Maintaining and updating the Portico's catalogue and archive (physical and digital records), developing a working knowledge of the collection
- Facilitating and supervising Members, readers, researchers and the public's use of the collection and archive
- Assisting the Librarian in building the collection through acquisitions and digitisation
- Working closely with the Book Committee and the Library's Collection Care team
- Working with the Portico's Strategic Development Committee to ensure the collection is central to the Library's development plans, and liaising with the Public Programme, Finance and Resources, and Equity and Representation Committee where appropriate
- Preparing and setting-up items from the collection for the exhibition and events programmes
- Issuing library items while ensuring the highest standard of security and handling
- Providing technical support in the Library's Adopt-a-book programme

### **Selection Criteria**

Essential:

- Experience of collection development across physical and digital formats, including policy writing, widening access, acquisitions, disposals and loans
- Up-to-date knowledge of best practice in collection/archival storage, handling and data standards
- Experience of using a digital library management system or equivalent and the ability to catalogue quickly and accurately
- An interest in the Library's core collection areas (literature, travel, natural sciences), printed books and their conservation
- A working understanding of diversity and inclusion practices in the library sector, including issues of working with politically and socially problematic historical texts including sensitivity to prospective collaborators' and visitors' traumas and experiences
- Good digital skills, especially in Microsoft Office, email, social media and cataloguing software

- Good interpersonal and communication skills, demonstrating an ability to write for, and speak to, a wide variety of users, audiences and partners
- The ability to plan, schedule, prioritise and allocate work effectively while delivering to multiple deadlines
- The ability to work as part of a team, providing support to colleagues and to projects, as well as a respectful and polite approach towards others, building proactive and collaborative working relationships

#### Desirable

- Experience using Heritage Cirqa Library Management System
- Experience of writing for the web and creating new content
- The ability to maintain collection usage statistics for regular reports
- An understanding of the communities, networks and partners the Library works with
- Experience of writing capital project development bids
- The ability to read and speak a second language

The Portico reserves the right to make reasonable amendments to the job description in consultation with the post holder at any time.

#### Application Process

Please submit a CV (including the name, phone number, email and address of two referees), Equal Opportunities form and a Supporting Statement no longer than two-sides of A4 outlining why you are interested in this role and your suitability for the post, highlighting your relevant knowledge, skills and experience. Please use examples where you can. The deadline for submissions is 11 October 2021, at 5:00pm. Please submit all documents (CV/Equal Opportunities and Supporting Statement) by email to [support@khes.co.uk](mailto:support@khes.co.uk) or post to Unit 2, Mossfield House, Chesham Fold Rd, Bury, BL9 6JZ.

Further enquiries about the role may be directed to the Librarian, Dr Thom Keep, on 0161 236 6785, email: [librarian@theportico.org.uk](mailto:librarian@theportico.org.uk)

To find out more about our collection, archive and catalogue please visit our website here: [www.theportico.org.uk/the-collection](http://www.theportico.org.uk/the-collection). For examples of how we use the collection with the city's communities, membership and partners, please read our Quarterly and take a look at our public programme here: [www.theportico.org.uk/whats-on](http://www.theportico.org.uk/whats-on).

We update our socials regularly and these can be found here - Twitter: @theportico, Instagram: @porticolibrary, and Facebook: @theporticolibrary

### **Shortlisting**

The evidence you provide in your CV and Supporting Statement will be assessed against the selection criteria. Applicants who best demonstrate that they meet the selection criteria will be shortlisted for interview.

### **Interviews**

If you are shortlisted for interview, the Library will let you know by 15 October. Interviews will be held 22 October. As part of this email you will receive details of your allocated date and time and of any tasks that will be included as part of your interview.

If you are invited to an interview, you will be asked to let the Library know if you have any special requirements to help you attend. All applicants will receive an email confirming their submission and feedback will be given to all shortlisted applicants. Unfortunately, we are not able to offer feedback to all submissions.

### **Access**

The Portico is located on the first floor of its original 215-year-old Listed Building. We are working towards make the Library as welcoming and accessible as possible for everyone, but there currently remain some access restrictions:

- There are 32 steps from the main entrance to the Library and no lift. There is a handrail, and a chair is placed on each landing.
- There is a stair-lift at the Library's back entrance, accessed by a portable ramp, but currently no step-free or accessible toilets.
- There are pay and display parking spaces immediately outside the Library, which are not dedicated or bookable disabled parking bays, but Blue Badge holders may park here free of charge.
- While this vacancy is an opportunity to work in a historic building, we are committed to making any adjustments we can to allow as many people as possible to carry out the role. If you are disabled, please contact the Librarian to discuss what could be done to facilitate your application at [librarian@theportico.org.uk](mailto:librarian@theportico.org.uk) or on 0161 236 6785.

### **Equality of Opportunity**

At the Portico Library, we believe that the rights of all people, inclusive of age, disability, gender, neurodivergence, mental health, race, relationship status, religion or belief, and sexual orientation, should be fully realised and protected. Our vision is of an organisation that is representative of our city and accessible to all. To help us achieve this vision and to ensure that the selection process is consistent with the law and the Library's Equal Opportunity Policy, we use a recruitment monitoring process administered by an external independent professional. To this end, applicants will be asked to complete an Equal Opportunity monitoring form, which will play no part in the selection process, and will not be seen by any member of the selection panel.

Entry into employment at the Portico Library will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of the Collections Librarian post.

The Portico Library is an equal opportunities employer and we value diversity in our organisation. We want to promote inclusivity and equity, and to become more representative of the people of Great Manchester with its wide range of cultures, ideas and experiences. We therefore welcome and encourage applications from candidates with diverse backgrounds and identities.

### **Safeguarding**

The Portico Library is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults and expects all staff members to share this commitment. This role will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. If called for an interview you will be asked to disclose details of any convictions which are not yet spent. If you have any questions around your suitability for this vacancy, please contact the Librarian.