



ABTAPL
Association of British Theological
and Philosophical Libraries



ABTAPL is the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries, an organisation of libraries and librarians/information managers working with theological and philosophical collections and related materials. **ABTAPL** works in liaison with CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals). **ABTAPL** provides for its members

- a network for sharing information and experience
- consultation, advice and professional support
- continuing professional development.
- training days on a wide variety of current topics
- professional advocacy
- discounts on subscriptions to selected electronic resources and journal subscriptions for some members
- a subscription to the **ABTAPL** Bulletin, published three times per year

Historical Roots

ABTAPL was originally formed to be the United Kingdom's member of the *International Association of Theological Libraries* which was set up in 1954 under the auspices of UNESCO. It was felt that there was a vital need, throughout the world of information, for wider dissemination about theological

libraries, theological librarianship and theological and philosophical literature. Although this original international Association was short-lived, it provided the impetus for the establishment of several national Associations of theological libraries. **ABTAPL**'s first meeting took place in 1956.

Later, many of the aims and objectives of the original international Association were carried on by the *International Council of Theological Library Associations* which today is known as BETH—Bibliothèques Européennes de Théologie, of which **ABTAPL** is an active member.

Membership

The majority of our members are librarians or information managers working in theological and/or philosophical libraries and resource centres; however, the membership is not confined to professional librarians. Anyone who has an interest in religious studies, theology and/or philosophy may join the Association. Many of our members work in professional isolation, so sharing experiences from a wide range of disciplines does much to lift professional horizons. Some of our members have spent all of their working lives in a specialist library; others have transferred from the public service; some have bookselling experience; some carry library responsibilities because they lecture in theology or philosophy. The only membership qualification is to have an interest in the bibliography, librarianship or management of our specialist subjects. All are welcome in **ABTAPL**.

If you are interested in joining **ABTAPL**, please consult our website (www.abtapl.org.uk) where you will find all the details for membership, along with an application form.

Activities

ABTAPL usually meets twice a year. A day meeting is held in the autumn, which includes a visit to a library in the specialisation, and a residential three day conference is held in the spring. Although the autumn meetings are usually convened in London, the spring conferences are held in different locations throughout the UK and Ireland. These meetings are valuable not only for seeing the wide variety of modern library practice in many different

institutions, but also for the opportunities to meet other professionals in the same specialisations. These occasions are highly regarded by **ABTAPL** members, many of whom work alone in their libraries and are not otherwise afforded the opportunity to broaden their professional education.

Besides the two meetings, **ABTAPL** also organises one day training sessions at regular intervals on a wide variety of current topics. The sessions are excellent value for money and provide more opportunities for professional development and the sharing of knowledge and experience.

The schedule of meetings/training day is posted on our website and also listed in the Bulletin. From time to time private visits to specialist libraries are arranged for **ABTAPL** members. Details of these are normally circulated on the **ABTAPL** discussion list (see below) and/or announced in the Bulletin.

Publications

ABTAPL Union List of Periodicals

This Union List of Periodicals includes the philosophy, theology and religious studies journal holdings of more than 45 different institutions in Britain, and is a useful tool for tracing the location of titles, as well as providing full publisher information in some cases. The list, which also includes links to some free electronic journals, is available at abtapl.wordpress.com.

Bulletin

The Bulletin is published by the Association as a forum for professional exchange in the fields of theological and philosophical librarianship. It is published three times a year (in March, June and November), and has a circulation of approximately 200 copies, with about one-third of these going to libraries outside the United Kingdom. Please see the **ABTAPL** website for subscription details.

ABTAPL Directory

The Directory is a comprehensive compilation of theological libraries in the United Kingdom and Ireland, including the location, access arrangements and a brief description of the holdings of each library listed.

It is available on the **ABTAPL** website.

Discussion List

ABTAPL also has a free online discussion list. You do not need to be a member of **ABTAPL** to subscribe to the list. Details and information on how to join can be found at www.jiscmail.ac.uk. There is also a direct link to this from the **ABTAPL** website.

What members say about ABTAPL

‘Provides an invaluable network of support’

‘Very useful to have insight into others’ experiences’

‘The professional experience, warmth of welcome and genuine friendship offered by **ABTAPL** colleagues is legendary’

‘Over many years **ABTAPL** has been a wonderful support network for me working in professional isolation’

‘Having not worked in a library for several decades, and then not a theological library, it has been tremendously helpful to attend **ABTAPL** conferences and training, not just for the formal input but also the informal networking’

‘I joined **ABTAPL** around 1970... I have made many friends both actual and virtual and, as an independent consultant, this makes me feel I really belong to a group’



www.abtapl.org.uk