



Guide No. 4 Equipment for a meeting library

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1. Shelving and storage

If choosing new **shelving** you will need to take into account its suitability for the collection and convenience of the users as well as the cost. Ideally, shelving should provide flat, smooth, strong support for books and other media, with no sharp edges. Shelves should be wide enough to house the books, and leave a space behind – about 5 cm. The bottom shelf should be at least 10 cm off the floor. A canopy over the top of the shelving, without holes, will give some protection from dust and debris and against water damage from above.

If you are shelving old or rare books avoid shelves made of unsealed wood (although if necessary unsealed wooden shelves can be lined with acid-free boards to prevent the release of acid vapours which can damage paper).

Plan the lay-out of shelving to avoid placing it directly against outside walls, and to permit good air circulation (to reduce the risk of mould). You may also need to take account of the weight-bearing strength of the floor. Shelving should be adjustable or of varied heights to allow books to be stored correctly (vertically, well supported, preferably upright, not lying on fore-edge). **Book supports** should be used to hold books upright, and to prevent them falling off the ends.

Angled shelving can be good for displaying periodicals or leaflets. For general storage on the shelves, you may decide to use **magazine files, closed or cut-away pamphlet boxes** rather than having pamphlets and periodicals interspersed with the rest of the stock on the shelves. Other library material, such as CDs or photographs, needs separate storage, for ease of access and protection from dust, etc. For a small quantity, this may simply be **racks or storage boxes** purchased from a general office supplier and placed on the bookshelves or wherever else convenient and accessible.

Even if the library can afford **kick-stools** for reaching books on higher shelves, you should avoid having shelves that are difficult for some Friends to get at. **Lockable**

bookcases may be useful if the library is in a room shared with other users of the building, or if there are valuable books in the collection.

When a meeting has no meeting house of its own, or there is not enough space for books, Friends sometimes store the books elsewhere and transport them to meeting weekly. **Crates** can be bought for this purpose, with lids to protect against bad weather: they should be sturdy, perhaps with handles, and not be overfilled. If you are storing old or rare books in crates or boxes you should use crates which are large enough to lay the books flat inside, and pad them with bubble wrap or similar to prevent sliding around. If the books are stored on-site, but you want to bring a selection into a prominent place after meeting, you might find a **book trolley** useful.

2. Signs, displays and exhibitions

Shelf guides and other **signs** help library users to orientate themselves in the library and find the books they want. Some library shelving comes with its own shelf guide system. A range of other adaptable shelf guide equipment is available, including bay end signs, signs that can be fixed to the shelving canopies and label holders that slip onto the shelves themselves. Homemade shelf signs made more durable using a **laminating machine** are an economical alternative (this can also improve the durability and smart appearance of library notices and exhibition material). Neatly presented and well designed signs also help the library look more attractive and inviting.

Display and exhibition equipment could include **display panels** or **boards** for mounting posters, book jackets and leaflets, or acrylic **display units**, which can make an attractive display of books, magazines, pamphlets or AV material.

3. Library stationery and supplies

Index cards for card catalogues can be bought in most stationery suppliers, as can **card boxes** for small numbers of cards. If the number of cards in the catalogue is large, you will need a set of **card drawers**, preferably with a rod to keep the cards in place – look out for second-hand library equipment, as libraries move over to computer systems.

The books and other stock need to be identified as the meeting's property. You may have **bookplates**, to be stuck inside the front board of the book, or a **library stamp**, which can be used in the same place and on the title page. You can get bookplates printed to your own design at a local print shop, and most stamp manufacturers include bespoke designs or lettering. If the meeting's name is to be written into books by hand, avoid biro or felt-tip: **2B pencil** is ideal. You will have to use **permanent marker** to label video and CD cases and other AV stock.

Except where the library is very small you will need **spine labels** showing the correct shelfmark, and possibly **spine label protectors** (but see below for leather bound and rare books). Some meetings use simple **coloured stickers** to denote the subject of the books. In either case, it is advisable also to write the information inside the item (adhesive stickers dry out and fall off in time), using a 2B pencil, as above. As the books are processed, you may decide to use **dust jacket protectors** and **paperback jackets**. For loans, some meetings may use **gummed loan sheets** to attach to the end papers,

and if you use a card-based loan system, you will need **pockets** inside the front covers of the books for the **loan cards**. If you need to repair modern books, there are various brands of contact tape for small repairs (but see below for old and rare books).

Other useful library stationery may include **notebooks** for recording loans and accessions, and orders.

4. **Supplies and equipment for the care of older material**

Repairs to old and rare books should only be carried out by a professional conservator. But there are a number of things you can use to prevent further damage. Tie books which have broken bindings or loose sections with **unbleached linen tape**. House damaged books in appropriately sized **phase boxes**. Adhesive tape and self-adhesive labels shouldn't be used on old or rare books: instead **acid-free paper labels** can be made and applied to spines using **wheat starch paste**. Conservators no longer recommend leather dressings, but you can gently clean books using a **soft brush** and **microfibre cloths**. **Book weights** and **supports**, such as **book cushions**, help readers to use older books without damaging them: they can be bought or improvised (e.g., covered curtain weights and small home-made bean bags filled with polystyrene balls).

5. **Furniture and lighting**

Comfortable **seating** and **tables** encourage Friends to use the library. Good **lighting** and **reading aids** such as **book stands** or **magnifying glasses** will help further.

6. **Planning a new library**

Occasionally, the meeting may be in the happy position of being able to start from scratch in designing the library - selecting appropriate library shelving and furniture, and also considering other physical aspects of the library, such as lay-out, lighting, space for exhibitions or notices, power supply and computer access. Even the choice of where to site the library within the meeting house may influence how much it is used and valued. The meeting librarian or library committee should be involved in the planning at some level. Being faced with a clean slate may be a good opportunity for consulting members of the meeting about what they want from the new library, and learning from the experiences of Friends in other meetings.

Advice on renewing and altering a meeting house, including design and accessibility is available here <https://www.quaker.org.uk/communities/quaker-processes/property-advice-1>.

7. List of suppliers

You can use specialist library suppliers, but a lot of the routine equipment you will need for the meeting library can be bought from good high street stationers and office supply shops (such as Rymans, Staples, W. H. Smiths) or large stores, such as John Lewis or IKEA.

Shelving and storage

Britannia Storage Systems
Old Cartlodge
Great Tey Business Centre
Warrens Farm
Great Tey
Colchester
CO6 1JG
Telephone 0845 6520049
Email sales@britannia-uk.com
www.britannia-storage.co.uk
Shelving, storage and display

Furniture Group Manufacturing Limited
Unit 5 Kenneth Way
Wilstead Industrial Park
Wilstead
Bedford
MK45 3PD
Telephone 01234 743311
Email info@fgm.uk.com
www.fgm.uk.com/
Shelving and library furniture

Gresswell, now part of
WF Education Group
Phoenix House
Stafford Drive
Battlefield Enterprise Park
Shrewsbury
SY1 3FE
Telephone 01743 812 200
Email customer.support@wf-education.com
<https://shop.wf-education.com/libraries/>
Shelving, storage, display, library furniture, trolleys, stationery and supplies

Rackline
Oak Tree Lane
Talke
Talke Pits,
Stoke-on-Trent,
ST7 1RX
Telephone 01782 777 666
Email now@rackline.co.uk
www.rackline.com
Shelving – specialising in mobile and other compact shelving and storage

Serota Library Furniture
92 Hilliard Road
Northwood
Middlesex
HA6 1SW
Telephone 01923 840697
Email info@serota.co.uk
www.serota.co.uk
Shelving, storage, display and furniture

Also useful: local craftspeople and shops, and branches of general, domestic or commercial furniture suppliers, such as IKEA, John Lewis, Staples.

Signs, display and exhibitions

Britannia Storage Systems
Old Cartlodge
Great Tey Business Centre
Warrens Farm
Great Tey
Colchester
CO6 1JG
Telephone 01206 913960
Email sales@britannia-uk.com
www.britannia-storage.co.uk
Shelving, storage and display

Gresswell, now part of
WF Education Group
Phoenix House
Stafford Drive
Battlefield Enterprise Park
Shrewsbury
SY1 3FE
Telephone 01743 812 200
Email customer.support@wf-education.com
<https://shop.wf-education.com/libraries/> *Shelving, storage, display, library furniture,
trolleys, stationery and supplies*

Serota Library Furniture
92 Hilliard Road
Northwood
Middlesex
HA6 1SW
Telephone 01923 840697
Email info@serota.co.uk
www.serota.co.uk
Shelving, storage, display and library furniture

Also useful: local craftspeople and shops, and branches of retail chains such as Staples, Ryman, W. H. Smith

Library stationery and supplies

Gresswell, now part of
WF Education Group
Phoenix House
Stafford Drive
Battlefield Enterprise Park
Shrewsbury
SY1 3FE
Telephone 01743 812 200

Email customer.support@wf-education.com

<https://shop.wf-education.com/libraries/>

Shelving, storage, display, library furniture, trolleys, stationery and supplies

D & M Packaging Supplies
5A Knowl Road,
Mirfield,
West Yorkshire.
WF14 8DQ

Telephone 01924 495768

Email packaging@dandmbooks.com

<https://www.care4books.com/>

Also useful: local stationers, branches of chains such as Staples, Ryman, W. H. Smith, and on-line suppliers such as Viking (www.viking-direct.co.uk) or Lyreco (www.lyreco.co.uk)

Supplies and equipment for care of older material

BookEnds Bindery
5/6 Bourne Road Industrial Park
Bourne Road
Crayford
Kent
DA1 4BZ
Telephone 01322 521644
Email bookendsbindery@IZRmail.com
<https://bookendsbindery.co.uk/>
Conservation storage (including boxes)

Preservation Equipment Limited
Vinces Road
Diss
Norfolk
IP22 4HQ
Telephone 01379 647400
Email info@preservationequipment.com
www.preservationequipment.com
Conservation storage, display and equipment (including polyester storage)

Conservation By Design Limited
2 Wolseley Road
Kempston
Bedford
MK42 7AD
Telephone 01234 846300
Email info@conservation-by-design.co.uk
www.conservation-by-design.co.uk
Conservation storage, display and equipment

Secol Ltd
Tyson Industrial Estate
13/16 Howlett Way
Thetford
Norfolk IP24 1HZ
Telephone 01842 752341
Email sales@secol.co.uk
www.secol.co.uk
Conservation storage (particularly polyester storage)

Falkiners Fine Papers
(now incorporated in Shepherds
Bookbinders)
30 Gillingham Street
London SW1V 1HU
Telephone 020 7233 9999
<https://store.bookbinding.co.uk/store/>
Conservation papers and equipment

I. Waterman (Box Makers) Ltd.
Assembly Passage
London E1 4UT
Telephone 020 7790 2394
Email info@memories-nostalgia.com
www.memories-nostalgia.com
Conservation storage

G. Ryder & Co. Ltd
Denbigh Road
Bletchley
Milton Keynes MK1 1DG
Telephone 01908 375524
Email sales@ryderbox.co.uk
www.ryderbox.co.uk
Conservation storage (including boxes)

Furniture and lighting

Furniture Group Manufacturing Limited
Unit 5 Kenneth Way
Wilstead Industrial Park
Wilstead
Bedford
MK45 3PD
Telephone 01234 743311
Email info@fgm.uk.com
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Shelving and library furniture

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Shelving, storage, display and library furniture

Also useful: local craftspeople and shops, and branches of general, domestic or commercial furniture suppliers, such as IKEA, John Lewis, Staples.

8. Further advice

For further advice please contact the Library at Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ. Phone 020 7663 1135. Email library@quaker.org.uk.

Join the Quaker Meeting Librarians Cluster for email discussion with other meeting librarians. Email library@quaker.org.uk to register.

Other leaflets in this series to download from <https://www.quaker.org.uk/meeting-librarians>

1. The Role of the Meeting Librarian
2. Selection and acquisition of stock
3. Cataloguing and arranging the meeting library
4. Equipment for a meeting library
5. Disposing of unwanted books
6. Caring for your books
7. Promoting the meeting library
8. Online resources for meeting librarians

Disaster preparedness: guidance for meeting librarians, clerks and custodians of records (Guides for custodians of records, no. 10)

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