

Museum of National Széchényi Library



[1]*National Széchényi Library, Buda Castle, "F" Building, Floor 5*

A permanent exhibition entitled "Library of the nation – a workshop of service" was opened on Floor 8 of Buda Castle in 1996. The exhibition was re-opened on Floor 5 of the national library in spring 2005, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of NSZL's moving into Buda Castle. The museum presents the intellectual environment and the actual objects used by librarians and readers between 1802 and 1985. On display are furniture of historical and especially library historical value, one-time labels and notices of the Library, old stationery, machines and tools used in processing and during workshop activities, documents and photographs.



[2]In and outside Hungary, there are libraries that had kept and now present an old library room or open a library historical exhibition, by way of showing just documents and no historical objects at all. So the museum exhibition of National Széchényi Library can be considered as a unique one, both by Hungarian and international standards. Our museum attracts a whole lot of visitors from both Hungary and abroad. In addition to all that, NSZL's museum exhibition has a special cultural historical significance, since it gives an example of the one-time furniture and stationery of not only the national library but of other Hungarian libraries and institutions, too.



[3]The starting point of the exhibition is the main corridor of Floor 5, leading up to the Director-General's office, where several showcases present library historical materials from 1802 until the middle of the 1960s. Among these showcases are placed three cast-iron catalogue card producing machines as well as an old trolley.



[4]On the adjacent corridor, in a space protected by glass, we show the world of Széchényi Hall, the Reading Room, a part of the repository and of a librarian's study and three workshops (bindery, restoration and microfilm laboratories) between 1846 and 1985, by way of presenting old furniture, working tools, machines, books, manuscripts, newspapers and other documents.



[5] Opposite to these interior samples, in a row of glass showcases, documents and photographs illustrate what the Library looked like on Floor 1 of the Hungarian National Museum. We can read the text of librarians' oath from the year 1846, a regulation of services from 1889, circulars, NSZL's seal imprints, request forms from various periods in the history of the Library, as well as work reports, statements of printing houses and binderies, price offers of binderies and of cameras and a whole lot of other documents illustrating the history of Hungary's National Széchényi Library.

Above the row of showcases, visitors can read informative texts in Hungarian and German about the interior of rooms opposite the showcases and also about collections and workflow, developing gradually with time.

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