

EISENBIBLIOTHEK



# Annual Report 2024

Iron Library Foundation and  
Corporate Archives of Georg Fischer Ltd

+GF+

# Imprint

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Jörg Spinatsch : Page 12 (top)

Christopher Zoller-Blundell: Pages 4, 8

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# Preface

Dear ladies and gentlemen  
Dear readers

In 1952, chemists at Georg Fischer (GF) in Schaffhausen began developing plastic pipe fittings for industrial use. The year in which our company celebrated its 150th anniversary also marks the beginning of the polymer era at GF. Since then, polymer fittings have become a cornerstone of modern industry, far beyond GF. As a library dedicated to the history of industrial materials, it is essential for us to also collect works on the history of plastics and the development of polymer technologies. Since 2014, this area has been a collection focus. As the crowning glory of the first decade of our work on the subject of “plastics”, we were able to agree with Huntsman Advanced Materials in Basel last year on the donation of their extensive research library. This makes the Iron Library one of the world’s largest private collections on the history of plastics.

We are delighted to be able to start our annual report on the preservation of the historical and cultural heritage at GF with such good news. On the following pages, we will provide you with more detailed information about the aforementioned expansion of the collection and many other projects, as well as the ongoing ground-work. Founded in 1802, GF has repeatedly developed and proven itself as an agile and resilient company thanks to its hard-working and committed employees. The Iron Library Foundation and the Georg Fischer Corporate Archives are dedicated to actively maintaining and communicating these impressive achievements and histories. Both are based at Kloster-

The Klostergut Paradies is continually changing: In the autumn, gardeners planted a new larch tree in front of the Iron Library.

gut Paradies, report to the Corporate Secretariat and are managed by Franziska Eggimann. We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the motivated and enthusiastic team, without whom it would not be possible to carry out so many tasks and projects to such a high standard.

## Personnel changes

The team was strengthened by the addition of a new member: the core team grew from three to four employees, who now share 330% full-time positions (previously: 240%). With the newly created position of scientific archivist, our two main areas of focus, the Iron Library and the Corporate Archives, can be professionally supported and maintained on a broader basis. Franziska Eggimann, managing director of the Iron Library Foundation and the Corporate Archives, will thus receive a welcome professional relief in managing the entire “GF Heritage” area.

## Statutory reorganization

In line with all other GF corporate foundations, we simplified the structure of the Iron Library Foundation last year. The Foundation Board now consists exclusively of GF executives. In place of the external figures who have until now served as an honorary board of trustees, we are setting up an advisory board made up of specialist colleagues from friendly institutions who will work directly with the Foundation’s managing director. This will strengthen the Foundation’s professional and scientific network.

We would like to thank the departing members of the Board of Trustees for their commitment. The new trustees from GF have already served on the now dissolved Governing Board. We are

pleased that two former trustees will also be members of the new Advisory Board, thus ensuring welcome continuity.

### **Growing Digital Offerings**

Increasingly, we are making not only catalogs but also the resources themselves available online. This is entirely in line with the “Open GLAM” (GLAM = Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums) concept. The Iron Library works mainly with cooperation platforms such as e-codices and e-rara on digitization; the Corporate Archives offers a growing amount of digital content directly on its own archives website. In the reporting year alone, our online presence grew by more than 22 000 digitized book pages. As of December 31, 2024, the digital offering included 6 397 digital volumes and files with 171 544 pages, as well as 38 236 digitized and born-digital photographs.

### **Increased collaboration with all GF divisions**

The Corporate Archives and the Iron Library work closely with the GF Corporation and its divisions in various areas. The Iron Library is a valued point of contact for R&D departments for literature research, advice and procurement. Demand continued to increase in the reporting year, supported by and in parallel with the group-wide access to an external platform with around 165 000 e-books and 500 current journals of renowned specialist literature, which the library manages.

### **Iron Library grows, thanks also to donations**

During the course of 2024, the library grew by 421 titles through purchases, donations and exchanges. The library received 105 requests (41 internal, 64 external) and 15 users (6 internal, 9 external) worked in the reading room for 27 days. The cataloging of rare works is particularly laborious. In the reporting year, numerous backlogs were reduced and 72 titles

from 1798 to 1916 were added to the catalog. As of December 31, 2024, the Iron Library catalog included 38 438 books, 1 206 magazines and 9 885 articles.

### **New record for digital visits to the Corporate Archives**

In the reporting year, we processed 144 archive requests (70 internal, 74 external). 14 users (8 internal, 6 external) also consulted archive material on site. In addition, the web-based archive database provides access to a comprehensive and constantly growing digital offering from any location. In 2024, the archive website registered a new record of 20 762 visits. On December 31, 2024, the archive database contained 135 631 records. In the reporting year, the indexed holdings thus grew by 25 linear meters of files or around 3 900 records.

### **Close network for research and outreach**

The Iron Library has always been remarkably open in the way it fosters its cultural heritage. We believe in providing the widest possible access to the Iron Library's and Corporate Archives' sources for research in the history of technology and economics. It is in this spirit that we also offer the Scholar in Residence program. In the reporting year, two scholars from Switzerland took advantage of the opportunity for an extended research stay at the Klostergut Paradies.

Networking also includes cooperation with other institutions in the context of educational work. In the reporting year, the Iron Library again loaned objects for high-profile exhibitions. The Kulturhaus Obere Stube in Stein am Rhein regularly displays works from the Iron Library in its permanent exhibition “Stein am Rhein im Spiegel der Zeit - das 17. Jahrhundert” (Stein am Rhein through the ages - the 17th century). In the reporting year, two books by Galileo were on display, which will be re-

placed by two new works from our rare book collection in 2025. For the past two years, the first issue of the journal *Kunststoffe* has been touring with the exhibition "Plastic: Remaking Our World", organized by the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, which traveled to the V&A Museum in Dundee and then to the MAAT in Lisbon. In 2024, the first issue of the journal *Kunststoffe* stopped at the National Museum of Singapore and the Hyundai Motorstudio in Busan.

### **Outlook for 2025**

The Erzählzeit literature festival returns to Kloostergut Paradies for the eighth time: on April 1, 2025, the Iron Library is organizing a reading by author Anna Katharina Hahn from her new novel "Der Chor". At the 44th History of Technology Conference on November 14 and 15, 2025, some 50 international scientists will discuss the topic "Low-Tech: Procedures, Actors, Concepts" – for the first time in English as the sole conference language.

The well-established internal collaboration with the R&D and communications departments of the GF Corporation and the divisions will be further expanded this year. Our services will be adapted to the announced and already implemented changes in the group structures.



Dr. Roland Gröbli  
President of the Board of Trustees  
of the Iron Library Foundation and  
Senior Advisor of Georg Fischer Ltd

The team of the Iron Library and Corporate Archives continues to work on the ongoing processing, expansion and maintenance of the holdings. A major focus this year is the acquisition and integration of the research library of Huntsman Advanced Materials into our holdings. The digital offerings are also constantly being expanded. This year, the Iron Library is once again expanding its "History of Technology and Science" collection on e-rara, and the Corporate Archives are tackling further digitization projects of various source materials.

We will be happy to provide you with more information about all these initiatives and activities in due course on our website [www.eisenbibliothek.ch](http://www.eisenbibliothek.ch) or at the latest in the next annual report.

We thank you all for your interest in the Iron Library and the historical and cultural heritage of the GF Corporation and look forward to being in contact with you in one form or another during the course of the year.

A big thank you goes to the GF Corporation, without whose financial, personnel and intellectual support the implementation of all these activities would not be possible.



lic. phil. Franziska Eggimann  
Managing Director  
of the Iron Library Foundation and  
Corporate Archivist of Georg Fischer Ltd





# Plastics

## 10 years of building up the plastics holdings

The name of the Iron Library is world renowned and synonymous with rare and exceptional works about the history of materials science. Yet while ferrous in name, its holdings go far beyond iron. Alongside metals, wood, glass, and ceramics, plastics now play a major part in the collection.

Plastics and advanced polymers are lightweight and versatile. Their development has reshaped manufacturing processes and spurred innovation to become a cornerstone of modern industry; collecting works about the history of plastics and the development of polymer technologies is therefore essential for a library that reflects the history of industrial materials. Since the 1950s, GF has taken a pioneering role in the development of fittings and flow solutions made from polymers. Two good reasons for our decision in 2014 to open a new chapter in the history of the library.

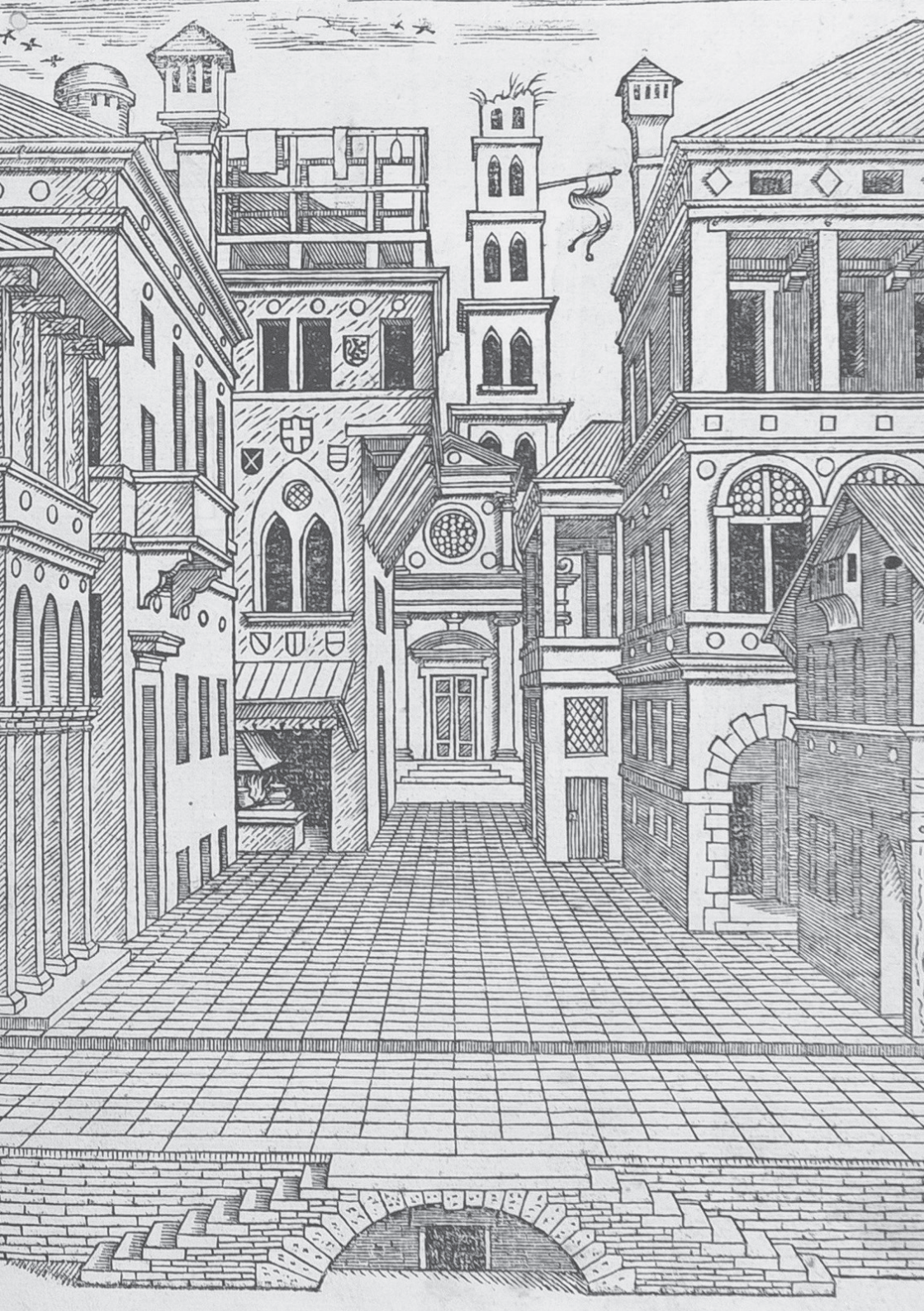
Based on discussions with the “plastic pioneers” and with polymer experts from GF we prepared a strategy paper with the defined goal to qualitatively sharpen the profile of the Iron Library and within 10 years put together a collection of 2 000 titles, constituting what would be the largest historically oriented collection of plastics literature in Europe after the Manns-Kaufmann Library in London. We are happy to report that we have achieved this ambitious goal and more.

Artificial silk samples, books on natural rubber, Bakelite and company histories: the Iron Library has been collecting literature on the history of plastics for ten years.

Acquisitions were not just the result of purchases but for the greater part came from donations. The first came from John Morgan, the author of “Conservation of Plastics” (1991). With this, advertises in the journal “Kunststoffe” and word of mouth, the library became established as an attractive destination for donations, and more followed. Among these were the library of the Deutsches Kunststoff Institut in Darmstadt in 2016, Prof. Dr. Dietrich Braun in 2020, and Prof. Dr. Oscar Nuyken in 2022.

After ten years of development, the collection comprised at the end of 2024 2,611 books and journals, or in other words: using the Library of Congress Conspectus method for evaluating the quality of holdings, the Plastics section of the Iron Library has achieved “research level”. The Iron Library has become established as a research center for polymer science, as evidenced by regular inquiries, research in the reading room, and visits by scholars in residence.

The completion of the ten-year build-up phase of the plastics collection was crowned with the donation of the Huntsman Advanced Materials research library in Basel at the end of 2024. The transfer of several thousand titles to Schlatt and their integration into our collection will take place in 2025. Through this donation the Iron Library will become one of the world's largest private collections on the history of plastics.



# Digital offerings

## Further increase in digital presence

Digital services have been part of the portfolio of the Iron Library and Corporate Archives for many years. In the spirit of "Open GLAM" (GLAM = galleries, libraries, archives, museums), we are committed to free digital access to cultural heritage and make numerous resources available online ourselves. As of December 31, 2024, the digital collection of the Iron Library and the Corporate Archives comprised a total of 6397 digital volumes and files with 171 544 pages and 38 236 digitized and born-digital photos. Films and audio tracks complete the digital offering of the archives.

To make the books and documents more accessible while also protecting them, both the Iron Library and the Corporate Archives pursue a long-term digitization strategy. Every year, valuable books and archive holdings relevant to the company's history are digitized. Of the newly digitized volumes, 18 were part of the library's continued participation in the ETH's e-rara project. Particularly noteworthy is an edition of "Den eersten boeck van Architecturen" from 1553. The author, Sebastiano Serlio, was one of the most influential architectural writers of the 16th century.

The digital collection of the Corporate Archive consists of born-digital data and digitized documents. The current acquisitions to the archive are increasingly born-digital data, such as digital photographs and films. However, there is still a high demand for the digitization of physical holdings. In 2024, comprehensive digitization projects were carried out.

Sebastiano Serlio's masterpiece: One of the most influential drawings of a street in the history of urban architecture, now available on e-rara.

The newly digitized documents include films from 1900 to 1990, audiovisual presentations, memoirs, employee magazines and employee/management information. These sources have a high information content and are often real archival gems.

The memoirs of former employees and managers provide unique insights into the events that have taken place in the group since it was founded. The comprehensive "insider knowledge" and personal comments make the memoirs a unique historical testimony. The films and employee magazines are equally valuable and substantial. The latter provide information about process and product developments and also contain information about GF employees.

The digitization projects each involve extensive post-processing so that the digital copies can be offered in a structured and clear way in the archive database. This work will continue to keep us busy in 2025. At the same time, several thousand analog photos from the second half of the 20th century are being digitized and published in the database.



# Outreach/Events

## Erzählzeit and customized tours

The Iron Library and Corporate Archives are not only committed to digitally making access to their holdings as broad as possible, but also cultivate a culture of easy accessibility as physical places. They are open to both GF employees and external visitors. In addition to the biennial History of Technology Conference, the next of which is scheduled for November 2025, the Iron Library annually hosts a reading as part of the Erzählzeit literature festival. In spring 2024, the library welcomed the writer Christian Haller, winner of the 2023 Swiss Book Prize. Haller read from his prizewinning novel "Sich lichtende Nebel" for an enthusiastic audience.

The wide and at the same time always customized range of guided tours also met with great interest in 2024. A total of 98 tours were held with 758 guests. In addition to the classic tour of the Iron Library with changing exhibitions in the treasure room, tours of the two exhibitions at the Kloostergut Paradies were also very popular.

The photo exhibition "Living Industry" often stirred up intense memories in former employees. In the exhibition of the travel diaries of company founder Johann Conrad Fischer, visitors were immersed in the first half of the 19th century: a world of industrialization, of new departures and of the founding of GF.

Particularly worthy of mention for 2024 are the two tours for a customer visit from the USA and the University of Brno in Czechia. To optimize the experience for the guests, we organized a series of half-day tours for them in small groups. In addition to the library facilities and the two exhibitions at the Kloostergut, a crash course at the Eligius Blacksmiths' Guild provided a further highlight.

The idea of customizing the tours to the interests of the guests is also a guiding principle for visits to the archives. Geographic and linguistic aspects play just as important a role as professional background and personal interests. On this basis, we arrange a small exhibition with documents and finds from the archives that complement the classic objects such as fittings or advertising catalogs. For example, the students from the University of Brno requested photos and written records of trade fairs in which GF participated in the 1980s in their home country. And the musician and mathematician Thomas Silvestri, this year's winner of the Georg Fischer Culture Prize awarded by the city of Schaffhausen, struck up the melody of the "GF March" from 1952 in the archives. It was a cheerful tune, and from the first note, he had everyone in a good mood. It's not only musicians who feel particularly welcome with us when we add a personal touch.

Top: GF General Secretary Roland Gröbli (l.) moderates the reading given by Christian Haller (r.). Bottom: Musician and mathematician Thomas Silvestri, Georg Fischer Culture Prize winner, visits the archives at GF's headquarters.



144. Königliches Materialprüfungsamt

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1878.

Gr.-Lichterfelde W.

# Research

## Scholar in Residence program and publications

Whether in the reading room or from afar: the Iron Library supports research, science, and technology history with various activities and initiatives. One of these is the Scholar in Residence program, which invites researchers to engage personally and intensively with the rich holdings at Klostergut Paradies. During the reporting year, we welcomed Franziska Müller-Reissmann and Sophie Battell.

Franziska Müller-Reissmann is the director of the Material Archive at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (ZHdK). Of particular interest to her were the earliest issues of the journal "Kunststoffe" and other pioneering volumes from the history of plastics. Her work encompasses a material aesthetic analysis of cellulose-based materials, both in terms of their history as substitutes and the very current search for sustainable materials and plastic substitutes.

Sophie Battell from the University of Zurich meanwhile spent her time in the reading room looking into some of the library's oldest print works on alchemy and gold metallurgy. Her research focused upon technical and other symbolic references to the sun for a core chapter of her upcoming book about the Sun and its place in early modern literature and culture.

### "Ferrum" and other publications

The year under review saw the publication of the 93rd issue of the journal "Ferrum", devoted to the theme of quality and safety in the history

A relic from the early days of materials testing: an X-ray of a coin that Bernhard Droste donated to the library and that is shown in his "Ferrum" article.

of technology. It contains 15 contributions based on papers presented at the last History of Technology Conference or in connection with the 250th Jubilee of Johann Conrad Fischer.

The Iron Library and the Corporate Archives also support other research work based on their holdings. The following publications appeared during the reporting year:

- Bernhard Droste: Bücher für die Eisenbibliothek. Reflexionen über gespendete Bücher zur Bestandserweiterung der Bibliothek. In: Ferrum, 93 (2024), p. 128–135.
- Franziska Eggimann: Johann Conrad Fischer (1773–1854): Pionier – Staatsbürger – Unternehmer. Eine Schaffhauser Biografie in der Anfangszeit der Moderne. In: Ferrum, 93 (2024), p. 136–147.
- Franziska Eggimann: Neue Perspektiven dank Zivis. In: Le Monde Civil, December 2024.
- Nicolau Lutz: Fischers Tagebücher als Zeugnisse von Technikwissen zwischen Handwerk und Wissenschaft. In: Ferrum, 93 (2024), p. 160–167.
- Rainer Ohlhausen: Als es in Herblingen noch eine Seilbahn gab. In: Q-info, Die Herblinger Quartierzeitung, May 2024, p. 2–3.
- Matthias Wipf & Alex Blunschli: Johann Conrad Fischer: Der Gründer des Industriekonzerns GF. Pioniercast episode 3, 2024
- Christopher Zoller-Blundell: Readings of a pioneer: Johann Conrad Fischer and the books of the Iron Library. In: Ferrum, 93 (2024), p. 148–159.

Per 399

SSG-E sind im  
Rack 34



33



# Library

## Use, services, development, and cataloguing

A reference library such as the Iron Library does not lend media, except for internal borrowing by GF employees in Switzerland and interlibrary loan requests from other libraries. Altogether 342 media were lent in the year under review. The popular Iron Library Book Table once again visited colleagues in Schaffhausen before the summer and Christmas holidays, while loans continued to be sent out and returned with regularity through the internal mail. Usage of the Springer Professional digital library of over 165 000 ebooks and 540 current journals, organized by the Iron Library and colleagues from GF's research groups, has hit over 2 202 visits and 8 525 downloads.

The Library received 105 inquiries in the past year. These ranged from queries about specific works in the collection, such as the recently acquired 1923 treatise by Hermann Oberth about multistage and liquid-fueled rockets, to detailed research questions about decorative and structural iron architectural elements and the history of the plastics industry. These research questions and requests about literature that is available only in the Iron Library came from all over the world and as far away as Japan. In 2024, 15 users worked in the reading room on 27 days. Most users remained for a day, while two Scholars in Residence stayed for a week each.

Over the course of 2024, the Library continued to grow. It purchased 243 items (books and periodicals) and received 178 items through bequests or exchanges. Among the donors

was Ingo Büren of Hilzingen, a materials engineer involved in the development of hybrid polymer and metal packaging materials. He donated a collection of works on this subject, among which were several company histories, including that of drinks maker Capri-Sun.

The Iron Library lists its holdings as part of the catalog of the Südwestdeutscher Bibliothekerverbund (SWB) and participates in cooperative formal cataloguing and indexing. Since 2021, the holdings of the library have been available on WorldCat, the world's largest library catalogue. Resource Description & Access (RDA) is the binding standard for formal cataloguing, while verbal subject indexing is governed by the rules for subject catalogs (German acronym RSWK), using in both cases the Integrated Authority File (German acronym GND). Efforts are still being made to correct numerous catalog entries that are either out-of-date or do not conform to these standards. As of 31 December 2024, the catalog of the Iron Library contained 38 438 books, 1 206 periodicals, and 9 885 articles.

Safely packed: the team at the Iron Library prepares the journal stacks for the installation of the new lighting and the painting of the ceiling.

D E  
MOTIONIBVS  
NATVRALIBVS

A GRAVITATE PENDENTIBVS,

LIBER

IO: ALPHONSI BORRELLI

in Academia Pisana Matheseos professoris.



REGIO IVLIO,  
In Officina Dominici Ferri. 1670.

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*Superiorum permissu.*

# Library

## A showpiece from the new acquisitions

**Giovanni Alfonso Borrelli “De motionibus naturalibus a gravitate pendentibus, Liber Io: Alphonsi Borrelli in Academia Pisana Matheseos professoris” [“On Natural Motions Due to Gravity, Book by Gio. Alphonsi Borrelli, Professor of Mathematics of the Pisan Academy”] (Regio Julia: in officina Domenici Ferri, 1670)**

What is movement? What defines it? Is there something in common between each step, graceful leap, or fall, or the swaying of a tree or flow or a river? How can these be explained by the laws of nature? These were the questions that spurred the research of Giovanni Alfonso Borelli (1608–1679) and led to “De motionibus naturalibus a gravitate pendentibus”. Published in 1670, Borelli’s work ventured into uncharted scientific territory, blending mathematics, physics, and biology to reveal a grand vision of a natural world governed by gravity.

While primarily the work of a physiologist, “De motionibus” became not only to be a foundational text of modern biomechanics but also one of the most significant contributions to our understanding of fluid dynamics. In this treatise, Borelli explored the movements of fluids in relation to gravitational forces, attempting to explain the natural behaviour of fluids in motion, applying mathematical reasoning to these problems, which was a relatively novel approach at the time, while quantifying and measuring flow in different circumstances. He takes up hydrostatics, looking at siphons and pumps, and

presents an approach to understanding the expansion of water while freezing.

Among his most important contributions is his treatise on capillarity. Understanding the flow of liquid in fine tubes gives insight into many natural processes, such as the spread of blood in a body or fluids in the stem of a plant. Yet it is also crucial for environmental and engineering applications where fluid movement in narrow spaces is a factor, such as in special fittings and filters.

“De motionibus” is more than a treatise – it’s an invitation to marvel at the natural order and to see gravity not as a constraint but as the defining force of the universe. Borelli’s contributions to biomechanics and fluid dynamics represent significant advancements in the application of mathematical principles to the natural world. This is the first book by him in the Iron Library. This interdisciplinary work laid the foundation for numerous future scientific developments in physics, biology, and physiology, cementing his legacy as one of the key figures of the Scientific Revolution, alongside Galileo, Descartes, Newton, and Boyle, works by whom are also to be found in the library’s collection.

The title page of “De motionibus”, the work that laid the foundations for modern fluid dynamics.

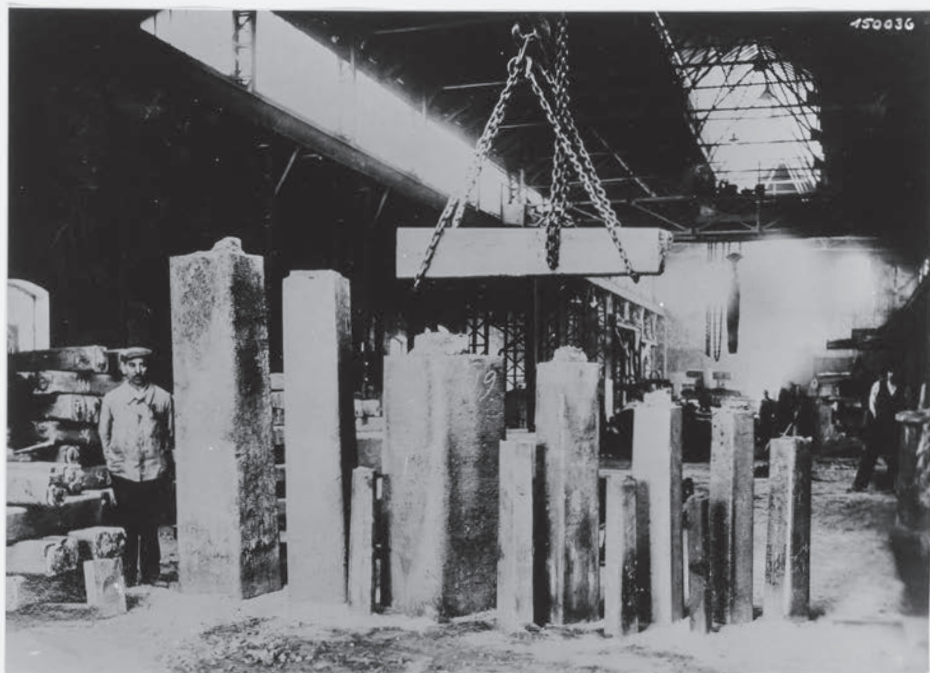


No.15278 Oefen Max & Moritz  
Schmelzmeister Stahlwerkchef  
W.Briel W.Liedtke



No. 15262

Stahlblock - Lager



No.15286 Stahlblöcke von 100 - 5000 kg,  
Vorarbeiter Risacher

# Corporate Archives

## Use, enquiries, accessions, and indexing

Anyone interested in the history of the products, processes and people at GF will find a wealth of source material in the Corporate Archives. A wide range of written documents, publications, photos, films, plans and objects bring the company's past to life and provide insights into current events. The archives are open to interested employees and external visitors and researchers alike. The offer is actively used: In the reporting year, 14 people spent 15 days on-site in the reading room. In addition, the web-based archive database enables access to a comprehensive digital offering from any location. In 2024, the archive website registered a new record of 20 762 visits.

In 2024, the archive received 144 requests. In addition to internal requests from various departments of the corporation, other institutions from the GLAM sector, including the St. Gallen State Archives and the IWC Museum, showed great interest in the holdings of the Corporate Archives. Other users of the archive included architects, historians and private individuals. The range of topics covered by the requests was just as diverse as the archive users themselves, and provided us with challenging and exciting research opportunities. Historical photos of works and ancillary operations were requested, as were documents on plastic fittings and ball valves or documents on GF's social commitment. There was great joy when private genealogists were able to be sent a photo from

the archives of their deceased grandfather, who used to work at GF.

In the area of accumulating historical records, 9 accessions with a total volume of 23 linear meters were recorded in the reporting year. The most extensive delivery comprised 24 boxes containing photographs of the EDM pioneer AGIE from Losone. Several deliveries were made to the archives from the GF Piping Systems division, including the latest series of minutes from the division management and plans for ball valve prototypes from the Customizing/Engineering department. The trend away from analog and toward digital accessions continued.

In 2024, the focus of the indexing was on personnel representation documents and digital photographs. In addition to the annually recurring indexing of annual reports, management and board documents, and employee information, the archive team cataloged old company magazines, commemorative publications, plans, and objects such as a mini anvil that was created during a factory visit by General Guisan in 1941. Many of the newly cataloged documents were also made digitally accessible. At the end of the year, the database comprised 135 631 records and 89 012 digital media. The volume of catalogued holdings amounted to 1 196 linear meters.

Ticino industry: Jakob Ith worked for GF for 49 years and in his memoirs also documented the smelting furnaces "Max & Moritz" and the steel ingot storage area at the Giubiasco plant.



DIEGARDINGHOFER AKTUESELLSCHAFT  
HILFSTHÄNDIGEN FÜRSTENBERGER  
IN DANKBARER WIRDUNG SEINER BEWAHRER  
RAGENDEN VERDIENST UM DIE INSTITUTION  
DES UNTEREN HIMMELN  
KARL WILHELM  
SONST

# Art collection

## Art appreciation at the Klostergut Paradies and online

GF fosters the region's historical and cultural heritage not only in the Corporate Archives and the Iron Library but also with its art collections, which have a regional focus. The largest of the three collections has grown organically over the last century. With annual commissions and purchases, GF has supported Schaffhausen and also trans-regional art. The collection includes around 430 works of art from the 17th to the 21st century and contains paintings, watercolors, prints in a wide range of techniques, and three-dimensional objects.

Three decades ago, GF also took over the collections of two Schaffhausen private collectors in order to preserve them as integral units. One of these collections comprises 98 historical maps of the Canton of Schaffhausen, while the other includes some 366 prints (woodcuts, engravings and etchings, steel engravings, aquatints, lithographs, etc.) of the Schaffhausen region from the 16th to 19th century.

These three collections are complemented by the Iron Library's collection of graphic art, with 109 works (prints, maps, sketches, photographs, drawings, certificates) on the topics of metallurgy and the history of technology.

The art collections are catalogued and described in detail in the Corporate Archives database. Until now, in-house inventory photos have been used for identification purposes. In

The result is a simple, good-quality photo. Behind the scenes, the photo shoot of the stained glass window from the art collection is more complicated than one might expect.

a digitization project spanning several years, all the works are now being professionally photographed so that they can be made available to the public online. In the reporting year, we digitized the first tranche of around 400 objects in a photo shoot with an external photographer that lasted several days. We focused on large-format and three-dimensional works at the GF headquarters and Klostergut Paradies locations, as well as on the lithographs stored in plan drawers. The project will be continued in 2025.

In addition to digitization, the focus in the reporting year was on a new art concept for the Klostergut Paradies. All the rooms in the convent complex were assessed for their suitability for art and areas for permanent displays and temporary exhibitions were defined. Based on this concept, a new selection of permanent works for the north wing and the refectory was curated and hung in autumn.

Visitors to the Klostergut Paradies and the Iron Library can now enjoy 100 works of art. There is great interest among visitors in these objects and their provenance. Since the end of 2024, they have been able to discover all the works of art in the Iron Library and the Klostergut Paradies themselves with the help of Smartify, an app for art recognition, and access background information. The app is easy to use and works without registration. Smartify's web-based app can also be used to view and browse the art in Paradies remotely.



## Further training

- March 2024: "AI in academic libraries", Bibliosuisse, Aarau (CZB)
  - June 2024: Forging with the Eligius Blacksmiths' Guild, Kloostergut Paradies (Team)
  - June 2024: VSA cycle Archive Practice, module "Digitale Horizonte. Die Zukunft des Archivzugangs in der Schweiz", Federal Archives, Bern (JS)
  - June/October 2024: VSA cycle Archive Practice, module "KI im Archiv", ETH Library, Zurich (FE/JS)
  - October 2024: Workshop "Smartify" art recognition, Kloostergut Paradies (team)
- October 2024: VSA cycle Archive Practice, module "Web- und Social Media-Archivierung: Best Practices und Bewertung", National Library, Bern (JS)
  - October 2024: VSA cycle on archiving practice, module "Informationsverwaltung: Rolle und Herausforderungen der Archive" (information management: the role and challenges for archives), Zurich State Archives (JS)
  - November 2024: workshop "Führungen in der Eisenbibliothek", Kloostergut Paradies

The Iron Library team (left to right): Laurin Egger, Franziska Eggmann, Barbara Zanetti, Christopher Zoller-Blundell, Cyril Zimmermann, Maryam Joseph, Jörg Spinatsch.



# Personnel

## Change and continuity in the team

The year brought a welcome change and at the same time continuity at the personnel level: the core team grew from three to four employees, who now share 330 percent of a full-time position. Jörg Spinatsch, who has been working with us as an intern since the end of 2023, took up the new role of scientific archivist on November 1, 2024. In this newly created position, he is the specialist point of contact for the Corporate Archives and complements the existing core team: Franziska Eggimann, Executive Director of the Iron Library Foundation, heads the entire "GF Heritage" division, which includes the Iron Library and the Corporate Archives. The academic librarian Christopher Zoller-Blundell takes care of the specialist needs of the Iron Library. Barbara Zanetti handles the administrative side of the library.

Nicolau Lutz supported the team on an hourly basis as a research assistant and was responsible for the content of the LinkedIn series on the industrial pioneer Johann Conrad Fischer in the reporting year. Niklaus Müller was replaced by new intern Maryam Joseph at the beginning of November 2024. For several years, the Iron Library has offered the opportunity for civilian service work placements. In the reporting year, Luca Miozzari provided valuable assistance at the Iron Library as a "Zivi".

## Involvement in committees/working groups

- Board of Trustees of the Deutsches Museum Munich (FE)
- Steering Committee Section Business Archives SBA of the International Council on Archives ICA (FE)
- Board and Education Committee of the Association of Swiss Archivists VSA (FE)
- Board of the Schaffhausen Museum

Association (FE)

- GLAM Wiki Switzerland (FE)
- Bibliosuisse commission on AI in libraries (CZB)
- Bibliosuisse working group on old prints (CZB)
- OPL-Kreis (One Person Libraries)
- Bodensee (CZB)

## Involvement in events

- February 2024: "Johann Conrad Fischer as an Eyewitness to the Industrial Revolution: Strategies for Visualizing a Bygone World", workshop "Von Ort zu Ort: Digitales Edieren von Reisenarrativen–Neue Perspektiven", Leibnitz Institute, Regensburg (presentation by CZB/NL)
- April 2024: "Corporate History konkret", further training in public history, ZHAW, Winterthur (presentation by FE)
- May 2024: "Travelogues of a Pioneer: Digital Edition of the Travel Diaries of Johann Conrad Fischer (1773–1854)—a Source and Education Project", VdW Conference, Stuttgart (presentation FE)
- May 2024: "A Swiss Steelmaker Abroad: Johann Conrad Fischer as Eyewitness to the Industrial Revolution", Centrepoint, Basel (presentation CZB)
- May, September 2024: Introduction for new employees, history of GF, Schaffhausen (presentation by FE)
- September 2024: "Access to archives—right or duty?" VSA specialist conference, Teufen AR (presentation by FE)
- September 2024: "Johann Conrad Fischer (1773–1854): Pionier der Industriellen Revolution und Gründer von GF", GF pensioners' celebration, Schaffhausen (presentation by FE)



A group picture taken at the meeting of the Governing Board of the Iron Library at the Kloostergut Paradies on May 14, 1957.

# Iron Library Foundation

## Modernization and simplification of the Foundation's structures

The structure of the Iron Library Foundation had evolved over time since its establishment in 1948 and was no longer appropriate in its present form. The organization with the three bodies of the Board of Trustees, the Governing Board and the auditors was very complex and lacked transparency.

In the reporting year, this structure was simplified, modernized and aligned with other GF corporate foundations: on the one hand, by abolishing the governing board and, on the other, by reducing the very large number of trustees. With the creation of an advisory board, we are also strengthening the foundation's professional and scientific network for the future.

We would like to thank the members who have stepped down from the Board of Trustees for their many years of commitment:

- Andreas Müller, CEO Georg Fischer Ltd, Schaffhausen
- Irene Amstutz, Head of the Swiss Economic Archives and the University Economics Library, University of Basel
- Prof. Dr. Ing. Martin Bastian, Director of the SKZ Plastics Center, Würzburg
- Prof. Dr. Ing. Andreas Bührig-Polaczek, Head of the Institute and Chair of Foundry Technology, Foundry Institute, RWTH Aachen
- Calvin Grieder, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bühler AG, Uzwil
- Prof. Dr. David Gugerli, Chair of the History of Technology, Institute of History, ETH Zurich
- Dr. Helmut Hiltz, Head of Library, Deutsches Museum Munich
- Dr. Roland E. Hofer, State Archivist Canton SH, Schaffhausen

## New organization of the Foundation

The Board of Trustees now consists of representatives of the Corporation and divisions of GF. After the reorganization in accordance with the statutes, there were two further changes in the new Board: Stefan Dahl, GF Machining Solutions, and Georg Neuschütz, GF Casting Solutions, resigned as trustees. We are also grateful to them for their many years of commitment. They are succeeded by Matthias Blumentrath, Corporate Secretary of Georg Fischer Ltd, and Thomas Fuhr, Chief Technology Officer of GF Building Flow Solutions, as new members of the Board of Trustees.

## Finances

The operating expenses of the Iron Library, which come to about CHF 600 000 per annum, are covered by an annual contribution from Georg Fischer Ltd to the Iron Library Foundation and by compensation for services rendered to the Corporation. The Corporate Archives have a separate cost center within GF.

## Board of Trustees: Members as per 1.1.2025

- Roland Gröbli, President of the Board Senior Advisor, Georg Fischer Ltd, Schaffhausen
- Matthias Blumentrath  
Corporate Secretary Georg Fischer Ltd, Schaffhausen
- Thomas Fuhr  
Chief Technology Officer, GF Building Flow Solutions, Frankfurt am Main
- Noel Schreiber  
Head Human Resources, GF Piping Systems, Schaffhausen

# Overview and statistics

## Library

Contents:	Form:	Scope:	Period:
Literature on the history of iron, steel and plastics as well as on the history of science and technology shelved according to a classification system developed by the library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Books/monographs</li> <li>- Journals and periodicals</li> <li>- Company publications and product catalogs</li> <li>- Articles and offprints</li> <li>- Separately listed collections and bequests</li> <li>- Digital resources</li> </ul>	Around 50 000 items	13th century to the present

## Archive

Contents:	Form:	Scope:	Period:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fischer family bequest</li> <li>- Management and administration files of Georg Fischer Ltd and divisions</li> <li>- Files of corporate subsidiaries and holdings</li> <li>- Photographic and film archives</li> <li>- Collection of objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Administrative documents - Project documentation</li> <li>- Correspondence</li> <li>- Promotional material</li> <li>- Minutes</li> <li>- Patents</li> <li>- Objects</li> <li>- Photographs</li> <li>- Films</li> <li>- Building plans etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More than 130 000 records</li> <li>- More than 1 800 linear meters</li> <li>- Approx. 2 900 three dimensional objects</li> </ul>	16th century to the present

## Art collections

Contents:	Form:	Scope:	Period:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collection of historical and contemporary art</li> <li>- Historical maps of the Canton of Schaffhausen</li> <li>- Historical prints of the Schaffhausen region</li> <li>- Works on the topics of metallurgy and the history of technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Paintings</li> <li>- Watercolors</li> <li>- Prints</li> <li>- Cards</li> <li>- Sketches/drawings</li> <li>- Three-dimensional objects etc.</li> </ul>	- Approx. 1 000 works	15th century to the present

<b>Use of Library/Archives</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
Library users – persons (days)	15 (27)	16 (42)	19 (55)	14 (42)
Archive users – persons (days)	14 (15)	11 (22)	24 (41)	20 (28)
Library inquiries	105	119	145	113
Archive inquiries	144	148	125	154
Library items lent	342	397	341	275
Visits to digital offerings	37 261	29 542	25 688	13 179
Springer Professional downloads	8 525	1 751	1 663	-
<b>Archive holdings</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
Accessions	23 Lfm	5 Lfm	112 Lfm	287 Lfm
Holdings indexed	1 196 Lfm	1 171 Lfm	1 147 Lfm	1 094 Lfm
Holdings not indexed	574 Lfm	583 Lfm	619 Lfm	597 Lfm
Indexing	25 Lfm	36 Lfm	53 Lfm	81 Lfm
Records in the catalog	135 631	131 769	128 991	121 570
Media in the catalog	89 012	84 956	83 350	82 635
<b>Library holdings</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
New acquisitions – purchases	243	214	186	223
New acquisitions – donations, exchanges	178	436	772	542
Catalog entries books – titles	37 748	37 437	36 866	36 688
Catalog entries books – copies	38 438	38 114	37 534	37 356
Catalog entries offprints, etc.	9 885	9 885	9 885	9 885
Catalog entries periodicals (ZDB)	1 206	1 181	1 178	1 173
Current periodicals and series	73	64	64	64
<b>Digital offerings</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
Digital and digitized volumes	1 999	1 562	1 392	1 309
Digital and digitized files	4 398	-	-	-
Digital and digitized pages	171 544	149 410	131 608	117 333
Digital and digitized photographs *	38 236	9 725	9 725	9 725
Archive database actors	6 575	6 269	6 153	5 379
<b>Guided tours</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
Total no. of visitors	758	1 645	646	464
Total no. of tours	98	128	84	69
Tours for GF guests	64	63	41	40
Tours for external guests	34	65	43	29
Ø no. persons per tour	8	13	8	7

\* The previous count was only for the image gallery; now the entire database is included.

# Useful Information

## Services

- Guided tours of the historical premises of the Iron Library
- Use of the Library and Archive holdings on site
- Advice to users and replies to inquiries
- Public reading room with several work-places, Wi-Fi internet access
- Lending of Library holdings for GF employees
- Interlibrary lending via SWB and SLSP
- Advice on archiving issues for GF companies worldwide as well as handling of archive holdings
- Subscription to FERRUM free of charge

## Digital services

- IRONCAT: library catalogue (<http://swb2.bsz-bw.de/DB=2.364/>)
- ANTON: archive catalogue ([www.archives.georgfischer.com](http://www.archives.georgfischer.com))
- FERRUM available digitally on e-periodica ([www.e-periodica.ch](http://www.e-periodica.ch))
- Selected manuscripts available digitally on e-codices ([www.e-codices.unifr.ch](http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch))
- Selected old print works available digitally on e-rara ([www.e-rara.ch](http://www.e-rara.ch))
- Image gallery with digitized photographs ([www.archives.georgfischer.com/gallery](http://www.archives.georgfischer.com/gallery))
- GF annual reports since 1896 ([www.archives.georgfischer.com/documents](http://www.archives.georgfischer.com/documents))
- GF sustainability reports since 2002 ([www.archives.georgfischer.com/documents](http://www.archives.georgfischer.com/documents))
- Employee newspapers since 1944 ([www.archives.georgfischer.com/documents](http://www.archives.georgfischer.com/documents))
- Digital Edition "Travel Reports of a Pioneer" ([www.johannconradfischer.com](http://www.johannconradfischer.com))
- YouTube channel "Eisenbibliothek / Iron Library" ([www.youtube.com/@ironlibrary](http://www.youtube.com/@ironlibrary))
- LinkedIn (<https://ch.linkedin.com/company/eisenbibliothek>)
- Smartify (<https://smartify.org>)

## Events 2025

- April 1, 2025  
Erzählzeit Literature festival:  
Reading by Anna Katharina Hahn from her novel "Der Chor"
- July 2025  
Book Table in Schaffhausen
- November 14 & 15, 2025  
44th History of Technology Conference  
"Low-Tech: Procedures, Actors, Concepts"
- December 2025  
Book Table in Schaffhausen

# Contact

## Employees as of 1.1.2025

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### **Jörg Spinatsch**

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### **Maryam Joseph**

Intern  
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www.eisenbibliothek.ch

archives@georgfischer.com  
www.archives.georgfischer.com

## Opening times and directions

Monday to Friday by appointment

Travel by train:

S8 train from Schaffhausen, direction Stein am Rhein, to Langwiesen or Schlatt station, then 10 minutes' walk to Klostergut Paradies

Travel by car:

Metered parking available across from the Paradies Restaurant and landing stage



Iron Library  
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