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The Library for Iranian Studies in London was opened to members on 16 November 1991 with Māšā'-Allāh Ājudāni as its director. At that time the library consisted of a collection of 2,500 books and other publications, and was housed in rented premises in Acton, London. This collection was partly from the private collection of Ājudani and partly from the collection of the periodical *Faṣl-e ketāb*, which at the time was being published in London by Ājudāni and Manučehr Maḥjubi.

The board of founding members of the library included Kāḡil Maḥluji, Farzāna Maḥluji, Maḥmud Kiānuš, Homā-yun Kātuziān, Moḡgān Farzāna Qā'emi, Ḥabīb-Allāh Jurbandi, and Ājudāni. The Library for Iranian Studies is wholly independent registered charity and is funded through contributions from members of the Persian community.

With the continued financial support of Persian community in Great Britain and abroad, less than two years after the initial inauguration, the Library was



able to purchase freehold premises in Acton from the local authorities. After extensive renovation and decoration, the new and fully equipped library was officially opened on 9 April 1994. To mark the occasion, works by the Persian sculptor, Maḥmud Moḥammadi, were unveiled. The works were commissioned by the library to pay hom-age to some of the key figures of Persia's rich cultural heritage. The permanent exhibition includes a bust of the Persian poet Ferdowsi and a number of bas-reliefs depicting Kayyām, Avicenna, Nimā Yušij, Šādeq He-dāyat, [Foruḡ Farroḡzād](#) and [Parvin E'tešāmi](#).

The library's stock has grown considerably over the last few years. At present there are over 30,000 books and other publications for public use. Although these are mainly in Persian and other Iranian languages, the library has a growing collection of foreign language books and publications on Iran. It is also committed to increasing its stock of books for younger readers.

For those people interested in academic research, particularly in contemporary Persian history, the library's archives, which contain a wealth of political and cultural publications, documents, reports and statistical information, provide a valuable service. Also kept in the archives are a number of old and rare publications. The Library has currently a membership of approximately 3,000 and on average 250-300 people use the Library per month.

As well as being both a lending and a reference library, the library currently organizes lectures, seminars and a range of courses for adults and children covering various aspects of Persian culture and literature. Between 30-40 students attend the Saturday Persian language classes per term. The number of attendees in the Persian Literature classes (mainly on Ḥāfeẓ and Rumi) ranges between 15-20 per course. Since 1994 the library has organized on average six lectures per year. These lectures are given by a wide range of prominent scholars from different countries and delivered either in Persian or English. The Library has also organized several Persian calligraphy and painting exhibitions, as well as book fairs.

(Namdar Baghaei-Yazdi)