

# ILAB Missing Books Register: Specific Guidance for Collectors

Becoming a victim of theft, robbery or fraud can be a traumatising and deeply unsettling experience. Reporting a stolen or missing item is an important part of the process in deterring thieves as a reported stolen book is much harder to sell. To make this process as easy as possible some of the key questions asked are answered below. If you have any further questions, please email the [ILAB Secretariat](#) who will do their utmost to help.

## What is the Missing Books Register?

The Missing Books Register was created and is hosted by the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers (ILAB), to aid in the recovery of missing or stolen titles, and to discourage future thefts. ILAB takes a strong stance against theft, fraud, and forgeries. ILAB works closely with all its 22 member associations and their members as well as a network of libraries, archives, and law enforcement agencies.

## Who can lodge a report on the Missing Books Database?

Any individual or organisation, involved in the storing, handling, collecting, and preserving of rare and valuable books and antiquarian material, is encouraged to report to the Missing Books Register as well as searching the site proactively.

## How much does it cost to use the Missing Books Register?

The Missing Books Register is a service provided **entirely free of charge**. ILAB does not charge for the registering of accounts, the reporting of stolen or missing items, nor for searching the database.

## What information should be reported to the Missing Books Register?

Please bear in mind that the more detail you can supply regarding a missing item, the greater the chance of having your item found and returned and to prevent the item belonging to your collection from reaching the rare book trade.

- **Bibliographic information:** Author/s, title, publishing details, date, size, binding etc.
- **Copy Specific information:** Giving full details of how your copy can be distinguished from another copy of the same book or item cannot be over emphasized. Examples of copy specific information could include, while not being limited to, an owner's bookplate, a special binding, damage in a

particular place within the book etc. **Please take the time to supply as many details as possible.**

Remember we need these details to help someone who is not familiar with your copy to identify it easily.

- **Images**, of course, are particularly valuable. Please bear in mind that the more copy specific information you can give us, the more efficient the Missing Books Register will be. Ideally please attach a picture of the missing item. If you have detailed images available from your purchase (the purchase details from a bookseller or an auction house with the accompanying images) or if you can contact the firm where you bought the item to obtain image material, it would be very helpful.

- **Contact information of the reporting institution:** Please provide ILAB with your full contact details and remember to update your account or contact ILAB if these details change. ILAB will follow up in regular intervals to find out whether a recovery has been made or if there are any further details now available on the incident.
- **Anonymity?** The more information we can provide on this public database, the better, but we realise that there may be reasons you would prefer anonymity. When reporting a loss to the Missing Books Register you will be able to indicate whether or not you would like your reported items to appear anonymously.

**Reminder! Copy specific information is vitally important:** Please always remember the more detail you can supply regarding a missing item, the greater the chance of having your item found and returned. It is critical to report anything that makes your copy individual. These details might be a library stamp, a prior owner's bookplate, or something else, any small detail could be crucial.

### **When should an item be reported missing to the ILAB Missing Books Register?**

ILAB advises collectors to report stolen or missing items immediately. If the item is subsequently found, it is very simple to remove it from the Missing Books Register. There is a much greater chance of the missing book or item being returned if ILAB is notified without delay.

As soon as the report is entered into the Missing Books Register, ILAB will verify the reported information and publish the missing item on the website. Additionally, ILAB will quickly send an email to our worldwide network of booksellers to alert the large number of dealers on our mailing list, so they are on the look out for the missing item.

**Do not delay reporting!** ILAB advises to report stolen or missing items as soon as a theft or loss is noticed. Many stolen items are sold within hours or days of having been stolen. Quick action is vital and may prevent the stolen item being sold.

### **Should I report if I am concerned about my safety?**

Please report the item and **mark clearly if you request anonymity**. ILAB and its network of rare booksellers and libraries worldwide needs to know about thefts to avoid the items being offered on the market.

When reporting the item, it will not get listed automatically on the database or the public website. No information is sent out to booksellers automatically. All entries are checked individually and anyone reporting an item can request anonymity.

### **Does ILAB assist in the further reporting process to law enforcement or insurance?**

ILAB asks you to always report any theft to your local law enforcement agency and obtain a police report / record. Country specific guidance cannot be given. However, your local police should be able to refer you to the antiques and arts department or section of your national police force. Unfortunately, not all countries have one.

All insurance claims must be arranged directly with your insurance. ILAB does not maintain any link with insurers.

### **Does ILAB recommend any third-party commercial businesses who can help in the recovery of stolen books or other antiquarian material?**

ILAB is unable to recommend any commercial businesses offering services relating to the recovery or listing of stolen books, art and other valuables.

The Missing Books Register is a central database for research and information. However, ILAB strongly suggests **contacting the national antiquarian booksellers' association of the country where the theft has occurred** who will always try and help as best as possible.

All national antiquarian booksellers' associations who are part of the international ILAB network are listed here: <https://ilab.org/page/associations>

### **What happens if an item appears to have been missing for some time?**

Report the item! Even if time has passed, it is always worth reporting missing material.

### **Who to contact in an emergency?**

Please contact the ILAB Secretariat if you do not have the resources or time to report the missing item(s) and ILAB will assist promptly. Email [secretariat@ilab.org](mailto:secretariat@ilab.org)

## Where does ILAB display the information? Who is informed after the reporting of a missing item?

- **Website listing:** ILAB will verify the information reported to the database without delay and once this vetting process is finalised, the missing item(s) will be published on the website, visible under “Latest Database Entries” and is also available by searching the database.
- **News:** The Missing Books Register includes a news section. This useful feature of the Missing Books Register site draws additional attention to incidents by publishing an article in the Missing Books Register News section. This news is also displayed on the ILAB website.
- **ILAB Security Mailing List to the full network of ILAB booksellers worldwide:** ILAB runs a mailing list and provides an immediate update to all ILAB booksellers via email.
- ILAB will contact the national antiquarian booksellers’ association in the respective country where the theft or loss has occurred, if this has not been done already by the reporting institution.

## How does the reporting process work?

As the Missing Books Register is in launch phase, please contact the ILAB Secretariat via email to report an item. The online login can be used in a few weeks’ time.