

# **Leeds University Library Special Collections: Collections Development Policy 2016-2020**



# Scope

This Collection Development Policy outlines the current areas where we are actively acquiring books, archives, manuscripts and other material to build on current strengths or introduce new themes. We collect to support teaching and research within the University of Leeds. Our collections also support scholarship in the wider academic community and the heritage we curate and preserve benefits all society.

All material is assessed on its own merit and research value. We also consider the policies of other collecting institutions.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Library Collections Strategy, The Stanley and Audrey Burton Art Gallery Collection Development Policy, the University Archive Appraisal Policy, and the Collection Care Policy.

Guides and catalogues to Special Collections holdings can be found at on the [Library website](#).

## Collecting Criteria

The University Library's reputation for holding rare books, manuscripts and archives of outstanding interest was established in 1936 when the private library created by Lord Brotherton of Wakefield (1856-1930) was presented to the University. Since then, the University Library's Special Collections have grown substantially and encompass a number of distinct personal libraries and Repositories. The resources of Leeds University Library Special Collections are amongst the most extensive and varied of their kind in any UK academic library and include five collections which have been designated through the scheme administered by Arts Council England as of national and international distinction.

The form and content of materials selected for Special Collections provide documentary evidence relevant to a wide range of disciplines including history, world literature, cultures and science. Existing collections are developed through the acquisition of additional material. New themes of collecting are developed in response to the changing trends in scholarship and to support the reinterpretation of existing collections. We regularly collaborate with donors and depositors, developing collections relevant to them. We create networks of collections, one strengthening others. We acquire exceptional works that mark profound changes in society. Collections are geographically diverse but special consideration is given to association with Yorkshire and Leeds. Association with the University of Leeds is significant in assessment.

All materials proposed for Special Collections are reviewed within this framework of collecting. In addition we will:

- Seek the assessment of expert staff in Special Collection and where appropriate active researchers and subject experts within the University and beyond to consider the likelihood of generating new research. Unpublished material unlikely to generate new research and research materials which have already led to widely available research outputs will generally not be collected.
- Consider the policies of other collecting institutions and regional, national and international frameworks to ensure material is held in the appropriate repository. If material is more suited to another organisation the Library will supply the owner with relevant contact details. In the unlikely event of any dispute over the most appropriate location of any material, we will seek the advice of a neutral arbiter.

- Adhere to the terms of current legislation and in particular the Public Records Acts, the Manorial and Tithe Document Rules and the Parochial Registers and Records Measure.
- Consider provenance and title, undertaking due diligence to avoid the acquisition of cultural material which might have been imported illegally.
- Consider the format of material. We will accept print, manuscript on paper or parchment, photographic material and multimedia. Objects are accepted only if they form an intrinsic part of an archival collection. Where technical expertise and preservation storage conditions are not available we will consult other specialist repositories to ensure an appropriate home can be found.
- Consider the condition of the material, any hazards preventing access and prohibitive costs for preservation and conservation.
- Appraise duplication in printed book collections. Collections are accepted on the understanding they may be weeded for duplicates. Duplicates will only be retained if it is intrinsically important for the collection to remain intact or individual items contain important copy specific features. The Library reserves the right to return or dispose of duplicates.
- Appraise and weed non-unique material in archival collections after receipt at the Library. This includes off prints, publications, unannotated proofs, duplicated typescripts and facsimiles of archival material held elsewhere. Items may be retained if they form an integral part of an archival collection.

## Acquisition method

Special Collections acquire archives by donation, bequest, purchase, deposit and transfer. It favours donation and bequest.

*Donation:* the owner assigns title of the material to the Library; the ownership of copyright in the material is not transferred, unless this is agreed at the time.

*Bequest and governments acceptance in lieu scheme:* the material is bequeathed to the Library on death by will. The Library retains the right to refuse material which does not meet its collecting priorities. Owners are encouraged to discuss potential bequests during their lifetime.

*Purchase:* the library buys material at auction, by private agreement and from dealers as limited funds allow. The ownership of copyright in the material is not transferred, unless it is specified as part of the purchase.

*Deposit:* the owner keeps his/her rights of ownership, material is normally put into the custody of the Library for twenty five years but may be shorter by agreement. The Library may consider indefinite deposit agreements with corporate bodies such as societies and charities. Terms of deposit will be agreed on a case by case basis.

*Transfer:* the Library sometimes transfers printed material from the general collections to Special Collections based on age, financial value and rarity.

The Library retains the right to decline offers of collections and to return or dispose of unsolicited material. Potential donors are encouraged to contact Special Collection with details of any proposal.

# Collecting Areas

The University of Leeds Special Collections contain unique and distinctive material for which the University has custodial responsibility. The following list of outstanding collection areas embraces most of the larger individual collections or groups of material normally regarded as coherent subject collections. It includes major deposited collections (subject to individual acquisition arrangements). The considerable range of subjects covered is self-evident, while the quality of the collections is best evidenced by their national or international standing as collections in their fields.

## 1. English literature and language

17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century manuscript poetry and plays form a significant part of the Brotherton Collection. Leeds is part of a world elite in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century manuscript verse, contributing to an online union first line index of English Verse: <http://firstlines.folger.edu/>. We continue to build the collection by donation and purchase and focus on reuniting dispersed manuscripts.

Printed poetry and play (1630-1750) holdings include some unique items and many held in only one or two other libraries world-wide. It forms one of the largest and best public UK print collection outside the copyright libraries. We acquire drama and poetry 1630-1750.

The 1890s collection forms part of the distinctive *Elliott Collection*. Purchases are guided by existing collecting interests of the donors, Fay and Geoffrey Elliott.

19<sup>th</sup> century/ 20<sup>th</sup> century literary manuscript and correspondence holdings are extensive in the Brotherton Collection, including the Brontë family, Elizabeth Gaskell, A.C. Swinburne, George Borrow, Byron, and Crabbe. Correspondence of Victorian/early 20<sup>th</sup> century literary (and associated) figures, include Henry James, Dickens, Hardy, and the Rossetti(s). We will build on existing named literary figures and their associates by donation, purchase and deposit. In the *Elliott Collection* 20<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts include Oscar Wilde, Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh. We will purchase manuscripts with links to existing strengths in the *Elliott Collection* in consultation with our donors.

First editions, often with fine bindings are a particular strength of the *Brotherton Collection*. We will acquire first editions, with a focus on fine bindings and copy specific features relating to authors represented in the manuscript and correspondence collections. The aesthetic quality of items will be considered for exhibition.

Literary archives and manuscripts (20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century) have formed a significant part of acquisition since the 1980s. Novelists feature in the collections, with strengths in British New Wave fiction, crime writing and children's literature often with regional associations. Modern English Poetry is a distinctive strength at Leeds, with only the British Library and Bodleian for comparison. Play scripts of prominent writers for the theatre expand the networks of writers and artists featured in the collections. Food writers' collections are developing as part of the designated Cookery Collection. To maintain and strengthen this distinction emphasis is placed on writers of national and international importance associated with Yorkshire and/or associated with writers already represented in the collections e.g. the Gregory Fellows. We are interested in the papers of collaborators, especially correspondence, where this forms the other half of material already held. In addition, attention will be given to emerging/contemporary English writers' archives with Leeds University connections. We will consider print donations that directly support our modern literary archives, including works of translation.

Prominent literary magazine and publisher archives are a feature of many collections (for example London Magazine, Enitharmon Press). We acquire print production archives that are associated

with writers in the collections. Relationships with regional private presses (underrepresented in the collections) will be pursued.

Vernacular culture collections include original research on language, rural life and folklore. The Survey of English Dialects, conducted from the University of Leeds in the 1950s, remains the definitive and indeed only such survey ever conducted. We will strengthen the existing collection with complementary oral history, photographic and survey data.

## 2. Visual and performance arts

Choreography is a focus due to the University's connection to *Bretton Hall* (Wakefield). Academic interest led to the creation of one of the best Rudolph Laban collections in the world, the content being little known, even to specialists. We would welcome additions focused on Laban's time in the North of England. The archives of dance companies based in Leeds and Yorkshire are a focus. We do not collect costumes/ props as part of such acquisitions.

19<sup>th</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> century Theatre features heavily in the collections, including the substantial collection of the West Yorkshire Playhouse. We will strengthen the collections of theatre houses in Yorkshire and Leeds by acquiring the papers of prominent managers and artistic directors, with national and international reputations who are associated with the University of Leeds or the region.

Documentary production has become a feature of the collections with the acquisition of the South Bank Show collection. We will consider material that complements the existing collection with national and international significance.

## 3. History of medicine, science and technology

History of medicine, particularly relating to the University of Leeds and Yorkshire forms a strong theme in several collections. Papers of key individuals associated with the School of Medicine (established 1832), the history of scientific and clinical medicine, and the history of nursing and healthcare are prominent. We acquire papers of those associated with the University of Leeds and its predecessor bodies, including the papers of medical societies and professional bodies. The Library is not authorised to collect the records of NHS bodies and hospitals and records of the Leeds General Infirmary will be referred to *West Yorkshire Archive Service*. The University will liaise with other repositories to ensure the broadest coverage of archives relating to the history of medicine in Leeds and Yorkshire.

History of science and technology, particularly within the University of Leeds are a strong feature of the collections with papers of for example William Astbury (forerunners of Watson & Crick), and William Bragg held. Focus will remain on the papers of key contemporary scientists associated with the University.

The 15<sup>th</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> century science and medical book collection is very large by UK standards. We acquire works that mark significant changes in science, medicine and technology within this period.

The Cookery Collection was designated in 2005. The collection has its origins in French, British and Italian works from 1487 to the 1930s. We acquire titles and imprints not represented in this area of strength. We will acquire manuscripts on cookery and medicinal remedies with a regional focus.

## 4. Political and social history

The Liddle Collection, designated in 2005, contains over 5,000 collections of individuals connected with the First World War and a smaller number of Second World War collections. Its strength is in the representation of lower ranked military personnel, the home front and conscientious objection. We hold a complementary 20<sup>th</sup> century print collection. The archival collection is actively growing for the First World War and newly published works researched using the collection will be accepted. Material will not be accepted on deposit/ loan.

The Leeds Russian Archive encompasses over 500 collections of manuscripts, photographs and other archival material documenting Russian history, literature and culture and Anglo-Russian contacts in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was designated in 2005. The collection is unique in its range within the UK, where only the *British Library, Cambridge, Oxford* and the *School of Slavonic and East European Studies (University College London)* have substantial Russian-related holdings. There are close connections with *Columbia University's Bakhmeteff archive (New York)*, *the Hoover Institute (Stanford, California)* and *Russian Academy of Sciences institutes* in Moscow and St Petersburg. We hold a complementary print collection. The collection is actively growing. Material will not be accepted on deposit/ loan.

The Romany (Gypsy) Collection is exceptional as a concentrated historical collection of print and manuscript. It is part of the original *Brotherton Collection* and has been supplemented by the bequest of the private collection of the late Sir Angus Fraser and was designated in 2005. We purchase books to fill gaps in the historical print collection and accept gifts. We actively acquire archives relating to activists in consultation with *Leeds GATE* and the emerging national strategy for Gypsy and Traveller heritage.

The Feminist Archive North (FAN) is held on deposit and is the most significant feminist collection of the 1960s outside the *Women's Library*. Special Collections supports FAN in the acquisition of complementary collections of women's organisations of the 20<sup>th</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 5. Medieval manuscripts

Special Collections holdings are small in number but high in quality. Alongside material owned by the University Library are the holdings of *Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society (YAHS)*, with the significant Wakefield Manor Court Rolls (enrolled on the *UNESCO Memory of the World Register* in 2011). The Library and Archive of *Ripon Cathedral*, held on deposit contains hundreds of manuscript fragments. We will acquire further medieval manuscripts if appropriate opportunities arise.

## 6. Early modern and industrial history

Textile business archives form a distinctive section of the collections. Collections are Yorkshire specific from 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century. We will acquire accruals to existing business collections and recognise the collecting activity of *West Yorkshire Archives Service*.

Yorkshire collections are strong particularly of books (and manuscripts) relating to Leeds and Sheffield. Comparable specialised collections are in the public libraries and archive services of Leeds and Sheffield. The *Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society (YAHS)* collection enhances this strength, including estate papers, family archives, personal archives (notes of archaeologists, historians and antiquaries), maps, plans, pedigrees, deeds, wills, and manorial court rolls. YAHS collections are subject to specific conditions of deposit and proposed accruals and expansion of the collection are assessed against Special Collections criteria. We collect rare books and other significant printed material associated with Yorkshire where appropriate.

17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century 'French' rare books collections include the only copies of many titles available in the UK. The collections include French translations of celebrated English works and French books of the time which were produced in other countries with fictitious French imprints. The French revolution is well represented. We will continue to build on this strength, identifying and filling gaps. The purchase of French illustrated books is an area of interest.

## 7. History of the Book

Early printed books (pre 1650) in the collection were mostly acquired by Lord Brotherton and include a significant number of books printed before 1501. These form the incunabula collection. Others feature in the *Ripon Cathedral Library* (on deposit). We will enhance the collection by provenance, focusing interest on former owners already represented in the collection. Items that will aid study of the history of the book and fine binding will be considered.

Private press books form a significant part of the collections. We will fill gaps in our existing holdings of private press book collections, including Kelmscott. We will acquire individual items that complement our broader holdings. We seek to acquire the complete output of Presses where the archive of the Press is held, e.g. Enitharmon Press. In support of the *International Contemporary Artists Book Fair* we will accept donations and purchase Artists Books as funds allow.

Historical geography is represented by the Whitaker Collection of over 400 English atlases from the 16<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> century, with an emphasis on Yorkshire. The collection is one of the best in the UK outside copyright libraries. We will fill gaps in the collection, concentrating on Yorkshire.

## 8. History of the antiques trade

We support the development of the *University of Leeds Centre for the Study of the Antiques Trade* through the acquisition of trader collections from 19<sup>th</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> century with regional, national and international importance.

## 9. Institutional archive of Leeds University

The University Archive is the most comprehensive for a UK university founded in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Institutional records of the Yorkshire College, the Medical School and University of Leeds include academic and administrative departments. A separate appraisal policy guides the development of the collection.

In Special Collections, archives of scholars may be acquired on a case by case basis where they contribute further to the social and cultural contexts of a particular discipline, or to the life of distinguished scholars with a connection to Leeds.

## 10. Quaker archives (Yorkshire)

Special Collections holds on deposit the largest Quaker collection outside Friends Meeting House. In consultation with the custodians we will continue to develop the Quaker collections, including the archives of specific meeting houses and the personal collections of prominent Quaker figures in Yorkshire.

## 11. Scandinavian

The second largest historical print collection relating to Scandinavia in the UK (after University College London) is held in Special Collections. This strength has grown from research and teaching interests at the University. Icelandic and Old Norse are still studied and the University's association with J.R.R. Tolkien has influenced recent acquisitions. We acquire material not held elsewhere in the UK. The collection will develop with consideration of the wider University Library collecting policy on heritage collections.

## 12. Emerging themes

We review material before acquisition against the categories outlined above. We are open to strengthening themes within the extensive range of existing collections. We respond to changes in research within the university and the wider academic community and are willing to acquire collections that support new areas of research.

The Library will only acquire material outside this collection development policy after careful consideration by the University Librarian and after consultation with other repositories.

Endorsed 14 May 2016 at Library Strategic Advisory Board

Due for revision May 2020