

Information Services

Edinburgh University Main Library Committee

Wednesday 11th December 2013

Moving the Special Collections publication date to pre-1900 from pre-1850

Brief description of the paper

The consultation paper presented to the 9th October 2013 Library Committee, and at the 30th October 2013 Humanities and Social Sciences Library and Computing Committee proposed a phased implementation of criteria which sets publication prior to 1900 as the eligible date for Special Collections transfer (from pre-1850). It outlined the case for the new date and suggested procedures for a phased move to the new date.

Feedback from the Committees and from other members of the community have been taken into consideration, and the summary of recommended approach has been amended accordingly (highlighted where applicable).

Action requested

The Committee are asked to support the new policy, for implementation in January 2014.

Resource implications

Yes, but this can be absorbed by the Main Library Collections Management and Special Collections teams.

Risk Assessment

Does the paper include a risk analysis? *No*

Equality and Diversity

Has due consideration been given to the equality impact of this paper? *Yes*

If 'Yes', please state. The paper has been screened to consider whether an Equality Impact Assessment is required. The screening concluded that this was not necessary.

Originator of the paper

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Freedom of information

Can this paper be included in open business? *Yes*

Proposal Paper

Moving the Special Collections publication date to pre-1900 from pre-1850

The Library Collections Group proposes a phased implementation of criteria which sets publication prior to 1900 as the eligible date for Special Collections transfer (from pre-1850).

The proposal paper outlines the case for the new date and suggests procedures for a phased move to the new date.

Summary of reasons for change

The current cut-off date of 1850 for transferring books from General Collections to Special Collections means that rare and fragile books published up to 163 years ago circulate around the library in the same way as modern textbooks. The books also occupy space in the browsable shelves which would be better filled by more modern materials. To transfer the 1850-1900 books into Special Collections would allow these books to be made accessible in the more appropriate reading conditions of Special Collections (Centre for Research Collections). It would also make the General Collections more intelligible and straightforward to navigate as a collection of modern books for general user needs.

Summary of recommended approach

A phased approach would commence with the Main Library and Library Annexe collections through the following process. **NB: Collections in the Site Libraries would not be considered at this time, except for new acquisitions.**

1. All new items, purchased or donated, published prior to 1900 would be added to Special Collections upon receipt;
2. Material pre-dating 1900 that has been loaned would be recatalogued into Special Collections upon return, [additional text:] material in high demand or used for current teaching purposes will be made available in an alternative format (e.g. reprint or digitised) prior to transfer to Special Collections;
3. Upon allocation of additional resourcing (perhaps in two years' time), a project team will actively retrieve and transfer material published 1850-1900, in stages, a decade at a time (i.e. 1850-1859 ... 1890-1891).

It should be stressed that material in Special Collections is not borrowable, and would be accessed through the Centre for Research Collections, with curatorial support. This is in order to ensure the appropriate care of vulnerable items.

1. Background

At present, all material published prior to 1850 is added to the Library's Special Collections where it can be appropriately cared for and curated. In 2012, a report was produced from our online catalogue to identify the quantity of material within the General Collections which may be transferred to Special Collections with a pre-1850 publication date. At the same time, it was decided to review the amount of material that may be appropriate for Special Collections, should the transfer date be increased to publication prior to 1900.

Table 4 appended illustrates the quantity of items recorded in the online catalogue, with publication dates between pre-1850 and 1900 – only for the Main Library and Library Annexe.

Loans of pre-1900 published material have also been assessed for the period of the last five years (2008-2013). For book stock in the Main Library and Library Annexe only, 88% of the collection has not been borrowed in the last five years:

No of times loaned in 5 years	No of items loaned this many time	% of overall Main Library pre-1900 collection
0	23,369	88
1	2,492	7
2	855	2
3	439	1
4	224	0.6
5	145	0.4
6	77	0.2
7	55	0.001
→	Up to	→
25	1	0.003

Table 1: Loans history for material published pre-1900

Indicative reports using Copac suggest of 36,765 items, 10,097 items (28%) may be unique to Edinburgh – see table 2 below. This confirms the importance of preserving these unique items for the distributed national research collection.

No of items	No of other copies in Copac	% of overall Main Library pre-1900 collection
10,097	0	28
2,630	1	7
1,833	2	5
1,366	3	4
1,085	4	3
941	5	2.6
812	6	2.2
651	7	1.8
550	8	1.5
507	9	1.4
→	Up to	→
1	36	0.003

Table 2: Items in the pre-1900 collection and comparator holdings found in Copac

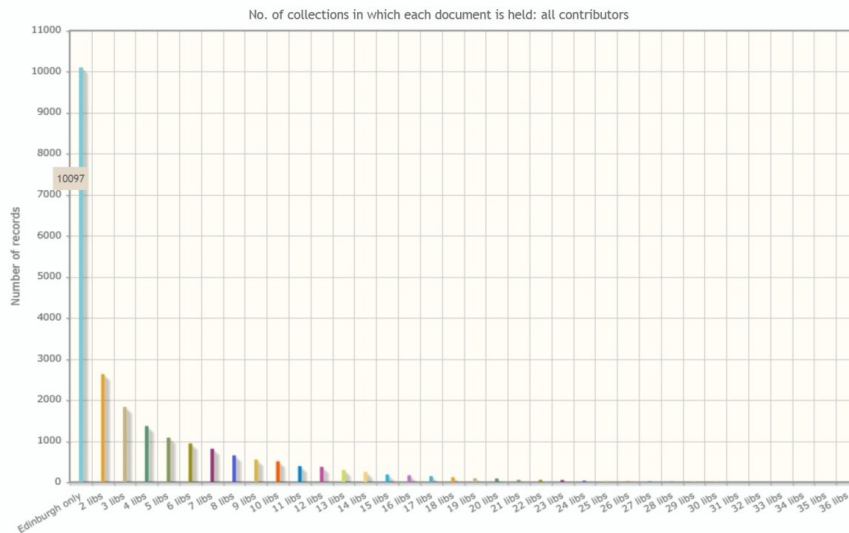


Figure 1: Chart taken from Copac Collections Management Tools indicating other holding Libraries

2. Pre-1850 collections policy

At present, Special Collections routinely transfer material published pre-1850 into their care. The pre-1850 publication date has been the *de facto* standard for Special Collections material transfer for sixty years, based on the 100 year rule, i.e. since the date of publication. This has been followed by most Research and National libraries in the UK and US, though many institutions are reviewing the date.

There are pros and cons of moving the transfer date from pre-1850 to pre-1900:

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward planning for the preservation and care of increasingly vulnerable material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The collections will be on closed access, where they must be requested for consultation during CRC opening hours – they are not borrowable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puts the University of Edinburgh in line with leading research Universities with responsible preservation policies (e.g. for the ongoing retention of print and e-journal access; for the care of fragile and rare research materials). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff resources and space will be required to arrange the physical transfer of such material to Special Collections locations (both in the online catalogue, and within the strong rooms/store).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curatorial support for users of rare material, where previously users would be expected to cope in a self-service environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all material dated pre-1900 is vulnerable, or valuable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the risk of future damage to materials, as items are stored in environmentally stable conditions; under supervision in the reading room; and where normal photocopying practice is restricted. 	

3. Categories of material

There are a number of ways an amendment to the Special Collections transfer date could be adopted. However, based on recent experience of large-scale collection moves and weeding exercises, the recommendation would be to phase the move to the new date in order to minimise disruption to users, to allow flexibility in the emergent policy, and to keep the enabling work manageable.

Five categories require consideration:

Category 1 - New additions to the collection (immediate action)

Any items added to the collections (either as donation, transfer, or 'addition' by being catalogued) with a publication date before 1900 should be incorporated into the Library Annexe Special Collections sequence, and accessed via the CRC reading room. This will apply to all IS Library Sites.

Category 2 – Loaned pre-1900 items (immediate action)

Anything loaned from the Annexe with a publication date before 1900 will be catalogued into Special Collections upon return. Similarly, anything loaned at the Main Library would be picked up by the book returns machines, and set aside for cataloguing into Special Collections upon return.

[Additional text:] Whilst transferring loaned material into a controlled access collection may appear counter-intuitive, the library return workflows will act as an identification tool for pre-1900 published material in a manageable way. Existing data on demand pre-1900 items will also be utilised to facilitate transfer of vulnerable but only at the appropriate point: the library will seek to ensure that material in high demand or used for current teaching purposes will be made available in an alternative format (e.g. reprint or digitised) to ensure ongoing open-access. In some instances such as this, it may be appropriate to retain a duplicate copy of the item in the general collections, where a copy is already available in the Special Collections.

Category 3 – Remaining open access pre-1850 material (immediate action)

The Main Library de-duplication project continues to identify material published prior to 1850 that is eligible for transfer into Special Collections. By the end of the project, it would be expected that most, if not all, items published pre-1850 will be transferred.

Category 4 - 1850-1900 material (funding required for a project)

If the policy to adopt publication prior to 1900 as the criteria for transfer into Special Collection is accepted and deemed practical, we propose phasing the transfer of the remaining materials, based on a ten year publication date range as part of a funded project, and for this reason would not start immediately.

Category 5 – Journals

A large proportion of the Library's print journal collections are now in the Library Annexe and is therefore physically less-vulnerable than the open access monograph collection.

4. Space implications

It is likely that the pre-1850 material is robust enough to be accommodated within the Special Collections sequence at the Library Annexe. A sequence of 145lm could be readily accommodated within available capacity.

Material dated post-1850 to pre-1900 is vaster in quantity, therefore greater planning would be required to accommodate this collection. However, as the Main Library's General Collections are re-set and low-usage duplicate copies are withdrawn, there is a freeing up of capacity in other parts of the Library, where it may be appropriate to store material of this type.

5. Recommendation

The Library Collections Group have approved this proposal, in principle. The Group has representation from the Centre for Research Collections, General Collections, and Liaison/Consultancy.

The proposal will be discussed through the following channels:

- ◆ College Library Committees (CHSS, CMVM, CSE)
- ◆ University Library Committee
- ◆ Knowledge Strategy Committee
- ◆ University Court.

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November 2013 (version 2 – updated to include additional recommendations for approach)

Appendix - Items published pre-1900 in the Main Library and Library Annexe General Collections

Items	Pre-1850	Linear metres	1850-1860	1861-1870	1871-1880	1881-1890	1891-1900	Total	Linear metres	TOTAL linear metres
Total	5538	153.62	3040	4158	4866	7113	11019	30196	838.64 *	992.96
LRA-1	134	3.72	87	93	117	209	249	755	20.97	24.69
LRA-2	1262	35	661	1575	1189	1794	2199	7418	206	241
MAIN-GEN	137	3.8	40	39	14	74	88	255	7.08	10.88
MAIN-GEN2	928	25.7	516	565	835	1365	1828	5109	141.9	167.6
MAIN-GEN3	568	15.7	329	353	651	1055	1456	3844	106.7	122.4
MAIN-HUB-S	0	0.00	0	2	2	5	4	13	0.36	0.36
MAIN-LGGEN	1629	45.25	1062	1312	1267	1900	3678	9219	256.08	301.33
MAIN-LGREF	699	19.4	297	134	482	438	642	1993	55.4	74.8
MAIN-REF	58	1.6	0	0	1	2	3	6	0.16	1.76
MAIN-REF2	0	0.00	7	23	44	85	136	295	8.2	8.2
MAIN-REF3	0	0.00	4	6	19	13	137	179	4.97	4.97
MAIN-SHO	0	0.00	0	0	0	1	2	3	0.08	0.08
MAIN-SHO2	2	0.05	6	2	13	17	239	277	7.69	7.74
MAIN-SHO3	2	0.05	2	2	16	39	112	171	4.75	4.8
MAIN-STO1	119	3.3	29	52	216	115	206	618	17.16	20.46
MAIN-STO2	0	0.00	0	0	0	1	40	41	1.14	1.14

Table 4; illustrating no of items per pre-1900 date period, and equivalent linear meterage.

*NB: the meterage may be less due to duplication of existing collections; missing items; and other factors.