Editorial

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Contents

Welcome to this themed issue of C&I which explores the world of rare books cataloguing. We have a range of articles looking at different aspects of rare books work, which offer useful insights into this specialist area of cataloguing. The articles cover the knowledge and experience needed to become a rare book cataloguer. We also have articles which discuss a number of rare books cataloguing projects and collections: the Lighting the past project at St Andrews, the Gerald Coke Handel Collection at the Foundling Museum, the de Saint Rat Collection at Miami University and the Special Collections at the University of Kent.

As a cataloguer mostly working with new library resources, I really value the insights that this issue offers. I think this will be a useful issue to go back to in the future.

It is worth noting that the call for papers for this issue resulted in a quick flurry of offers to write which was excellent news to the editors and demonstrated the enthusiasm that rare book cataloguers have for the work that they do.

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This article is intended to introduce the main features of rare book cataloguing for beginners; it is *not* meant to provide a comprehensive manual of the techniques of rare book cataloguing.

What makes a book rare?

The concept of rarity as applied to books encompasses not only a consideration of the number of extant copies of each edition, but also takes into account the provenance, or ownership history, of a particular copy. Paper quality, illustrations, and typography all add to the interest which rarity brings to a particular copy.

'Rarity' is often a composite of characteristics: it is difficult to choose one particular characteristic which holds true for all cases. In the case of ephemera, in to which category many pamphlets fall, there might be only one traceable copy. In other cases, over time, the physical characteristics of a particular copy of a book, as manifested in inscriptions and binding, have assumed equal importance to the intellectual qualities of the text which it shares with other copies of the same book, and have assured its transition to 'rare' status. This is apparent in the next section on the distinctiveness of rare book cataloguing.

Libraries may use a particular date, such as 1800 or 1850, to indicate that books published before this date should automatically be considered 'rare' or 'special.' However, many books, particularly those published in very short print runs, can still be described as such, and become rare as soon as they are produced.

How and why is rare book cataloguing different?

Rare book cataloguers adhere to the same rules and have the same purpose as any other cataloguer: to give a precise description of a particular copy's intellectual and physical characteristics. The difference lies in the greater importance which rare book cataloguers attach to including the physical characteristics of a copy in the catalogue record. This importance arises not only from the unique qualities of each copy, but also from the social and economic context of earlier stages in the history of book production and distribution. Rare book cataloguing builds on the existing knowledge of current cataloguers, and can be done well by any cataloguer with a secure knowledge of cataloguing practice.

The catalogue record shown below refers to the copy of an edition, published in 1674, of the Authorised Version of the Bible. This was owned by the influential Puritan theologian Richard Baxter, and is noteworthy for its copious inscriptions and for the binding which Baxter commissioned for it. It is now held in the Foyle Special Collections Library, King's College London.

Although it is not apparent from the example shown, rare book cataloguers often use the variant title field (246), as a rare book may well have more than one title page, and may have a different title on the spine than on title pages, as bindings were often completed after the production of the paper copy.

Although it is also not apparent from this record, several printers and booksellers (who between them would share the costs of publication and distribution) would often be involved in the production of the book. They should all be included in the 264 field.

The information included in the 300 field, as this example shows, can also vary from current cataloguing. Many rare books (particularly those published before 1501, commonly known as incunabula) were not paginated at all, include a significant number of unpaginated leaves or include several discrete texts, with separate pagination sequences.

500 fields are often used by rare book cataloguers to denote specific typographical features to which they wish to draw attention, which often relate to the design of the title page, or to the presence of divisional title pages. Often, rare book cataloguers use a 500 field to draw attention to differences, frequently minute, between different editions of the same work.

This brings us to the importance of the ESTC indicator, (see 510). The ESTC, or English Short Title Catalogue, gives a separate sequence of numbers, like an ISBN, to each edition of a book published in English speaking countries before 1801. Differences between editions can often be far from obvious, such as the absence of a bookseller or printer from a title page, or a printing error. In these cases, the English Short Title Catalogue offers invaluable guidance. For further information, see the web page of the English Short Title Catalogue: http://estc.ucr.edu

The 561 and 563 fields offer the most obvious examples of deviations from current cataloguing practice. The Baxter Bible is exceptional in that it offers, through its well documented inscriptions, an almost complete history of this particular copy from 1674 to the early 20th century. Any ownership inscriptions, no matter how obscure or anonymous or even if they are apparently unrelated to the purpose of the book (e.g. a shopping list) would be referred to by the catalogue record in the 561 field.

They can provide valuable information concerning the history of a particular copy and the uses to which it has been put. Particularly good examples are two 17th century copies in the Foyle Special Collections Library of Nicolas Culpeper's *The English physitian enlarg'd*. Although the copious inscriptions are anonymous, the prescriptions and the clear references to astrological influences on medicine indicate that Culpeper was successful in producing a manual which was useful to apothecaries without much, or any, knowledge of Latin.

As can be seen from the 563 field, in our example, Richard Baxter ordered a bespoke binding for this particular copy, which was a far from uncommon practice. Such bindings would often include heraldic devices, which can, in the absence of inscriptions, be invaluable sources concerning the provenance of a copy. Even if they are not bespoke, bindings can often indicate the importance of a particular copy at the time of its publication or can provide information about particular binding styles. An unappealing binding from an aesthetic perspective can often yield valuable clues about a book.

Rare book cataloguers may often use more subject headings than current cataloguers would, which arises from the diversity of texts which are often included in a book and also from the fact that an 18th century text on medicine, for example, would often cover several diseases rather than concentrate exclusively on one. As most rare book collections are closed access, browsing the shelves is not an option for most readers, and so more subject headings than usual are needed. Rare book cataloguers often use more 700 fields than other cataloguers, to provide additional access points for printers, booksellers, illustrators and former owners.

Why is this information useful?

Readers may still wish to consult a copy of a rare book in order to peruse the text, although many books are now available online, through subscription services such as Early English Books Online (EEBO) and Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO). Often, they may be interested in consulting a book because they are interested in a bibliophile whose collections were dispersed, or are researching particular binding styles, or would like to trace the output of a particular printer. If they are interested in a text, their research may concern its contemporary reception, circulation and use rather than the content of the text alone. If such readers find that a consultation of the catalogue record, rather than the book itself, suffices, that may well be a measure of the catalogue record's success.

The comprehensiveness of a catalogue record can often provide invaluable assistance to rare book librarians when curating exhibitions or selecting books for seminars. If a librarian is curating an exhibition which concentrates on provenance, inscriptions or bindings, she would rely very heavily on such information. Similar considerations would apply when selecting items for online publicity, or when choosing suitable items for conservation on a limited budget. The precision and professionalism of rare book cataloguing contribute to every aspect of rare book librarianship. They acquire particular relevance in an age when public engagement has become important for many organisations. They cannot be dismissed as evidence of esoteric connoisseurship.

A word about RDA

Every cataloguer, including those specialising in rare books, must be concerned to make their work intelligible to users. In this, RDA does help, especially in disposing of Latinate terms, which may mystify rather than clarify.   Misprints in titles (a relatively common occurrence) were previously accompanied by '[sic]', which would not necessarily have meant anything to any potential reader who did not know Latin. Now, the correct spelling with explanation must be in the 500 field. As the dates of many authors of rare books are often indeterminate, rare book cataloguers often used the terms 'floreat' and 'circa' (abbreviated to 'fl.' and 'ca.' respectively) when indicating the approximate dates of an author. Now, 'active' or 'approximately' have been substituted. When imprint details are unknown (as is often the case with ephemera), 'No identifiable place of publication' and 'No identifiable publisher' have been substituted for 's.l.' and 's.n.'

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This is a question I've been asked several times recently, by work experience volunteers who are interested in a career in Special Collections/rare books librarianship, or by people trying to find that elusive first professional post in those areas. A while ago I wrote a blog post on this subject, and this is an updated version of that post.

My initial reaction to the question was "Yes, but…", because so much depends on the collections you are looking after. I also don't know the figures for jobs that are solely rare books cataloguing, and jobs that also involve other elements of work, such as working with readers, promotional activities and preservation. Many rare books libraries are very small, and may employ few staff so cataloguing may not be the only part of the job.

The CILIP Rare Books & Special Collections Group has a document on skills for rare books librarians on their Careers page,[1] which mentions the need to have language skills to help you manage and research your collection, and that increasingly users themselves may not know Latin so will need your help.

However, if you look after a modern special collection, Latin is going to be much less useful than other skills. Some rare books job adverts will make knowing Latin an essential or at least desirable selection criterion, but others won't. For instance, one of my previous jobs had knowledge of Latin **or** a European language as a desirable criterion, but not essential. So, not knowing Latin won't necessarily stop you getting a job as a rare books cataloguer, but it might count against you if you're competing against other candidates who have Latin, and it might limit the jobs for which you can apply. Over the course of a career, knowing Latin surely has to be a good thing as most pre-1800 rare book collections are going to include a proportion of books in Latin? Is it less important than a knowledge of historical bibliography? Possibly. After all, you can't catalogue any pre-1800 book (whatever language it is in) without some knowledge at least in historical bibliography.

How does knowing Latin help?

I have an A Level in Latin, and I have found it very useful in my career so far. You can "get by" in cataloguing without knowing Latin, and there are resources that can help, such as the Historic Libraries Forum guide.[2] Rare Books in Scotland have run workshops in the past on Latin for rare books librarians, and have a guide published here[3] (link goes to pdf), which includes links to other resources, including information about place names and a word list. With many (most?) collections, you're going to end up cataloguing a book in a language you don't know at some point, even if you do know Latin.

But, especially if you work with a collection that has many books in Latin and other European languages, knowing Latin is an enormous help. You don't just match a record on COPAC,[4] hoping for the best, you can catalogue the book yourself. If you know the endings of names, you can work out the name of the author and not confuse it with a name in the title. You can also interpret the book more easily, which helps with adding subject headings or assisting a reader who doesn't know the language. Even if the book you're looking at is in another European language you don't know, knowing Latin may give you a clue. You'll also miss out on the fun of cataloguing, and getting to know the book if you can't understand the language it's written in.

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1. http://www.cilip.org.uk/rare-books-and-special-collections-group/careers
2. http://www.historiclibrariesforum.org.uk/hlf/publications.html
3. http://www.nls.uk/media/778068/latin-words-list.pdf
4. http://copac.ac.uk/

How do I learn Latin?

Latin in state schools has been making a bit of a comeback in recent years, but it still not as commonplace as it once was. If you didn't get the opportunity to learn it whilst you were at schools, there are still plenty of options available to you now. I have heard the view expressed that making Latin a requirement in a job description is discriminatory, as it excludes people who didn't go to a private school. However, you don't need to learn Latin in school, for a start.

Learning for fun

If you just want to learn Latin for fun, or to add to your skills in a job you're already doing, then probably the cheapest way is to go it alone with a book and study guide. I used the Cambridge Latin Course[5] for GCSE. I learnt Ancient Greek on a summer school which used Reading Greek,[6] and there is a companion volume called Reading Latin,[7] which is aimed at a student and adult audience. Learning on your own requires commitment though and it can be hard with no one to answer questions. The Cambridge Latin Course has a scheme for distance learners,[8] which has tutors and can take you right up to A Level standard. You could also ask around or advertise for a tutor to help you (although expect to pay upwards of £15-20 an hour for a tutor).

Other options include doing an evening class via adult education through your local council, university or WEA.[9] That way you'll meet other interested people as well as having a tutor to mark your work.

Summer schools are also fun, and offer an intensive way of getting to know the language with support available. These are some that were mentioned during the CIG e-forum on rare books cataloguing:
London Summer School in Classics[10] - They teach Latin, Greek, Syriac and Coptic.
Latin in a week[11] at Gladstone's Library (you can also do Greek , Hebrew or Welsh in a week!). What could be more fun than a week at a residential library?
Greek and Latin summer school at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David[12]
Joint Association of Classical Teachers summer schools[13]
Byzantine Greek summer school in Birmingham[14]

The University of Dundee offers modules in Latin aimed at archivists and researchers.[15]
The Great Courses has a Latin 101 option.[16]

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5. http://www.cambridgescp.com/Upage.php?p=clc^top^home
6. http://www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/subjects/classical-studies/classical-languages/reading-greek-text-and-vocabulary-2nd-edition?format=PB
7. http://www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/subjects/classical-studies/classical-languages/reading-latin-grammar-vocabulary-and-exercises?format=PB
8. http://www.cambridgescp.com/Upage.php?p=il^top^home
9. http://www.wea.org.uk/
10. http://www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/classics/study/summerclass/index.aspx
11. https://www.gladstoneslibrary.org/events/events-courses-list/latin-in-a-week
12. http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/classics-summer-school/
13. http://www.jact.org/summer-schools/
14. http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/bomgs/events/summerschool/teaching-staff.aspx
15. http://www.dundee.ac.uk/cais/programmes/modules/basiclatinforarchivistsandresearchers/
16. http://www.thegreatcourses.co.uk/courses/latin-101-learning-a-classical-language.html

East Oxford Community Classics is offering several course options.[17]
The Open University has a module in Classical Latin, and other languages. The Latin course is based around the Reading Latin book I mentioned above.[18]

Another fun option is to get involved with Minimus mouse Latin teaching. Minimus is aimed at primary school children and some schools run lunchtime or after school clubs to teach it.[19]

Gaining a qualification

If you want to be able to put Latin on a job application, you might want to aim for a qualification to show your commitment and attainment. Some of the above options include the chance to gain a qualification if you want to, or you may be able to access a GCSE or A Level course through a local college, although this may take place in daytime. If you're still at university, you can often take a module or two outside the subject you're studying, so why not investigate taking a module in Latin?

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17. http://www.eoccc.org.uk/project/events/courses
18. http://www.open.ac.uk/courses/modules/a276
19. http://www.minimus-etc.co.uk/

Lighting the Past – a retrospective rare book cataloguing project

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In 2011, the Director of the University of St Andrews Library set the goal of eliminating the University's rare book cataloguing backlog within ten years. At that time, only about one third of the more than 200,000 early and rare printed books in Special Collections were accessible via the online catalogue, leaving approximately 135,000 books in need of cataloguing. Those records which did exist in the OPAC were of varying quality: some were minimal records containing only truncated versions of title and imprint; others were detailed records but with non-standard access points.

Given our available resources (at that time, one full-time rare books cataloguer), creating full DCRM(B) records for every volume was not feasible. To tackle this daunting task, we developed a phased approach which would result in the majority of books having basic but bibliographically identifiable records (the Phase 1 element). More challenging books would be set aside for full-level DCRM(B) treatment (Phase 2), and the basic Phase 1 records would be upgraded to Phase 2 as resources became available.

We wanted Phase 1 to be a quick but clean means of cataloguing; time trials undertaken with student volunteers indicated that a Phase 1 cataloguer could create 6-8 bibliographic records an hour. Armed with the figures from the time trials, we devised a catchy project title (*Lighting the Past*), secured University funding for a mixture of project and casual staff, carved out physical work space for three people in close proximity to the collection stores, and set to work in June 2013.

The Phase 1 team was composed of a Lead Cataloguer (who holds a Masters degree in Information and Library Studies) in a full-time supervisory role overseeing a number of part-time staff corresponding to two full-time equivalent (FTE) student cataloguers. Our intention was to provide work and specialist training for University students, and our project is consciously student-focussed, but our first round of recruitment also elicited enquiries from non-students, whom we encouraged to apply. The current team of eight cataloguers is composed of one alumna, two undergraduates, one taught postgraduate, and four research postgraduates.

Before cataloguing starts on any given collection, we print 'smart' barcodes for items that are already in the Library Management System (LMS). These barcodes, which include a classmark and short title, are attached to acid free flags and matched up with their corresponding volumes. The flag provides a visual marker that the item is already on the system, and prevents the creation of duplicate records. Any items lacking a barcoded flag go into the cataloguing queue.

For the sake of expediency, all Phase 1 records are created from scratch without searching for existing copies. We are aware that this creates duplicates when our records are exported to shared databases such as OCLC, yet even so, our Phase 1 records are more detailed than many of the batch-loaded records currently in OCLC.

Phase 1 records include all the basic descriptive elements necessary to identify and retrieve specific editions: author; full transcription of the title, imprint, and edition statement; statement of extent (based upon numbered pages); one basic subject heading derived from a pre-existing Library of Congress classmark; collection-specific identifiers; and an accurate holdings statement.

We revisited the guidelines drawn up for the time trials, making them more accessible for student workers by walking the cataloguer through each area of the record step by step. As the project has progressed the guidelines have grown to include responses to common questions (for example, "How do I handle multiple places of publication?").

Alongside these guidelines the Phase 1 cataloguers work with templates set up in the LMS by the Lead Cataloguer. Place-holder text is given in square brackets (for example, [last name, first name] in the 100 field) and the aim is to have no square brackets left by the time the record is completed. This ensures that no understanding of MARC is needed for Phase 1 cataloguing. We have simplified encoding, omitting subfields within the 245, giving series statements in a note field rather than a 490/830, and only checking authorised forms of headings against our local database, rather than LCNAF. Each collection uses a separate template to supply collection-wide access points relating to donors, collection titles, immediate source of acquisition, etc.

Serial records were deemed to be more complicated than monographic records, and so are created by the Lead Cataloguer. Catalogued to Phase 1 level, these records lack 008 and 300 fields, describe only the issues held by the Special Collections Division, and are not exported to external catalogues or databases. They are, however, merged with existing St Andrews holdings by a specialist serials cataloguer in the Library's cataloguing team.

Although Phase 1 is a quick cataloguing method, the Lead Cataloguer does take the time to report items to ESTC if relevant, and adds ESTC numbers to records. To date Phase 1 has reported 960 items to ESTC, and we are turning up quite a lot of unique finds; 27 items have so far been identified as being entirely new. These unique items are passed over to our rare books cataloguer to receive full-level cataloguing before the records are submitted to ESTC.

Current output at Phase 1 has achieved only half the expected target of 6-8 books per hour for a number of reasons. Firstly, the job includes other tasks besides cataloguing, such as matching barcoded flags with their volumes; fetching and re-shelving books; noting conservation needs and tying books with cotton tape where needed. Secondly, new cataloguers can also need 2-3 weeks of training before they're up to speed and feel confident in their work; we typically hire new staff twice a year, at the start of each semester. Finally, the books themselves can cause problems: transcribing foreign-language material can slow workers down (especially books in Fraktur type); some books have very long titles; and large folios not only take more time to retrieve from the shelf, but also have to be brought to the office in smaller numbers. Additionally, we now include more information than originally planned, such as contents notes for some multi-volume sets, giving better access for readers in a closed-stack environment. Yet even at this slower rate, the Phase 1 cataloguers are producing significantly more records than would be possible with full-level cataloguing.

That said, the Phase 1 element of *Lighting the Past* was never intended to be carried out in isolation or to be viewed as a finished product. Some collections have been identified as not appropriate for Phase 1 cataloguing due to monetary value or cultural significance (incunabula, recent donations, or extremely expensive purchases). These records receive full-level DCRM(B) treatment, incorporating descriptions of bindings and provenance, controlled headings with relationship designators for engravers, publishers, printers, former owners, etc., additional subject and genre terms, detailed condition notes for internal use, and correct and complete MARC encoding. When *Lighting the Past* began, some individual items within collections were set aside for Phase 2, either because they were deemed too difficult to catalogue (e.g. lacking title page), or because there was insufficient information to create a Phase 1 record (e.g. lacking imprint). The original intention was for these Phase 2 items to be dealt with by the rare books cataloguer. However, this has been difficult to resource, and, since it is better to have a record with minimal information than no record at all, we now create records for most of these items.

There are various challenges to come out of the project. At Phase 1, training and checking the work of new cataloguers can be very time consuming, as is the linking of bibliographic records for separate works bound together after publication. We have also taken the decision that every record should include at least one subject heading; because we derive subject headings from LC classmarks, collections without LC classmarks present problems. As the Phase 1 team successfully tackles increasingly complex bibliographic data, we continue to adapt our procedures, freeing up more of the Lead Cataloguer's time.

The challenges for Phase 2 are somewhat different. Our rare books cataloguer is now externally-funded, with priorities for full-level DCRM(B) cataloguing set by the donor whose interests do not necessarily match our internal cataloguing needs. We therefore only have a limited amount of time which can be spent on non-project cataloguing. Nevertheless, the Rare Books Cataloguer continues to be a key member of the team and to contribute to the decision-making process when unusual items crop up in Phase 1. Although Phase 1 records are simplified, we try to follow standard practices where possible so that the process of upgrading records to Phase 2 is one of expanding rather than correcting.

In addition to the challenges, there are many opportunities which have resulted from *Lighting the Past*. Having so many more items on the online catalogue has increased our collections' visibility and intellectual control. In addition to this obvious benefit, we have also been able to mine the project for blog posts:[1] every time a collection is completed we write a blog about it, highlighting the highs and lows of cataloguing the particular collection, and also the subject focus of the owner (for personal collections). Interesting finds may get their own post, or perhaps a quick mention on our Facebook page. Research conducted for blog posts has even led to collaboration with other institutions.

With work progressing well at Phase 1, we are now looking to catalogue more bibliographically complex collections not originally earmarked for Phase 1. Perhaps best of all, we have created an invaluable staff resource and are able to draw upon a pool of casual staff trained in rare book handling and familiar with the MARC environment for other short-term cataloguing projects as opportunities arise. One cataloguer has recently been trained in creating full DCRM(B) records for an externally-funded project to catalogue economic works. We were also able to secure internal funding for a short project for another of our cataloguers when we learned that she is a native Bengali and Hindi speaker. She will work closely with our Rare Books Cataloguer to create full DCRM(B) records for around 23 items containing non-Roman scripts. Opportunities have also arisen for Phase 1 cataloguers outwith Special Collections, as they are able to use the knowledge and experience gained in the project to advance their careers: two team members have progressed to higher-grade jobs elsewhere in the Library, one of which is a cataloguing post.

The *Lighting the Past* project is not without flaws (such as duplication of records in shared databases) and does require institutional commitment to provide staffing resource, but it has significant benefits. Using a simplified cataloguing system, we are able to tackle the majority of our backlog at a rate of 3-4 books per hour, per FTE, the benefit of which has been very visible. In its first two years the project has achieved much, creating 19,711 bibliographic records and 21,227 item records. Seven named collections have been catalogued in their entirety at the Phase 1 level, as well as portions of a further five named collections. Additionally, because simple items are catalogued quickly and inexpensively, we can ensure that our Phase 2 cataloguer's time is spent on books that noticeably require more expertise. Yet it must be remembered that Phase 1 is only the beginning. The more detailed bibliographic information and encoding found in full DCRM records will facilitate more avenues of in-depth study. Improved subject access and descriptive notes will improve unknown item searching, and controlled headings will enable catalogue users to group together records by genre, provenance, and other aspects of book production. The next three years should see the completion of those collections originally earmarked for Phase 1 treatment. If funding allows, the following five years will be dedicated to Phase 2, enhancing existing records and creating new records for our most bibliographically challenging collections, many of which have hitherto remained hidden.

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1. The University of St Andrews Special Collections' blog, Echoes from the Vault, can be found at https://standrewsrarebooks.wordpress.com/

Who doesn't love the smell old books? You know, that slightly musty and rich smell of leather bindings, the faint whiff of sweetness rising from handmade paper ... In the age of e-books, e-journals and digitisation projects, it is sometimes easy to forget that primal feeling of opening an old book that perhaps was last opened decades, if not centuries before, and inhaling that special 'old book' smell (having checked for mould first obviously). There are many reasons why I decided on a career change from struggling academic to being a librarian, but one certainly was that I loved the idea of being surrounded by books. Another deciding factor was that as an academic, I enjoyed the pursuit of knowledge and the challenge of solving riddles. What I found less appealing was the pressure to produce research outcomes, the relentless admin, and what felt like exploitation of early career scholars. And yes, I wasn't very keen on teaching either.

This is partly why I decided to go alone when the opportunity presented itself to become one of the National Trust's freelance book cataloguers. My background in medieval studies had equipped me with basic Latin and I had a well-trained eye for detail. I can read more or less successfully several languages other than English (even if I don't speak all of them). I retrained as a librarian in one of the UK's distance-learning masters' programmes. A note of caution: check carefully what modules are on offer before deciding which programme to enrol on. In my case, the programme was disappointingly focused on 'virtual' librarianship with a single practical exercise in cataloguing offered in an optional module on rare books librarianship. But, the opportunities for learning are still out there: the Historic Libraries Forum organises one-day workshops for aspiring rare books cataloguers; many universities now offer distance-learning CPD modules; the annual London Rare Books School is a programme of week-long intensive courses that can be taken for credit. The Forum also produces short specialist cataloguing guides on its website. It is fair to say that I learned to catalogue on the job, with the help of these additional resources.

Despite initial misgivings about the viability of working freelance, I quickly learned to love the diversity, meeting new people, being my own boss, and acquiring new knowledge. I get to work in fascinating places and with people from a range of backgrounds (librarians, museums professionals, archivists, conservators).

How often do we get to catalogue books in their historic context? To get to grips with a collection owned by an individual or by members of a single family? Or to be exposed to the challenges of the preservation of collections in environments which are less than congenial to the wellbeing of books? Most of the libraries in the care of the National Trust are remarkable for their survival as a collection and the insights they give into the intellectual fashions and reading habits of the upper class; only a few, such as at Blickling Hall, are 'special' collections in the sense of containing unique, spectacular, or otherwise rarefied individual items. So, yes, I might be cataloguing a fairly pedestrian publication one moment (a first edition Barbara Cartland), but then find a rare seventeenth-century rendition of the story of Reynard the Fox. I feel I've come to know superficially some of the individuals who inscribed their books; how one of them was obsessed with health and sports, but died very young of cancer; how another's political career is reflected in his reading matter while also being exposed at a more personal level through some of his surviving children's books. And how yet another had literary aspirations but seems to have been frustrated by the eighteenth-century relative disinterest in women's education.

But being freelance is not an easy route to take. Opportunities are rare and need to be actively pursued; lateral thinking is extremely important; and you need a Plan B. Contracts are usually short-term and you need to be prepared to spend time away from home. I've worked in Wales, Ireland, Southern England and within commuting distance from where I live. From cataloguing, I've branched out into collection surveys, the occasional editing job, historical research, and recently, project management.

I've had to get over my dislike of social media and now blog, tweet, like and follow to my heart's content to raise my professional profile. Networking and self-promotion are not part of my default settings…

Access to online resources, such as the cataloguer's toolkit or even the digitised databases of Early English Books Online and Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, is problematic when you're a sole trader. There are no pension or NI contributions; holidays and illness mean no income; there's the annual tax return and mad last-minute scrabbling about for receipts. Career development opportunities don't present themselves through staff programmes or a line manager. No organisation pays for the 'up-skilling' of a freelance.

Then there is the constant fear that the work may not materialise. There is a degree of chasing after jobs that go to other people or fall by the wayside. It can be lonely, spending week-day evenings in rented accommodation or a B&B when you know the alternative is being at home in the company of your family.

So, after this litany, the question begs itself: is it really worth it? For me it is, but it is a personal choice. The freelance path is uncertain, but rewarding in its variety. It gives a sense of freedom. I learn an awful lot from other people. I catalogued my first ever Mills & Boon at Calke Abbey (NT) a couple of years ago, but I've also seen some amazing incunabula. I've had the joy of working alongside book conservators and learn about the techniques of book preservation first-hand. And I get to meet people who look after collections with boundless passion and dedication. It is a real privilege to be part of that.

Rare books librarian in action! (Photo credit: P. Hoare)

Danielle Westerhof works freelance as a historian, librarian and writer. She welcomes enquiries from readers interested to learn more about working freelance and about her work in historic libraries. Danielle can be contacted through her website http://www.daniellewesterhof.co.uk, where you can also read her blog about the books she catalogues.

The Gerald Coke Handel Collection at the Foundling Museum[1] is an internationally important collection of material relating to the composer George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) and his contemporaries. The collection was assembled by Gerald Coke, a businessman, across the greater part of the twentieth century, and includes books, scores, libretti, manuscripts, art works, sound recordings, periodicals and ephemera, including Handel's will and other manuscript documents, which are available to the public for research. The user base is international, and as such it was considered a priority to create a detailed catalogue of the whole collection to maximise access and assist those who may find it difficult to visit the collection in person. The software used is Soutron's Solo software, which was selected as it allows for a great degree of customisation. We were fortunate to be able to select software purely for our non-lending specialist library. Rather than having to fit in as part of a larger organisation, and thus we could focus entirely on cataloguing requirements of the system. As a small private library with limited funds we have not been able to invest in large-scale digitisation of our unique materials, but we hope to convey as much information as possible about individual items to help researchers find what they need.

To cater for our international readership we use 'extreme' cataloguing, incorporating much data not normally found in standard library catalogues - for example, lists of performers mentioned in eighteenth-century editions of printed music, contents of concert programmes (both performers and works performed), details of works in miscellaneous manuscript anthologies - as well as all the extra details required for music cataloguing - language of performance (for sound recordings), languages (often multiple) for printed editions of music and libretti, uniform titles, formats, musical key, thematic catalogue numbers, printers, engravers, citations in relevant musical reference sources such as RISM (Répertoire International des Sources Musicales, a collection of international databases of music scources),[2] ISMNs (International Standard Music Numbers) for modern works, etc.

Music cataloguing always requires extensive use of uniform titles – our catalogue currently has 400 titles relating to Handel's oratorio *Messiah* – but individual titles from publications include 'Messias' (German), 'Messie' (French) , 'Messia' (Italian), as well as a Japanese recording and a Korean symposium paper which I cannot transliterate for this article – these are all brought together by the uniform title. Similarly the reader will need to know what text is supplied in the edition – a German publication of Messiah may have German translation, English original text, or both. In editions with multiple languages, the texts may be printed at the front of the volume before the musical score, or underlaid in the music along with the other language(s), which is essential information if the performance is to be in a particular language.

 Variations in versions of musical works are also common, compared with those in literature for example; composers frequently re-composed or re-arranged works to suit the performers available, so that different variants can be identified. The use of thematic catalogue numbers here is crucial – for example Handel's *Esther* survives in two distinct versions by the composer, and these are identified in the composer's thematic catalogue (Händel-Werke-Verzeichnis) as HWV 50a and HWV 50b. The first is a chamber drama and the second an oratorio, requiring different vocal and instrumental ensembles, so the particular version is essential information for any prospective performers (or indeed researchers) in order to obtain the correct work.

Another field perhaps unique to our catalogue is the 'Smith number', which relates to the identifying element in William C. Smith's *Handel: a descriptive catalogue of the early editions* (2nd ed., London, Blackwell, 1970), which is the key reference tool for early Handel music bibliography.

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1. http://foundlingmuseum.org.uk/
2. http://www.rism.info/en/organisation.html

It lists every variant of Handel's published music known at the time of publication, which is extremely helpful to library staff assessing potential new antiquarian editions, and immensely useful to scholars tracing publication and performance history. Music scores in the eighteenth century were printed from engraved plates, and in Smith's catalogue re-engraved pages (not only title-pages) are identified, price differences noted, and known copies listed. Since we commenced detailed cataloguing we have identified further variants among our editions which are not included in Smith, which is in itself useful for scholars. Gerald Coke was a discerning and thorough collector, and would add a second copy of a work if there were any variants, such as a re-engraved page somewhere in the volume, a different device used for decoration, an errata slip added or manuscript annotations made to a printed item. Thus he acquired two of the surviving half dozen copies of the wordbook from the first performance of *Messiah* in Dublin in 1742; for both copies our catalogue notes "The a in 'gave' of 'He was dispised' (p.9) is added in ink. With a pastedown at the foot of p.11 supplying the missing text of the recitative 'Unto which' and the chorus 'Let all the Angels'"; one copy has further provenance notes from manuscript inscriptions on the item. Often it can be difficult to spot the difference in two apparently identical copies of a score, and we go through them page by page with two colleagues together, looking for differences which might be as small as an additional accidental or a single altered note on a page; it can be time-consuming but with practice it isn't as slow as it might sound, and it is very rewarding to identify a new and different printing. Often one can trace the history through several printings, as plates get more worn and images are less clearly defined, or there is a crack in the original plate, and then suddenly a re-engraved page appears in the next issue.

Formats are another issue peculiar to music. While we are now seeing the advent of ebooks as an alternative to printed books, the music world has always had to deal with the question of formats at an early stage in any bibliographic description; does the reader require a full score (complete version of the whole work), and if so is it for study (pocket size may suffice) or to conduct from (large format required)? Do they want a set of performing parts for their orchestra, quartet, choir, etc.? Do they want a piano reduction, so that a pianist can accompany a choir practising, or the user can play an arrangement of an orchestral work at home? Or another arrangement, such as an orchestral work rearranged for small ensemble? Or do they need a sound recording - and if so, should it be an LP, CD, DVD (for an opera, for example) or other format? Or do they want a critical edition with extensive footnotes, alternative versions of any parts of the work, source information and critical commentary?

Minor variants can distinguish printings as with all musical works; we have recently begun to load our records of eighteenth-century wordbooks (libretti) on to the English Short Title Catalogue, and have been surprised at how many small variants there are, not only in terms of publication detail, price, etc. which might be expected, but also in the number of provincial printings, for example, of a particular musical work, which reflect performances in different venues at the time of printing; of around thirty printings of the libretto of *Acis and Galatea* in our collection, we find publisher locations including Dublin, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Chester, Bath, Salisbury and Oxford, as well as many in London, reflecting local interest in performances in these venues.

Lists of performers mentioned are particularly useful for those researching their history; it was common in the eighteenth century for collections of songs to have the individual title and 'sung by Mr Beard', or whoever had popularised the song, presumably to add to its marketing value. From this information can be gleaned the repertoire, locations and even dates of an individual performer, as well as reconstructing cast lists and performance history of individual works. Similar information can be gathered from concert programmes and the introductions to 'word books' (early programmes which might contain only the libretto and a cast list, but no 'programme notes' as we know them today).

As a multi-format collection assembled by a private individual there are some unusual items among the mainstream formats. We have artefacts as diverse as a Swiss nineteenth-century musical box, an English eighteenth-century mourning ring, a German twentieth-century paper-weight, and a twenty-first century memory stick from the BBC, all featuring Handel.

Many of the nearly 200 concert tickets in our collection are from the eighteenth century and are works of art in themselves, beautifully engraved by leading engravers of the day; the nineteenth-century tickets impart information on prices, availability and audience sizes, and concert programmes from around the world reflect the growing fame of Handel's work in the last century. Conservation work is recorded in extensive notes; a requirement for our software provider was that we could have notes fields which are as long as will ever be needed, so we can transcribe (or cut and paste) extensive reports from conservators on work undertaken.

Our catalogue serves users studying art, social history, performance reception and the more obvious musicology and performance specialisms, and while following the principles of MARC cataloguing which were prevalent when it began, we have customised the database to try to meet the needs of all of these groups. In FRBR terms, we are cataloguing to item level, whether a manuscript or a CD, as almost all our items have a unique identifier of some sort, if only by their provenance. Our authority records have been created in-house, as we often include a descriptor, and many names have little information attached, such as performers in eighteenth-century concerts about whom little is known, who may be described for example simply as 'Smith, Mr G., fl.1820-1831, performer'; not necessarily helpful at first glance, but aggregated with other information at some future date this may be useful to identify a particular individual. Descriptors also help to limit searches for people with a range of functions, e.g. Christopher Hogwood can be found as an author, conductor, editor, performer and donor. There are imperfections in the cataloguing of course, although we do peer check our work, and some detailed cataloguing needs to be added to basic records.

The catalogue is hosted at: http://foundling.soutron.net/Library/Catalogues/Search.aspx

If you are inspired to come and look at something in the collection, please contact us at handel@foundlingmuseum.org.uk.

Masha Stepanova, Coordinator of Cataloging and Slavic Librarian, Miami University Libraries.
William Modrow, Head, Walter Havighurst Special Collections and Archives, Miami University Libraries.

The de Saint-Rat Collection

The André and Catherine de Saint-Rat Collection of Russian History, Literature and Art in the Walter Havighurst Special Collections is a unique grouping of books, objects, pamphlets, manuscripts, and art themed around the Russian Silver Age period and focuses on several prominent artists, as well as the political situation shortly after the 1917 revolution.

As with any rare book cataloguing specialized training is required especially when dealing with foreign language materials. At the time of acquiring the de Saint-Rat materials the one of the challenges we faced included not having a Slavic language cataloguer nor any available cataloguer with the necessary skills to approach such an extensive collection of important materials in multiple formats. Thus the materials were acquired without having anyone prepared to begin the lengthy process of organizing, arranging and cataloguing the collection.

Exhibit brochure

To meet this challenge several meetings and a collaboration between the Library Administration and faculty from the Political Science, the Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies, and Modern languages developed, not only were important resources supported, but a challenge often facing many Special Collections – use of these rare foreign language materials. This was where the collaborations were most successful; faculty and instructors not only used the materials, but continue referring researchers, colleagues and students to the DSR collections.

The greatest outcome of the collaborations was the support for hiring a Slavic cataloguing librarian and among her duties was to work on the de Saint-Rat collection. No processing or cataloguing of the collection, with the exception of some minor sorting, was done until her hire several years after acquisition.

André de Saint-Rat came to Miami University in 1951 to teach Russian language and Russian history, but his real passion and expertise were in collecting rare materials. Through his work with Russian émigrés in Paris he was given and purchased many treasures. However, the collection is far from a gathering of unrelated and random rare items. It was built through Professor de Saint-Rat's connections and knowledge. It is an outstanding research collection that has been sought for exhibition by the Los Angeles County Museum and the Hirshhorn Museum of the Smithsonian. There are items on the history of the Russian Imperial family, military history, folktales, fin-de siècle literature and art, children's literature, transportation, politics, avant-garde art, and others. Some items are not very rare, but contain important marginalia or are related to more unique items in the collection. There are also remarkable gems, such as items from the library of Tsar Nicholas II or the only known surviving copy of a portfolio of political portraits by IUrii Annenkov, which used to be his personal copy. The strength of the collection is not in the number of rare items, but in how well everything fits together. Each historical or artistic event is represented by a number of items in different formats that give a researcher a wide range of reactions from the official Bolshevik perspective to the reaction of the émigré community.
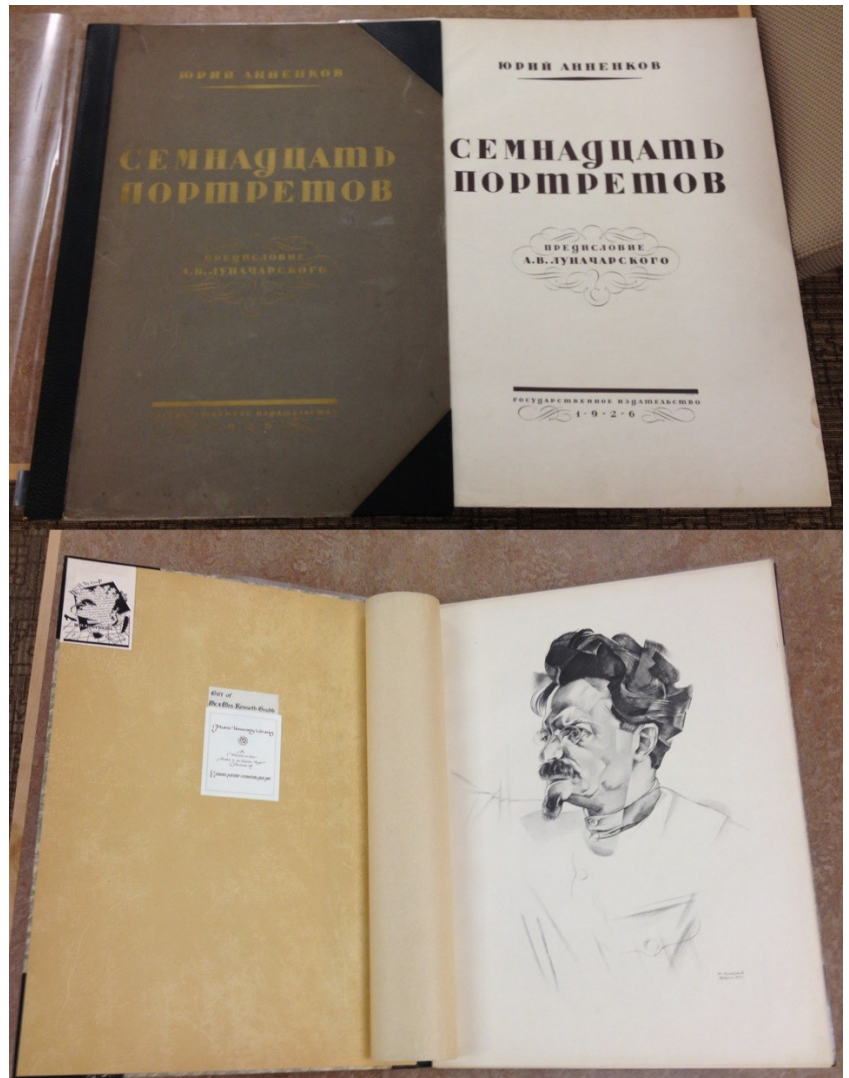
Annenkov

Challenges

Cataloguing a vast collection of varied formatted unique materials in a foreign language is vastly different from regular cataloging due to original records being created and much of the collection, as mentioned, included nontraditional materials not in book format. Much of the collection then could not be catalogued using a "copy" cataloguing process since many of the objects were artist related and did not have Library of Congress authority controls to assist in the processing.

Serving as the visiting then permanent Slavic librarian my first challenge was an inventory of the collection. The inventory was a preliminary processing step, which helped immensely when I began cataloging of the collection, as well as collection development to complement the collection.

The inventory was done with a homegrown database which included a searching tool, allowing me to utilize Worldcat.org, select the correct record, if there was one, and save it into the database. This tool also assigned a unique number to each item, so I was able to print out flags for each of the items. These flags allowed me to see right away if the item required copy or original cataloging and whether or not it was duplicating our holdings.

Cataloguing the collection

Once the inventory was completed, I began cataloging the materials. During this phase, many challenges became immediately apparent. The major ones were obvious: lack of manpower, inconsistent local procedures for local notes and for processing of rare materials, non-Roman script display issues, coming up with a consistent description level for all materials, and my complete lack of rare book cataloging training. Because I am also the Slavic librarian and a native Russian speaker, I am the only cataloguer processing this collection, however, this collection was also added to my regular cataloguing responsibilities. Another challenge from being the only one working on the collection and being able to dedicate little time to it, was having to work in another department where sometimes I'm asked to assist with tasks beyond cataloguing the collection.
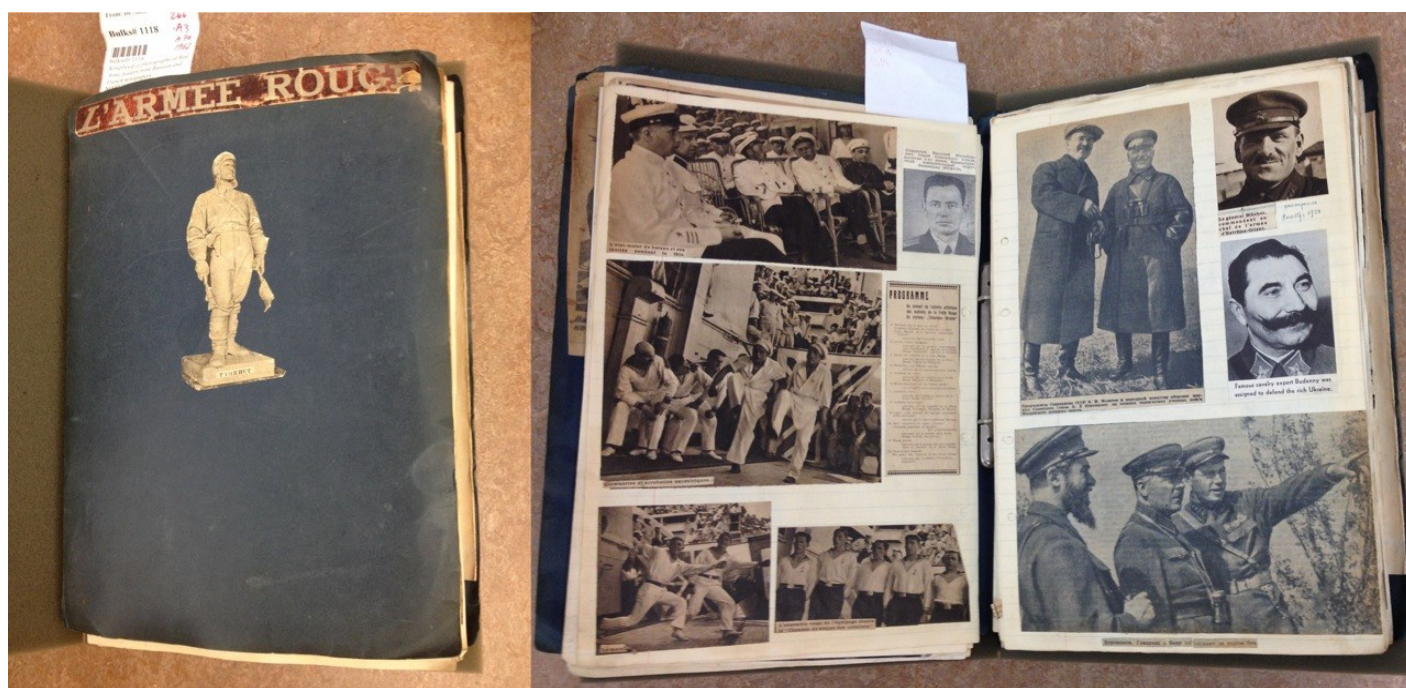
Scrapbook

Very quickly I discovered that there is no standard language for local notes to indicate inscriptions, prior ownership, marginalia, etc. This prompted me to create a working group consisting of everyone who did any cataloging for Special Collections. We researched RBMS rules and procedures and created a standard local procedure.

Another issue was the condition of the materials. An overwhelming number of monographs and especially periodicals from the 1920s were printed on poor quality paper and needed special handling. One of the Special Collections librarians took on the project of evaluating the collection to determine how many items will need boxes or other conservation attention. The condition of materials also raised the question of conservation costs and inspired several grant proposals to fund digitization and or conservation of much of the collection.

Although none of them resulted in conservation funding, we were given more internal funds to purchase items that would complement the de Saint-Rat collection.

The greatest challenge still remains in that over half of all items in the collection are in Russian, which uses Cyrillic script. I started the actual cataloging of items when parallel non-Roman fields were becoming a very attractive addition to bibliographic records. At the time I was not only unable to add them myself, I was faced with our local ILS unable to display diacritics. Beyond being an issue of aesthetics, it made searching for items using diacritics impossible. These problems had to be resolved with several other librarians and each individual diacritic had to be indexed separately in order to be searchable. Eventually I was able to add Cyrillic parallel fields to records if they didn't already have them and have them display successfully at least in one of the versions of our local catalog.

However, there were advantages to having responsibility for cataloging a large collection like the de Saint-Rat collection one is better consistency. I learned to judge fairly easily which items are rarer or important to our collection and what the description level should be for particular levels of importance. Regardless of an item's significance I record any markings on the books for the purpose of provenance, as well as security. This is something that does not get added to records for items in the circulating collection.

Another challenge for unique items and distinct from the circulating collection is how I handle laid in material. In many cases, Professor André de Saint-Rat, included manuscript materials, articles, photographs, and reviews concerning the subject matter of a book. Sometimes there is enough ephemera laid in the book to compromise its structure. When this is the case, I remove extra material, place it in archival envelopes or folders, label them with information on where they came from and organize them in an archival box in call number order. After this is completed, a local note is added to each bibliographic record with information about additional material. The note also directs the patron to ask at the desk in Special Collections.

This procedure, as simple and minimal as it is, involved several librarians, many conversations about the most efficient way to deal with additional materials, and I was able to get the assistance of a graduate student to complete the project. There are further plans, though more long term, to scan more fragile clippings and photographs, storing them on a library server, thus making them accessible to a world of researchers.

The process of cataloging the André and Catherine de Saint-Rat collection is slow and filled with unexpected issues. Because I am the only cataloguer working on the collection and each decision involving several people, only half of the collection is searchable in our local catalog. However, each decision impacted other collections and areas of rare book cataloging locally. The process is slow but fulfilling and fascinating. I have learned much about local procedures, accessibility, and cataloging in this time. I have also learned the collection very well and through the initial collaborations on campus the collection is shared with students in library instruction sessions, with researchers and with visitors to Special Collections.

Anarchist funeral ribbon

Unseen University : Rare Book Cataloguing at the University of Kent

Josie Caplehorne, Rochester Cathedral Cataloguer (at the University of Kent),
Rachel Dickinson, Metadata Assistant, University of Kent

A little bit about Josie…

I arrived at the University of Kent in early 2013 and quickly settled into the role of metadata assistant, having previously worked for Bexley Library service in a public facing role. With no experience of metadata I was guided by my supervisor in the principals of cataloguing. The metadata team was going through a period of transition and consisted of only three team members at this time. Additionally, with the lack of book cataloguing staff present in the Special Collections & Archives team I was quickly tasked with undertaking the cataloguing of rare & special books in collaboration with these teams. However, without the experience of specialist rare book cataloguers, an early obstacle to be navigated was to learn how to handle & catalogue these materials. Although armed with my newly formed knowledge of MARC21, AACR2 & RDA, I was now attempting to teach myself the in-and-outs of DCRM(b).

A little bit about Rachel…

Working with rare books and other archival material is my defining role at the University of Kent. I came to Kent in June 2014, transferring from customer service at Medway Libraries, and everything I have learned about cataloguing has been taught by my colleagues at Kent. I was thrown straight into rare book cataloguing, and for a while needed much assistance from Josie. As the months went on I became more independent, and my role broadened. I now catalogue political cartoons for the British Cartoon Archive, assist in seminars utilising our unique materials, and undertake collections care.

A little bit about our Special Collections…
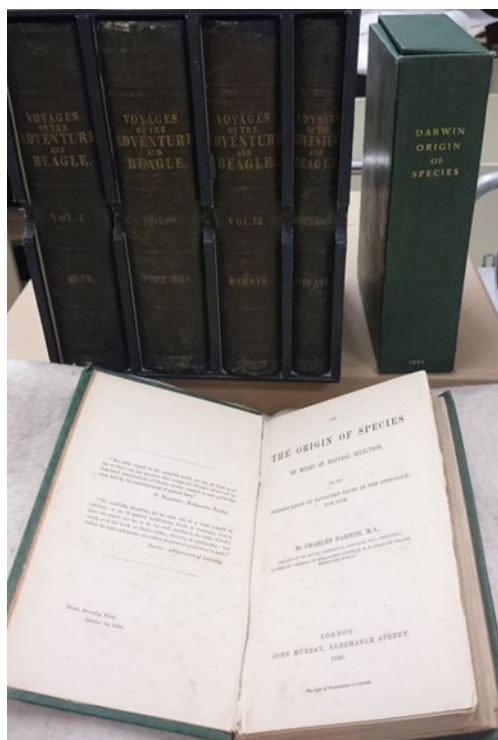
The *Voyages of the Beagle* and first edition *Origin of Species* from the Jack Johns' Darwin Collection.

Special Collections and Archives at the University of Kent is made up of a unique selection of locally, nationally and internationally significant collections. We have a large local history section, including the University archive, and the archive of Hewlett Johnson, Red Dean of Canterbury Cathedral. Kent is home to the British Cartoon Archive, and the newly created *British Stand-Up Comedy Archive*. We are also known for our history of science collections, and our extensive Victorian and Edwardian theatre collections, notably including The Boucicault and Reading/Rayner Collections. We even have a selection of rare publisher's bindings.

Our rare book cataloguing predominately involves working with Special Collections although we do also collaborate with the British Cartoon Archive from time-to-time.

Challenges and Differences:

One major difference between cataloguing rare books and regular stock is the care and handling techniques we apply. All books, including those printed after 1901, are treated with the same deference and care as the oldest, most fragile item in our collections. This ensures that our books are preserved for future generations. Books are always placed on cushions to provide full spine support for even the most fragile bindings, although the latter can prove to be a challenge if there is deterioration.

To further decrease handling, weights are used to hold down pages, although if a book has tight bindings, this can be time consuming to arrange. Sometimes the pages are uncut, which creates further difficulties. We use only soft leaded pencils if it is necessary to write on the item thus allowing easy removal. The biggest challenge this treatment creates is that it significantly increases cataloguing time.


One of our many Bibles, boasting impressive brass book furniture and gilt edges.

In terms of metadata, the Templeman Library catalogue, at the University of Kent, transitioned from AACR2 to RDA in the spring of 2013. Although adapting our existing records and ongoing cataloguing of our standard stock has been straightforward, implementing this to our rare books cataloguing has been an uphill struggle. The main reason for this is that no real decision has been made in the wider library community about how to move forward with RDA & DCRM(b). We deliberated for some time as to whether we should create a policy to provide a clear outline of how we would undertake this in house, all the while holding off, in the hope that a final decision would be made that would have a wider community impact by creating a standardised procedure.

We were eventually required to make our own decision due to a collaborative project between the University of Kent and Rochester Cathedral to undertake the cataloguing of around 2500 of their rare books printed prior 1901.   We produced a detailed series of guidance procedures to be adhered to for the cataloguing of the Rochester Cathedral Collection as well as for the cataloguing of books held at the University of Kent Special Collections & Archives.

These guidance procedures, as well an accompanying policy for the Rochester Cathedral project, has worked towards creating a harmonious relationship between RDA and DCRM(b), to eradicate historical in-house cataloguing conventions and to highlight the differences between standardised cataloguing and rare/special book materials. This all sounds so simple when we break it down to these three areas, but it hasn't always been straightforward.

One of our greatest cataloguing challenges has been the use of 'uncommon' catalogue fields. Historically, many mistakes have been made, mainly with fields being used inappropriately. It would have been easy to continue in the same vein, but we made a conscious decision to make our records as detailed and accurate as possible. However, further complication was encountered when we established that we needed to use fields which had not been used historically, such as the 563 binding field, and the 583 conservation action field. Once understood, these are simple to use, but sometimes gaining understanding is time consuming and difficult.

GREAT CONTEMPORARIES

To

David Lloyd George

from

Winston S. Churchill

October 1937
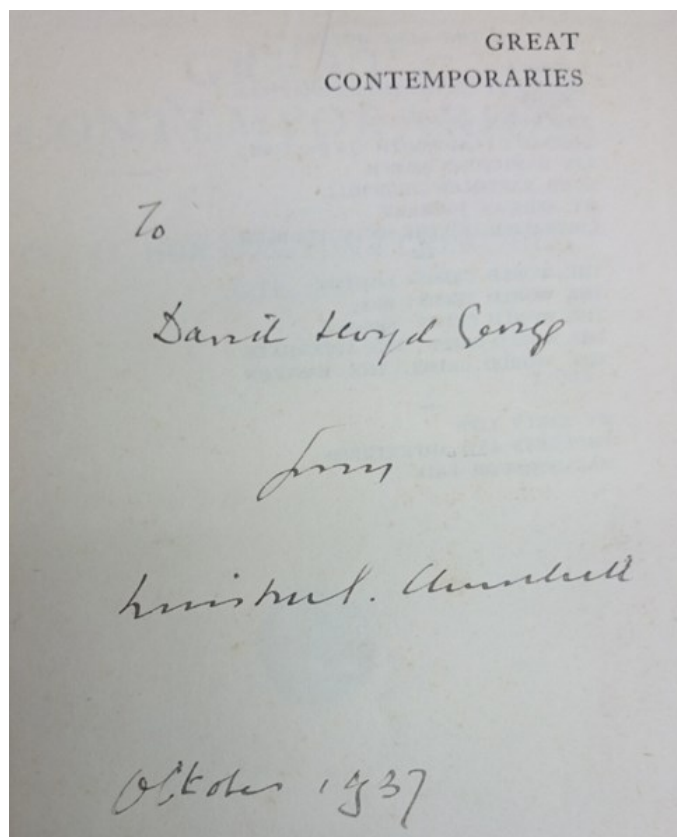
Dedication inscription from Winston Churchill to David Lloyd George in *Great Contemporaries* by Churchill, from the Lloyd George Collection.

Another notable difference is the importance of provenance. Our standard lending library books have any items found in them removed. However, when cataloguing books for Special Collections, important clues as to the provenance of an item are often contained in the book and are referenced in the metadata we create. Some of the books within our regular lending collections also include bookplates, and are referenced in the metadata as the most recent donor/former owner. All other previous provenance information is emitted. In rare book cataloguing this information is often what makes an item interesting or of important historical relevance. Tracing the history of a book in this manner is one of the most fascinating aspects of rare book cataloguing.

Multiple publications that are bound together have also presented a challenge. Historically these items had been catalogued in multiple ways, providing confusing records that lack continuity. It was necessary to standardise this, but producing the most user friendly record was a challenge. We searched many library catalogues, including the British Library and many prestigious academic libraries, and discovered that even these had no one method for cataloguing such items. After much discussion and experimentation, we decided one catalogue record per item was most user friendly, regardless of how many publications were contained within the item. The use of the 505 contents field and the 700 contributor field, in combination with a subfield 't', provide all the necessary searchable information.

Collaborative working beyond the scope of the University is also imperative. Special Collections have a well-established relationship with Canterbury Cathedral Library & Archives staff which we have been fortunate to be part of. The Rare Books Librarian there has been a fantastic support when we have questions and queries, and has also provided training to us to recognise specific book binding features. Josie was recently recruited to the role of the Rochester Cathedral Cataloguer, and is looking to develop a positive working practice beyond the scope of the project closure.

Moving forward, we hope to continue to work collaboratively with our Special Collections teams to develop a rare book cataloguing policy. The vision is to produce a consistently high level of metadata for our rare books, which will subsequently mean that search results will be easily generated beyond the threshold of the University, especially within internationally used & shared Resource Discovery Systems. We also anticipate looking at our historically created rare book catalogue records, to ensure that all our resources are searchable in this way.

The dissemination of the knowledge we have gained between us is also a crucial aspect of developing an understanding of the importance of good quality metadata. We work very well collaboratively, and it is great having another person to talk to when we encounter new areas of interest within this field. We anticipate educating others who contribute to bibliographic metadata, and to encourage wider interest whilst offering a strong support network, something which we have struggled to find elsewhere ourselves. Josie's return from the Cathedral project will bring an enhanced understanding of rare book cataloguing, which can be applied to further highlight our own collections.

Cataloging & managing film and video collections: a guide to using RDA and Marc 21 / Colin Higgins. Chicago: American Library Association, 2015. ISBN: 9780838912997

Reviewed by Clare Playforth, University of Sussex Library

The MARC 21 Bibliographic Standard has advice on how to catalogue as does RDA and in this book Higgins provides relevant information from both, sometimes highlighting areas where they agree, disagree or are ambiguous and providing his own recommendation for best practice. For new cataloguers this could be an excellent way to begin learning to navigate your way through the standards as many of the explanations can be extended to books and other items besides film. There is also a complete chapter on how to use AACR2 for film, which acknowledges the fact that many institutions will be copy cataloguing without necessarily updating every record to RDA.

The book is organised so that over several chapters it runs through the fields of the MARC record one by one, explaining how to best construct them. This will be a logical and helpful arrangement for those who wish to use the book as a reference tool as it mirrors the approach we might use to build or update our own records. This type of organisation also turned out to be a reminder of some of the issues with MARC in general as it highlighted some of the areas where information is duplicated (in particular when we reached the 546 Language Note field we were directed back to the section on the 041 field). It was interesting to see how, although MARC records some things like language in multiple places, there are other data items pertinent to film such as aspect ratio that have no home at all there and hence have to end up in a 500 note.

There were many interesting facts to be learnt. I learned that 57 years pass between the storylines of Alien and Aliens, that Who Framed Roger Rabbit has 743 people in the credits, I learnt the difference between a remake and a reboot and the physical differences between a CD and a DVD. Besides these, Higgins provides us with many great tips and insights to remember when we are cataloguing, for example he recommends that you avoid including anything in the 520 filed that could be a plot spoiler – this seems obvious but it's not something that I'd thought about before.

The book is incredibly thorough and instructs on how to create a record that allows the item its absolute maximum discoverability for the users. I ended up feeling quite confident that I would never remember all the various punctuation rules that RDA specifies but as this book is grounded in a limited concept I would personally find it easier to refer to than I would the RDA toolkit for example, in order to quickly look something up.

Overall I enjoyed reading the book. I found the chapter on the history of film and the evolution of formats from celluloid film strips to VHS, Betamax, DVD and Blu-ray fascinating and there is a section at the end that covers film streaming services and what the future may hold. Besides cataloguers, parts of the content would be very relevant to film librarians, collection development teams and indeed anyone who deals with the acquisition or management of film collections in any format.

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