

# Research collections of primary sources

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## Introduction

The Library holds extensive collections of primary source material to support student projects, dissertations and PhD research. These include collections of rare books, archives and manuscripts held by Special Collections, the Library's digital repository of primary source material (Special Collections Online), subscriptions to online collections supplied by third parties, printed resources and material on microfilm/microfiche. Collections cover most chronological periods and geographical areas, and include material of relevance to a number of schools and departments within the College, particularly English, History, Archaeology and Ancient History, History of Art and Film, and Museum Studies.

The Special Collections reading room in the Library can be booked for small group teaching, to provide students with experience of handling rare books, archives and manuscripts. Sessions can be run by Library staff, academic staff or both. During the present academic year visits have been arranged for students from the Schools of English (EN3040, EN3142, EN3170, EN7001), History (HS1005, HS2319, HS3678, HS7005, HS7017) and Archaeology and Ancient History (AR3075). Sally Horrocks's HS2001 group project requires students to undertake original research using the University Archives, leading to an assessed presentation. There is considerable scope to increase the use of the Library's primary source collections for teaching, assessment and research. At present, one off sessions involving groups of students are not normally followed up by individual visits to carry out independent study. This report identifies collections covering the Ancient, Medieval, Early Modern and Modern periods that could form the basis for undergraduate and taught postgraduate dissertations and identifies archives held by the Library that offer opportunities for PhD projects.

## Undergraduate/taught postgraduate projects

### Ancient/Medieval

*Special Collections* holds a range of original sources that could support student projects on topics such as medieval religious piety, manuscript culture and the early history of the book.

- [Manuscript Bibles and Books of Hours](#) (12<sup>th</sup> century onwards)
- [Brut Chronicle \[The St Albans Chronicle\]](#)
- [Incunabula](#) (books printed before 1500)

### *Online resources*

- [Parker Library on the Web](#) (digital images of manuscripts and early printed books, 6<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries)
- [Parliament Rolls of Medieval England](#)
- [Manchester Medieval Sources Online \(editions of medieval documents\)](#)
- [Translated Texts for Historians E-Library](#) (translated historical sources, AD 300-800)
- [Hengwrt Chaucer](#)

### *Published Primary Sources*

- [Calendar of Patent Rolls](#)
- [Calendar of Close Rolls](#)

### *Microfilm*

- [Piers Plowman](#)
- [Ancient Correspondence 1175-1538 \(12,400 documents covering reigns of King John to King Henry VII\)](#)

## **Early Modern**

### *Special Collections*

- Over 2,000 Books and [Pamphlets](#) printed before 1700
- [Reformation of the University of Cambridge & Essex Ministers, 1644](#)
- [Fairclough Collection of 3,500 17<sup>th</sup> century portraits](#) (collection of engraved portraits of 17<sup>th</sup> century figures, published between 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. See [Special Collections Online](#) for a sample)

### *Online Resources*

- [Early English Books Online](#)
- [Eighteenth Century Collections Online](#)
- [British Newspapers 1600-1950](#)
- [House of Commons Parliamentary Papers](#)

### *Published Primary Sources*

- [Calendar of State Papers](#) (domestic, foreign & colonial)

### *Microfilm*

- [Wills & administrations: District Probate Court, Birmingham. Worcestershire](#)
- [Essex Archdeaconry Act Books](#)
- [Archdeaconry of Colchester Act Books](#)
- [Papers of Prime Ministers of Great Britain](#) (18<sup>th</sup> century)
- [Complete State Papers Domestic](#) (1714-1782)

## **Modern and Contemporary**

### *Special Collections*

- [Joe Orton Archive](#)

- [Sue Townsend Archive](#)
- [David Campton Archive \(author and playwright\)](#)
- [Chris Challis Archive](#) (material relating to the beat generation, mainly correspondence with Carolyn Cassady)
- [Kevin Laffan Archive \(playwright and screenwriter, creator of Emmerdale Farm\)](#)
- [Leicester Mercury Archive](#) (press cuttings and photographs, 1960s-1990s)
- [Joan Skinner Archive](#) (20<sup>th</sup> century Leicester factories and industrial history)
- [Papers of René MacColl \(1905-1971\) author and journalist](#) (foreign correspondent for *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Express*)
- [University of Leicester Archives \(1921-present\)](#)
- [Association of Independent Museums Archive](#)

#### Online resources

- [My Leicestershire History](#) (photographs, film, books and audio)
- [Manufacturing Pasts](#) (industrial change in twentieth century Britain)
- [Archives Unbound](#): Post-war Europe; Testaments to the Holocaust; Women, War & Society
- UK & US Newspapers: [The Times](#) (1785-1985), [Guardian/ObsERVER](#) (1791-2003), [LA Times](#) (1881-1989), [New York Times](#) (1851-2009) and [Washington Post](#) (1877-1996)
- [Mass Observation Online](#)
- [OECD iLibrary](#) (economic surveys from 1960s onwards)
- [UK Data Service](#) (large-scale UK government surveys, international macroeconomic data, qualitative studies and census data from 1971 onwards)

#### Microfilm

Extensive holdings for the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, including:

- [Manuscripts and miscellaneous papers of Charles Dickens from Dickens House](#)
- [Messages between Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston S. Churchill, 1939-1945](#)
- [Diaries of Henry Lewis Stimson](#) (1867-1950), US statesman and politician
- FBI papers on [Malcolm X](#) & [Marcus Garvey](#)
- [Papers of Thomas Hardy](#)
- Various material relating to protest and civil disorder in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain

## PhD projects

Many of the collections noted above could provide the basis for doctoral research. There are three archives held by the University which would lend themselves to PhD projects, for which we are particularly keen to explore possibilities for funding.

- **Joe Orton Archive:** 2014-18 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the first productions of all Joe Orton's major plays, and the period is likely to see a reappraisal of his work. Emma Parker has expressed an interest in supervising a PhD on Orton, and identified as a potential research topic the relationship between his plays and the books that he and Kenneth Halliwell defaced in Islington Library.
- **Sue Townsend Archive:** There has never been any sustained academic work on Sue Townsend, and her literary and personal archive is an untapped research resource. Following her recent death, the Library is considering ways of marking her life and work. A funded doctoral studentship examining Townsend as a social commentator and satirist of late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain would be an excellent way of achieving this.

- **The *Leicester Mercury* Archive:** This collection has received considerable interest from within and outside of the University since its deposit in 2013. The collection can provide material for research into most aspects of the history of Leicester from the 1960s to 1990s. Themes that might be addressed include industry and de-industrialisation, immigration and the nature of local news reporting during the period covered.

We would be keen to discuss with interested departments career development opportunities that could be offered to a funded student, for example developing exhibitions based on their research within the Library and in digital form or the organisation of events to promote the collections.

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