How the Library’s Special Collections can support Digital Humanities Projects
Who I am

• Sean Rippington (sbr2@st-andrews.ac.uk) – Digital Archives Officer, based in the Special Collections Division of the University Library

• Broadly responsible for supporting ‘digital’ within Special Collections
What I’m going to talk about

1) What do we mean by ‘Special Collections’

2) What’s in Special Collections

3) What we’ve been doing to support Digital Humanities

4) What we would like to do to support Digital Humanities

5) Next steps?
1) What do we mean by ‘Special Collections’?

- The University has been collecting books and manuscripts, and its own archives, for its entire six centuries, and the photographic collections have been developed since the birth of photography in the early 19th century.

- With the opening on the new Library building on North Street in the 70s, a Special Collections dept was founded to work with collections not suitable for open shelves
2) What’s in Special Collections?

• Muniments (records of the University itself)

• Manuscripts (handwritten papers, usually - but not always - related to the University or to the local area)

• Rare books (over 200,000 printed books ranging in date from the 15th to 21st centuries)

• Photographs (about 1 million, going back to the earliest days of photography)
Going in to each area in a little more detail…
Muniments – what’s there

The archive contains a huge range of material dating from 1215, including:
- title deeds
- minutes
- accounts
- matriculation and graduation records
- staff and student records
- maps and plans
- photographs
- correspondence
- administrative files

You'll find documents written in Latin, French and Scots as well as in English.
College papers
Readers receipt books
Faculty minutes
Architectural drawings
Student experience – presentation album
Muniments – who uses them?

- The muniments are consulted for many different research purposes: it is a rich source for social, local, national and biographical history.

- Material relating to living persons will be closed!
Manuscripts – what’s there

• Many relate to our local area of North East Fife, such as records of churches and burghs, local estates, schools, societies and sports, including, of course, golf.

• There are also papers from local businesses such as solicitors, engineers, papermakers, furniture firms and architects
Manuscripts – what’s there

• Records of churches
Manuscripts – what’s there

- Records local estates
Manuscripts – what’s there

• Records of schools
Manuscripts – what’s there

- Records of societies
Manuscripts – what’s there

- Records of sports, including golf (!)
Manuscripts – what’s there

- Records of local businesses e.g. solicitors, engineers, papermakers, furniture firms and architects
Manuscripts – what’s there

• We also hold personal papers of people who are, or have been, connected with St Andrews e.g.
  • Douglas Dunn – poet
  • Gerald Finzi – composer
  • The Gregory family – mathematics
  • Ladislav Holy – anthropology
  • Andrew Lang – literature
  • D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson – natural sciences
Manuscripts – what’s there

• Douglas Dunn – poet
Manuscripts – what’s there

- Gerald Finzi - composer
Manuscripts – what’s there

- James Gregory (1638-1675),
  David Gregory (1661-1708),
  David Gregory (1712-1765)
Manuscripts – what’s there

• Ladislav Holy - anthropology
Manuscripts – what’s there

- Andrew Lang - literature
Manuscripts – what’s there

• D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson – Natural Sciences
Manuscripts – what’s there

Finally, the manuscripts include collections covering many academic subjects, such as botany, chemistry, social anthropology, astronomy, marine biology, mathematics, classics and oriental languages.
Manuscripts – what’s there

Botany
Manuscripts – what’s there

Chemistry/Alchemy
Manuscripts – what’s there

Oriental manuscripts
Rare Books – what’s there

• Our Rare Books Collection is really a collection of many smaller collections.

• Includes gifts of entire libraries, bequests of several books and subject-based, named collections.

• Our collection is now comprised of over 50 named collections which range from the personal libraries of former principals to subject-based collections focusing on children’s and photographically illustrated books.
Rare Books – what’s there

• Books of former Principals:
Rare Books – what’s there

- Children’s books:
Rare Books – what’s there

- Photographically illustrated books:
Rare Books, what’s there

• From 1710 to 1837 the Library was entitled to a copy of every book printed in Britain under the Copyright Deposit Act, as a result of which it is particularly strong in 18th century material.
Rare Books, what’s there

- The main subject areas of the collections are theology, classics, history, English and Scottish literature, philosophy, science and medicine.

- There are about 150 incunabula (pre-1501), 5,000 16th century, 7,000 17th century books.
Rare Books, what’s there

- Theology
Rare Books, what’s there

- Science – J.D. Forbes collection
Photography Collection – what’s there

• St Andrews University Library holds one of the largest and most important collections of historic photography in Scotland, stemming primarily from the fact that St Andrews played a vital role in the development of the photographic process through the early interest of Sir David Brewster and his friendship with William Henry Fox Talbot.
Photography Collection – what’s there

• The images exist in a wide variety of formats: negative (on glass and film of varying sizes), lantern slides, prints (from salt paper to modern photographic), postcards and modern transparencies.
Photography Collection – what’s there

• the photographic archive of *Valentines of Dundee*, the well-known photographic company which produced albums of Scottish views from the 1870s, and later became famous as the producer of picture postcards;
Photography Collection – what’s there

• the archive of *Robert M Adam*, the well-known Scottish landscape photographer whose work spans the first half of this century and numbers over 14,000 negatives;
Photography Collection – what’s there

• the work of *George Cowie*, a local press photographer from 1930 to 1982, which covers all aspects of life in and around St Andrews and the East Neuk of Fife, with a considerable section on the subject of golf.
Photography Collection – what’s there

- The work of **Lawrence Levy**, containing over 250,000 images of golf taken between 1978 and 1993,
3) What have we been doing?

Working with Dr Alice Crawford on getting more material online
What have we been doing?
What have we been doing?

• There is an ongoing program to digitise rare books unique to, or of particular interest to, St Andrews. These are available via our Digitised Rare Books portal.
What have we been doing?

**Digital Exhibitions**

- [A Royal Foundation: 400 years of the King James Library](#)
- [Quincentenary Scrolls of the University of St Andrews](#)
- [Light Box](#)
What have we been doing?

- Mass digitisation of photographic collections
Some examples of what Special Collections material can be used for…
What have we been doing?

• St Andrews Cathedral – 3d recreation of the cathedral library
What have we been doing?

ReadMe! – paleography teaching tool
http://openvirtualworlds.org/omeka/exhibits/show/readme
What have we been doing?

- Memory Box Network - pictures to help connect family and friends through conversation and reminiscence
What have we been doing? Ongoing…

• Transkribus – Library borrowing registers
• Historic photo app
• Recreating stereoviews with Google cardboard
• Gregory letters for EMLO
• Roll of Kings – annotation and comparison
• Burnwynd project – records of local trade guilds
• Crowdsourcing – JD Forbes library?
• Online exhibitions
What have we been doing? Ongoing…

- Historic photo app – St Andrews comprehensively photographed at an early stage
What have we been doing? Ongoing

- Recreating stereoviews with Google cardboard
What have we been doing? Ongoing

- Gregory letters for EMLO at the Bodleian
What have we been doing? Ongoing

• Roll of Kings – annotation and comparison with similar rolls
What have we been doing? Ongoing

- Burnwynd project – records of local trade guilds
What have we been doing? Ongoing

- Crowdsourcing – JD Forbes library?
What have we been doing? Ongoing

- Online exhibitions – Open Exhibition 2015
4) What would we like to do?

• Trying to engage more with academics – they will have the best ideas
• Keep up with what academics need
• The Digital Humanities Network
• Critical Mass
• Digitisation Strategy
5) Next steps

• Interested?

• Website: http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/library/specialcollections/

• Online catalogues

• Our curators and staff

• Arrange to visit!
Next steps

http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/library/specialcollections/
Next steps

Online catalogues – no cross-search – not everything is catalogued

Our website should direct you to the appropriate online catalogue, with advice on how to use it
Next steps

Get in touch with our curators and staff:

**Archives Team**
- Rachel Hart
  - Monument Archivist and Deputy Head of Special Collections
  - t: 01334 462327
  - e: rmh@st-andrews.ac.uk

- Maia Sheridan
  - Manuscript Archivist
  - t: 01334 462341
  - e: ms101@st-andrews.ac.uk

- Fiona Menzies
  - Project Archivist
  - t: 01334 461727
  - e: fhm4@st-andrews.ac.uk

**Rare Books Team**
- Daryl Green
  - Rare Books Librarian
- Elizabeth Henderson
  - Rare Books Librarian
- Christine Megowan
  - Rare Books Cataloguer
Next steps

Make an appointment to visit:

Portacabins in North Haugh not pictured
Next steps: Discussion points

- Feasibility
- Scope and limits of the project
- Copyright/permission – not everything we hold belongs to us
- Collaboration
- Funding
- Technical assistance – digitisation
- Preservation/ongoing maintenance
Next steps

• Give us feedback! What should we be doing?

• If our collections aren’t useful – why not?

• What should we be collecting? What should be cataloguing and digitising?