

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of Bristol
Unit of Assessment: 29 Department of English
Title of case study: Transforming access to, and raising awareness of, the Penguin Archive
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

The Penguin Archive Project, funded by a major grant from the AHRC [7], produced an online catalogue of the Penguin Collection at the University of Bristol Library (launched in 2011). Penguin Books transformed the range and greatly extended the availability of books to a general readership in the twentieth century. The Penguin Archive located at the University of Bristol can therefore be conceived of as a record of the democratisation of reading in the UK in the twentieth century. As a result of the Penguin Archive Project impact has been realised in three main areas: improving access to the Penguin Archive and making it easier to use for a variety of non-academic users; raising awareness and understanding of the significance of the archive and the rich cultural heritage of Penguin books through public engagement and media activities including a major international conference in 2010; developing collaborative links with Penguin and contributing to their publishing practice. As a result, researchers, editors, authors, publishers and other users such as the Penguin Collectors Society now have access to this major resource.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)
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The project was conceived by scholars at the University of Bristol in collaboration with librarians and archivists at the University Library's Special Collections. The Penguin Archive contains the archives of Penguin Books from its 1935 foundation to the 1980s. It includes a wide variety of materials on the business life of Penguin Books, as well as social events, legal cases (particularly the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* trial of 1960), exhibitions on the company's history, and the private lives of prominent figures in the early history of the company, including Sir Allen Lane, Eunice Frost and Betty Radice. It also includes a large collection of Penguin books from 1935 to date.

John Lyon (Reader in English Literature, 1986 to April 2013), who made extensive use of the Penguin Collection in editing works by Joseph Conrad and Henry James for Penguin Classics and Penguin Twentieth Century Classics [1, 2] saw the value of establishing an effective database and catalogue of the archive. Lyon became PI for the project, and was joined by George Donaldson (Lecturer in English, 1985 to 2009, Research Fellow, 2009 to 2012), whose research on D. H. Lawrence also drew on the archive [3], by Hugh Pemberton from the Department of History, and by Ika Willis from the Department of Classics. The 'multifaceted, multidisciplinary approach' of the project was noted in the AHRC's publication *Leading the World* in 2008 (p.31). The Penguin Collection was a resource for scholars at Bristol who could access it directly. Those interested in publishing history, especially the history of Penguin itself, were aware of its significance; but it was cumbersome to use, and a strong case was made both to open it up to a wider audience, and to enhance its functionality. An online catalogue of the Penguin Collection was created to make this valuable resource more accessible to a variety of users.

The project generated significant new research particularly in the areas of modern poetry, 'Penguin Specials' and their socio-political impact, and Penguin translations of the classics. Researchers who worked on the project include Dean Blackburn [4], Robert Crowe [5] (PhD students), and William Wootten [6] (Postdoctoral Research Fellow). The research addressed important issues, exploring what the evidence of Penguin Books tell us about how we have come to understand contemporary poetry, how our taste was formed and how we have come to read the particular poets that we do [6]. Other lines of research examined the influence of the series of 'Penguin Specials' in focusing political issues — in shaping public opinion, the agenda of social and political analysis and action, and the policies of successive governments in the second half of the twentieth century [4] — and the role Penguin Classics play in our modern understanding of the writings of Ancient Greece and Rome [5].

These strands of research fed directly into the project's public engagement activities, whilst a number of other publications benefitted from the archive including, for example: Patrick Cramsie, *The Story of Graphic Design: From the Invention of Writing to the Birth of Digital Design* (London: British Library, 2010); Valerie Grove, *So Much to Tell: The Biography of Kaye Webb* (New York:

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Viking Press, 2010); Susie Harries, *Nikolaus Pevsner: The Life* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2011); Valerie Holman, *Print for Victory: Book Publishing in England, 1939-1945* (London: The British Library, 2008); Andrew Marr, *The Making of Modern Britain* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2010); Sean Matthews, 'The trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*: "The most thorough and expensive seminar on Lawrence's work ever given"', in *New D H Lawrence*, ed. Howard Booth (Manchester University Press, 2010); Joe Pearson, *Drawn Direct to the Plate* (Penguin Collectors Society, 2010); William Wootten, 'Fifty Years on: The Triumph of the Penguin Modern Poets', *TLS* (2012); ——— 'A Passage to Harmondsworth: E. M. Forster as a Penguin Author', *Bristol Bound* (2009). These examples comprise literary criticism, biography, social history, publishing history, and the links between these subjects; publishers range from university presses to mainstream commercial publishers, journals, societies and public bodies.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)**Publications before launch of project**

- [1] John Lyon (ed.), Joseph Conrad, *Youth/Heart of Darkness/The End of the Tether* (Penguin Modern Classics, 1995). ISBN 0140185135. Can be supplied on request.
 [2] Henry James, *The Sacred Fount*, ed. John Lyon (Penguin Classics, 1994). ISBN 0140433503. Can be supplied on request.
 [3] George Donaldson, 'Unestablished Balance in *Women in Love*' in *D. H. Lawrence in Italy and England*, ed. George Donaldson and Mara Kalnins (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1998) pp. 52-76. ISBN 0312216823. Can be supplied on request.

Publications during or subsequent to launch

- [4] Dean Blackburn, 'Penguin Books and the "Marketplace for Ideas"', in *Reassessing 1970s Britain*, eds. Hugh Pemberton, Pat Thane and Noel Whiteside (Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 224-51. ISBN 9780719088148. Can be supplied on request.
 [5] Robert Crowe, 'How to Fillet a Penguin: Remarks on Bowdlerizing the Classics', in *Expurgating the Classics: Editing Out in Latin and Greek*, eds. Stephen Harrison and Christopher Stray (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012). ISBN 9781849668927. Can be supplied on request.
 [6] William Wootten, "'That Alchemical Power": The Literary Relationship of A Alvarez and Sylvia Plath', *Cambridge Quarterly* (2010), pp. 217-36. DOI 10.1093/camqtly/bfq020. Submitted to REF2

Grant

- [7] John Lyon, George Donaldson, "Penguin Archive Project" 2008-2012, AHRC, £650,000

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

(i) Improving access: The online catalogue represents a major advance in the public accessibility of the archive. One key beneficiary of the online catalogue (and of the Penguin Archive Project generally) is the Penguin Collectors Society (PCS). The PCS is a registered charity with more than 500 members internationally. It encourages and supports the study and collecting of works published by Penguin. The Chairman of the PCS, states that the improvement in the catalogue 'has been the greatest achievement of the Project for researchers into the history of Penguin Books' [a]. As an example, the archive prompted Gaby Wood's *Daily Telegraph* article 'A Touch of Frost: the Story of Penguin's Secret Editor' [b]. The article draws on the archive's holdings of the personal papers of Eunice Frost, an editor at Penguin in the 1930s and the first female director, aiming to recuperate 'one of the [publishing] industry's most significant, yet forgotten, forces'. Following the archive's cataloguing, Penguin Books have solicited assistance from the archivists in the preparation of their own catalogues and lists, including requesting information to identify typography and text designers through Penguin's history and a list of Pelican publications. The archive also provided assistance during the relaunch of the Penguin English Library on 26 April 2012, including a request for journalist to do a feature on the archive/PEL by Penguin Press Officer, Mari Yamazaki. The archive is valued by members of the public conducting independent research, or with an interest in publishing history, for example an independent scholar, who is using the archive in order to write a chapter on the Penguin Classics editorship of Betty Radice for a forthcoming book on women Classical scholars. She is also working on a study of the reception of Modern Greek poetry, in which the Penguin *Four Greek Poets* played a crucial role [c]. The improved access to the archive can in part be measured by the significant increase in the number of visits to the archive, from 51 in 2006 to 284 in 2010, or from the number of items signed out from

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the Penguin Archive, which rose from 643 in 2008 to 2009 to 1000 in 2010 to 2012 (the latter figure representing 40% of all items signed out from the Library's archives).

(ii) Raising awareness:

Penguin Books was founded in 1935 as a 'means of converting book-borrowers into book-buyers'. The company had an 'impact agenda in making books available to huge audiences through high quality inexpensive paperbacks, so it was natural that the project which brought the Penguin archives into the public domain should be mindful of its own impact. From the launch onward the project has engaged and informed the wider reading public that has been shaped by Penguin Books and the publishing revolution it helped to bring about. The launch of the project was covered in articles in the national press and broadcasting media, e.g. Toby Clements's *Daily Telegraph* article 'History of Penguin Archive' [d] which celebrates the status of the archive as "a record of 'the democratisation of reading'". The launch event in Bristol on 2 December 2008 included a poetry reading by James Fenton at the Watershed (and featured a mini-exhibition), with an attendance of 240 (sold out). The project hosted conferences and study-days, all of which included events open to the public and generated media coverage:

- 'Lady Chatterley and Her Consequences' (2 July, 2009). This event included plenaries from Fiona Becket and Alistair McCleery and a mini-exhibition. Donaldson was interviewed about *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in February 2011 on *The One Show*, BBC1 [e], which has an average daily audience of 5 million viewers.
- '75 Years of Penguin Books: an International Multidisciplinary Conference' (29 June—1 July, 2010). This event featured plenaries from Christopher Ricks, David Cannadine, Kim Reynolds, and Simon Eliot, a panel discussion from Penguin's current editorial staff, a mini exhibition and tours of the archive. The audience of 75 included members of the PCS, publishers, graphic designers and writers. Public lectures on the history of Penguin design by Phil Baines and James Pardey attracted an audience of 200. The conference was favourably reviewed in *The Penguin Collector*, which described 'three fascinating days of Penguinary investigation, dissection, explanation and celebration' [f], whilst the Chairman of the PCS described it as 'a considerable contribution to the overall knowledge of the history of Penguin books and the extraordinary contribution which the firm has made to the social history of the century' [a]. The event prompted an article, 'Picking up Penguins for 75 Years', by Clare Matheson, Business reporter, on BBC news online [g], which raised awareness of the role of Penguin Books in publishing history.
- 'The New Poetry and Penguin Modern Poets: 50 Years', 16 March 2012. This conference stemmed from Wootten's research on Al Alvarez [6]. It featured a plenary lecture by Edward Lucie-Smith, and panels on Penguin Poetry and Translation, Al Alvarez and *The New Poetry*, and Penguin Modern Poets, attended by 25 conference delegates. The public face of the conference featured a Q & A session with Al Alvarez (introduced by William Wootten) and readings by three of the poets published in the first series: John Fuller, Edward Lucie-Smith, and Tom Raworth, and attracted an audience of 300. A programme sparked by the conference entitled 'The Paperback Poets', in the BBC Radio 4 series *Archive on 4*, commemorated the Penguin Modern Poets series and featured a visit to the Penguin Archive [h].

A series of Penguin Readers' Days (for the general public) was devoted to the place of Penguin Books in popular cultural memory, inviting Penguin readers to share personal memories:

- 'Introducing Penguin: A Penguin Readers' Day', 24 October, 2009. Included workshops by members of the project and talk by the biographer of Allen Lane, Jeremy Lewis. Featured mini-exhibition. Attendance: 30.
- 'Puffin Study Day', 15 October 2010. Included talks by Puffin editors past and present and author and illustrator Jan Pienkowski. Featured mini-exhibition. Attendance: 65. 'Penguin, Puffin, and the Paperback Revolution', a programme presented by the author Michael Morpurgo—son-in-law of Allen Lane, founder of Penguin Books—featured a visit to the Penguin Archive as part of a history of the firm and his own involvement with it (j).
- 'Writers and Publishers', 26 November 2011. Speakers included historian of Penguin Steve Hare and current Penguin authors and editors reflecting on editorial processes past and present. Attendance: 40.

The project contributed to the InsideArts festival, the University of Bristol's major public-access arts event, in October 2011, with a display and mini-exhibition of material from the archive, and a panel discussion (18 October) led by Lyon, Donaldson, and Hannah Lowery (Special Collections Archivist). The event was fully booked with an audience of 30. Feedback revealed a mixed audience including members of the public from Bristol. Attendees found the event 'stimulating and interesting' whilst one individual noted, 'I wallowed in nostalgia' [i].

(iii) Links with Penguin

Throughout the project there have been extensive links with Penguin Books. Current Penguin employees have participated in Readers' Days and the three-day conference, and events have been carefully coordinated with Penguin. Archive staff have helped Penguin with queries over the archive, being of particular assistance to both Penguin and Penguin USA in their gathering of archival material for the 75th anniversary of Penguin Books. The excellent relationship between Bristol and Penguin was confirmed when former Penguin MD Helen Fraser was awarded an honorary degree in 2010. The 2010 conference, '75 Years of Penguins', included a special session 'Judging a Book by Its Cover', with guest lectures on Penguin design by Phil Baines and James Pardey. The event introduced current members of editorial, design and marketing staff at Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, Penguin and Puffin to an academic audience and to members of the general public. It was reported back that issues raised at the conference were fed into Penguin's discussions of current publishing strategy.

The Department of History has secured corporate sponsorship from Penguin Books for an annual 'Penguin History Lecture', partly on the basis of the company's links to Bristol through the archive. Professor Robert Bickers, Director of the AHRC-funded British Inter-University China Centre, secured funding for a post-doctoral researcher to work for Penguin Books examining the archive's holdings of editorial files on early Penguin publications related to China. Penguin China want to capitalise on the press's heritage identity as part of its marketing in China. They aim to republish some of the work, and this research will help to inform that programme.

The project was instrumental in securing two major donations to the archive, the first of books from the personal library of Penguin founder Sir Allen Lane (given by his daughter Christine Teale), the second the Rough Guide archive (given by Mark Ellingham, founder of the *Rough Guides*).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- [a] Chairman, Penguin Collectors Society. Corroborates the significance of the online catalogue and the impact of the 2010 conference in raising awareness of the history of Penguin books.
- [b] Gaby Wood, 'A Touch of Frost: the Story of Penguin's Secret Editor', *The Daily Telegraph*, 5 August 2010. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/7926458/A-touch-of-Frost-the-story-of-Penguins-secret-editor.html>. Demonstrates how making the Penguin Archive accessible has enabled journalists and writers to raise awareness of the history of Penguin Books.
- [c] Independent scholar. Demonstrates how the archive is now being used in research outside of higher education.
- [d] Toby Clements, 'History of Penguin Archive', *Daily Telegraph*, Wednesday 16 November, 2008. Corroborates benefits of opening the archive to the public.
- [e] *The One Show*, BBC1, 7pm, 24 February 2011. Corroborates raising awareness of the archive and its history to a national audience.
- [f] Review of '75 Years of Penguin Books: an International Multidisciplinary Conference' in *The Penguin Collector*, 74 (August 2010). Corroborates the impact of the 2010 conference in terms of raising awareness of the history of Penguin books.
- [g] 'Picking up Penguins for 75 Years', article by Clare Matheson, BBC news 30 July 2010 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-10794227>. Corroborates raising awareness of publishing history.
- [h] 'The Paperback Poets' (21 July 2012, in the BBC Radio 4 series *Archive on 4*). Corroborates raising awareness of the archive and its history.
- [i] Collected feedback from 2011 InsideArts Festival. Corroborates raising awareness of the archive and its history.
- [j] 'Penguin, Puffin, and the Paperback Revolution' (2 September 2010, a Unique Production for BBC Radio 4). Corroborates raising awareness of the archive and its history.