

Harwell Case Study: Collections transfer and quarantine, University of Leeds

When libraries and archives are presented with exciting opportunities to obtain new acquisitions, it is important to ensure that incoming collections are in a suitable condition and do not pose a risk of cross contamination to existing holdings. Checks of incoming collections should be conducted to verify that they are dry, pest-free, clean and with no evidence of historic or active fungal contamination. Without checks, and intervention where needed, the new acquisition can potentially deteriorate after transfer, even in high-quality storage conditions, or even trigger pest or fungal outbreaks.

Harwell Restoration can provide a holistic solution to new acquisitions, from simple, packing, transfer and delivery, to more complex projects, involving challenging transportation, quarantine and repackaging. Often requirements include freezer deinfestation to eradicate insect pests, interventive drying to remove excessive moisture content, and cleaning of dust deposits and mould growth. Additionally, our skilled and experienced teams can remove fixings such as staples, repackage and label new collections, where required.

University of Leeds Project

Last year, the University of Leeds was fortunate to receive a bequest from the John Victor Bedford Will Trust, which included the donation of John Evan Bedford Library of Furniture History. John Bedford was a noted antique dealer and collector, who amassed a significant rare and modern book collection on the history of furniture design over a period of 40 years in his home on the island of Guernsey.



Working closely with the Collections and Engagement Manager (Rare Books and Maps) and Conservation Officer for the university, Harwell oversaw the packing and transportation of the thousands of volumes and papers from Mr Bedford's property, identifying the small number of items which required intervention before safe transfer to Leeds.

After quarantine at Harwell, Harwell moved and shelved the volumes in the Special Collections store. A cataloguing project is now underway to make the collection available to researchers.

Rhiannon Lewis –Francis, Collections and Engagement Manager comments about her satisfaction with the completion of the project:

“It was a pleasure working with Emma at Harwell to ensure the best possible care for this important collection. The complex move was undertaken with a perfect blend of professionalism and good humour .”

If you would like to discuss any future projects, please do not hesitate to contact us by phone on 0800 019 9990 or email us at info@harwellrestoration.co.uk.