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Special collections in the university library: an examination of special collections at Nottingham University Library and Warwick University Library

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SPECIAL COLLECTIONS IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY: AN
EXAMINATION OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AT NOTTINGHAM
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AND WARWICK UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

by

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A Master's Dissertation, submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the
Master of Arts degree of the
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OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AT NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AND
WARWICK UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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SECTION ONE

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation was designed to shed some light on broad issues concerning special collections in university libraries. To this end the special collections held by the Libraries of the Universities of Nottingham and Warwick have been examined (throughout, references concerning Nottingham are to the humanities and social sciences library, and not to any other of the constituent parts of the University Library as a whole). These particular institutions were chosen for reasons of proximity and of personal contacts, not because they are held to be in any way typical of special - or, perhaps 'research' - collections in this field.

Nor was the exercise designed specifically as a comparison. A true comparison can only be made of like with like, and the Libraries of Warwick and Nottingham, together with their special collections, are not, to use the phrase of Humphreys, "similar in genesis and in character" (1). Inevitably comparisons are drawn during the course of this work, as a means of highlighting the specific experience of each institution: however, given the limited validity of direct comparison between each institution, the contrasts have been kept implicit in the text rather than explicit.

1.2 Definitions

The phrase 'special collection' is open to a number of interpretations. For present purposes the comment of Cave has been taken as a starting-point:

"The terminology is not particularly important, as long as it is recognized that we are dealing with a special category of library materials (which of course need not be books) whose acquisition, technical processing, storage and exploitation all call for different treatment from the run-of-the-mill stock of the library". (2)

This is adequate as a rough rule of thumb. However, not all of these conditions need apply all the time. The acquisition of material could be quite 'run-of-the-mill' without the collection to which that material is added becoming any less "special". The printed material on D H Lawrence at Nottingham University Library is a case in point.

Likewise, the 'storage' aspect is not so simple as Cave suggests. True, it is useful to argue that, as a general rule, if it is on the open shelves, it is not a special collection. Thus for present purposes the outstanding collections at Warwick in twentieth-century German literature and pure maths have, since they co-exist on open shelves with the 'run-of-the-mill' stock, been dismissed as 'strengths' of the general bookstock rather than special collections. Similarly at Nottingham the Mellish meteorological collection, on open shelves away from the special collections sections, has been classed a 'strength' of the geography stock.

But to be on open shelves does not in itself prevent material from being 'special' in its present meaning. The definition is bound up too with provisions for the exploitation of the material, and a collection may be on open access and yet, by virtue of a complement of staff devoted specifically to its exploitation and administration, be 'special'. The Warwick statistics collection and the Nottingham East Midlands collection fall into this category.

Furthermore, certain material which is on closed access and termed 'special collections' has been virtually ignored for present

purposes. The special collections dealt with in this work are those which have some sort of internal coherence either because they have been gathered together specifically for a particular purpose or because of their provenance, through which they arrived at the library as "libraries" in themselves. A completely different collection are the books which Humphreys identifies (3) as acquired from diverse sources and later gathered together for administrative and security reasons. Thus the 'special collections' collection in the Nottingham special collections department and the material contained in the 'special collections room' at Warwick are only lightly touched on here, since they are not strictly 'collections' at all but assemblages of items too valuable to be left on open access shelving.

A final point to mention is that throughout this piece of work 'special collections' is a phrase interpreted to embrace both printed and manuscript collections. It would be too simplistic to argue that printed sources are the province of librarians, manuscript of archivists, and it would be impossible to gain an accurate picture of a university library's commitment to, and preoccupation with, research material if one was to consider either one or the other but not both. In the case of each library under consideration a major element of its 'special' significance as a centre for academic research lies in collections of original sources.

1.3 A note on the literature

The amount of literature on special collections relevant to the present purpose has not been found to be extensive. Cave (4) is an adequate introduction to the area. Humphreys (5) is particularly interesting insofar as he differentiates, as we have seen, between different types of special collection: in this he has exerted influence on the definitions within which the present work has been planned.

A useful account, one might even say a model account insofar as the present work is based on a model (which is not very far) is that of Cox (6), a case-study of the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds. Also stimulating was the work of Inns (7). The journal Archives recently contained three papers concerned with support of the national heritage by national funds: these shed valuable light on an area which can often appear confused (8).

Some time was spent examining recent American accounts of work in the field of special collections. These have been included in the Bibliography because if they are of little relevance to current practice in Britain, they at least contain new ideas and a different perspective on the functions and responsibilities of the special collections librarian and/or archivist (9).

The bulk of the literature used for this piece of work is material which has emanated from the institutions themselves, in the form either of annual reports and readers' guides, or of published and unpublished accounts of their work by the librarians and archivists concerned. In addition to this there have been valuable personal interviews at Warwick and Nottingham, face-to-face and by telephone, which have helped to create an accurate picture of the work undertaken by the relevant sections of the Libraries, and to reveal some of the preoccupations of the staff in charge of such sections.

1.4 The pattern of this work

The dissertation falls into two main parts. The first, Section Two, concerns the development of the special collections under review; the second, Section Three, is a discussion of different aspects of policy and practice in the special collections reviewed here, under the broad title of 'Attitudes'.

Broadly speaking Section Two concerns itself with the past, Section Three with the present. Much of the material has been obtained from the mouths of those in charge of the special collections. This is particularly true in the case of Section Three, in its concern with present practice; and it is to be hoped that this will go some way towards explaining the somewhat loosely-structured nature of the section entitled 'Attitudes'.

1.5 What special collections?

1. University of Nottingham Library

Special collections at the University Library can be said to have developed shortly after the removal of the University College to its Highfields site, where initial building work was finished in 1928. Part of the suite of buildings provided for by the Boot largesse was a library, the first the college had possessed. Hitherto it had relied on the resources of Nottingham City Library adjacent to its original site in Shakespeare Street, Nottingham.

The University Library has included a local history collection from its earliest days - it was already "in the process of formation" by 1931 (10) - and to this day the East Midlands collection of material on the historic counties of Derby, Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham and Rutland forms the bulk of the special collections department.

Other collections have accrued to the department. Foremost among these is the Briggs Collection of early educational material, amassed, presented and endowed by Dr W G Briggs. Two collections were presented to the Library by Cambridge City Library in 1960: they are now known as the Cambridge Shakespeare Collection (primarily eighteenth and nineteenth century editions of Shakespeare) and the Cambridge Drama Collection (mostly English plays from 1750 to 1850). The basis of the French Revolution Collection

was acquired in the early days of the Library by Professor Owen (Librarian 1928-31) and Mr Flack (Librarian 1931-58), from the duplicates available from the Crawford Library, and subsequently by purchase (11); it contains many contemporary pamphlets and books. The D H Lawrence Collection comprises editions of works by Lawrence together with material on him. The Coventry Patmore Collection is similarly a collection of works by and about the poet, built up mainly during the 1930's. The basis of the Parker Woodward Collection is Woodward's Baconian Library, presented in 1945 by his son.

The department houses two parish libraries: that of Oakham, received on deposit in 1980 and that of Elston, recently received from the County Library where it had been on deposit since the 1950's.

Finally the department houses so-called "special collections": that is, "books of unusual rarity and value.... all books printed before 1701 are placed here, together with examples of fine printing and some literary first editions". (12)

The other half of 'special collections' activity at Nottingham is contained in the Manuscripts Department, designated a department in its own right in 1958 (13).

Manuscripts can be said to have arrived, in a haphazard fashion, ever since the Library opened in 1928. By 1936 the manuscripts collection had begun to assume a position of importance in the Library (14). Instrumental in the process of building up a manuscript collection was Flack's interest in developing a local collection. When the Historical Manuscripts Commission established the National Register of Archives after the war (15), Flack became County Secretary for the operation in both Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. He was thus in a prime position to make contact with local sources of archival material. In 1947 an archivist was appointed to the library. This predated Records Offices appointments

for both the County and City of Nottingham, a mark that the University acquired material which might well have gone to public repositories at a later date. By 1950 it is clear that the major pride of the University Library was vested in the manuscript collections; the special collections of printed material having come to be perceived very much as an adjunct to original sources (16).

The present contents of the Manuscripts Department can be grouped under the following headings:

- a) family papers
- b) Church records
- c) business and trade union papers
- d) water authority and drainage records
- e) hospital records
- f) literary manuscripts

2. University of Warwick Library

Various areas of special library interest have evolved since library collections began in 1963. However, the library collection has evolved in such a way that there are in it no whole, separately-staffed sections such as are termed at Nottingham the 'manuscripts' or 'special collections' departments. Special collections at Warwick, for the purposes of the present piece of work, comprise individual outstanding areas of the library collection under specific librarians who may or may not have other responsibilities.

A policy of collecting in support of lively departments of politics, economics and law began the nucleus of what has become one of the country's foremost collections of statistics, particularly in the fields of trade and finance (17). Besides serving the needs of university academic departments the collection is the basis for a commercial information service - the 'Warwick Statistics Service' - which is an attempt to offer outside London a service parallel to that of the Statistics and Market Intelligence Library

of the Department of Trade and Industry.

The second important collection at Warwick is known as Economics Working Papers. This provides research information, in the form of working papers in economics and a collection of company reports, to its university clientele in addition to an international audience which it provides through its own commercial service. It has no rivals: Warwick holds "what has become the national collection" (18).

Also contained in Warwick University Library is the Modern Records Centre, established in 1973 and now the largest collection of primary trade union material in the country. Its terms of reference are however larger than this would suggest: it collects in addition the records of employers, of pressure groups, of political parties, and of individuals in the sphere of British labour and industrial history.

Warwick, like Nottingham, has a number of items which are deemed "special collections". In the absence of a section to put them in they occupy their own air-conditioned room. Here are kept all early printed books, limited editions, examples of fine-binding, fine-printing, and so on. This is in many ways a haphazard collection amassed in this form for administrative convenience and is not touched upon in great detail here since it falls outside the present definitions. It does contain items of special significance. A good example is the 'Marandet' collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French plays (19).

SECTION TWO
THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

In discussing the 'development' of special collections one is asking a fundamental question: "How do these special collections come to be in this institution at all?" In looking for an answer to this question one becomes aware of a number of different factors at work: personal; financial; local; institutional; and 'chance' factors.

2.1 Personal factors

a) It is difficult to underestimate the role of particular individuals played in the inception and development of a particular special collection. This may appear obvious - a special collection does not spring up of its own accord. But the personal influences justify considerable emphasis.

Nottingham University Library is relatively old-established compared to Warwick University Library but the history of the dependence of each on individuals is similar. It is no surprise that what Tucker writes in his first Library Report - that it is not possible to foresee a time when gifts of books or money will not be indispensable (1) - is an echo of a statement of Flack's in 1948:

"not a single University library has achieved a position of esteem without the assistance of numerous benefactors. It is confidently hoped that at the present time more persons will come forward to assist the library in its efforts to fulfil the great task that lies before it". (2)

b) At Nottingham

The foundation of the University's special collections department depended crucially on committed individuals.

The East Midlands Collection began life as an enthusiasm on the part of the Librarians Owen and Flack, coupled with that of academics such as A.C. Wood; as far as the beginnings of material itself is concerned, in 1931 the local collection was attributed almost entirely to the generosity of Mr. Granger (3). Likewise the enthusiasm of Owen and Flack created what is now known as the French Revolution Collection. For the Briggs Collection the University is indebted to W.G. Briggs; for the Parker Woodward Collection to the Woodward father and son - father for amassing the collection, son for depositing and occasionally adding to it; for the Coventry Patmore Collection to the enthusiasm and generosity of Professor R.M. Hewitt and Frederick Page (4). Cambridge City Library was indebted to Mr. H.T. Hall for the collections of drama material which it donated to Nottingham University Library in 1960; in its turn the University Library appears indebted to the friendship, through a regional committee, of the Cambridge City Librarian with the University Librarian (5).

Quite who bought what for which special collection until the appointment of a special collections librarian in 1972 remains unclear. But the Librarian of the day (Owen, Flack and Smith) seems to have played a large role. Much of the local collection appears to have been housed in the Librarian's room (6), which is a reflection of subject preoccupations amongst library staff as much as it is a comment on shortage of space.

The development of manuscript holdings has been crucially dependent on individual donors. But the role of the individual went further. That Flack became local Secretary of the post-war National Register of Archives project inevitably facilitated the flow of deposits to his own library, and the development of services

in the Manuscripts Department itself depended on personalities: J H Hodson, Keeper of the Manuscripts from 1958 to 1964, has been credited with breaking new ground in exploiting manuscript material (7).

Hodson also played a great part in the development of material on D H Lawrence. The collection of Lawrence material, both printed and manuscript, was dependent on individuals determined to rehabilitate Lawrence's name - notably Hodson and Professor Pinto. In 1947, when the present Keeper arrived, the name of Lawrence was a dirty word in the University largely because of Lawrence's involvement with the former wife of Ernest Weekley, Professor of French in the University College until his retirement in 1938 (8). Later expansion of the material on Lawrence owed much to the work of Professor Boulton, whose Project for the publication of Lawrence's works and letters was based, until his appointment at Birmingham, in the Manuscripts Department itself: this inevitably encouraged growth in the holdings of original and reproduced manuscript sources (9).

The next great addition to the Lawrence holdings at Nottingham depends on one man: George Lázarus, who bequeathed his collection as far back as 1964. His material was then described as without doubt the finest corpus of D H Lawrence manuscripts, letters, first editions and critical works in existence (10).

c) At Warwick

From its beginning the University Library was subject to policy decisions on a broad level. The Librarian felt that any special collections the Library acquired should be non-antiquarian. Any antiquarian material would not be acquired in sufficient quantity, he felt, to make the collection anything other than a 'museum': he wanted special collections which people would feel it 'worth going to' as research collections (11). The Librarian "deliberately

avoided Shakespeare or local history collections" (12). But it was felt desirable that a library should make every effort to attain distinction in some field or other, for the sake of its competing university (13).

It is clear that in the attainment of such distinction personal influences were of great importance. Peter Tucker traces (14) the concept of the library's statistics collection to Ken Mallaber, Librarian at the Board of Trade in the 1960's; its development depended on the calculated risk (15) by which Warwick accepted the material, and on further individuals. Among these must be noted Mr Spinney, at the British Museum Library; the enthusiasm of John Fletcher, then Warwick's economics librarian; and later Colin Offor, who did much to ensure the success of the Statistics Service in the mid-1970's (16).

Personal influences were also at work in the formation of the Modern Records Centre. The proposals put to the Leverhulme Trust suggesting that the Centre be created were promoted by subject interests in the University in social history, politics and business studies, acting together with the Industrial Relations Research Unit (based at Warwick University) and the University Library (17). The early development of collections at the MRC also depended to a large extent on the same group of people, in particular on the academics in the IRRU and the Centre for the Study of Social History, who had contacts with organisations up and down the country (18). The importance of 'inside' knowledge in the early years of the MRC's collecting was crucial (19).

2.2 Financial factors

a) At Nottingham

Both special collections and manuscript collections have depended largely on gifts and deposits to the University Library. The departments were inaugurated primarily for the preservation and exploitation of what has been given to the University free of charge.

Some purchases are made. Certain areas of the special collections section are added to systematically out of the Library's general funds - the East Midlands Collection, for example, together with the Lawrence printed material. Should the occasion arise, the special collections department might be able to call on library reserve funds as necessary for a special purchase. In the session 1970-71 the department was endowed with the W G Briggs gift of £5000 reserved for the acquisition of rare and special items for which provision cannot be made from normal library funds.

Certain purchases for the Manuscript Department are possible by means of the general funds of the Library (20). However much of the material in which the Department is interested is a highly marketable commodity. In the case of, for example, manuscript material of Lawrence, purchases are possible only with aid from one or other of the national funds: and then only if income from bequests made to the Library over the years is available to provide the University's share of the cost - for the most part its share has not come out of the ordinary recurrent library grant (21). Thus within the last ten years alone, the Department has depended on the governmental Purchase Grant Fund administered through the offices of the Victoria and Albert Museum (22) (hereinafter known as the Victoria and Albert Museum Grant Fund) for the purchase of D H Lawrence letters (in sessions 1974-75 ; 1978-79; 1979-80) and for a Kirke White Manuscript (1979-80); and on help from the Arts Council Fund administered by the Committee for Contemporary

Writers for a further number of Lawrence letters (1978-79).

It is possible for an academic department to contribute to the purchase of material. A good example of such an arrangement - in turn a reflection of the need for flexibility in the search for resources with which to make purchases - comes from the session 1969-70. There was then the joint purchase on the parts of the Departments of Manuscripts and Geology of a collection of letters from J B Pentland to the Rev William Buckland, the geologist (23).

b) At Warwick

Financial circumstances at Warwick differ substantially from those at Nottingham in at least one respect. Money acquired from external sources has not been destined primarily for the purchases of items otherwise beyond the budget: but for the administration and exploitation of the special collections which have been acquired largely by gift and deposit. In the words of the Librarian:

"evidently what has been achieved out of the ordinary rests largely on a combination of deposit arrangements and external funding". (24)

In 1969 Warwick University Library received a three year grant from the Nuffield Foundation to cover staff costs in the development of the statistics collection on condition that the collection would subsequently be opened to interested parties in industry and commerce. In 1972 a grant was obtained from the SSRC for the development of the existing economics working papers collection. In 1973 the University received a four year grant of £51,500 to establish the Modern Records Centre in the Library.

External financial influences thus played a crucial role in the initial development of special collections at Warwick. All had specific time-limits, and in time the University assumed much

responsibility for the staffing of the collections. But even after this, external resources were still of importance (25). In the MRC, for example, £5000 from the British Library, matched by £5000 from an anonymous donor, paid in 1978 for a member of staff with special responsibility for cataloguing; £4000 came from the Industrial Relations Research Unit for the same purpose in 1979; a four year grant came from the Leverhulme Trust in the same year, for the appointment of a member of staff responsible for cataloguing the CBI archive. In 1979 the Statistics Collection received a three year grant from the Department of Industry in order to appoint an additional professional to facilitate exploitation of the collection.

The impression such financial arrangements give is one of flexibility. Because it has less direct support than Nottingham from the University, the Library is forced back on to ad hoc arrangements in its administration and exploitation of special collections. A good example of such flexibility is the employment of young people under the Manpower Services Commission Community Enterprise Programme: during the session 1981-82 the Statistics Collection and the MRC both employed one person each, on specific projects.

Material is acquired at Warwick largely by gift or deposit. Some purchases are possible on the part of the MRC: money was available from the Leverhulme Trust in the Centre's first year, and it has utilized the resources of the Victoria and Albert Museum Grant Fund (sessions 1974-75; 1975-76).

Systematic accessions policies are in operation for the statistics and the working papers collections. But material in these collections is exploited as a commercial service. Both supply commerce and industry as well as academics with information and both charge for their services to commercial interests. Thus part of the cost of each section - in staff and in purchase of

material which cannot be obtained by gift, exchange or deposit - is borne by the money which each section generates. In the statistics collection two out of three members of staff are paid for by money brought in by Warwick Statistics Service. In Economics Working Papers part of the clerical staffing establishment is financed by money obtained by arrangement with its publisher.

The potential for wider departmental involvement is present at Warwick as it is at Nottingham. The original purchase of eighteenth-century French plays in 1975-76 was possible with the help of a contribution from the Department of French Studies (and, incidentally, a grant by the Finance and General Purposes Committee of University Council); and what became known as the 'Marandet collection' and housed in the Library's 'special collections room', was added to in the summer of 1979 again with financial help from the French Department (26).

2.3 Local factors

a) At Nottingham

As we have seen, both the special collections department and the Manuscripts Department at Nottingham University Library have strong local collections.

Study and research in regional history have been pursued since the 1920's (27) and the interests of both academics and librarians have helped evolve a strong East Midlands Collection. This collection, together with the geographical position of the library, provides some pretext for the existence of certain other of the special collections - for example, the parish libraries of Oakham and Elston. The Lawrence printed collection would almost certainly not be such a priority collection were Lawrence not a local writer with intimate connections with the University College. However, the emphasis on local influences should not be overdone.

There is plenty of material in the special collections at Nottingham which has no overt local connection.

Local influences can be seen clearly in the Manuscripts Department. Many of its categories of material are located at Nottingham because of the Library's proximity to the material's source. Within each category, however, there may be material which is of little strictly local interest. For instance, among the records deposited by the Trent River Authorities are the records of the drainage of Hatfield Chase by Vermuyden in the reign of Charles I. Other good examples are the groups of family papers which can range over a variety of subjects: for instance, the Portland manuscripts contain a quantity of Restoration verse such as to necessitate the compilation of a first-line index as a finding aid (28).

b) At Warwick

In the case of special collections at Warwick, local factors have exerted pressure in a different direction.

"We deliberately avoided developing Shakespeare or local history collections, which were well-developed in the area, just as we avoided rare books in general. (There was no academic interest in local history, and our relations with the Shakespeare Institute were good)". (29)

That is not to say that there is no 'special' material of local interest in Warwick University Library. Some such material was acquired, particularly in the first years of the Library (30). But there has never been a systematic development of local material as a special collection as such.

A number of reasons seem to lie behind this policy. Among these, it is worth pointing out that by 1963, when Warwick University Library was founded, many of the potential local responsibilities which Nottingham University Library had encountered in its early years had

been assumed by other bodies. Warwick had no necessity to act as the repository for local manuscript records in the absence of a County Record Office, nor to preserve the records of a prominent local author of international stature.

Some indication of how well-established potential local rivals were by the time Warwick University Library began assembling its special collections is contained in the collecting policy of the Modern Records Centre, which has from the beginning had a policy of

"concentrating on national rather than local or regional records (without, however, operating under a total self-denying ordinance in respect of such material)". (31)

2.4 Institutional factors

A number of influences may be subsumed under the adjective 'institutional'. Some of these are held in common by Warwick and Nottingham; others are not. It makes sense in this part of the work to approach the two libraries in the same section.

The first institutional factor which requires consideration is the influence of the library itself, or at least of librarians. At Nottingham Owen and Flack built up a special collection on the French Revolution because, it seems, they felt that the Library 'needed' special collections, not with particular reference to relevant academic departments. At Warwick John Pemberton voiced the concern of a librarian in an article of 1968 where he argued that it was a matter of great concern that a considerable amount of raw material for research in the social sciences was simply not being collected (the suggestion being that it was with altruistic motives, for the sake of scholarship in general and indeed for the good name of librarianship, that Warwick was putting emphasis on the collecting of primary sources for the social sciences) (32).

A further institutional factor is that of the larger institution, that is the University in question. If in 1937 the collection on local material was "in constant use" (33), it was because there was a vigorous academic interest in regional studies in the University College, Nottingham. If Warwick University Library built up research collections in statistics and economics it was because the Library wanted to support "lively" schools of social science (34). The Modern Records Centre would not have been created at Warwick had not the University through catalysts such as the Industrial Relations Research Unit, been receptive to such a proposal.

In the case of Warwick there has been a more intimate connection with academic departments than at Nottingham. Tucker points out that the Librarians of the new universities of the 1960's were much more intimately involved with the course planning and research activities of academic colleagues than the Librarians of older universities had been (35). That "the University Librarian was everywhere one of the first officers to be appointed" (36) is a reflection of such involvement and an explanation of how libraries such as Warwick developed in this respect.

Another institutional factor concerns both Library and University: the feeling on both sides that the Library should reflect the status of the institution. Thus in 1948 it is explicitly stated in the University of Nottingham's Annual Report that the attainment of full University status will be a stimulus to the building up of a collection of original sources; and in 1950 that the extensive use of the Library's Manuscript collection will without doubt add to the prestige of the University and its Library (37). This sentiment has an echo in the words of the Librarian at Warwick, who argues that

"it is desirable that a Library should make every effort to attain distinction in some field or other, for the sake of its competing university". (38)

A final example of institutional influence on the development of special collections is the relative dependence of the library concerned on institutional largesse. Nottingham's special collections have depended a great deal on institutions - fellow libraries, the University Grants Committee, the Victoria and Albert Museum, to name a few. The picture at Warwick is more distinct. As child of its time it has depended, as we have seen, on external sources such as the Nuffield Foundation, the Leverhulme Trust and the SSRC, to develop special collections, in the absence of financial initiative from its parent institution, the University of Warwick itself, and the University Grants Committee. Peter Tucker states that as far back as the 1960's it was evident

"that very little would be achieved without either a flow of external money to support a specific subject area, or a flow of material of a particular kind by gift or deposit" (39)

2.5 Chance factors

a) At Nottingham

The role of chance, of accident, is of considerable importance. The special collections librarian at Nottingham points out that the chance element has been of great importance wherever he has worked with special collections. For example, it was a chance reading of an article in The Guardian in May 1963 of an article by a woman who was normally the paper's defence correspondent that led the Keeper of the Manuscripts to the collection of Lawrence letters owned by the lately-deceased former Louie Burrows, who was engaged to Lawrence for a time (40).

It is plain that from its beginning the staff of the Library of the University College, Nottingham were enthusiastic for material which would help render the library collections of 'special' importance. It was only natural that, in the absence of an explicit

acquisitions policy, the way the collections, especially special collections, grew was to a great extent haphazard.

It was probably less haphazard by the time of the Second World War (41), but the crucial element of chance still loomed large. The good fortune that the Librarian of the time played such a large role in local National Register of Archives activity was reflected in the size and importance of the Library's own collection of archives.

The war itself - or at least the social change which, consequently or not, followed it - exerted its effect. The picture of its effect on the Library is best painted by Wood in his History of the University College (1953):

"Meanwhile, the break-up of estates and the closing down of large country houses which resulted from the social changes wrought by the war, were producing a remarkable addition to the college library. Within the space of a few years there was a prodigious influx of manuscript material from many local sources, either by purchase, gift or deposit. This by 1948 had obliged the library to appoint a full-time archivist and to erect two new instrument rooms to house the collections of family papers which flowed in even more rapidly than space could be provided ... almost at one bound as it were a miniature repository of archives thus grew up at Highfields, with a rich collection of manuscripts ranging from the early twelfth to the nineteenth century....". (42)

The Annual reports of the period support what Wood says about the trend of the times: additions are constantly made in the post-war years, and important accessions are reported in Reports dated 1947; 1948; 1949; 1951; 1954; 1955. The coincidence that this spate of frequent and rich archival donations came at the very time when the College, from 1948 the University, was most conscious of the 'need' to acquire research collections of original sources, was a historical accident of the greatest importance for the development of the Manuscripts Department.

b) At Warwick

The Library at Warwick grew up in tandem with the University in a different age and in different economic circumstances: there was much less likelihood of special collections there being as much of a chance assemblage of material as at Nottingham.

But that does not mean that chance does not enter into the history at Warwick. After all, it was the historical accident of being a child of a particular time which dictated much of the general course of special collections development. And even the best laid lines of policy may not be immune to accident - witness the following from the Librarian at Warwick:

"we found ourselves, contrary to our policy, with a few hundred volumes of special collection material, that is works of Italian, French and English literature stretching back over two or three centuries". (43)

and again:

"possibilities of development open up almost by accident". (44)

The suggestion is quite clear. - that the particular course taken by special collections at Warwick has been to a great extent in the lap of the gods.

One example of this is the way that the Warwick statistics collection has turned out to be so pre-eminent outside London. According to the Statistics Librarian at Warwick, the original idea of the Board of Trade and Industry Library was that there should be relegation of historical and duplicate material to a series of regional centres throughout the country. This regional system would reduce pressure on London and improve the flow of material to the provinces. By historical accident, Warwick

University Library already had a small statistics collection and thus in 1967 it received its first material from London - as a prelude, presumably, to its becoming the 'regional centre' for the Midlands. By chance no other centres materialised. Thus Warwick continued to receive material, and became a national centre with one of the country's largest collections of international statistical and market research data (45).

SECTION THREE

ATTITUDES

Section three seeks to subsume under the title 'Attitudes' the present state of special collections at Nottingham and Warwick as expressed in policy, if any, and actions, if any, in the relevant sections of the library, in the libraries themselves and in the larger institutions. It is a section which will range over a broad field of issues organised into six divisions: holdings and accessions; finance; exploitation; usage; accommodation; and the relationship with the university in question. The first four divisions will look in turn at Nottingham and Warwick divided as follows: Nottingham Manuscripts; Nottingham special collections; Warwick Modern Records Centre; and Warwick statistics and working papers.

It is hoped that much of this section will 'speak for itself' insofar as conclusions in many cases have not been explicitly drawn. Since it concerns present practice, and since much of the material on which this section is based derives from personal interviews with those responsible for special collections sections, it is very much a reflection of the particular preoccupations of those people. This makes for differentiation but not for systematization: there is no rigid pattern for the account of practice under each head.

3.1 Holdings and accessions

a) Nottingham Manuscripts Department

To an extent the manuscript collections at Nottingham are a haphazard collection of disparate records. Beyond this point, however, there is a distinct rationale behind the collection (1).

A division is possible into a number of distinct areas: within these categories a certain amount of growth is generated.

For example, the holding of non-conformist church records from Nottingham encourages further deposits of kindred material. Collections which seem to begin by chance - hospital records, for example - stay to grow into major areas of the Department's interest. Likewise after a series of deposits on the part of present and former water authorities, the Manuscripts Department is now operating what the Keeper regards as amounting to a records management programme for the divisions of the present Severn-Trent Water Authority. Some recognition of this, perhaps, lies in the fact that the cost of printing and publishing the catalogues of the Severn-Trent material has been borne by the Authority itself.

Such growth is part of what might be termed a 'passive' acquisitions policy: the principle being to sit back and wait to see what comes in. This is especially easy in fields where records can be transferred to the Department from the moment when they become no longer 'current'; this happens with certain of the hospital records at Nottingham.

What might be termed an 'active' acquisitions policy has two aspects: one, the greater, is the seeking out of new areas. In the 1950's and early 1960's were encouraged the records of industrial concerns⁽²⁾; little success was had with industry as such, though some good trade union material was recruited at the same time.

The second aspect is the searching for useful additions to existing collections. In this task much useful work is undertaken by the Historical Manuscripts Commission, which after scanning auction room catalogues, operates an alerting service to interested institutions.

Cooperation in the field of accessions is loosely organised. In the Department's infancy there was competition with rival record offices (the County, for example). Nowadays a potential gift or deposit is examined in terms of the questions "whose line is this? Ours? Or the County's?".

b) Nottingham.Special collections section

In the case of certain of the special collections, there is active development. In other instances only part of a collection will be expanded. In still other cases a collection is virtually 'closed'. The East Midlands Collection is added to constantly, and the Briggs and Lawrence collections continue to be expanded. But collections such as Parker Woodward, Coventry Patmore and Cambridge Shakespeare are 'dead' as far as accessions are concerned. The French Revolution Collection's expansion is at a very low ebb (3).

Why this should be so depends on a configuration of a number of circumstances. Part of the reason first lies in the amount of use which a collection receives. Other things being equal, a collection is more likely to be expanded when it is of demonstrable interest to readers.

But other things are not equal. The 'worthwhile' criterion extends beyond the consideration of whether the collection is being used or not. Thus the East Midlands Collection is expanding not only because of the interest shown in it but also because it would be folly to stop the active development of a very valuable assemblage of material. The Briggs Collection has likewise been developed partly because of the feeling that there is something there of general good, worthwhile developing.

One is tempted to argue that the local factor gives added stimulus to the growth of a collection. The local influence holds for accessions to the East Midlands Collection and for the Lawrence

material; there is a tendency for additions to the Briggs collection to be material with an East Midlands significance. But the local factor does not operate to the exclusion of everything else. After all, the Cambridge Drama Collection is being expanded by transfer and purchase.

The question of money also enters the expansion equation. After the buying policies for the collections deemed 'worthwhile' have been paid for there seem to be few resources left to develop the remaining collections, and little impetus to find the money to do so. But this brings us into other broad areas of concern - of finance and of exploitation. Cooperation is loosely developed. In the East Midlands Collection there is a systematic attempt not to duplicate the holdings of other libraries. That is why "the collection is a working one, consisting mainly of secondary material" since "the county libraries in the area have local studies collections based on many years of intensive acquisition" and the University "does not compete in collecting many kinds of printed matter". However, there are some exceptions to this rule (4).

The other area of cooperative concern is the Lawrence collection where there has been and continues to be duplication with the County Library except where an accession is likely to be very expensive, in which case each Library hopes that the other will buy it.

c) Warwick. Modern Records Centre

The objectives of the Modern Records Centre are to collect and make available for research primary sources for British political, social and economic history, with particular reference to labour history, industrial relations and industrial politics. As a relatively young repository with a relatively large remit its accessions policy has been generous notwithstanding the limitations of its staffing establishment. It was begun, after all, as

"a search and rescue operation, an attempt to salvage vast quantities of industrial history records..." (5)

Acceptance of material is dictated by the nature of the material desired, and by the preoccupations of other repositories. Despite its title, the Centre does not specify cut-off-dates.

The collections are beginning to develop of their own accord. As the fame of the Centre spreads more people are likely to offer material to it directly; many single collections are also developing sui generis, with new batches of 'non-current' material arriving to supplement original deposits. The importance for accessions of personal contacts in the labour field is now much diminished.

In the summer of 1973, prior to the opening of the Centre in October 1973, some injudicious publicity led some existing repositories to believe that the MRC would be poaching on their territory (6). These fears were allayed by the evidence that the Centre is concerned not so much with local as national material. In general the Centre's policy of not conflicting with local repositories has resulted in few accessions of business records, although some business and other local records have occasionally been acquired.

While cooperation with other repositories is pursued, some overlap is unavoidable. In most cases of potential skirmish over material the personal contacts which the Centre and particularly the Archivist have built in almost ten years of work are sufficient to be able to smooth things over in advance by means of a telephone call (7).

d) Warwick. Statistics and economics working papers collections

Both of the special collections operate a systematic accessions policy. Economics working papers is by its nature a working collection. It now contains some 17,000 papers, which are held for four years and then deposited at the British Library Lending Division. About 3500 papers are received each year, most by standing agreement with contributing organisations (8).

The current state of development of the statistics collection is probably expressed most concisely in the form of a quotation from the brochure of Warwick Statistics Service:

"the geographic coverage is world-wide, and includes material received under deposit agreements with over thirty overseas national statistics offices, and with the EEC. There are subscriptions to the statistical and economic publications of many international bodies such as the UN, FAO, ILO, OECD and OAPC. In addition, publications of banks, trade associations and private research companies are received". (9)

3.2 Finance

a) Nottingham. Manuscripts Department

The Manuscripts Department has never had the funds such as to be able to go out and buy freely on the open market. Indeed, it has no fund of its own and the bulk of its collection has been acquired as gift or deposit. On rare occasions it will buy in the auction room. A recent example gives the general pattern of events in such cases. Alerted by the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Department approached the University Librarian, who agreed to allow money for a bid up to a certain limit, paid for out of general library funds.

Larger sums than that involved in this example require more complicated negotiation. As we have already seen, the

Department has on occasion had recourse to two external sources - the Victoria and Albert Museum Grant Fund and the fund administered for the Arts Council by the Committee for the National Manuscript Collection of Contemporary Writers. Such aid is essential when the Department is seeking to acquire highly sought-after material such as the papers of D H Lawrence.

Much of the Department's resources go towards the maintenance and exploitation of material which is given to the Library on deposit. A deposit may be revoked at a depositor's death (that is why all family material on deposit remains in its original family coherence rather than in a thematic reorganisation with other material, which might be of more use to the researcher) and in such cases a repository can lose out terribly on the investment it has made in the administration of the material.

That is what renders a recent development concerning the Manuscripts Department at Nottingham of such importance. In April 1981 it was announced that the Newcastle Collection had been accepted by the Treasury in part-lieu of capital transfer and had been 'allocated' to Nottingham University Library by the Secretary of State for Education and Science. The Duke of Newcastle had made his offer conditional on the collection remaining at Nottingham University where it had been on deposit since 1955. The financial and other advantages of such a course of action - available if a collection is deemed of pre-eminent national importance - is succinctly put by Welch:

"The Keeper of Manuscripts would like it to be known that the University appreciates this course of action which alleviates an owner's tax liabilities while recognizing the time money and effort expended by a repository on a collection of manuscripts of national importance already in its care. Equally important it fulfils the commitment to posterity by keeping an archive intact". (10)

b) Nottingham. Special collections section

As far as acquisitions are concerned money enters the field in only a cloudy way. Funds are not allocated to specific sections of the Department. Even the Briggs endowment is occasionally used for purchases outside the sphere of the Briggs Collection. After the 'normal' purchasing - that is, for the most part, the systematic buying for the East Midlands and Lawrence collections - there is little left over, and there may be, as we have seen, little impetus to expand in certain areas. For example, the competitive market in the field of the French Revolution means that there is little inclination to actively collect at Nottingham: it would be expensive to do, with less chance of success than in less competitive areas of the Department's collections.

The special collections librarian argues that it is not the expenditure on accessions which eats up financial resources, but staffing costs: this in particular, together with the cost of the staff who work for the Department in the acquisitions and cataloguing sections of this Library, which areas in the field of special collections can be recherché and time-consuming.

c) Warwick. Modern Records Centre

As we have seen, the Modern Records Centre has been indebted to external sources for its existence and development: the Leverhulme Trust in 1973 and 1979; the British Library in 1978; the IRRU in 1979; and an anonymous donor in 1978.

Much of the responsibility for staffing the Centre has now been assumed by the University of Warwick, although there has been difficulty over this responsibility ever since the Centre and the University Librarian had problems in 1977 when the original grant from the Leverhulme Trust expired. In 1977 the University finally agreed to pay for two out of the three posts created in

1973. At the end of 1979 the University finally picked up the third post as well. Since then there has been continuing difficulty over finance for the post of clerical assistant in the Centre. Having been cut to a half-time post and having disappeared altogether at the end of 1980 it has now been 'recreated' as a full-time library post.

Difficulty over financing its staff establishment forces the Modern Records Centre to depend on raising external grants for staffing for particular projects as much as possible.

There is no MRC fund. Most of its collections have been acquired by deposit or as gifts. Occasionally purchases are made. The alerting service of the Historical Manuscripts Commission is used. Sometimes money for purchases is available from general library funds; sources such as the Victoria and Albert Museum Grant Fund and the Leverhulme Trust were used to buy certain material in the mid-1970's. Lack of finance for accessions is not nearly so much of a strait-jacket as lack of finance for staffing for the simple reason that there is not much in the MRC's field to be bought.

d) Warwick. Statistics and economics working papers collections

The statistics collection receives much material free of charge. Much arrives regularly by arrangement with, for example, the statistical offices of foreign countries. Of that which is not free, official publications are in the Library's general budget. The cost of purchases on top of this is borne by the department itself.

As well as providing a subject collection for the relevant academic departments in the University of Warwick the collection is run, under the title "Warwick Statistics Service", as a commercial operation. This does not produce a net gain to the Library (11). However, the Service, freed from overheads such as

lighting, postage and telephone charges, does 'make money' out of which it covers the salaries of two out of the collection's three staff.

The development of the statistics collection has been partly dependent on grants from external sources, as we have seen: in 1969 from the Nuffield Foundation and in 1979 from the Department of Industry.

Economics working papers spends very little on accessions. Most of its material is acquired by arrangement with other organizations by gift or exchange. It, too, is run as a commercial service as well as an academic service. It has an agreement with an American publisher which deals with sales of reports held at Warwick: Warwick provides the bibliographic control. Part of the clerical assistance for the administration of the collection is paid for with money derived from the publisher. The working papers collection was, like the statistics collection, indebted to an external grant: in 1972 the SSRC provided the resources to help develop the existing working papers collection and in particular investigate into what type of subject index would be most suitable as a form of bibliographic control (12).

3.3 Exploitation

a) Nottingham. Manuscripts Department

There can be no doubt that the staff of the Manuscripts Department are under pressure. Understaffing has been a characteristic of the Department for some years. In 1950 it was stated that the complement of staff in the Manuscripts section continued to be too small to meet the demands made on it (13). In the session 1958-59 it was decided that because of the backlog of cataloguing and inadequate staffing the Department would discontinue detailed catalogues and substitute lists instead (14). The present-day

Department appears to be short of staff still. In recent years the Keeper has been gratified to point to increasing usage of the Department's materials but has felt the necessity to state that this causes strain on the staff; that the staffing position is inadequate; or 'continues to give cause for concern' (15).

At present the staff of the Department comprises three professionals, and three non-professionals: the Keeper, Assistant Keeper and the Archives Assistant; two secretaries and a store-room assistant. Together this team has a considerable number of years of experience: the Keeper emphasizes that what the Department lacks in terms of finding aids is partly compensated for by the knowledge which each member of staff carries around in his or her head.

Also given emphasis by the Keeper is a different attitude regarding accessions from that of a librarian. An archivist's first duty is perceived to be preservation, not exploitation. Readers come, if you like, in second place. Pressure from readers causes the sorting and listing and general care of manuscripts - the prime function of the archivist - to suffer (16). Nevertheless it must be pointed out that the Department at Nottingham does have a reputation for good and helpful service to its readers.

The pressure caused by readers' visits and requests for material is compounded by the other preoccupations of the department. A vigorous policy of exhibiting is followed. Normally three major exhibitions a year are mounted, each by a professional member of staff in turn, although at present because of pressure from other quarters only two exhibitions are being put up each session.

There is a constant flow of group visits, for which a small display is usually mounted: the work of preparation involved in this renders each visit particularly time-consuming.

In addition to this there are issued a number of publications. First, there are published catalogues and lists of collections (of which the prime example is the illustrated catalogue of D H Lawrence material held by the Department, published in 1979). Second, there are 'archive teaching units', which originated in the session 1964-65 (17) as a joint effort between the Department and visiting groups of teachers to exploit material for use in the teaching of history. Since then a number of units have been produced and published on the commercial market. Unit number five is a typical example (18): concerning the 1745 Jacobite rebellion, it is based on the Pelham Papers in the Newcastle Collection.

b) Nottingham. Special collections section

Michael Brook was appointed 'special collections librarian' in 1972 when, by means of 'new development money' allocated over the past two sessions, the University Library expanded its complement of professional staff (adding also a reference librarian and a librarian for the student loan collection, for example) (19). Prior to this appointment the precise responsibility for the maintenance and exploitation of the special collections appears - today - to be unclear; evidently the East Midlands Collection was cared for by a Librarian with a keen research interest in regional matters. Brook himself was appointed on the strength of his experience of local studies collections.

The special collections librarian works with a half-time junior assistant. Much work is undertaken by other sections (acquisitions, for example) on behalf of the special collections department just as for any other academic division in the Library. But there is an increasing workload on the department itself. For example, changes in the cataloguing section at the end of the session 1982-83 mean that the special collections librarian will begin again, after a lapse of some years, the work of classification.

The increase in pressure on staff adds weight to the view that he ought really to be assisted by a full time senior library assistant. The present level of staffing seems adequate to cope with the daily round of readers. Shortage of staff has never prevented the Department accepting a gift or donation. But lack of staff time does restrict services. More could be done to exploit material. For example, updates are needed of certain handlists which date from the early 1970's; and publications is a field very little exploited (though a bibliography of the lace industry has recently been issued by the Department, in an edition of 100).

c) Warwick. Modern Records Centre

Staffing arrangements at the MRC have already been partly touched on. At present it runs as follows: on university money, the Archivist, the Assistant Archivist and a clerical Records Assistant; on Leverhulme money, an Archives Assistant, employed specifically to catalogue the CBI archive received by the Centre in 1979, but also participating in the day-to-day running of the Centre.

As befits its initial designation as a 'rescue' operation the MRC's emphasis has been similar to that which the Keeper at Nottingham perceives as the archivist's prime function:

"the emphasis of the Centre's work will be primarily laid on search and rescue and only secondarily on the work of cataloguing and indexing, by means of which acquisitions are made fully ready for research". (20)

However, this statement was made early in the MRC's history and the rate of acquisitions has now slowed down somewhat. In any case from the earliest days of the MRC a positive information and publication programme has been envisaged and implemented.

"In order to achieve the widest possible use of the Centre's holdings every effort is made to secure published notices of its accessions, which in practice also serve to suggest the Centre as a possible repository for undeposited records". (21)

The list of publications is now extensive. Obviously there are cataloguing backlogs, given the short period of existence of the Centre and the limitations on staff time: but a number of catalogues have appeared and a number have been printed. The task of publicity has encouraged other publications. There is the annual Report for the session; the Guide to the collections (1977) and a Supplement to the Guide (1981); a quarterly, now twice-yearly Information bulletin giving details of latest accessions; a number of leaflets (on for example, the Taff Vale and Osborne cases) based on material in the Centre; and some books based on extracts from material in the collections. (A shop steward at Oxford has been followed by A postman's round 1858-61).

The likely result of publicity is, of course, an increase in use by researchers, which in turn increases the pressure on staff. A balance has to be achieved between the 'backroom' work of cataloguing; the work of information; and the flow of readers and requests.

It was decided in the early days of the Centre that it was not worthwhile exhibiting as such in the University. However, displays are put together for group visits; and the Centre will sometimes collaborate on a display. It recently provided material for an exhibition put together by the University's philosophy librarian on the occasion of the death of Arthur Koestler.

d) Warwick. Statistics and economics working papers collections

The statistics collection has a staff of three: two 'information officers' and one 'clerical officer'. As the Warwick Statistics Service they provide

"a commercial information service which offers access to one of the country's largest collections of international statistical and market research data, as well as expert staff assistance". (22)

A search and report service is carried out for either subscribers or occasional enquirers. An enquiry may require anything from a specified figure to a dossier of tables or a written desk report. An innovation of recent years is the 'client evening' or 'seminar' for users of the service, at which displays are mounted and outside speakers visit. The seminars are increasingly popular and remunerative.

At the same time the statistics collection staff service academic enquiries from inside and outside the University, acting in these cases as subject librarians just as in any subject division of the University Library.

Small-scale displays are occasionally mounted.

There is a systematic publications programme. There is a regularly monthly news bulletin, and occasionally comprehensive reports are issued: the latest (April 1983) is entitled The counties and regions of the United Kingdom: a statistical and economic review of local authority areas.

The working papers collection is administered by clerical staff and with part of the time of the Library's economics librarian. As we have seen, part of the cost of clerical assistance is borne by the commercial service, but the collection has lost a half-time assistant since the University felt unable to renew the post in session 1980-81 (23).

Newspapers are listed in one or other of two Contents journals for current awareness purposes (24). Every six months is published the Economics Working Papers Bibliography, the fruit of a collaborative project between the University Library, the Center for International Studies at the University of Pittsburgh and the Trans-Media Publishing Company of New York. Trans-Media also deals with the sales of the papers in the collection by means of a microfilm service. The Collection at Warwick itself is concerned with the inter-library loan service: in 1980-81 3635 loans or copies were sent out (25).

3.4 Usage

a) Nottingham. Manuscripts Department

From figures alone, usage of the Department appears to be increasing.

Visits, 1976-1982 (26)

	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82
Individual visits	634	699	665	926	836	1204
MSS produced	27812	46393	47033	42142	36186	52186

The pattern of usage varies. Sometimes there appears to be among users very few Nottingham students; at other times the number increases. In a recent annual report the Keeper urges that more staff and students at Nottingham University should become interested in topics based on the wealth of material in the manuscript collections (27). But she recognizes that such usage is beyond the control of the Department: it depends greatly on individual members of the academic staff. There are far more readers from outside the University than from within.

Although it holds similar material to that contained in the County Record Office, the emphasis of usage at the University Department is different. There are more scholars and fewer amateurs, at the University. However, the Manuscripts Department is completely open - unlike the University Library as a whole - to bona fide users whether professional or not.

The question "who is this Department for?" is given an interesting twist insofar as both the Keeper and Assistant Keeper undertake some teaching based on material in the collections. The Assistant Keeper works with adult education groups and has contributed to teaching in the University departments of history and archeology; the Keeper conducts classes in palaeography for students in relevant academic departments (28). This teaching is a mixed blessing. It increases the staff commitment to 'front of house' rather than 'backroom' work such as cataloguing and listing; at the same time it increases the usage of original material and introduces students to the wide range of sources contained in the collections.

b) Nottingham. Special collections section

The Department serves as a repository for material of much wider potential interest than is contained in the University alone. Although academic interests have, as we have seen, created certain influences on the development of the collections, the specific way that much of the special collections have developed means that they are far from being a direct reflection of academic preoccupations in the University.

A number of departments have connections with parts of the Special Collections Department - particularly with the Lawrence Collection, the drama Collections, and the Briggs Collection, but above all with the East Midlands Collection. The history department now offers a course in regional history which is of direct relevance to the latter.

Many parts of the section's collections are very little used: Parker Woodward and Coventry Patmore spring to mind. There is, however, an ebb and flow to the pattern: the French Revolution Collection has, for example, been used more frequently recently.

The level of University use varies, as does the frequency and level of use from outside the University. Outside amateur use is quite vigorous: there are a fair number of genealogical enquiries, and a trickle of mail enquiries - in each of these cases, however, the County Library may be better qualified to help.

No figures are available for the number of readers. There are figures for loans from the East Midlands Collection: usage of this by loan appears, if anything, to have declined since records were begun in 1977.

c) Warwick. Modern Records Centre

The Centre's rigorous information programme is specifically designed in order to encourage exploitation of the material by researchers. The Archivist argues that he is walking a tightrope between the twin pressures of national and indeed international appeal, and the lowlier needs of users such as second- and third-year undergraduates.

It was implicit in the original proposals from the MRC that if it was successful it would be of national stature in its field. The overall number of users - at all levels - continues to increase. The current rate of flow is indicated by figures which show 300 individual research visits in the period October 1982 to March 1983. Interest within the University continues to grow but there are always more outside than inside users. Increasing use by undergraduates, particularly those reading politics, has been documented (29).

d) Warwick. Statistics and economics working papers collections

It has been argued, as we have seen, that the Librarians of the new universities found themselves much more intimately involved with the course planning and research activities of their academic colleagues than had hitherto occurred in British universities (30). The collections at Warwick reflect this involvement with academic preoccupations to an extent.

The statistics collection began life to service the keen interest of the Department of Economics and a growing school of industrial and business studies. There still remains a reasonable amount of academic use of the collection, especially among researchers. Most university usage is by staff and postgraduates (for whom practical sessions in the use of the collection may be arranged (31)), rather than undergraduates. Interested departments include those of economics, business studies, management science, and others with a fringe interest in the material offered - history and geography, for example. However, David Mort would suggest that one element behind the establishment of a Statistics Service on a commercial basis was a disappointing academic response to the range of material in the collection.

Economics working papers is a collection which directly supports the departments of Economics (which has to an extent lost interest in 'statistical material') and others concerned with business studies and management. It, too, is run partly as a commercial service in addition to its strictly academic role. By 1976-77 it had gained a reputation in other countries as being the only service of its kind (32).

It has been argued that the commercial services offered by Economics Working Papers and the Warwick Statistics Service are necessary to provide outside users with information because existing national or regional services (that is, inter-library loan systems) lack the level of direct, often personal contact necessary for the requisites of their customers (33). At all events,

both services can point to continuing commercial success.

Enquiries to the Statistics Service from commerce and industry arrive mostly by telephone. The total number of calls is approaching 1000 a year. Personal visits number about 120 at present and the number of users continues to increase as the reputation of the Service becomes more widely known (34).

Economics Working Papers has no personal visits on a significant scale since it is concerned largely with bibliographic work and inter-library loans by mail. It continues to be used by academics and economists across the world: sales and loans remain fairly constant.

3.5 Accommodation

At the University of Nottingham the Manuscripts Department and the Special Collections section occupy purpose-built accommodation on the ground floor of the ten-year-old arts and social sciences library. Here are a suite of rooms which almost entirely fulfil the criteria of adequacy suggested by Cox (35). In discussing the requirements for rare books and special collections he argues for: strict control of temperature and humidity; security; material kept in a style fitting their importance; reading rooms capable of close supervision; an exhibition area which in contrast should allow easy entrance and a free flow of traffic under general supervision; a seminar room which will permit teaching from the material itself; and a conservation work-room. Where the Library at Nottingham fails is in the provision for close supervision of the reading room. The Keeper of the Manuscripts points out that the tables in what amounts to the reading area for both sections are obscured by the stacks holding the East Midlands collection.

At the University of Warwick special collections have grown up - to a large extent unanticipated - in the library building which opened in 1966. The statistics collection occupies almost the whole of the top, that is the fifth, floor. Economics working papers is tucked away in a corner of what is officially the 'sciences' floor (although a move to the fifth floor is imminent). The Modern Records Centre has been obliged, faute de mieux, to expand in piecemeal fashion in one half of the Library's ground floor. The bulk of its material is now housed in the Library's adjacent store, built not for the Centre but to hold the Library's relegated stock according to the Atkinson plan. It moved into the store in spite of uncertainties over its physical condition (36). The Centre - which by the nature of its material offers the closest parallel with the arrangements for special collections at Nottingham - fulfills Cox's criteria of security and supervision, but no others.

3.6 Relationship with the university

Some aspects of the relationship between special collections and the university as a whole have been discussed in earlier sections. Certain elements of this relationship remain to be emphasized.

One element which must be borne in mind is that in any assessment of the relationship, external factors play a large role - that is, factors beyond the control of the institution. It is too simplistic to infer from the present position of special collections at, say, Warwick, a deliberate policy on the part of the institution. It remains true that in the absence of declared policy to the contrary, present practice is often all there is to depend on in trying to reach an assessment of the position. But on no account must external circumstances be forgotten. This should be borne in mind throughout the present section.

The example of Warwick is illuminating. Policy towards special collections is to a large extent dependent on finance; and the flow of money to a university is dependent on the state of a number of external factors - the University Grants Committee in particular, and the political colour and economic temperature of the nation in general.

Special collections at Warwick were seen almost from the start as space-hoggers; in 1971 the statistics material was singled out as the main culprit responsible for the library building filling up prematurely (37); with the prospect of an archives division it was fully anticipated that there would be increased pressure on space (38). By the mid-1970's the University Grants Committee was being perceived as no friend of special collections at Warwick because of the amount of shelving they occupied (39); the Librarian continues to impress upon the representatives of the Committee the necessity for adequate consideration of the special collections, which form the main part of the Library's claim to be a centre of excellence (40).

It is an accident of history that the external circumstances in which the University of Nottingham grew up were very different from those experienced by the University of Warwick. If Nottingham had received its charter in 1965 it would surely have experienced the sort of problems which Warwick has, with all the attendant inferences which might follow concerning the institution's commitment to special collections. Instead, Nottingham's showpiece library was opened in 1973. Meanwhile the Modern Records Centre at Warwick, also opened in 1973, has grown up to the external accompaniment of the Oil Crisis, hyper-inflation, and a contraction in higher education: all this relegating even further into the future the "purpose-built Records Centre" mooted in 1975 as "a feature of the University and as an appropriate national repository for trade union materials" (41). But who can say for sure that, given the resources, the University of Warwick would

not have built - and might not build - such a Centre?

A further element in the relationship between the University and the special collection is the propensity of the latter to grow in the direction of an independent existence.

Some special collections develop to such an extent that they acquire their own momentum. 'Recurrent' archives will expand almost by themselves. At Nottingham, for example, during the sessions 1966-67 and 1981-82 accessions in the Manuscripts Department took the form mainly of additions to existing collections (42). Moreover the special collection can become a base for research in its own right, rather than simply containing the raw material for research by other academics. The statistics collection at Warwick has provided the foundation for two research projects on statistics: one, begun in session 1973-74, an investigation into the task of providing subject access to a whole range of international statistics (43); the second, a British Library grant awarded recently for a comprehensive assessment of non-official statistics published in the United Kingdom (44).

In such ways special collections become less and less adjuncts of the university library and develop their own raison d'être. This process is compounded by the evolution of special collections departments as public repositories with significance at regional or national level. In discussing the UGC's seeming reluctance to give adequate consideration to special collections in university libraries, Humphreys emphasizes that

"it is this regional and national duty of universities and local authorities which has been so public-spiritedly accepted in the past which must be emphasized and continued in the future". (45)

Good recent examples of what he means come from Nottingham University. In the special collections section, the session 1980-81 was marked by the receipt on deposit of the parish library of Oakham and the bulk of the library of the Thoroton Society.

Both deposits strengthened the East Midlands collection, and at the same time the University helped prevent the dispersal of local collections of importance (46). The significance of the Manuscripts Department is illustrated by the allocation to it in 1981 of the Newcastle Collection - of 'pre-eminent' national importance; and by the formal designation in 1979 of the Department - after due inspection by an officer of the Public Records Office - as the repository for the records of hospitals in the local health district.

As we have seen, the development of research collections at Warwick has echoed Sloman's opinion that the way to excellence in a new university is through concentration of resources (47); Warwick's special collections are also of national, indeed international significance. Of them the Modern Records Centre fulfils the role of repository (the statistics and working papers collections are rather up-to-date working collections), and the Centre may fairly be said to have 'arrived' with its acquisition of the Victor Gollancz papers (1977), the CBI archives (1979) and the type-scripts of Richard Crossman's diaries (1980).

Despite the evident importance of certain special collections - indeed, perhaps because of it - the larger institution of which the library is a constituent often appears to find it very easy to turn its back on its special collections.

At Warwick the Librarian discerns a certain narrow-mindedness on the part of the academic community. He argues that he has had to make plenty of noise concerning the statistics collection in order to convince the University that it is a serious and worthwhile service; and he has worked hard to persuade some of his academic colleagues that in the Modern Records Centre they have something of which the university can be proud (48). Even an apparently well-established arrangement such as the special collections at Nottingham University is not immune from apparent neglect on the part of the university; we have seen that in the Manuscripts Department, for example, there is

increasing pressure on a limited number of professional staff, with no prospect of relief.

It may be that the growth of certain special collections in the direction of their own raisons d'être alienates those whose responsibility it is to finance such special collections. It is certainly possible that the expenditure of university resources on projects of a wider, public beneficé rankles with academic departments concerned to protect their own budgets. (This is not the place for a discussion on the responsibility of the universities to the community at large). The Keeper of the Manuscripts at Nottingham sees no apparent resentment there at the resources which go towards what are often largely non-university ventures. She would cite those academic departments at Nottingham whose members have to visit other institutions and other repositories in the course of their research as sympathizers with the work of her Department. However this leaves a number of departments - particularly in sciences - where such an understanding might be lacking. At all events, quite what the powers-that-be at Nottingham think of the Library's special collections is, as the special collections librarian points out, difficult to fathom (49).

It is less likely that academic diffidence at Warwick towards special collections is because of the organisation of some of them as commercial services. Such organization is concomitant with the continuing phenomenon which has become dubbed 'Warwick University Limited' (50). The Vice-Chancellor of Warwick, Jack Butterworth, has never been squeamish about entrepreneurial initiatives (51), and their presence in the university library is a reflection of the role of business values in the university as a whole. Indeed, David Mort would argue that academics at Warwick are less hostile about his providing

a commercial statistics service to industry than might be expected of academics in comparable institutions (52).

The quid pro quo which a university receives for having invested in the library's special collections can be classed broadly as prestige. As we have seen, the desire for prestige has occasionally been an explicit motive behind the assembling of special collections. Prestige can take a number of forms: it can be explicit or implicit; public, or limited to a particular academic field. There is, for example, the general academic prestige of a constant flow of scholars to the university, drawn by the magnet of a particular special collection.

To conclude this section one 'prestigious' example will be taken from each institution.

At Nottingham the D.H. Lawrence exhibition of 1980, "*very largely the work of the keeper of manuscripts*", was acknowledged in the Report of the Librarian:

"The participation of Dr Philip Larkin in the opening ceremony in May, and the conferment of an honorary degree in July on Mr George Lazarus, for many years a great friend of the Lawrence collections, had the effect of bringing the library into the public eye in a more positive way than usual". (53)

At Warwick national exposure was achieved in 1978 by means of a piece in The Times:

"The Modern Records Centre at Warwick University has succeeded in rescuing from oblivion important areas of modern life, in particular source documents of the modern Labour movement and industrial relations, which would otherwise have no memorial.

It has just finished its foundation period, published the first guide to its holdings, and is established as the best record of those things". (54)

FINAL WORD

The aim of this piece of work was to throw some light on broad issues concerned with special collections in university libraries. As was pointed out in the introduction, comparisons have been inevitable, although some care has been taken to avoid direct comparison where it would be unnecessary and, indeed, invidious to do so.

Much of the discussion has revolved around the fact that the history and circumstances of special collections at Warwick and Nottingham are in many ways dissimilar. In retrospect it seems worthwhile highlighting how much both institutions have in common in this respect. On a general level certain things are clearly common to both: the personal influences on the development of collections, financial pressure, shortage of staff, are subjects which spring to mind. Even at specific level there are common experiences: Nottingham, like the Modern Records Centre, has, it will be recalled, experienced the difficulties of acquiring business archives.

But the similarities should not be over-emphasized. It is the dissimilarities, the contrasts, which serve to illuminate the specific experience of each institution. Special collections at Warwick - where there have been intimate links with academic departments in the amassing of special collections, and where the Library has depended on, and been attuned to, gaining external grants for their development - are clearly a very different phenomenon than they have been and are at Nottingham. It is hoped that this dissertation has revealed something of their different approaches to the provision of research collections.

NOTES

Notes to Section One

1. Humphreys (1977), p.27.
2. Cave (1982), p.10.
3. Humphreys (1977), p.28.
4. Cave (1982).
5. Humphreys (1977).
6. Cox (1981).
7. Inns (1977).
8. Coachworth (1982); Lang (1982); Stone (1982).
9. Archer (1970); Burckel (1980); Kyvig (1977); Zabrosky (1977).
10. University College, Nottingham. Annual report, 1931, p.62.
11. University College, Nottingham. Annual report, 1933.
12. University of Nottingham. Library. Readers' information leaflet No. 11B, p.4.
13. University of Nottingham. Report of the librarian, 1957-58, p.3.
14. University College, Nottingham. Annual report, 1936, p.64.
15. For an account of the incipient process at regional level see Anon. (1946).
16. University of Nottingham. The Library: ... (1950).
17. Tucker (1972), pp. 374-375.
18. Tucker (1980), p.78.
19. Emelina (1979).

Notes to Section two

1. University of Warwick Library. Report, 1963-1966, p.6
2. University College, Nottingham. Annual report, 1948, pp. 45-46
3. University College, Nottingham. Annual report, 1931, p.62
4. University of Nottingham. The Library:.... (1950), p.18
5. Conversation with Michael Brook, June 1983
6. University College, Nottingham. Annual report, 1938, pp. 69-70
7. University of Nottingham. Keeper of Manuscripts. 13th report, p. 30
8. Welch (1983)
9. University of Nottingham. Report of the Librarian, 1973-74, p.9
10. University of Nottingham. Annual report, 1963-64, p.86
11. Conversation with Peter Tucker, June 1983
12. Tucker (1980), p.76
13. Tucker (1980), p.76
14. Tucker (1983)
15. Tucker (1980) p.77
16. Tucker (1983)
17. University of Warwick Library. Report of the librarian, 1972-73, p.3
18. University of Warwick. Modern Records Centre. Report, 1973-74 p.2
19. Conversation with Richard Storey, June 1983
20. Conversation with Mary Welch, June 1983
21. Welch (1983)
22. Coachworth (1982), p.143
23. University of Nottingham. Report of the librarian, 1969-70, p.9
24. Tucker (1980) p.77
25. The information which follows is taken from the conveniently concise account contained in the unpublished return to the UGC questionnaire on special collections (1982), of which Peter Tucker kindly gave me a copy

26. University of Warwick Library. Report of the librarian, 1975-76, p.1; 1979-80, p.2.
27. University of Nottingham Library. Readers' information leaflet no. 11A, p.1
28. University of Nottingham. Report of the Librarian 1978-79, p.12
29. Tucker (1980), pp. 76-77
30. University of Warwick Library. Report 1963-1966, p.7
31. University of Warwick. Modern Records Centre. Report, 1974-75, p.1
32. Pemberton (1968)
33. University College, Nottingham. Annual report, 1937, p.69
34. Tucker (1972), p.374
35. Tucker (1972), p.382
36. Tucker (1980), p.67
37. University College, Nottingham. Annual report, 1948, p.45; University of Nottingham. Annual report, 1950, p.65
38. Tucker (1980), p.76
39. Tucker (1980), p.76
40. Welch (1983)
41. Conversation with Mary Welch, June 1983
42. Wood (1953), pp. 149-150
43. Tucker (1980), p.72
44. Tucker (1980), p.77
45. Conversation with David Mort, June 1983

Notes to Section three

1. Much of this account is based on conversation with Mary Welch, June 1983
2. University of Nottingham. Annual report, 1952, p.59; 1959-60, p.97; 1961-62, p.115; University of Nottingham. Report of the librarian, 1957-58, p.4
3. Much of this account is based on conversation with Michael Brook, June 1983
4. University of Nottingham Library. Readers' information leaflet No. 11A, p.1
5. Tucker (1980), p.77
6. University of Warwick. Modern Records Centre. Report, 1973-74 p.5
7. Much of the preceding account has been based on conversation with Richard Storey, June 1983
8. University of Warwick Library. Working papers, p.1
9. University of Warwick Library. Warwick statistics service:...., p.[3]
10. University of Nottingham. Keeper of Manuscripts. 13th report, p.[31]
11. Unpublished return to UGC questionnaire on special collections, 1982
12. University of Warwick Library. Report of the librarian, 1971-72, p. 10
13. University of Nottingham. Annual report, 1950, p.67
14. University of Nottingham. Report of the librarian, 1958-59, p.6
15. University of Nottingham. Report of the librarian, 1971-72, p.10; 1974-75, p.11; 1975-76, p.11; 1977-78, p.9; 1978-79, p.11
16. University of Nottingham. Report of the librarian, 1977-78, p.10
17. University of Nottingham. Report of the librarian, 1964-65
18. University of Nottingham. Report of the librarian, 1974-75, p.12
19. University of Nottingham. Annual report, 1972-73, p.136

20. University of Warwick. Modern Records Centre. Report, 1973-74
p.6
21. University of Warwick. Modern Records Centre. Report, 1978-79,
p.5
22. University of Warwick Library. Warwick statistics service:...,
p.[2]
23. University of Warwick Library. Report of the librarian, 1980-81,
p.5
24. University of Warwick Library. Working papers, p.1
25. Unpublished return to UGC questionnaire on special collections,
1982
26. University of Nottingham. Keeper of Manuscripts. 12th, 13th
and 14th Reports
27. University of Nottingham. Report of the librarian, 1976-77,
p.9
28. For an account of the activities of the Department see University
of Nottingham Keeper of Manuscripts. 13th report, p.6
29. University of Warwick. Modern Records Centre. Report, 1975-76,
p.3; 1979-80, p.4; 1980-81, p.6
30. Tucker (1972), p.382
31. University of Warwick Library. Report of the librarian, 1976-77,
p.6
32. University of Warwick Library, Report of the librarian, 1976-77,
p.6
33. University of Warwick Library. Report of the librarian; 1971-72,
p.10
34. Information from conversation with David Mort, June 1983, and
unpublished return to UGC questionnaire on special collections,
1982
35. Cox (1979), p.90
36. University of Warwick Library. Report of the librarian, 1979-80,
p.3
37. University of Warwick Library. Report of the librarian, 1970-71,
p.6

38. University of Warwick Library. Report of the librarian, 1972-73, p.9
39. University of Warwick Library. Report of the librarian, 1974-75, pp.3-4
40. University of Warwick Library. Report of the librarian, 1976-77, p.2; 1981-82, p.3
41. University of Warwick Library. Report of the librarian, 1974-75, p.3
42. University of Nottingham. Annual report, 1966-67, p.97;
University of Nottingham. Report of the librarian, 1981-82, p.9
43. University of Warwick Library. Report of the librarian, 1973-74, p.7
44. The Guardian, 13th May 1983
45. Humphreys (1977), p.30
46. University of Nottingham. Report of the librarian, 1980-81, p.3
47. Tucker (1980), p.70; Sloman (1964), pp.26-27
48. Conversation with Peter Tucker, June 1983
49. Conversations with Michael Brook and Mary Welch, June 1983
50. Thompson (1970); St John-Brooks (1981)
51. St John-Brooks (1981), p.470
52. Conversation with David Mort, June 1983
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54. Howard (1978)

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