

George Orwell's Collection of Political Pamphlets

Reference: 2019-22-BAI

Supervisor	Alison Bailey (Lead Curator, Printed Heritage Collections 1901-2000)
Department, Location	Printed Heritage Collections, Western Heritage Collections - St Pancras, London
Start date/timeframe	The placement could take place any time in the period from May 2019 to March 2020.
Duration	3 months (or part-time equivalent).
Remote-working	It is not possible to work remotely on this placement as it requires access to on-site material.
Context for placement	
<p>The team in Printed Heritage Collections (PHC) 1901-2000, within Western Heritage Collections, curates material published in the UK and Ireland from 1901-2000, including monographs, periodicals, pamphlets, leaflets and other printed ephemera.</p> <p>We hold a collection of pamphlets etc. which previously belonged to George Orwell, donated in 1955 to the then British Museum Library (now the British Library) which are not catalogued individually. An important part of our work is to make specific collections within the collection visible and accessible to as wide an audience as possible, while placing them in the context of publication in the relevant period.</p> <p>This placement would allow us to promote this material, approximately 2,700 items (including newspaper cuttings), which belonged to Orwell. The material dates primarily from the period of the Second World War and the years immediately preceding. (Further information is available on the British Library website.)</p> <p>The PhD placement student will create catalogue records via a spreadsheet system for a substantial percentage of the collection to an agreed standard. This would enable resource discovery for those interested in the history and politics of the Second World War and preceding years as well as those specifically interested in Orwell and his collecting.</p>	
Expected tasks and outcomes	
<p>The main task would be the creation of descriptive records of the Orwell pamphlets in a spreadsheet and research into the context of the material. In addition to these records, which would be made visible in the British Library's public catalogue (Explore the British Library), the outcomes would include one or more of the following (to be shaped by the interests of the student):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of an essay for the Library's online resource <i>Discovering literature</i> • Blog post(s) on the Library's blog <i>Untold Lives</i> • A collection guide on the Library's website • An article for submission to the Library's peer-reviewed journal (or another academic publication) • The potential to publicise the progress of the project and items of interest via the Library's social media channels <p>These potential outputs would be discussed and reviewed over the course of the placement with the placement supervisor and relevant colleagues.</p>	
Training and experience expected to be gained by student through the placement	
<p>Following an initial induction to the British Library, its collections and how the Orwell Collection fits within that, the student will receive training in the creation of records via the spreadsheet system (constructed according to the principles of RDA and MARC21). They will also be introduced to the range of online subscription databases to which the Library has access. The recording of items will be based on professional standards and the placement student will have considerable autonomy in deciding research methods and focus and how best to promote the material.</p> <p>The placement student will be invited to departmental and section meetings in order to gain a wider</p>	

understanding of the work of the Library. The student would also be encouraged to attend relevant staff training events such as those provided by the Digital Scholarship and Training teams and the regular staff talks given as part of the Library's *21st Century Curators* series.

The student will also receive support and guidance in relation to writing the blogs and material for the British Library website.

This would be an excellent introduction for any PhD student with an interest in pursuing a career in the libraries, archives or museums sector and presents a valuable opportunity to put knowledge of the period and subject to practical application. It will provide specialist knowledge of the standards required for cataloguing and metadata in such institutions.

Throughout the placement, there will be opportunities for the student to meet other research fellows, placement students and collaborative doctoral researchers based at the Library.

The Library's blog posts command a large and predominantly non-academic readership; contributing to this will enable the student to publicise their work to thousands of readers and will hone their skills in writing for popular audiences.

Required knowledge and skills

The project would particularly suit someone with research interests in twentieth-century British or International history, and who has an understanding or experience of research using archival materials and sources.

This is a training and development opportunity open to current PhD students only. It is not intended to lead to a permanent post at the Library. Please note that the Library is unable to provide a stipend for PhD research placements. Applicants must obtain the support of their PhD supervisor in advance and, as part of their process, consult their HEI to ascertain what funding is available to support them.

Application deadline: 5pm on Monday, **18 February 2019**. Information on how to apply is available on our website: <https://www.bl.uk/news/2019/january/phd-research-placements-2019>