# Managing collections at the University of Birmingham:
What have we learned from 3 years of the new Main Library and Research Reserve?

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# The new Main Library

# 3 years in…
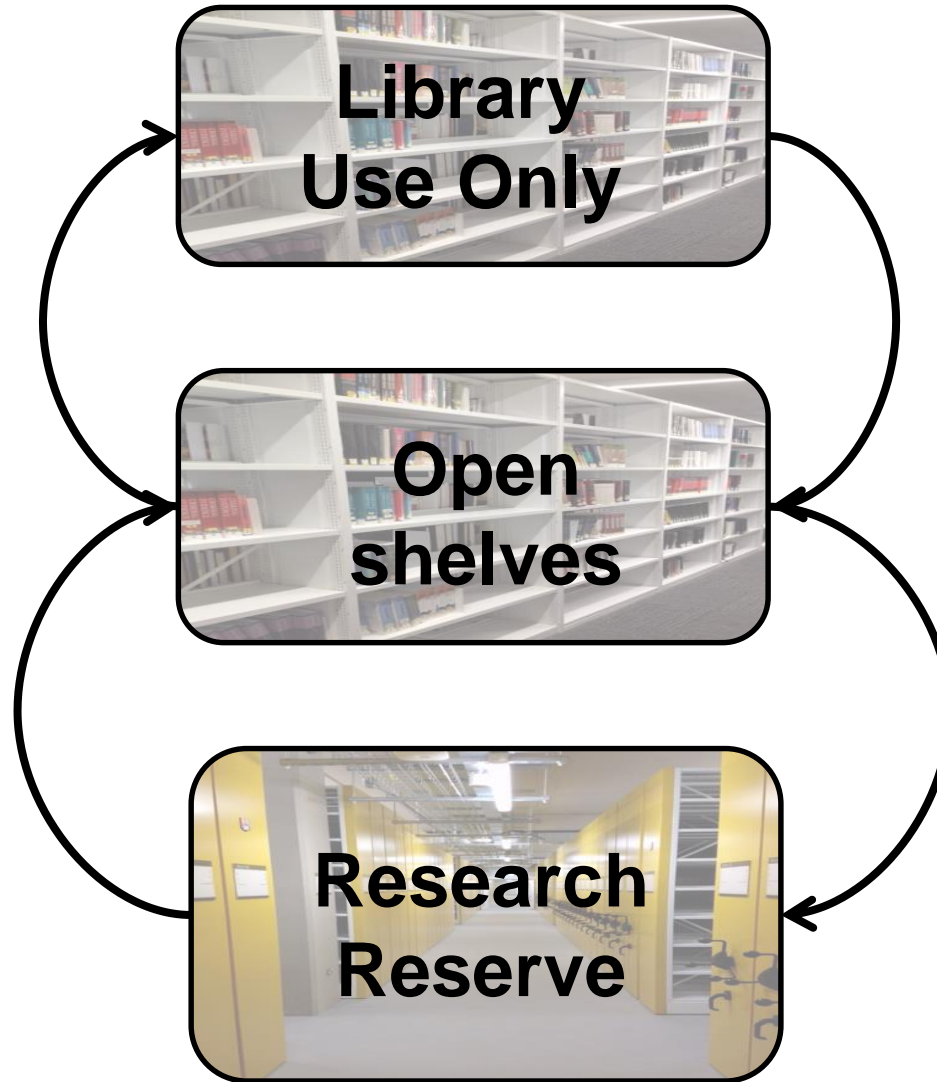# what have we learned?

**Main Library upper floors: 20% (12km)**
**Higher use collections, open for browsing**
Books: loaned in last 5 years, purchased in last 2 years
Journals: current, print only subscriptions

**Research Reserve: 80% (50km)**
**Lower use collections, fetching service**

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

**Library Use Only**

**Open shelves**

**Research Reserve**

Movement based on:
- Resource list category
- Usage
- Purchase date

E.g. books moved from RR to open shelves if:
- On a resource list (not background reading), or
- 5 or more holds in a rolling 12 month period
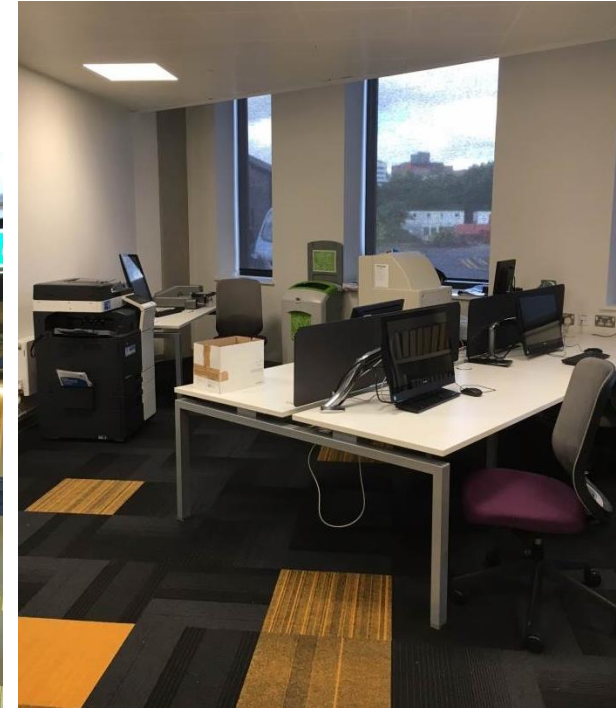- Current editions only

# Lessons learned

☐ Can't escape manual overrides (for multi-volume sets, old editions etc)

☐ Metadata is a constant challenge

☐ No matter how you hone the reports, the data will find ways to surprise you (50k relegation items in 2019!)
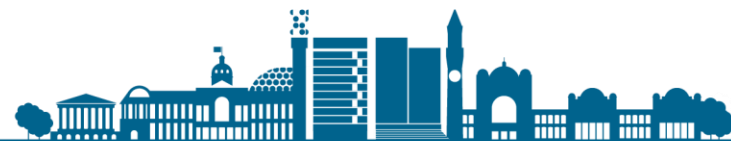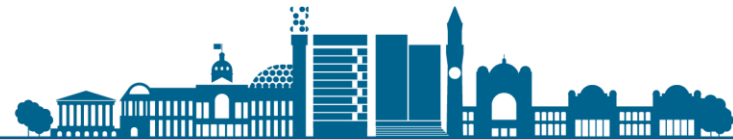
# The Research Reserve

# Space in the Research Reserve

☐ Key layout decision: aim for a single Library of Congress book sequence

☐ Big benefits for fetching and browsing <u>but</u>
  – Interfiling and shifting will never end
  – Reduces working capacity of shelves
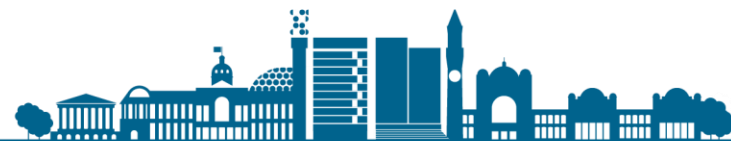  – So many bookends…

# Research Reserve requests

☐ Average 1639 physical item requests per month (Sept 16-Apr 19)

☐ Average 53 scanning requests per month

– Scanning is free but only 3% of requests

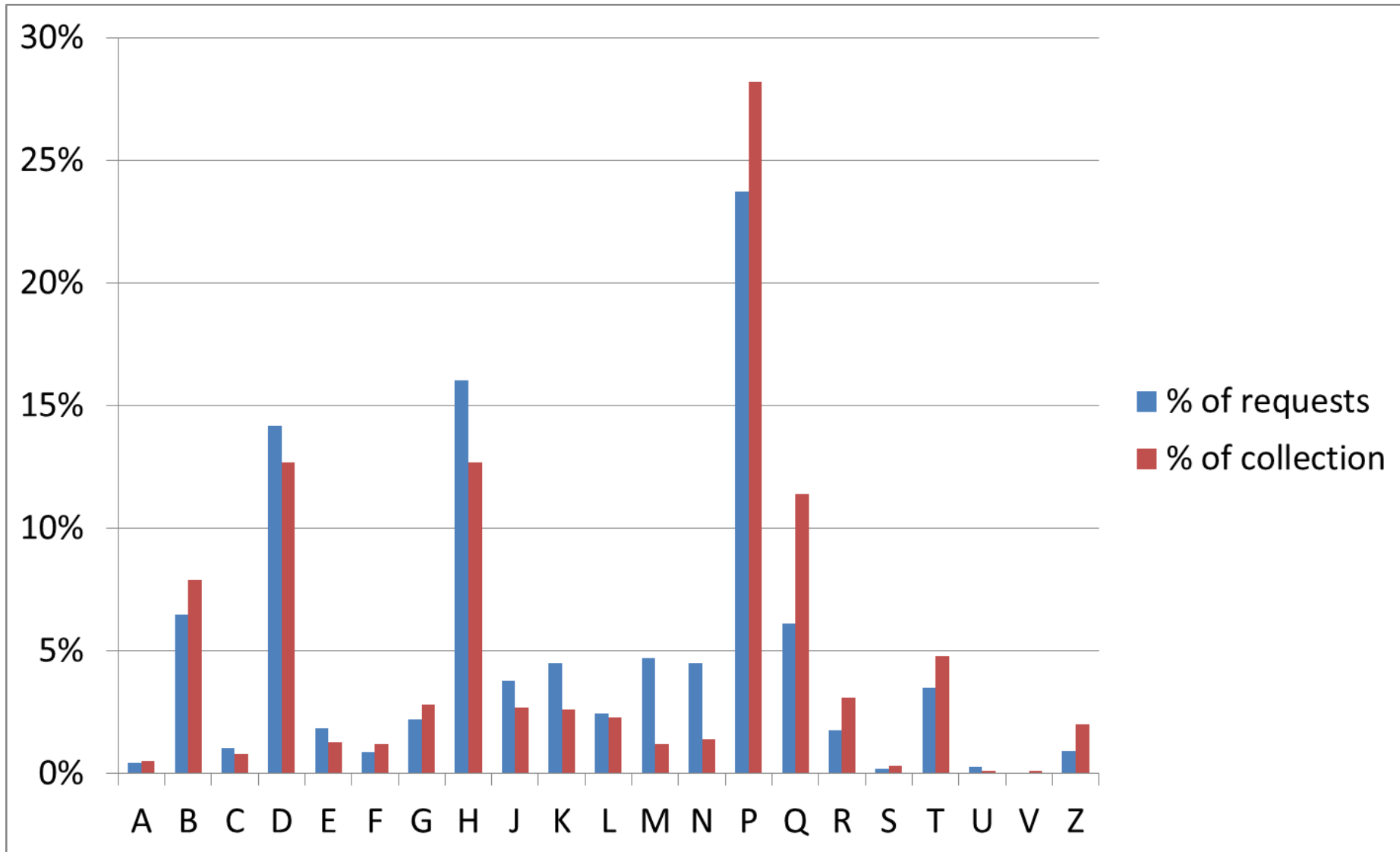☐ Most requests (>80%) are for monographs

# Research Reserve requests

| LoC Classmark | % of requests | % of collection |
|---|---|---|
| B (Philosophy, Psychology, Religion) | 6% | 8% |
| D (History) | 14% | 13% |
| H (Social Sciences) | 16% | 13% |
| P (Language and Literature) | 24% | 28% |
| Q (Science) | 6% | 11% |
| Other | 33% | 27% |

# % of requests since 2016 where the classmark can be analysed:

# Research Reserve requests

| Top ten most used sub-classes of LoC | | Requests since 2016* |
|---|---|---:|
| PR | English Literature | 2757 |
| PN | Literature (General) | 1559 |
| DA | History (Great Britain) | 1235 |
| HD | Industry/Management | 1220 |
| ML | Literature on Music | 1069 |
| PQ | French/Italian/Spanish Literature | 1024 |
| PA | Greek and Latin Language and Literature | 999 |
| N | Visual Arts | 837 |
| D | History (General) | 833 |
| PS | American Literature | 811 |

*out of 37578 requests with extractable classmarks

# Research Reserve requests

- In 18/19
  - 54% of requests from undergraduates
  - 13% from post-graduate taught
  - 15% from post-graduate research
  - 12% from academic staff

# Research Reserve browsing

- ☐ Politically important

- ☐ Only offered to academics, post-graduate research students, and taught students at their tutor's requests

- ☐ Health and safety induction required ahead of/during first visit

# Research Reserve browsing

☐ Average 33 visits per month

☐ In 2018, 374 visits, from 106 individuals

– 27 individuals visited 5 or more times

– The highest user visited 23 times

☐ Top 5 departments for browsing:

– History; Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology; Music; Modern Languages; Byzantine, Ottoman and Greek Studies

# Lessons learned

☐ Most usage comes from a concentrated group of users/subjects

☐ But there's a big 'long tail'

☐ Users of the RR want books, not scans

☐ Comparatively low use from research students and academics compared to taught students
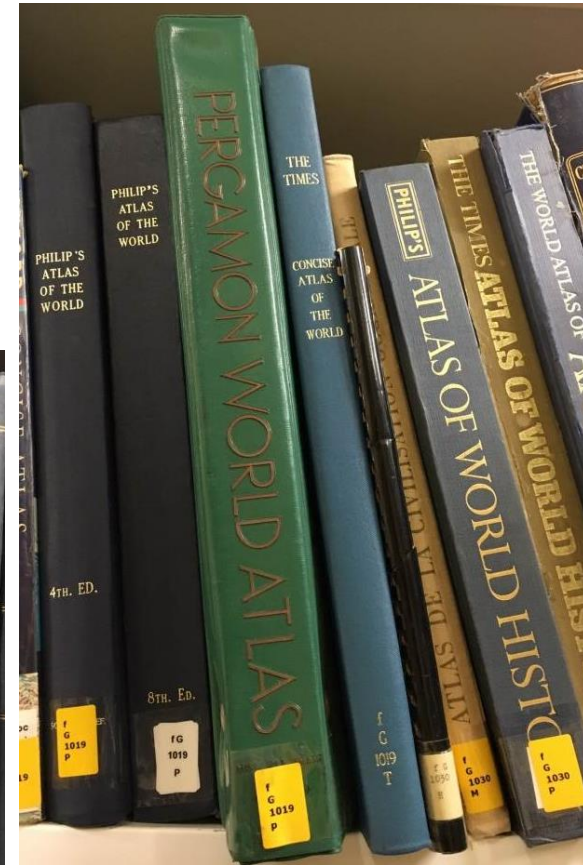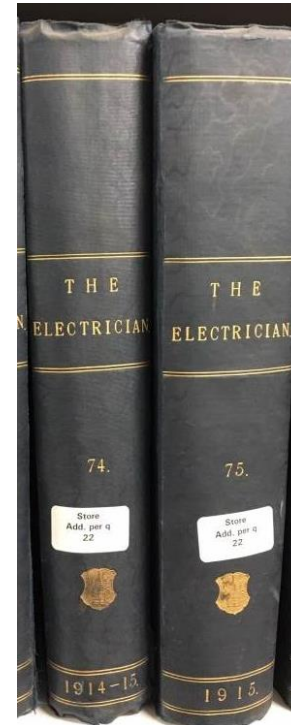
# What's next?
# Service development

☐ How low use should 'low use' be?

– Strategic driver to raise profile of how Library Services support research

– Service review group set up (processes, communication)

– Summer intern focus on deeper understanding of researchers

# What's next? Space management

- ☐ Continued consolidation and interfiling
- ☐ Tough questions about best use of space
- ☐ Understanding the collection better through categorisation

# Thank you

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