Birkbeck Library Annual Review 2021–2022

Highlights 2021–2022

New silent study area

We opened a new silent study area on Level 2 of the Library in March 2022.

The new space – which is fully separated from the rest of the Library to ensure that it is truly silent – has plenty of natural light and includes a variety of seating styles, desks with and without PCs, as well as some height-adjustable desks. It also has state-of-the-art ventilation and desk lights on some of the study desks.

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Highlights 2021–2022

New silent study area (2)

In April, we asked students to give us feedback on the new space, using a blackboard and post-it notes. Their feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

We quickly rectified the problem with the noisy door leading to this area which 'killed the silence ironically' as one student described.

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Highlights 2021–2022

New archives room

Our new silent study area also includes a dedicated archives room which provides a new home for the core of the Birkbeck College Archive, the David Bohm Papers, Sir Bernard Crick Archive and our collection of medieval books.

In 2021–2022 we received 26 enquiries relating to the College Archive, the Bohm Papers and the Crick Archive. Most enquiries are dealt with online where we consult or scan the material on behalf of the enquirer.

Since the archives room opened, we have received visitors from as far as the USA and Australia, most of them returning for a second visit.

Highlights 2021–2022

Use of image collections for research

The Library provided high-quality versions of more than 70 historical images for College projects undertaken by the Academic Services and the Marketing and External Relations teams, in addition to around 60 images for Professor Joanna Bourke's new history of Birkbeck. We also advised on their legal use and pointed colleagues towards alternative sources where the Library did not hold anything suitable. The images feature in projects such as the 200th anniversary edition of the Alumni magazine and the Vice Chancellor's welcome video for new students.

The Library offers a new session 'An introduction to using archives and images in your research', aimed at PhD students but open to all, as part of our annual training programme. A new online guide is available to complement the session.

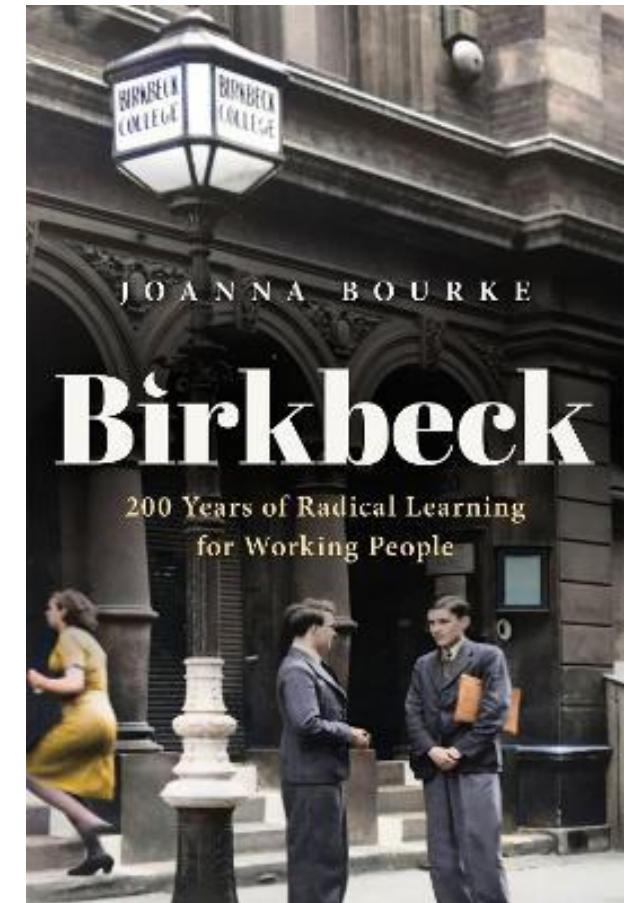WWW.BBK.AC.UK

Highlights 2021–2022

Birkbeck: 200 years of radical learning for working people

Professor Joanna Bourke used the Birkbeck College Archive extensively in the research for her book Birkbeck: 200 years of radical learning for working people. Two PhD students, each researching different aspects of the history of Birkbeck, also worked on the project.
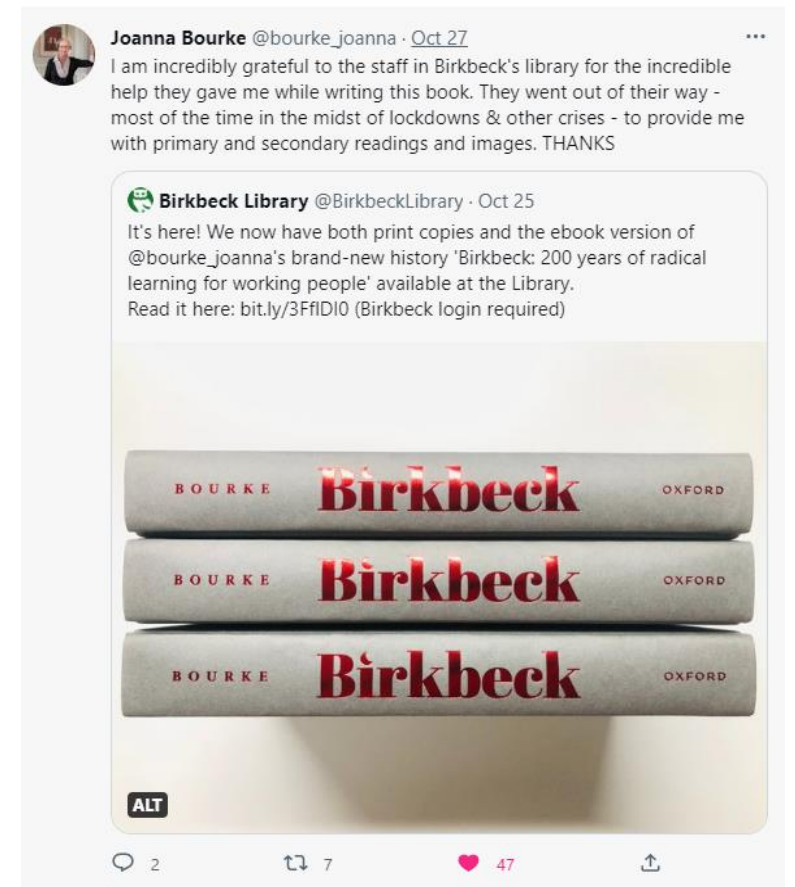
Many Library staff assisted Professor Bourke and her team with their research: the interlibrary loans team sourced secondary material, the Assistant Librarian (Repository and Digital Media) advised on the use of images from the Birkbeck History database and the Subject Librarian for the School of Science provided access to archive material.

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Highlights 2021–2022

Birkbeck: 200 years of radical learning for working people (2)

The book was published on 8 September 2022. The Library holds print copies and provides unlimited access to the ebook for Birkbeck students and staff.
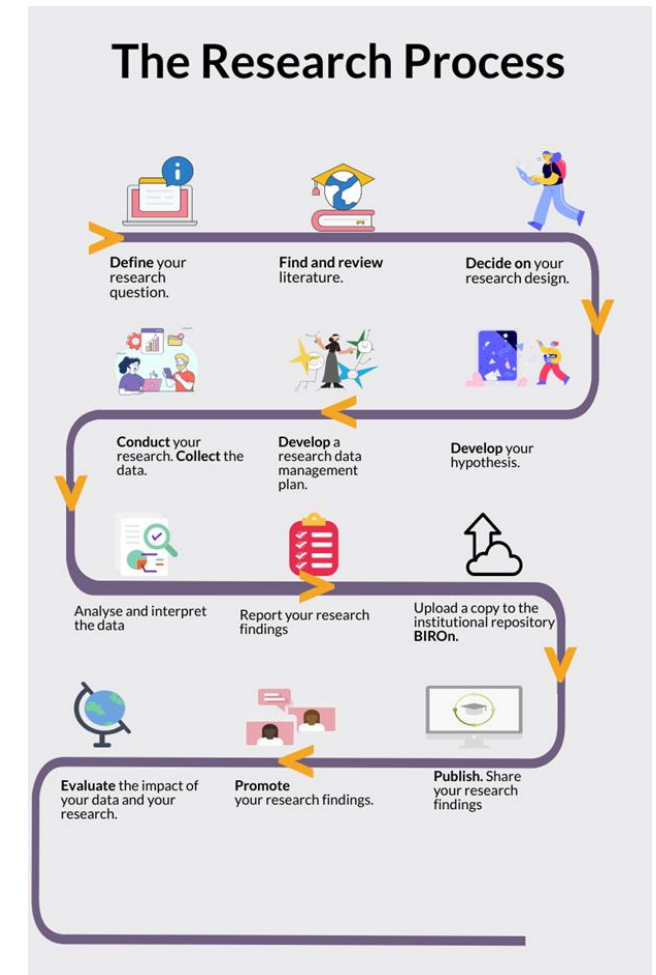
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Highlights 2021–2022

Supporting research

Library staff delivered a series of training sessions aimed at PhD students. Topics covered at these introductory sessions included: literature searching, research data management, uploading digital thesis copies to BIROn (Birkbeck Institutional Research Online), open-access publishing and research impact.

Our very informative research support guide provides help and guidance for both PGR students and staff.

For Open Access Week 2021 the Library worked collaboratively with colleagues from other institutions to deliver a programme of online events called London Open Research Week. Participants joined sessions from all over the world.

The Research Process

Define your research question.

Find and review literature.

Decide on your research design.

Conduct your research. Collect the data.

Develop a research data management plan.

Develop your hypothesis.

Analyse and interpret the data

Report your research findings

Upload a copy to the institutional repository BIROn.

Evaluate the impact of your data and your research.

Promote your research findings.

Publish. Share your research findings

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Highlights 2021–2022

Library participation in REF

The Library played a key role in the preparation of the College's 2021 Research Excellence Framework submission by contributing to several of its elements.

Library colleagues purchased and supplied 247 print copy monographs to the REF panels and checked Open Access (OA) requirements for journal articles. 502 records were deposited on BIROn (Birkbeck Institutional Research Online repository); 323 had fully open full text – 208 of these were Gold OA and 115 Green OA.

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Highlights 2021–2022

Customer Service Excellence – re-accreditation

Following our achievement of the Customer Service Excellence accreditation in 2021, the Library was reassessed in September. The assessor confirmed that we had maintained the Standard and even achieved more 'compliance plus' ratings (10) for areas where we exceeded the requirements of the Standard. The assessor wrote in his report that "it was very pleasing to witness the continued commitment of the organisation towards Customer Service Excellence".

Feedback

We continue to use feedback to inform our services and improve the Student Experience.

"Great library services and there is always someone to help, with plenty of space for both silent individual studying and group studying. A good variety of textbooks (and just general reading books)"

"The Library is the warmest part of the building – it's nice for us to be able to come here!"

"Nice new study area... I bet it's gonna be packed during exams time. Looks comfy and clean and the lights are just about right. "

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Statistics at a glance

Enquiries received at the desk: **20,145**

Live chat enquiries: **1,732**

Individual visits to the Library: **116,146**

Print book loans: **25,708**

Interlibrary loan requests fulfilled: **1,304**

Online searches for electronic resources: **121,242**

Page views of Library website (homepage): **128,410**

Disability and Dyslexia Service one-to-one appointments with students: **67**

Subject Librarian one-to-one appointments with students: **157**

Subject Librarian information skills sessions: **69**

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Statistics at a glance (2)

Orientation activities - new and prospective students attending Library tours: **c. 600**

Data Management Plans – our Research Data Support Manager helped Birkbeck researchers: **c. 20**

BiRD (Birkbeck Research Data Repository)
- Deposits: **10**
- Downloads of datasets: **3,200**

BIROn (Birkbeck Institutional Research Online repository)
- Deposits: **1,584**
- Downloads: **615,424**
- 'Request a copy' requests (where researchers authorised the Library to release a single copy to a requestor for private study): **48**

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Our Service Standards: how did we do?

Achieved
- ✓ We will have trained library staff available to provide help and support whenever we are open.
- ✓ We will respond to all enquiries within a day.
- ✓ We will respond to complaints and comments within 2 working days.
- ✓ 99% of interlibrary loan requests will be submitted to the British Library within 2 working days.
- ✓ 90% of all returned material will be reshelved within 48 hours.
- ✓ 90% of students will be able to arrange an appointment with their Subject Librarian within 1 week.
- ✓ 90% of new books will be available to library users within 7 days of arrival.

Not achieved/not applicable
- × We aim for the Library to be open 100% of our advertised opening hours.
- × Our Library Catalogue and electronic resources will be available 24/7 for 100% of the time.

The Library had to close early on 10 occasions due to staff shortages and twice due to circumstances beyond our control (storm Eunice; local power outage). The Catalogue was available 90% of the time with one major network outage that affected the Library's indexes and our electronic resources were available for 95% of the time as we experienced downtime with some platforms.

Further information

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