

AHRC US/UK Digitisation Project: Cookery Archives at the University of Leeds

Reflecting its designated status, the Cookery Collection at the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds, includes many unique or rare documents that have not been digitised but which have significant potential value for international researchers. The collections are:

1. **Cookery Printed Books** is composed of a range of individual gifts made to the university since 1939. It includes nearly 10,000 printed volumes and over 140 manuscript recipe and household books. Its holdings range from 1487 to the present day. The collection has particular thematic strengths in astronomy, empire, home economics, medicine, confectionery, recipes, menus, and vegetarianism. National traditions, including those of China and Italy among others, are also well represented.
2. **Cookery Scrapbooks.** The work of a single cook, Ann Sergeant, the extensive cuttings (packaging, recipes, ingredients) and recipes in these scrapbooks offer a distinctive window of the evolution of food production and cooking since World War Two.
3. **Michael Bateman Archive.** This archive includes scrapbooks, videotape, artwork, and diaries alongside the published writings of Michael Bateman. The collection reflects Bateman's interest in contemporary food writing as well as in processes of food manufacture, including his 1980s Campaign for Real Bread.
4. **Food Standards Committee Papers.** Alongside his noted work in establishing the Procter Department of Food Science at the University of Leeds, Professor Alan Ward was chair of the British government's Food Standards Commitment between 1959 and 1977. These papers include a series of important reports that the committee published in this time among other contextual documents.

Scoping work carried out as a result of this AHRC research network has indicated that **at least** 17% of the material in the Cookery Collection has been digitised. Approximately 4% of this material has been digitised by the university while the remaining 96% sits on external resources such as the Internet Archive.

The proportion of digitised material by historical period is as follows:

Year	Total	Digitised	% digitised	% not digitised
1500-1550	41	0	0	100
1550-1599	67	4	6	94
1600-1650	83	5	6	94
1650-1699	154	5	3	97
1700-1750	252	7	3	97
1750-1799	404	168	42	58
1800-1850	685	495	72	28
1850-1899	768	595	77	23
1900-1950	2357	359	15	85
1950-1999	4449	4	0	100
2000-2500	407	0	0	100

By language, meanwhile, is as follows:

Language	Total	Digitised	% digitized	% not digitised
English	8728	1458	17%	83%
French	402	146	36%	64%
Chinese	202	0	0%	100%
Italian	104	14	13%	87%
Latin	103	0	0%	100%
German	73	20	27%	73%
Spanish	46	0	0%	100%
Portuguese	14	0	0%	100%
Norwegian	11	0	0%	100%
Japanese	10	0	0%	100%
Multiple languages	8	1	13%	88%
Dutch	7	1	14%	86%
Russian	5	1	20%	80%
Danish	4	0	0%	100%
Swedish	3	0	0%	100%
Catalan	1	1	100%	0%
Hungarian	1	1	100%	0%
Esperanto	1	0	0%	100%
Turkish	1	0	0%	100%
Ukrainian	1	0	0%	100%
Welsh	1	0	0%	100%

Following further investigation, the real proportion of digitised material, and hence all ratios above, is likely to become higher. Links to such existing external resources will aid the researcher wherever possible. Even following the identification and creation of such links, however, a very significant amount of the library's Cookery holdings will be unavailable elsewhere. The following future actions thus hold value for international research:

- **Subject Data.** Most of the 10,000 titles in the collection have no subject field, and cataloguing is inconsistent across different texts. Developing and applying a standardised list of subjects for them, while a significant undertaking, would greatly enhance the knowledge and usability of the archive across the international field of food studies.
- **Digitisation Strategy.** Such standardised subjects would enable the team to identify thematic strengths of the collection and to plan future digitisation strategy. Developing these standardised subjects as well as our future strategy in collaboration with this international AHRC network will enhance international visibility, while the size of the archive and benefits of digitisation indicate a case for external investment. Recent external investment in digitising the Leeds Archive of Vernacular Culture provides a useful model for future projects related to this other designated strength of the university's library.

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