

HarperCollins Publishers

A strong business archive can provide a company with a source of information, a place to prove their rights and obligations, and an ability to showcase their heritage. The archive at HarperCollins Publishers does this daily for our business.

William Collins founded his business as a publisher and printer in Glasgow in 1819, and this original company makes up the majority of material in our archive. As well as our records management side of the archive, we have artwork and bible collections, along with historical material relating to the Collins family and their business. For many years, the archive had been without permanent stewardship and therefore in 2012, it was ready to be refreshed and re-inspired. The logical first step for the improvement of the archive was to understand what we had and consolidate the material. Between appropriately managed destructions and the reorganisation of our rooms, this was achieved and our archive could then provide the right service for our company in both our Glasgow and London offices.

The benefits of having an archivist in-house are plentiful. The archivist can act as an advocate for the archive and help to illustrate how it can benefit the business. Internal outreach plays an important part in this. For example, each month on our HarperCollins intranet site, an Archive Item of the Month is shared with colleagues. This has proved very popular, showing that employees have an interest in our history, and staff now understand the benefit of collecting and depositing material in the archive and what information can be found by using editorial material from the past. A wonderful example of this is the republishing of some of 'The Detective Story Club', a series of books started in 1929. Using the original covers found in the archive, the books have been introduced to a new generation of crime fans.

Equally, having an archivist on-site allows for the chance to increase our external outreach. By increasing our archive's involvement in projects such as the Scottish Council on Archives' 'Working Archive', speaking at conferences and sharing our #HCArchive tweet of the week on Twitter, our archive has a presence in the wider archival sphere. Sheena Barclay, Deputy Managing Director of Collins Learning and Managing Director of Collins Geo says of the archive 'With a rich tapestry stretching almost 200 years, HarperCollins is a company with a strong understanding of the importance to the business of a living archive. A daily operational necessity for some, Collins Archive is also a deep and varied creative treasure trove, which helps highlight our heritage and inform and enhance our future thinking.'

The future holds the celebration of our bi-centenary in 2019, which will be an opportunity for the archive to shine and support the business in various ways. It will present opportunities for new publishing, republishing of our classics and to celebrate our rich 200 years of history.



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