Cataloguing Literary Archives: from the West Yorkshire Playhouse Archive into the Future

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West Yorkshire Playhouse Archive

- Large collection of a local theatre
- Several accruals
- Modern – earliest record is 1965
- Wide range of material
Sources of information

- The Playhouse supplied a brief history & a list of plays
- National Theatre archives catalogue

- GLAM thesaurus and glossary [http://glam-archives.org.uk/?page_id=1147](http://glam-archives.org.uk/?page_id=1147)
Organisation

- Hierarchy:

  Sub-fonds: Leeds Playhouse and West Yorkshire Playhouse
  Series created using functions and format
  Sub-series based on theatrical seasons
Hierarchy

West Yorkshire Playhouse

Production Files

Season 1996-1997

‘As You Like It’ by William Shakespeare
‘Things Fall Apart’ by Chinua Achebe
Reviewing the processing and cataloguing of the WYP Collection

- It took a year for one fte Archivist with volunteer help

- Much of the time was taken up:
  1) cataloguing to item and file level
  2) repackaging

- Disproportionate effort in proportion to the benefit to customers
Drivers for re-thinking our approach to processing and cataloguing

- Survey of Special Collections has revealed a backlog of at least 12 years of archival cataloguing

- Review of accessioning in April 2013 stated our aim should be to make 80% of accessions available within 5 weeks
Adopting the More Product Less Process Model

- MPLP was put forward by Greene and Meissner in an article in 2005
  http://www.uiowa.edu/~c024120/Readings/Greene-Meissner.pdf

- An analytical approach to processing and cataloguing

- Not one size fits all
Changes in procedures at Leeds

The Accessioning Archivist will:

- Assess the needs of a collection at the point of accession
- Record its prioritisation on our Collection Management System
- Create a collection level record
The introduction of MPLP

- West Yorkshire Playhouse – new accrual
  
  Team Assistants have carried out minimal repackaging

- Literary Archive of Ken Smith
  
  Team Assistants have packaged and listed the archives

  An Archivist will:

  1) use the list to create the cataloguing hierarchy
  2) provide clear notes on the content of each box
What has the introduction of MPLP meant so far?

- Changing attitudes to cataloguing and processing
- Providing Team Assistants with detailed guidelines and ongoing support
- Preparing to assess MPLP’s impact on access