

"Collaborating with Library colleagues has been key to a step-change in Special Collections based research. Researchers across the disciplines are able to work with the outstanding holdings of archives and rare books at The University of Manchester using innovative digital and scientific approaches that are genuinely world-leading. Moreover, the Library team also works with researchers to disseminate their findings to wider audiences and to engage meaningfully with the public."

Professor Hannah Barker
Director of the John Rylands Research Institute, The University of Manchester

Supporting Teaching & Learning

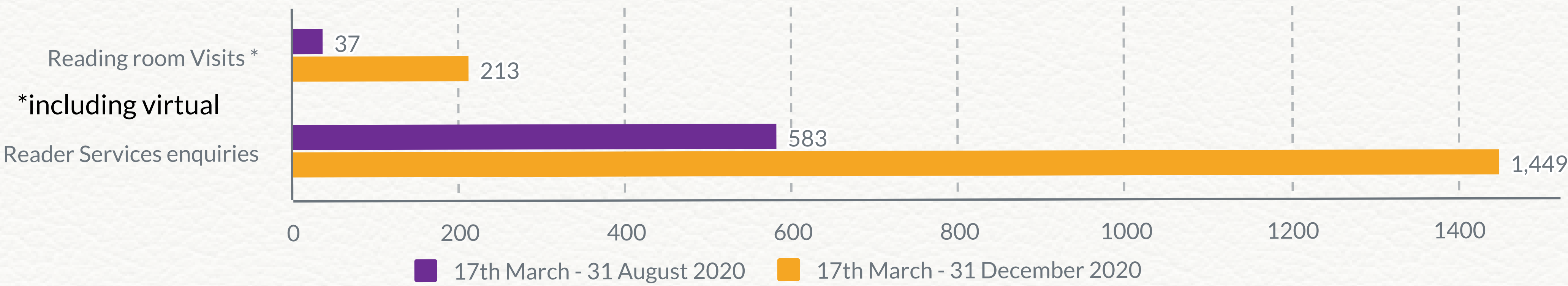
- We launched free, open educational resources on Medium in May 2019.
 - By August 2020, 21 separate stories were available on Medium with topics including 'What are Special Collections'; 'PGCHE students learn about using our collections in the classroom'; and 'Politics and protest'.
 - Of 88 planned teaching sessions in 2019/20, nine had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions, but curators continued to join video calls to provide expertise. Over the year, we reached nearly 950 students in taught sessions.
- "I would like to thank you all for your efforts in making these modules work this year. I don't think I ever thought we would be doing the full year online, but with your tremendous efforts, we did it. 'We couldn't have done it without you' is a cliché that this year, was truer than ever. Thank you. "

Professor David Matthews, Medieval and Medievalism Studies, The University of Manchester

- A unique and sector-leading virtual teaching suite was set up during summer 2020 to provide tutors and students with virtual, interactive access to Special Collections.

Supporting Research

Over the academic year 2019/20, the Reader Services team dealt with 2,517 enquiries



- In November 2019 the newly refurbished reading room opened at the John Rylands Research Institute and Library . This project delivered improvements to acoustics, the reader experience and care of the collections.
- Following the lockdown and closure of onsite services in March 2020, our Reader Services team continued to support researchers by responding to enquiries and creating blog posts to share the collections from a distance (<https://rylandscollections.com>).
- From March 2020, we planned how we could continue to provide access to collections once the restrictions were eased and developed a virtual reader service which was launched on 29 July 2019 and allowed us to facilitate 1,584 researcher consultations between 1 Sept 2019-31 Aug 2020 despite being unable to provide physical access for nearly 5 months.

Positive feedback for the refurbished reading room

"I can't speak highly enough of the facilities and arrangements here. The ready access to material, advice on accessing other items in the catalogue not stored here, the pleasant, spacious working conditions and the invariably courteous and helpful staff-all these factors make this an excellent place in which to research. I feel it's a privilege for which I am very grateful."

Positive feedback for the virtual services

"Just want to thank your library service for this creative, digital appointment. As I am not in Manchester, this service really makes the most out of The University of Manchester's excellent collections. I feel that it is also coherent with the spirit of interlibrarian services, which do help researchers like me a lot."

"What a remarkable service!"

"Staff were incredibly helpful and made the process super easy."

"All of the staff I have emailed or spoken to have been very friendly and extremely helpful in finding and going through the documents that I am interested in regarding my research."

- In July 2020 we were successful in a joint grant application worth \$100,000 to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. We worked with Harvard and Stanford Universities on building preservation functionality into Stanford's email archiving application ePADD. The 18-month project continues the Library's close association with significant literary email archives and cutting-edge preservation tools.