

Mapping Sussex University Library's Black History Archives

The subject for this research was inspired by the launch of the Black@Sussex project which was inspired by the 60th anniversary of Sussex University, and by the work of the Black Cultural Archives. This research was a chance to recognise and highlight some of the untold stories of people of colour within the university and beyond by:

- Cataloguing all of the material relating to black studies in two library collections
- Creating a new collection called black studies
- Contributing to the Black@Sussex initiative
- Considering steps towards a new Black Studies module

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Background

This research took place in the archives at Sussex University Library. Current collections do not explicitly identify which documents relate to the experiences of Black communities and so students have not been easily able to search for items related to black history, even though these resources exist.

I looked across two collections, Legacy and Docs consisting of:

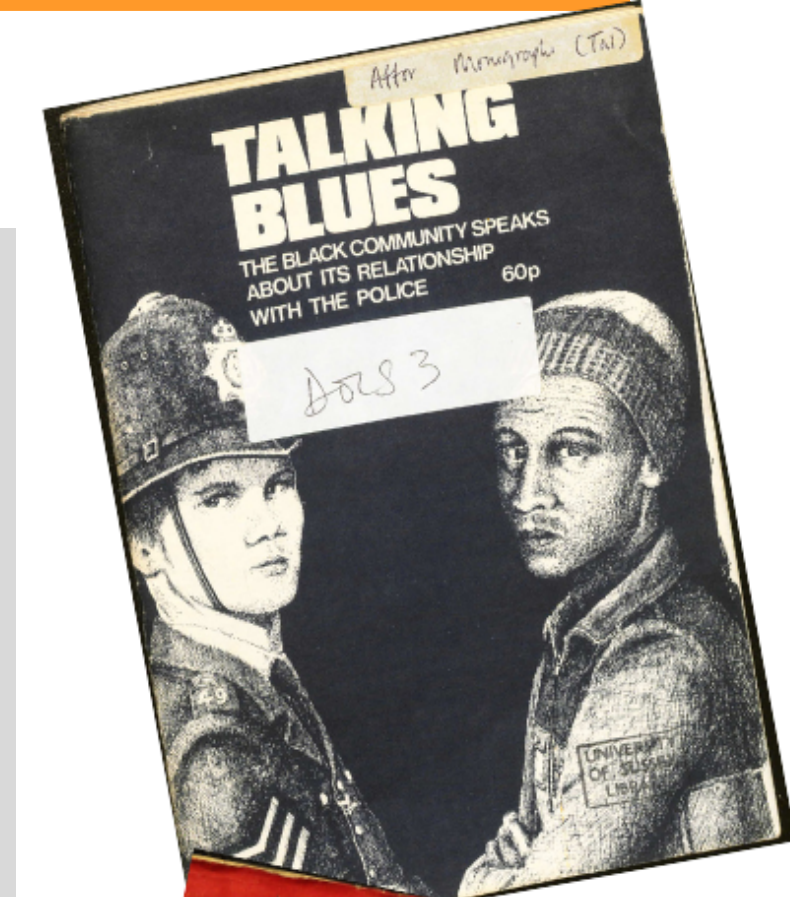
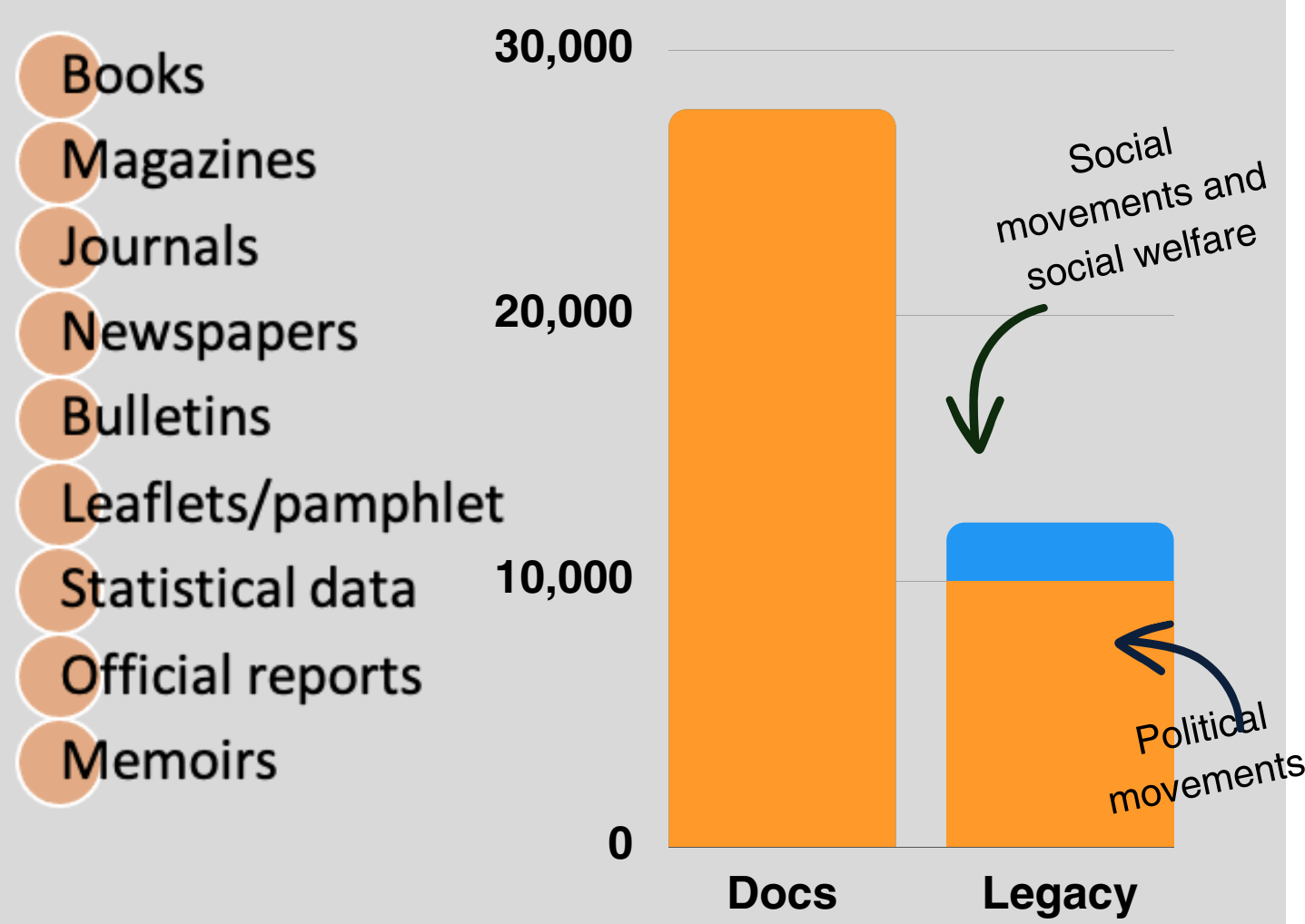
Legacy Collection

- split into themes including social welfare and social movements
- ordered by shelfmark into boxes
- from 1800s-1990s, mostly from 1900 onwards

Document Collection

- collection of around 27,000 docs
- in folders in alphabetical order by organisation
- items from 1970s onwards

Document types



Methodology

- **Legacy Collection:** looked through the boxes in shelfmark order
- **Document Collection:** more complex, much larger volume of materials which had an impact on my methodology

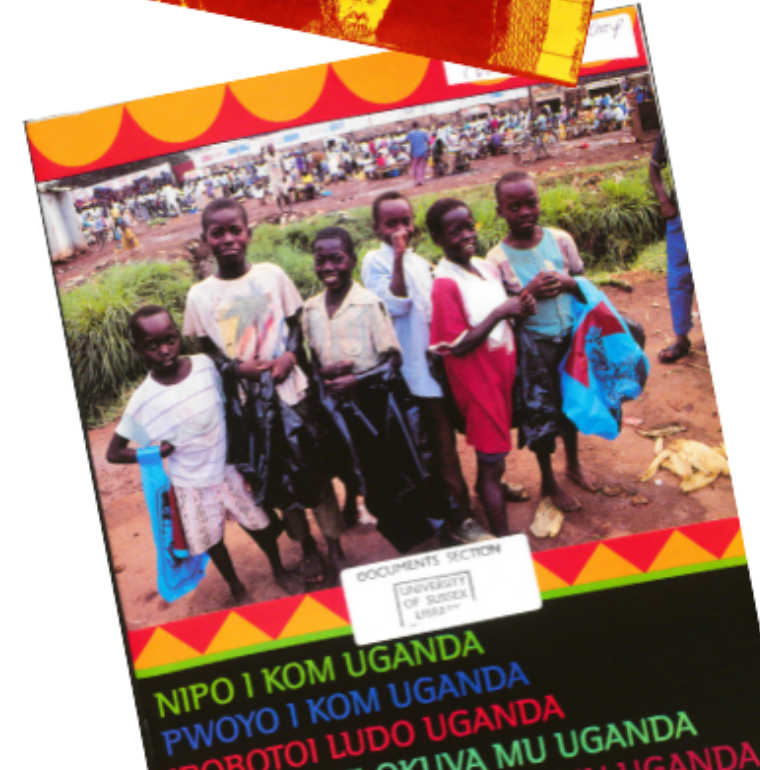
Make a decision: which organisations to look at, which ones to leave out.

- keywords in the title (e.g. racism, black, ethnic)
- name of the organisation (e.g. Institute of Race Relations)

Ambiguous cases: would explore in more details before deciding.

Cataloguing Method

- Is material relevant to Black Studies Collection?
- What type of document is it?
- How could the material be useful for the collection?
- Does it lend itself to one or more thematic areas?



Results

- Identified and catalogued **260** documents as being relevant to the new Black Studies Collection
- Identified themes which would be used within this new collection: race and religion, race and education, race and housing, race and criminal justice

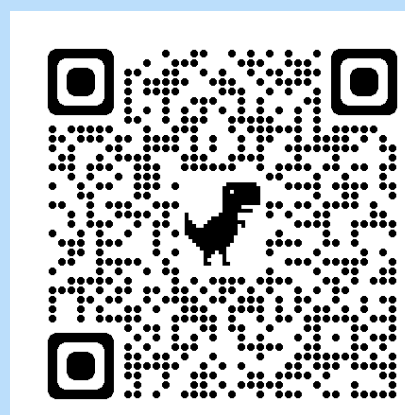
260

Opportunities

- Further documents to review and catalogue (given size of collections and limited time of JRA programme)
- Opportunities to exhibit and share learning
- Opportunities to utilise the new collection in the development of curriculum material and potential Black Studies module
- Potential special dissertation on the subject of this research as part of final year studies

References

To find out more about the documents in the visuals on this poster, please scan the code



Who I am



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