

## **DUNEDIN PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

### **ALFRED & ISABEL REED COLLECTION POLICY 2016**

#### **SCOPE**

This policy related to the Alfred & Isabel Reed Collection, held by the City Library of the Dunedin Public Libraries network. Its provisions do not extend to archival material for which a separate policy, the Heritage Archives Collection Policy, exists.

#### **1. Collection Scope**

The Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection is one of the largest collections of rare books and manuscripts held by a public institution in New Zealand. Many of the items included are present in the collection due to their rarity, age, craftsmanship, or provenance. The Collection is of value to local, national and international researchers interested in various fields of historical research including the religious, literary, and the history of print. It is international in its focus and includes materials in a number of languages. The collection does not aim to collect comprehensively in any area, but seeks to provide representative examples of works in these areas.

#### **2. Collection Purpose**

Reed gave his collection to Dunedin Public Library rather than to an academic library because he wanted it to be available to the general public. The main access point to the collections is through the online catalogue. The exhibition space and organized tours allow for controlled viewing of Reed materials rather than the collection being displayed on a permanent basis.

#### **3. History**

The core of the collection was gifted to Dunedin Public Library by Dunedin writer, publisher, and philanthropist Alfred (later Sir Alfred) Hamish Reed (1875–1975). The original Deed of Gift was made in 1948. It was revised and updated in 1949, 1950 and 1951. Further gifts were made in 1949 and 1950. Reed's stated intention was:

To gather rare books and manuscripts, such as would be of the greatest educational, historical and literary interest and use.

In return for the donation the City was expected to house the collection appropriately, to make provision for its future custody and care, and to ensure its accessibility to the general public. After the 1948 donation, which established the collection, Reed continued actively to promote, organize, develop, and work with the collection until his death in 1975.

#### **4. Collection Description**

The Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection include many rare, valuable and irreplaceable items. It is made up of a number of specialized sub-collections with material dating from the tenth century to the present day. The collections include about 13,800 books, autograph letters and manuscripts. The collection contains over 400 pre-1801 imprints, of which seven are incunabula. The oldest items are two fragments from a tenth-century Gospel Book.

The Collection strengths are in illuminated medieval and Renaissance manuscripts; editions of the Bible; particular eighteenth- and nineteenth-century authors, autograph letters, and the history of writing and the book.

#### **4.1. Association Books**

- Reed amassed a collection of books with inscriptions either by their authors or that showed previous ownership by such people as Charles Lamb, Anthony Trollope and explorer Sir John Ross. Reed's donations and later purchases provided the Library with a collection of association books that now numbers more than 1,000 volumes today.

#### **4.2. Autograph Letters & Manuscripts**

- The Autograph Letters and Manuscripts Collection takes up 70-linear metres of storage space and numbers more than 5,200 items from the sixteenth to twentieth century. The collection is strongest in nineteenth-century letters, with original documents by literary, aristocratic, political and religious figures.

This area of the collection is governed by the principles contained within the Heritage Archives Collection Policy 2011.

#### **4.3. Literary Material**

- Samuel Johnson

The collection includes first and early editions, critical and biographical publications including several editions of James Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*; the Yale editions of James Boswell's private papers and the works of Samuel Johnson respectively.

- Charles Dickens

Representing the works of British novelist Charles Dickens (1812–70), this is considered one of the largest and best collections of Dickensiana held by a public institution in the Southern Hemisphere. It includes a number of first editions and novels in their original monthly parts, literary criticism and other secondary material.

#### **4.4. Medieval & Renaissance Manuscripts**

- The Library holds the second largest collection of Medieval and Renaissance manuscripts in New Zealand. The collection currently numbers twelve bound manuscripts and more than sixty leaves and fragments, ranging in date from the tenth to the sixteenth century. Important holdings include: a fifteenth-century Wycliffe translation of the Gospels, of which approximately 230 copies survive and only 31, including the Reed manuscript, are held outside the United Kingdom; two leaves from a tenth-century Gospel Book, some of the oldest manuscript leaves in New Zealand; and the Mantell Hours, believed to be the first medieval manuscript brought into the country.

#### **4.5. Portrait Books**

- A collection of single or multi-volume publications consisting of portraits (engraved or photographic) and short biographical essays of eminent people.

These were sometimes used by Reed to provide illustrations for his albums of mounted letters, and the extra-illustrated Forster and Boswell.

#### **4.6. Printing examples and history**

- Examples of printing from the fifteenth to twenty-first centuries. This collection features more than 500 examples of printing from various periods and places, including a number of private press editions, with over 70 examples from the eighteenth century and earlier.
- Reference collection on book history

The more than 1,600 volumes in the History of Printing Collection covers all aspects of the history of the book, including typography, book collecting, paper, printing ink, manuscript books, illustration and illumination, book-binding, private presses in general and individual printers.

#### **4.7. Religious material**

- Printed Bibles
- Liturgy
- Bible Commentaries

The earliest item in the Reed Printed Bible Collection is a leaf of the Gutenberg Bible (ca. 1454). First, or near-contemporary, editions of many significant English translations are held, along with facsimile editions of unique or scarce bibles. Important editions include the Geneva Bible (1560), first and second folio editions of the King James Version (1611 and 1613), and a portion of the 1538 diglot New Testament, containing the English version of William Tyndale and the Latin of Erasmus.

### **5. Collection Management**

Responsibility for the management of the Alfred & Isabel Reed Collection rests with the Reed Rare Books Librarian.

#### **5.1 Selection Tools**

Resources used to aid selection include:

- Trade, library, general, and special interest magazines – print and online
- Booksellers' catalogues – print and online
- Special interest websites
- ListServs including EXLIBRIS-L and SHARP-L
- Auction catalogues

#### **5.2 Selection Guidelines**

Sir Alfred Reed's 1950 Deed of Gift specified that priority be assigned to developing certain sections of the collection including:

- Editions of the Bible – manuscript & printed
- Manuscripts, especially illuminated & religious
- Material associated with the writer Samuel Johnson
- Material associated with the writer Charles Dickens

Selection will take the following criteria into account:

- Enhancement of existing collection strengths
- Relationship to other collection items
- Suitability for exhibition
- Ability to fill a known subject gap in the collections
- Literary or artistic merit
- Value for money
- Item significance or uniqueness
- Condition of the materials and their preservation requirements
- Space or special housing needs

### **5.3. Collection-Specific Criteria**

- Bible Commentaries

Additions to this collection are restricted to scholarly works on the history of the Bible as a book (either manuscript or printed). Works of a theological nature are to be excluded.

- Bibles Printed

Additions to this collection are restricted to notable editions of the Bible, such as Robert Aitken's Bible (the first to be printed in the United States) and areas where there are gaps in the collection. Emphasis is to be placed on expanding the Library's holdings of bibles in Pacific languages. Victorian Era bibles and common printed bibles should be excluded, unless there is significant provenance, e.g. a Bible owned by Alexander Turnbull, Richard Seddon, or Robert McNab.

- Printing Examples

Additions to this collection are restricted to private and small press editions, with an emphasis on New Zealand private presses, and notable examples of printing eras where there are gaps in the collection.

### **5.4. Replacements**

The replacement of significant items which are damaged, lost or stolen, may be undertaken if it is considered more important than the purchase of items new to the collection.

## **6. Deselection**

Reed's Deed of Gift allows for material to be sold and the proceeds to be used for augmenting the collection. In practice, the Library has not disposed of Reed Collection items, but sales of items in order to fund the purchase of other items may be considered in the future.

An item may be deselected, if the following criteria apply:

- Material is an *exact* duplicate
- The donor or vendor had no right to give or sell them to the library
- They have physically deteriorated & conservation is not possible, or is actively placing other parts of the collection at risk

- The items are transferred to the original party or to a third party with the agreement of the original party
- Items do not fit the stated scope and aims of the collection
- Reed's original Deed of Gift is not contravened

## **7. Acquisition and Purchasing**

Funding for Reed acquisitions comes from the Library budget and the interest on the Alfred, Isabel and Marian Reed Trust.

## **8. Standing Orders**

A small number of publications are received on standing order. They are at present:

- The Age of Johnson
- The Dickens quarterly
- The Dickens studies annual
- The Dickensian
- Dickens Fellowship (Christchurch)
- The New Rambler
- The RBM
- Whitman Quarterly Review

## **9. Review**

This policy will be reviewed within five years.

Endorsed by the Senior Management Team, 2016