What we do is secret? A study of issues relating to the collection, care, and accessibility of zines in institutional and alternative collections in the UK.

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Abstract

Fanzines, or 'zines' are self published magazines with small print runs, where the entire process from creation to distribution is done by the maker and generally not created for profit. Their subject matter can be almost anything. They are distinctly anti-commercial a, often acting as an outlet for alternative or marginalised voices, which are often ignored by mainstream publishing. The UK has a strong zine culture, and an increasing number of libraries here are developing zine collections. There are also a number of alternative spaces such as self organised zine libraries and anarchist social centres which do the same thing.

The first chapter sets out the context of the dissertation, and flags up the fact that most of the research and literature about zine collections in both institutional and alternative spaces is very USA-centric. As a result the study of UK zine collections is important in terms of the focus of this dissertation. Chapter two considers the way that zines might be defined. Using a combination of face to face and written interviews with people responsible, and fieldwork in the form of visits, this dissertation examines a selection of both institutional and alternative zine collections located in UK and examines how they collect, care for, and make accessible their collections in the third and fourth chapters. The concluding chapter draws examines the issues that UK institutional and alternative zine collections face, including the argument for and against collecting zines at all. Although this study does not consider every institutional or alternative zine collection in the UK, and therefore cannot be considered comprehensive, it aims to give an idea of the range of collections that exist here.
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Chapter One

Introduction

Over the last 50 years, many libraries have shifted towards increasing reliance on large scale vendors, such as Dawson, to supply them with stock. These companies also offer services that previously would have been carried out in house, by library staff, such as classification, and processing tasks such as labelling (Dilevko, 2008, p.679). These 'shelf ready' books require next to no additional attention from library staff. However what happens for non-standardised material that libraries might wish to collect?

Fanzines, or 'zines' are self published magazines with small print runs, where the entire process from creation to distribution is done by the maker and generally not created for profit. Their subject matter can be almost anything. (chapter 2 of this dissertation will offer a more detailed consideration of what zines are.). Zines can be considered part of the field of self published literature, such as little magazines, artists' books and journals and alternative comics (Spencer, 2005, p.94-214), and increasingly they are being collected by libraries, both within formal institutional settings, for example, national or academic libraries, but also in informal alternative settings, such as cafes or infoshops (although they might use the words 'library' or 'archive' to describe themselves) (Hedtke, 2007 p.40). The nature of zines as a format means that many of the established acquisitions processes for standardised material such as monographs and serials are harder to apply (Bartel, 2004, p.88). The act of collecting zines and placing them within an institution, such as a library can potentially be considered problematic, as it seems to contradict the anti-commercial, 'out in the world' spirit, in which zines are often created. This dissertation aims to consider
the issues around the collection, care, and accessibility of zines that collections in institutional and alternative spaces in the UK face.

The United Kingdom has a well developed zine culture, including zine collections, both institutional and alternative. However the majority of existing research on this subject area is focused on collections in the United States of America. This study will focus on United Kingdom based collections. This dissertation will feature primary source material in the form of unstructured and structured (in the case of email/letters) interviews or questions, and fieldwork in the form of reports from visits to the 56a Infoshop. Where possible I have interviewed the relevant subjects in person, however for some of the subjects, constraints such as distance and time made this too difficult to do, so interviews were carried out via email or letter. The interviewees names have all been disguised, with the exception of the artist Mark Pawson, where the context of the project he was carrying out as part of an exhibition, that is important to the focus of this dissertation would have made it too difficult to do this so his name is used throughout the dissertation.

The second chapter of this dissertation will consider what zines are in greater detail. The third and fourth chapters respectively will be studies of three institutional collections and five alternative collections, and will examine their motivations for collecting zines, and the issues around collecting, organising and making this material accessible. The final chapter will consider issues that the collections face.

**Limitations**

This dissertation cannot be comprehensive. It focuses on seven collections- obviously there are others in the United Kingdom, but it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to
cover them at this time.

**Literature Review**

There are three main thematic strands of literature that are relevant to this dissertation: Literature about the history and development of zines, literature about zine libraries and collections of zines within institutional structures, and literature that focuses on non-institutional libraries.

Below Critical Radar: Fanzines and Alternative Comics From 1976 to Now: Fanzines and Alternative Comics from 1976 to the Present Day' By Roger Sabin and Teal Triggs (2001), and 'Zines' by Teal Triggs (2010) both provide good entry points for possible definitions of what a zine is, motivations for creating them, and detail their history, and growth in popularity. For material such as zines, where physical format and appearance is often a primary concern when it comes to study, both books contains pages of good quality images of publications, from the earliest days of zine making, to the present, illustrating the wide range of forms that zines can take and subject matter that they cover. The independent, anti-corporate nature of zines, and their importance in alternative and/or radical cultures is examined by Stephen Duncombe's book 'Notes From the Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture' (2008). Duncombe highlights a selection of zines to show how they can represent marginalised, radical or niche voices or subjects. Similarly, in her book ‘DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture’ (2005), Amy Spencer dedicates two thirds of the the publication to zines and zine culture. Part two, particularly is useful in terms of highlighting the historical development of zines and the wider contexts in which they can be placed, with links to art movements, science fiction fandom, and small press publishing.
Perhaps the most comprehensive text on the subject of zine libraries could be considered to be 'From A to Zine' by Julie Bartel (2004). Bartel, a librarian at the Salt Lake City Library set up a well regarded collection there, and drew on her experiences in doing so to write this book. It discusses reasons for starting a collection, and offers practical advice about building it from scratch. Standard library processes such as acquisitions, cataloguing and storage, are examined specifically with zines in mind, and the challenges that can occur when trying to build a collection in a library are highlighted, and practical solutions suggested. The subject of promotion the collection is also covered.

Alternative literature, such as zines often pose a number of challenges to conventional library collection development and management policies within institutional collections. Juris Dilevko's article focusing on the work of James Danky and the Socio-cultural politics of Collection Development (2008) traces the homogenisation of collection development processes that have been taking place since the 1960s- the outsourcing of selection in libraries, the 'give 'em what they want' school of purchasing which results in very middle of the road collections, the move away from the need for librarians to have developed and extensive specialist subject knowledge, and the resulting deskilling of job roles this causes- to highlight how difficult this can make collecting non-mainstream material, but how important it is that librarians do so, as alternative literature (such as the zine) provides insights into certain human and social conditions, which do not feature in mainstream materials.

In her 2005 article, Colleen Hubbard compares three zine collections in public libraries in the USA, looking at their history, how they acquire materials, the access they offer, and how they promote the collections. Through these studies, and then a comparison of all
three, Hubbard states that although it is easy to assume that all libraries with zine collections should have much in common, the scope of the collection that the library chooses to build can cause widely varying issues for different institutions.

The preservation aspect of building a zine collection is covered by Ron Chepesiuk. Written in 1997, he highlights some important bequests of personal zine collections to institutional libraries, and posits that the highly individual nature of zines, and the diversity of subjects covered by them means they function as important primary source material for researchers. He also flags up some of the difficulties surrounding the notion of preservation—zine publishers not wishing for their works to become 'institutionalised' by libraries, and the fact that due to their nature as ephemeral objects, produced in small runs, many slip through the net, and are never preserved. In a special issue of Serials Review published in 1995, edited by Julie Herrada, a number of writers focused on zines in libraries. The short piece by Andy 'Sunfrog' Smith, a zine creator who had initial reservations about 'institutionalizing' his creations by submitting them to a library collection, but who is now a passionate advocate for zine collections within libraries, is particularly interesting, representing a non library professionals view as to why zine collections within libraries are important.

In terms of literature regarding alternative, non-institutional zine libraries/collections, Chris Dodge's article 'Taking libraries to the street: Infoshops and Alternative Reading Rooms' (1998) is a good introduction to one type of alternative space in which zine libraries are commonly found. This article emphasises the importance of the idea of self education, which seems to go hand in hand with the self-published nature of zines, and the fact that the spaces in which these zines libraries are located often have multiple functions as a place for the community. This is particularly interesting in a time where it is becoming more
and more common to find that public libraries in the United Kingdom are setting themselves up as 'community hubs' not just places to borrow books. Although mostly focusing on infoshops and zine libraries, Lacey Prpic Hedtke mentions other spaces in which zine libraries exist, including bookmobiles, sheds and 'street libraries', which, as the name suggests, are not located in a physical building, in her article 'Cereal Boxes and Milk Crates: Zine Libraries and Infoshops are...Now' (2007). The role of the librarian, both in the qualified, and self defined sense in these non-institutional spaces is considered by Jessie Lymn in her 2013 article 'The Librarian as Insider- Ethnographer'. Lymn uses the model of librarian as ethnographer posited by Chris Atton in 1998 to argue that it is important for librarians, both those who work in institutional and non-institutional settings to have active involvement in the communities from which they collect material. Firstly because specialist knowledge of the subject area and an awareness of the context in which the material is created will be to the advantage of both the institution and the library user. Secondly, by being involved in the community, as well as being part of the institution they are better able to negotiate some of the tensions that crop up, for example the idea that it is contradictory to collect zines, which are supposed to be out there and ephemeral, not kept in locked case. Lymn also highlights the concept of the 'autonomous archive' conceived by Moore and Pell which is useful in illustrating how some non-institutional zine collections/libraries function.
Chapter Two

Some thoughts on the definition of zines.

In the introduction to this dissertation, a basic definition of the zine was given as self-published magazines with small print runs, where the entire process from creation to distribution is done by the maker and generally not created for profit, on the subject of potentially anything. Zines are incredibly varied in nature, both in terms of how they look, and subject matter that they cover, and by trying to make very concrete definitions about what they are, there is the risk of excluding works that could be considered zines. In order to avoid this, this chapter will take the approach that Julie Bartel advocates and will look at some common characteristics that zines have in order to build on the basic definition above and gain a greater understanding of what they are (Bartel, 2004. p.1).

To begin, it is worth considering their historical development. It is broadly agreed that zines, or ‘fanzines' have their origins in science fiction fandom that began in the early 20th century (Triggs, 2010 p.17, Spencer, 2010, p.94, Herrada, p.79, 1995 and Duncombe, p.11, 2008). Early publications such as ‘Amazing Stories', published in the 1920s featured letters pages, and encouraged their readers to write in offering their opinions and feedback on the content of the magazine. Their names and addresses were printed with their letters, and as a result correspondence clubs formed, and community of likeminded fans developed (Spencer, 2005, p.94). Inspired by the magazines that they read, and each other the science fiction fans began to self publish their own magazines (Spencer, 2005, p.95). These magazines, produced by fans became known as ‘fan magazines'. In 1949, fan magazine producer Russell Chauvenet shortened the name to ‘fanzine' (Triggs, 2010, p.10), and the same year ‘fanzine' first appeared as a formal entry in the Oxford English Dictionary (Triggs, 2010, p.10).
However perhaps the most significant development for the zine as we know it today happened in the 1970s. The rise of punk music in the late part of this decade, and its initial rejection by the mainstream press meant that punk fans developed their own 'Do It Yourself' networks for everything—from music, to communication, and created their own fanzines to cover their scene, which was not featured by the mainstream press. When the press finally picked up on it, and punk 'sold out' and became mainstream, zines were used to provide an alternative to what many punks saw as the corporate takeover of their scene (Spencer, 2005, p.195). Librarian S also believes that the development of cheap, readily accessible photocopying technology during this period fuelled this boom in zine making, as it made it much easier and cheaper for people to print their work without having to through a professional printer. (Appendix S). This was also the period where 'fanzine' increasingly became shortened to just 'zine'. Librarian K speculates that this developed as a result of the rise of the 'personal' or 'perzine'- diary-esque zines which detail the everyday lives of the writers, away from the fandom focused zines of the punk period (Appendix K).

The idea of 'Do It Yourself' and the zine as a self published document are perhaps the two principles that are central to the zine. Duncombe posits that the zine is the perfect vehicle for alternative, marginalised or radical voices, which would not normally find space in the mainstream press (Duncombe, 2008, p.9), and as a result zines often contain views and opinions that for commercial and/or censorship reasons are often rarely found in commercially published material. Self publishing allows the creator to retain total control over every aspect of the creative process, in distinct contrast to the model followed by professional publishers, where much of this control is relinquished to editors.

Over time, zine makers have developed their own networks for distribution. In the early
days of zine making trades were made by post, and review zines, such as Factsheet 5, which detailed new zine releases and their contact details, should you wish to purchase them, were published regularly (Duncombe, 2008, p.164). Zine 'distros' (shortened from 'distributors') where someone bulk buys copies a number of different zines, and then sells them on, continue to be central to the way that zines are purchased, as are zine fairs and symposiums, where zine makers congregate to buy and sell work (Bartel, 2004, p.58-62).

Of course the rise of the internet has had a significant impact on zines, especially in terms of distribution and promotion. Many distros started as mail order style operations, but with the rise of the internet many have utilised it to list their stock and sell through an online interface- for example Marching Stars Distro (Marching Stars, 2013) or Microcosm (Microcosm, 2013). Zine review zines, such as the aforementioned Factsheet 5 are now uncommon, but zine review blogs have sprung up in their place, such as Spill The Zines (Spill The Zines, 2013). This dissertation does not deal with the online 'webzine', but despite initial predictions of the death of the zine as a physical object (Triggs, 2010, p.171), it is arguable that the internet has taken on complimentary, rather than conflicting role in the world of zines. Many zine makers maintain a web presence to promote their zine- but still place the most importance on zine as a physical object (Appendix K). Perhaps the desire to create something physical, which could be seen as somewhat archaic in an age where you can create and publish via blog in minutes could be tied into the rejection of popular concerns, which have been previously discussed as an important aspect of zine creation, and as a reaction against the increasing dominance of the internet as a main mode of receiving information.

Bartel states that zines are created as a result of 'passion rather than a desire for profit'. (Bartel, 2004, p.1), and the rejection of profit as the prime motive for creation is another
important characteristic of zines. They are usually sold at a low price, traded, or given away for free (Duncombe, 2008, p.15). In turn, this influences their production. Generally, zines are printed in small runs, and once the original print run has been distributed or sold, they are not reprinted, which contributes to their somewhat ephemeral nature (Duncombe, 2008, p.17). Although it is easy to see them as lo-fi analogues to professionally published serials, zines do not adhere to the regular publication schedules and standardised formats that those serials usually have (Bartel, 2004, p.90).

Where it starts to become more difficult to identify shared characteristics, is when it comes to subject matter and aesthetics. As Bartel states:

'With zines, anything goes. Anything.' (Bartel, 2004, p.2)

As previously stated, zines cover a vast range of subjects, however it is possible to draw out some common subject categories. Duncombe has created a 'Zine Taxonomy' where he lists and then defines what he considers to be the most common types of zine (Duncombe, 2008, p.15-17), for example, personal, or 'perzines', which operate like personal diaries, sharing the detail of the every day aspects of the writers life, or 'vocational zines' which focus on the job that the zine maker does (Duncombe, 2008, p.16). Of course this is not exhaustive, and it is possible to break these categories down further, but it gives an idea of common themes that are found in the zine world. Aesthetically, zines are similarly varied, however the means of production- usually a black and white photocopier or printer often dictates a somewhat lo-fi aesthetic for many publications (Appendix S). A distinct disregard for copyright and the re-appropriation of existing images are also common (Appendix S). Librarian S cites Jamie Reid's ransom note graphic design work for the Sex Pistols as 'making wonky cool' for zine makers and encouraging them to use existing material to create something new (Appendix S). This also fits in with Duncombe's idea that amateurism is a central part of zine making- even if you're not artistically talented, you
should make a zine anyway if you feel compelled to (Duncombe, 2008, p.18).

Of course not every zine will feature all of the aspects mentioned above, in fact many may seem to reject some of these features entirely. This is where it can become harder to decide if a publication is a zine or not. For example many fine art or photography zines often feature higher production values- for example colour printing onto good quality paper- than other types of zine, and often retail at a higher price. As a result, it could be argued that publications of this kind are artists' books rather than zines. The anti-commercial nature of zines can also be challenged when a zine develops into an actual magazine, with publication schedules and an ISSN, as has been the case with Giant Robot, and Arty magazine (Appendix K). This is backed up by Librarian K's assertion that once a publication gains an ISSN, generally it can no longer be considered a zine (Appendix K).

Although much is made of the capacity for the zine to provide an alternative to the mainstream, like any element of a subculture, zines have the capacity to be co-opted by it. Zines were a central part of the feminist music movement Riot Grrrl in the the early to mid 1990s, and much to the consternation of the women involved, the zines that were published were picked up on by the mainstream press, who reduced the message of the movement to a set of catchy soundbites about 'girl power' and features about 'Riot Grrrl fashion'. A 'media blackout' where zine creation stopped, and nobody involved in the movement spoke to the press was instituted, but to little effect (Marcus, 2010, p171-200). This shows that although zines afford the maker a great deal of control over every aspect of the creative process, once they publish and distribute their zine, they relinquish this control.
As Duncombe states, the best way to understand what zines are, is by actually looking at them (Duncombe, 2008, p.21). However in the absence of being able to do this, thinking about some of their common characteristics is useful to illustrate the incredibly wide scope that the format covers.
Chapter Three

Zine Collections in Institutional Libraries

In the UK, there are a number of libraries which contain zines within their collections. This chapter will focus on the collections at The British Library, the Stuart Hall Library based at Iniva, and London College of Communication Library. The British Library zine collection, started around 1998, contains a wide range of zines, and is part of the wider printed historical sources collection, which covers material from 1914 to the present day (Appendix S). The Stuart Hall Library is the reference library for the arts organisation the Institute of International Visual Arts (Iniva). Primarily it collects zines which related to cultural diversity, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, as well as personal/political and art zines, and they have been collecting since 2010 (Appendix H). Finally the collection at London College of Communication (LCC) Library is part of the printed historical special collections. The zine collection contains significant amounts of punk fanzines, and there is an emphasis on zines which feature interesting or unusual design (Appendix K).

Acquisitions

The British Library is a legal deposit library, so by law, a copy of every publication which is printed in the UK has to be donated to the library (British Library, 2013a). However, zines, without ISSNs, with their own, non mainstream distribution networks, and the fact that they can be considered ‘unpublished’ material, often slip through the net, and it has become necessary for the British Library to consciously collect them (Appendix S). The zine as a platform for alternative, radical or marginalised voices is something that all three librarians interviewed agreed was an important reason for collection. Juris Dilevko makes the case
for collecting non-mainstream material stating that collecting

“contemporary alternative and small-press publications was key to providing an in-depth picture of current social, cultural, and political issues.” (Dilevko, 2008, p.679).

especially in terms of representing groups which had traditionally operated outside of mainstream society. (Dilevko, 2008, p.681). In the case of the the British Library, which arguably represents the literary output of the United Kingdom, this can be seen as particularly important. Indeed, Librarian S is keen to collect publications that are created by members of ethnic minority groups as he believes that they are underrepresented within library collections (Appendix S). Zines can be considered primary source material (Chepesiuk, 1997, p.69), and this is another reason why they are valued within these institutions. Librarian K at LCC gives the example of a football zine, written shortly after the Hillsborough stadium disaster from the perspective of a Liverpool football club fan, which ran counter to the popular notion in the press at the time that the Liverpool fans were responsible for the disaster, or a punk zine published in the 1980 which focused on the imprisoned miners, post the miners strike who were also given a limited platform in mainstream press at the time (Appendix K). Although many researchers visit due to their interest in the format, Librarian S stresses the importance of seeing the zines as thematic primary research documents, for example if someone was researching skinhead culture, or football, it might not occur to them to look at zines in the first instance, but could potentially provide unique and personal take on a particular subject, which would be useful overall (Appendix S).

The purpose of the institution can also influence the reasons to collect. The Stuart Hall Library is part of Iniva, a research led arts organisation. Librarian H, the librarian who started the collection there feels that the traditional academic networks on which the organisation are founded, and the outputs that they create in terms of research can be
very academic and formal, and this is reflected in the material found in the library. They believe that the zine collection is a way to open up these networks and add variety to the library collection overall (Appendix H). The collection at LCC is well used as a teaching collection by many of the courses, who set students projects to make zines, and encourage them to use the material for inspiration (Appendix K).

None of the collections have specific policies for their zine collections, as they are included in the wider collection policies for the libraries overall. Librarian K suggests that this could be because in comparison to standardised library material such as serials and monographs, zines are much harder to define and thus write something as finite as a collection policy for (Appendix K). All three collections do, however, have loose sets of criteria by which collect (Appendix K, H, S). Librarian K believes that the zine is a constantly evolving format, having relatively open ended criteria that can be adapted is important, as is the ability to select work on a case by case basis (Appendix K). Material with proven historical value, such as original punk zines are collected by all three collections, but Librarian K also highlights the importance of purchasing new zines with this in mind- They use the example of Savage Messiah zine by Laura Oldfield Ford, which critically charted the redevelopment of the Hackney/Stratford area in the years running up to the the London 2012 Olympics. Oldfield Ford's vision of polluted land, compulsory purchase orders and forced eviction runs counter to the view that the Olympics organising committee promoted, and could be seen as a valuable alternative record of events at this time (Appendix K).

Zine makers are often keen to donate a copy of their work to libraries for preservation, and all three libraries accept donations. The degree to which they do this varies. The Stuart Hall Library collection was founded after a call for donations in 2010, and accepted
entire personal collections that people had donated. They would never turn a donation away, and the collection still relies mainly on donations (Appendix H). The British Library also accepts donations, and has a regular donor in the form of a printshop, who make an extra copy of every zine they print for a zine maker, which they collect and then send to the library on a yearly basis (Appendix S). Reliance on donations can make it difficult to steer the collection in a particular direction, and LCC is perhaps the most selective of the three in this respect. Librarian K has turned away work which was felt too commercial for the collection, even when it had been donated (Appendix K).

The British Library and LCC purchase most of their zines directly from their makers or zine distros (Appendix S and K). Librarian K also visits zine symposiums and fairs, however Librarians S and H do not do this, mostly as they do not have the time (Appendix S and H). Librarians S and K both purchase from collectors (Appendix S and K). Purchasing from smaller vendors when part of an institution who deal mainly with large scale suppliers can be difficult (Bartel, 2004, p.62). Librarian K often purchases the zines personally and claims them back as expenses as it is easier than invoicing the zine maker and making them wait to be paid (Appendix K).

**Cataloguing and Library catalogues**

All three libraries catalogue zines using AACR2 and MARC21. Both LCC and the British Library have specialised cataloguing departments, who deal with the material (Appendix S and K), but at the Stuart Hall Library the cataloguing is done by a member of library staff. The Stuart Hall Library and the British Library treat zines as periodicals when they catalogue (Appendix H). Librarian S reasons that many zines are created as part of a series, so by cataloguing as a serial the various issues will be represented as a run and
linked. Librarian H states that one of the challenges in cataloguing this way is the fact that even though many zines are produced in series, libraries often lack full runs (Appendix H), and as a result the use of cataloguing as a serial is questionable. In all three libraries, access to the collections is by request, so it is important that the catalogue records provide as much description as possible. Librarian K emphasises the importance of using the 500 MARC fields in a record to do this (Appendix K). LCC library has recently started to scan in cover images of zines in the collection and add them to the catalogue records (Appendix K). Unlike monographs, zines rarely have a title page, and bibliographic information such as author, and place and date of publication often has to be inferred from reading the zine. Librarian K notes that this can be difficult for cataloguers who don't have specialist subject knowledge of the format. All three libraries keep their zine collections in closed access conditions, so the importance of detailed catalogue records in absence of the user being able to browse the collection is high. Creating this kind of record, however, can be a time consuming process. 'Shelf ready' standards of delivery to library in as little time as possible cannot be applied to this kind of material.

Library of Congress Subject Headings applied to catalogue records can be useful to assist the user in a search for zines and also to give an idea of some of the thematic elements that they might contain, for example subject headings for 'feminism' or 'punk rock music'. In terms of ease of searching for zines using the library catalogue, LCC offers the best functionality, where it is possible to search the entire collection by selecting LCC as the location and searching for zines (Appendix K). Of course, this brings back a high number of results, but as many of the records have Library of Congress Subject Headings applied, it is possible to refine the results somewhat. Perplexingly, searching the British Library Catalogue for zines is quite difficult. As the catalogue records are created by a centralised department, and treated as serials, they only contain the subject heading for periodicals.
Librarian S admits this is frustrating (Appendix S), and this illustrates one of the problems of having a specialist collection of non-standardised material in a large institution with generalised workflows. There are also a number of separate findings lists for the British Library collection, which in the age of the discovery engine style library catalogue seems rather archaic and time consuming for users (British Library, 2013c).

**User Groups and Accessibility**

To an extent, institutional collections come with a ready made user group, in terms of the people who are members of said institution. To view the zines in the British Library collection, a readers pass is required (British Library, 2013b). Although the Stuart Hall Library focuses on material which supports the staff at Iniva, anyone can register to join and membership is free (Iniva 2013), Librarian H also uses the zine collection as a way to attract a more diverse audience to the library, facilitating workshops with young people in further education, and even of school age, in which the zine collection is the central focus (Appendix H). At LCC the collection is primarily for University of the Arts London students, however researchers from outside the institution are able to access the collection if they arrange it with Librarian K in advance (Appendix K). All three librarians agree that a high proportion of visitors to their collection are zine makers who visit for inspiration (Appendix S, H, K). Placing a collection in an official institutional setting creates a number of issues for users. The British Library is a quite formal setting, traditionally associated with research, and for users who might wish to view the zines for no reason other than pleasure or personal interest, this might not feel like the most inviting environment to do so in. Registering for a readers pass requires the presentation of a number of personal documents, and being able to demonstrate that the material you wish to see is not accessible anywhere else (British Library, 2013b). This can also seem somewhat daunting.
At LCC, it would be impossible for researchers from outside the institution to get past the security gates at the front of the building, so it is always necessary to arrange ahead so that necessary arrangements for access can be made (Appendix K). Although all three librarians are keen to open their collections up to the widest audiences possible, factors which are part of wider institutional policy can sometimes make this difficult.

**Promoting the Collections**

The British Library website contains information about the zine collection (British Library c ), and Librarian S gives talks about the collection upon request, however the zines are very much placed in the context of wider 20th century alternative material, more emphasis seems to be placed on the collection overall than zines specifically (Appendix S). LCC maintain a facebook page for the zine collection, where photographs and information about newly acquired zines are posted. Librarian K also visits zine fairs and hands out fliers to raise awareness of the collection. (Appendix K). Librarian H feels that there is a certain element of 'preaching to the converted' when it comes to library zine collections- and places importance on attracting people outside of the usual user group of academics and zine makers to the library. They try to run at least one big event every year to raise awareness of the collection, makes sure zines are always on display when groups visit, and utilises social media to promote the collection (Appendix H).

**Storage**

All three institutions keep their zine collections in closed access conditions (Appendix K, H, S). Librarian K laments that fact that unlike many institutional zine collections in the United States, they are unable to buy two copies of each zine purchased for the library,
one for use, on shelves that can be browsed, and another that would be kept, untouched for preservation purposes (Appendix K). As with any library collection, there are always potential space issues, and at the British Library, many of the zines are stored in Yorkshire, at the Boston Spa site, meaning that readers have to order this material in advance so it can be transported to London (Appendix S). Librarian K notes the fact that when selecting material, space is always a consideration. They generally avoid buying full runs of zines favouring the chance to create a more varied collection rather than filling the space with lots of the work of one zine maker (Appendix K).

**Preservation**

As zines are generally printed in small runs, and not always reprinted if the original run sells out they are ephemeral in nature. As a result there is a strong case for libraries developing zine collections with a preservation aspect in mind. Chepesiuk states that the value of zines as a record of contemporary culture means that libraries should take an active role in collecting them and preserving them for future users (Chepesiuk, 1997 p.70). Librarian S agrees with this sentiment, describing it as a 'triumph' to collect zines, as in the past, non-mainstream material of this kind was often overlooked by large institutions like the British Library (Appendix S). The risk of zines 'mouldering away' in an attic, unused is something Librarian K feels is addressed by library zine collections, which make them accessible to a greater audience (Appendix K). However there is the view that it is rather contradictory to collect such ephemeral and transient artefacts, which are made to exist outside of the mainstream, and then place them in a formal and structured institution like a library (Appendix M). Many zine makers, according to Chepesiuk, do not wish for their zines to be collected by libraries, as it 'institutionalises' them, and feels like it 'flies in the face' of their anti-mainstream intents in producing such works (Chepesiuk, 1997, p.70). In
opposition to this view, Librarian K acknowledges the conflict that some zine makers feel about their work being placed in institutional collections is understandable, but believes that zine makers should consider the wider access to their zines, and the sentiments espoused in them that can be achieved by placing them in a collection like the one at LCC can offer, and the potential that their work has to be an inspiration or a gateway for someone who might not see it otherwise (Appendix K). Ultimately though, once a zine maker has published their zine, and it is out in the world, they no longer have the same level of control over it and have to accept that it might end up in an institutional collection. (Appendix K).

Many zines are made of non-conventional materials or are accompanied by additional materials (Bartel, 2004, p.81), and this can create some interesting challenges when it comes to preservation, especially within institutional settings where strict preservation guidelines often have to be adhered to. For example, many early punk zines were accompanied with a flexidisc containing tracks by bands featured in the zine. When zines like this, with a disc arrive at the British Library, the disc and the zine are catalogued as a periodical and a sound artefact respectively, and stored separately. Each catalogue record will link to the other, so users can request both the zine and the flexidisc if they wish. Librarian S also tells the story of an anarchopunk zine that came accompanied by a 'bomb making kit' in the form of a match, which for safety reasons was removed from the zine (Appendix S).
Zine Collections in Alternative Spaces

Although, as the previous chapter showed, zines have been collected within some institutional libraries for some time now, it is still a relatively small proportion, and to cite Chris Atton,

“It is hard to find library materials that challenge the for-profit, corporate culture...libraries, though publicly funded, primarily serve middle class constituencies’. (Atton cited in Hedtke, 2007, p.40)

As a reflection of the anti-establishment sentiments that can be considered a central part of zine culture, many alternative spaces which offer access to zine collections have developed. The scope that these alternative spaces cover mirrors the scope of the zines that they contain, and can range from a bicycle powered mobile library for the benefit of the homeless community in New York (Streetbooks, 2013) to the work of Radical Reference, a collective of volunteer library workers who offer their resources and skills at protests and events, often linked to autonomous political movements such as occupy (Radical Reference, 2013). Other spaces, often those which describe themselves as 'zine libraries' use formal processes associated with libraries, such as the physical organisation of material onto shelves, and cataloging, but often in less strict, customised ways, within a non-library space (Hedtke, 2007, p.40). Lymn locates these spaces in Moore and Pell's theory of the 'autonomous archives' (Lymn, 2013, p.5). An autonomous archive is the archive of

“Emergent publics...without...solidified group cohesion, loci of identification or external recognition”. (Moore & Pell, cited in Lymn, 2013 p.5).

Lymn believes the term can be applied to alternative spaces in which zine collections exist, as they are autonomous in the sense that they are self determining, and act alone, without deferring to a greater authority (Lymn, 2013, p.5).

In the United Kingdom, there are a variety of these spaces, and this chapter will examine
three different kinds. In her article 'Cereal Boxes and Milk Crates Zine Libraries and
Infoshops are...Now', Hedtke highlights two of the most common alternative spaces in
which zine collections are found- the independent zine library, and the infoshop. She
defines the zine libraries as being:

“A collection of zines organised by zine-lovers and makers...in the hope of
preserving and making accessible obscure materials”. (Hedtke, 2007, p.40)

Two zine libraries will be examined in this chapter- the Salford Zine Library, started in
2010, now based in the Nexus Cafe in Manchester (Appendix C), and the zine library at
SHOP- a community interest company that sells vintage clothes and homewares, and
holds events and art exhibitions within the shop space, located in Bristol (Appendix M).

The second alternative space that Hedtke describes is the Infoshop, sometimes referred
to as social centres, she states that they are:

“A place to go for information...usually, but not always run by anarchists, but not
necessarily for anarchists...they are volunteer run, non-hierarchical spaces...” which
often “house libraries and reading rooms”. (Hedtke, 2007, p.40).

56a Infoshop is an infoshop and social centre located in Elephant and Castle, London.
Founded in 1991, it is 100% volunteer run and unfunded (56a, 2013). The zine library, is
part of an extensive wider archive of radical literature (Appendix F). The building also
houses a food co-op, free bicycle repair workshop, and hosts events for local and radical
community groups (56a Infoshop, 2013).

The final collections that will be examined in this chapter are two private collections. The
first, the personal collection of Respondent L, which they call the Edinburgh Zine Archive.
Respondent L has been collecting zines since 1983, and began to think of it as an archive
in the 1990s. The collection numbers around 6000 zines (Appendix L). The second private
collection belongs to the artist Mark Pawson, and was made accessible for the duration of
an exhibition. In June 2013, as part of an exhibition at Xero, Kline and Coma gallery in East London, Pawson unpacked, catalogued and displayed some of his collection of zines, small press publications and other materials, which he had accumulated over the course of 30 years (Xero, Kline, & Coma, 2013).

**Acquisitions**

Zine libraries and infoshops generally rely on donations to populate their collections (Hedtke, 2007, p.41), and this is the case for both the Salford Zine Library and SHOP. Respondent C from Salford Zine Library, and respondent M, who assisted in setting up the zine library at SHOP are both zine makers, with links to the zine community, and as a result were well placed to make a call for donations (Appendix C and M). Initially SHOP received a high number of self-published comic zines, reflecting respondent M's own output, and networks (Appendix M). In the case of infoshops, material is often donated by zine makers, who form part of the community that use the infoshop (Appendix F). Hedtke also points to a tradition of 'dumpstering'- salvaging discarded library books as a source for many infoshops (Hedtke, 2007, p.41). 56a relies on donations from members of the zine community, and are successful in this respect, regularly receiving donations (Appendix F). As previously stated, Mark Pawson has acquired the materials in his collection over a period of 30 years, and they consist of three main strands- work that he was directly involved in making, with a focus on zines, small press material and mail art, self published zines and books by other artists that interested him, and material which he purchased to sell on, usually publications from overseas (Appendix P). Respondent L, at the Edinburgh Fanzine Archive mostly purchases zines directly from zine makers or distros, but occasionally receives donations (Appendix L).
Like many Infoshops the zine library at 56a contains material which focuses on radical, 'do it yourself' politics and lifestyles, for example punk, political, feminist and queer zines. (Appendix F). Material that could be considered fascist, racist, homophobic or sexist would be rejected (Appendix F). Both Salford Zine Library and SHOP have very open submission criteria, where the most crucial principle is that the material is self published, and as a result both collections contain a wide range of different types of zines (Appendix C and M). Respondent C states that Salford Zine Library are currently in the process of making more specific calls for donations to develop the areas of collection which are felt to be underrepresented, such as football zines (Appendix C). SHOP would reject any material that was deemed to be racist, sexist or homophobic (Appendix M). Respondent C takes a less absolute view on material of this nature, stating that it could be accepted at Salford Zine Library, but puts great emphasis on this being a theoretical statement, as Salford Zine Library is yet to receive any material like this, and could potentially still decline it (Appendix C).

Although Pawson did not initially begin collecting with the end point of having an archive in mind, he states that the material that he has collected, he often kept as he had a vague notion that it could be of some importance in time (Appendix P). Many of the items within Pawson's collection are created by people who Pawson considers friends, or has some person connection to, and the collection contains significant bodies of certain artists work, for example the work of Robin Crozier (Appendix P). As a result, the collection could be seen to feature archives within an archive, which is quite unusual. Respondent L states that he collects zines which deal with all subject matters, where the main thing that they have in common is the self-published, lo-fi format (Appendix L.)

**Cataloging and the Library Catalogue.**
Initially SHOP kept a Tumblr as a catalogue of the zine, and kept an inventory on their blog, however after a website issue, this was lost, so browsing is the only way for the users to negotiate the collection (Appendix M). Salford Zine Library also lack a catalogue, and does not have an inventory of the material in the collection, although Salford Zine Library have plans to catalogue the material and develop an online catalogue as part of a website redesign (Appendix C). 56a have recently re-organised their collection so that it is alphabetically organised by title (it was previously organised by subject), and are in the process of listing their collection. There is a rudimentary catalogue, which exists as a spreadsheet that contains a number of descriptive categories (Appendix F). A system of subject keywords has been devised to indicate thematic content on the catalogue, and consists of a code and a definition, which helps the volunteer describing the material to know how to apply it- for example RIO is the subject code for zines which describe themselves, or are clearly about the Riot Grrrl movement (Appendix F). Last year volunteers at 56a reorganised the archive, and using the Librarything website, listed the content. They hope to do something similar for the zines later this year (Appendix F). There is talk of setting up separate public and private catalogues in order to keep certain information such as zine makers names more private Appendix F), which is in keeping with the ethics many infoshops hold when it comes to privacy and the ability to search and use the library with a degree of privacy and untraceability (Hedtke, 2007, p.41).

At the Edinburgh Fanzine Archive, respondent L keeps an A-Z list of zines they have purchased (Appendix L). For Pawson, cataloging was a central to the purpose of the exhibition in which his zine collection was displayed. Every day he would unbox and catalogue his collection within the gallery space, and produce a descriptive list, using the categories Title+number, Editor(s), Country/Town, Date, Price, Theme/Info (Appendix P).
Pawson was aware that he was producing the sheets for public consumption, and added more detailed explanations and context about the materials (Appendix P).

**User Groups**

Respondent C states that the main user group at Salford Zine Library are zine makers who are already aware of the zine scene, but that the library aims to work with other organisations such as museums, schools and libraries to reach a wider audience (Appendix C). The zine library at SHOP was used by a wide range of people who had come in to look round the shop (Appendix M). Access to private collections is at the owners' behest, and although respondent L would like people to visit the archive the fact it is stored in a bedroom, with limited space makes it difficult (Appendix L). Pawson's collection is also stored in his home, but became temporarily accessible to the public in the gallery for the duration of the exhibition (Appendix P). 56a Infoshop describes itself as a resource for local people, campaign groups and projects (56a, 2013), and this is reflected in the kind of people who use the zine library. As much of the collection focuses on radical politics and lifestyles, it is particularly useful for anyone who wishes to find out more about these issues. Like Salford Zine Library, it also draws in zine makers who have heard about the collection (Appendix F).

**Promoting the Collections**

As Hedtke states, alternative spaces that house zine libraries do not advertise in newspapers or magazines, as this is not financially viable (Hedtke, 2007, p.42), although this is less of an issue now than it has been in the past, as the internet can be used to do this freely, in a variety of ways. Both Salford Zine Library and SHOP have used blogs and
social media to publicise their collections (Appendix C and M). The zine collection at SHOP was also featured on local radio, which helped raise awareness to a wider audience (Appendix M). 56a has been functioning since 1991, and as a result the collection is well known throughout the zine community. There is talk of holding an event to promote the zine library after the re-cataloguing has been completed, probably in early 2014 (Appendix F). Private collections are more difficult to promote. For example, rather than hearing about Mark Pawson's exhibition through the traditional channels I use for zine news, such as blogs and twitter, I first heard about it through the mailing list of an artists’ bookshop. Similarly, I was made aware of the Edinburgh Fanzine Archive through Librarian K at LCC.

**Storage and Accessibility**

One of the most problematic factors for many of these alternative spaces, flagged up by both Hedtke (Hedtke, 2007, p.41) and Dodge (Dodge, 1998, p.63) is the fact that they are often temporal and precarious. As they often have no budget, they are housed in buildings that also perform other functions (Hedtke, 2007, p.41) and this is certainly the case for Salford Zine Library and Shop, which are located in a cafe and a vintage clothes and homeware shop respectively (Appendix C and M). Indeed, Salford Zine Library was originally based in Salford, moved to new home in Manchester's Northern Quarter, but have decided to keep the name for continuity (Appendix C). 56a was originally a squatted building, but signed a 10 year lease, so is relatively secure for the near future (56a Infoshop, 2013).

The Salford Zine Library and SHOP have zine collections which are on open shelves, and can be browsed freely by visitors (Appendix C and M). Respondent C states that there are
times when the collection at Salford Zine Library is completely unsupervised, and that they have to rely on the good nature of people not to steal zines (Appendix C). SHOP initially built cardboard shelving, but this proved to be impractical, and was replaced by longbox storage instead (Appendix M). At 56a zines are stored in magazine files, grouped into three different sizes, and sorted alphabetically by title. The reading room is publicly accessible, and there is generally a volunteer to assist with locating things (Appendix F). All three libraries are reference only, however, and offer no lending facilities (Appendix F, C, and M).

The Edinburgh fanzine Archive is located in respondent L's bedroom. The zines are stored them in box files, chronologically, and then sorted alphabetically. He estimates that the total space the collection takes up in shelving is seventy five and a half feet (Appendix L). Pawson also stores his collection around his home mainly in photocopier paper boxes. One of the purposes of the exhibition was to re box the materials into plastic comics sleeves, with cardboard supports for the more fragile items. Although there was a degree of organisation to Pawson's collection beforehand - many of the boxes were labelled, and similar material was grouped together - the process of unboxing, cataloging and re-boxing allowed Pawson to reorganise his collection in a better way (Appendix P).

Preservation

As zine makers, both respondents C and M understand the importance of zines as records of non-mainstream culture, and respondent M in particular believes that alternative spaces run by people involved in the zine scene play a very important part in maintaining their legacy (Appendix M). As an alternative spaces with politics rooted very much in the same world as zine culture, infoshops are arguably able to avoid the conflicting issues of
collecting and preserving a format like zines which institutional collections can be seen with having to deal with. By inventorying and cataloging the collection, volunteers at 56a hope to establish if there is any particularly special material in the collections, which may require greater care (Appendix F). Respondent L states that part of the reason they collect zines is that because they believe that there is a lack of interest in preserving them within libraries and other places of research, even though in respondent L's opinion they should be considered important records of youth culture (Appendix L). As previously stated, one of the reasons Mark Pawson decided to keep many of the items in his collection was because he thought they were usual enough to potentially hold historical value in time (Appendix P). In the longer term respondent L hopes that the Edinburgh Fanzine Archive will one day find a home within an institutional library (Appendix L), and Pawson would also like to place his collection somewhere that the material can be catalogued properly and made accessible eventually (Appendix P).

Chapter Five
**Conclusion: Issues facing institutional and alternative zine collections in the UK.**

Hopefully chapters three and four of this dissertation, although not exhaustive, have given an idea of range of zine libraries and zine collections within libraries that exist in the UK. This conclusion aims to consider some of the issues that both types of collection face in terms of the collection of zines, care of zines, and accessibility to the collection.

The institutional collections studied in chapter three have existing acquisitions, cataloging and storage procedures, which are generally helpful in facilitating preservation and access to the collection, and it is interesting to note that often alternative collections take formal processes that are used in institutional libraries, for example referring to their collection as an 'archive' as respondent L does (Appendix L), or the informal cataloging strategies used by Mark Pawson (Appendix P) and customise them. However, sometimes when institutional procedures which are enforced at a blanket level have to be adhered to rigidly, this can create difficulties. Firstly the non-standard nature of zines is arguably the reason that many institutional libraries are put off of collecting them in the first place- the effort it can take to get hold of them, and the fact it is hard to assimilate them into standardised workflows (Bartel, 2004, p.33). A particular example of this is cataloging- at the British Library and the Stuart Hall Library, zines are treated at periodicals, and although there are some similarities, zines are not always created in multiple runs, so it is possible to suggest this is not the best way to deal with them. Using Library of Congress Subject Headings to indicate the subject matter of zines can also be problematic, as relevant ones that reflect the specialised or niche topics found in zines often don't exist. Alternative collections have much greater freedom in terms of how they catalogue their zines, and can develop
systems which specifically suit the collections, for example the subject keywords system at 56a. However, as the studies of the alternative collections in chapter 4 show, listing the collections, and then making them accessible in the form of a library catalogue is harder when you are not part of an institution that has the technology in place to do this already. As a result it can be hard to realise the scope of these collections, especially for someone who cannot visit personally. The private collection of Mark Pawson is interesting to consider in this respect- he is basing his actions on what he thinks library cataloguing is, and what will be interesting to gallery visitors, and the detailed contextual information he provides could prove useful for provenance should his collection ever become part of an institutional archive or library.

In terms of acquisitions, although all three institutional collections did accept donations, they all had a budget which with they could purchase zines. In comparison, due to the self organised nature of 56a, Salford Zine Library and SHOP, where there is no budget, it is necessary for them to rely on donations. Of course this can have implications for the collection in terms of the quality of material received, and can make it more difficult to steer the collection in a specific direction. On the other hand, donations allow for the sidestepping of financial transactions. This is especially advantageous to institutional collections, where there can sometimes be a disjunct between centralised finance departments who need to follow specific procedures, and zine creators who generally do everything on a much smaller scale and much more informally.

The often temporal, precarious environments in which alternative collections often find themselves housed should also be considered. Although sharing space can often be complimentary- for example 56a is based in a building which also houses a food co-op and a free bicycle repair workshop- as Dodge states, many of these alternative spaces come
and go frequently due to surrounding environmental pressures such as rising rent (Dodge, 1997, p.63). This is not to say, however, that zine collections in institutional libraries are totally immune to these difficulties—witness the recent move of the women’s library as a standalone institution based in purpose built building to being incorporated within the library collections at LSE (Times Higher Education, 2012). The reliance on volunteers to run alternative collections can also place a strain on things—political and ideological differences can cause breakdowns (Dodge, 1997, p.63), and as people move on and things change, collections in the words of respondent M ‘develop a lifespan of their own’ (Appendix M), and come and go.

This leads on to accessibility. The Edinburgh Zine Archive is particularly interesting in this respect. As it is housed in respondent L’s bedroom, where space is at a premium, opening the collection to visitors is not really an option. Although Pawson’s work was made accessible in a gallery for the duration of a month, the collection is also stored in his home. It could also be argued that the institutional collections studied, although allowing visitors from outside of the institutions still require interested parties to go through formal processes— for example signing in, or registering for a readers ticket. This could be something users may feel uncomfortable doing, and could see as a block to them accessing the collections. The idea of privacy and trackless searching/use is often a very important principle for infoshops (Hedtke, 2007, p.41), and alternative collections such as 56a, Salford Zine Library and SHOP, which do not have to operate with overarching rules about access could potentially be seen as more accessible spaces as a result. In terms of user groups, both the institutional and alternative libraries studied are heavily used by people who already know about, are involved in the zine scene, although both types of collections are generally keen to broaden their users groups, some, such as the Stuart Hall Library, and Salford Zine Library actively targeting groups who might not have used the
Perhaps the biggest issues for both institutional and alternative zine collections relate to the preservation of zines, and whether or not they should be collected at all. As previously discussed, some zine makers are reticent for their zines to be part of library collections, particularly institutional libraries as the controlled, owned, nature of something like a library collection seems to be the antithesis of many of the fundamental ideas that are central to zine making— independence, estrangement from mainstream culture, and the zine as something that exists to be out in the world, as an ephemeral object to be widely read. The transition of the zine from what could be said to be an active object— designed to be circulated widely in no specific environment, to a cultural artefact, held in an institution with controlled access, can also seem problematic. Respondent M believes that this is one of the reasons that independent, alternative collections are very important, stating that as:

“zines emerge from a grassroots movement...it should be the grassroots, the makers, that own that curation process” (Appendix M).

Lymn suggests that a solution to this is to take the approach of 'librarian-as-insider-ethnographer' as first posited by Chris Atton, where information professionals who are involved in DIY communities such as the zine world use this insiders perspective to inform their actions as librarians and bridge this gap (Lymn, 2013, p.2). It is arguable this is already happening, as two of the institutional librarians interviewed have both been involved in the zine world (Appendix H and K), but perhaps is a philosophy to build upon to bridge the gaps that can sometimes be seen between alternative and institutional collections.

However, there are many strong arguments for collecting and preserving zines within institutional settings. They act as important records of alternative voices, and non-
mainstream culture, which has the potential to be overlooked historically, especially in institutional libraries, where the majority of the stock is standardised material, often delivered from large suppliers (Bartel, 2004, p.30-31). With their long term preservation plans and generally stable environs, institutional collections offer the potential for zines to be accessible to users for the foreseeable future. In 2010, Research Libraries UK (RLUK) published a report into 'hidden collections', which showed that uncatalogued material was a huge problem for many libraries (Research Libraries UK, 2010). From looking at the alternative collections examined in this study, where mostly, nothing is catalogued, it could be said that this could be the case for them. For collections such as the Edinburgh Zine Archive, or Pawson's, which with limited access, and no fixed plans for their legacy, this could be considered even more pressing.

Perhaps it is best to take the approach advocated by Librarian K, and believe that the importance of collecting zines and making them accessible to people lies in the fact that somebody visiting a collection, be it institutional or alternative might be inspired by what they see, and that it could act as a gateway for them to discover more about something- a subculture, a type of music, a political movement, and perhaps act as an impetus for them to create a zine of their own, especially if what they want to see in the world isn't there already (Appendix K). The title of this dissertation references a song by punk band The Germs- 'What We Do Is Secret'- and although zines could be seen to embody this sentiment, as an alternative to the mainstream media, their wide scope in terms of appearance and themes, and importance as primary source objects, often as a conduit for opinions and voices which would not otherwise be heard creates and argument for sharing the 'secret' of zine culture with wide range of people, whether through formal institutional library collections such as LCC or the British Library, or alternative ones, such as 56a or Salford Zine Library, and preserving them, so people can continue to access
them for years to come.

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**Appendix C**
Interview with respondent C, who co-runs Salford Zine Library.

1) I'll Start with a big question first: What's your personal definition of a zine? and/or does the Salford Zine Library have a specific definition of what a zine is?

A zine, to me, is any print publication that's self-published that has a relatively short run. That's the kind of broad definition of a zine that we use at the Salford Zine Library too. As long as it is self-published, we'll take it.

2) Can you tell me how the Salford Zine Library came to be? When was it founded?

Salford Zine Library was founded in 2010 by Craig John Barr, a zine maker who used to send his zines to libraries in the US. He thought it might be a good idea to set up one in the UK too. It was originally housed at Islington Mill, a creative studio/art space in Salford but has since moved to a room at the back of Nexus Art Cafe in the Northern Quarter, Manchester. So the library isn't actually in Salford anymore, but people know who we are now so the name probably won't change despite the fact it's a little confusing geography-wise. Craig is in the process of moving to the US and my partner and I recently took over the running of the library, so we're just getting started and making plans for improving the library and building on Craig's hard work.

3) How many items are in the collection?

Somewhere between 1400 and 1500 zines, we think.

4) From looking at the website, I see that the Salford Zine Library relies on donations. This is great, but obviously would make it difficult to enforce any kind of collection policy. Is there any kind of collection policy at all? Is there any material the collection wouldn't accept? For example a publication which is an artists' book rather than a zine?

There isn't any kind of collection policy at all, no. As long as it is self published we'll add it to the collection. Theoretically we could be sent a whole bunch of racist/homophobic/otherwise nasty stuff and we would still include it, although hopefully that isn't something we'll have to deal with!

At the moment we are in the process of doing more specific calls for donations in areas of the collection that we think are slightly under represented at the moment. For example, we only have a few football fanzines and we're working with a couple of websites to try and encourage people to donate some of their old football zines. There are loads of zines that we like that aren't in the library at the moment, so we'll probably be pro-actively asking people to donate some of their zines to the collection. Although we don't want the collection to be too skewed towards only stuff we like! This is a conflict we'll have to try and get around somehow.

5) I know that you work as a cataloguer in your other library job. Does the Salford Zine Library catalogue its collection at all, or have a catalogue that lists the contents
of the collection?

The library doesn't have any kind of catalogue, no. There's not even any kind of basic inventory of stuff that's been donated! At least not one that's been updated for a long time. This is a project that I'm hoping we'll be able to get started on soon, cataloguing and classifying (in a very basic way) the collection. It will help us organise the collection on the shelves a little better and help people have a fighting chance of being able to find stuff too. While it's nice to browse and serendipitously find something, the librarian in me wants everything shelved in some kind of logical order.

We're hoping to get a bit of funding to help us catalogue the collection and build a new website, and hopefully get a few volunteers involved too. I'm dying to get started as I love cataloguing. It will be a big job though, retrospectively cataloguing everything in the collection. It'll be worth it, though. We want people to be able to search and browse through the catalogue online and then be able to pop along to the library and find the stuff that they want easily. I think that's a fairly basic aim for a library of any kind to have!

6) New zines get photographed and posted on the library blog/website. Is this the main way for users to see what is in the collection?

Yes, this is the only way at the moment, besides coming down to the library and looking on the shelves. We're intending to start tweeting photos of new stock a bit more. The Twitter account has quite a lot of followers but hadn't previously been used that much, so we're hoping to use this a bit more to promote the collection a bit more. And obviously we hope to have a super swish website/catalogue up and running at some point soon too.

7) How are the zines stored? Are they open or closed access?

Completely open access. The library is housed in a room at the back of a cafe and people can just walk in any time while the cafe is open. There's no-one looking after the library during the day, so theoretically people could just walk in, pack a couple of bags full of zines and then walk off. We're trusting (hoping) that people don't do that! The library is reference only and we ask that people put things back where they found them after they've finished. There's some comfy seating in there and they can take zines out into the actual cafe to read, too, so they don't really need to take anything home with them.

8) Also from looking at the website/blog, I see that the library tours and holds events to promote the collection. As the Salford Zine Library is a stand-alone collection, unlike say, the collection held within the London College of Communication Library, you don't have a 'ready-made' user group. Can you tell me more about how you promote the collection? I know this is a bit of a difficult question to give a concrete answer to, but would you say there is a main user group for the library? E.g zine makers, or students?

I think we have two main audiences that we want to reach. We want to be a kind of hub for the zine making community, not just in the local area but across the whole country. We want to encourage people to discover new zines, make new connections and give exposure to artists/writers who make zines. So this is people who would already be aware of zines/DIY culture, I guess. We can do this by posting about different zines/zine makers on our blog and in the future we'd like to have more interview/feature type content on there
too. We're also interested in hosting informal events for local zinesters too, where we could facilitate collaboration and co-operation and things like that, in a nice cosy cafe setting.

Secondly we want to educate people about what zines are and why they're so great! We have loads of amazing zines in the collection and we think the possibilities are endless for what these can be used for. The library has exhibited in museums before and we're very much interested in building relationships with museums, galleries and libraries. We're hoping we'll be able to tailor exhibitions and events for certain circumstances. So, for example, if a gallery has an exhibition coming up about feminism or punk or any subject we think is covered in the collection, we want to be go to them and say 'we have all this stuff that would look great with the exhibition - do you want to borrow it and can we run some workshops around it?'. Organising and cataloguing the collection is the first step with this, though. We can't really do this if we don't know what we've got!

The library has worked with schools, colleges and universities in the past too and we're hoping to be able to continue this in the future. Speaking as someone who has never had a job in any kind of educational institution, I think that zine making is a great way to teach just about anything. Whether it's a more interesting way for arts or creative writing students to present their work, or just a fun way of getting school kids to engage with a subject, we want to be involved in encouraging it.

A lot of this stuff is just in the planning stages at the moment, so sorry for being a bit vague!

9) One of the reasons I'm writing my dissertation on zine collections is because I think zines are really important in terms of offering an outlet for work that would be unlikely to be published through conventional channels, and can be important as historical artefacts- for example as records of peoples lives, music scenes, political views etc. However, the varied nature of zines, and the fact that they're not the easiest kind of material to deal with for most libraries who use standardised systems for acquisitions (for example are they periodicals? not really, although sometimes share similarities.), which in turn means that institutions are put off of collecting them. This creates the risk that zines become overlooked, and due to their nature- usually published in small 'one off' runs- are lost forever. Even when they are collected, due to their wildly varied, and aforementioned non-standard nature, there's the risk of them becoming 'hidden collections', as they are deemed difficult to deal with, or get lumped in with other collections- for example ephemera, and users might not even know that they are there. On the other hand, I know that some people find the idea of keeping zines in library collections problematic, as it sort of goes against the idea of them being out there and accessible to anyone. Do you have any thoughts on this, and the idea of preserving zines in general?

Yeah, I can see both sides of the argument. On the one hand, part of the charm of zines is that they are made in very small runs and, typically, are only read by a very small audience. Collecting them together and preserving them in libraries goes a little against this and I can see why some people might not like the idea of treating zines like historical artefacts.

That said, I agree with you in that zines are an amazing record of non mainstream culture. We don't have that much stuff in the library collection that was made before the 1980s at the moment, but we do have sizeable collection of sci-fi zines from the 50s and 60s.
They’re probably my favourite publications in the whole collection. They’re more or less analogue versions of internet message boards, discussing various sci-fi and fantasy topics via letters to the editor. I find them fascinating and I’m sure there’s probably lots of potential within the collection for supporting research in a number of fields.

It amazes me how many universities have zine collections in the US. I think there are only a handful of university libraries over here that have zine collections. I can see why they might be a bit wary of starting to build their own collections, though! Zines, by their very nature, are ‘underground’ publications, and sourcing relevant materials for your collection would probably be a bit of a nightmare, especially if you’re a collection development librarian who doesn’t know very much about them. Salford Zine Library’s complete lack of selection policy means that we don’t have these kind of headaches!

Appendix F
Over the period July 25th–August 28th I made four visits to the zine library at 56a Infoshop. From my own observations, and talking to volunteers I learned the following:

- The zine library is located in a small room in the building, alongside the 56a Infoshop Archive, which contains anarchist magazines, books, pamphlets and leaflets.
- The zines in the collections are donations focusing on radical politics and lifestyles.
- The zines are shelved in magazine box files, on floor to ceiling shelving.
- They are organised by size. 56A has three classifications for size: A4, Medium (A5), and 'Cute' (anything smaller).
- After size they are filed alphabetically by title. Previously they had been shelved by subject.
- Anybody can access the zines, although there is usually a volunteer present to help them.
- According to volunteer D, who I spoke to on July 25th, the zine library is mostly used by people who are interested in the subject areas the Infoshop deals with, who have come to use the other facilities in the infoshop, or zine makers, who have heard about the infoshop online, or by word of mouth.

On August 21st 2013, I spoke to volunteer E who was working in the zine library about its cataloging and organisation.

- 56a are currently in the process of making an inventory of their zines, and inputting this data into an excel spreadsheet which will function as a catalogue.
- This spreadsheet contains a number of categories:
  A: Title
  B: Issue/No.
  C: Size: A4, M, or Cute
  D: Keywords
  E: Other Keywords
  F: Date of Publication
  G: Name(s) of creator(s)
  H: Place of creation
  I: Are there duplicate copies in the zine library?
  J: Notes.
- A group of volunteers came up with relevant keywords, and definitions for these keywords, which could be applied to the catalogue to give some idea of the subject of the zine. Each keyword was given a shortened code name- e.g RIO for zines that describe themselves, or contain content that could be described as being part of the Riot Grrrl movement.
- This keyword index and a printed list of the spreadsheet is kept in a binder.
- Material in the archive has been catalogued, and is accessible to the public via Librarything. There are plans to make the zine library catalogue accessible in a similar way, but it is possible two catalogues might have to be created, one for external and the other for internal use due to issues around personal privacy- it is possible not all zine makers will want their names listed on the internet, and this is something 56a is considering.
- The cataloging project had taken a break over the summer, but it is hoped the project will be finished by 2014, and there are plans to hold an event/exhibition.
highlighting interesting/rare material in the collection when it is completed.

Appendix H
Interview with Librarian H, Manager of the Stuart Hall Library, Iniva.

Please can you tell me about your role and the zine collection at Stuart Hall Library. When was it established?

Sure. I’m the manager of the Stuart Hall Library at Iniva, the Institute of International Visual Arts. My main role is to document the projects and work of Iniva, which mainly concerns international contemporary art. My role that is relevant to your research is managing the zine collection. The zine collection was founded in 2010, and I’d been here about three months. I’d previously managed a zine collection at the Women’s Library, which was then part of London Met University. I’d had an interest in zines since I was a teenager in the 1980’s, when they were very much fanzines, and very much connected to either indie music or various subcultures, very much in paper form, so I knew about zines before, and for zines to become part of my job at the Women’s Library was very exciting! So when I got to Stuart Hall Library, I was working with someone called [redacted], and I knew that she was interested in zines, and we both got very excited and decided to establish a zine collection here. [redacted] is a zine writer, so we decided to put a call out for zine donations. We did that and we got a trickle of zines in which was great. Then we decided to organise an event to launch the zine collection, which happened in October 2010. The launch event was incredibly successful. [Redacted] already had a network of zine people and it went very well. The main result of the launch event was an incredible amount of zines. Somebody donated their entire collection of over 100 zines! Anyone who made zines and came donated a copy. It was like an instant collection. I was really overwhelmed by their generosity. So that’s how the collection started.

You say you receive a lot of donations. Do you mostly rely on donations or do you purchase zines also?

We mainly rely on donations, but that’s only because there are only two of us working in the library, there is very little time for me to get out and buy them. That doesn’t mean that I don’t- periodically I’ll purchase them online, I’ll look up distros, but generally we just get a trickle of donations, and don’t have to put much of a call out, which is really good.

As someone who works in the Library Acquisitions department in an academic institution, the financial processes for buying zines are not always straightforward- the workflows are set up to deal with our commercial suppliers rather than small, individual vendors. Do you have any issues in this area?

It’s fairly straightforward as we’re such a small library within a small institution, so all the financial procedures are dealt with by one person only, the head of finance. Everything is really small scale. The only problems I’ve had have been when buying from distros. We don’t have a Paypal account, so I have to do it personally, but it’s not that big a deal.

Generally, do you have a specific collection policy for the zines you collect, for example thematic requirements, or is it quite general and open?

It’s probably more open than it should be, because we get donations and I will not turn them away. We have a larger collection development policy, which zines are part of, and it states that we are looking for zines with a strong visual element, because we’re a visual arts library. But because the remit of Iniva is to look at the arts, cultural politics, cultural diversity, I’ve broadened that out in the library collection policy to include subcultures. So
to me cultural diversity also includes different subcultures, such as different sexualities, different music styles, the way people dress, identities, so it's much broader here perhaps, than it is in the rest of Iniva. That means what we collect is a bit more open and inclusive.

In terms of organising the zines, how are they catalogued?

We catalogue as we would catalogue periodicals, which can have its challenges. Obviously there are a lot of one offs, or we have runs with issues missing, so it's not as standardised as it could be.

It's interesting because where I work, we catalogue zines as monographs with lots of descriptions in the 500 fields instead.

That's probably quite good in terms of providing information for people who are using the catalogue.

How are the zines stored?

At the moment, as it's International Zine Month, during the day the entire collection is on display in the library. Usually they are not held on open access, they are kept in our office space, and are available by request. I give them out box by box, and we invigilate them.

You were talking about the launch event for the collection. Zine collections often run the risk of becoming 'hidden collections' within libraries, and are not always well promoted. I wondered if you could tell me more about how you promote your collections and get people through the doors to look at them?

I think it's really important to have events. Particularly for us, as we're a small library and if we don't promote ourselves, nobody will know we are here. What I try to do with the zine collection is try to have open days, where people can come in and see what we've got. And when we have group visits, I will always make sure there are some zines on display and always refer to them. But what I've tried to do since we've had the collection is have one event a year. We had the launch in 2010, a late night event in 2011, and in 2012 we had the exhibition, and we opened on a Saturday afternoon. Having at least one event a year says 'we're here', and needless to say, social media is invaluable really.

As you say, because you're a small, independent library, you don't have a 'ready made' user group, for example a collection based in a university has the student body. However I'm going to ask you if you could name the most common kind of user for the zine collection?

It's often zine makers themselves who are interested, and people who are researching zines. It's a bit like preaching to the converted. However, what is really interesting, and one of the things I'm keen to work on is to really make the zine collection be seen as another part of the library collection. When I talk to people in the rest of INVIA about zines, I think they think it's my hobby horse. We really started the collection by stealth- we brought it in then said we'd done it! So nobody could really say no! It's not always the way to do things, but we thought 'why not?!'. What we have been doing with our education curator is facilitating workshops with younger people- FE students, some school age students, but not many, so mainly people 14-18 and a lot of them haven't heard of zines. When you're trying to engage with them- as an art library, we're incredibly print heavy, and so because
they're so interested in the digital, and also because a lot of the material is complex - I'd say the main users of the library are postgraduate students, I think one of the ways we can really engage young people is through zines. As I said, a lot of the time they've not heard of zines, and they don't know what they are, but as soon as you show, them they're like "ooh this is really good" or "I could properly make one of these!", this is a format that anyone can use and make of it whatever they want to. You don't need a degree of artistic skill, and I think it blows their minds a little bit. It's so wide open, what you can do.

That's great. We were talking before about the way that some institutions have a 'ready' user group, but that can also exclude access, for example if a collection is held within a university and you're not a student, organising visitor access isn't that simple. I'm basing my research on UK zine collections and libraries, because I feel that there's lots of literature about zine collections/libraries in the USA, but not here, and something I've noticed is that in America, there are a number of public libraries that lend out zines, which is something we don't have here at all, but would be great to have in terms of offering a wider range of people access to zines.

No, I'm not sure it's happening here. Maybe it will happen, but it hasn't yet.

I think a big barrier to it is the fact that a lot of acquisitions work in public libraries is being outsourced. It makes it more difficult to develop to develop something like a zine collection, which can't come in off the peg, shelf ready.

Yes, it is really interesting what's going on in the states. I've signed up for the zine librarians mailing list, and it really gives you a sense of how active they are. It's completely embedded in their library culture in the way it isn't here.

One of the reasons I'm writing my dissertation on zine collections is because I think zines are really important in terms of offering an outlet for work that would be unlikely to be published through conventional channels, and can be important as historical artefacts. On the other hand, I know that some people find the idea of keeping zines in library collections problematic, as it sort of goes against the idea of them being out there and accessible to anyone. Do you have any thoughts on this, and the idea of preserving zines in general?

I can understand that viewpoint, but personally I feel that by collecting zines, and making them accessible through the library we can introduce them to a wider audience than just those who are involved in the zine scene, which can only be a good thing!

When I was talking to Librarian S at the British Library, he said something that stuck with me. He suggested that rather seeing zines as primarily a format, their subject matter is sometimes more important. So a football fanzine made in the 80s would be an important primary research document for someone researching the history of football for example. I suppose it's another way to get people to use your collections.

Absolutely! I think when we introduce people to zines here, it's something to remember. It's not just the fact that 'ooh these are nice objects', it's much more about the subject matter, particularly because INVIA has a culture of research, and it's very academic, and can be quite dry, and I think the networks that already established in terms of research can be quite closed. Something I strive to do in the library is to re-open it up, and one of the ways
to do that I think is through zines.

**Appendix K**

Interview with Librarian K, London College of Communication.
Hello! to begin, what do you understand ‘fanzine’ or ‘zine’ to mean? How is it defined in terms of the collection at LCC?

I must say this is the hardest part of building the collection, and it's one we've tried to nail down, because for all our other collections we have a collection development policy, criteria with which to add or weed, very finite, and we've struggled hard to find a definition that suits. We've looked at certain things- we can say they're non mainstream, they don't go through mainstream publishing channels or distribution, everything about it is done by the creator, including distribution. They're non commercial, they might have a small print run, but there are always exceptions to these criteria, which can still be classed as a zine, or a fanzine, and we've come across those. One thing I'd say they wouldn't have is an ISSN. The zine 'Arty' is interesting in that way. It started off very much as a zine, but now it's a magazine, and I've stopped buying it, because it has an ISSN.

Yes, we subscribe to it through our serials agent now.

Exactly! So that's something that has made that transition. I don't know what Cathy Lomax (creator of 'Arty') is doing with it. Whether the production has changed, but if nothing has changed except that it has an ISSN, that's quite a difficult call to make. I have refused things for the collection, because I've thought they're not zine-y enough, because when I look at them I see they're trying to be a magazine. They're very commercial, they're trying to have a regular print run, and ideally they'd like to be in mainstream outlets, but they just happen not to be, because they haven't got the money, or publicity. So I have, two or three times, been given donations and had to say 'I'm really sorry, but I'm not going to be able to add this to the collection. The reason being I feel this is more a commercial magazine.' I've not had any comeback from that, maybe they've just been really annoyed with me! By and large that's the biggest issue though.

The thing about the difference between 'fanzine' and 'zine', I suppose...a music fanzine is very clearly a fanzine, because you're a fan of something, and I think it was a lot clearer a while back, because if you were a fan of a particular music scene, or a film, or a football team, you're a fan, you're writing a fan magazine, it's very simple. I suppose you chop the 'fan' off when it becomes more personal, but even then, that's not an absolute. Some punk ones, that are about music, the author has said 'this is my zine', so they're self defining it as a zine, and I don't know whether it's just a matter of language changing, but I've still not come to a conclusion. In the end, we look at the individual item, consider the reason someone has made it...it's as much about motivation. As a librarian, I like to know, and have concrete definitions, but I don't think you can with zines, really. I've spoken to people from the punk era who refuse to use the word 'zine', as they see it as a modern phenomenon, something that's very individualistic, and a bit self promoting. They're not really into that, to them fanzines are very much about alternative culture, and it doesn't matter if nobody else reads it. I don't know if I agree entirely about that, but I can sympathise, because they came up through a very particular time, and I do think the motivation and content has changed. It's an evolving format.

Yes, I think you definitely see trends, especially for certain time periods. I'm cataloguing some zines for the collection at the moment, late 1990s to mid 2000s punk zines, and it's interesting, because you can draw out a lot of similarities between them. For example, there are lots of rants about McDonalds, which you don't see so much any more in punk zines that are being produced now, and a lot of
mentions of technology, so mobile phones, and the gradual appearance of the MP3 player—usually spoken about negatively, which again you don't see so much of now! Also there's almost a standard format to them— they pretty much all feature reviews, interviews and rants!

Yes, some of the ones I've been cataloguing lately are punk zines from the late 70s/early 80s. Obviously in the early 80s there were things like the miners strike, and it's fascinating reading them, because they talk about that. One of them actually, one of my favourites, 'sentient paradox', it was 15p and the proceeds went to the miners fund. I wonder how many 15ps went there! That zine contains quite a lot of information about the imprisoned miners, just after the end of the strike. I think that shows that whatever is going on, especially in the leftist political movement, is an influence. There was the crusty movement in the late 1980s/early 90s, which was looking into the eco-warrior movement, being vegan, things like that. A lot of early punks weren't interested in that, they were much more 90s issues.

Talking about the personal and the political, and how they overlap sometimes, zines are interesting, because they're written from a personal viewpoint, but they're often about a wider cultural thing.

Maybe that says something about the music scene. Certain bands were seen to be parts of political movements. Does that happen now? I don't know.

Umm, I think it does, but it's changed a bit. I think feminism in the music scene is kind of going through a resurgence at the moment, and it's becoming a wider thing. People are making zines about it. There are collectives, like Girls Get Busy, OOMK. Although, on the other hand sometimes it can come across as pure nostalgia, like reading a facsimile of a riot grrrl zine from the 1990s rather than something new.

I had a student mention that when I did a session. He was looking at one of the recently made zines that looks quite punky in style and he said 'I don't get why it looks like that, why are they using cut and paste when they don't have to anymore?', and I thought, yeah that's interesting. He said 'I like the old ones, because that's all they had, but this is just looking back to the past', and that is a concern, are zines just becoming stylised objects that have to look a certain way? I was at a talk about zines a few years ago, and one of the women in the audience said 'don't you find it's very much about one theme and type of person? You never see zines written by OAPs, talking about being a pensioner'. She was an Asian woman and she spoke about her grandmother, who worked in a community bike workshop with other women, and she said that they never write about it, but were doing something quite alternative. She also said, 'you never see fascist zines', but you do! There were lots of rightwing skinhead ones, mentioning fascist punk bands like Skrewdriver. We only have anti-racist skinhead zines at LCC though. Do you think people still make them?

I'm not sure, I don't really go to the kind of events where they'd be for sale. Also, if they are being made, I don't know if the creators would identify them as zine.

Yes, that's the curious thing, what is the impulse to make something and define it as a zine?

Yeah, I'm fairly sure movements like the EDL or the BNP self publish magazines and pamphlets, and maybe in some respects they could be considered it. This leads me
on to the next question, about grey areas. Zines have potential overlaps with a number of other forms- for example artists' books, but when does something stop being an artists' book and become a zine or vice versa? I suppose you have to look at the collection as a whole and think 'is this in keeping with it' to make the choice.

Yes, there's a lot of making decisions on an individual basis. Also, our zine collection is part of a wider special collection, the printing and historical collection, which goes back to 1485, and within that there are other examples of self publishing. That's a strand that goes way back. You could even argue that the early printed books were self published, because you had some artisan printer dying, turning the platen! William Morris' private press books that we have...this is something I've had to think about a lot, when I've been talking to students about this, because you end up with a very elitist product. Morris was a socialist, he wanted to get away from industrialisation and mechanisation, so he went back to hand presses and made his own paper, made his own ink...but of course he couldn't make multiple copies like that, so made limited editions that only the wealthy could afford. There are conflicting views about whether you should collect zines, and one of the ideas about zines is do you think zine creators want their zines to reach as many people as possible, or stay as an elite thing? A hard to find thing? Is that part of the attraction? In which case, how does that work with the need to express non-mainstream views? You want them to get out there don't you? It's a bit of a conflict.

I think it's one of the inherent contradictions, especially in certain scenes, in which zines and zine making have been really important. Zines were a huge part of how women and girls built that network, and how the movement developed, but when it eventually and inevitably got picked up on by the mainstream press, and became co-opted, they tried to organise a complete communications blackout! Lots of people involved in the movement decided not to make zines anymore, to shut out the press. There were whole zines about not making zines anymore because of mainstream press coverage! They felt like it wasn't theirs anymore.

I think it's more about the message- would more women benefit from the message being out there? Women sitting in their homes, who were a bit more isolated or whatever, unable to get to gigs, or their local independent bookshop- this is pre-internet of course, so they can't google things and find them like that. Do you want them to be able to go into HMV, to give an example, and find something there and think 'ahh that's changed my life'. Zines are a great gateway but they have to be out there and able to be found. I can see also, that you don't attach yourself to the mainstream ways of working as a zine maker, because it's exploitative, it's denigrating, but yes, it's a difficult thing. I do think there are lots of contradictions and grey areas, but I don't feel too anxious about them. Being a librarian, you get used to structure, and wanting things to be neat. But what I've learned from working with this collection, is to think about it as a whole, how it fits in with the wider printing and historical collection. I try to look at them as examples of people doing things for themselves. The DIY element is really important. If there's a move too much away from that, I'll reject it. The DIY element is the strongest thing for the collection here. It's something you can show the students and say 'you can do this, you can make stuff, you can just get on. Look around at your environment and make something from it'. You can express yourself without spending a lot of money or getting approval from anyone. I think that's the value of it. There are cultural values now too. We don't really collect football fanzines, but I've got one issue of 'When Saturday Comes', which was written just after the Hillsborough disaster, and it's fantastic to read as it's from the fans point of view, which
was thoroughly rejected and denigrated at the time, but has now been proven to be absolutely correct, and you look at that and think 'yes, this is really important'.

We spoke before about the problematic elements of collecting zines in an institutional environment, taking them out of their original context of being these ephemeral things that are out in the world. As cultural artefacts, the content of the zine can be as important as the format- they can act as really important primary source material, especially for niche or non-mainstream voices or subjects, so I would argue that this is why it's important to collect and preserve them. This also feeds into some questions I have about how you make the collection accessible to users. To begin, can you tell me a bit about how the zines are catalogued?

Firstly, going back to what you said about zines being important primary source material, recently we had a student come to the desk, looking for material about sadomasochism. We do have some adult zines, and they'd found them on the catalogue, because the Library of Congress Subject Headings for that subject had brought them up in the search. Sometimes the students find the zine on the catalogue, and it's obvious when they come to the desk that they don't know what a zine is. You do have to point out that they're primary source materials, and not an edited work, so if someone is using them for academic purposes, I will always say to them, treat these like you would a blog, in terms that it's opinion, and it's someones voice telling you something, but when you write you have to explain that, and it's fine as long as that is made obvious. Cataloguing often leads people to the zines through the subject headings. I based the cataloguing of the zines on artists' books cataloguing guidelines published by ARLIS, but AACR2 doesn't lend itself to that particularly well! We rely a lot on the relevant 500 note fields, and try to add as much description as possible, of what it looks like, how it's bound...it's the only way you can really do it. Some zines lend themselves well to a 505 note, with lots of contents, others you have to use the 520 field for and describe the item overall. Lots of the authors of zines use first names only, or pseudonyms, and the zines aren't always dated, so often you have to spend a lot of time reading through and trying to make the best judgement about those things. I use the website discogs a lot- I look at what records are being reviewed and their release dates, then put the date it's likely to be in square brackets. If it says it's by 'Mick' I put 'Mick' as the author in the 100 field. I think you should put as much as possible in. If someone is trying to track down a particular zine, they may remember it was by someone called Mick, and find it. We've got two zines called 'In the City', which are very different. One is a mod zine, and one is a punk zine, so you need to put as much info in the records as you can to show the differences. The dates aren't that far apart either. It's hard, but it's interesting because you actually have to look through the item, and read the intro. See who has written it, why they've written it, get a sense of their attitude, find out where they are from...you can usually find most of the bibliographic information you need if you read it, it's just not a title page. But as you know, with the limitations of AACR2, it's not set up for ephemeral works, that have no standard format. It makes for a longer cataloguing experience, but a nicer one, I think. You get to know the collection more, which for me, who has to promote it, is good. Having said that, we know it is hard for students to really know what the collection is. We're adding images of the covers with the help of the systems team. One of my assistants is doing a great job of contacting zine makers to get permission to use cover images for the catalogue. She's done many boxes, and we've had a great response. Hardly anyone has refused. It's interesting when they do though. One of the reasons that they give is 'It doesn't represent what I'm doing now'. That's also the interesting thing about being in the public domain and being unedited. You can argue about the authorial voice, and the editors role- is it a collaboration? An intrusion? A safety
guard? What it does do is formalise those kind of issues. I would respect someones choice not to have their cover in the catalogue, but it is a weird thing because you think 'I bought that and put it in the collection, you made that and put it out there, and it's out of your control now'. It's like if a zine maker changes their name, and then wants all records of their work to be changed. In cataloguing standard books, the name is written as it's printed on the page.

Yes, the name authority file would cross reference old/new names as well.

Yes! And in a library structure, which is very fixed you are being very literal and describing what is in front of you, not what is going on in the ether around it. It's purely based on the object. It's objective, but of course knowledge of the subject is useful. I imagine it is more difficult for someone to catalogue this material who has no background in the scene, or previous knowledge. If you have knowledge, you can contextualise the material, and think around it. You know what Library of Congress Subject Headings are like...the most obvious thing won't come up! So you'd know what to try to look up, or think a way around it. With zines, because you're having to delve deeper it's more work.

A lot of zines reference each other, which is really interesting.

Yes, they say 'Johnny from this zine was at this gig...' and they review each others zines, and you can link them together. I love making connections between things, and it's important to pull these out, because it's another way for people to find relevant things. I know people think cataloguing is really dry, but it's so important for accessibility.

The collection here is closed access...

This is the big frustration. I'd love to do what New York Public Library do, and buy two copies of everything- a reference copy on the shelves that can be browsed through, and a copy that is kept in plastic sheeting and never touched! I try to make it as accessible as possible. We'd never say no to a non-student coming in to use the collection, they have to contact us though, to get past the front desk, and we work on a rota, so that has to be factored in. They also have to give us an idea of what they want to see, because they can't browse the collection. I will then choose the things I think they might be interested in. However, hopefully by making the catalogue accessible, people can choose for themselves. You can enter 'zines' and select London College of Communication from the location list on the OPAC and the entire collection will come up. There's a thousand though, which is why we try to add relevant subject headings and images to the records. I have my favourites, other people have theirs. It's hard not to show people your favourites all the time! It's the same with any of the special collections though. If someone comes in and says 'I'm researching gold tooling' we have lots of books that feature that. Which ones do they want?

I suppose the more specific the person can be the better...

Yes. If they don't know what they want at all, they can look at a folder, with a random 30 zines in. If they were patient they could look at the whole collection! There are 32 folders at the moment. In a way, once the items go into a university collection, they have to be treated like this.

Thinking about users, you could make the assumption that LCC has a readymade
In the first instance, everything that we do has to be for them. We're here for them, to support the students of UAL. However, we want to encourage any usage of our special collections. It's different loan collections, where we buy a certain number of copies of books depending on how many students are on a course, and we would be strict about letting in students from other institutions to use the main collection, as they should have their own. Obviously with the SCONUL scheme, we let people in, but not necessarily borrow. Special collections are slightly different, because they haven't been developed for specific courses, and we have researchers come to do all sorts of things with our collections. We get a lot of zine makers who want to see what other people are doing. I do promote it, I go to zine fairs and leave flyers, and we have a facebook page. From this I mainly get donations from zine makers, that's the biggest result I get from that.

On the subject of donations, I know that zines are also purchased. Do you know roughly what proportions are donated/bought?

That's a tough one. Mostly we purchase the zines. While I was getting the collection off the ground- it started in 2009, everything was bought. For a while it was me trudging round, buying things and filling out expenses forms! It is still largely purchased. Most weeks I get a couple of donations, especially now we're known a bit more. I'm also buying slightly different stuff now, trying to build up the punk side of things, getting in touch with collectors who might have older things they want to get rid of. Talking about cultural importance, that kind of material has proven importance- it's nearly 40 years old! Some of it is untested, but I try to purchase stuff that could become important. Savage Messiah zine by Laura Oldfield Ford...recording how cities are changing, and the gentrification of East London. Yuppiedromes and things!

Yeah, I think that subject area is reaching a critical mass point now, especially in London. With things like the anti-squatting laws, and the bedroom tax, at the same time luxury flats are being built everywhere...

Yes, there are lots of issues, and I think Savage Messiah is really important, because it charts this, and is a valuable document already. Also other publications, like the Eel, which are documenting how London, in this case Hackney, is changing. They will be really good to look back on. They already are- the ones that Laura wrote about the development of the Olympics site at Stratford. There's something very complete and whole about her work, and the fanzine format is integral to that, and it's when the format can be really powerful.

Laura's zines were the first we bought for the collection, in fact, we purchased them before the zine collection existed, and they were initially stored with the private press books, as we had nowhere else to put them! It was from that which I started the collection. Students were asking if we had anything like zines...

Yes! This is London College of Communication, and I know from my past as an art student that a lot of graphic design students get set projects where they are told to make a zine...

They really are! I don't know if this is a temporary blip, but we've had projects where we've
worked with the students. They've donated copies of what they've made to the collection. The zine collection is part of a teaching collection and it's inspiring in that way. Whether people who make the zines would like them to be used like that, I don't know. You would hope they'd like the fact that it's exposing their work to different people, people who've never seen them before. Even if they haven't come to them through feminism, or music, or politics, maybe they can be politicised by them.

When I started buying zines as a teenager, I was initially drawn to them as a format, and wasn’t so concerned with the content inside, I was just interested in the fact someone had made something like that. When I've talked to people about my dissertation, I've often had to explain what zines are, or rather what I think they are, because it's very subjective. People often say 'why do you bother to make them?', especially in the age of the internet...

I think that interesting. Most zine makers now have a dual presence- they'll have a blog, they'll even be on twitter, or facebook or whatever, but they're also making something, and there is still that need to have something you hold, and a bit of effort has gone into making it, and there's something really nice about saying 'I just made that'.

I think there’s been a bit of a zine resurgence, because people are a bit bored of just putting stuff on the internet, on a blog or something.

Yes, very rarely would you code a blog from scratch. The template is there, and you just customise it. Ok, you can change the colour, and put your own images in, but you're not really creating it...there are so many elements of outside control about that, and if you really want to get out of that thing where your information is directed by some other force, then you have to make it yourself. It's no good just knowing how to modify existing software.

Yes, it goes back to this idea of DIY, and controlling your own output, which is central to zine making...

Yes, that's maybe why. It's the only way to be totally free, uncensored and not directed. There's something about having your own direction that's very important, I think. I had a group of students come over from the USA who asked to look at the zines, and they actually read the zines, and thats the first time I've really seen students do that. A lot of our students are very interested in how they are made, and the typography and layout. But these students- one guy actually only read one zine for the whole session!

The format is a huge part of what they are, but if you see them as being more about the content... Zines cover such a wide subject range- there's a zine written about pretty much every topic under the sun!

Yes, it would be interesting to look through the collection and list all the subjects that are covered! We've got ones where people are talking about being a virgin in their twenties, people talking about mental health issues, people talking about going walking in the mountains, political things, musical things, things about sexuality, all sorts...comics...

I think you can identify certain genres, thematic things that reoccur a lot, and that can be broadly identified, but even within these themes there are so many sub-themes...it can get so granular, all these niche things...
Absolutely. There's a zine for everyone!

And if there isn't they can make it themselves!

I come from a literature background, not an art one, and the words are always the thing for me. I would go more for what is being said, than what the zine looked like. So I've found it very interesting running this collection, because for me, the content is always the first thing. It's been really interesting learning how other people view the collection, and it's good, because I can now see there's value in something because of how it's designed, as it's not been my primary way of thinking in the past.

Speaking to people about how they develop their zine collections, specifically in the case of qualified librarians, I've noticed that although you go to library school, and you learn about collection development and being objective about the items in the collection, it can be more difficult with this kind of material. With more standard things like books- especially in academic libraries- you're buying them for a course, and certain areas of the subject have to be covered by what you purchase, so it's kind of easier. Something that is very personal, like a zine, and especially if your background is in zine culture- your own inherent biases about what you like or don't like will be there, but you have to balance them up.

Yes, as a librarian you always have to be objective. It's like when you're cataloguing- in the 520 field never put flowery publishers blurb like 'beautifully illustrated'- you have to be really neutral.

Yeah, even when it's something you really don't like!

With the zine collection I do treat everything equally. When I post new things on the facebook page, I'll say what it's about, and an image. Of course there are things in the collection I really don't like! I hope that the facebook page gives a good overview of the things we have in the collection. Because we don't have endless space, I don't tend to collect whole runs of zines, however a few people have just sent me stuff, and I have. I wouldn't purchase from new. Although for someone really important, like Tom Vague...we have a box of his stuff, the earliest issue we have is number 9. I think it would be stupid of me to say 'we mustn't take any more zines by him'. If I found earlier ones, particularly. Even Tom doesn't have those though!

Thinking about zine makers, and how they don't preserve their own works...I've heard of zine makers who go back to the libraries they've donated from asking to see copies of work that they've made because they don't have the originals anymore. It goes back to the idea of preservation and that sometimes you don't know what you've got until it's gone! Even though sometimes zine makers purposefully let their work go out of print, because they feel it's no longer relevant...

It's still a record of them at the time. When people say 'you shouldn't have zines in library collections'...I think it's good to collect them because they are ephemeral, and they do disappear, and otherwise they might be sitting in a load of boxes in an attic mouldering away...

I think facilitating access to them, whether it's through a library like this, or a more
informal collection, if you can make the material accessible, and let people know that it's there...

Yeah, that's what I thought was great about Mark Pawson's recent exhibition, you could go and browse it and see what was there as he worked on it. I thought that was really great. Out of a deep personal interest, he'd just kept all this stuff, and it's become...now it's an archive.

Yes, at what point does a personal collection become an archive?

This is the problem. When people look to donate their collections, the libraries pick and choose what they want. If you want your collection to stay together...

How selective are you for material for the collection in this respect?

I have constraints, obviously. A financial constraint- not a bad one actually! But it is there. We don't have endless space, although the zines take up relatively little space, so it's not an immediate problem. There's always that in mind though. Ten years down the line I don't want to have to refuse good stuff because we filled the space with everything that was available at an earlier point in time. You have to be selective in that regard. I would say even a non-formal institution would struggle with these problems. I wrote my Library MA dissertation on the period 1800 to 1850 and the Libraries for workers, and a lot of those were do it yourself libraries, with no formal structures that had to rely on donations, which often meant their book stock was bad! Really bad! The couldn't select, so in a way I'm fortunate I can select. For instance, one of our sellers sent me a list of 700 zines, which are duplicates that he has and wants to sell. I had to go through the list thinking about how much budget I will have, research the titles, which ones I thought 'we haven't got anything like that', what would be most relevant and interesting...bearing in mind certain research projects staff are working on. I'm waiting for next years budget, and I've kept the list. When I get my new budget I'll get in touch with him, and ask him if he still has the zines I want. When I'm offered entire collections I always ask for a list. One guy had a collection of about 200 zines he wanted to get rid off. I asked for a list, and he said 'oh no it's impossible for me to send you a list', so I said I was afraid I couldn't look at his collection, and I couldn't just buy everything. I'd love to be able to go through them but I don't have the time. I am selective and I do my research instead. I've asked people to hold onto things if I can't get them straight away...I've asked a woman to hold onto some Polish punk fanzines until I get my new budget, hopefully she'll do it!

My dissertation is focusing on UK zine collections, as I feel they are under represented in research, but the idea of having collections that incorporate foreign language material, especially in a big multi-cultural city like London is important, but isn't that widespread...

We have a few. A couple in cyrillic, from Siberia, some Greek ones, some from Argentina. Brazilian punk zines. Many of them don't feature text in English. Some of our zines contain Arabic text, which was a challenge to catalogue initially. I transliterated it...I read Arabic...hopefully I did it correctly! By and large they're mostly English language. We have some American, Canadian and Australian zines, but I don't go out of my way to buy them.

The collection policy for University of the Arts, unlike a lot of other academic library ones focuses more on the visual value of the material, so if the text is not in
English, it's not seen as an issue.

Also we have a lot of overseas students. We shouldn't restrict our collections to English language material only! There's no bar on material if it's interesting and useful.

Appendix L

Interview with respondent L, owner of the Edinburgh Fanzine Archive. Transcribed from responses sent by handwritten letter.
1) What is your personal definition of a fanzine. Would you ever use the word 'zine' as well as/instead of fanzine to describe them?

My personal definition of a fanzine would be a personal, independently produced music based publication. The reason for this view would be because when I started buying them they were all in one way or another music centred. The other format which covers a broader subject would be pamphlets, of which they tend to be mainstream, i.e ISSN/Professionally printed. I do use the word 'zine' due to their being titles called it. I understand the USA tend to call them that.

2) When did you start collecting zines?

I believe I started buying fanzines in 1983/4. I didn't date all the items I bought until late 1984, but I have done so ever since. The reason this is done is so that I know where the items are, in whatever box I've placed them in, and as a record of when it came out, so I can if needed show a) a year or b) year picture of what has been produced.

3) I notice you use the word 'archive' to describe your collection. Why did you pick this word and when did you start using it?

I believe I would have used the word first in the 1990s. The amount of fanzines of such broad content meant that the collection of my own building had changed to that of an archive (from buying titles that would interest me, to trying to buy everything released in the UK/Ireland).

4) Also, 'archive' suggests a collection that the public can access. Do people ever ask to visit and look at the collection?

I would like people to see the fanzines, but space has limited access. Persons have visited, but since I moved in 2004, the space has reduced (?) the opportunity of such visits. Most sharing of info about the archive is done by post or phone.

5) How many (roughly!) fanzines do you think the archive holds?

The total number of fanzines were 2928 between1983-2004. (2004-2013 976 titles x4=3,904 issues) roughly at this time.

6) How do you store the collection?

The total collection is on shelves in my bedroom, in magazine box files. The space covers, if in one line, 75.5 ft. I had shelves put up on two walls for 250 magazine files. At least 219 are on them, with others to follow.

7) Do people donate fanzines to you, or do you mostly purchase them?

I have had the odd donation from people who know about the Fanzine Archive, but mostly I buy from the writers or distros. I have also bought from record shops.

8) How do you organise the collection? Do you have some kind of catalogue or list of content?
The contents of the archive are boxed by when I bought them, then sorted A-Z. I have a list of what I’ve bought which is also A-Z, and update this. Also a list for all titles from the UK to work out what I have overall.

9) Have you considered the legacy of the archive? I'm thinking in the longer term—would you consider donating it to library/other institution at some point?

I hope to find a long term home for the archive— the fanzines, letters, concert info, ephemera— which shall probably be a library. Perhaps the National Library of Scotland, but that's for the future!

10) Is there a 'type' of fanzine that is most common in the archive? e.g. music zines?

They tend to be A4 or A5 in size, black and white in printed format, and mostly written by males. Apart from those trends, there is not much else in common.

11) Do you feel a responsibility to preserve the fanzines at all? Obviously fanzines are quite ephemeral objects, but can also be considered as really important cultural objects, especially in terms of representing underground voices. What do you think?

Yes, I do feel the need to preserve the printed format of fanzines. For something so common and inexpensive, there seems to be not much interest by libraries or other places of research, at least until recently. Another buying of such items will be harder due to the ephemeral nature of independent productions. Also the cost involved—some people will seek to sell rare issues at inflated prices. Fanzines need to be archived as unlike other youth cultures, this was one in which the fans controlled the medium of the music and the message through their own printed publications, unlike other youth cultures where the fans are told and sold the message through mainstream magazines and newspapers. With the growth of computers, there is more interaction between fans, which is quicker/easier than zines, so perhaps the fanzine is not as important as it once was, but they should be available to read/research so that people will know what was there for the fans of twentieth century culture.

**Appendix M**

Email interview with respondent M, who helped found the zine library at Shop! Bristol.
1) Why was it decided to start a zine library in Shop?

The idea came from me. At the time, I was on the Advisory Board for SHOP, which was a Community Interest Company, and I suggested that it was something we could do that was in-line with the ethos of the organisation. I had just started making comics and zines seriously, and wanted to know more about the world of self-publishing. At same time, I strongly believe in supporting people to take control of their own voice and express themselves, especially through print. So partly the zine library was to catalogue the world of zines, and partly to inspire people to make their own.

2) Am I right in thinking that everything in the collection was donated? Was your request for donations well met?

The zine collection was entirely donated. Some of the donations came from collectors, some from people with a collection that needed a new home, and most came from the producers themselves. We'd started off by making contact with zine makers, other libraries and distros requesting zines. Within a few months, we were getting unsolicited zines on a semi-regular basis.

3) Zine libraries that rely on donations usually have very varied collections as a result. Could you give me a rough idea of the scope the collection at Shop covers? Do you know roughly how many zines there are in the collection?

At the last look, which was at the end of 2010, we had quite a diverse range. At first we had a lot of comics (perhaps reflecting my own network of zine makers from the original call we put out), but we also had perzines, poetry zines, music reviews. The whole lot really! We tried to have a very light touch selection criteria. We weren't too concerned about the definition of a zine (e.g. printed at home, hand bound, pro-printed etc), but would not accept material we deemed to be racist, homophobic, sexist material etc. There are around 300 zines in the collection.

4) How was the collection stored?

Initially, we made a cardboard bookshelf, which was fun but very impractical. Over time that changed to a longbox. The problem is the variety of sizes, shapes and the fact they are by their nature often floppy and difficult to stand up, have no spines etc. We did categorise them for a while, but found it to be a difficult task - was an autobiographical comic, for example, a comic or a perzine?

5) In terms of access, were people able to just browse through the zines?

SHOP was open 10 - 7, 6 days a week at the time the zine library was founded. They also offered free coffee and cake. Anyone could browse through the collection in their lounge during opening hours.

6) Is there any kind of catalogue or list of the zines in the collection?

In the beginning, we kept a tumblr as a review blog/catalogue. SHOP also had a system
of cataloging, I think, as they received the zines directly in the post but I don't know what that method was.

7) How did you promote the collection?

We tried twitter, blogs, websites and a bit of Facebook, but mostly reading out to zine distros and other libraries. We also ended up on Bristol local radio and in the local paper! [http://www.thisisbristol.co.uk/zine-specialist-library/story-11262156-detail/story.html#axzz2ap4V6PAy](http://www.thisisbristol.co.uk/zine-specialist-library/story-11262156-detail/story.html#axzz2ap4V6PAy)

8) One of the reasons I'm writing my dissertation on the subject of zine collections is because I think zines are really important in terms of offering an outlet for work that would be unlikely to be published through conventional channels, and can be important as historical artefacts - for example as records of peoples lives, music scenes, political views etc. On the other hand, I know that some people find the idea of keeping zines in library collections problematic, as it sort of goes against the idea of them being out there and accessible to anyone. Do you have any thoughts on this, and the idea of preserving zines in general?

I think the act of self-publishing is an incredibly positive thing. Making zines enables people to explore their own creative practice, develop their own voice, and experiment with ways of communicating. Self-publishing is also inherently social: it is about communities, about sharing and about learning from one another. Collectively, self-publishing has the power to be empowering, to change ideas and be progressive.

Zines themselves become artefacts of that process, of those conversations. I think preserving them is incredibly important and recognising their social, cultural and political value a vital part of sustaining their impact and their ongoing legacy. However, I do think that those best placed to carry out that preservation and that curation are the community who produced those artefacts. Zines emerge from a grassroots movement, a radical thing, a political thing, an inclusive thing. So it should be the grassroots, the makers, that own that curation process.

So as long as the stewardship of zines is taken on by the producers or readers of those zines, I'm personally happy with any attempts to preserve them. This isn't to say the expertise of established librarianship, curation etc aren't go value - they are. But solid methods underpinned by the right politics produce the right kind of space for zine libraries to thrive.

There are obviously challenges: they can be very contingent, temporary, fleeting things. The left is notoriously good at turning on itself, and radical communities often implode. I would imagine collections come and go, move between different locations and owners and have a lifespan all of their own. They offer interruptions in the world where things are different and people can see the world differently through engaging with them. So what remains is the task of finding more permanent homes for a transitory thing, but that doesn't allow those voices and materials to be swallowed up into the institutions zines were often made to circumnavigate - the academy, the library, the bookshop or the publisher.

**Appendix P**

Interview with the artist Mark Pawson.
Hello Mark, could you tell me about yourself and what you do.

I'm an artist, a book maker and a book seller. I also teach and write.

I recently saw your exhibition 'Unboxing' at Xero, Kline & Coma in Hackney. For this exhibition, you unpacked, catalogued and displayed some of your personal library, which includes zines. I'm interested in the differences between purposefully built collections, and collections which develop more organically over time. How would you say your collection developed?

I've collected and accumulated things for almost 30 years, on several strands. Things that I was directly involved in- mail art, postal art projects, which were very small circulation, and in most cases don't really have more of an outing or a commercial availability. And then small press publications, following my own interests and just trying to find interesting things. At certain points I began selling some of these things, so there's also a strand of publications which I, in most cases, brought in from overseas and sold in this country. They're the three main strands, which were all going on concurrently, without really a fixed plan, theory or idea. They were all natural strands of my activity. It was also very natural of me to save things. Some things were thrown or given away, but I can't tell you what they were, because I didn't write them down! Some people are surprised by how much I've kept, but I'm not. Luckily, I've just about always had enough space. I hadn't really considered it, but deep down I guess I thought it was all interesting and of some value, and deserved to be saved. Most of the things I have are a bit below the mainstream, but if there would have been more mainstream things, I would have been less bothered about preserving them, as they'll probably be somewhere else anyway.

Yes, Within institutional collections, there tends to be a very specific remit for material that is going to be collected, but it's interesting that although you didn't have something that specific laid out, you were still thinking, in the back of your mind, that this material was significant. I was reading a Stewart Home article about the exhibition, and in it you spoke about things going from 'stuff' to an 'archive'. When you decided to catalogue the collection, did you do so because you felt it had reached a kind of critical mass, because you thought it would be an interesting project, or for another reason?

Going back to the first question, in 2011 two things happened. I was asked to loan stuff to two exhibitions, through word of mouth of people that I knew rather than more formal approaches. A friend in Scotland was sorting out his archive, and placed some of it with Artpool in Hungary, and they didn't want everything, including my work which was in his collection. Some of that work was sent back to me, repatriated, which was interesting! Those things activated it. Previously I wouldn't have described my collection as 'my archive' or an 'archive of...', but those three events- the two submissions and the returned work, seemed to activate, or focus, my mind on it a bit more. Then in 2012 I was asked to write for the bookworks 'Why Publish?' publication, where the theme was why publish? Why distribute? Which got me thinking more about those issues. Earlier on this year, I wrote a little post it note to myself which said 'start cataloguing some of this stuff', and put it up...it might have been on that shelf there, I can't remember, and then in February 2013, I did start doing that with some of the stuff that I have. In the two situations where I loaned material to exhibitions, we had to make a list of the stuff when it went out, so there already was a little bit of listing done. One of which I did, and one of which the lenders did. So that
was me starting to catalogue, just for my own interests and purposes.

I noticed that there is a large body of work by Robin Crozier in your collection. That's a collection within a collection, almost, and that's interesting in comparison to an institutional collection, as often they might separate the collections out. I've also been thinking about what happens when non-conventional material comes into these collections and people are not sure how to deal with it. Obviously as this is your personal collection, as you've said you know the backstory of most of the items in it, but if somebody was to try and catalogue your collection who was not you, it would be difficult for them to attain the levels of detail you have. I work in a library and cataloguing is a big part of my job, there are very strict rules about how you catalogue...

There aren't very strict rules about how you catalogue when you're doing it in your bedroom!

Exactly! What you are doing made me think about the idea of 'folksonomies' which is quite popular in the library world at the moment. It's user generated forms of cataloguing and organising information - for example tagging a blogpost with relevant tags - rather than more formally structured ways of doing things. I was looking at the lists you generated when you were cataloguing, and the categories that you've chosen - things like title, number, editor, town, price, theme... I was interested in how you decided on those categories. They're quite traditional...

Yes, it's basic bibliographical information, and it's helpful to have them written down, so I remember to do them all. For some of the material one or the other of those categories isn't so relevant, or the information isn't necessarily there. I'm sort of doing my idea of what I think cataloguers do without having formally researched it, having viewed listings and book dealers catalogues and what have you, I'm picking up on that. If a date is not stated, I put a question mark, if I know the editors/authors personally, but their names are not given, I put that in brackets. The themes category, I haven't particularly done.

(hands SB sheet)

This sheet is what I'd done at the gallery. The first cataloguing sheets I did at the gallery were mainly for my own reference, so there were little anecdotal things, links to other things. Whereas the sheet you have has more of that information, as it could have just been a bit dry or obscure otherwise. To actually properly summarise something takes a lot of work, and I haven't done that. I've done that for a previous project, and that would be a different project... to do it properly is really time consuming.

Yes, there's a lot of information about the background of the material in your collection in your notes. The idea of provenance can be really important in library cataloguing, especially for rare materials. It's interesting, because there are lots of references to events and reasons for publication in your lists - for example, a publication produced for the festival of plagiarism. In terms of the way you might cross reference things, if you were to make these lists into a catalogue, would these connections be something you'd want to pull out and make explicit?

Possibly, but it would difficult to do. Most of these publications I got directly from the producers, either personally, or through the post. A lot of the work in this collection is pre-
internet days. Post was the way you got stuff, which is why there were envelopes in the exhibition, to show that network. I have some personal connection to a large amount of the people in the collection, and for a lot of the other ones I have a good memory of where or when I obtained the material. Most of the things were bought at the time of publication, or shortly afterwards. Little was bought later on. If that's happened I've stated it, if I can remember the price I've stated it. At the moment I'm going to keep doing it this way and see what happens. I'm following the project where it goes. I haven't imposed any ambition or fixed output on it.

In terms of the legacy of your collection, have you had any thoughts about that? When I read the article that Stewart Home wrote about your exhibition, he talked about how he'd donated his own archive to the National Art Library, and how it's actually quite difficult for him to access it as a result. Have you thought about the future of your collection at all?

I'm aware of the issues you mentioned, but I've not really engaged with them yet. I'm 48, so I'm not approaching the end of my life, or career, when it might be more natural to consider those things. Eventually I think someone should pay me for it, and a sensible price, with a commitment to make it available and catalogue it properly. I'm aware that those things I've just stated, which seem very obvious to me, very often do not happen.

When I visited the exhibition, I noticed you were transferring publications into plastic bags and boxes...

Everything is in boxes already. Hence the name of the exhibition. The name is a play on unboxing videos as well. Do you know what they are?

Is this what I think it is? The thing on the internet, where someone buys something new like a handbag or a phone and then videos themselves unwrapping it? There are whole internet forums for this!

Yes, that's partly where the title comes from. Everything was boxed up, and to a small degree had labels, little labels for my reference. It was all boxed and a little sorted out. It could have been by theme, just stuff from one year, or when I'd emptied the bookshelves and boxed stuff up to make space. Some things- people who I have a lot of work from, that would be a little more sorted out. There's more chance that would be a bit more organised as a matter of course.

The bags- mainly for display. They're comic bags costing about 6p each, and offer display, visibility. As I'm going through, I'm bagging things and placing card inside to protect them. I'm doing it in a very practical way. I use bags for storage anyway, and use the card for printing, so it's stuff I have anyway. Whether they need Ph neutral standards is a different matter anyway! If I'm taking things out, sorting through them and repacking them, it just makes sense to do that. Things squash each other, and there's a slight irony that when I repack things they'll take up more space and it will cost me more money to do it, but not so much that it's prohibitive. Previously a lot of the stuff was stored in A4 photocopier paper boxes.
(Catalogue sheet given to SB by Mark Pawson).
Appendix S

Interview with Librarian S, the British Library.

Hello. Could you tell me a bit about what you do at the British Library?

I'm in an ambiguously described section called printed historical sources, which doesn't really tell you much, but what that means is UK publications, and what I do is basically the modern stuff- Anything published in the UK from 1914 to the present, as long as it's non-literary. The big myth is that everyone in the road out there assumes we have everything, they say we have everything published in the UK, that wouldn't possible. So I get lists from booksellers, vendors, people who don't generally have shops, just lists and sell to collectors, but they all specialise in something. They might specialise in cookery history, or rail history, or pick your favourite war. There's a vendor that specialises in gypsies and travellers. I get offers of things all the time, and I'm always going down the lists, looking at the publishers, not the titles. If it's a publisher I can disregard, that is I've heard of them, then I don't look them up, because they were supposed to send stuff to us. I could look up 10,000 things and I might find 2 out of 10,000 that somehow didn't get here, but that's not worth my time. I'm looking for local things, self published items, and of course zines fall into that category.

Why does someone do a zine? There are many reasons, but the main one is that what they want isn't out there already. Now if I can talk about technology a bit. That made all the difference. I guess it always does. Before photocopies, they had a stencil, which you would type on a typewriter, which you could draw on as well, it would be a sheet of paper, lets say A4, it would have carbon in it and would go around on a drum. Each revolution of the drum would print out another sheet. They called that Gestetner machines or mimeographs. If you wanted something a bit better you'd have to go to a commercial printer. That cost you money. The self published things like that...I include literature porn as early zines in a way. Several years ago I got a call from the metropolitan police, they said 'we've got to move buildings, we've got these cabinets full of stuff that was confiscated, going back 80 years or so, so you want to have a look?'. I said sure, of course, and spent a couple of days there looking at it. We had a lot of the things already, and of course what they would have confiscated 60 years ago, you wouldn't look twice at today! I did find early porn, porn-ish things, which wouldn't be recognised as porn today. This book called 'Alice and Eva the landgirls', and it had an illustration pasted in, a watercolour. The mention of sex was the underground thing. Not politics- there's always been money to print political things. There's a lot on the left; parties you've never heard of, parties that were only in existence for 8-10 months, and they got it together to use a commercial printer, or a mimio, and get their literature out. They couldn't press it into your hand quickly enough! They wanted to get their word out. As pop culture really takes off in the 60s, then people want to do zines, I will call them. Back then they called them 'fanzines', because the creators were fans of something. Could be they were fans of reggae or american rock'n'roll, or science fiction. The photocopy changed everything. There was a problem though, photocopiers weren't everywhere. If I had to estimate a year, around 1978 was the first time that if you wanted access to a photocopier, you could go to the highstreet, there would be some shop that would have one. If you were in a big urban place, it might be a shop devoted to photocopying, where they'd do all kinds of print jobs, and you could do your own too. Prior to 78ish, if you wanted to do a zine, you'd have to stay after work. After everyone else went home, you'd use the photocopier. Concurrent with the accessibility to photocopiers was the
sex pistols graphic by Jamie Reid. The font was done in a ransom note style. What that meant was that anything that looked wonky was cool. Even into the 80s' print jobs weren't done on computers, they were done on compositing machines. All the things that are done on a PC now were done like that, and it was the only way to do it. Early PCs had rubbish fonts. The thing was, you didn't have to be able to illustrate to make a zine, you didn't have to be able to draw.

There's an overlap in all these things- artists' books, zines, comix, comics, there is overlap. If you wanted to do something in the early 70s you'd have to try to draw and illustrate, but the punk thing, the photocopier, meant you didn't have to draw at all. All of a sudden there are factors in place that haven't changed. You're doing it because you want full self expression, nobody else is doing it, that's why you are. You don't care about niceties, like libel! Like copyright! Any image goes. And of course you don't have to answer to advertisers. In 78 all of a sudden the zines field broke into two paths. One was punk the other was football. In that year alone I think there were over 100 titles that came into existence, because it was cheap and easy to do. Premier league football teams have their own professional magazines, but there is still room for the alternative voice. The smaller teams didn't have official publications, so people just made them up, and their reason d'etre was to take the piss out of the players and the owners, because they are the fans and this is their voice, and again, copyright, libel, they don't care. It's like Private Eye humour, and they'd sell them outside the gates on match days. The British Library has a lot of those. We'll never get them all, but we've got more than anybody else. Music zines too.

I had a look at the collection outline document you sent me. Obviously libraries have collection policies, and your criteria for collection is interesting. It's very broad, and lot of things could fit within it. It's interesting to compare them to library collections that have a more specific focus, such as the women's library. I know you accept donations, but to what extent do they have to fit within your policy or would you just take the donations regardless?

I'd probably take the donations anyway. Keep in mind the criteria is for purchasing.

I was going to ask what the ratio of purchased to donated material is actually.

Most are purchased. However, there's a collective of printers in Leeds, Footprinters, who do a lot of zine printing. They keep a copy of every zine they print, and once a year they send a box or two of them down, and we just reimburse them for the shipping.

I work in an academic library environment, and when zines are purchased it can be problematic, as the financial system we use is set up for use with our three big suppliers, and buying from smaller suppliers is difficult. For example, when we send invoices, and the zine seller replies with the name of their zine, rather than the name on their bank account, the finance department won't pay them. Getting receipts from a seller at a zine fair is not likely to happen! Do you have any problems like that here, or is it fairly straightforward?

You'd be surprised. I can buy from anybody. We don't write cheques any more, we pay by BACS. I always say to first time sellers that we need an invoice and it's got to have your bank account and sort code, so we can just drop it into your account. I bought from a vendor last week I met at a fair. They have a posh address, but they are really spacey. They wrote out the invoice on a compliments slip, so I typed it out, printed out several
copies, numbered it and emailed it to the vendor.

**Do you ever go to zine fairs?**

I have done, but not now. I don't have the time. I'm always going out and finding things. I've just had dental work done, and as I was paying, I noticed a book the dentist had done on before and after work he'd done. Thought “better write this down, and let legal deposit know so they can request a copy!”. I try to get material created by ethnic minorities and immigrants, because their grandkids are going to come in and say 'where were we?', so if I go into a dry cleaners or something, and see a magazine for Asian Women, or something like that, and I see it's the second issue, and perhaps there won't be a third, I get it!

**As part of my dissertation I'm looking at the idea of hidden collections. Self published things, small things, like the magazine you were just talking about, there's the potential for them to fall through the cracks. It's not like published material, with the legal deposit requirement and ISBNs and ISSNs.**

Even though we have legal deposit, of course things slip through. We also get sent material without ISBNs or ISSNs. I don't deal with the artists' books here, but some of them are very expensive and some of them don't look like books, which can be problematic for the cataloguers.

**That leads me on to my next question. I noticed that you catalogue the zines as periodicals. Could you tell me more about that?**

Zines, if they're numbered, or if there's a hint that there will be another issue, I send them as periodicals. It's that or monographs, and periodicals and monographs have different types of records. The internal MARC periodicals record, not the one the public sees, has endless slots for further issues, and we can know if we have it or not. We didn't keep track of this electronically until around 1990, so things received since 1990, lets say a football zine, I can look at it from my desk, this is not available to the public, and see if we have all the issues. The basic catalogue entry can't be changed all the time, so it will say '1978 hyphen', which means the run starts in 1978. It could mean we only have one issue of it, so I'm always calling up runs and inventorying them, so it will be easier to use next time. It's also easier for the reader, and they won't waste their time ordering things they don't want. It's easy for me, I'm here every day, but researchers come from out of town, or outside of the country and they don't want to waste their time. The catalogue record can't be perfect to the nth degree- just because there are 19900 MARC fields, doesn't mean you have to use them all, but you can give the researcher a good level of description with them.

I did look at some of the catalogue records for zines in the collection, and I was looking at how Library of Congress Subject Headings were used. They are used to suggest some thematic elements, but not 'zines'. Why is this?

That's the problem! It won't happen, they're processed with periodicals so are treated as such.

**For someone who is not from a library background, that's not very helpful when it comes to searching, because they're going to look for zines, and not much will come up, even though there's lots there!**
That's true. That's why we need more research on zine history, where people mention the titles of zines. You could never just guess them! They're all over the place!

Yes, I think you have to have either a way of browsing them, for example by using the Library of Congress Subject Headings for zines. If you didn't have a clear idea about what you wanted to see in this collection, browsing isn't very simple.

Yes, it makes it difficult here, which is ironic as we have the most zines, yet you can't find them easily unless you have specific titles.

There's an added level to this, with the material in the British Library being accessed upon request. You can't browse open shelves. This is the case with lots of zine collections, as they're often considered part of the 'special collections'. When you think about what zines are, and why people make them, a lot of the time they want them out in the world. It's an interesting contradiction- the desire to collect and preserve them vs. why they were made in the first place, and their intended function.

It's great they are being preserved, and catalogued, even if imperfectly. To me it's a victory taking them in. If photocopies had been around in the same way they were in the 80's in the 1950's, the British Museum, as the British Library was then, would not have taken them in!

When did the British Library start collecting zines?

People would send them as donations, and we had some and realised there were more out there. I can't really put a date on that. Probably...maybe 1998 when my predecessor actually started looking for zines.

In terms of the people that use the collection, is there a specific demographic? I'm asking because the collection at London College of Communication is frequently used as a teaching collection, and it's interesting how much the kind of institution a collection sits in can determine the user group.

No. One might assume that most people researching zines might be generating a zine themselves and want guidance. We can never second guess what people will want 20, 50, 100 years now. The things that were most popular in an era may not be the things that survive. It may be only certain things that weren't that popular, that didn't have the kudos at the time, so we don't know. So if someone comes here, they may not know or care about zines, but they're researching football, or racism. We have racist zines. Ok, you had skinheads- you had racist skinheads and anti-racist skinheads. Anti-racist skinheads would promote bands like Madness, and they'd be communicating through their zines what music you should like and what you should wear. Meanwhile the racist skinheads were promoting fascist so called punk bands like Skrewdriver, but some of them didn't even bother with that and it was just straight up racism! Someone researching that might come in and think 'oh it never occurred to me to look at zines'.

Yes. You were talking before about the fact that people make zines, because what they want to see isn't in the mainstream and isn't being written about. So that's a whole chunk of history that might not have been recorded if someone hadn't made a zine about it. Some of the zines you buy currently were published a number of
years ago. Do you do much research into them? Obviously this can be quite difficult as many zines were created under pseudonyms, and not documented historically.

I see if we have them. I'm given a description of the content. It has to be something that wouldn't be documented elsewhere. For example, some people state that post-punk started in 1979, but from the material in the collection, I would place it as starting in 1981. In terms of music zines, after 1980, the content has to be some kind of sub-genre that would not be covered by the mainstream music press like the NME or Melody Maker. The goalposts move a lot when it comes to what is underground, but I make sure that what I purchase is.

Can I ask about the storage of the collection?

Zines are stored in the library in a climate controlled environment in the basement. The basement is the deepest hole in London! There are four of them, and some are higher than others, and you need ladders, like the ones you'd use to board an aeroplane to get to the top shelves. But there's not enough room here. Everything expands. They couldn't have built a library big enough to hold everything it would ever need. Serials, journals, all expand, new books come out. We also have the storage facility in Yorkshire, Boston Spa. It's in a village in the middle of nowhere and it's former MOD property. That's why it's where nobody would amble upon their work! A few decades after world war II they no longer need it, and offer it to government grant bodies. In 1974 when the British Library separated from the British Museum, it took a number of years for the government to decide where to put us. So until 1997 we were renting that space from the museum. The things in Yorkshire are couriered down by van in 48 hours. When I take in zines, they generally go into acid free envelopes, the one thing that protects them in shipment, and life. The acid free paper will absorb the acid from the document, giving it a bit more life. Also it makes them a bit anonymous looking. The only thing on the front of the envelope will be a shelfmark and maybe a title. They aren't put in boxes, we have high density storage now, sort of shelves in crates, I call them coffins, and it's in a special building where the only human access is at the end. Most retrieval is carried out mechanically. Everything is barcoded, so in theory we should know what crate anything is in. My innovation was to get the acid free envelopes. I trim it to fit, so that the zine is more likely to enjoy it's eternal life here. Then stuff has to be transported, in a van, on a trolley to the reader.

Some zines come with other things enclosed, for example flexi-discs. When I get something with a flexi-disc I get it catalogued by the sound archive, then I get the shelfmark for that, and include the information in a note saying 'this zine came with a flexi-disc, which is at this classmark. Please cross reference it when you catalogue'. Otherwise the disc will walk from the reading room! I did get one from the 80s, we have a lot of anarcho zines, and this one came with a 'free terrorist kit'. On the inside of the back cover, sellotaped, was one match. Pretty good! Last week I found a christian hippy magazine, which ran for about 5 years, and one issue had a bag of seeds, I think they were fennel.

I guess that could cause a preservation issue!

It can do! I had to remove the match from the anarcho zine. As you know, a lot of popular magazines come shrinkwrapped with all kinds of stuff. The Women's Library had a great exhibition of all these junky bits that came free with the women's magazines and frame them! We've had all kinds of stuff.
Is there anything you've ever turned down?

No, not on the basis of size. We officially don't take in puzzle books but I do like to make exceptions, for example someone famous, 'celebrity X's sudoku book', we've got to have it because it documents that this celebrity was famous enough to have that named after them! Also childrens colouring in books, those are out of scope, but if there is a narrative sometimes we make exceptions.