

## The John Rylands University Library: A Five-Year Relocation and Re-Delivery Programme

Moving John Rylands Library required a meticulous programme of protection and sequential relocation, supported by and innovative inventory management system.

### The Challenge

The safe, secure and accurate relocation of the John Rylands Library's entire collection from its historic Deansgate building into store prior to refurbishment, and its return five years later.

The relocation comprised of more than 750,000 printed volumes and a million manuscripts and archives.

### The Solution

Harrow Green set up a barcode identification and computerised inventory management system for the collections, giving the library fingerprint-accurate storage and tracking. This meant a completely secure move and also allowed for a fast 'find and recall' service for the weekly retrievals that Harrow Green managed while the collections were stored.

### The Benefits

The move began five years ago, when Harrow Green undertook a three-month decant of the library prior to the refurbishment. Then, for five months Harrow Green implemented the epic move back to the library with painstaking care and accuracy. Deadlines were set, and met. There was not a single incident of loss or damage.



"This is one of the greatest libraries in the world and protecting our collections is paramount. Harrow Green knew this and ran a very precise operation, tight on process and focused on quality. They were an exemplary partner, from their methodologies to how they managed cost."

**John Hodgson,**  
Keeper of Manuscripts  
and Archives, John  
Rylands Library



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When the John Rylands Library embarked on a major modernisation programme, Harrow Green was appointed to manage the relocation of its collections – a staggering ten miles of stock – out of its building in Deansgate, into store and back again after the refurbishment. Half of the collection went to the University of Manchester’s library and half went 500-feet underground, into the former Cheshire salt mine known as Deepstore.

Harrow Green gave firm, fixed prices and operated open-book financial management, allowing the library to see how its charges were structured, showing costs and profit.

Harrow Green received a **Commercial Mover of the Year award** for the JRL programme.

The John Rylands Library is the largest academic library in the north of England. It houses some of the most significant books and manuscripts ever produced.

The magnificent neo-gothic building in Manchester’s city centre is a major visitor attraction as well as a research library of world renown.

"If this had been a standard library move, we would have completed it in half the time, but this wasn't about saving a couple of months. This was about preserving many hundreds of years of irreplaceable history."

**John Lord,**  
Commercial Manager,  
Harrow Green



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