

Man jailed for theft of high value books



Police Scotland Photo Martin McAdam

A man responsible for the high-value theft of books from Edinburgh's universities has been sentenced.

At Edinburgh Sheriff Court on Wednesday 18th September, Darren Barr, who is also known as Alexander Van De Kamp, was given 25-months in prison for stealing and resetting thousands of literature from Edinburgh Napier University, Heriot Watt University and the University of Edinburgh.

The offences took place between October 2017 and August 2018.

Police were initially contacted after staff at Edinburgh Napier University conducted an inventory check of their books and found several thousand books to be missing.

As a result of an investigation carried out by Corstorphine

CID, 28-year-old Barr was identified and almost 1,300 stolen books were recovered from across the UK.

Examination of these items found that 260 of them had been taken from Edinburgh University and Heriot Watt University, with the others belonging to Edinburgh Napier.

It was established that around 7,000 had already been sold online, with Barr making an almost £40,000 profit.

On 2nd September 2018, Darren Barr was arrested and charged in connection with the theft and illegal resale of the books.

Detective Sergeant Dougal Begg from Corstorphine CID said: "This is one of the most brazen and high-value thefts from our universities that I can ever recall and the amount of money Darren Barr was able to make by resetting stolen books is staggering.

"Had it not been for the staff at Edinburgh Napier University raising their concerns about missing stock, we may never have uncovered what Barr was up to and even larger quantities of books may have ended up being taken from the institutions.

"We conducted a thorough investigation that identified the scale of Darren Barr's offending and ensured he was brought to justice.

"All reports of acquisitive crime are treated with the utmost seriousness and a professional and robust inquiry will always be carried out to identify those responsible."