

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

<b>Institution:</b> Nottingham Trent University
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> D29 English Language and Literature
<b>Title of case study:</b> Recovering Labouring-class and Radical Writing
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Making a major contribution to English recovery research in the Unit, work associated with this case study has brought to a wider public:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) the works of writers whose livelihoods were principally earned through manual labour or craft skills;</li> <li>2) radical and neglected writing across a range of periods, genres and cultural contexts.</li> </ol> <p>This has led to impact through enhancement of public understanding of literary and cultural value.</p> <p>Underpinning research began in 1994; subsequently three principal routes to impact have evolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) the development of open access online resources, in particular, 'Labouring-Class Poets Online';</li> <li>2) NTU publishing imprint, Trent Editions, which combines scholarly research with dissemination of neglected radical writing;</li> <li>3) engagement with literary societies and related organizations.</li> </ol>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The Labouring-Class Poetry research project has a central role in our recovery research activities. This project defines 'labouring-class' writers as those who principally earned their living through hiring out manual skills, including the poets Robert Bloomfield (1766-1823) and John Clare (1793-1864), both East Midlands farm labourers (Helpston, Northamptonshire and Shefford, Bedfordshire). It began with Goodridge's monograph, <i>Rural Life in Eighteenth Century English Poetry</i> (CUP, 1994), coupled to an NTU hosted conference on 'John Clare and the Self-Taught Tradition' (1994). Contacts with the John Clare Society were foundational and remain ongoing, helping to establish the internal dimensions and external reach of this project. Other research and research-related activities arising out of this research include 'The John Clare Forum' (1997), the edited volume of essays <i>John Clare: New Approaches</i> (2000). Goodridge edited the <i>John Clare Society Journal</i> from 1993 to 2007, and was General Editor of the six-volume edition <i>English Labouring-Class Poets</i> (Pickering &amp; Chatto, 2003, 2006). NTU is the international centre for Clare studies, evidenced most recently by the publication of Goodridge's <i>John Clare and Community</i> (CUP, 2013), a major academic study whose early reviews note its clarity and accessibility to non-academic readers and the fact that it 'adds another, joyous dimension to this endlessly fascinating figure' (<i>TLS</i>, 10 October 2013).</p> <p>Our research on radical and neglected writing has also included the <a href="#">Perdita project</a> (1999-2005; Warwick from 2005), an AHRB-funded database of early modern women's manuscripts, as well as the Panacea Society-funded <a href="#">Dorothy Gott project</a> (2008-10; Worrall with Cho) which conducted research on millenarianism, religious and spiritual cultures, and women's writing. Further contributions came with Fulford's AHRC, BA, and Leverhulme-funded involvement in the <i>Romantic Circles</i> repository of Romantic era writing and culture. Our recovery research has developed most substantially through Trent Editions, an imprint launched in 1998 with the aim to recover and republish landmark texts in handsome and affordable modern editions. Since then Trent Editions has published 43 books, including work by labouring-class poets Robert Bloomfield and William Barnes, Harriet Wilson (the first published African-American woman novelist), Stanley Middleton (Nottingham-based Booker Prize joint winner, 1974), the Ghanaian journalist Mable Dove, and Indian lawyer Cornelia Sorabji. Since January 2008 Trent Editions has published the <i>Literary Memoirs of Laura (Riding) Jackson</i> (2 vols, 2011; ed. NTU Visiting Research Fellow Jacobs, with funding support from the Laura Riding Foundation); <i>William Fox: The Complete Writings: Abolitionist, Tory and Friend of the French Revolution</i> (ed. John Barrell/T. Whelan,</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

2011); and Ethel Carnie Holdsworth, *This Slavery* (ed. Nicola Wilson, 2011). Each edition has a critical introduction and accompanying scholarly apparatus. Our editorial board comprises senior NTU figures, including emeritus professors S. Smith and Lucas, as well as experienced editors from other institutions, such as Ian Haywood (Roehampton).

The Unit also maintains the [Raymond Williams Centre Archive](#), containing letters, manuscripts and tapes relating to radical and neglected writing from the late-eighteenth to the late-twentieth century. This repository of research materials includes collections relating to Laura (Riding) Jackson, Hilda Morley, Libby Houston and Gael Turnbull, Stanley Middleton, and Philip Callow. Our acquisition in 2006 and ongoing development of the extensive papers of the influential popular writer and broadcaster Ray Gosling (b. 1939) further strengthens the potential impact of our work on labouring-class writing and culture. Gosling, a writer of humble origin, pioneered the documentary of common life as a radio and television form. We also maintain an archive of gay culture and AIDS related source materials.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. John Goodridge, *Rural Life in Eighteenth Century English Poetry* (CUP, 1994). ISBN: 0-521-60432-X. Reviews provide evidence of the exceptionally high quality of this work: it is 'an original and inspiring book' (*Modern Philology*, 96:4, 1999) and centrally represents the 'important work that John Goodridge has been engaged in to transform the study of the poetry of labor (and written by those of the labouring classes) in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.' (*Romanticism*, 6: 2, 2000).
2. *John Clare Society Journal* (1993-2007). ISBNs: 0 9509218 9 0 (1993) to 0 9538995 7 8 (2007). Evidence of the quality of this work may be found in the reviews it received, notably in the annual *Year's Work in English Studies*, e.g. 'The invaluable JCSJ continues to be an essential resource for Clare scholars' (*YWES*, 79, 2001); 'lovingly assembled and wonderfully rich' (*Keats-Shelley Review*, 11, 1997); 'this issue will strengthen the already high reputation which the journal has earned' (*English*, 45, 1996).
3. *English Labouring-Class Poets*, 6 vols, gen. ed. John Goodridge (Pickering & Chatto, 2003 and 2006). ISBNs: 1851967583 to 185196763X. Reviews provide evidence of the quality of this work. Donna Landry writes that, 'these attractively produced volumes represent must-haves for all university, research, and literarily-inclined public libraries' (*JCSJ*, 26, 2007); and Brian Maidment describes this as, 'a massive and carefully conceived anthology' (*Studies in Hogg and His World*, 17, 2007). It has become a standard source-work in the field, routinely cited and drawn from in major monographs such as Keegan, *Labouring-Class Nature Poetry* (2008); Krishnamurthy, *The Working-class Intellectual* (2009), and important essay collections such as Blair & Gorji (eds), *Class and the Canon* (2012).
4. Robert Bloomfield's *The Banks of Wye*, ed. Tim Fulford & Lynda Pratt, *Romantic Circles* (2009). Open-access online publication. Evidence of the quality of this work may be found in the fact that it is published on *Romantic Circles*, a refereed scholarly website published by the [University of Maryland](#) and 'supported, in part, by the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities ([MITH](#)), and the English Departments of [Loyola University of Chicago](#) and the University of Maryland'. Fulford's collaborative (with Nottingham U) contributions to the *Romantic Circles* project include an NMM Caird Fellowship (2010, £4.8K), and awards from the Panacea Society (2010, £7K), the Paul Mellon Centre for the Study of British Art (2009, c.£700, and a BA SRG (2010 £7.4K).
5. David Worrall (with Nancy Jiwon Cho), 'William Blake's Meeting with Dorothy Gott: The Female Origins of Blake's Prophetic Mode', *Romanticism*, 6 (2010) 60-71. DOI 10.3366/E1354991 X10000875. Evidence of the quality of this work is provided by the awarding of £71K between 2008-10 by the Panacea Society.
6. John Goodridge, *John Clare and Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). ISBN 978-0-521-88702-1. Evidence of the quality of this work is provided by the early and positive scholarly reviews it has received, notably in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 11 October 2013 ('Several recent studies have attempted to redress [the] image of Clare as a pitiable, victimized loner. John Goodridge's *John Clare and Community* is the most recent and by far the most comprehensive'); and the *Clare Journal* ('an important study, that will do much

to re-orient our thinking about Clare and – in its use of a free range of critical methods – may influence more generally our approaches to poetry’

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

##### 1) Open access publication

As stated in REF3a, open-access publication is integral to our research, and the environments it offers have provided our recovery research projects with new pathways to impact, especially the major open-access resource [Labouring-Class Poets Online](#). Prior to 2008, this resource consisted of material relating to six hundred poets; since July 2008, 1,060 poets have been added. A revitalised version of the resource was launched collaboratively in April 2013 by a team led by Goodridge, with co-investigators from two US universities (Creighton, Omaha, and Notre Dame), and involving NTU PGR Whatman. Its Advisory Board brings together scholars from the US, UK and Germany, including John Barrell, Florence Boos and Gustav Klaus. The database includes, among occupational groupings, 230 weavers, 130 shoemakers, 40 miners, 18 postmen, 17 policemen and 7 hairdressers as well as 30 shepherds and 25 herders. Of these, 12% are women; 55% Scottish; 5% Irish; 1% Welsh. Entries include biographical and bibliographical information. **The content richness and availability of these online materials open this resource to readers worldwide and outside of HEI contexts.** Evidence of the reach and significance of this resource is provided in the **testimonies** gathered together in Ergo’s report (source 6) on this project’s impact. One respondent’s comment is representative: ‘If there is a “centre” for work on labouring-class British writers, it is at Nottingham Trent, where over the years John Goodridge, Timothy Burke, Tim Fulford, and David Worrall have contributed so indispensably to this field’.

Alongside the ‘Labouring-Class Poets Online’ resource, the Unit co-ordinates the [John Clare Resources](#) website (ed. Goodridge, from 2013; this includes Goodridge’s electronic edition of Clare’s *The Village Minstrel*). Post-2008, the public understanding of Romantic writing has also been influenced by our support for the *Romantic Circles* editions of [The Letters of Robert Bloomfield and his Circle](#) (ed. Fulford—left 2012—and Pratt; assoc. ed. Goodridge, 2012), [The Collected Letters of Robert Southey](#) (ed. Fulford, Pratt & Packer, 2009), and Bloomfield’s [The Banks of Wye](#) (ed. Fulford & Pratt, 2009). These resources **enhance cultural life by preserving, and enabling the public interpretation of, cultural capital**; their impact is to be located primarily in their **conservation of overlooked literary artefacts and a neglected cultural heritage**.

##### 2) Trent Editions

The ethic underpinning Trent Editions is also one of **preservation and conservation, combined with an emphasis on public accessibility and broad dissemination**, operating with print runs of between 500 and 1000 copies for each volume. They are well-designed, inexpensive softback books designed to appeal to students, sixth formers and general readers whilst reshaping the canon through the scholarly presentation of neglected figures. Books are sold to the public through both the NTU online store and major book retailers, including Abebooks, Allibris, Amazon, Blackwell’s, The Book Depository, and Waterstones. Trent Editions’ involvement with public debates about copyright and accessibility is exemplified by Editorial Director Goodridge’s [Guardian](#) article of 2000 and which become the subject of a 2010 House of Commons Early Day Motion on ‘The Publication of John Clare’s Poetry’ ([EDM: 1191; 25.3/2010](#)). Its **impact has also in part been economic**, since print-based publishing contributes to prosperity via production and distribution organizations. Trent Editions occupies a distinctive niche amongst UK small presses and its publication strategy has **influenced other small presses**, including Cheltenham’s Cyder Press and the Library of Wales series, both of which now include titles featuring labouring-class poets.

##### 3) Literary Societies, Festivals, and Outreach Activities

A third distinctive quality of work associated with this case study, **further linking scholarship with the wider public**, has been its close involvement with literary societies, especially the 500-strong John Clare Society but also the two societies founded or co-founded by NTU scholars, the

## Impact case study (REF3b)

Robert Bloomfield Society (Lucas, Goodridge) and the Thomas Chatterton Society (Goodridge, Nick Groom (Exeter U)). These are constituted bodies and members of the Alliance of Literary Societies, and the John Clare Society is affiliated to the John Clare Society of North America. These entities have strong **local, educational and community links**, as well as a substantial online (open) presence. Throughout the impact period staff in this Unit have contributed to the annual John Clare Festival in Clare's village of Helpston with 150-200 in attendance and involving regional and local schools and voluntary organisations.

Goodridge is Vice-President of the John Clare Society and a senior advisor to the Chatterton and Bloomfield Societies. He has engaged in talks with Bristol City Council over the future of Chatterton's house (2011), and was consulted by the John Clare Trust over their development of Clare's Cottage (2006). NTU hosted with the Bloomfield Society an annual 'Bloomfield Day' throughout the impact period, and has regularly offered speakers for talks on labouring-class poetry and on Clare for academic events, literary festivals and similar events. Across these various external activities, NTU research on labouring-class and radical writing has **connected with local communities, forged links with public organizations, and made a distinct and material contribution to knowledge beyond HEI contexts.**

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. President, The John Clare Society. To corroborate the work of staff relating to the case study whose activities have had impact with regard to the John Clare Society.
2. Chair, The Robert Bloomfield Society. To corroborate the work of staff relating to the case study whose activities have had impact with regard to the Robert Bloomfield Society.
3. Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Sheffield Hallam University. To corroborate the work of staff relating to the case study whose activities have had impact with regard to the perception both in and beyond the academic world of labouring-class poetry.
4. Dean of Arts, Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska. To corroborate the work of staff relating to the case study whose activities have had transatlantic impact with regard to the perception in and beyond the academic world of labouring-class poetry.
5. Emeritus Professor of Literature of the British Isles, Rostock University, Germany. To corroborate the work of staff relating to the case-study whose activities have had international impact with regard to the perception in and beyond the academic world of labouring-class poetry.
6. [http://www.ergoclear.com/NTU/Labouring\\_Class\\_Writing.pdf](http://www.ergoclear.com/NTU/Labouring_Class_Writing.pdf) Ergo Consultants' summary of the responses to the survey questionnaire on this project's impact, circulated between July and September 2013 to members of the John Clare Society, the Robert Bloomfield Society, the Thomas Chatterton Society, and by email to approximately 125 other individuals (both academic and non-academic) now known to be actively interested in reading or writing about labouring-class poetry. It elicited 66 responses, mirroring the varying reach of the research: local, regional, national and international. This questionnaire and survey corroborates the work of staff relating to the case study whose activities have had impact with regard to the perception in and beyond the academic world of labouring-class poetry, particularly with regard to non-academic one-name societies such as the John Clare Society.
7. Local press stories on recent recovery work:
  - (a) 'The lost poet of industrial age' <http://www.nottinghampost.com/lost-poet-industrial-age/story-19410190-detail/story.html>;
  - (b) 'Blast from the past with forgotten female poets' <http://www.nottinghampost.com/Blast-past-forgotten-female-poets/story-19681328-detail/story.html>

To corroborate the work of staff relating to the case study whose activities have had impact with regard to local and regional perception beyond the academic world, of labouring-class poetry.