

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of Liverpool
Unit of Assessment: 29 – English Language and Literature
Title of case study: Gladstone's Library, Gladstone's Reading
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Between September 2006 and January 2009, the Department of English's Gladstone Project was centred on William Ewart Gladstone's Library in Hawarden, North Wales (formerly St Deiniol's Library). It created an online electronic catalogue of the Library's holdings and a separate online catalogue detailing Gladstone's own books, with contextualised details of his annotations in them.</p> <p>As a direct result, a significant body of work has been preserved and Gladstone's Library has today established itself as a major heritage centre and visitor institution, developing wider public and media interest in Gladstone, his political career and his relationship to nineteenth century literature. Impact has also extended into teaching practice at other HE institutions, through the work of the Gladstone Centre for postgraduates.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The University of Liverpool's research at Gladstone's Library (then St Deiniol's Library) began with a successful collaborative bid to the AHRC for £319,919, awarded in 2006. The Principal Investigator on the AHRC project (February 2006-January 2009) to identify Gladstone's books and create GladCAT was Professor Juliet John, Senior Lecturer, then Reader, then Professor at the University of Liverpool. The postdoctoral researchers on the project, employed by the University of Liverpool, working mostly onsite identifying books and logging annotations at the Library, were Dr Mark Llewellyn (January 2006-August 2007) and Dr Matthew Bradley (August 2007-January 2009).</p> <p>The intention was to provide a major resource and research contribution to the study of Gladstone (four times Victorian prime minister, Victorian thinker and voracious reader) looking at nineteenth-century religion, politics, culture, heritage institutions and the history of reading in general. The research confirmed Gladstone's reputation as a key Victorian thinker, developed major insights into the development of his religious ideas, and provided an important and unique insight into Victorian reading habits and book ownership.</p> <p>Gladstone had c.30,000 volumes in his private book collection, many of them annotated. While scholars had occasionally referenced specific instances of Gladstone's reading in the course of their own research, there had been no sustained examination of the annotations. Nor had any systematic work to identify the books in the library that Gladstone had owned ever been undertaken (Gladstone's books were at that point lying unidentified amongst all the other books on the open shelves). The AHRC project led to a full electronic catalogue for the library and an additional research resource, GladCAT. This is an online catalogue, separate from the main library catalogue, containing records for those books known to have belonged to Gladstone himself. Many of these, like Gladstone's copies of works by Dante, Shakespeare, Walter Scott, Newman, and Tennyson, are irreplaceable. The database also contains fully keyword-searchable information on the vast majority of Gladstone's annotations; in the case of marginal comments, these are not merely transcribed but fully contextualised and edited. We know of no other resource in the world that offers such insight into a single reader across so many years and so many volumes.</p> <p>The creation and implementation of the database led Bradley (subsequently appointed in September 2011 as Lecturer at the University of Liverpool) to undertake further research in the form of a peer-reviewed article that interrogated the methodology involved in creating such resources - what do we <i>do</i> with all this information, and what kinds of quantitative and qualitative conclusions can legitimately be drawn from it? - and then considered these issues in the context of the developing 'history of reading.' This is currently evolving into additional research using the</p>

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GladCAT information itself regarding Gladstone and his reading, in *Reading and the Victorians*, ed. Juliet John and Matthew Bradley (Ashgate, 2014).

3. References to the research

John, J., Bradley, M., Llewellyn, M., eds., [GladCAT: The Gladstone Reading Database](#) (2006-9).

Bradley, M., 'Annotation Mapping and What it Means: Developing the Gladstone Catalogue as a Resource for the History of Reading', *Literature Compass*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (February 2009), pp.499-510. [REF2 output]

John, J. (Principal Investigator), AHRC collaborative Award with Gladstone's Library for £319,919, awarded in 2006 from 2006-2009.

4. Details of the impact

The primary impact of the Gladstone project has been to preserve an important part of the UK's cultural heritage and to make it available to audiences outside the academy. Specifically, it has stimulated tourism to Gladstone's Library, a significant commercial heritage institution in the area, and in Wales second only to the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth, with holdings of over 250,000 volumes. In particular, it has enabled a significant re-orientation of the Library's marketing strategy, emblematised by the change of name from 'St Deiniol's Library' to 'Gladstone's Library' in 2010 reflecting the opportunity for the Library to market itself as a Gladstone heritage institution. Media articles now routinely refer to the Library as a 'memorial' institution (e.g. [Huffington Post blog April 2013](#)). This has led to significant and continuing usage increase - the 2011 average for users of the Library was 10.3 per day, while 2012, a year in which the GladCAT collection was actively promoted to the public, saw an increase to 15.8. Guided tours, which average 3 visitors a day, now show a variety of Gladstone's books and his annotations in them.

Such is the extent of this re-orientation that Gladstone's books have now been moved into a 'Gladstone Foundation Collection', housed separately from the main collection for reasons of both security and for marketing purposes, which would have been impossible before the findings of the project. The Library has managed (at the time of writing) to raise £38,304 in funding for this initiative, from funders including the Leverhulme Trust, the Coutts Charitable Trust, the P.H. Holt Foundation and the Worshipful Company of Grocers, as well as numerous private individuals.

More widely, the move to an electronic catalogue for the Library (fully accessible online) has fundamentally transformed library users' experience, and significantly eased the administrative burden on the staff, prior to 2006, the entire Library was catalogued by card-index only, and a partial electronic catalogue operated until completion in 2009. In the month of February 2013, the main electronic catalogue for the Library logged a total of 262 sessions (individual users) with 642 searches. Moreover in November 2013, Gladstone's Library will begin the process of uploading its collection to COPAC. In terms of the GladCAT (annotations) database, in February 2013 there were 27 sessions (individual users) and 50 searches; approximately 10% of all searches on the main catalogue. These searches averaged results of 42 'hits', giving searchers a significant range of results. GladCAT has its own assigned terminal in the Library for users to consult, and indeed librarians at the Institution now continue the work on the GladCAT database, undertaking further accession-register research to discover un-annotated books which might have belonged to Gladstone.

The Gladstone research also led to media interest from within the local community, which was centred around publicising both the research into Gladstone's reading itself, and the Library as a visitor attraction. Bradley was interviewed on the *Daybreak* programme (religious broadcasting) on BBC Radio Merseyside in March 2008, and on the *Fishlock's Wild Tracks* programme (guide to local sites of historic and touristic interest) in February 2009. It has also formed the basis of the University's continuing relationship with the Library. In 2013, for example, the Library organised a

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programme under the umbrella heading of '*Re:Defining Liberalism*' - a questionnaire given to readers and visitors in 2012 on whether and why they counted themselves liberal. This generated nearly 300 responses (some by famous names including Anthony Selden and Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor). Bradley also worked closely with the Gladstone Library's Director of Collections and Research to organise an academic conference on Victorian liberalism that looked outside the academy, including as a keynote speaker Sir Alan Beith, ex-deputy leader of the Liberal Democrats.

The University of Liverpool's 'Gladstone Centre', a local grouping of North West institutions including Liverpool John Moores University, University of Chester, University of Keele, and the University of Manchester, first established in 2003, has made significant impact on the research on teaching practice at those institutions; a number of these institutions now regularly bring their graduates to the Library to use the electronic catalogue and the GladCAT database as part of their postgraduate programmes. The Centre has made a successful AHRC bid (University of Liverpool, University of Keele) to host events in May and September 2013 to bring together potential external partners with postgraduates from other universities: participating institutions include the Wordsworth Trust, the Prince's Trust, the New Vic Theatre and the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum.

The Centre has also shifted its gaze outwards as a result of the project: in December 2013, a new initiative, the new annual 'Gladstone Centre Lecture', will form a key part of the Library's round of advertised talks and courses (primarily aimed at the local community and the public). Dr Emma Mason, Reader at the University of Warwick, has accepted an invitation to deliver the first lecture on the basis of the reputation the Gladstone Library has developed.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. The Warden of Gladstone's Library has provided a statement corroborating the wider commercial impact of the project on the Library overall, in particular its contribution to the Gladstone Foundation Collection.
2. The Director of Collections and Research at Gladstone's Library has provided a statement detailing the Library's Foundation Collection project and the broader operation of the Gladstone Centre's events programme, illustrating the impact of the research on other projects and strategies that the Library is now able to pursue.
3. [Huffington Post blog April 2013](#) is an example of a news article evidencing the increased emphasis on Gladstone's Library as a memorial institution.
4. A former Librarian at Gladstone's Library (until August 2013) can be contacted to corroborate details of the immediate impact of the research on user experience of the Library, and the way the research significantly altered user experience through new technology and a re-orientation towards Gladstone's reading.
5. A Professor of Nineteenth Century Literature at the University of Chester can be contacted to corroborate details of impact of the online resources from the project on postgraduate teaching at Chester, principally through organised research trips for MA students, and continued participation at the colloquia.
6. '[Gladstone Foundation Collection](#)' - this webpage outlines the work of the project from Gladstone's Library's perspective, and demonstrates its continued importance as part of the Library's promotional strategy.