

<b>Institution: University of Nottingham</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 30</b>
<b>Title of case study:</b> The commemoration and preservation of local cultural heritage: W E Gladstone in Nottinghamshire
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Previously un-exhibited archival material has illuminated the formative early part of Gladstone's political life for new audiences through commemorative exhibitions, talks, and related digital resources contributing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>public access</b> to previously unseen sources - Gaunt curated a popular exhibition at the Weston Gallery, Nottingham, using original archival material;</li> <li>• an <b>expanded knowledge base and research network</b> for local curators through Gaunt's role as historical consultant for related Nottinghamshire events;</li> <li>• significant <b>new audiences</b> for a small regional museum;</li> <li>• <b>new forms of cultural preservation</b> - the recording of a Gladstone election song, discovered through Gaunt's research, by a local singing group;</li> <li>• the delivery of <b>enriched curriculum content</b> for school and college students studying the Victorian period.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Dr Gaunt (Nottingham, 2003- ) has an established academic reputation in 19<sup>th</sup> century British political history and has published extensively in the field. His long-term research focuses on two major collectives of archive material – the Newcastle of Clumber Collection (University of Nottingham) and the Tallents Collection (Nottinghamshire Archives). The key research themes underpinning the activity described in section 4 – issues of representation and democracy, the creation of political reputation and connections between the major landowning families of Nottinghamshire and their local communities – drew on these longstanding research interests and peer-reviewed publications [<b>References 3.1-3.2</b>].</p> <p>The bicentenary of Gladstone's birth (December 2009) provided an excellent opportunity to extend these research interests and present the findings to a wider public audience, through a commemorative exhibition hosted by the University in collaboration with Nottinghamshire Archives. Gladstone's first constituency as an elected MP was Newark (Nottinghamshire), his electoral patron was the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Newcastle and the firm of Tallents (solicitors) were his election agents.</p> <p>To this end, the curator undertook the following research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcription and editing of a new source, the diaries of Godfrey Tallents [<b>Reference 3.3</b>]. The original diaries are held privately by John Tallents, a family descendant, who agreed to loan them specifically for this research and the exhibition.</li> <li>• Work on a neglected source, the Newark election song-book, held by Nottinghamshire Archives. The research involved transcription and contextualisation of the song lyrics and the selection of telling extracts [<b>Reference 3.4</b>].</li> </ul> <p>The distinctiveness of the research is that, whilst much is known about Gladstone's later political career and development, relatively little has been written on the formative early part of his political life (1832-1846) and none of it employs the archival collections used here. Critical insights to emerge from the research were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of engaging constituents through electoral activity (canvassing, social events, influence or coercion) even where those constituents lacked formal political representation through the right to vote.</li> <li>• The symbolic and practical importance of electoral culture and activity (election songs, party colours or flags, physical confrontations between rival groups of supporters).</li> <li>• The continuing association between Gladstone and the county on multiple levels even after his formal political connection with the county ceased; in particular, his</li> </ul>

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importance as a trustee of the Newcastle Estate in the development of Nottingham Castle and Park [**Reference 3.5**].

- Gladstone's enhanced public profile in satirical cartoons, advertising material and illustrated periodicals of the period [**Reference 3.5**].

A key factor in the success of the research was the long-term relationship established by Dr Gaunt with the University's Manuscripts and Special Collections and Nottinghamshire Archives. The University provided the framework, venue and facilities for conducting the research and sustaining a three-month exhibition at the Weston Gallery whilst Nottinghamshire Archives collaborated in the provision of archive material and additional digital support for the delivery of materials at the exhibition.

### 3. References to the research

3.1. Gaunt, Richard (ed.), *Unhappy Reactionary: The Diaries of the Fourth Duke of Newcastle-under-Lyne, 1822-50* (Thoroton Society Record Series, vol. 43) (Nottingham, 2003) ISBN 0-902719-19-1. Available on request.

3.2 Gaunt, Richard, 'The Fourth Duke of Newcastle, "the Mob" and Election Contests in Nottinghamshire, 1818-1832', *Midland History*, 33/2 (2008), 196-217. Available on request.

3.3. Gaunt, Richard (ed.), *Politics, Law and Society in Nottinghamshire. The Diaries of Godfrey Tallents of Newark, 1829-1839* (Nottinghamshire County Council, 2010) ISBN 978-0-902751-65-1. Available on request.

3.4 Gaunt, Richard, 'Cheering the Member. Gladstone Election Songs at Newark', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire*, 114 (2010), 159-66.

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/history/documents/cheering-the-member.pdf>

3.5. Gaunt, Richard and Wrigley, Chris, 'William Ewart Gladstone. A Bicentenary Perspective', *Journal of Liberal History*, 75 (Summer 2012), pp.4-20.

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/history/documents/gaunt-liberal-history-article.pdf>

Quality indicators: All items (3.1 to 3.5) are in peer-reviewed publications

### 4. Details of the impact

#### Creating and interpreting cultural capital to engage Nottinghamshire audiences with their local history

The archival material used by Gaunt had not been researched or exhibited before. Its integration into the exhibition 'W E Gladstone, The Grand Old Man in Nottinghamshire' (11 December 2009-21 March 2010) thus represented an opportunity to **present this previously neglected element of local heritage to Nottinghamshire audiences for the first time**, and through its digital legacy to conserve the material and ensure its wider appreciation.

Gaunt's research and the archival sources upon which it is based, relate specifically to Nottinghamshire. The exhibition programme – part of a regional series of events to mark Gladstone's bicentenary – was explicitly intended to engage Nottinghamshire audiences. At the Weston Gallery (Nottingham), the material was presented through six exhibition cases and exhibition boards (which reproduced approximately 50 items in facsimile) [**5.1**], attracting 3,240 visitors during its first [three-month] run (compared to average figures of just over 2,000 and thus representing a 'pleasing' success for the venue). [**5.2**] Gaunt's research on the Newark election songs [**3.4**] led to the retrieval, performance and digital preservation of a song that otherwise would not have been heard by the public and would have remained in the archive in manuscript form. A local singing group, Sempre, recorded the song (based on the original Manuscript of the song book in Nottinghamshire Archives) which was subsequently included in the exhibition, enriching the visitor experience. [**5.1**] Visitor feedback demonstrates how **the exhibition changed public understanding of Gladstone's early (neglected) political career and his life in Nottinghamshire**. [**5.3**] Following on from a lunchtime talk given by Gaunt, a reporter from the

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'BBC Politics Show' in the East Midlands contacted him to contribute a feature on the research and the exhibition (17 January 2010) demonstrating regional reach and interest in the exhibition's accessible style, appeal, and its contemporary purchase. Three free lunchtime talks at the Weston Gallery, delivered by Gaunt and academic colleagues from Nottingham and the 'History of Parliament' research project proved so popular (audiences totalling 298) that they had to be relocated from a small performance room in the Lakeside Arts Centre to the much larger theatre space. [5.2]

Through the Team Manager Archives & Local Studies for Nottinghamshire, Gaunt was able to mount a satellite version of the exhibition between 20 November 2009 and February 2010 at Newark Library. Integrated into the main body of the library, the exhibition benefited from a daily footfall of between 555-570 visitors over the period. **The much broader demographic of the local library audience (compared to the museum audience) helped to make the material accessible to new audiences who might otherwise not have engaged.**[5.4]

Through the use of digital resources, **the impact of the research has been extended by making the findings available to a wider community** online: the exhibition boards have been published as downloadable pdf files and two exhibition films have been released on You-Tube. [5.1] As of 31 July 2013, the films had received 1,366 views and had generated significant interest beyond the UK (in the US, Canada, India, Australia and Germany), demonstrably extending the reach of the research beyond its intended local audience. Their continued popularity (downloads continuing into 2013 rather than clustering round the time of the exhibition and stopping) demonstrates an on-going engagement with the material. [5.5]

**Supporting the delivery of enriched curriculum content for school and college students studying the Victorian period**

The Lakeside Educational officer developed curriculum content to complement core curriculum areas of citizenship and the Victorians. This was used in three workshops, delivered to a total of 75 year 6 pupils (March 2010). The workshops focused on role-playing different situations represented in the exhibition such as the corn laws (fighting for free food), elections (fighting for free choice) and slavery (fighting for freedom). Additionally, Gaunt spoke to 32 visiting A-Level students about the exhibition and its themes (5 February 2010); feedback attested to the role of the detailed knowledge presented and the opportunity to ask questions in **contributing richness to the curriculum.** [5.3]

**Expanding the knowledge base and networks of local curators**

Gaunt provided historical advice and context for the Town Hall exhibition, **enhancing the quality of the research base available to the curator and ultimately contributing to the improved quality of the visitor and tourist experience.** His use of the Newark Town Hall museum's collections in his research [References 3.1-3.4], led to Gaunt being invited to be historical consultant on the 'Images of Gladstone' exhibition mounted there (25 November 2009-6 February 2010) at which he also gave the launch event key-note address. Representatives of the exhibitions worked together to develop a trail between the University and the various places in Newark. According to the curator of the Town Hall Museum, this 'was a really interesting and valuable project' [5.6], with Gaunt's contribution providing 'those extra links and I know more about where I can go to find information as a curator. It's useful to know who are the people to contact and that working together helped in that way.' [5.6] Part of the legacy of Gaunt's work with the curator lies in her continued access to an extended knowledge network which the museum will continue to draw on in the future to consolidate the knowledge base behind its exhibitions.

**Contributing to engagement from new audiences and to a sense of cultural ownership**

An initiative to encourage local residents to engage with the exhibition resulted ultimately in it reaching, according to the Curator, '**people that wouldn't normally come into a museum**'. Given the premium placed on **expanding the diversity of and increasing the volume of visitors** in the Museums sector, this constituted a particularly valuable outcome for the museum. Press coverage around the time of the exhibition (broadcast, print and web [5.5]) and specifically an advertisement placed by the Museum in the local press for Gladstone-related memorabilia resulted

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in the temporary loan of many Gladstone bags and other artefacts from Newark residents. According to the Curator, those who loaned items then visited the exhibition with 'their spouses, children, grandchildren [and] friends'. As the curator notes, this **made 'them feel that they were putting down their own mark and contributing to Newark's heritage'**. She comments that even now (2013), people come in saying that they 'had heard that Gladstone was a Newark MP and wanted to know more about it', demonstrating what she feels to be the continued legacy of the original exhibition.[5.6]

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- 5.1 Website: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/history/research/projects/gladstone.aspx>
- 5.2 Lakeside Gallery Marketing Manager
- 5.3 Visitor/School feedback from 'W E Gladstone, The Grand Old Man in Nottinghamshire'
- 5.4 Factual Statement from Team Manager Archives and Local Studies, Children, Families and Cultural Services, Nottinghamshire County Council
- 5.5 Collated print and social media coverage
- 5.6 The Curator, Town Hall Museum, Newark (Factual Statement)