



University of  
Nottingham  
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ISSUE 23: JANUARY 2024

# DISCOVER

The University of Nottingham's Manuscripts and Special Collections

## Activism, anarchy and archives – stories of Nottingham women's liberation

'dear sisters'  
exhibition open  
from March

### Competition

Win a Hallward  
Library 50th  
anniversary  
tote bag and  
notebook

See page 20





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**Weston Gallery**  
**Free exhibition**  
**Until Sunday 3 March**



Cover image: Meeting of the Nottingham Women's Liberation Group, artist unknown, *Women Now*, 1974. Feminist Publications Collection, Periodicals HQ1600. NOT WOW

## WELCOME

# Editor's letter

Welcome to *Discover!* This edition isn't supposed to be themed, but as I was reading through it struck me how very modern some of the collections and projects we're doing are. Recently we've catalogued several significant 20th century collections, including 82 boxes of the papers of Audrey Beecham, a lecturer and warden at the University of Nottingham and women's rights activist. We're delighted to feature an article about her by guest writer Val Wood from the Nottingham Feminist Archive Group. The Group's own archives of their experiences and activism from the 1970s onwards feature prominently in the Weston Gallery exhibition "dear sisters: activists' archives". More about that in the Exhibition News section!

Although we still take in lots of the traditional paper and parchment archives, increasingly the records we acquire are at least partly digital, and we have the same responsibilities to preserve them and make them available as their physical counterparts. There's an update on our digital preservation and access work on page 12. We've also been working with other colleagues in the University of Nottingham Libraries to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Hallward Library, the main Arts and Social Sciences Library on University Park campus. Over the last few months we've helped put together an exhibition of old photographs that's currently on display in the Library, and written a series of blog posts about its history. These have been condensed into one short article in this issue, although all four are available in their entirety on our blog: [blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscripts/](https://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscripts/). To celebrate the occasion, we're also running a competition to win a tote bag and notebook. Entry details are on page 20 and you have until 31 March to enter. Good luck!

**Kathryn Steenson, Senior Archivist (Academic and Public Engagement)**



Image: Back cover of *Socialist Woman* magazine, July-August 1973. Feminist Publications Collection, Periodicals HQ1600. NOT SOC

### Opening times

#### Reading Room at King's Meadow Campus

- 9.30am–5pm Monday–Tuesday
- 9.30am–6pm Wednesday–Thursday

#### Weston Gallery at Lakeside Arts, University Park

- 12 noon–4pm Tuesday–Sunday



For holiday opening hours, see our website [nottingham.ac.uk/mss](https://nottingham.ac.uk/mss)

# Our 2023 outreach impact

All figures for autumn term 2023

We have worked with **619** children

Heritage Learning Officers Charlotte and Steph delivered hands-on history and archaeology activities to primary school children.

from **6** primary schools delivering to **15** classes

Replicas of ancient, medieval, 19th century, and 20th century toys so children can learn through play in the Toys Through Time workshop.

**180** total student volunteer hours

WELCOME

## Letter from the Keeper

Welcome to the latest issue of *Discover*, and the first one of 2024.

It has been a cold winter so far and those who know me won't be surprised to hear that I'm writing this in my office with my heater plugged in next to me. While there may be a desire to hunker down for the winter months our staff have been as busy as ever with our outreach and engagement programmes, promoting the collections and ensuring that as many people as possible can access them.

Our Heritage Learning Officers, Charlotte May and Stephanie Tristram, have been particularly busy running our primary schools programme. This is the first full year of our programme and we set ourselves a target of working with 10 different primary schools and 300 pupils. In fact in the first three months we have managed to work with 619 children from 6 schools and we are thrilled that the programme has proved so popular. You can find out more about our work with schools in an interview with Charlotte later in this issue.

We have also continued to welcome university students to our classes, introducing them to archival collections and research as part of their degree programmes. Of course, our collections are open to everyone, not just members of the University of Nottingham, and we are delighted to have welcomed students from our neighbour, Nottingham Trent University, as part of their module on Rebel Literature. Our events programme has also continued and our archivists have given talks to a range of community groups, both on-site here at King's Meadow Campus and out in the local area. If you are interested in arranging a class for your students, a visit or a talk please do get in touch. We would love to hear from you.

Moving away from outreach, Manuscripts and Special Collections staff are continuing to work on increasing access to our digital collections. Archivist Laura Peurt recently presented a paper to the Research Libraries UK Digital Scholarship Network on the theme of opportunities and challenges. The long-term preservation of digital material certainly is a challenge for all archives, as is providing access to material stored on a variety of

formats. You can find out how we have been meeting that challenge in Laura's article on page 12.

Digital records are an ever-growing presence in our collections but that doesn't mean that we can turn our attention away from the preservation and conservation of our more traditional holdings. For the past twelve months we have been increasing our work on the phase boxing of our Special Collections – creating bespoke boxes for individual books to help protect them from changes in environmental conditions. We have also started on the digitisation of the Rushall Psalter, a 15th century volume containing the Book of Psalms. Look out for more information on this digitisation project in a future issue of *Discover*.

This is an eclectic mix of work but it all links back to our seven strategic priorities:

1. To acquire and develop collections according to published acquisition policies
2. To preserve collections according to national standards
3. To enable the discovery of our collections by a global audience
4. To provide opportunities for students from the University of Nottingham, and other universities, schools and colleges to develop their potential through the use of collections
5. To increase research use of our collections to solve problems and improve lives
6. To be a library, archive and museum without borders and a bridge to the community
7. To develop a sustainable future for Manuscripts and Special Collections and the University Museum

I hope that you have enjoyed this insight into what everyone has been up to over the past few months. If you would like to find out more about any aspect of our work then please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Hayley Cotterill**  
Keeper of Manuscripts and Special Collections

# Sticking out from the crowd – Audrey Beecham and the Nottingham Women’s Liberation Group

Guest writer Val Wood, Nottingham Feminist Archive Group

Audrey Beecham (1915-1989) was a lecturer in Social and Economic History and warden of the University of Nottingham’s Nightingale Hall. Amongst the many boxes transferred to Manuscripts and Special Collections by the Bodleian Library, to whom her literary archive was bequeathed, were several folders relating to her involvement in Nottingham Women’s Liberation Group (WLG) from 1971 to 1978.

Of specific interest are the detailed records she maintained as their treasurer during this period. In the days when women couldn’t open a bank account without a male guarantor, an account was duly established for the group by Audrey at the university’s branch of NatWest. An account to which she was zealous in managing during her tenure as treasurer. Subscriptions had to be paid and monies accounted for – failure to do so resulted in a reprimand and a hand-written letter, signed off with the valediction ‘sisterly whatnots...’

Tracing the background to her involvement in the Nottingham WLG is not as straightforward as one would imagine. Throughout her life, Audrey had identified as an Anarchist and was well known to many in that movement in the UK. She was, for example, a lifelong subscriber to *Black Flag* magazine and regular reader of the anarchist weekly newspaper, *Freedom*. In 1969 Audrey became involved with the Nottingham University Women’s Freedom Group, a small anarchist group of women

‘In the midst of the atrocious scenes which shook Paris, the women are particularly distinguished by their cruelty and rage; most of them are widows of communards. Madness seems to possess them; one sees them, their hair down like furies, throwing boiling oil, furniture, paving stones, on the soldiers, and when they are taken, they throw themselves desperately on the bayonets and still trying to fight!’

Under arrest the women showed fortitude and defiance superior to that of the men whose despair according to some spectators took a more apathetic turn. Goncourt described a detachment of prisoners he saw being marched through Passy on May 26th. This batch included sixty-six women.

‘There were women wearing kerchiefs next to women in silk gowns. I noticed housewives, working girls, and prostitutes, one of whom was wearing the uniform of a National Guard. And in the midst of them all there stood out the bestial head of a creature whose face was half-covered with an enormous bruise. Not one of these women showed the apathetic resignation of the men.....’

They were glorious in rage, in contempt and in unyielding defiance.

Audrey Beecham



Louise Michel.

12th June, 1974

Dear Rose,

I am so sorry not to have replied earlier to your letter of May 5th. I enclose two cheques, one value £9.23p. for ‘Women’s Day’ stationery expenses, and another for £2.22p. for our new banners.

I think that the reason why I have not dealt with this before is because I felt uneasy to ask you what was the meaning of your remark ‘I believe a sum of money was collected to cover these expenses’ i.e. the ‘International Women’s Day’ expenses. I do not think anyone gave me any money, and I wonder if you know who collected it?

Yours with sisterly whatnots,

Rose Knight,  
3, Dunlop Avenue,  
Levens,  
Nottingham.

“Throughout her life, Audrey had identified as an Anarchist and was well known to many in that movement in the UK.”

## WOMEN NOW

26, Newcastle Chambers  
Angel Row,  
Nottingham.

Women now is the Journal of Nottingham Women's Liberation Group. Its aim is to provide information on various aspects of women's oppression, the theme of women at work corresponds with the introduction of the Anti-Discrimination Bill and the Equal Pay Act. It is interesting to see how firms are preparing themselves to avoid giving women equal wages whilst remaining within the law.

Our Group meets on Thursday nights at 8pm in the Womens Centre for discussion on the progress of the various campaigns and on the problems which face women at work, in the home or in other Countries. The Nursery Campaign group are fighting for nursery accommodation for all children.

The Battered Wives Campaign is having some success in setting up a refuge, for women battered in their own homes, to escape to.

The Abortion and Contraception Campaign has as its aim the RIGHT for free contraception and abortion to any women wanting these services.

The Working Women Charter group sets out its aims clearly in the article contained in the Journal. The Anti Discrimination Campaign aims to end all discrimination against women on the grounds of sex. We want equal pay and equal opportunities. The group is expanding rapidly but the problems facing women are enormous, so if you feel in sympathy with our aims why not join us.



Above: Meeting of the Nottingham Women’s Liberation Group, artist unknown, *Women Now*, 1974. Feminist Publications Collection, Periodicals HQ1600.NOT WOW

Right: Statement by Audrey Beecham, as treasurer for the Nottingham WLG, 1975. Papers of Audrey Beecham, AB/93/3

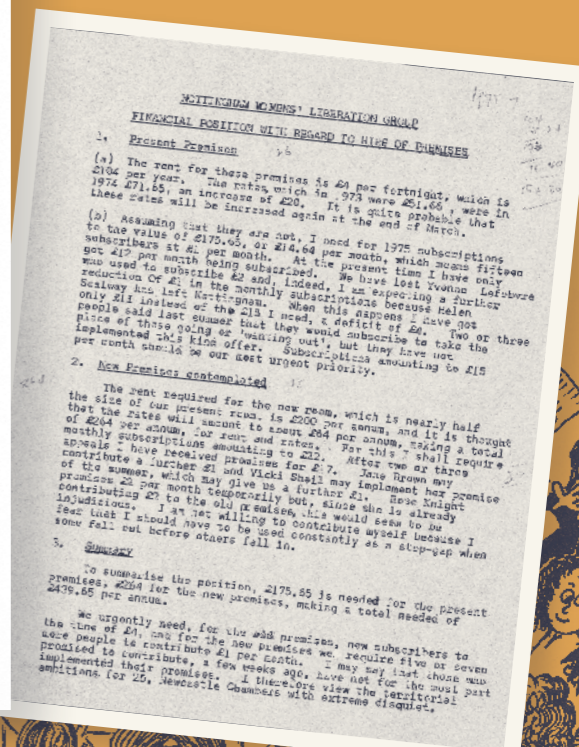
students. Other feminist groups were starting to emerge in Nottingham at this time, the Socialist Woman group, an offshoot of the International Marxist Group, and a women’s group based at Trent Polytechnic (now Nottingham Trent University). These three separate groups would eventually join to form a single Women’s Liberation Group in the city.

When the group secured premises to open a women’s centre in Nottingham, initially at Cobden Chambers, Pelham Street, from late 1972, and then at 26 Newcastle Chambers, Angel Row, until late 1978, Audrey would attend the meetings. A cartoon depiction of some of the members on Nottingham WLG, taken from the group’s newsletter/journal *Women Now*, features Audrey seated third from the left with a cigarette and glasses.



Images opposite page, left to right: From article by Audrey Beecham ‘The Brave Women of the Commune’, *Women Now* Vol. 1 No. 2, May/June 1971. Feminist Publications Collection, Periodicals HQ1600.NOT WOW

Letter from Audrey Beecham to Rose Knight, 12 June 1974. Papers of Audrey Beecham, AB/93/3



### NOTTINGHAM WOMEN'S LIBERATION GROUP FINANCIAL POSITION WITH REGARD TO HIRE OF PREMISES

1. Present Premises

(a) The rent for these premises is £4 per fortnight, which is 210s per year. The rates, which in 1973 were £11.65, were in 1974 £11.65, an increase of £20. It is quite possible that these rates will be increased again at the end of March.

(b) Assuming that they are not, I need for 1975 subscriptions to the value of £172.05, or £14.34 per month, which means fifteen subscribers at £1 per month. At the present time I have only one subscriber being £2 and £1. Indeed, I am expecting a further reduction of £1 in the monthly subscription because Helen Scully has left Nottingham. I am expecting a further £1.50 in the monthly subscription because Helen Scully said last summer that they would subscribe to take the place of those going to 'making out', but they have not implemented this offer. Subscriptions amounting to £15 per month should be our next urgent priority.

2. New Premises contemplated

The rent required for the new room, which is nearly half the size of our present room, is £200 per annum, and it is thought that the rates will amount to about £24 per annum, making a total of £224 per annum, or £18.67 per month, making a total of £224 per annum. For this I shall require to contribute a further £1 and Vicki Shell may implement her promise of the summer, which may give us a further £1. I have not yet contributed £2 per month temporarily but, since this is already included in the old £1, I should like to be able to contribute myself because I feel that I should have to be used constantly as a stop-gap when some fall out before others fall in.

3. Summary

To subsidise the position, £175.05 is needed for the present premises, £224 for the new premises, making a total needed of £400.00.

We urgently need, for the new premises, new subscribers to the tune of £1, and for the new premises we require five or seven more people to contribute £1 per month. I may not get them until I have implemented their promise, a few weeks ago, have not for the most part implemented their promise. I therefore give the financial position for 25, Newcastle Chambers with extreme disgust.

# Activism in the archives



Women, including members of the Nottingham Feminist Archive Group, protesting outside Marks & Spencer's about the impact of rising prices on women, 1974. Feminist Archive (East Midlands), FME/2/2/1



FORWARD SISTERS! Members of the Nottingham Women's Liberation group stage a "procession of mourning" for women who have died during abortions. See article on page four, also Letters, on page two.

Above: Article in the student newspaper *Gongster* 11 December 1973, 'Forward sisters!'. University of Nottingham Collection, os.X. Periodicals Not5. G14.8.F48

Left from top: The feminist collections being explored by attendees of the summer school organised by the NTU Periodicals and Print Culture Research Group

Members of the Nottingham Feminist Archive Group discussing curation with staff from Manuscripts and Special Collections.

## Facts and figures:

**30** boxes of publications   **32** archive boxes   **30** oral history interviews

Since our last update in issue 18 (June 2022) of *Discover*, our feminist collections have come a long way. The Nottingham Feminist Archive Group have been recording interviews with women who were active in the Women's Liberation Movement in Nottingham in the 1970s and 1980s. As a result, donations of photographs, meeting papers, posters etc., have been coming in thick and fast.

Some of the Group have been cataloguing their own papers, whilst others have been very busy at Nottingham's Women's Centre, building on the Centre's extensive library by helping to develop and preserve the Centre's collection of rare feminist literature from the 1970s and 1980s. The Women's Centre has kindly donated their dupli-

cates which has got our new special collection, the Feminist Publications Collection (FPC), off to a strong start. The catalogue for this and for FME: Feminist Archive (East Midlands) are now searchable online, though work is ongoing to add more descriptions.

The collections have already been put to use by attendees of Nottingham Trent University's Radical Print Summer School Workshop, who spent a morning exploring the magazines and the context in which they were created. Multiple classes of NTU students also visited recently to use the collections for a module on Rebel Literature.

We have been enjoying exploring the links between our Feminist Archive and the collections held at Nottinghamshire Archives, Nottingham

## Almost

**11GB** of digital materials

Black Archive, and Sparrow's Nest Library and Archive. We have also revisited and reprioritised cataloguing of some of our own collections. We made some exciting discoveries in the papers of Audrey Beecham, warden of Nightingale Hall (see article by Val Wood on page 6). One of our volunteers, Samantha, has been trawling through the student newspaper, *The Gongster*, to uncover references to feminist activists at the university (and the sexism they were battling!).

The two feminist collections will be showcased in the upcoming exhibition, "dear sisters: activists' archives", which opens at the Weston Gallery in March 2024. It will present some of the campaigns which women in Nottingham fought so hard for (including Women Against Pit Closures) and will profile a number of the activists involved. We hope that students visiting the gallery will be inspired by the determination and achievements of the sisters who went before them.

**25** different women contributing archive material

**66** NTU students, a conference, a UoN ceremony, and an NTU workshop

**2** student volunteers  
**1** paid placement  
**1** trainee archivist working on the collection

# Plants and Prayers

## a poetical postscript



“Over 3,400 records have been created which cover approximately 200 years from the early 1600s to the late 1700s.”

To coincide with last year's exhibition 'Plants and Prayers: Health and Healing before 1700', a group of community volunteers undertook a research project with Dr Rebecca Moore, Exhibitions Officer, which was funded by the Institute for Policy and Engagement.

Volunteers catalogued medicinal herbs and their uses in remedies in manuscript and printed material held at Manuscripts and Special Collections. Over 3,400 records have been created which cover approximately 200 years from the early 1600s to the late 1700s.

The group also took part in various workshops throughout the project, including book making, cyanotypes, embroidery, foraging, and creative writing. These two poems were written by two of the volunteers, inspired by the project.

### Wild Tansy — Gail Webb

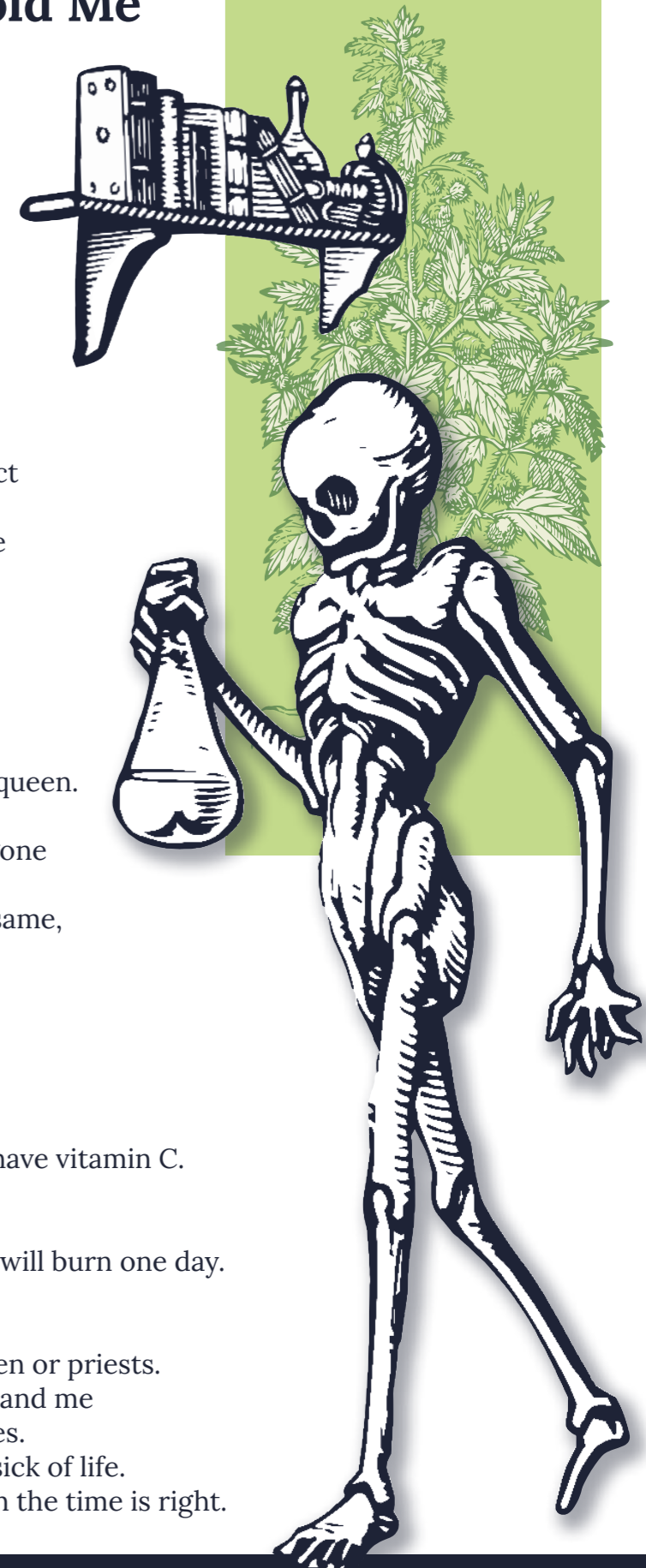
*“... stops the immediate flux of the terms in women” (if it is worn in their shoes!)*

—Nicholas Culpeper

Wear it in yer shoes, Tansy, tread upon it light,  
it will crush yellow on yer soles, a sudden sight -  
button flower heads pressed, disc florets,  
gathered among meadows and in forests  
bitter taste, fern-like leaves, aromatic smells,  
mustard clusters conjure up sweet women's spells  
flattened, subdued, the plant will do our bidding  
to stop flows, rhythms, any other shedding  
though it grows on the wayside, next to brooks,  
it can be used by witches and by cooks  
freckles, spots, pimples, sunburn disappear  
every time this herb in vinegar comes near  
fine, shining, silver leaves, this silver weed  
frees women from terms they had not agreed  
Wear it in yer shoes, Tansy, a secret we shall hold.  
You dance upon danger, sunshine seeds, burnished gold.

### What a Wise Woman Told Me — Denise Morton

That food is all around me if I  
look up as well as down.  
That there are mushrooms that can kill.  
That I should not rely on Google  
and ask an expert instead.  
That sometimes even experts get it wrong.  
That the best nettle seeds are female.  
That you'll know them when you see  
the droop of their threads like the heads  
and arms of worn-out washerwomen.  
That male nettle seeds stand proud and erect  
and don't do a damn thing for you.  
That one of her relatives burned at the stake  
for healing the sick too well.  
That Hibiscus (her cat) recently died.  
That every night she still cries and cries.  
That borage doesn't heal all grief.  
That her daughter thinks she's lost the plot  
and should join the W.I.  
That her elderflower cheesecake is fit for a queen.  
That she brews a fine fennel tea.  
That it's scone as in stone, Not scone as in gone  
and that jam goes first, not cream.  
That hogweed and hemlock look much the same,  
And should be avoided like the plague.  
That the NHS is in a terrible mess.  
That nature can relieve our distress.  
That mugwort thins the blood,  
that plantain weeds heal wounds,  
that dandelions cleanse our insides out,  
that violets soothe the throat and rosehips have vitamin C.  
That her granddaughter's on TikTok though  
she's not sure what that means.  
That climate change is underway and Earth will burn one day.  
That people seem to miss so much,  
as they focus on their phones.  
That she has no faith in politicians, policemen or priests.  
That they've lost touch with the likes of her and me  
as they're driven to their mansion-like homes.  
That she's not afraid of dying but is not yet sick of life.  
That she's prepared to make her peace when the time is right.



An anthology of non-fiction and fiction creative writing produced by the volunteers is available on the 'Plants and Prayers' exhibition website:

[nottingham.ac.uk/exhibitions/plantsandprayers](http://nottingham.ac.uk/exhibitions/plantsandprayers)

# Digital preservation in action

“Since 2020 we have uploaded over 15 terabytes of digital objects (over 187,000 individual digital files)”



We have made great progress in our digital preservation journey since our last update in issue 14 (January 2021). Since implementing our digital preservation system Preservica our work with our digital collections has moved towards business as usual. Preservica is the system that helps us safely preserve and provide access to our digital collections, and since 2020 we have uploaded over 15 terabytes of digital objects (over 187,000 individual digital files) into it for safe storage and active monitoring in our digital archive. This allows us to ensure they remain accessible. We know that the pace of technological change together with the fragility of some digital formats can render content inaccessible or lost if not actively managed.

In the last update we explained how we initially prioritised the transfer of content held on physical media, such as floppy disks or CDs. Digital files held on such media are at greater risk of loss due to the fragility or obsolescence of the physical media carrier itself.

We are pleased to have completed uploading these media items in our collections into our preservation system. However, we continue to regularly receive new collections containing CDs, DVDs,

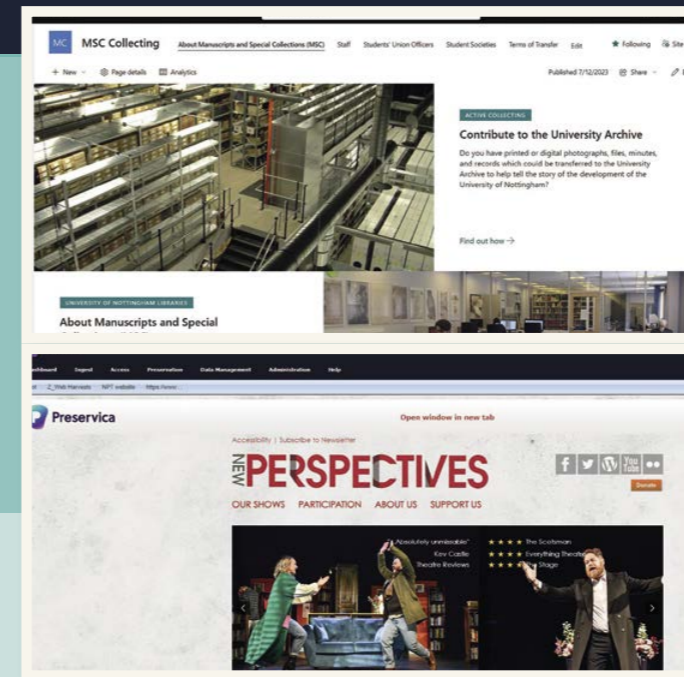
USB sticks and 3.5-inch floppy disks. This means the work involved in safeguarding and securely transferring their contents into a securely backed-up preservation system will continue for some years into the future. Preservation workflows are now part of day-to-day work for our staff.

The tools offered by our preservation system have expanded opportunities for us to proactively collect digital content from our university community. An increasing proportion of our new acquisitions come from online cloud-based digital systems.

One example of this is university staff or student society transfers of digital files via Microsoft 365. To make this easier we have set up a Collecting SharePoint site which provides advice, guidance, and dedicated deposit folders where we can collect digital content for the archive.

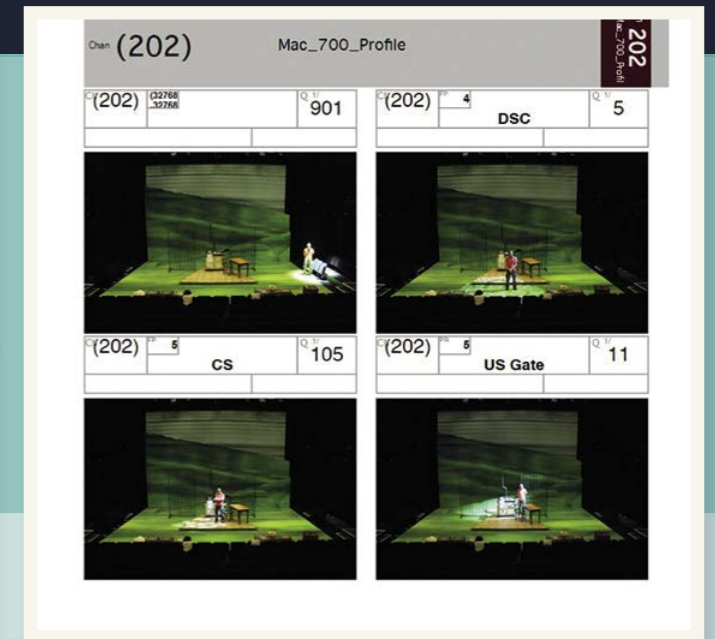
We also have our own tools for capturing relevant web-based content on an automated schedule. This is used for university websites, blogs and other websites and social media items that support our University of Nottingham and deposited collections.

We expect to develop more automated methods of transferring digital files to us in the future.



MSC Collecting site: Manuscripts and Special Collections Sharepoint site for advice and transfer of internal university records.

An example of an older version of the New Perspectives Theatre webpage harvested and now saved in Preservica. An example of old formats we've encountered in the collections.



For those outside the university community, we are happy to help with transfer of digital material to our archive and can provide tailored advice to support this.

Elsewhere in this issue of *Discover* you can read about our work developing the Feminist Archive (East Midlands) together with the Nottingham Feminist Archive Group. The group have been running an oral history project and the digital recordings that result will be safely uploaded in our preservation system so that future researchers can learn from and be inspired by this activism.

An example of a collection which is transitioning from paper formats to digital is the archives of The New Perspectives Theatre, currently celebrating its 50th anniversary. We hold their fabulous archive including administrative papers, production planning records such as scripts, technical design and set information, as well as colourful publicity and design materials going back to the 1970s in traditional paper-based formats. Material transferred to us for the most recent productions includes more and more born digital formats. Both paper and digital items from the collections are available to researchers in our reading room at King's Meadow Campus.

We have made great progress in developing ways for people to access and use digital content in our reading room and online. Watch this space for further updates as we continue to develop and improve ways to search and access our digital collections.

## Help grow our digital collections

Suggestions for online content published by members of the university which ought to be captured for posterity are very welcome: [mss-library@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:mss-library@nottingham.ac.uk)

We have written several blog posts about our work with digital collections to date, including a blog giving tips on how to preserve your own personal digital content including that created on social media. Go to <https://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscripts> to find out more.

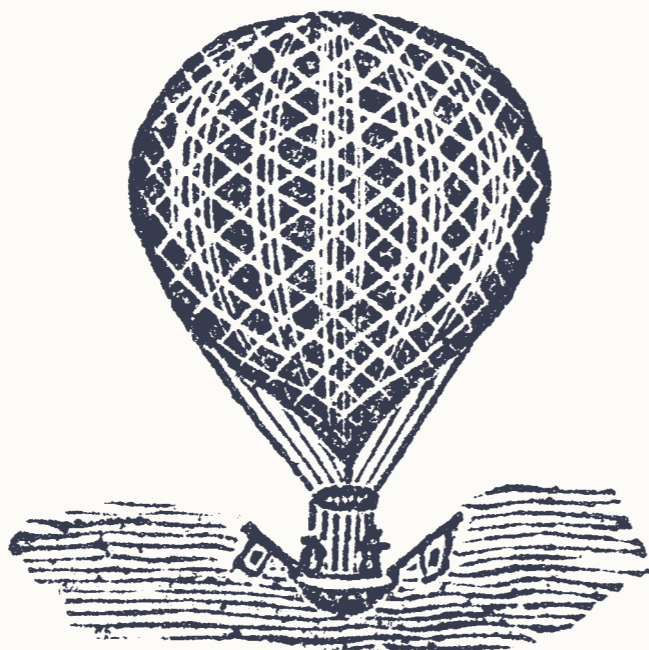
# Let's go fly a balloon!

Mention 'Mr Green' to contemporary Nottingham folk and most would think of the mathematician and physicist Mr George Green. However, mention it to Nottingham folk of the early to mid nineteenth century, and many would gush about Mr Charles Green, the balloonist. His exploits were widely reported in local newspapers and recorded in diaries that are held at Manuscripts and Special Collections.

Charles Green made his first ascent above Nottingham in August 1826. His balloon, filled with coal gas, took off from the Market Square. For half a guinea, passengers could accompany him on this vertical trip. Ropes had been attached to the car and, having reached the pinnacle of the climb and Nottingham viewed from the air, the balloon would be pulled back down.

“Charles Green made his first ascent above Nottingham in August 1826. His balloon, filled with coal gas, took off from the Market Square...”

His ballooning followed earlier ascents by James Sadler (November 1813) and his son, Windham Sadler (November 1823). Sadler the elder was an experienced balloonist and travelled in his hydrogen-filled balloon from the Canal Company's wharf in central Nottingham to Pickworth in Rutland. Sadler the younger, by comparison, flew a coal gas-filled balloon from Nottingham Castle's grounds to Thorpe-on-the-Hill, near Lincoln.

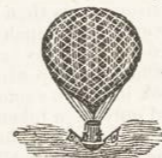


In August 1847, Charles Green returned to Nottingham to undertake his 370th balloon ascent from Nottingham Barracks near Derby Road. The balloon, called *Royal Victoria*, was formed from 12,000 yards of silk and boasted magnificent stripes of crimson and yellow. From top to tail it measured sixty-eight feet. Efforts to fill it with 220,000 gallons of hydrogen began from 7.30am on 19 August. This carburetted hydrogen was obtained from the new gasometer at Old Radford and was conveyed in iron pipes laid down for the occasion. Meanwhile, with the event being a momentous one for Nottingham, the elite of the town and neighbourhood were invited to an elegant luncheon in the mess room. At half-past three, a pilot-balloon made of varnished paper about a yard in height was sent up to test the wind and floated away in a south-easterly direction.

Advertisements about the intended feat had appeared in several local newspapers. On the day, people excitedly waited for the balloon to take off. Reports say that up to 2,500 spectators paid to enter the barrack yard. A section was roped off for the ladies, who made up a large portion of the crowd.

Two gentlemen accompanied Green on the flight, each paying ten guineas. They were mentioned by solicitor William Parsons in his diary. One of these gentlemen was another solicitor, John Foxcroft. The other was Captain Forster of the 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards. Inside the car, they found a seat, a basket of provisions, and a grappling iron (an iron anchor with five flukes, each about twelve inches long).

The weather was splendid, with scarcely a cloud in the sky and a gentle breeze. The balloon, which had been held in place by a contingent of soldiers,



## GRAND BALLOON ASCENT.

BY the kind permission of Colonel Chatterton, K.H., and under his patronage, and that of the Officers of the 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards, Mr. GREEN, Aeronaut to the Royal Gardens, Vauxhall, and Cremorne, Chelsea, respectfully announces to the Inhabitants of Nottingham and its Vicinity, that he purposes making his 370th ascent from Nottingham Barracks, on Thursday next, August the 19th instant, at Five o'Clock in the Afternoon, with his new and splendid balloon, the Royal Victoria, in which he had the honor to ascend in the presence of her Majesty and his Royal Highness Prince Albert and the Duke of Wellington, at his Royal Highness's Installation at Cambridge.

For the gratification of Parties desirous of witnessing the process of Inflation, and closely inspecting this Aerial Monster and its various appendages, the Doors will be opened at Two o'Clock.

Admission to witness the inflation, attaching the car, and immediate ascent from the earth, 1s. each; Children, 6d.

Colonel Chatterton has most kindly permitted the Band of the Regiment to attend upon this occasion.

N.B. There will be Seats in the Car for Four Persons.



## GRAND BALLOON ASCENT.

BY the kind permission of Colonel Chatterton, K.H., and under his Patronage, and that of the Officers of the 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards,

MR. GREEN,

AERONAUT to the Royal Gardens, Vauxhall, and Cremorne, Chelsea, respectfully announces to the Inhabitants of Nottingham and its Vicinity, that he proposes

MAKING HIS 370th ASCENT

FROM NOTTINGHAM BARRACKS, ON THURSDAY NEXT, THE 19th INSTANT,

AT FIVE O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON,

With his NEW and SPLENDID BALLOON, THE ROYAL VICTORIA, in which he had the honor to ascend in the presence of her Majesty, His Royal Highness Prince Albert, and the Duke of Wellington, at his Royal Highness's installation at Cambridge.

For the gratification of parties desirous of witnessing the process of Inflation, and closely inspecting this aerial monster, and its various appendages, the Doors will be opened at Two o'Clock.

ADMISSION to witness the Inflation, attaching the Car, and immediate Ascent from the Earth, 1s. each, Children, 6d.

Colonel Chatterton has most kindly permitted the BAND of the Regiment to attend upon this occasion.

N.B.—There will be seats in the Car for four persons.

An advertisement for the 'Grand Balloon Ascent', *Nottingham Review*, 13 August 1847. East Midlands Special Collection Periodicals:Not

Advertisement for the 'Grand Balloon Ascent', which refers to the balloon as an 'aerial monster', *Nottingham Mercury*, 13 August 1847. East Midlands Special Collection Periodicals:Not

William Parsons' diary entry for 19 August 1847 mentions Mr Green's balloon. He would very likely have known fellow solicitor, John Foxcroft, who had made a previous ascent.

took off successfully at half past five. The spectacle was witnessed by thousands of people. Shops in Nottingham's main streets, as well as in the Market Place, were closed to allow workers to see it. Contrary to the pilot-balloon, it took a south-westerly course and floated gracefully towards Beeston. It hung in sight for a long time, with some people taking to their roof-

“In August 1847, Charles Green returned to Nottingham to undertake his 370th balloon ascent from Nottingham Barracks near Derby Road.”

tops to wave it on. Even at 6.30 that evening, the balloon could still be seen from Nottingham as it drifted towards Loughborough.

The balloon landed safely upon the lawns at Staunton Harold Hall, Leicestershire. Here, the passengers were welcomed heartily by the Earl and Countess Ferrers, plus their guests. Nottingham itself had been totally mesmerised by the sight. *The Nottingham Review* of 20 August 1847 proclaimed, “A more magnificent ascent, as respects the weather and all other circumstances, was never seen”.

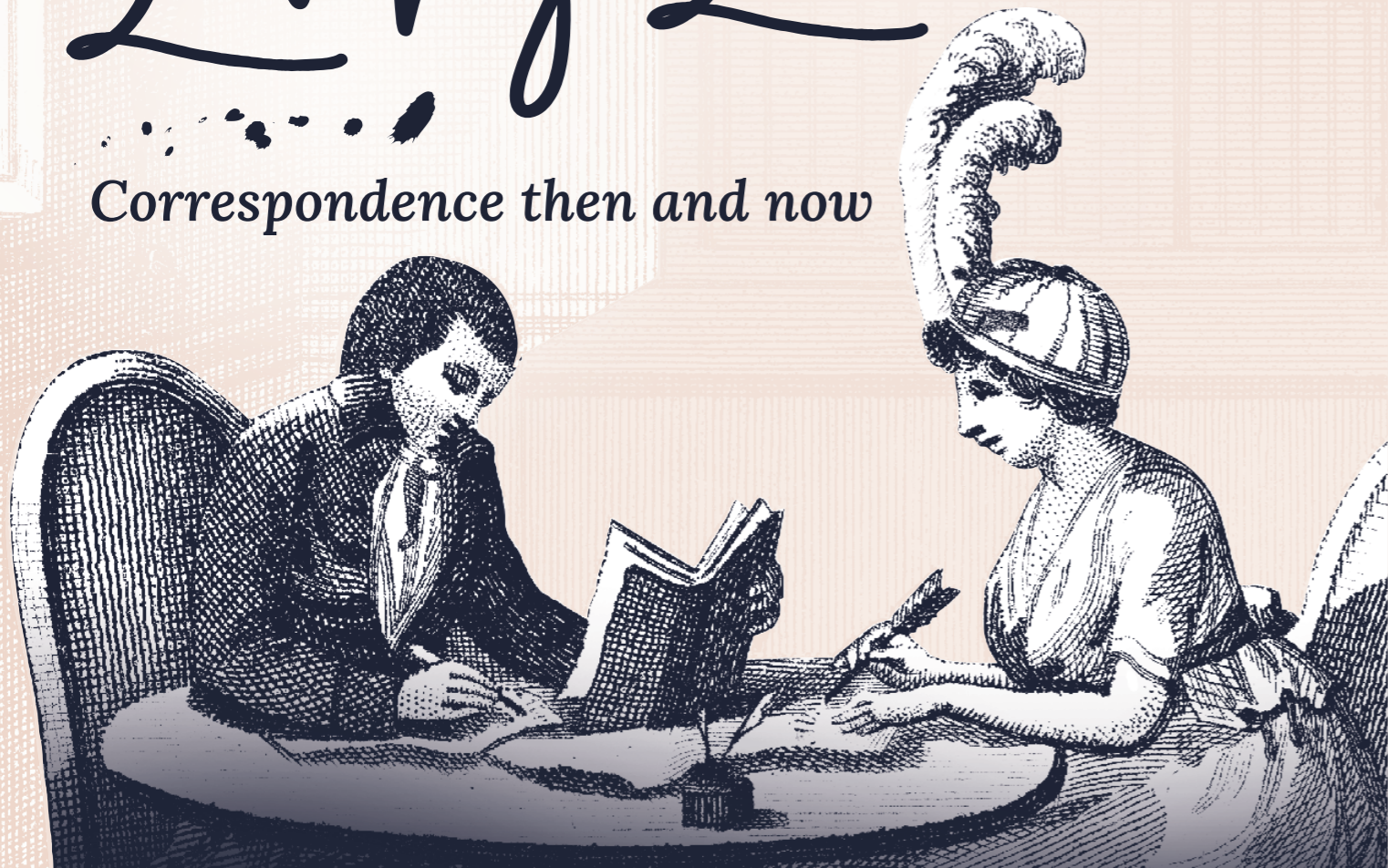
19: Resumed my avocations at the office as well as I was able. It is wonderful to reflect upon the feelings of which man's mind is composed. Today inconsolable for a loss that cannot be retrieved: tomorrow our sorrows thrust aside by the ordinary occupations of life. But were such not to be the case man would indeed be a creature of sorrow & his life a life of misery. Green's Balloon made a beautiful ascent from the Barrack Yard about 5 this afternoon with Mr. Green, John Foxcroft & a young Officer, and descended in the neighbourhood of Ashby de la Zouch. The Balloon was long in sight from my House whence I saw Mr. Malesy & Mr. Malesy returned from Liverpool. Our cause not having come on as Mr. Malesy the Herald. Martin's sister had died at Nottingham in his absence.





# Living Letters

Correspondence then and now



**Free exhibition**

Thursday 12 October 2023 – Sunday 3 March 2024

Opening times: Tuesday–Sunday 12 noon–4pm. Closed Mondays.

Weston Gallery  
Lakeside Arts  
University Park  
Nottingham NG7 2RD

☎ Box Office: +44 (0)115 846 7777  
🌐 lakesidearts.org.uk  
📄 nottingham.ac.uk/mss



EXHIBITION NEWS

## Join our events

A series of special events will be held to accompany the exhibition.  
Places are limited so please book in advance on +44 (0)115 846 7777  
or online at [www.lakesidearts.org.uk](http://www.lakesidearts.org.uk)

### ▶ Letter handling sessions

Bentinck Room, King's Meadow Campus

Thursday 8 February, 1.30-3pm  
FREE Advance booking required

Join the university's Manuscript and Special Collections team to explore a selection of manuscript letters not on display in the Living Letters exhibition.

To book:  
Email: [mss-library@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:mss-library@nottingham.ac.uk)  
Telephone: +44 (0)115 951 4565

Coming to Weston Gallery  
in March 2024

### ▶ Letters and laughs: humour in literary correspondence

Djanogly Theatre, Lakeside Arts

Thursday 29 February, 1-2pm  
£3 (free concessions)

Amy Wilcockson will draw on letters by Edward Lear, Jane Austen, and Thomas Campbell to discuss how – and why – they use comedy, nonsense, and the absurd. She will explore how such attempts to create camaraderie, advance social status, and deal with difficult situations, provide an intimate insight into the lives of all three authors.

Telephone Lakeside: +44 (0)115 846 7777  
or online at [www.lakesidearts.org.uk](http://www.lakesidearts.org.uk)

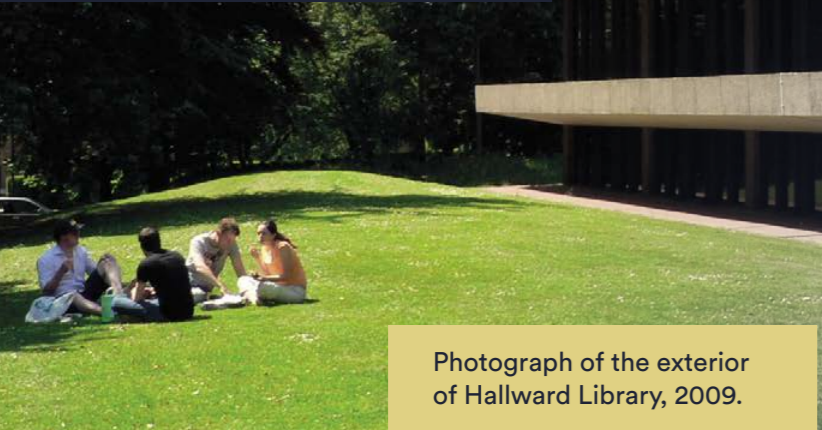
## dear sisters: activists' archives

Weston Gallery from 21 March  
Free admission

Box Office: +44 (0)115 846 7777  
[lakesidearts.org.uk](http://lakesidearts.org.uk)



# Happy Birthday Hallward Library



Photograph of the exterior of Hallward Library, 2009.

This academic year is the 50th that the University of Nottingham's Hallward Library has been opened. This is a condensed version of a series of our blog posts exploring the Library's history, using the university archives and contemporary publications kept at Manuscripts and Special Collections.

In 1928, when University College Nottingham moved onto the new University Park Campus, all academic departments were in the Trent Building. The ground floor east wing was reserved for The Library. As the institution grew and was granted full university status in 1948, pressure increased to provide more library materials, as well as accommodate far more than the 225 readers for which it was initially designed. Lack of space meant that books ended up being stored in the temporary "cowshed" huts behind Trent Building.

Academic departments began moving out of the crowded Trent Building in the 1950s. It was thought that the library could expand into the vacated space, with the entire building eventual-

ly becoming the University Library. However, the distance between the new locations and the Trent Building led to some departments, such as Law and Music, taking their subject specific books with them. When the bespoke library for Science and Engineering opened in 1964, the case for a modern new Arts and Social Sciences library increased.

The idea of a new standalone library had been part of Vice-Chancellor Bertrand Hallward's vision in the 1940s, but it wasn't until 1962, after campaigning from University Librarian Richard Smith, Professor Monica Partridge, the Students' Union, and academic building specialist Sir William Holford, that the University Grants Committee was convinced of the need for a new building.

With £810,000 funding and the architects H. Faulkner-Brown in place, the only thing remaining was to decide where the building would go. The location of the temporary "cowsheds" behind the Trent Building was rejected in favour of the gardens of Lenton Mount (now known as The Hemsley), which is nearer to the departments which the library would primarily serve.

“Lack of space meant that books ended up being stored in the temporary “cowshed” huts behind Trent Building.”

Hallward Library



Photograph of the interior of Hallward Library, c.1973

Below right: Foundations of the new University Library building, c.1970-72. Photographs from the University of Nottingham and its predecessor University College, Nottingham UMP 6/3/1/17

There would be 1,030 reading places, a micro-form and audio/visual room, a Special Collections and Rare Books Room, offices, a lounge for staff (who may “bring sandwiches for lunch”), and space for the Manuscripts Department. Large windows on the lower floors would help passers-by to identify the use of the building by the visible bookshelves.

Acoustic treatment would keep noise levels from open-plan spaces to a minimum, and sound-proofed study carrels would allow the use of typewriters without creating a disturbance. The library would be ready for new technological advances: American libraries were issuing books using computers, and it would be ready for when such modern practices were introduced in the UK.

Construction began in August 1970, undertaken by W.J. Simms Sons & Cooke Ltd. Relocating the library from the Trent Building was planned to start in June 1973, beginning with the Manuscripts Department, followed by the main book stock to be moved with the help of 12 students and 2 hired vans.

The library quietly opened to staff and students August 1973, and officially opened by Sir Hugh Willatt, secretary general of the Arts Council, in a ceremony that December.

Staff and students praised the “outstandingly good” building, with the coffee shop proving

“

Before the pandemic, Hallward Library recorded a peak of over 7,000 visitors in a day.”

## Hallward facts

**£810,000**  
new building funds  
secured in 1962

**1,030**  
reading places created

**1970–1973**  
Construction to  
official opening

Named after the first Vice-Chancellor of the university,  
Bertrand Hallward



“embarrassingly popular” considering the small amount of space allocated to it. Attendance at the Science and Engineering Library fell as students flocked to the comfort of the new building. Student newspaper *Gongster* was equally positive, and although likening the exterior to a spaceship from Star Trek, declared the library “a superb place to work in”. The design was also a hit in the professional industry. The Royal Institute of British Architects included it among their awards for 1974, praising the sloping landscape half-burying the first floor and concealing the service entrance, and commending the interior as warm and welcoming.

Although the name was officially the “University Library”, it was also known as the “Arts and Social Sciences Library” and “Main Library”, until 1989 when it was named after the first Vice-Chancellor of the university, Bertrand Hallward.

Before the pandemic, Hallward Library recorded a peak of over 7,000 visitors in a day. It was visited by Queen Elizabeth II as part of the university’s centenary celebrations, was the subject of an April Fool joke that cats would be introduced into the library, and was a filming location for the Bollywood musical *Teri Meri Kahaani*. Fifty years on, it remains one of the most distinctive buildings on campus.

## Competition

We have a Hallward Library 50th Anniversary tote bag and notebook to give away.

To be in with your chance to win, simply answer our easy question and email your answer to [mss-library@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:mss-library@nottingham.ac.uk) by 31 March 2024.



Background: Architectural plan of Level 1 of the Arts and Social Sciences Library [Hallward Library], 1970. Archive of the University of Nottingham Estates Office, UFE/2/1/36/173

Photograph of the library at University College Nottingham within the Trent Building, c.1928. Records of University College, Nottingham, UR 1382/7

Bottom left: Photograph of the Manuscripts and Special Collections reading room on level 1 of Hallward Library prior to it moving to King’s Meadow Campus, 2006. Level 1 of Hallward Library was then refurbished with new facilities such as group study rooms, computer suites, and a cinema screening room.

When did Hallward Library open to staff and students?

- August 1973
- October 1962
- September 1984

For full terms and conditions, please visit: [nottingham.ac.uk/discover-prize-draw-terms-and-conditions.pdf](http://nottingham.ac.uk/discover-prize-draw-terms-and-conditions.pdf)



## PROFILE

Five minutes with...

# Charlotte May



### What is your job?

“I am a Heritage Learning Officer along with my colleague Stephanie Tristram (who represents the university’s Museum) and we head the Heritage Learning Programme for primary schools. I’ve been in post for about a year, but I’ve been working with manuscripts at the university for a lot longer.”

### What is your background and how you did you get into this type of work?

“I did my BA, MA and PhD here at the university and I work on the manuscripts of overlooked, underrepresented, or marginalised individuals. I’ve always done a lot of public engagement. I’ve worked with museums for about ten years and as a part of that I developed family-friendly and children’s activities.”

### What does your work involve?

“We deliver workshops on-site in primary schools, and at the university. We run a range of activities on Florence Nightingale, Romans, Vikings, the history of writing, and toys through time, which meet the curriculum needs. We bring exciting objects and replicas with us, which make the workshops engaging. There’s more information on our website <http://tinyurl.com/yc8edsm9>”



### What are the most challenging aspects?

“Sometimes a child is looking forward to one task and doesn’t want to do something else, so that can be challenging. Running to time is one of the biggest challenges. We need to allow children enough time to do what they need but also meet the outcomes of the session.”

### What is your favorite item from the collections?

“My expertise is in letters and I’m really interested in the way people connect and communicate. A letter can be a very carefully constructed literary text but sometimes you find the odd note that should have been burned, or words that are scrawled on the back of a piece of paper, and these are sometimes more interesting. My favorite item is a draft copy of an 18th century Shipwreck Journal (Me J 10) from a ship that was wrecked at Bird Island off the coast of Africa. It reads like a novel and is a fantastic blend of fact and fiction.”

### What do you like most about your job?

“I like it when you can see a learner with their head down getting really interested in what they’re doing. Good education programmes give children an opportunity to choose what they want to do to a degree, to explore a topic and ignite their imagination. For example, one of our activities uses facsimiles of 19th century alphabets in different fonts, and six-year olds who are learning to write have the chance to artistically write their name by copying these different fonts. They can choose how it looks and it’s empowering for them.”

Image: Florence Nightingale School Resource.

# New additions to the collections and catalogue



From the left: page featuring a poster for the 'Cripps Hall Drama Group Present The Long and The Short and The Tall by Willis Hall' from the 'Cripps Hall Archive' scrapbook volume.

A page featuring a poster for 'World Refugee Year Garden Fete' from the 'Cripps Hall Archive' scrapbook volume.

Cripps Hall Association visit to Manuscripts and Special Collections, September 2022.

## University archive

Cataloguing has recently been completed on the archive of Audrey Beecham (AB), a lecturer in Social and Economic History and the formidable warden of Nightingale Hall from 1950-1980. Part of her fantastic papers have been described by Val Wood elsewhere in this edition of *Discover*.

Speaking of Halls, one particularly lovely item added to the university's archive is a very large scrapbook-style volume into which have been pasted newspaper cuttings, photographs, and information about Cripps Hall of Residence, and its founders and residents (UL/H/8/1). There are also many posters, reviews, and programmes from plays produced by the Cripps Hall Drama Group. The volume was started in 1962 and was in use until about 1984. Last summer we hosted a reun-

ion visit by the Cripps Hall Association at which the volume was on display.

Following last year's "Knowledge is Power" exhibition celebrating Nottingham's pioneering contribution to adult education in Britain, the co-curator and former Professor of Adult Education John Holford donated his papers (MS 1057) covering his time at the University of Nottingham alongside his roles on various governing bodies, journals, and committees.

## DH Lawrence

In a serendipitous turn of events, we were offered a recording of a radio programme in which Bridget Pugh interviewed Professor JD Chambers (former Chair of Economic History at Nottingham) on his recollections of DH Lawrence (who completed teacher training here before becoming an



author). This out of the blue offer was gratefully accepted after we discovered that the copy on cassette already in our collections (La Ch 79) had been recorded over - prior to arriving at Manuscripts, we should add! Broadcast on Radio Nottingham on 15th November 1968, Chambers spoke about two of Lawrence's books - *The White Peacock* and *Sons & Lovers*.

Continuing the Lawrence theme, we recently accepted an album containing a script and images compiled by Garry Akers (former Secretary of the D.H. Lawrence Society), representing two illustrated lectures he delivered on 'D.H. Lawrence: Son of an Eastwood Miner' and 'D.H. Lawrence - Painter', 1980-1985 (La R 1/7). The album includes images of some less often seen drawings and paintings by Lawrence.

We received the first few pages of an original typescript of William George Parkinson's 'Autobiography of an Artist' (c.1893-1965), published in *The Windmill*, the newsletter of the Langley Collectors Society in April 1997 (La Mc 3/17). The date of the typescript is unknown but is thought to have been written late in Parkinson's life. The rest of the work doesn't appear to have survived. Parkinson was an artist at Langley Mill Pottery and was a former pupil of Lawrence. His father George Leighton Parkinson (1864-1938) was a qualified Art Teacher who taught art to DH Lawrence and other pupil-teachers at evening classes. Professor John Worthen's upcoming article in the *Journal of the D.H. Lawrence Society* explores the links between the Parkinson family and Lawrence and the content of the autobiography in more detail.

## Theatre archives

Two years after receiving the Theatre Royal Nottingham collection we are looking forward to accepting the Royal Concert Hall archive (TRC), which the heritage volunteers over at the Theatre have been hard at work boxing up. Keep an eye out for further updates in a future *Discover*.

Images: Repackaging work on the Theatre Royal Collection continues.

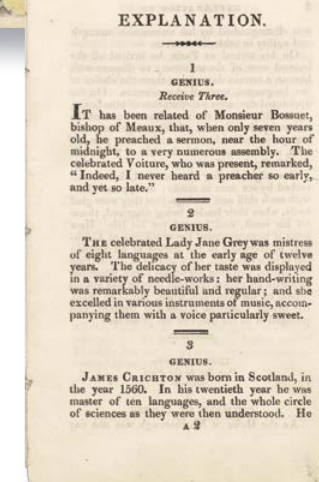
*The Mirror of Truth* (1811). Briggs Collection, Game x-135

Booklet accompanying the game *The Mirror of Truth*. Briggs Collection, Game x-135

And finally, a brief mention of the archive of Nottingham-born screenwriter and playwright Roy Minton. Over his long career, he wrote dozens of scripts for theatre, radio, and film. Possibly the most familiar are *Company of Five*, a 1968 TV anthology series, and *Scum*, which began life as a play and was adapted into the 1979 film of the same name starring Ray Winstone. His archive is so recently arrived that we've barely had time to process it, but it contains screenplays, novels, correspondence, and promotional material.

## Special Collections

A new addition to the Briggs Collection is the board game *The Mirror of Truth* published in 1811 by John Wallis. The subtitle, "exhibiting a variety of biographical anecdotes and moral essays: calculated to inspire a love of virtue and abhorrence of vice", refers to the accompanying booklet of moral anecdotes which direct the players' progression to the Temple of Happiness. These anecdotes are "selected from the Pages of History, unembellished by the hand of Fiction," and are depicted in hand-coloured squares on the gameboard. Only the virtues are illustrated and allow the player to move forward! The game was designed to keep children amused yet quiet, away from the "pernicious science of [playing] cards".





University of  
Nottingham

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

## Contact details

Manuscripts and Special Collections  
University of Nottingham  
King's Meadow Campus  
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Nottingham NG7 2NR

✉ [mss-library@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:mss-library@nottingham.ac.uk)

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🖱 [nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections](http://nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections)

🐦 @mssUniNott

# Talks and tours

from Manuscripts and Special Collections  
at the University of Nottingham

**Our talks** (last for approximately 45 minutes)

Our expert staff offer talks on a range of topics including:

- Nottinghamshire Treasures
- Sex and scandal in Nottingham Church Court
- Supernatural stories from the East Midlands
- An unheroic history of Robin Hood
- Murder most horrid

**Our tours** (last for approximately 60 minutes)

- Private behind-the-scenes tour at Manuscripts and Special Collections, display of archives and rare books.
- Private curator's tour of the exhibition gallery at Lakeside Arts.

For group size, fees and refreshments, see online.

For a full list of talks available and  
details on how to book, visit

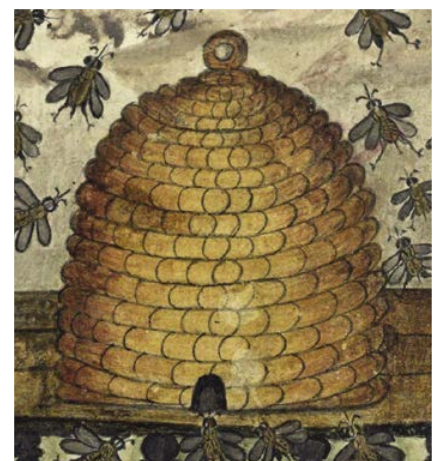
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We can travel to venues in  
and around Nottingham or  
deliver talks online.



Or scan QR  
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information

