



Event 2024 Gladstone's Library Hub Schedule

Wednesday 11th of September

8.30-9am Registration

**9.00-9.15am Andrea Russell, Welcome to Gladstone's Library
(Chapel)**

**9.15-10.15am Keynote 1 – Michael Wheeler, *The Great Change:
Gladstone and his Age* (Chapel)**

10.15-11.15am Panel 1 – Mourning and Memorialisation (Chapel)

Hannah Burden, *'My Life as a happy one is ended!': Queen Victoria's Reading in Mourning*

This paper is based upon a chapter of my thesis entitled 'Sorrows Manifold-Queen Victoria's reading in mourning'. It will focus on the reading of Queen Victoria in times of mourning, investigating reading materials that consoled and comforted the Queen as well as those which enabled her expression of grief, memorialised those she mourned and became part of her curated widowhood played out, as Adrienne Munich suggests, in 'carefully staged scenes'. Though Queen Victoria reigned for forty of her sixty-three-years on the throne dressed in black, epitomising and defining nineteenth-century widowhood, her mourning, though most potent when centred upon the loss of Albert, expanded beyond one death to include a great many losses. These events threw the Queen and the monarchy into crisis. I will examine how Victoria's reading materials together with her journals and letters can give us insights into her mental state, religious ideals and sense of duty and allow us to assess how having a widow on the throne changed the world.



My paper will explore various texts that the Queen read in times of sorrow from *The Christian Keepsake* (1836) to *In Memoriam A.H.H* (1850) and will include some exciting marginalia found in my research at Osborne House and The Royal Library, Windsor Castle for which I gratefully received a BAVS grant.

Emma Liggins, *Memorialising Female Death, 1870-1910*

This paper considers the memorialisation of female death from the closing years of Victoria's reign up to 1910 and investigates whether what J.S Curl has famously identified as 'the Victorian celebration of death' (1972) changes in this transitional period. It reassesses Thomas Laqueur's narrative of the 'new', modern mourning rituals of the 1900s. In *The Work of the Dead* he suggests that 'with the advent of the modern cemetery a new kind of space had come into being that appropriated pieces of the past to make a future; as a museum of sculpture and architecture; as an arboretum; as a tourist attraction; as a pilgrimage site; as national, regional, communal, or familial place of memory' (2015: 288). With their narratives of loss and lineage, headstones and inscriptions fulfil a significant archival function (Sprackland 2020: 17) and can act as a barometer of social change. Their memorialising imperative was reproduced on mourning cards distributed by undertakers or offered for mass circulation at moments of national mourning such as the death of Victoria.

Comparing the visuality and iconography of graveyard epitaphs and mourning cards, this paper takes Manchester's Southern Cemetery (opened in 1871) as a case study, paying particular attention to femininity, often overlooked in studies of mourning and memorialisation. It analyses a selection of the 170 mourning cards from the little-known Laura Seddon collection at Special Collections Museum, Manchester Metropolitan University. The elegiac poetry and Biblical messages used on these cards will be analysed in relation to the aesthetic of death, the female mourner and memorial objects such as urns, angels and flowers. Should we read the verbal/visual dynamics of cards and gravestones commemorating female death in terms of a refashioning of dominant consolatory/celebratory attitudes to loss between 1870 and 1910?

11.15-11.45am Break (Glynne Room)

11.45-12.45pm Panel 2 – Natural and Political Evolution (Chapel)

Luciana Hermida, *Imagining the Invisible: Art and Science in the work of Charles Darwin and Ernst Haeckel*

A significant moment of change in the Victorian period was the publication of Charles Darwin's 'Origin of Species' in 1859, which opened the conversation around evolution and the position of humans within the web of life. Alongside this, representations and new concepts of nature started becoming popular, such as the art produced by the German zoologist Ernst Haeckel. Haeckel was a great admirer of Darwin's work and contributed to the visualisation of Darwin's theories through the creation of phylogenetic trees as well as producing an extensive body of work about Radiolaria (single celled marine organisms). He

also coined the term ecology as the "relation of the animal both to its organic as well as its inorganic environment".

The organic interplay of art and science, emerged through the knowledge exchange between Darwin and Haeckel enabled a revised role of art, and the role of imagination, in the understanding of the unseen structures of the natural world. Through Haeckel's artistic depictions of the unseen, the complexities within the natural world became visible paving a renewed sense of connection with nature. Science not only inspired the work of Haeckel but also the use of imagination enabled him to achieve a sense of wonder in his artistic representations.

As an artist myself, I will aim to talk about the role of imagination in connecting what we see with what we cannot see, linking it with the scientific work of Darwin and Haeckel. Imagination is key to produce my artistic work, which is informed by observation and the appreciation of the invisible to the naked eye. My intention is to imagine what lies beyond our vision and manifest it visually, with the hope we can re connect with nature more meaningfully.

Alice Cleave and Jade Arrowsmith, *Rethinking Politics: The Lifespan of Liberal Democracy in Westminster*

The long nineteenth century is a period that underwent significant moments of change in all areas of society. The landscape and economy of the UK saw consequential change in the 19th century, and the political reforms of the period established the basis of liberal democracy in the UK, extended access to education, and provided more centralised welfare support. The reforms of this period also underpin much of the current political processes of Westminster today.

It is easy to identify moments of change retrospectively, as the impact that they have had can be analysed. However, is it equally possible to identify them as they are happening? Some events may feel momentous at the time, but often have little lasting impact. The question that needs to be asked now is, are we at the end of the life of liberal democracy or is it still growing? There have been increasing calls for change under the current parliamentary system, which raises the question of whether the twenty-first century will see the same levels of change as those experienced in the nineteenth century. This paper aims to provide a reflection on how the electoral reform of the past is relevant to contemporary discussions on the state of liberal democracy and may provide insight into future democratic evolution.

12.45-2.15pm Lunch (Food for Thought)

2.15-3.15pm Keynote 2 – Michael Sanders, *Disturbing the Dust: Finding Places of (and for) Victorian and Edwardian Working-Class Writing* (Chapel)

3.15-4.15pm Panel 3 – Hot off the Press: Daily Reading in Newspapers and Periodicals (Chapel)

Elizabeth Rawlinson-Mills, *Imperial Masculinities in the Newspaper Poetry of the South African War, 1899-1902*

The South African War of 1899-1902 has typically been characterised as the high point of Victorian imperialism, and a watershed moment in Britain's understanding of itself. Central to these narratives are constructions of imperial masculinity.

This paper draws on original archive research into poems published in British and colonial newspapers during the war, setting Kipling's Barrack-Room Ballads alongside an international multitude of amateur and often anonymous imitators and parodists who have so far never received critical attention. I begin by arguing that Kipling transformed the figure of the common soldier into an exemplar of Britishness, with surprisingly widespread influence on representations of soldiers in the newspaper poems of 1899-1902: Kipling's Tommy Atkins was robust, single-minded and hypermasculine – a vitally reassuring figure in times of imperial anxiety. In the second half of the paper, however, I turn to the fundraiser-text that 'went viral': Kipling's 'Absent-Minded Beggar'. Many of the hundreds of poets inspired (or provoked) by this paradigmatic newspaper poem used the structures and idioms that Kipling had popularized to assert alternative visions of the ideal military man. These poems of parody and protest use their own versions of Tommy Atkins to voice uncertainties or anxieties about the Britain, if not the Britons, at the heart of the imperial project. While my paper allows the extraordinary and international influence of Kipling – his voices and verse forms, as much as his politics – to come into focus, it makes clear that the brief hegemony of his transgressively energetic Barrack-Room boys, with their 'locker-room banter', is no sooner established than it is fractured and contested.

The issues of masculinity and international politics so fraught in 1899-1902 feel very contemporary, as global leaders pursue identity campaigns and policy agendas apparently driven by what we now call toxic masculinity. My paper will invite us to consider resonances, parallels and regressions, bringing the fin-de-siècle imaginatively (and uncomfortably) close to 2024.

Lucy Ella Rose, *The Death of the Yellow Book: The Birth of the Fin de Siècle Sorority*

'It was Oscar Wilde's tragedy that killed it', writes New Woman writer Netta Syrett of the iconic 1890s periodical the Yellow Book (1939: 95), famously associated with male aestheticism and decadence. This paper considers the infamous Wilde trial of 1895 as a pivotal point in the gender history of Victorian-Edwardian England, arguing that the resulting death of the Yellow Book galvanised a creative sorority of women writers, artists and activists at the fin de siècle. It illustrates the works and networks of women who collaborated in professional creative partnerships and coteries, to an unprecedented extent, at a time when the women's suffrage movement was gaining momentum. This paper explores the concurrent rise of creative and political sisterhood, focusing on specific

case studies of biological sisters who – having contributed in word and image to the Yellow Book – went on to redirect their careers and form empowering female collectives in a radical departure from the Yellow Book's male editorship and elitism. Key figures discussed are lesser-known cohabiting sisters Netta, Nellie and Mabel Syrett, and Marion and Ella Hepworth Dixon, who actively worked together and with many of their female contemporaries. These include: writer and feminist Evelyn Sharp; writer and illustrator Mabel Dearmer; suffragette Marion Wallace Dunlop; and artist Pamela Colman Smith, with whom they contributed to the same projects (children's fiction and theatre), clubs (Lyceum Club, New English Art Club) and societies (Society of Women Journalists, suffrage societies). This paper's analysis – of literary and visual texts, female and feminist collectivity, and New Woman networking strategies – shows how women redefined themselves in relation to masculinity, femininity and society at the turn of the century.

4.45-4.45pm Break (Glynne Room)

4.45-6.15 Panel 4 - Glasshouses and Crystal Palaces (Chapel)

Joanna Knowles, *Domesticating the Exotic: Global Flowers in the British Garden and the British Popular Imagination*

This paper would examine the consequences of the invention of the Wardian case in 1833 as enabling a revolution that unfolded gradually, yet also had dramatic repercussions. Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward's creation of a mini glasshouse carrying case, which allowed young exotic plants to be transported to Britain while kept at hospitable temperatures – enabled an influx of exoticism into British houses and gardens. In what has been called the 'golden age of gardening' (Musgrave 2007), the increasing ability to transport flowers and cuttings across the globe led to a surge of enthusiasm for conveying one's wealthy and/or fashionable status via the display of such exotic plants and blooms. This enthusiasm spread to gardens of various kinds, from the country estate to the humble cottage and to city yards and windowsills. Moreover, it infused the popular imagination, with various nineteenth-century fictions depicting their protagonists' ownership of and attraction to flowers as a way of configuring social aspirations and new cultural identities. This paper would explore the increasing presence of well-travelled blooms like the orchid, which Margaret Willes identifies as one of the 'wildly fashionable florist's flowers' (2014: 108) in popular nineteenth-century fictions like Braddon's and Collins's. These fashionable flowers, and their ability to evoke a sense of travel beyond British borders and likewise British social and cultural mores, will be considered alongside Sergeant Cuff's adoration of the classically English rose. Garden fashions were in a state of flux during much of the nineteenth century, so that the peaceful qualities traditionally attributed to a garden scene could be re-read as embodying notions of contrast, conflict and rivalry between difference garden styles, blooms and floral arrangements. The paper will examine the shifting and contrasting sets of values, aspirations and possibilities that proliferated in the wake of Ward's little glass cases becoming widely used.

Angela Kenny, *The Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 and the Exhibition's Legacy*

This talk will cover the setting up of the Royal Commission under Prince Albert's presidency and how it went about organising the Great Exhibition, the sorts of items that were exhibited, the success of the Exhibition, how the profits were spent on the Commission's estate in South Kensington, how the area was developed as a site for Science and Art including the establishment of the V&A, Natural History Museum and Royal Albert Hall, and how from 1891 onwards the Commission has sponsored early career scientists and engineers. As part of this, it will describe the Commission's archives which are available for researchers to use.

Jim Cheshire, *Stained Glass, Hawarden, and the Gladstone Family*

This paper will focus on an event that took place in June 1898: the unveiling of the stained glass in West Window of St Deiniol's Church Hawarden. Designed by Edward Burne-Jones and dedicated to William and Mary Gladstone, the window was planned as a thanksgiving for the long lives of William and Mary Gladstone, although William died before the window was finished and Burne-Jones himself died less than a month later.

While focused on the West Window, this paper will explore the prolonged relationship between the Gladstone family and stained glass. The style and content of the West Window was the subject of considerable debate between the artist and the Gladstone children and other windows in St. Deiniol's commemorate not just the family but political connections, as shown by an example that acknowledged Gladstone's relationship with Armenian Christians.

This paper will reflect on stained glass as a mode of commemoration and the way in which it represented people and events. In particular, it will explore the relationship between religious imagery and secular concerns: how patrons sought to articulate about their own lives and beliefs through the vocabulary of Christian iconography.

6.15-6.45pm Opportunity to visit St Deiniol's Church, restored by Sir Gilbert Scott in the nineteenth century after a fire and featuring several stained glass windows by Edward Burne-Jones as well as an effigy of William and Catherine Gladstone

6.45 Dinner (Food for Thought)

Thursday 12th of September

8.30-9am Registration

9-10am Keynote 3 – Deborah Wynne and Holly Kirby, ‘I stumbled across...’: Chance Encounters with Museum Collections (Chapel)

10-11am Panel 5 – Women of Paradise: Depictions of Women in Art (Chapel)

Jessica Thomas, *The Moment the Store Window Became Spectacular* and Emile Zola’s *The Ladies Paradise*

This paper will consider the momentous event of the explosion of visual culture on the streets of Paris in the Second Empire, during the governance by Emperor Napoleon III. The paper will consider this event on the micro – scale of the department store, which is a metaphor for Paris during this period. The department store was composed of several layers of visuality to attract passers-by in the streets to become consumers within its interior space. The first of these spaces, which this paper will consider in depth is the store window. This in turn was composed of layers of visually attractive and alluring objects and mannequins who gave life to the goods. These commodities were vital components of the new visual space of the city, with the shop mannequin taking centre stage in encouraging the bourgeois society to spend their money. The paper will consider the evolution of the mannequin from mere tailor’s dummy in the workroom, to an avatar of woman and the symbol of perfect femininity, in the spotlight position of the store window. The paper will take a literary focus with Émile Zola’s 1883 novel, *The Ladies’ Paradise*. It will focus upon the dummies in the department store window and throughout the store itself and will consider how Zola’s text articulates how the sight of the dummies displaying the commodities affects the predominantly female viewers. These effects include the fragmentation of identity, the emergence of the commodity fetish as well as notions of mimesis of the machine by the human and the importance of the image, which in turn becomes superficial and artificially constructed.

Bethany Dahlstrom, *Women and Birds in Edward Linley Sambourne’s Punch Cartoons*

Founded by Ebenezer Landells and Henry Mayhew in 1841 and fashioned after the French satirical magazine *Le Charivari*, *Punch Magazine* became a radical source of entertainment in the Victorian period. While *Punch* featured drawings from several well-known satirists, one artist in particular, Edward Linley Sambourne, focused on the rise of female feather fashion, particularly in his collection “Mr. Punch’s Designs After Nature”. Sambourne’s images follow the fashion trends through the Victorian period, with the explosion of feathers in the fashion industry most prominently in the 1860s. His pictures depict everything from wearing whole swans as headpieces to weaving peacock feathers into hair, with one striking image depicting a woman literally turning into a bird of prey as she attacks other birds. The commentary surrounding these pictures in the magazine itself suggests that the women who sought to wear bird feathers as fashion were nearly

becoming as ruthless as birds of prey themselves, so far gone were they in their quest to engage in the latest and most exotic fashion trends.

While Victorian feather fashion has been heavily studied, this paper seeks to examine multiple Sambourne cartoons and what they say about the relationship between women and birds, particularly focusing on both women and birds as the Other. While some women chose to wear feathers, thus contributing to the extinction of certain species, other women chose to form societies, such as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, which still exists today, to protect those same small creatures with whom they had formed a kinship connection. This paper will consider how Sambourne's cartoons can enhance contemporary understandings of Victorian feather fashion and its destructive habits.

11-11.15am Break (Glynne Room)

11.15-12.45am Panel 6 – Hidden Histories and Public Events (Chapel)

This joint panel stems from and develops the February 2024 public engagement event at Charles Darwin's Shrewsbury birthplace, The Mount, 'Susannah Darwin at The Mount: Hidden Maternal Histories'. The event, staged in collaboration with Shropshire Museum Service, brought together academics, creative practitioners, and members of the public who share an interest in exploring the forgotten life and legacy of Charles Darwin's mother, Susannah, with a view to including her story within new on-site heritage developments. This panel aims to extend the reach of our research about Susannah's experiences of motherhood, her guiding influence on the young Charles, and her contribution to the Darwin family home, business interests, and garden. We also aim to reflect anew on the impact and value of creative, public engagement events by drawing on our experience of the original event at The Mount. To this end, the panel will include a co-delivered contribution from two postgraduate students who attended the event, providing opportunities for them to showcase original films and poetry created in response.

Gaynor Llewellyn-Jenkins, *An Introduction to the Life and Letters of Susannah Darwin, née Wedgwood (1765-1817): The Reclamation of Susannah Darwin*

Jude Piesse, *The Mount Doves and Other Tales: 'Susannah Darwin at The Mount'*

Charlie Pryce and Yanira Gonzalez, *Reflections on 'Susannah Darwin at The Mount'*

12.45-2.15pm Lunch (Food for Thought)

2.15-4pm Heritage Fair (Reading Rooms)

An on-site fair for organisations in the North West with Victorian collections to advertise their holdings and to foster research and public engagement connections between heritage organisations and researchers. Are you currently working on a Victorian project or in the early stages of planning one? This is your opportunity to find collections that may be helpful for you and to pick the brains of the professionals who manage them.

Heritage organisations include:

- John Rylands Research Institute and Library
- the Portico Library
- Manchester Metropolitan Special Collections Museum
- North East Wales Archives
- Cheshire Archives
- the Walker Art Gallery
- Edge Hill University Archives
- Liverpool Central Library and Archive
- University of Liverpool Archives and Special Collections
- Liverpool John Moores University
- St Helen's Archive Service
- Unilever Archives
- Wirral Archives Service
- Gladstone's Library

4-5pm Panel 7 – Abolition of Slavery and its Legacies (Chapel)

Alice Kinghorn, Religious Discourse of 'Civilisation' after the Abolition of Slavery in the British Caribbean

This paper examines the aftermath of the abolition of slavery in the British Caribbean through the influence of British missionaries. In the early nineteenth century, British missionaries had enjoyed a position supported by the British government, seen as necessary to 'civilise' enslaved people in the British Caribbean. Following the Abolition Act of 1834 however, missionaries had to justify their existence in the Caribbean by continuing to manufacture the importance of religious instruction to the 'civility' of apprentices and newly freed people. By examining the continuing work of Christian missionary societies sent from Britain following abolition, this paper argues that the effects of Abolition were not synonymous with 'progress,' and that dangerous links between civility and Christianity were maintained through British missionary presence.

Firstly, this paper considers the political and fiscal support granted to Christian missionaries in Britain through the 'Negro Education Act' (1834). Additionally, it examines language used in missionary periodicals describing their work and political discourse that convinced donors and subscribers to continue supporting missionaries beyond emancipation. Secondly, it examines missionary correspondence in this period to understand how teachers and catechists viewed their work in the climate of apprenticeship and freedom. Finally, it examines the choices made by newly freed people in accepting or rejecting missionary teachings. It considers how missionary societies were forced to re-evaluate their teaching content and methods.

In doing so, this paper argues that British missionaries managed to maintain their relevance in the years following emancipation – by advocating a ‘spiritual freedom’ only found through religious instruction. This definition of freedom contributes to scholarship suggesting that viewing the Abolition of Slavery as a dividing point on a timeline obscures complexities of the period of apprenticeship and freedom.

Alex Patterson, *Abolition of Slavery, its Legacies, and Representation in Neoclassical Sculpture*

This paper will explore how the social and political aftermath of slavery has shaped the perception of Black and Global Ethnic Majority (GEM) people in Britain and across the British Empire. Despite abolition, the Slavery Compensation Act rewarded slave-owners and continued to withdraw the rights of enslaved people. Wealth from slavery and its economies enabled the rapid expansion of major cities in Britain, such as Liverpool. Local influential merchants, bankers and politicians founded institutions to promote learning and culture. They centred themselves in this narrative, through the buying, collecting and commissioning of art, books and specimens which influenced British education. The formation of these collections rejected slavery and its associated histories. Instead, they promoted white western ideals creating racial biases that continue to exist today. The Walker Art Gallery is closely linked with these people and institutions. Their gifts, bequests and purchases were the foundation of the collection today.

This paper focuses on 19th century neoclassical sculpture at the Walker, specifically the work of Liverpool sculptor John Gibson (1790-1886) and the British School in Rome. It examines how the neoclassical style reinforced and contributed to racial biases in Britain. The paper will share new methodologies to identify, research and share links to slavery, colonialism and empire. It will also provide examples of how to address absences in museum collections and explore ways of recentring Black histories. By working with young people from Liverpool's Black and Global Ethnic Majority communities, Patterson's work creates a holistic approach for collaborative learning. It focuses on giving a voice to the people who feel unwelcome or unrepresented in museum spaces. It also explores ways to share these histories while supporting healing and recovery. Most importantly, the paper will reflect on the inevitable challenges and restrictions of this work and offer potential opportunities going forward.

5-5.15pm Break (Glynne Room)

5.15-6.45pm Panel 8 – Unheard Voices: Twenty-First Century Approaches to Victorian Collections (Chapel)

Kathryn Simpson, *#Legacy 150: ‘The Museum will not be decolonised’ – Understanding Colonial Collections in Non-Ethnographic British Museums with Equity, Humanity and Honesty*

This paper will discuss a project currently taking place at the David Livingstone Museum, Blantyre, Scotland in partnership with the University of Sheffield.

On the 18th of April 1874 David Livingstone was given what amounted to a state funeral in Westminster Abbey in London. Livingstone had come to embody, at his death, all that was central to British ideas of colonialism. Livingstone died at the end of April 1873 in present day Chipundu, Zambia. The subsequent transcontinental journey led by Jacob Wainwright and James Chuma to take his body to the coast to be returned to Britain became the stuff of legend. Importantly, this journey reinforced notions of Britain seeing itself as a global leader with a soft-power that could make people of other nations walk 1500 miles in 10 months to return a body to its home country. This “soft-power empire liberalism” not only manifested in how Britain saw itself but in how its museums were and are presented as being custodians of the histories and cultures of the world.¹

The project explores what objects mean as representations of human experience, how we can accurately represent their lived experience and their weight as political and social signifiers in the contemporary world. The research that drives this project looks to move outwith the boundaries of normal, as seen by Western knowledge hegemonies, research practice and looks to understand what motivates desires around restitution and repatriation. It uses cutting-edge digital technologies to facilitate tactile engagement with objects that are usually gatekept and designated as protected from the majority, and only accessible to those that are ascribed as professional.

Janette Martin, Smoke, Squalor, and Public Engagement: How the Modern History Archives at the John Rylands Library, Manchester, Support Research

Manchester underwent rapid changes during the early decades of the 19th century. It was the shock city of the Industrial Revolution. Cotton production sited in colossal mills generated great riches, yet alongside the wealth sat squalor, overcrowding and poverty. Unemployment, high food prices and taxation led to tensions and dissatisfaction with Government and fomented social and political change and an appetite for democracy.

This paper will take ‘The Industrial Revolution’ as a key event that shaped Victorian Britain, examining how that momentous change played out in the Manchester. Its perspective will be ‘history from below’ examining how the working people worked to improve their lives and those of their family and communities via political engagement, education and social and economic movements for change (Chartism, temperance, mutual improvement, cooperation). It will also centre the archival records held at the John Rylands Library which document these pivotal decades of industrial growth and social change and how the lives of working people are represented (or not) in the collections.

Rather than offering a more traditional academic paper, this presentation will comprise a series of short case studies on how the Rylands works with academics to support impact and facilitate public engagement, through exhibitions, events and research festival activities. It hopes to stimulate discussion on how archivists, librarians and heritage professionals can work fruitfully with academic researchers studying the Victorian period while encouraging new and dynamic use of archival collections.

Imogen Durant, *After Roget: Reflections on the Power and Possibilities of an Expansive Approach to Language*

The publication of Roget's Thesaurus in 1852 was a defining moment in the Victorian era. It's difficult to overstate the ongoing significance of this text, which has sold over 300 million copies and has never been out of print. A medic, mathematician and lexicographer, Peter Mark Roget was also the first secretary of the Portico Library. This organisation was established by a group of Manchester businessmen, doctors and scientists who were formative in establishing Cottonopolis as an industrial city.

The publication of his thesaurus demonstrates an emerging interest in language during the Victorian era. As the 1870 Education Act brought rising literacy, this new readership created a mass market for popular fiction. But this narrative of the Victorian era as a moment of social reform, class mobility and economic progress overlooks the experiences of those omitted from the historical record. While the library's archives offer insights into the reading habits of the wealthy elite, the story of progress on which our history rests overlooks the exploitation of the enslaved people on whose labour the city was built.

The library's collections reflect the hierarchies of knowledge upon which these systems of oppression were established and still exist today. Europeans colonists dominated the people and lands they colonised by ascribing order and naming. In the same way, library catalogues attempt to organise the knowledge according to a controlled vocabulary, often reflecting the perspectives of the white institutions that define them.

The Portico Dynamic Collections project hopes to return to the principles upon which Roget based his thesaurus, considering the power and possibilities of an expansive approach to language, and exploring the ways that catalogue records can 'facilitate the expression of ideas' that are not only our own. Applying reparative reading and inclusive cataloguing methodologies, blended with community-centred programme co-design, we are piloting an iterative approach to diversify our engagement and deepen hyperlocal relationships. This presentation will share the findings of the project to date, reflecting on this methodology as a way of challenging Victorian hierarchies of knowledge and considering the ways that language can be used expansively to reshape our understanding of 'People, Purpose, and Place' in historic books.

6.45 Dinner (Food for Thought)