

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: York St John University		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 27 English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: Print Matters: Unlocking the Potential of Eighteenth-Century Political Print		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2016-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Dr Adam James Smith	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Lecturer in Literature (2016-17), Lecturer in Literature and Liberal Arts (2017-18), Lecturer in Eighteenth-Century Literature (2018-20), Senior Lecturer in Eighteenth-Century Literature (2020-present)	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2016 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Since 2016, Smith's research on ephemeral print in the eighteenth century has led to the creation of an open-access digital archive and has reached a wider audience through collaboration with social media influences. Impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Positively changing a popular influencer's Youtube channel by demonstrating through collaboration the significant public interest in eighteenth-century materials, bringing her channel larger returning audience [5.1] ▪ changing the way York Explore Libraries and Archives understand, organise and disseminate information pertaining to collections used in Smith's research [5.2] ▪ inspiring further work on and responses to and capitalise upon this subject [5.2; 5.3; 5.4] 		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Since 2014, Dr Adam James Smith has researched the role that ephemeral print played in negotiating the relationship that British citizens shared with government and state during the eighteenth century. From this research, two York-based case-studies stood out: the life and literature of James Montgomery and Christopher Wyvill, to men involved in print, politics and protest.</p> <p>In 2017, Smith published an article in <i>The Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies</i> (JECS) which situated Joseph Addison's metropolitan and Whiggish model for property-owning citizenship, as espoused in his 1715-16 periodical <i>The Free-holder</i>, alongside competing models that appeared in the periodical press throughout the eighteenth century [3.1]. A major case-study in this article was the periodical writing of Christopher Wyvill, which was published in York. Wyvill was a leading member of the controversial Yorkshire Association, which at the end of the eighteenth-century petitioned parliament for greater representation of the North in government.</p> <p>Smith's work on Wyvill, who regularly featured as both a news subject and contributor in the <i>Sheffield Register</i> and <i>Sheffield Iris</i>, led him to the works of Sheffield-based newspaper editors Joseph Gales and James Montgomery. Gales, founder and editor of the <i>Sheffield Register</i>, fled the country after charges of treason and sedition whilst Montgomery, his apprentice and successor, was twice sentenced for publishing seditious materials and held in York Castle</p>		

Prison. After his time in prison, Montgomery became a prolific hymn-writer, philanthropist, director of the Sheffield Boiler company and, in his later years, a Tory MP, demonstrating a range of different positions on the question of civic participation, dissent and partisan allegiance.

Smith published much of his work on Montgomery in a book chapter focussing on his prison writing: the site where he reflected most explicitly on the question of where the lines should be drawn between partisan opposition and treasonous dissent [3.2]. This discussion is situated in a broader survey of York's representation in eighteenth-century cheap print as both a radical city (home of Christopher Wyvill's Yorkshire Association, for instance) and a profoundly conservative one (home of York Castle prison where most radicals in the North of England were charged and sentenced).

Whilst composing this book chapter, which was published in 2020, Smith established an open access digital archive title 'Words with Wagtails: York Prison Poetry.' This makes publicly available Montgomery's prison poetry alongside other primary sources which help contextualise his work (such as the radical writing of Christopher Wyvill), offers critical commentary and invites creative responses from the public. The archive has provided the bedrock for the wide range of talks, events and collaborations detailed below.

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

[3.1] Smith, Adam James, 'Property, Politics and Patriotism: The Figure of the "Freeholder" in Eighteenth-Century Partisan Print', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 40.3, Sept 2017. pp. 345-362. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1754-0208.12463>

[3.2] Smith, Adam James, The 'Crazy Clock' of York: Collapsing Time and Unstable Reality in James Montgomery's Urban Topographic Poetry, *Time, the City, and the Literary Imagination* (Palgrave, 2020), pp. 15-32. ISBN 978-3-030-55961-8. [Can be Supplied by the HEI upon Request]

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

In February 2017, whilst undertaking primary research for what would become [3.2], Smith launched the Words with Wagtails: York Prison Writing (WWW), an open-access digital archive of poetry. The poetry is accompanied by contextualising primary materials that were also used in [3.1] and [3.2]. It has been accessed by 1545 online users and has provided the basis for two York St John University 'Student as Researcher' projects. The project later invited creative responses from the public, a selection of which are archived on the site. WWW has generated three areas of impact:

- **Unlocking New Audiences**

Whilst promoting WWW, Smith caught the attention of the Digital Marketing and Online Content Creator at Harper Collins UK and, on 8 May 2017, appeared on her popular YouTube channel (which has over 16,000 subscribers) to discuss his work on eighteenth-century print culture [5.1]. The video has currently been viewed almost 4000 times. The influencer notes that it is one of her most recommended videos and her "most clicked on video card." Describing how the video is used, she explained:

"My viewers often use this video as a starter guide for their own academic study of the 18th century [...] 50.8% of the viewers of the video are not followers of mine, which is evidence of the video reaching a wide audience in a broader public setting. The video is often searched for and watched by those looking for different videos on the 18th century [meaning] Adam's research is reaching wider than my own followers and introducing more people to 18th century print culture. The video boasts brilliant viewer retention

meaning that although people came to the video from different sources, Adam's research and insight kept people watching and engaged.”

Fenby acknowledges the beneficial impact of this collaboration on her own understanding and on her channel: “After our video collaboration, I felt inspired to research print culture (especially in the North of England) during the 18th Century and included my own findings in my Masters [in Eighteenth-Century Literature]. [It] made me re-think and challenge everything [I] knew about the 18th Century! [It] added value to my own YouTube content with an increase in views, watch-time and a gain in subscribers. [The] video is the foundation of all my 18th century content and contributes to all future videos as a brilliant reference point.”

- **Unlocking the Archive**

WWW, and accompanying talks, also influenced the Access and Engagement Archivist at York Explore Libraries and Archives [5.2]. As she notes:

“The engagement activities Adam has undertaken have allowed me the opportunity to learn more about the political and literary context of the creation of some of the archives and special collections publications in my care [which] in turn helps me [when] dealings with customers who wish to use those archive collections, as I'm more confident in answering enquiries. I also manage Explore's Special Collections material, and his knowledge of print-making and publishing have directly benefitted me in that work. [...] In particular, when I was cataloguing the archives of the Yorkshire Association (a later 18th century movement for political reform) the information he provided was invaluable.”

- **Unlocking New Stories**

Local audiences have also benefited from Smith's eight live events, delivered between 17/10/2016 and 3/5/2020 [5.6]. For example, after a talk given on 13/11/2018, an author reflected that: ‘It made me think differently about the city I live in, and the ways in which past generations related to it. I found it particularly useful as a novelist who is writing about eighteenth-century York - the talk directed me towards some primary sources I've never heard of before, and these will help me with my fiction’ [5.3]. A historian, author, and independent publisher has noted the specific impact of Smith's research on his own work and on the local community:

“There were some remarkable people in Sheffield who had great influence over our culture including the Galeses, Montgomery and Joseph Mather. Sadly they are not taught in schools. They should be. They should be celebrated and what they tried to achieve better understood. Adam's research has helped to keep the importance of these people alive. [5.4]”

WWW's second student researcher based her undergraduate dissertation on materials archived in this digital anthology, reflecting that: “Adam changed the way that I thought about [print culture] entirely and really influenced my desire to pursue it further. [...] Adam's influence and work played a large part in my MA proposal and statement. I plan on going on to do a PhD in this field” [5.4]

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

[5.1] Testimonial: Influencer (Youtube, Instagram, Twitter) and Digital Marketing and Online Content Creator at Harper Collins UK.

[5.2] Testimonial: York Explore Libraries and Archives, Access and Engagement Archivist at

[5.3] Testimonial: Historian, Author and Independent Publisher (1889 Books)

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[5.4] Testimonial: Former Student-as-Researcher on the 'Words with Wagtails: York Prison Poetry' project, now studying an MA in Eighteenth-Century Literature at the University of York.

[5.5] Compiled Online metrics ('Words with Wagtails: York Prison Poetry')

[5.6] Survey Data: Feedback from events (2016-20) collated into a spreadsheet (96 responses).