

4.3.1 Gladstone's Library Collection Development Policy – Circulating Collection

Introduction

Gladstone's Library was founded in the late nineteenth century by four-time prime minister, William Ewart Gladstone, with a collection of 20-30,000 printed items from his personal library. Many of these books are annotated, inscribed, or give an insight into Gladstone's reading practices, and the Library has an obligation to preserve this Foundation Collection as part of the nation's cultural heritage.

The Foundation Collection informs the collection development policy for books and archives and the Circulating Collection has continued to be developed, particularly in areas of Gladstonian interest: literature, theology, history and politics. The Library now holds a total of 27 distinct book collections, including historic and contemporary collections, and a large Circulating Collection. Continuing the legacy of the Foundation Collection, the Library aims to promote research and accessibility to its resources through development of its Circulating Collection and special collections.

The Circulating Collection is the Library's principle contemporary collection. It has been developed as an evolving research collection and is subject to both weeding of older material and purchase of new acquisitions to stay up to date with recent thinking.

Purpose of the collection development policy

The purpose of this collection development policy is to outline the key areas in which Gladstone's Library develops its Circulating Collection. The policy outlines the scope of existing collections and historic acquisition practices with a view to future collection development.

The policy provides Library Trustees, staff, and Reading Room users with clear guidance and criteria for acquisition, weeding, and general management of the Library's holdings. This guidance helps the Library staff manage funds effectively by establishing priorities, and ensuring consistency and objectiveness across all acquisition areas.

Mission statement

The general Library and Reading Room mission statements are available to view on our website.

Purpose of the library

William Ewart Gladstone originally founded the Library with the aim of making his large personal library accessible to others, 'for the purposes of learning, education, literature, and instruction', and particularly for the 'pursuit of divine learning'. The Library today continues to uphold these aims as a place for research, discussion, reflection, and learning.

Library's audience (focus on collections)

The Library's audience is broad and varied, in keeping with our varied spaces. All Residents who are staying at the Library also have access to the Reading Rooms, and the majority of Residents

come to stay specifically for the Reading Rooms. The collections are also accessible by registering as either a Reader, or for a day pass ('Researcher') card.

Within these Reading Room user groups, our main audiences for printed collections are:

- Academics/people with a research interest – particularly nineteenth-century studies, Gladstone; this includes scholarship winners
- Clergy and lay ministers
- People attending courses or events at the Library
- General visitors – often local people who use the Reading Rooms regularly as a work space and who might find items through serendipity more than design

History of the Library and its collections

The Library was founded by William Ewart Gladstone in the late nineteenth century with a collection of books from his personal library. Gladstone founded the Library for the 'pursuit of divine learning' as well as 'for the purposes of learning, education, literature and instruction'. He hoped that by making his library more public, it would be accessible and helpful to a wider audience. His collection is very broad, ranging across 21 classmarks and including topics as varied as Christian doctrine, ancient archaeology, church history, travel and topography, art, literature, and natural sciences.¹

Gladstone did not view his collection as static, but wanted it to remain current and up-to-date with new thinking. As a result, acquisitions have been a part of the Library's work since the very beginning, as our accession registers demonstrate. Since it opened, the Library has accumulated a large Circulating Collection, totalling over 52,000 titles as of 2024. The Circulating Collection was built directly onto the Foundation Collection, and Gladstone's books were not stored as a discrete collection until 2012. The Library historically acquired books across all 21 of Gladstone's classmarks. This was a mammoth undertaking, and considerations of funds and storage space meant that some of these were removed in 2010. The Library now continues to develop holdings in the remaining thirteen classmarks:

Biblical archaeology	Christian liturgy	History
The Bible	Church History	Literature
Patristics	Philosophy and psychology	Social Sciences
Christianity: Doctrine	Anthropology	Art and architecture
Christianity: Practice		

Although the Foundation Collection is now stored separately to the Circulating Collection, the Library aims to maintain this interconnection between the Foundation and Circulating Collections so that they can be read alongside each other, and provide inspiration or provoke thought. This aim informs our collection development policy.

As well as the Foundation and Circulating Collections, through the course of its history, the Library has also acquired various other special collections in the key Gladstonian areas of literature, history and politics, and especially theology. These include a large collection of pamphlets, ephemeral items relating to Gladstone and Hawarden Castle, the research collections

¹ For a more detailed history of the library, please see T.W. Pritchard's *A history of St. Deiniol's Library* (Monad Press, 1999). For more information on Gladstone as reader, see Ruth Clayton Windscheffel, *Reading Gladstone* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

of specialists in the field of Gladstone and the nineteenth century, the private collections of several theologians or clergy, focused collections of primary and secondary sources relating to, for example, the Franciscan Order, and the Order of St John the Evangelist, and a collection of early printed books formerly owned by the Glynne family.

The Library also has a strong history of collecting archival material and today holds 35 individual archives. We have significant holdings in the areas of nineteenth-century history, literature and theology, and particular strengths include the papers and correspondence of the Glynne and Gladstone families, nineteenth-century literary culture, Anglican history and theology, liberal theology, and the history of Gladstone's Library.

The Library aims to make these special collections and archives as accessible as possible for research and general interest, and develops holdings in the Circulating Collection to complement them and facilitate this research.

Selection process

The Library aims to maintain the purposes laid out in the Foundation document in developing the collections today.

Through acquisitions, Gladstone's Library aims to cater to the needs and interests of its primary audiences. This ranges from academics and independent researchers to people with a general interest, or more general visitors. Within our broad collections, we particularly aim to build on our existing collection strengths, and develop our Circulating Collection to provide social, historical and intellectual context for our Special Collections and Archives.

The Library's priority areas and budget are agreed by the Warden, Trustees, Director of Collections and Research, and the Librarian. New acquisitions are selected in line with these priorities by the Librarian and Director of Collections and Research.

Criteria for acquisition

Librarians have a responsibility to be objective and inclusive in collection development, selecting material, and making this material accessible to library users. The inclusion of any material in Gladstone's Library's collections does not signify endorsement of or approval of said material by the Reading Room team, Warden or Trustees of the Library. Unless subject to GDPR laws, Gladstone's Library makes all collection items available to Reading Room users, although it retains the right to ask for advance notice of requests for some material, including special collections and archives.

Like all libraries, Gladstone's Library is subject to limits on funding and storage. As a result, we have established priority areas and criteria for the acquisition and retention of contemporary printed collections. These criteria include:

- Relevance to the Library's mission and purpose
- Relevance to other collections held at Gladstone's Library, particularly special collections and archives
- Relevance and contribution to existing collection strengths, or gaps in our holdings
- Relevance to scholarships offered by the Library
- Relevance to events and courses run by the Library

- Timeliness or permanent value, longevity
- Reputation of the author, editor, or publisher
- Accuracy
- Recommendations or suggestions from library users, and relevance to the Library's audience

The Librarian and Director of Collections and Research use various professional tools and resources when applying these criteria to potential book acquisitions, including reviews and other published references.

Principle collecting areas

Gladstone's Library acquires books across thirteen classmarks, with particular focus on areas of Gladstonian interest, namely literature, theology, and history and politics. The Foundation Collection has provided the basis for the development of the Circulating Collection, and although now stored separately, we aim to ensure that these two collections can still be read in tandem, and inspire and impact each other. This informs some of our principal collecting areas, particularly with regards to social, historical, and intellectual contexts:

- Primary and secondary works relating to nineteenth-century literature, theology, and history and politics – as Gladstone's own life spanned the nineteenth-century, we aim to complement contemporary works within the Foundation Collection and provide key context for accessing these works today, as well as highlight new and evolving areas of research for the time period 1780-1914; we also aim to provide context for the papers and correspondence held in our nineteenth-century archives
- William Gladstone, his immediate family, life, work, and times, particularly research which makes use of our special collections and archives
- Liberal politics including historical and contemporary works, and works relating to the history of liberalism
- Liberal theology, including queer, feminist, womanist, and Black theologies, liturgy, and interfaith dialogue
- Contemporary literature, particularly as represented in the Library's awards, programmes, and events
- Book history and culture, particularly in relation to private collecting and libraries in the nineteenth century

The Library also aims to develop its collections to support our scholarships, including but not limited to:

- St Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan order
- The history of technology, particularly during and following the Industrial Revolution
- The history of the slave trade, chattel slavery, and indentured servitude in the Caribbean

Format of materials

Gladstone's Library prefers to acquire materials firstly in print format. Items are currently collected in the following formats:

- Books: the Library primarily acquires fiction and non-fiction books in paperback format where possible, to maximise storage space and best use of funds. The Library purchases hardback format in cases of oversize books or in certain instances on a case-by-case basis.

The Library does collect a few multi-volume series, but the majority of books are acquired on an individual basis, subject to the selection criteria.

- Periodicals: Gladstone's Library subscribes to a selection of newspapers and magazines, primarily in print format. Periodicals are selected based on the same selection criteria as the circulating collection and largely relate to the key areas of Gladstonian interest: literature, theology, history and politics. The most current editions are available in the Reading Rooms, and a backlog of editions published up to one year previously are available on request. Editions older than one year are recycled.
- Journals: Gladstone's Library has accumulated a large collection of journals dating back to the eighteenth century. The majority of these subscriptions were paused in 2020, and the Library is still reviewing how to proceed with journal acquisitions. It is likely that the Library will prioritise digital journal resources over print going forward, due to space constraints.
- Article offprints: Gladstone's Library prioritises acquiring published research conducted using our collections, and much of this research is published in articles. Where possible, these articles are collected in the relevant journal volume, or as an article offprint.

The following formats are not collected into the Circulating Collection at Gladstone's Library:

- DVDs: Gladstone's Library has accumulated a large DVD collection to accompany former courses and events relating to film and theology. These courses have ended now, and the Library is no longer prioritising acquiring DVDs.
- Audio/CDs
- Ebooks
- Online databases and resources

Gifts/donations

Gladstone's Library does not actively seek donations of printed material. All donations are subject to the same selection criteria as new acquisitions, as donated material results in considerable hidden costs.

If a donation does not meet the selection criteria or is not viable for the Library's collection, it will either be placed on our second-hand book sale shelf, or recycled in line with our disposal policy (see below).

All donations are considered at the discretion of the Librarian and Director of Collections and Research. Particular priority is given to printed items that have made extensive use of our collections for research purposes.

If you would like to get in touch about a donation, or if you have suggestions for new book acquisitions, please contact library@gladlib.org.

Retention, weeding, and disposal policy

We are committed to maintaining a relevant and evolving Circulating Collection which can be stored within the space available in the main Gladstone's Library building.

Our special collections and archives are retained indefinitely due to their specialist nature. Our newspapers and magazines are retained for either six months or twelve months depending on individual titles and frequency of publication. We do not accept duplicates of items already in the collection.

We systematically review our Circulating Collection, to remove older material and make space for new items. Weeding is a regular and necessary process at the Library. Items are reviewed on a rolling basis and weeding decisions are made based on specific criteria, including but not limited to:

- The condition of the item and any damage
- Usage figures (over a seven-year period)
- Availability of the item
- Relevance to other Gladstone's Library collections
- Whether the item is outdated/has been superseded by a new edition
- The information given in the item is no longer current or accurate (non-fiction primarily)

Gladstone's Library is committed to appropriate methods of disposal. These are:

- Exchange with or donation to other libraries, institutions or individuals
- Sale to antiquarian or other booksellers
- Sale to the public of individual titles through our second-hand book sale shelf
- Donation to charitable booksellers which fund literacy in the developing world through second-hand book sales. Gladstone's Library receives a small percentage payment for each sale
- Discard, either through recycling or pulping

Staff are not permitted to purchase or otherwise avail themselves of collection items.

Replacement policy

Gladstone's Library will only replace a lost or damaged item if it is deemed vital to the development of the Circulating Collection or is frequently circulated.

If the item has been superseded by a newer edition, the Library will prioritise purchasing the updated version.