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Empathetic access to cultural heritage: A case study of an adult learning session held by York Minster’s Historic Collections Team

A study submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MA Librarianship

at

THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

by

Maria Nagle

Registration number: [130118006]

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Abstract

**Background:** In recent years, heritage organisations have distanced themselves from their previous positions as authoritative transmitters of received knowledge, moving towards encouraging interpretative activities which use personal connections, memory and narrative to educate and entertain audiences. The role of emotional response and emotion work has grown within this development and is prominent within fields such as heritage studies, information behavior and cultural heritage education. It has not yet been examined within a cross-curatorial environment, especially not as a focal point in the examination of the use of historic collections.

**Aims:** This case study aims to explore the role of emotional response to historic collections and the opportunities this creates for engagement in cultural heritage education. It achieves this by focusing these aims on an informal adult learning session run by York Minster’s Historic Collections team entitled *Collections Unlocked ‘Praying for Victory? The Legacy of War.’*

**Methods:** This session was observed, recorded and transcribed and field notes were captured throughout. Follow-up interviews were held with a selection of the participants (three out of nine attendees) and all three organisers, which were also recorded and transcribed. The researcher’s reflections were captured throughout the research, to account for any bias. The observation and interview data was coded and presented in situational and positional maps to demonstrate the variety of responses and narratives at play within the session and interviews. This helped pinpoint sites of particular interest, which were then subjected to narrative analysis.
**Results:** This research found that emotional response is not restricted to collections alone, developing from discussions, topics, other people and the environment. Nevertheless, the use of historic collections can provide an insight into other worlds and a deeper understanding of our own location within these, fostering critical engagement with the world around us. The educational value of sessions which focus on emotional response lies within this process of meaning making and understanding – within the act of engagement itself. Finally, methods for capturing and analyzing emotional response can be adapted to provide a narrative aspect to other qualitative and quantitative avenues of attaining feedback, assisting with the interpretation of other data sources by contributing another level of meaning.

**Conclusions:** This narrative project shed light on the depth and complexity of learning sessions such as *Collections Unlocked*. However, due to the small-scale of the project and its restricted demographic, these findings are not widely generalisable. This research would benefit from being developed into a multiple case study, expanding to different institutions, different environments and different demographics. The findings from this study would be clarified through this comparative focus, which would enable a more critical view of several aspects of emotional response and cultural heritage education.
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Chapter 1  Introduction

1.1. Context

In recent years, there has been a perceptible shift in the work of heritage institutions, away from transmitting received knowledge of collections and towards empowering audiences’ meaning-making potential and interpretive capabilities. Many museums, libraries and archives have evolved as places of memory (Andermann & Simine, 2012; Jimerson, 2009), giving rise to the ‘affective turn’ (Munro, 2014, p.45) which advocates the role of emotional and personal responses in heritage settings to collections. Large organisations such as the National Trust are now focusing on visitor ‘experiences that move, teach and inspire’ (National Trust, 2015, p.16). Recent research notes ‘the use of memory making objects at National Trust sites engenders an emotional response and thus informs the sense of place remembered’ (Cope, 2014, p.127).

This ‘affective turn’ is evident in the collections access work of York Minster, especially in its intention to ‘place [its] world class Collection in modern contexts to make the story of York Minster and its faith relevant to as wide an audience as possible through the formation of emotional connections’ (Chapter of York, 2015, 2). York Minster holds library, archive and museum collections which are managed and co-located within the Old Palace, a converted twelfth-century chapel just outside York Minster. As part of the 2014–2015 Adult Learning programme, which realised York Minster’s purpose ‘to put learning and the transformation of ourselves and of others at the heart of all we do’ (Chapter of York, 2014, p.5), a series of adult learning sessions were developed entitled Collections Unlocked. Advertised as ‘informal talks’ (p.9), these sessions invited
audiences to emotionally engage with objects, with sessions based around narrative themes such as Christmas, the Reformation and war.

1.2. Purpose and Rationale

This dissertation sets out to investigate the personal, social and emotional connections people make when in contact with historic collections, whether museum objects, library books or archival documents. By conducting a narrative-based case study of the Collections Unlocked session ‘Praying for Victory? The Legacy of War’, this dissertation attempts to explore the complex dynamics of sessions like these, examining their potential for learning, development and critical engagement. This exploratory case study will develop a qualitative methodology which could be used to complement more quantitative performance measurement methods, contributing to research on visitor experience, cultural heritage education and a growing body of literature on emotion work and emotional response. Munro (2014) argues that emotion work in museum settings based around community engagement is often undervalued; this research aims to illuminate the deeply transformative effects facilitated by emotional response to historic collections. This will provide a basis for further research and demonstrate the need for a more in-depth approach to understanding the role of public engagement with the past.
1.3. Aims and Objectives

1.3.1. Research question

How can emotional response inform the use of historic collections in cultural heritage education?

1.3.2. Aim

This dissertation aims to explore the role of emotional response to historic collections and the opportunities this creates for engagement in cultural heritage education.

1.3.3. Objectives

1. To explore emotional responses to historic collections and the narratives created around these.

2. To investigate how personal narratives interact with surrounding environmental narratives (including, but not limited to: public, historical, organisational, professional).

3. To understand the perceived educational value of these various narrative responses.

4. To present a narrative study which informs future research and provides transferable methods of investigating the emotive value of historic collections.
1.4. Terms and Definitions

Definitions of key terms follow; these are divided into two broad categories, including:

1.4.1. Responses

A growing body of research cautions against attempts to create sharply defined conceptualisations of terms such as affect, emotion and feeling (Bondi, 2011; Anderson, 2009; Bille, Bjerregaard & Sørenson, 2015). Loose working definitions will be established from the outset, acknowledging Bondi’s (2011) claim that ‘efforts to delineate sharp and stable conceptual boundaries around and between emotion and affect are misplaced’ (p.595).

**Affect** – an instantaneous, intense reaction, influenced by Anderson’s (2009) definition as ‘non-narrative and a-signifying’ (p.80). This always precedes emotion, but signifies an experience that is difficult, or even impossible, to express.

**Emotion** – a reflective, intense reaction that can be expressed, influenced by Anderson’s (2009) definition as ‘narrative and semiotic’ (p.80). Although emotion can be expressed, this mode of expression does not necessarily come naturally. Emotional response is this dissertation’s main focus, due to its strong links to narrative and (somewhat contested) potential to be captured and analysed.

**Narrative** – a storied method of communication or ‘given in order and with the establishing of connections between them; a narration, a story, an account’ (Narrative,
2013). This order is not necessarily chronological, instead following the logic of the narrating body.

1.4.2. Heritage

**Historic collections** – this term arises from the definition used by York Minster’s Historic Collections team. It includes museum, archive and library collections, referring to physical objects (including books and documents) with varying properties. The term is used to denote significant collections which are not defined by their age or form but the value the institution attributes to them – ‘historic’ is not necessarily an indicator of age, but of potential past, present and future value.

**Cultural heritage** – this term relates to activities, institutions or modes of thought and communication which concern themselves with understanding, relating to or learning from the past. This definition is strongly related to Smith’s (2006) conception of heritage as ‘a process of engagement’ (p.1).

1.5. Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation has six chapters. Following this introduction, a literature review will explore and summarise the key research to date. A methodology chapter will then clarify the research methods used to answer the research question. The next two chapters will outline the study’s results, with a discussion to analyse and explore the study’s findings and applications. A conclusion will follow with a set of recommendations based around the results of the study.
Chapter 2  Literature review

2.1. Introduction

The range of literature on emotional and affective response within a heritage context covers several interdisciplinary fields, including sociology, philosophy, psychology and literary criticism. This literature review commences by discussing the research on emotion, affect and cognition, highlighting their continuums and interdependencies. It then examines these phenomena within the field of heritage, highlighting the essential differences and crossovers between libraries, archives and museums. These institutions’ educational purposes in relation to these phenomena are explored, with reference to research which draws links between both. Finally, the use of narrative and particular case studies adopting this approach is considered.

2.2. Concepts and development of affect, emotion and cognition

As noted in the Introduction, efforts to establish clearly prescribed definitions of nebulous terms such as ‘affect’ and ‘emotion’ have been treated with suspicion; several researchers provide a strict caveat alongside attempts to elucidate either term (Bondi & Davidson, 2011; Edensor, 2012). Nevertheless, there is much deliberation over the relations and overlaps of these responses, especially regarding their constructive role in heritage contexts (Crouch, 2015) and information seeking contexts (Savolainen, 2014). Conceptions of emotions have evolved throughout twentieth century research, from chiefly biological phenomena to phenomena shaped by environment, culture and society (Lupton, 1998; Despret, 2004). Affect appears to have adopted this biological,
embodied role in research as a ‘pre-personal field of intensity’ (McCormack, 2008, p.426) and a ‘set of flows moving through the bodies of human and other beings’ (Thrift, 2009, p.88).

Both affect and emotion had previously been positioned in opposition to cognition and reason in psychological and philosophical research: a dualism which was only fully challenged within the twentieth century. For years, this false dichotomy divided these, driven by the Cartesian notion of the essential separateness of emotive and rational thought (Schorch, 2012). Damasio (1994) argues that, far from stunting rational capacities, emotion works together with reason and can alternately help and hinder intellectual engagement.

Information behaviour research has adopted this idea, exploring individuals’ responses to the information-seeking process. Fourie and Julien (2014) highlight the need for further research into the emotional dynamics of information interactions, including the medium of information sharing, its environment and participants’ emotional states. Some have located this phenomenon within structuralist and post-structuralist thought, such as Thellefsen, Thellefsen and Sørensen (2013) who use Peircian elements of information, cognition and emotion to analyse their interdependencies. Using the critical theory of semiotics, this research explains how emotion is the dominant level in the first stages of informational response, and feeds into a later cognitive level where information is transformed into knowledge. This process of meaning-creation hinges upon participants’ prior experiences; they explain ‘[o]ne of the main points of the significance effect is that the recognitional level of the interpreter becomes reflected in the sign’ (p.1743). Meaning-making is an extremely personal experience, working through a spectrum of collateral knowledge and emotional connection. As Gregg and Seigworth (2010) argue, cognition and affect are inseparable – ‘affect is integral to a body’s perpetual becoming’ (p.3), suggesting a constructivist function within affective
and emotional response. Affective and emotional engagement can catalyse a developmental response, transforming perspectives and enhancing understanding. This can result in, as Despret (2004) argues, values judgments or an evaluation of significance within the phenomena of emotional response.

These ideas are fundamental to Sense-Making theory, where emotion factors in users’ interactions with information as a developmental bridge between knowledge gaps (Dervin and Reinhard, 2007). Dervin asserts that studies grounded in Sense-Making help researchers understand ‘phenomenological pictures of how users construe their worlds’ (p.76). Dervin adopts a constructivist approach; information cannot be merely transmitted, but is rooted in its context, environment, transmitter and recipient (Dervin, 2003). Information is understood as subjective and dependent on recipient responses – affect and emotion determine cognitive processes of experiencing the world.

### 2.3. Meaning-making and memory in the heritage sector

Having explored the roles of affect, emotion and cognition, their importance in engagement with historic collections becomes clear. While they are relevant to libraries, archives and museums, each sector’s literature adopts its own approach with little research into cross-curatorial potential for emotional engagement. Research covering more than one sector often articulates these different approaches; Beasley’s (2007) exploration of curatorial crossovers emphasises the importance of distinguishing between the informational and artefactual value of rare books. Despite this arguably Cartesian division, he asserts the ‘emotional value of rare book collections, what I would call empathetic access’ (p.28). Jimerson (2009) extends this to differentiate
between archives and monuments, emphasising the former’s active, instructional nature against the latter’s passive, commemorative function.

Latham (2012) explores these dichotomies, bridging these gaps by examining how museum objects can be viewed from an informational perspective, using Buckland’s conceptual framework of information-as-process, -knowledge or -thing. ‘Information-as-thing’ illuminates objects’ potential as evidence, their capacity to transform perspectives and be interpreted and acted upon (p.50). Objects become historical documents and archval documents’ artefactual value is appreciated, depending on their situational context. This interpretation of object/information value is also linked to semiotic theory; ‘information-as-thing’ is used to construct and impose meaning by the interpreter. These ideas, while less prominent in library and archival literature, are well established in museum research, within areas such as visitor experience (Wood and Latham, 2009; Latham, 2015) and material culture (Woodward 2007). Pearce (1994) studies the relationships between people and objects that contribute to interpretation processes, highlighting the dialectics that determine viewer response, social construction of meaning and the narrative power of objects. Balance is essential; viewers must relate objects to their knowledge and experience to create meaning while balancing this with objects’ evidential nature and their societal history, to ensure meaning remains intelligible in its cultural context.

Dudley (2010) calls for a greater focus on the materiality of museum objects, noting the advantages in examining museum visitors’ engagement with objects’ physical and sensible aspects. She recommends ‘embodied and emotional engagements with objects’ (p.4) to enable visitors to empathise with the stories objects represent, both subjectively and in their wider context. Cameron (2008) extends this, examining how museum collections can be structured into flexible networks and the effect this has on more democratic forms of meaning-making, opening up collections to collaborative
interpretation activities. Cameron highlights the urgency of considering emotional, social, symbolic and material knowledge to understand the fluidity required by these networks to enable and facilitate interpretative activities. The inclusion of emotional engagement demonstrates its importance in this personal, yet socially aware, activity.

These looser approaches to interpretation and engagement are a result of the ‘material turn’ (Bjerregaard, 2015, p.74) and the ‘affective turn’ (Munro, 2014, p.45) which depart from traditional interpretations of museum and heritage spaces as elitist institutions of received knowledge. They instead focus on the material aspects of objects (Dudley, 2010) and the interpretative power of their audiences (Pearce, 1994). Wood and Latham (2009) recognise the growing interdisciplinary fields of museum and object research, deriving a definition which acknowledges this diversity. This definition is formed of ‘three representative paradigms; Material, Cultural and Personal’ (p.390). These varying levels of interpretation represent the physical, symbolic and personal acts of interpretation formed on objects by their audiences, demonstrating the dynamism and multiplicity of these processes. Indeed, Crouch (2015) argues ‘[a]ttending heritage is like a journey […] In journeys, our feelings about ourselves and our relationships in the world are negotiated but also happen to us’ (p.178). Similarly, Smith (2006) understands heritage as ‘a process of engagement, an act of communication and an act of making meaning in and for the present’ (p.1). Heritage is no longer synonymous with a canonical, ‘fixed’ history – emotional engagement involves and immerses us in the processes contained in heritage activities and historical thought.
2.4. Cultural heritage education and consumption

The examination of emotive and affective interactions with historic collections and the meaning-making that occurs is vital to developing effective cultural heritage education. This review has already covered constructive processes relating affect, cognition and emotion, and how these manifest in heritage activities. This view of development is also reflected in educational theory; Dewey believes in constructive, experiential learning, claiming that education connected to personal experience provides a stronger relation to acquired knowledge (Dewey, 1938). He identifies a question that still occupies many heritage professionals today: ‘[h]ow shall the young become acquainted with the past in such a way that the acquaintance is a potent agent in appreciation of the living present?’ (p.23).

Hein (1998) furthers museums’ educational role from this perspective, emphasising the need to consider programmes from visitors’ viewpoints. He argues that eliciting enthusiasm is not enough; visitors need to relate to, interact with and participate in the museum experience for a truly educational visit. Similarly, Martin (1999) explains object-based learning’s benefits, emphasising the wealth of information contained within museum objects and commenting on their emotional appeal. Froggett’s and Trustram’s (2014) account of introducing a group of homeless men to the Harris Museum and Art Gallery’s collection describes this group’s encounters with art and their creative reinterpretation of their experience in a poetry workshop, where their response is internalized before they use it to create, develop and reflect. This phenomenon is linked to object relations theory, where the human mind develops through interacting with a world full of objects, including other people. The personal and the social are interconnected, creating simultaneously individual and communal learning experiences.
Despite museum education research’s popularity, there have been studies which question its role in modern settings. Bagnall (2003) argues that ‘museum-as-education’ can be classified in opposition to emotional and personal response, citing instances where visitors have approached exhibits using emotional techniques negatively (Reigel, 1996). Bagnall goes further, observing that heritage sites are structured by ‘different and frequently competing discourses such as education, entertainment, conservation, commercialization and marketization’ (p.95). In a more commercialised study which attempted to segment museum visitors by emotions, Del Chiappa, Andreu and Gallerza (2014) located museum learning alongside comfort, orientation and enjoyment, within a set of objectives contributing to a good customer experience. This demonstrates the uncertainty about the evolving role of heritage organisations and whether their educational role functions together with, or is at odds with, this set of arguably consumerist concerns.

Nevertheless, many view this uncertainty as an opportunity for heritage learning and education. Hooper-Greenhill (2000) cites the move from museums directing a standardised educational message to an ‘essentialized mass audience’ to a place which ‘listens and responds sensitively as it encourages diverse groups to become active participants in museum discourse’ (p.8). Andermann and Arnold de-Simine (2012) embrace this movement away from enforcing an academic notion of history and towards encouraging communities to critically engage with collections and to contribute their memories and experiences, advocating community learning and problem solving. In this, museums move from a didactic, authoritarian role to facilitators of memory and, arguably, social cohesion, with a growing body of research into museums’ potential to improve health and wellbeing (Froggett, Farrier and Poursanidou, 2011).
Despite the popularity of museum education research, archives and special collections equivalents are comparatively small, albeit gradually expanding. Krause (2010) observes special collections and archives professionals’ reluctance to identify as educators, highlighting a need to explore the relationships between professionals and users. Torre (2008) attributes this overlooked area to the championing of archives’ and special collections’ research value, which overshadows their potential as learning activities. Aurand (2011) takes a similar approach to museums, heralding the library as a cabinet of curiosities, where collections’ ‘artifactual qualities bring authenticity to learning’ (p.18) and students have the freedom to explore and engage with collections. Robinson (2014) attempts to unite all three sectors in her epistemological examination of the potential knowledge benefits of museum, library and archive convergence, examining the debated field of converged collections information. She argues that these collections ‘offer particular opportunities and settings where users can encounter different forms of information, creating knowledge and personal meaning for themselves’ (p.219). While this small body of literature provides interesting perspectives, it exposes the need for deeper exploration into people’s interactions with converged collections, similar to research within the museum sector.

2.5. The power of narrative and discourse

Narrative and discourse are frequently used in heritage research to explore people’s relations to collections, environments and atmospheres. Foucault’s (1972) conceptions of the shifts in historical discourses from great, cohesive units towards a new type of history, which engages with plurality and converging and diverging relations, set the scene for a new type of historical discourse. In viewing discourse archaeologically, he moved his focus from ‘the enigmatic treasure of “things” anterior to discourse’ (p.47), instead relating them to the rules and structures that ‘constitute the conditions of their
historical appearance’ (p.48), demonstrating how they are shaped within their worlds. Tamboukou (2013) advocates a Foucauldian approach to narratives as a way of interrogating ‘truths’ and acknowledging the reflexivity of discourse and the connections between stories, discourses and worlds which constitute what is understood.

This position is integral to the study of library, archival and museum collections today; the use of narrative provides access and meaning to collections and links the areas explored throughout this literature review. Palmenfelt’s (2010) study of the use of narrative in cultural heritage describes its centrality; his description of the use of dominant units in multiple narratives – collective ideas which surface in multiple personal recollections of past events – demonstrates the power of museum collections to reconstruct and excite memory, commemoration and reflection through the use of narratives and storytelling. Palmenfelt argues that these units should be ‘understood as cognitive nodes connecting significant chains of events with possible story lines, fitting them into existing value systems and expressing them in certain emotional modes’ (p.70). Andermann’s and Simine’s (2012) description of museums’ shift from bastions of history to places of memory also emphasises narrative and emotional response, highlighting personal narratives’ potential to challenge and enrich historical and dominant narratives in the postmodern tradition. This enhances ‘experiential learning’ (p.7), providing a form of meaning-making which displaces power from the institution to focus on relations and interactions between people and objects. Hannabus (2000) acknowledges the multiple functions of narrative as encompassing entertainment value as well as ‘explanation, memory, and bardic interpretation’ (p.409). This conception bears similarities with the contested roles of museums as explored in the last section, showing how narratives work to articulate complexity and test interpretive boundaries.
Narrative does not merely have a descriptive function. Prince (2003) explains narratives’ potential for discovery and invention, beyond simple representational functions. Albano’s (2014) idea of exhibition narratives as places where ‘knowledge, emotion and imagination merge’ (p.10) can be extended beyond displays to heritage audiences, where ‘visitors become the protagonists’ (p.11). Narratives have the potential to be immersive and incredibly personal; Hurdley’s (2006) research which examines people’s narratives based on the objects displayed on their mantelpiece analyses how narratives often pose their tellers as producers of meaning, rather than consumers of objects. She rejects the idea of narratives as mere portals to experience, emphasizing their potential to construct and express identities, histories and knowledge. DeSilvey (2007) relates this sort of narrative practice to the construction of oral histories and memory, acknowledging Gordon’s (1997) idea of ‘complex personhood’ where ‘the stories people tell about themselves, about their troubles, about their social worlds, and about their society’s problems are entangled and weave between what is immediately available as a story and what their imaginations are reaching toward’ (p.4). DeSilvey interprets this as the realisation that we ‘make up who we are as we go along’ (p.413) in line with our surrounding environment; a realisation revealed in the objects people surround themselves with, in the processes of exchange and consumption.

These narrative and discursive methods will be investigated throughout this dissertation; their potential for exploring the personal and social dimensions of emotive and interpretative experiences of meaning-making provides a complex phenomenon ripe for further research.
Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Research paradigm

The concepts and media explored throughout this project stem from constructivist, interdisciplinary frames of thought, exploring emotional responses and how they relate to the material objects used and the surrounding environment. This research adopts an interpretive paradigm – its focus on analysing the lived experience of its participants through their narratives necessitates this framework. Furthermore, as Hennick, Hutter and Bailey (2013) observe ‘the interpretive paradigm recognizes that reality is socially constructed as people’s experiences occur within social, cultural, historical or personal contexts’ (p.15). The project’s epistemological focus centres on the interactional and discursive; Pickard (2013) states ‘[a]ll knowledge we acquire is a product of the interaction between the known and the knower; the researcher and the subject are both ‘changed’ by the experience, and knowledge is a result of this interaction and is time- and context-bound’ (p.12). This provides a fitting lens to explore interactions between people and things, in the context of learning and ‘transformation’.

3.2 Case study approach

To explore and appreciate the complexities of emotional response within this framework, this project was conducted as an exploratory case study, using narrative inquiry to investigate this specific context. This provides a suitable approach as, by presenting a contained and bound system to analyse, this project provided the opportunity to research Collections Unlocked ‘Praying for Victory? The Legacy of War’ in depth, highlighting its uniqueness through an intrinsic approach (Creswell, 2013).
The findings from this project are not widely generalisable but will instead contribute to a developing methodological approach to analyse the value of recognising and understanding emotional response in a cultural heritage education context. A narrative case study views phenomena and experience in a storied sense, making sense of a whole by ‘eschewing the reductionist, fractionating methods of much social science inquiry – methods that attempt to dissolve the connecting threads and fibres that hold social phenomena together’ (Thomas, 2011, p.184).

This dissertation provides a detailed account of the *Collections Unlocked* session to present the ‘more rounded, richer, more balanced picture’ (Thomas, 2011, p.4) typical of a case study. A decisive factor in adopting a case study approach was my employment within York Minster’s Historic Collections team. This provided organisational connections, well-established relationships, environmental awareness and an insider perspective. Additionally, this approach is ideal for a pilot study, providing a solid foundation for future research.

### 3.3 Narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry is used to explore emotional response to historic collections within *Collections Unlocked*. It exposes the various reactions within the session and probes their role in the meaning-making process, relating them to the objects, setting, attendees and session organisers. Using narrative methods emphasises unique perspectives and consideration of emotion and moods (Brophy, 2009). Although not strictly a phenomenological approach, it occasionally overlaps; Clandinin and Connelly (2000) emphasise narrative inquiry’s potential to study lived experience as it is understood. They claim ‘if we understand the world narratively […] then it makes sense to study the world narratively’ (p.17). This project collected individuals’ stories,
including those participating in the learning session, those organising the session and my reflections throughout the project. The interplay of these narratives enables the study of the learning session from several perspectives, providing insight into the cultural, educational and social value of these collections.

Labov (1997) defines narratives of personal experiences as a telling of a sequence of events that have entered the biography of the speaker: events which ‘are emotionally and socially evaluated, and so transformed from raw experience’ (Section 0.1). Narratives provide a representation of individuals’ original experience, yet can never recreate it – they embody their teller’s state of mind, environment and modes of interaction. Squire (2013) elaborates on this hermeneutic consideration, outlining three important narrative elements:

'1. Talk that is not about events but that is nevertheless significant for the narrator’s story of ‘who they are’.

2. Representation itself. The uncertain, changeable nature of written, spoken and visual symbol systems means that stories are distances from the happenings they described, have many meanings and are never the same when told twice.

3. Interactions between storyteller and listener, researcher and research participant, in the co-construction of stories’ (p.47).
By using narrative inquiry to probe emotional responses and cultural heritage education, this research uncovers the connections, relations and interdependencies at work during and following the *Collections Unlocked*, exploring their effects and exploring their integration into their tellers’ lives.

### 3.4 Data collection

Several data collection methods were used to gather multiple sources of information, as is typical of an exploratory case study (Creswell, 2013).

#### 3.4.1 Observation of *Collections Unlocked* session

To capture these experiences, *Collections Unlocked* ‘Praying for Victory? The Legacy of War’ was observed, recorded and transcribed for analysis. One session was chosen due to availability and time constraints; it was the last *Collections Unlocked* session of the 2014–2015 adult learning programme and took place on 22
d April 2015. Nine people attended, with three organisers leading and facilitating discussion around the objects. This session was held in the Reading Room of the Old Palace, a modern extension to the building usually used as a public study space. The session began at 7pm and lasted nearly two hours.

Detailed field notes were captured throughout the observation, forming an ethnographic record to supplement transcripts of the participants’ and organisers’ discussions (Spradley, 1980). These field notes considered participants’ body language
and the environmental setting, providing a useful outlet for capturing initial analytic thoughts (Bryman, 2012), noting relationships, interactions and gestures.

I observed as a passive participant, only interacting with the group to inform them of the research at the beginning of the session, to request their participation and consent and to ask them to register their interest for follow-up interviews at the end of the session. While I was passive at this stage, I had some involvement in the session planning as a York Minster employee; further details are provided at the end of the Discussion chapter.

3.4.2 Interviews and sampling

Six interviews were held: three with session attendees and three with the session organisers – York Minster’s Librarian, Head of Collections and Canon Chancellor. The organisers were selected for their role in creating, planning and leading the sessions. The three session attendees who were interviewed were selected from five who expressed interest; of the five, one did not respond to an invitation and another was discounted as they attended for career development purposes. The latter attendee had been invited by the Librarian, due to their interest in pursuing a career in special collections; their motivations were perceived to lie outside of the research scope.

The interviews were semi-structured and designed to elicit narrative responses. The interview guides were developed with reference to Holloway’s and Jefferson’s (2000) narrative approaches to interviewing which ‘recognises that the story told is constructed (within the research and interview context) rather than being a neutral account of pre-existing reality’ (p.32). Closed and open-ended questions were avoided
to prevent answers which were either too brief or abstract; these were replaced by questions beginning with ‘Can you tell me about...’, prompting interviewees to link their responses to events and experiences (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000). Interviewees were asked about their background, expectations, responses to the environment, objects, discussion and other people present, and their opinions on the session’s learning aspects. Two interview guides were developed for session participants (Appendix 1) and session organisers (Appendix 2) due to their different roles.

The interviews were conducted over two weeks and just over two months after Collections Unlocked. While this long period between the observation and interviews was partly due to time constraints, I also felt that leaving time between the two modes of data collection allowed for a better comparative understanding of knowledge, memories and emotions retained from the session.

### 3.4.3 Reflective writing

My role as a researcher is very much bound with my role as a library assistant in York Minster; the idea for this dissertation arose from conversations with colleagues and much of my knowledge relates to my working knowledge of the collections and environment. Therefore, it is crucial that I clarify any possibility of researcher bias, which is central to this project’s focus as an intrinsic narrative case study. Jasper (2005) advocates reflective practice to draw ‘attention to the fact that there is no one objective reality, that any presentation is a construction of that reality according to the writer’ (p.249). While this project aims to explore emotional response through a narrative study, it needs to emphasise that these narratives and social worlds are
delivered through my own sense- and meaning-making capabilities as a researcher, student and library assistant.

To better understand this, I kept a reflective journal throughout the data collection and analysis period to capture my own responses and to recognise any personal bias which occurred throughout the research process. This was extremely important as a method of acknowledging how I influenced my findings and therefore ‘what comes to be accepted as knowledge’ (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2002, p.216). This helped me understand my role as another social actor and narrative strand, influencing the people, interpretations and environment around me. These reflections are summarised at the end of the Discussion chapter.

3.5 Data analysis

3.5.1 Qualitative coding

Saldaña (2013) claims ‘at the beginning cycles there are [...] rich discoveries to be made with specific coding methods that explore such phenomena as participant processes, emotions and values’ (p.14). To fully engage with the research data, I used emotion and narrative coding to understand participants’ responses and prepare the data for further analysis which would locate these within the participants’ social, historical, biographical and environmental contexts. This coding adopts methods from grounded theory, by indexing codes to record categories derived through codes and to fully appreciate the diversity of codes within these categories (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Analytic memos were also used to trace the analytic process.
Emotion coding was used to ‘track the emotional journey or storyline of the codes – the structural arc they follow as certain events unfold’ (Saldaña, 2013, p.107). This provided a fitting method of not only recognising the spectrum of emotions expressed in the session and the interview, but also tracking this in narrative form as a developing and constructive force. Narrative coding sought to recognise the storied expressions of the participants’ experiences that were prompted by the session, including the session itself, narratives from their own lives or their interpretations of the objects. This form of analysis follows Gubrium and Holstein’s (2009) advice to ‘[a]pproach the big and little stories as reflexively related, not categorically distinct, dimensions of narrativity’ (p.144).

### 3.5.2 Situational analysis

Once this data was coded, these codes were used to profile the participants’ narratives and map them against the objects presented. This follows the method of situational analysis which by ‘analyzing discourses through situational mapping [...] seeks to represent all the major discourses related to the situation of interest – not just what could be called “the master voice”’ (Clarke, 2005, p.175).

With Collections Unlocked as the central focus, this stage of analysis critically engages with the similarities and divergences of narrative and response, using the session’s material objects as fixed points by which to trace the negotiation and construction of meaning, emotional engagement and the meeting of various narratives. These are represented within ordered and positional maps of narrative responses, providing a better understanding of the points of narrative interplay throughout Collections Unlocked. This allows a broad, multi-faceted view of the session, which captures a
snapshot of these social phenomena at work. The codes and categories produced are mapped out in relation to objects and institutions, tracing discursive pathways within the session and interviews.

3.5.3 Narrative discourse analysis

This final stage of analysis is presented alongside positional maps to provide a more in-depth, rigorous engagement with the discourses produced through the session, interviews and reflections. While situational analysis and positional mapping aims to illustrate the social world(s) elicited by this discourse, this narrative discourse analysis uses the codes and positional mapping to pinpoint locations where the research texts would benefit from in-depth analysis and extracted examples which defined points of convergence and divergence. These narratives are treated as research texts, analysed for structure and performance and exposed to interpretive and hermeneutic inquiry (Riessman, 1993). This helps illustrate specific encounters within the research and provides a micro-level analysis to anchor the wider perspective of situational analysis. Emotional response is probed through this structural and performative analysis in an approach which ‘examines the informant’s story and analyses how it is put together, the linguistic and cultural resources it draws on, and how it persuades a listener of authenticity’ (Riessmann, 1993, p.2).

3.6 Methodological limitations

The main limitation for this project was the short space of time in which to conduct it. The case study approach acknowledged this by focusing on a bound experience but, due to the in-depth nature of this research and my lack of research experience, these time restrictions proved challenging. This project was also conducted while working
part-time in several jobs based in libraries and archives. This limitation could also be interpreted as a benefit, as I conceived and pursued the idea for this project through my role within York Minster. Nevertheless, this necessitated the constant awareness and interrogation of my role as both a researcher and a member of staff in the Old Palace to account for any institutional bias.

Another limitation was this study’s small scale; a multiple case-study approach would provide a better insight into emotional response to historic collections in several different environments. However, due to time restrictions, this single case study aims to provide an effective insight into participants’ experiences and narratives from this single Collections Unlocked session, working towards constructing of methodology which can be adapted or developed for other similar projects.

3.7 Ethics

3.7.1 Ethics approval

This research project has been judged to be ‘Low Risk’ by the University of Sheffield’s Information School Research ethics committee. The approval letter provided by the committee can be found at Appendix 3, together with the project’s information sheets and consent forms provided at Appendices 4, 5 and 6.

3.7.2 Consent and participation

Collections Unlocked participants were fully informed of my research at the beginning of the session; I spoke to each attendee and introduced my research to the group when
the session began. Each participant was given an information sheet (Appendices 4 and 5) and a consent form (Appendix 6) to sign, to ensure they were fully informed about the research process.

They were informed both verbally and through the consent form that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time, or withdraw their information after the data collection stage. The information sheet was also revisited during the interview stages of this research, to ensure participants were aware of what they were consenting to. Contact details for myself, my supervisor and the Head of the Information School were provided, should the participants have needed them.

3.7.3 Data anonymisation and storage

Personal data was anonymised to prevent accidental disclosure; participant’s names are coded in transcripts, and this dissertation generalises personal information to protect participants’ identities. However, it was communicated to the Collections Unlocked organisers that their unique job roles (ie. Canon Chancellor, Head of Collections, Librarian) could lead to them being identifiable within this research, after which each participant consented.

The data collected was only accessible to myself and my supervisor. It was stored securely on a password-protected laptop and on a shared storage space provided by the Information School for the purposes of research data storage. All research data related to this project will be destroyed upon its completion.
Chapter 4 Results

4.1. Introduction

This research aims to explore the role of emotional response to historic collections and the opportunities this creates for engagement in cultural heritage education. This chapter presents the observation and interview results. It will adopt the following structure, providing:

- An overview of the *Collections Unlocked* session along with its aims and objectives.

- Detailed descriptions of the objects and responses to them, presented through situational maps and narrative analysis.

- An exploration of the session’s educational focus, as interpreted from the participants’ and organisers’ responses.
4.1.1. Glossary

Research participants will be referred to by the following abbreviations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canon Chancellor</td>
<td>CC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Collections</td>
<td>HoC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Nagle (Researcher)</td>
<td>MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1, 2, 3 etc.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3 etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Overview of Collections Unlocked ‘Praying for Victory? The Legacy of War’

This Collections Unlocked session centred on the subject of war, its description in York Minster’s Adult Learning Programme reading ‘What is the role of prayer in past and present conflicts?’ (Chapter of York, 2014, p.9). York Minster’s Head of Collections defined the main three objectives of the session as:

‘to have fun, to remind people that actually it’s okay to learn and that [...] we wanted to get the collection out to a wider audience, to let people know that this actually exists’ (HoC/7).
Alongside these objectives was the session’s subject – the relationship between war and faith. The session aim was made clear from the beginning; the Canon Chancellor’s introduction emphasised ‘different perspectives on war’ (OBS/7) and he continually revisits ‘the huge ambiguity’ (OBS/14) and a ‘complex ambiguous story’ (OBS/46) represented by the objects. His interview also reflects this position:

‘MN: So [...] you were hoping people would leave with questions
CC: Yeah [...] a sense of the complexity of it’ (CC/40).

The session followed a loose structure of introductions, twenty minutes to explore and handle the objects, a discussion period and then presentations from the Historic Collections team on the objects’ stories. Importantly, participants were not given any information about the objects before this exploration period; the organisers provided them with a worksheet asking for their reactions to and questions about the objects. This was used as a method of encouraging engagement:

‘if they’re being asked what are your questions rather than what do you think this is [...] or how was it used that implies [...] if you put it that way it implies the kind of deficiency of knowledge [...] whereas if you say ‘well what questions have you got about this’, then it immediately opens up [...] a desire to explore and find out’ (CC/15-16).

By using emotional response to encourage engagement and break down interpretive barriers, objects are transformed into triggers and talking points, as will be explored below.
4.3. Responses to the objects

A brief description is provided for each object, followed by an ordered situational map and positional map of narrative responses to each. These are used to highlight particular exchanges within the Collections Unlocked session and following interviews, which will be analysed to elaborate on emerging themes.

4.3.1. Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologia* [1639]

A 1639 edition of Aquinas’ thirteenth century theological treatise *Summa Theologica* was used to introduce the theory of ‘Just War’ – a set of criteria used to question and determine the validity of war. This led into a debate within the session about whether war could ever be justifiable. The maps that follow demonstrate a broad view of the narratives that both framed and resulted from the discussion, during the observation and interviews:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational narrative</th>
<th>War narratives</th>
<th>Faith narratives</th>
<th>Historical narrative</th>
<th>Personal narratives</th>
<th>Object narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>World War Two</td>
<td>Theological studies</td>
<td>Rowntree family</td>
<td>Family connection</td>
<td>Just War theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>World War One</td>
<td>Church philosopher</td>
<td>World War Two</td>
<td></td>
<td>Canonical text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canonical text</td>
<td>Necessity to overthrow Hitler</td>
<td>Pacifism</td>
<td>World War One</td>
<td></td>
<td>Examination of morality and law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological studies</td>
<td>Pacifism</td>
<td>Roman Catholic church</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peace must be at the heart of war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church philosopher</td>
<td>Decision to invade</td>
<td>Canonical text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>War as last resort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Kill or be killed’</td>
<td>Society of Friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Criteria for Just War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>War or terror</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iraq war</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gulf war</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As this volume was presented first, it framed much of the discussion throughout the Collections Unlocked session and in the interviews. The following debate demonstrates some key issues which arose during this discussion:

‘P1: Personally and from my family’s point of view we, all of us, felt very strongly that Adolf Hitler had to be got rid of ((overlap)) and that –

P7: Yes yes yes that’s what I would say
P1: – would – as – the only just about – justifiable reason for war that I personally have, not for any others at all

L: Yeah

P5: But was it justifiable for people from outside Nazi Germany themselves – to get rid of him?

P1: Mm tha-that’s well the White Rose movement tried and gen- some of the generals tried voting but it was so unsuccessful –

P5: Was it our job to go and sort out Kavgams or Iraq and who said so?

[...]

P4: Sometimes there isn’t the time almost to consider [...] sometimes it happens inevitably [...] you’re either killed or you be killed almost’ (OBS/22-23).

The strength of feeling expressed throughout this debate shows a multitude of reactions and responses. While framed by a historical context, the debaters reflect on several elements of past and present conflicts drawing upon this historical context to facilitate comparison. Emotional response develops from P1’s initial justification and P7’s support, which collides with P5’s skepticism and passion against violence and for the consideration of social responsibility. P4’s response mediates between these two passionate reactions, attempting to adopt a realistic approach. The narrative thread throughout this exchange is constantly disrupted, bringing the object narrative into contact with conflicting counter-narratives associated with war, faith and personal experience.
4.3.2. *The Mudhook* [1917]

*The Mudhook* is a magazine produced during World War I by and for the 63rd Royal Naval Division in Boulogne-sur-Mer. The presentation of this focused on a poem depicting a chaplain’s response to a soldier’s question about violence in wartime, where ‘he told the boys he could aim his gun to kill and sing a hymn whilst doing it’ (OBS/25). While illuminating a human element to World War I warfare, this black humour also provides a subversive and contemporary perspective on the conflict.

The maps that follow demonstrate a broad view of the narratives that both framed and resulted from the discussion, during the observation and interviews:
### Table 3: Ordered situational map: *The Mudhook*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National narrative</th>
<th>War narratives</th>
<th>Faith narratives</th>
<th>Personal narratives</th>
<th>Object narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British humour</td>
<td>Troops</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>Collector</td>
<td>Cartoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not our regiments</td>
<td>Royal Naval division</td>
<td>Chaplains</td>
<td>Different perspectives</td>
<td>By soldiers for soldiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulogne</td>
<td>Reality of war</td>
<td>Poignant</td>
<td></td>
<td>Price – five centimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extremists vs. trench warfare</td>
<td>Odd sense of humour</td>
<td></td>
<td>Artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficult conditions</td>
<td>Army nursing corps</td>
<td></td>
<td>Writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wipers Times</td>
<td>Service commission</td>
<td></td>
<td>Poets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Old archive films</td>
<td>Family connections</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adverts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christmastime truce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gallows humour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tommies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leisure time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>World War I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boredom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The maps show that the personal connections drawn with this object were multifaceted and focused more on the materiality and the creators of the object, emphasizing its presence as material evidence from the conflict. Associations were made with images and ideas associated with the collective knowledge of the war:
‘P1: It’s a bit like when they came up out of the trenches [...] at Christmastime and in friendship and then went back’ (OBS/26).

‘P5: Long periods of boredom interspersed with very savage short periods of fighting each other’ (P5/27).

Participants and organisers viewed this object as an opportunity to consider the realities of warfare and soldiers’ situations. This empathetic approach inspired many personal connections, such as that between one person and their father:

‘P4: Look they’re wonderful but it [...] I mean it partly it’s – I mean I would be interested anyway but [...] my dad was fighting the whole way through and was wounded and got medals [...] and all of this [...] gives me a different opinion of him and what he was like because as a boy I didn’t like him’ (P4/21).

This observation by one of the organisers also gives a personal insight:

‘L: So I was an army nurse – so I spent a lot of time with soldiers [...] and they have this really odd sense of humour [...] that nobody else in the world seems to have and so for me reading The Mudhook [...] it was just great because that humour just bounces straight off the page’ (L/30).
Interestingly, a publication ‘never intended to be a civilian readership’ (OBS/24) had a demonstrably profound effect on several participants, despite its ephemeral nature. This material vulnerability and graphic representation of the realities of warfare provided, for many, a physical remnant of the past which provided an insight into those caught within past and present conflicts.

4.3.3. Prayers for War Time [1939]

This pamphlet was used to explore the relationship between the church and war – the main focus being on its ‘Prayer for our Enemies’. The pamphlet was published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) and was used mainly as a prompt, as the librarian stated ‘I had real problems finding out anything about this’ (OBS/26). Despite this elusiveness, several points of discussion arose from this object.

The maps that follow demonstrate a broad view of the narratives that both framed and resulted from the discussion, during the observation and interviews:
Table 4: Ordered situational map: Prayers for War Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National narrative</th>
<th>War narratives</th>
<th>Faith narratives</th>
<th>Personal narratives</th>
<th>Object narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Anthem</td>
<td>Robert Runcie on Argentina</td>
<td>Robert Runcie on Argentina</td>
<td>TV programme – blessed objects</td>
<td>Tuppence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State authority</td>
<td>Army chaplain</td>
<td>Army chaplain</td>
<td>Stories</td>
<td>Distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propaganda</td>
<td>Lions led by donkeys</td>
<td>Melrose vicar</td>
<td>Question of truth</td>
<td>Melrose vicar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity</td>
<td>Prayer for Peace</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prayer for peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World War I and II</td>
<td>Denise of Christianity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SPCK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enemy vs. soldier</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Batches to the front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Us and them</td>
<td>Lord’s prayer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prayer for the enemies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificial barriers</td>
<td>TV programme – blessed objects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed forces</td>
<td>SPCK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer for the enemies</td>
<td>Prayer for the enemies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith and war</td>
<td>Faith and war</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV programme – blessed objects</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3: Positional map of narrative responses to Prayers for War Time
The relationship between the war and faith narratives represented by and triggered by *Prayers for War Time* generated some interesting points of comparison. One of the organisers saw the pamphlet as an attempt to bring meaning to the conflict:

‘HoC: The um prayers [...] I don’t know why they connected so much more – I think again because someone’s just actually erm – actually asking – using faith in such a way to understand war and [...] to try and ask forgiveness and try and ask for understanding and erm – that – someone’s wrote those to try and understand what’s going on’ (HoC/29).

While some participants had markedly different responses:

‘MN: [...] I think a few people pointed out that it was interesting that there was a prayer for our enemies – in there.

P5: Well every time people say the Lord’s prayer um they’re praying for our friends and our enemies and people of every faith in every nation in the world because it’s our father [...] the us – our enemies, ourselves but – I have no enemies [...] this is only interesting to say that a state at a certain time [...] said the Germans are from this day or the Russians are from this day or the uh Afghans from this day are our enemies [...] these are our allies, these are our friends, but they are other’ (P5/21).
These show the two different perspectives held by one person in charge of creating a meaningful narrative for an object-based learning session and by another who is a self-proclaimed pacifist, unravelling the semantics within prayer. The former focuses on the personal act of meaning-making and interpretation, arguing for an insight into a complex and ambiguous situation, while the latter exposes a higher, grand narrative that highlights a perceived influence of the state in war and faith. Both approach the object differently; the former uses a top-down approach, embracing the gravitas of the situation and its manifestation through a simple book of prayers, while the latter uses a bottom up approach to reveal the wider issues this book exposes. Neither of these readings can be dismissed as mistaken – both offer equally valid interpretations.

4.3.4. Eric Milner-White’s portable communion set [1910]

These items were arguably the most anticipated objects featured, partly due to their inclusion in the local press a few days previously (Religion’s role in war explored in York Minster, 2015). Owned by Eric Milner-White, an army chaplain who progressed to become Dean of York Minster over thirty years later, they were chosen because of their strong connections to York Minster through Milner-White. The Head of Collections emphasises this point through their material connections, ‘y’know he’s touched them, he’s used them, they’ve meant something to him’ (HoC/27).

The maps that follow demonstrate a broad view of the narratives that both framed and resulted from the discussion, during the observation and interviews:
Table 5: Ordered situational map: Dean Milner-White’s portable communion set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Narrative</th>
<th>War narrative</th>
<th>Faith narrative</th>
<th>Minister narrative</th>
<th>Object narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Milner-White</td>
<td>World War I and II</td>
<td>Sacrificial lamb</td>
<td>Minster worshippers</td>
<td>Object vs book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazis</td>
<td>Nazis</td>
<td>Army chaplain</td>
<td>Minster school</td>
<td>Wonky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annoyance</td>
<td>Army chaplain</td>
<td>Consecration</td>
<td>Dean of York</td>
<td>Symbolism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed opinion</td>
<td>Trenches</td>
<td>Ritual</td>
<td>York Press article</td>
<td>Battered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male relations</td>
<td>Holocaust</td>
<td>The mass</td>
<td></td>
<td>German set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holocaust</td>
<td>Lambs to the slaughter</td>
<td>Restrictive worship</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dean Milner-White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family connections</td>
<td>German and English</td>
<td>Gregory Dix</td>
<td></td>
<td>Munich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>War services</td>
<td>Anglican faith</td>
<td></td>
<td>German and English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>War services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Question of origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal courage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The striking visual appearance, symbolism and contested meanings within the communion set provided a trigger for powerful personal connections during both the session and the following interviews. P1 began the discussion around this object during the session, referring to her family’s involvement in both World Wars, and the casualties suffered:

**Figure 4: Positional map of narrative responses to Dean Milner-White’s portable communion set**
‘P1: erm my – his future wife as she was during the time of the First World War my mum’s mother actually erm ((long pause)) erm she lost her life in the Holocaust actually erm ((pause)) so it raised a lot of things with me umm and ((pause)) my dad um met my mum when he was in British Intelligence in Germany during the Second World War [...] i-it y’know it- it mixes up all sorts of emotions in me because we’re we’re all of us – German and English’ (OBS/16).

This draws interesting parallels with the object itself, manufactured in Germany and used by an English priest – a relationship that was discussed at length in the session and interviews. One participant described her reaction on finding the inscription of München on the chalice:

P6: The thing is when I looked at it at first [...] oh this beautiful and [...] I turned around to look and I felt this sort of like – oooh ((laughs))

P1: So where was it acquired?

P6: I feel differently about this object (OBS/16-17).

The material aspect of this object elicits questions and reactions from the viewer by representing a political and conflicting division in its production and use. These two reactions are representative of the strong personal connections and stories that surfaced through engagement with the object; the narrative map above (Figure 4) shows the strong narratives coming through from personal responses and the object’s own meanings. The object narrative codes such as ‘wonky’ or ‘battered’, show an
understanding of its usage, suggesting a transcendence from its role as a museum piece to a recognition of its previous uses and its material links with the past.

4.3.5. Two Civil War tracts [1643–44]

York Minster holds a large collection of Civil War tracts: pamphlets, sermons and lectures produced and circulated during the Civil War by both Royalist and Parliamentarian sides of the conflict. Two of these tracts were used during the session; one detailing a sermon given in thanksgiving for a Royalist victory and the other detailing a sermon given in thanksgiving for a Parliamentarian victory. These items were used to highlight the religious nature of their victory celebrations, along with their depiction of both sides of the English Civil War.

The maps that follow demonstrate a broad view of the narratives that both framed and resulted from the discussion, during the observation and interviews:
Table 6: Ordered situational map: Civil War tracts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Narrative</th>
<th>Social narrative</th>
<th>War narrative</th>
<th>Faith narrative</th>
<th>York narrative</th>
<th>Object narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History enthusiast</td>
<td>Nobility and gentry</td>
<td>Same nation</td>
<td>God’s support</td>
<td>York gates – portcullis</td>
<td>Choice of Biblical text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mount School</td>
<td>Us and them</td>
<td>Tragic time</td>
<td>Choice of Biblical text</td>
<td>Siege of York</td>
<td>Religious language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Minster School</td>
<td>Division</td>
<td>Us and them</td>
<td>Puritan names</td>
<td>The Mount School</td>
<td>Martial language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York hen and stag parties</td>
<td>York hen and stag parties</td>
<td>Repeating history</td>
<td>Religious language</td>
<td>The Minster School</td>
<td>Everybody celebrating the same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience</td>
<td>Same nation</td>
<td>God’s support</td>
<td>Religious war</td>
<td>York hen and stag parties</td>
<td>Two sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pete Wenham</td>
<td>Oliver Cromwell</td>
<td>Religious persecution</td>
<td>War in York</td>
<td>Division</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Martial language</td>
<td>Isis</td>
<td>Lamel Hill, York</td>
<td>Different viewpoints</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Siege of York</td>
<td>Catholics and protestants</td>
<td></td>
<td>Contrasts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monarchy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious war</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Isis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious persecution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enemies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5: Positional map of narrative responses to the Civil War Tracts

The most prominent addition to these maps is the social narrative, embedded within the historical narrative but still encompassing the other emergent narratives. Codes which featured in the discussions of other items, such as ‘us and them’ develop into social worlds beyond war and faith; one participant’s reflection summarises this position when they consider the aristocratic language of the tracts:
‘P5: [...] fortunately all these feelings of you know you doff your hat to so and so [...] oh you know your elders and your betters now and people are people are people [...] all sorts of social reflections as well as historic reflections about the actual war [...] every text is what it’s trying to say and all the contrasts between then and now and us and them’ (P5/29).

‘P5: The people inside were the citizens of York and the people outside – who were they? [...] So people ((hesitates)) seen by human nature to want to find us and them [...] in whatever way they can describe it whether it’s – and the presence us and them is us the reliable steady citizens of York and them the people who come for their hen parties and their stag parties on Saturdays [...] we’re constantly trying to find us’s and thems aren’t we?’ (P5/31–32).

These ‘social reflections’ shed a new insight on the other narratives presented in these maps – illuminating multiple signs of this split; ‘division’, ‘contrast’, ‘Oliver Cromwell’ and ‘the monarchy’, ‘Isis’ and ‘enemies’. In their presentation of the two sides of war, these tracts lay bare the divisions forced, not only in historical conflict but in day-to-day life, as the parodic ‘hen and stag parties’ comment attests to. This reflective response signals an awareness provoked by the objects’ message; their similarity in look, language and message represents a division which is arguably created and maintained by human nature.
4.3.6. Roman coin [c.330–1 AD]

The last object discussed was a coin dating back to the reign of Constantine, who was proclaimed Emperor in York where York Minster stands today. He was well known for proclaiming toleration of Christianity in 313AD. The coin, minted in York, bears the symbolism of both pagan gods and the Christian Chi Rho alongside depictions of military insignia and soldiers and was presented in the session as a foil to the Civil War tracts. Instead of representing division between two warring forces, the coin shows the uneasy transition from one faith to another with the ideas of war very much present. This object was used to show a ruler ‘hedging his bets – which god is going to give me what I want?’ (OBS/39) and ‘how the army is so clearly aligned to the religion’ (OBS/39) during this period.

The maps that follow demonstrate a broad view of the narratives that both framed and resulted from the discussion, during the observation and interviews:
Table 7: Ordered situational map: Roman coin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historical Narrative</th>
<th>Personal Narrative</th>
<th>War narrative</th>
<th>Faith narrative</th>
<th>Object narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constantine</td>
<td>Transactions</td>
<td>Army and religion</td>
<td>Sol Invictus</td>
<td>Chi Rho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julius Caesar</td>
<td>Different hands</td>
<td>Soldiers</td>
<td>Chi Rho</td>
<td>Pagan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emperor</td>
<td>Numismatists</td>
<td>Battle of the Milvian Bridge</td>
<td>Pagan</td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Empire</td>
<td>Story about a penny</td>
<td></td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Symbolism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eboracum (Roman York)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Start of Christian faith</td>
<td>Throwaway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undercroft – Roman Basilica</td>
<td></td>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gods</td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Army and religion</td>
<td>Illegible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Edict of Milan</td>
<td>Tease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Battle of the Milvian Bridge</td>
<td>Soldiers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of the responses to this object are shown (Figure 6) to be factual or related to the coin’s materiality – codes such as ‘small’, ‘illegible’, ‘throwaway’ and ‘tease’ highlight the interpretative difficulties many people experienced. Responses were mixed:
‘P4: Need a bigger magnifying – better magnifying glass or I need my glasses tested – one of the two ((laughs))

P5: My questions were all about it – I – I – couldn’t read the words on it

((murmurs of general agreement))

P7: Looked like an emperor’ (OBS/19).

Discussion was mainly limited to facts about the coin’s context and discussion over its general appearance. This narrative map, (Figure 6) unlike the others, includes codes within the surrounding historical context, due to the object’s age when compared with the other items. This decision can be explained with reference to two of the organisers’ discussions about the object during their interviews:

‘HoC: Coin was almost throwaway which is awful ((laughs)) [...] erm it didn’t have the same erm – for me the same connection...’ (HoC/15).

‘HoC: I feel like I can touch Milner-White almost in history [...] I can’t do that with Constantine – he’s too far away [...] so I don’t know whether that has [...] and impact on the objects erm but I didn’t connect with the coin in the same kind of way...’ (HoC/28).

‘L: The response to the coin is – wow I suppose, because of its age [...] and the fact that it was minted here and [...] it ties Constantine and the start of the Christian faith so very clearly [...] to this site so that’s [...] quite exciting [...] although I didn’t feel much of an emotional response’ (L/29).
These responses (or lack thereof) suggest both advantages and drawbacks to the item’s age and significance – it provides an insight into an ancient world, yet also emphasises the difference between that world and the present. This surrounding historical context educates audiences about a pivotal moment in history, but struggles to offer anything relatable as a way into understanding this period. This is evident in the personal narratives listed above: all relate to generic thoughts and ideas based around coinage and currency, suggesting a struggle to establish a connection on a personal level.

4.4. *Collections Unlocked* and adult learning

While the narrative maps and analysis present many of the major themes and discussions urged by emotional responses to the historic collections, two overarching narrative strands were overshadowed by this project’s singular case study focus – the narrative of the session itself and the environmental narrative within York Minster and the Old Palace. This is partly due to my decision to maintain a close analytic focus on the responses’ content and to attain a micro-level understanding of the relationships at play, but also due to my belief that these two strands would only truly come into focus through a multiple case study project, when compared with other sessions within York Minster and other organisations.

Nevertheless, interviewing participants and organisers about their experiences and ideas around the educational impact and value of this *Collections Unlocked* session provided some insight into this session’s context as a learning experience. Interestingly, participants who were interviewed all gave comparatively similar reasons for attending the session:
‘P5: My main interest is the topic – my main interest is not in libraries and museums’ (P5/8).

‘MN: ((discussing the war)) Is that what ((overlap)) interested you about it?

P1: ((overlap)) Yes I think […] cos I’ve got very strong feelings on it I thought – that would be rather interesting to go along to’ (P1/15).

‘ P4: I’d read the- the information about it, I saw it was to do with th-the First World War and that there’d be objects there and-and-and talk and […] discussion so that’s what attracted me’ (P4/10).

All participants interviewed were attracted to the topic of the session, driven by personal connections such as family members involved in the conflict (P1 and P4), or a deep personal response to war demonstrated in those who described themselves as pacifists (P1 and P5). Their perceptions of the educational value of the session were generally positive, but presented in an evaluative tone:

‘P4: I just got an overall impression that I was very pleased – I’d gone, I’d learnt a lot, it was good, it was stimulating’ (P4/31).

‘P1: Very useful [...] anything that I can glean information about York is of great interest to me’ (P1/36).

While these answers may not provide any deep understanding of the educational impact of the session, when compared with the organisers’ thoughts on informal learning, these responses begin to make more sense:

‘HoC: I think what works so well erm with the Collections Unlocked sessions is the fact that maybe you don’t realise you are in a session ((laughs)) [...] because you let the objects lead and erm that’s not a way of teaching that most of the people who are connecting with us are used to’ (HoC/40).

‘CC: We’re not there to provide the answers; we can provide factual information [...] but in the end I think the – you know the objects themselves [...] the great thing is that they can stimulate imagination, ideas, questions [...] if people went away feeling that they had been stimulated I think that what we [...] hoped would happen’ (CC/42).

It is possible that this reluctance, or possible inability, to articulate specifics around the educational impact of the session is due to its form and focus on object-based learning. This, and several other aspects of the educational value of interaction with historic collections, will be explored in more depth within the following chapter, in the context of wider educational theory and cultural heritage practice.
4.5. Conclusion

Through situational mapping and narrative analysis, this Results chapter provided an understanding of the breadth and depth of emotional responses to the items, discussions and debates presented by the session, analysing the responses to each object to develop a clear picture of the narratives at play throughout the session. The role of Collections Unlocked as an informal adult learning session was then illuminated through a comparison of the opinions received from attendees and organisers, interrogating the methods through which people learn and professionals teach using historic collections. This is one of the subjects tackled in the following chapter, which provides a discussion around these results in the context of other research and practice.
Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of this research project with reference to the original research questions and objectives, situating these findings within the context of similar research covered in the literature review. It is structured with reference to the research objectives mentioned in the introduction:

1. To explore emotional responses to historic collections and the narratives created around these.

2. To investigate how personal narratives interact with surrounding environmental narratives (including, but not limited to: public, historical, organisational, professional).

3. To understand the perceived educational value of these various narrative responses.

4. To present a narrative study which informs future research and provides transferable methods of investigating the emotive value of historic collections.

It concludes with a reflection about the research project and my dual role as a researcher and employee working within the York Minster Historic Collections team, referring to reflections recorded throughout data collection and analysis.
5.2. Emotional response to historic collections

The wide range of narratives highlighted throughout the results show a profound emotional response to the collections used and the subject of the session. This was facilitated by the structure and execution of the session: by giving visitors a chance to handle and engage with the objects on their own terms, it is clear that Collections Unlocked itself is a product of the ‘material turn’ (Bjerregaard, 2015, p.74) and the ‘affective turn’ (Munro, 2014, p.45). By shifting the focus to the interpretive power of the audience and allowing them to engage physically, cognitively and emotionally in meaning-making activities often restricted to heritage professionals, the session both validates and encourages engagement, as demonstrated by one of the organisers:

‘CC: I think when people are engaging with objects the great thing about – about that is that – it liberates people [...] out of thinking ‘Oh my gosh, what’s the right answer?’ They can – they can speculate, they can imagine, they can – uhhh dream a little bit’ (CC/14).

This signals a definitive step away from traditional heritage activities to a freer mode of engagement within a historic collections context. The narratives that developed from this activity elucidate the various types of emotional response at play and showed that, while objects and books were always used as starting points for discussion, they were not always the main trigger point for response. People responded to the topic of discussion, the environment and others around them as well as the objects. However, by focusing the first part of the session on allowing participants to interpret the objects on their own, this session catered to multiple modes of interpretation and consumption, suggesting a concern with what Bjerregaard (2015) terms as ‘the staging
Emotional response within the session surfaced in multiple forms: from the reactive to the reflective to the provocative. Responses could be fleeting, developmental or built collaboratively through discussion or debate, but their expression through the discourse of the session meant they were more often expressed in the narrative forms detailed in the previous chapter. This narrative mode and the emotions captured during this session indicated a deep desire to find out more; curiosity and attempts to reason or achieve understandings of the object were prominent within the data. This is where personal narratives played an instrumental role: by filling that information gap, their use allowed participants to attempt to understand the objects and topics of the session through their own experience.

This mode of engagement was evident in the responses of the interviewed participants; one in particular was very self-aware in their responses to the objects and session and punctuated their narratives with reference to this form of engagement:

‘P1: Is there such a thing as a Just War [...] I think that’s what triggered the response – the personal response in me’ (P1/2).

‘P1: So I mean it’s – it’s sort of going off at – digressing a bit [...] but this is, this is my personal reaction’ (P1/9).
'P1: The initial thing that you see - if you get a reaction then it colours the way that you could possibly see other things’ (P1/15).

The reflexivity of these responses and others observed throughout the research can be understood through the lens of Dervin’s Sense-Making theory (Dervin, 2003; Dervin and Reinhard, 2007), where emotion functions as an active catalyst for information transfer. In the case above, the message of a seven-hundred-year-old theological treatise on Just War can still be interpreted as relevant, when that personal response is also accepted as meaningful and important. This information, which has the potential to be obscured within its historical context, is made meaningful through the formation of personal connections and the application of its messages to personal experience. Throughout the session, this mode of understanding was actively encouraged and occasionally provoked:

‘CC: What emotions does the object stimulate for you [...] what questions?’ (OBS/8).

‘CC: What’s the role of the church in all this? I mean are we [...] to support the army unquestioningly?’ (OBS/40).

‘CC: What do you think Christians or anybody else ought to be praying for in relation to war?’ (OBS/42).

The focus here centres on the audience’s answers; these are not the rhetorical devices of static exhibition labels. What is also striking is the emotion work present in these exchanges; it is this ‘affective labour’ (Munro, 2014, p.45) that facilitates emotional response and allows audiences to feel secure in expressing these. This mode of performance and mediation is increasingly important within audience relations, as
Bagnall (2003) asserts, to enable ‘visitors to relate the consumption experience to a range of experienced and imagined worlds’ (p.87). These worlds are evident in the stories told by the session participants and their recognition of the narrative value of historic collections:

‘P5: What is interesting is that from a book, from an artefact – an object ((pause)) twenty people will all – if they had to write an essay about what thoughts it made [...] they would all write totally different things [...] because it’s my experience presented to these objects, not the job that the objects are doing and not the job that the books are doing’ (P5/35).

This reflection explicitly summarises the interpretive, and deeply personal, relationships between historic collections and their audiences, in what Pearce (1994) refers to as ‘the dynamics of viewing’ (p.26). This process, Pearce argues, has the paradoxical effect of ‘reflecting the developing personality of the viewer’, while, at the same time ‘the effect of the object is to modify or change the viewer’ (p.26). P5’s recognition of the passivity of these books and artefacts reveals the complex relationship that occurs in sessions like these, where meaning is often contested and hinges upon the emotional responses of their audiences.

Through exploring these emotional responses within an intrinsic case study, it quickly became clear that emotional and narrative responses were very much linked and were almost impossible to distinguish from one another. This was a finding that was preempted by Anderson’s (2009) definition of emotion as ‘narrative and semiotic’ (p.80). With physical objects and expressive narratives forming this project’s foci, this blurring of boundaries was inevitable and reflective of the nature of both explicit and implicit emotional response.
5.3. The interaction of personal and environmental narratives

The complexity of the relationship between viewer and object is clear when understood in relation to the multiple narratives which flow within the interpretive gap between subject and signifier. The situational maps developed in the previous chapter provide snapshots of narrative responses to each object, showing how personal narratives stem from this dialectic relationship and both expand into, and rely upon, shared narratives relating to institutions such as war, history, faith and nation.

These show that historic collections are not only viewed in the context of personal experience, but as a product of the world the viewer inhabits. This demonstrates the structuralist view argued by Bourdieu (1993); when engaging with works of cultural production, one must remain aware of ‘structural relations – invisible, or visible only through their effects – between social positions that are both occupied and manipulated by social agents which may be isolated individuals, groups of institutions’ (p.29). While each personal response told a different story, their links with shared knowledge and collective narratives demonstrated the prevalence of overarching institutional narratives, providing an interesting insight into the formation of cultural knowledge. This draws parallels with Foucault’s (1972) archaeological interpretation of discourse, where speakers construct their worldview in relation to these social formations – the subject/signifier interactions that occur in Collections Unlocked indicate a trigger point, but certainly not the origins of these diverse narratives. Foucault’s ‘attempt to reveal discursive practices in their complexity and density’ (p.209) indicates that the subject is not fully in control of their own discursive practices; received narratives from a body of surrounding and collective knowledge are present in their expressions.
The topic of the session highlighted this complexity; based on faith and war with World War I as the central focus, the participants’ responses continuously drew on collective knowledge, using the language (italicised) associated with this particular period:

‘P4: British humour shines through in the wars, in the [...] Tommies and that’ (OBS/12).

‘P5: And did our troops have lots of French money...’ (OBS/12).

‘P1: But I do think that there was the justifiable reason for the Second World War [...] not for the First World War [...] I know I’d’ve been a Conchie ((laughs))’ (P1/3).

The personal is deeply situated within this web of collective knowledge, with participants actively suspending temporal bounds and relating their own responses and feelings within wider realms of meaning. Narratives of war and nation are deeply embedded in the consciousness of these speakers and are active in its formation around this topic. This corresponds with Palmenfelt’s (2010) research into narrating cultural heritage, where ‘dominant units can be regarded as verbal expressions of an ongoing interplay between collective ideas and individually expressed narrative forms’ (p.69). In this particular session, ‘dominant units’ can be interpreted as the surrounding environmental narratives referred to in this project’s objectives. This research has demonstrated the occurrence of this discursive phenomenon within a learning session.
aimed at questioning and exploring historical complexities and ambiguity through object-based learning.

The interplay of these various narratives within Collection Unlocked is emphasised at points of critical engagement which was often provoked and mediated by the session organisers:

‘CC: I mean are we ((pause)) are we to support the army unquestioningly? Are we to support our politicians [...] uncritically?

[...]

P4: But surely we shouldn’t support anything uncritically, should we [...] if we say we’re Christian, I mean, it should be very critical of- of things...’

(OBS/40-31).

Politics, war and faith are all combined in this one interaction and are critically reflected upon rather than freely accepted. Even though these ‘dominant units’ are ever present in the discourse of both organisers and participants alike, they are recognised and grappled with. Critical engagement stems from the recognition and analysis of these composite, constructive arenas of discourse, providing an ideal environment for informal adult education.
5.4. The educational value of emotional and narrative response

Critical engagement with historic collections was one of the main drivers of *Collections Unlocked*; the motifs of ‘complexity’ and ‘ambiguity’ that continually resurfaced throughout the session challenged participants to not only contend with their own interpretations of the objects and topics, but also to look inwards and interrogate these responses. This corresponds with Froggett, Farrier and Poursanidou’s (2011) argument that ‘[t]he sense of discovery is not only the discovery of something new, as is often thought, it is the discovery of a *personal relation* to something new’ (p.68). This session’s educational value was directly related to these personal modes of interpretation and the communal value of discussing and debating them. For example, one participant’s view of Dean Eric Milner-White was transformed within the session:

‘P4: I know that people’s opinions of him so I didn’t have a – an incredibly high opinion of – of Milner-White to be honest [...] but I certainly changed my view a little I – when I learnt more about him.’ (P4/15)

Having previously spoken about meeting and researching this figure, it becomes clear that P4’s opinion was altered not merely through their knowledge of Milner-White but this personal relation to their involvement in York Minster and their judge of character. This intersection of personal narrative, the history of York Minster and the experience of war all coincide to power this discovery and transform previously accepted views.

This constructivist mode of informal learning finds expression in shared emotional responses and narratives, yet its indirect nature meant that, when participants were
asked about their views on the session’s educational value, their answers were not consistent. For example, P5’s differentiation between ‘fact’ and ‘experience’ (P5/45-46) oscillates between two different modes of education, with the session being categorised under ‘experience’. This correlates with Dewey’s (1938) assertion of the importance of experiential learning, but does not necessarily mean that this participant perceived the session as an educational experience. In contrast, P1’s discussion of the session referred to their ‘love of learning new – new things and new good experiences’ (P1/37). While still an experiential view of learning, they communicate a direct, educational motive for their attendance, ascribing value to this adult learning focus.

This focus on experience suggests the importance of the session’s form and execution as an embodied experience, rather than just relating to transmitted content. In this, cultural heritage education signifies a broader definition of educational practice, focusing less on fixed outcomes and more on the processes by which people make sense of the world. As Smith (2006) argues:

‘The idea that heritage is engaged with the construction and negotiation of meaning, in this case through remembering, reinforces the idea of heritage as an active process and not a passive subject of management. The act or performances of remembering help to bind groups together not only at national, but at sub-national community levels’ (p.303).

The real perceivable educational value of this session, enabled by emotional engagement and narrative response, is the negotiation of meaning provoked by these objects, discussions and relationships in a collaborative setting. In many ways, this draws parallels with the theory of ‘threshold concepts’ where students depart from seeing knowledge as an authoritative monolith towards understanding their own
position within its networks, as knowledge co-constructors (Fister, 2015). *Collections Unlocked*, through focusing on the complex and ambiguous, can be said to employ threshold concepts and their ‘transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something without which the learner cannot progress’ (Meyer & Land, 2003). These similarities demonstrate the opportunities present in using cross-curatorial collections in an informal learning setting; the information literacy implications of threshold concepts and dominance of museum case studies within cultural heritage education can be understood alongside one another to make the most of these converged collections. This is currently a growing area in cultural heritage research (Baker, 2013).

It is clear that the majority of participants interviewed and observed perceived the session’s educational value positively. Interestingly, all three participants who were interviewed had previous teaching experience, although all had left or retired from the profession. Although the interviewed participants only represent a third of the session attendees, this suggests a highly educated audience who required challenging subject matter, as alluded to by this organiser:

‘HoC: The actual local London audience are very much – well we’re a bit more than that, we know we’ve got this amazing museum but we need something a bit extra because we’re a bit more – effectively educated – ‘cause we’re used to seeing this stuff around and... I think there’s a perception that York’s quite similar.’ (HoC/9)

This suggests a specific demographic covered within this case study, with a wide scope for further research into different educational levels and demographics attending sessions which encourage emotional response through object-based learning. Within
the *Collections Unlocked* ‘Praying for Victory?’ session, the audience contained researchers, academics, library workers and members of the York Minster community which may have been reflected in the discussions that took place. Therefore, it is difficult to generalise the results of this research due to this small sample size and its restricted demographic.

### 5.5. Transferable methods of investigating the emotive value of historic collections

This project was embarked upon with the clear understanding that its form as a single case study would prevent it from being widely generalisable. Consequently, a key objective was to provide an understanding of how this research could contribute towards the development of a methodology for capturing emotional and narrative response to better understand visitor experience, cultural heritage education and best practice. From conducting this research, the following practical applications were observed:

- Emotional engagement is only possible within an environment and setting that facilitates and validates this form of understanding and interaction; narrative analysis of the language used by both organisers and participants can help develop an understanding of these interdependent relationships.

- Emotional response is deeply personal and cannot be captured using standardised measures; it requires flexible and adaptive methods to fully
engage with the range of reactions, reflections, mediations and provocations it encompasses.

- Situational and narrative analysis provide ideal methods for understanding these interactions at a macro- and micro-level, situating the participants within their environmental, social and institutional contexts while critically engaging with their worldviews through close examination of their discourse.

While this project is perhaps too time- and resource-intensive to be easily replicated as an internal method of performance measurement or audience feedback within smaller organisations, its data collection and analysis methods could be adapted to provide a broader, more qualitative approach to evaluating similar activities. Furthermore, while this project has centred on emotional response to historic collections, its methods can also be adapted for use in other sectors such as public libraries, health libraries and any institution that engages in object-based learning or reminiscence work. However, the range of emotional and narrative responses captured and analysed within this project, while representative of multiple views, have all been collected, processed and analysed by just one person; these findings have inevitably been filtered through my experience as both an employee and researcher within York Minster. This provides a caveat for the repurposing of these methods and results for other projects and institutions; a critical success factor for a project like this is a deep understanding of the host institution and a sensitive approach to research participants. This will be explored further within the final section of this chapter.
5.6. Reflective summary

The inspiration for this research project originated in conversations with colleagues based in York Minster and developed through my connections to York Minster and professional relationships with colleagues organising the session. While this has been invaluable for my research and helped me establish connections with research participants in a way that would prove difficult for an external researcher, in many ways it has exposed this project to bias and made me more susceptible to caution due to my own stake in the research environment.

My professional role as a library assistant in York Minster Library enabled me to access and influence areas of this research that may not have been possible. I sat in on planning sessions and contributed ideas, as was recognised in one organisers’ interviews:

‘L: So umm – the Thomas Aquinas I think – came from you [...] perhaps that’s part of it as well – it is about discussion with other people’ (L/21).

Despite attempts to remain passive and impartial through the observation and interviews, my ongoing work within York Minster meant that I was part of the research environment. This was evident to me throughout; on several occasions, I found it difficult to negotiate the boundaries between my role as researcher and my role as an employee based in York Minster. Maintaining an externalised, critical attitude to my research focus proved difficult as it meant acknowledging and stepping outside of my institutional mindset and probing deeper to contextualise my research on a wider scale. This task became easier during data analysis, as I was able to directly compare
and contrast the experiences of both organisers and participants and better understand their convergences and divergences.

Nevertheless, throughout the data collection stage, my presence as an employee based in York Minster inevitably affected the responses I received from participants and organisers alike; my role as a social actor within York Minster impacted the construction of these responses, especially during interviews. While this was inevitable, I could have managed this better and believe that in future projects, an interview guide designed explicitly to cater for these relationships would be useful. Nevertheless, I have found this approach fascinating and believe that it suited the topic. While charting these research participants’ responses and narratives, I have developed a more sensitive approach to the professional activities discussed here and have grown as a researcher and a professional.
Chapter 6  Conclusion

6.1. Key findings

In seeking to answer the research question ‘How can emotional response inform the use of historic collections in cultural heritage education?’ this project has delivered the following key findings:

- While historic collections often trigger responses, discussions and debates, emotional responses within these sessions are not restricted to objects and books alone, and can develop from resulting discussions, the topic of focus, other people or the environmental setting. It is very often difficult to pinpoint the exact moment of emotional responses, as these can develop over time and through discussion.

- The use of historic collections in learning sessions can provide a portal into other worlds and a sense of temporal suspension; the interpretative value of this act cannot be underestimated. Recognition of the structure and power of these other worlds, however, is key to providing the context required to facilitate critical engagement with the institutions that shape worldviews.

- The educational value of sessions such as these cannot be solely based on the content of the session. Cultural heritage education is only successful when it involves its audiences in Smith’s (2006) ‘process of engagement’ (p.1), where the emphasis is shifted to personal and collaborative interpretation activities. Emotional response is a process and not an outcome of engagement with historic collections; its contribution to informal learning cannot be undervalued.
in establishing meaningful connections with new ideas, topics and ways of thinking.

- The methods used to capture and analyse emotional and narrative response require flexibility, adaptability and a sensitive approach. While a project on this scale may be too time- and resource-intensive for routine professional practice, its methods could easily be customised to include a narrative aspect of performance measurement or market research to complement other forms of qualitative and quantitative data collection. This can help with interpretation of other data sources by contributing another level of meaning.

These key findings demonstrate that this research project has met its aim to explore the role of emotional response to historic collections and the opportunities this creates for engagement in cultural heritage education. It has provided a detailed insight into the various manifestations of emotional response and a detailed discussion on the social, educational and critical impact this has on both the audience and facilitators. The opportunities created will be reflected in the recommendations below.

### 6.2. Critical reflections on the research limitations

As has been mentioned throughout this dissertation, this project’s focus on a single case study limits the applicability of the research findings as it is still unclear which characteristics of this session were generalisable to other learning activities and which were a product of the environment. A critical review of the environment in which these responses, reflections and relationships demonstrates the need for a comparative viewpoint; *Collections Unlocked*’s position as a learning session facilitated within the environment of York Minster, although advertised as an ‘informal learning’ session, is
situated very clearly within the larger institution of the Church of England and therefore deeply embodies the tenets of this dominant religious narrative. While this was clear from the topic and the setting of the session, what is unclear is whether an institutional backdrop such as this imposes any limitations to learning and the exact nature of these.

An interesting point of comparison lies within Illich’s (1973) *Tools for Conviviality*, which dictates: ‘A convivial society should be designed to allow all its members the most autonomous action by means of tools least controlled by others’ (p.28). From this perspective, *Collections Unlocked* promotes a convivial approach to learning by allowing participants to individually and collaboratively develop their own interpretations using the objects, or tools, presented. However, the selection and presentation of these objects and even, by extension, their very presence in a cathedral collection suggests a learning experience that is dictated by the institutional forces of religion and education. A closer examination of these higher influences and their role in this learning environment would provide a fascinating insight into the direction of this learning and the intersection of religious and secular modes of thought.

Another critical limitation within the project was the specific demographic of the session attendees. As well as representing a highly educated group, the data showed a definite imbalance between those who made oral contributions and those who didn’t. Several participants remained silent throughout the *Collections Unlocked* session and four declined to participate in the following interviews. Furthermore, the session was not free of charge: admission cost £5 per attendee. These limitations reflect Clarke’s (2005) ‘sites of silence’ (p.85) – several of those who participated in the session may not be adequately reflected within this research. Those who did attend may have had their decisions influenced by educational, religious or financial considerations; these are other areas that would benefit from comparison within further research.
6.3. Recommendations

This project delivers two sets of recommendations; the first for practice within similar organisations and the second for further research.

6.3.1. Professional practice

Specific recommendations relating to the planning, execution and development of sessions like these include the following:

- Organisations should critically engage with their audiences, understanding their motives for attending the session and the backgrounds of attendees. This would not only contribute towards the planning of the session but would help develop an understanding of areas where these learning activities can be expanded for new, or previously overlooked audiences.

- Due to the depth and complexity of the responses and discussions occurring within these learning sessions, facilitators would benefit from a debrief following the session. Engaging in collaborative reflective practice at some point following the session would help form an understanding of the session’s successes and limitations, and could contribute towards forming a standard of best practice.
6.3.2. Further research

The following recommendations are put forward for further research:

- This project could provide a pilot for a larger project with multiple case studies, researching the role of emotional response in cultural heritage education. This would be vital in attaining a comparative point of view which could provide a better understanding of how emotional response works in different settings.

- A deeper critical investigation into the relationship between the educational value of historic collections and the institutions that both hold and manage them would provide some interesting insights into the nature and shape of this learning, and how deeply it is influenced by the tenets of these various institutions.

- One of the relationships that surfaced within this research which would benefit from further analysis is that between these learning sessions and other modes of informal learning, through recreational activities like watching television, listening to the radio or the use of digital interactive media. Evidence of this came across in the research data, but was not fully analysed as it was considered outside of this project’s scope.
6.4. Contributions of this study to current research

This narrative project has provided an initial case study into the effects of emotional response within a heritage learning environment, hosted within the unique environment of a major cathedral and using a converged collection of books, documents and museum objects. This research’s exploratory nature has shed light on the depth and complexity of learning sessions like these, relating this to the literature reviewed as part of this project, which drew together the current research around emotional response, heritage and meaning-making, cultural heritage education and narrative response.

This project has contextualised much of the research explored in the literature review within an environment specifically based around informal learning and using cross-curatorial collections. It has suggested new modes of recognising and analysing the characteristics which contributed to the success of *Collections Unlocked*. As mentioned above, this could form a pilot study for further research into multiple sessions, formed from different demographics, within different environments and different institutions, to attain a broader knowledge of emotional response and its role within cultural heritage education.

Word count: 14,933
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http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2012.709194


Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide (participants)

Interview guide: *Collections Unlocked*

*Nb. This guide is intended to be flexible and questions may be adjusted or omitted during the interview depending on the interviewees’ responses.*

Introduction

I want to say, first of all, thank you for coming today. The first thing I’m going to do is give you a little background about myself and this dissertation project.

I’ve been a library assistant at York Minster Library for over three years and have been living in York for over five years, having moved up here from Swansea to do a degree. I’ve been studying part-time for an MA in Librarianship from the University of Sheffield, which I’ll have completed by September of this year.

So this dissertation project is obviously a big part of that and I’ve decided to research into how people respond to historic collections – what kind of feelings, emotions, thoughts they stir up and how that works in sessions like this. To do this, I’m conducting a case study of the *Collections Unlocked* session you attended at the end of April. The first part of this was the observation and recording of that session and the second part consists of these interviews. You may have noticed I’ve left quite a bit of time between the two – this is not only for practical reasons, but I also think it’s important to leave a bit of time to reflect and even to understand which bits of the session are more memorable to each person who attended. So today I’ll be asking you some questions about your responses to the objects used, your experience of the session and also chatting about your experiences in similar environments, possibly with similar collections.
Before we get started, I’m just going to ask – have you read over the information sheet? Are you happy to consent to this interview? Just to make some important things clear – I will be recording this session, but all personal identifying information will be anonymised in transcripts and the dissertation write-up. All recordings and documents will be stored in a secure location, on a password-protected laptop and you are, of course, free to withdraw at any time today or, to contact me to withdraw your information from the project at a latter point. This research will be turned into a dissertation and potentially a conference paper or journal article. Are you happy to continue? Do you have any questions at this point?

**Background**

How long have you lived in York?

What is your occupation?

Are you studying or have you ever studied at a university?

Was this your first time attending an event held by York Minster?

Was this your first visit to the Old Palace?

**EITHER:**

Can you tell me, in your own words, your experience of the session? I’ve brought out the objects that you saw during *Collections Unlocked*, so you can talk me through those, if you want.

OR (if interviewee unsure of how to proceed)

**Opening questions – motivations & background**

Can you tell me a bit about what made you want to attend this session?

**PROBE:** Did you know you’d attend at first, or did you decide later?
Have you attended any similar events in the past?

**PROBE:** What type? Were they based in museums, libraries etc?

Can you tell me a bit about your experience of museums and libraries in general?

**PROBE:** Are you a regular visitor? What sort of events/buildings do you prefer to visit?

How did you feel upon first entering the building and then the reading room?

**PROBE:** What sort of atmosphere or environment had you been expecting?

**Key questions – emotional response & experience of session**

Can you tell me a bit about how you felt at the beginning of the session?

**PROBE:** What were your thoughts just before the session began? Did you walk around, talk to other attendees, sit and reflect?

As you may remember, the objects and books were already set up on the tables in the reading room. How did you feel upon seeing these?

**PROBE:** Did any particular object or book catch your eye?

Can you tell me about any memories these objects/books might have triggered for you? Any connections you made to your own life?

**PROBE:** Was this in some way related to the objects/books? Did they trigger any thoughts or memories?

So now we’re going to take another look at these objects – could you share your responses to these? (run through each object)

**PROBE:** Is there anything you can remember thinking about these during the session? Is there anything different you’re noticing now?
Can you tell me whether your responses or feelings towards any of these books/objects influenced by the people around you?

PROBE: Did you notice other people’s reactions or discuss the objects with others?

Can you tell me about your feelings during the presentation part of the session?

PROBE: Was this material the sort of thing you were expecting? Did it feel relevant to your interests? Did it affect your reactions to these objects?

**Closing questions – learning & education**

What, for you, were the most memorable parts of the session?

PROBE: If I asked you to describe the session to me, as if I’d not been there, what do you think would spring to mind first?

Do you feel that you learned anything new from the session?

PROBE: Did anything make you pause for thought, or reflect?

If you think back to the session, did it feel like a learning or education session?

PROBE: If so, what in particular made it feel like this? If not, what did it feel like?

Can you tell me a bit about how you felt leaving the session?

PROBE: What were your thoughts at this point?

If you were to attend a session like this again, would you, personally, change anything?

PROBE: What would you change? /Why wouldn’t you change anything?

Do you think sessions like these could be relevant to a wider audience?

PROBE: Can you tell me who you feel these sessions are directed towards, if anyone?
This brings the interview to a close. Do you have any questions for me?
Appendix 2: Interview guide (organisers)

Interview guide: *Collections Unlocked*

*Nb. This guide is intended to be flexible and questions may be adjusted or omitted during the interview depending on the interviewees’ responses.*

Introduction

Firstly I’d like to say thank you for agreeing to be interviewed today.

I know we’ve discussed my topic of research before, but just to reiterate... I’m researching into how people respond to historic collections – what kind of feelings, emotions, thoughts they stir up and how that works in sessions like this. To do this, I’m conducting a case study of the *Collections Unlocked* session ‘Praying for Victory? The Legacy of War’. The first part of this was the observation and recording of that session and the second part consists of these interviews. You may have noticed I’ve left quite a bit of time between the two – this is not only for practical reasons, but I also think it’s important to leave a bit of time to reflect and even to understand which bits of the session are more memorable to each person who attended. So today I’ll be asking you some questions about your experience of planning the session, your personal response to the objects used and your general aims and hopes for the session and for the adult learning programme at York Minster in general, with specific reference to the Historic Collections.

Before we get started, I’m just going to ask – have you read over the information sheet? Are you happy to consent to this interview? Just to make some important things clear – I will be recording this session, but all personal identifying information will be anonymised in transcripts and the dissertation write-up. All recordings and documents will be stored in a secure location, on a password-protected laptop and you are, of course, free to withdraw at any time today or, to contact me to withdraw your information from the project at a latter point. This research will be turned into a
dissertation and potentially a conference paper or journal article. Are you happy to continue? Do you have any questions at this point?

**Background**

What is your role in York Minster and how long have you worked here?

Can you tell me a bit about what you see as your role within York Minster? What are you responsible for – how does this translate into your day to day work?

What drew you to this particular career choice/vocation?

**Opening questions – development of the session**

Can you tell me a bit about the development of the Collections Unlocked sessions?

   **PROBE:** How did they start? What was the overall aim of these sessions and the adult learning programme?

Can you tell me a bit about the sort of audience you envisaged for these sessions?

   **PROBE:** Did you have any particular audience in mind? Tourists, members of the Minster community, general public?

Have you ever attended or observed any sessions similar to this elsewhere?

   **PROBE:** Have you ever heard of something similar going on in other places?

Can you tell me a bit about your role in the planning process behind this session?

   **PROBE:** Did you go through any particular stages to develop the final session? Who was involved in the planning process? Did this follow the same process as the other sessions?

Can you tell me a bit about the theme of the session? How was this decided upon?
PROBE: Which came first, the theme or the objects?

How did you go about choosing and deciding upon the items to be used?

PROBE: Did you suggest any of these in particular? What drew you to pick these particular items?

How did you decide where to hold the session?

PROBE: How far would you say that you considered the setting and the environment?

**Key questions – emotional response & experience of session**

Can you tell me a bit about how you felt at the beginning of the session?

PROBE: What were your thoughts just before the session began?

Can you tell me a bit about your opinions of and responses to these objects?

Probe: *run through the objects and discuss each individually*

Were you aware of the session attendees’ interactions with the objects?

PROBE: Can you remember anything in particular from the session about how the session attendees interacted with the objects during the breakout period?

How do you feel the people engaged with the discussion and talks around the objects and the subject of war?

Thinking of the objects, did any one in particular stand out for you?

PROBE: Did your opinion of these change at all from development through to the session itself?
Did any of the discussions around the objects bring up ideas that you had not previously considered?

PROBE: Did you feel that you learned something from your audience at all?

How did you feel while presenting?

PROBE: Did the audience feel responsive? Was there a connection at all – perhaps a rapport?

Closing questions – learning & education

What, for you, were the most memorable parts of the session?

PROBE: If I asked you to describe the session to me, as if I’d not been there, what do you think would spring to mind first?

What do you think was the important, take-away message from the session?

PROBE: Was there one?

Thinking of the description of the session as an ‘adult learning session’, do you think that the educational aspect was prominent throughout the session?

PROBE: What do you feel that your role was in this? An educator? Facilitator? Storyteller?

Can you tell me a bit about how you felt after the session?

PROBE: What were your thoughts at this point?

Is there anything, at this point in time, that you’d like to change about the sessions?

PROBE: What would you change? /Why wouldn’t you change anything?

What are your plans for the future of Collections Unlocked?

PROBE: Which direction would you like to bring it in?
This brings the interview to a close. Do you have any questions for me?
Appendix 3: Ethics approval letter

Maria Nagle
Registration number: 130118005
Information School
MA Librarianship

Dear Maria,

PROJECT TITLE: Empathetic access to cultural heritage: A case study of a learning session held by York Miners Historic Collections Team
APPLICATION: Reference Number 003194

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 25/03/2015 the above-named project was approved on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 003194 (dated 23/03/2015).
- Participant information sheet 006742 (23/03/2015)
- Participant information sheet 006741 (23/03/2015)
- Participant consent form 006743 (23/03/2015)

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Jones
Ethics Administrator
Information School
Appendix 4: Information sheet and consent form (participants)

Information Sheet

Research Project Title

Access to cultural heritage: A case study of Collections Unlocked

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project’s purpose?

This is a small research project conducted for a dissertation in partial fulfilment of a MA Librarianship taken at the University of Sheffield.

I am interested in how people often emotionally react to historic collections and the effects this has on learning in libraries, museums and archives. I aim to explore this subject through observing a Collections Unlocked event held by York Minster and by holding a series of follow-up interviews. I hope this work will allow a better insight into the variety of personal responses to historic collections, and how different people interpret and make sense of these objects.

This project will run from March 2015 – September 2015. I anticipate the interviews will take place between May – June 2015.

Why have I been chosen?
You have been chosen as an attendee of *Collections Unlocked: Praying for Victory? The Legacy of War.*

**Do I have to take part?**

You can decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason.

If you decide that you do not want to be recorded during the *Collections Unlocked*, please let me know and I will use alternate methods of capturing data (e.g. field notes, my own observations).

**What will happen to me if I take part?**

If you take part, anything you say during the *Collections Unlocked* session will be recorded and may be analysed to understand the various responses to historic collections. You will be asked at the end to indicate whether you would like to be contacted for a follow up interview. If you indicate that you do not want be contacted, no further action will be taken.

If you indicate that you would like to be contacted, you may be invited back to the Old Palace for a one-to-one interview with me, which will make use of some of the objects discussed and presented during *Collections Unlocked*. These interviews should take no more than 90 minutes and you will be asked open-ended questions about the session and your responses the objects. This will be an informal interview and there will be no ‘correct’ answers – the idea is to explore the variety of different approaches to historic collections and events like *Collections Unlocked*. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or would like to stop the interview and withdraw from the research process, we will do so immediately.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**
As the session is based around war and the role of faith, I understand some people may not feel comfortable being recorded and/or interviewed in light of these topics. If you feel uncomfortable at any point, please do contact me or my supervisor (see below) or ask directly to withdraw or cease recording.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

There is no intended benefit from allowing the *Collections Unlocked* session to be recorded. However, if you express interest in attending a follow-up interview you will have access to object and books that you may otherwise not be able to access, with a staff member of York Minster’s Historic Collections team.

**What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?**

If this is the case the reason(s) will be explained.

**What if something goes wrong?**

If you have any complaints about the project, in the first instance you can contact me or my supervisor (see below). If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction you can contact the University of Sheffield’s Head of Information School to take your complaint further. (see below)

**Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. Your name will not be included in the dissertation; pseudonyms will be used and precautions will be taken to prevent accidental disclosure of any information you give which could be used to identify you. If you would like to review any interview or session transcripts, please contact me or my supervisor. (see below)
What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project’s objectives?

The recording of Collections Unlocked will be used to gauge visitors’ immediate reactions to the collections - this information will help understanding the various responses people have to historic collections and how they affect learning in these and other similar environments.

The interviews will prompt discussions and reflections based around the session, the objects and your related experiences and connections with these. This research does not aim to come to any final conclusions about the use and perspectives on such collections; it is an exploratory case study, aiming to capture individual responses.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

Results of the research will be written up into a dissertation and published online on the University of Sheffield’s online database: [http://dagda.shef.ac.uk/dispub/](http://dagda.shef.ac.uk/dispub/). If you wish to be given an electronic copy of this dissertation upon its completion, please contact me. (see below) There may also be academic journal or conference publications resulting from this research.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is being organised and funded by Maria Nagle and managed by the University of Sheffield. Due to my role as a part-time Library Assistant within York Minster’s Historic Collections Team, York Minster have kindly given permission to also make use of their space and collections.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved by the Information School’s ethics review procedure. The University of Sheffield’s Research Ethics Committee monitors the application and delivery of the University’s Ethics Review Procedure across the University.
Contact for further information

Ms Maria Nagle (Principal Investigator) Information School, Regent Court, University of Sheffield. Tel: +44 (0)114 222 2662. Email: menagle1@sheffield.ac.uk

Dr Barbara Sen (Supervisor) Information School, Regent Court, University of Sheffield. Tel: +44 (0)114 222 2635 Email: b.a.sen@sheffield.ac.uk

Professor Val Gillet (Head of Information School) Information School, Regent Court, University of Sheffield. Tel: +44 (0)114 222 2652 Email: v.gillet@sheffield.ac.uk
Appendix 5: Information sheet (organisers)

Information Sheet

Research Project Title

Access to cultural heritage: A case study of Collections Unlocked

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project's purpose?

This is a small research project conducted for a dissertation in partial fulfilment of a MA Librarianship taken at the University of Sheffield.

I am interested in how people often emotionally respond to historic collections and the effects this has on learning in libraries, museums and archives. I aim to explore this subject through observing a Collections Unlocked event held by York Minster and by holding a series of follow-up interviews, through which I will pick out narratives and story-telling methods based around these collections. I hope this work will allow a better insight into the variety of personal responses to historic collections, and how different people interpret and make sense of these objects.

This project will run from March 2015 – September 2015. I anticipate the interviews will take place between May – June 2015.
Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen as an organiser of Collections Unlocked: Praying for Victory? The Legacy of War.

Do I have to take part?

You can decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason.

If you decide that you do not want to be recorded during the Collections Unlocked, please let me know and I will use alternate methods of capturing data (e.g. field notes, my own observations).

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you take part, anything you say during the Collections Unlocked session will be recorded and may be analysed to understand the various responses to historic collections.

Following this, I will ask to arrange a one-to-one interview with you. This interview should take no more than 90 minutes and you will be asked open-ended questions about your experience of organising the session, the messages and atmosphere you hoped to convey through the session and your own responses to the objects. This will be an informal interview and there will be no ‘correct’ answers – the idea is to explore the variety of different approaches to historic collections and events like Collections Unlocked. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or would like to stop the interview and withdraw from the research process, we will do so immediately.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

As the session is based around war and the role of faith, I understand some people may not feel comfortable being recorded and/or interviewed in light of these topics. If you
feel uncomfortable at any point, please do contact me or my supervisor (see below) or ask directly to withdraw or cease recording.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

There is no intended benefit from taking part in this research project.

**What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?**

If this is the case the reason(s) will be explained.

**What if something goes wrong?**

If you have any complaints about the project, in the first instance you can contact me or my supervisor (see below). If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction you can contact the University of Sheffield’s Head of Information School to take your complaint further. (see below)

**Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

All attempts will be made to keep any information collected from you confidential; pseudonyms will be used as well as methods to prevent accidental disclosure of any identifying information. However, due to the unique nature of this session and your role in York Minster, it will be very difficult to eliminate all possibility of you being identified. If you would like to discuss this in more detail and/or review any interview or session transcripts, please contact me or my supervisor. (see below)

**What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project’s objectives?**

The recording of *Collections Unlocked* will be used to gauge visitors’ immediate responses to the collections - this information will help understanding the various responses people have to historic collections and how they affect learning in these and other similar environments.
The interview will prompt discussions and reflections based around the session, the objects and your related experiences and connections with these. As an organiser of *Collections Unlocked*, you will also be asked questions relating to your profession and the mission and ethos of York Minster. This research does not aim to come to any final conclusions about the use and perspectives on such collections; it is an exploratory case study, aiming to capture individual responses, as well as their environmental backdrop.

**What will happen to the results of the research project?**

Results of the research will be written up into a dissertation and published online on the University of Sheffield’s online database: [http://dagda.shef.ac.uk/dispub/](http://dagda.shef.ac.uk/dispub/). If you wish to be given an electronic copy of this dissertation upon its completion, please contact me. (see below) There may also be academic journal or conference publications resulting from this research.

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**Contact for further information**

Ms Maria Nagle (Principal Investigator) Information School, Regent Court, University of Sheffield. Tel: +44 (0)114 222 2662. Email: menagle1@sheffield.ac.uk
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Professor Val Gillet (Head of Information School) Information School, Regent Court, University of Sheffield. Tel: +44 (0)114 222 2652 Email: v.gillet@sheffield.ac.uk
Appendix 6: Consent form (participants and organisers)

Participant Consent Form

**Title of Research Project:** Access to cultural heritage: A case study of Collections Unlocked

**Name of Researcher:** Maria Nagle

**Participant Identification Number for this project:**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 22nd April 2015 explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. **Contact: Maria Nagle (0)114 222 2662 or menagle1@sheffield.ac.uk**

3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.
4. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research

5. I agree to take part in the above research project.

________________________  __________________  __________________
Name of Participant        Date                 Signature

________________________  __________________  __________________
Lead Researcher            Date                 Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant
Appendix 7: Access to Dissertation form

Access to Dissertation

A Dissertation submitted to the University may be held by the Department (or School) within which the Dissertation was undertaken and made available for borrowing or consultation in accordance with University Regulations.

Requests for the loan of dissertations may be received from libraries in the UK and overseas. The Department may also receive requests from other organisations, as well as individuals. The conservation of the original dissertation is better assured if the Department and/or Library can fulfill such requests by sending a copy. The Department may also make your dissertation available via its web pages.

In certain cases where confidentiality of information is concerned, if either the author or the supervisor so requests, the Department will withhold the dissertation from loan or consultation for the period specified below. Where no such restriction is in force, the Department may also deposit the Dissertation in the University of Sheffield Library.

To be completed by the Author – Select (a) or (b) by placing a tick in the appropriate box

If you are willing to give permission for the Information School to make your dissertation available in these ways, please complete the following:

☐ (a) Subject to the General Regulation on Intellectual Property, I, the author, agree to this dissertation being made immediately available through the Department and/or University Library for consultation, and for the Department and/or Library to reproduce this dissertation in whole or part in order to supply single copies for the purpose of research or private study

☐ (b) Subject to the General Regulation on Intellectual Property, I, the author, request that this dissertation be withheld from loan, consultation or reproduction for a period of [ ] years from the date of its submission. Subsequent to this period, I agree to this dissertation being made available through the Department and/or University Library for consultation, and for the Department and/or Library to reproduce this dissertation in whole or part in order to supply single copies for the purpose of research or private study
Information School.

Name: Maria Nagle

Department: Information School

Signed: M. Nagle  Date: 31st August 2015

To be completed by the Supervisor – Select (a) or (b) by placing a tick in the appropriate box

(a) I, the supervisor, agree to this dissertation being made immediately available through the Department and/or University Library for loan or consultation, subject to any special restrictions (*) agreed with external organisations as part of a collaborative project.

*Special restrictions

(b) I, the supervisor, request that this dissertation be withheld from loan, consultation or reproduction for a period of [ ] years from the date of its submission. Subsequent to this period, I, agree to this dissertation being made available through the Department and/or University Library for loan or consultation, subject to any special restrictions (*) agreed with external organisations as part of a collaborative project

Name

Department

Signed  Date

THIS SHEET MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH DISSERTATIONS BY DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENTS.