

M4C Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA)

PROJECT TITLE				
Engaging audiences with stories of marginalised communities in rugby through a case study of Nottingham Rugby Football Club.				
LEAD INSTITUTION				
Name of HEI institution	Nottingham Trent University			
Lead regional city	Birmingham <input type="checkbox"/>	Coventry <input type="checkbox"/>	Leicester <input type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PARTNER ORGANISATION				
Name of organisation	Culture, Learning & Libraries – Inspire			
Website	https://www.inspireculture.org.uk/			

Project

Nottingham Rugby Football Club (NRFC) was founded in 1877 and has been part of the city's social fabric and sporting life ever since. Since 2015, the club's archival material has been stored at Nottinghamshire Archives (managed by Inspire on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council) but has been largely left untouched. Consequently, important stories have been hidden from the community. The lack of a detailed catalogue has prevented the club and the public from knowing much about the club's history and its role in the life of the local community. This project will focus on two areas. Firstly, it will produce a searchable catalogue to allow other researchers to access the archives, opening up the project to an international audience. Secondly, this project will uncover hidden stories attentive to questions of race, class, sexuality, and gender by highlighting relevant parts of the club's history and producing a public-facing output that tells these stories.

Indicative preliminary research questions:

- What is the most effective way of making hidden stories digitally available to the public?
- What role has Nottingham Rugby Football Club played in the history of the city?
- Have players, staff, and supporters challenged societal norms through their involvement in the club and, if so, how?

Process

The award-holder will ideally have previous experience and skills in historical and archival research and an active interest in sports history. The researcher will also have the opportunity to design a public-facing output celebrating the stories of marginalised groups from Nottingham Rugby Football Club. Training in cataloguing will be provided to the award-holder by Inspire. Thus, there is no need for any formal background in this skill prior to commencing the project.

This project has been co-produced between NTU and Inspire to reveal hidden histories of traditionally marginalised groups in the sport, as well as support Inspire's remit to bring their material to public attention. The project is interdisciplinary, and we invite candidates from a range of backgrounds, including (but not limited to) history, museum and heritage studies, and cultural studies. We expect the award-holder to develop their own focus and approach but anticipate the use of the following methods:

- a. Archival and collection research – Inspire houses the archival material of Nottingham Rugby Football Club. Additional archives will likely include the World Rugby Museum in Twickenham, as well as newspaper archives held digitally, or at the British Library.
- b. Creative practice in presenting findings to non-specialist audiences.
- c. Conducting oral history interviews of former members of Nottingham Rugby Football Club.

Student Support

The supervisory team (Dr Katie Taylor, NTU Sport and Exercise Science, Dr David Dee, De Montfort University International Centre for Sports History and Culture, and Ruth Imeson, Heritage Services Manager at Inspire) will meet regularly with the candidate at NTU or Inspire.

Taylor will ensure that the candidate is integrated into the research culture within NTU and through the Doctoral School). She will ensure that the student is well-grounded in sports history research methods and will assist the student in developing public engagement. Dee will ensure that the candidate develops their understanding of historical issues and contexts regarding diversity, marginalisation and (in)equality. His consultancy and communities experience will support cohesive working between the partners.

Inspire will provide desk space on-site and access to the archives and collections. They will also organise induction, including Health & Safety, GDPR and EDI training. Imeson will ensure that cultural outputs will be engaging, appropriate, and compliant with archival standards, particularly where sensitive topics, personal data, or the use of archival materials are concerned.

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HOW TO FIND OUT MORE. Please email the lead university supervisor if you want to find out more about this CDA project.

Lead HEI Supervisor:	Dr Katie Taylor
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