

M4C DTP Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) Marketing Template

Project Title				
Histories of the High-Street Shopper: Boots and the experience of chain-store retail, 1880-1980				
LEAD INSTITUTION				
Name of HEI institution		University of Nottingham		
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		Boots UK		
Website URL		archives.walgreensbootsalliance.com		
THE RESEARCH PROJECT				
<i>(Max 750 words)</i>				
<p>With the British high-street increasingly perceived to be ‘in crisis’, this project uses the case study of Boots the Chemist to explore what high-street shopping has meant to shoppers over time. Boots had one of the most extensive chains of high-street stores in twentieth-century Britain and dominated the market for healthcare and beauty products, in particular. At times in its history, it also sold stationery, records, leather goods, travel goods, and more, and offered photographic and optician services. The stores also provided social spaces for customers through their Book Lovers Libraries, Boots Cafés and artistic studios. Using the vast and under-explored holdings of Boots Archive (which includes employee magazines and merchandising bulletins, store photographs and architectural plans, advertisements and strategic plans and reviews), the student will explore the historical role of high-street shopping in ordinary people’s experience of and negotiation of social change.</p> <p>The project will consider the following research questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did Boots executives imagine its shoppers, and how did this change over time? - How was this reflected in the design and everyday management of the stores, and the service culture they created and performed? - How did Boots stores enable, respond to, or resist wider social changes within Britain, around (e.g.) gender roles, generational difference, class structures, marital status, sexuality and race? - In what ways did the everyday practices of shopping at Boots feed into particular social identities, experiences or pleasures? - What, for its customers, was the cultural value of shopping at Boots and how did this change over time? <p>The knowledge uncovered by this project will not only develop our historical appreciation of the social and cultural value of high-street shopping, but provide important insights that might help companies like Boots to regenerate the British high-street in an age of increasing online retail.</p>				
HOW TO FIND OUT MORE				
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