

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: University of Leicester</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 30 History</p>
<p>Title of case study: <i>KEPT</i> – Knowledge Exchange Partnerships for Tourism: supporting the tourist economy and improving visitor experience at historic destinations.</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Through a series of well-established knowledge exchange partnerships, Leicester historians have enabled heritage organisations to identify a research agenda to inform their strategy, create innovative tourist information resources for historic sites in the UK, and manage the transition of these resources from paper to digital media. The cumulative impact of their contribution has been to extend the global reach of these organisations, to improve the quality of visitor experiences of the historic places they manage, to increase footfall and revenues at historic sites, and to develop – and realise – new pathways for economic growth by increasing demand for and strategic investment in heritage-based tourism.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The research expertise of two Leicester historians (Story and Sweet) is the foundation of well-established knowledge exchange partnerships with business and heritage organisations that focus on developing heritage-based tourism in the UK.</p> <p>Joanna Story (appointed 1996) focuses her research on early medieval Europe, especially connections between England and the Continent AD 600–900. It is underpinned by sustained research over 15 years on the development of historical writing in Anglo-Saxon England, especially that produced by the Northumbrian monk Bede (d. 735). Her work explores the ways in which knowledge and narratives of the past were received, transmitted, and shaped for contemporary audiences, and on the development of regional and national identities in the eighth century. Her research is characterised by an interdisciplinary methodology using historical and archaeological evidence, and a focus on the material culture of text (especially the circulation of contemporary manuscripts), resulting in publications that demonstrate the extent and depth of the cultural, political and social networks that bound England to its continental neighbours in the early middle ages.</p> <p>Evidence from and about the kingdom of Northumbria in its Anglo-Saxon ‘golden age’ has been central to Story’s research and publications [1–6]. The monastery and bishopric at Lindisfarne was one of the cultural powerhouses of Anglo-Saxon England, with Europe-wide reach and significance [1-2]. It was founded in 653 and so it was central to the earliest phases of the conversion of the English to Christianity and to the establishment of the enduring administrative structure of the English Church [6]. Cuthbert was one of its earliest bishops; the cult that developed at Lindisfarne around Cuthbert’s relics after his death in 689 was central to the creation of pre-Conquest Northumbrian identity [3-4] and subsequently enabled the Lindisfarne community (later based at Durham, but with a cell re-founded at Lindisfarne in the early twelfth century [5]) to become one of the richest and most powerful in pre-Reformation England.</p> <p>Rosemary Sweet (appointed 1998) has specialist research expertise in eighteenth-century British history, with particular strengths in the cultural and intellectual history of the period, especially antiquarianism, gender and urban history. Material culture and the built environment have been important sources for her research. She has shown, for example how metropolitan codes of behavior were transformed through the topography of provincial towns in the eighteenth century [7]. Her research reveals how eighteenth-century elites embraced the study of the material remains of the distant past from both Britain and Europe as a way of expressing their own identities and contemporary sensibilities [8] and she shows how and why objects and ideas collected on The Grand Tour were curated in the elite town and country houses of English gentry [9].</p> <p>Sweet’s expertise in this field and her reputation for academic leadership has enabled her to win funding for and to direct a series of postgraduate research projects, involving English Heritage (on eighteenth-century wallpaper), the Lamport Hall Preservation Trust and the Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust at Boughton House Northamptonshire. Five AHRC Collaborative doctoral awards (the aim of which is to facilitate strategic research and knowledge transfer between academic researchers, students and non-academic institutions) have been made to facilitate these partnerships since 2011 [G2-G4]. Research undertaken for the CDA with Lamport has already discovered that the estate was a major centre of agricultural improvement in the nineteenth</p>

century, hitherto unknown. Other postgraduate research projects have made important discoveries about the dynamics of the Isham family that owned Lamport Hall, and especially the role of the women in the family during the 17th and 18th centuries, which has featured in the press.

3. References to the research

1. J. Story, *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Francia c. 750-870* (Aldershot, 2003)
2. J. Story, 'The Frankish Annals of Lindisfarne and Kent', *Anglo-Saxon England* 34 (2005), 59-109 [doi:10.1017/S0263675105000037]
3. J. Story, 'Bede, St. Cuthbert and the Northumbrian *folc*', in *Northumbria, History and Identity 547-2000*, ed. R. Colls (London, 2007), 48-67
4. J. Story, 'After Bede: Continuing the Ecclesiastical History', in *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald*, ed. S. Baxter et al. (Aldershot, 2009), 165-184
5. J. Story, 'Frankish Annals in Anglo-Norman Durham', in M. Becher & Y. Hen (eds.) *Wilhelm Levison (1876-1947). Ein jüdisches Forscherleben zwischen wissenschaftlicher Anerkennung und politischem Exil* (Bonn, 2010), 145-60
6. J. Story, 'Bede, Willibrord, and the Letters of Pope Honorius I on the genesis of the archbishopric of York', *The English Historical Review* 127 (2012), 783-818 [doi: 10.1093/ehr/ces142; see REF2: STORY1]
7. R. Sweet, 'Topographies of Politeness', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002), 355-74 [doi: 10.1017/S0080440102000142]
8. R. Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in 18th-Century Britain* (London 2004)
9. R. Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour. The British in Italy, c. 1690-1820* (Cambridge 2012) [see REF2: SWEET1]

Relevant peer-reviewed grants

- G1. 2002: *Antiquarians and Antiquarian Culture*, AHRB, £12,035
- G2. 2011: *Gender, Patronage and Architecture in the 19th-Century Country House*, AHRC CDA Studentship with *Lamport Hall Preservation Trust*, AHRC £42,450 plus £3,000 from *Lamport Hall Preservation Trust*
- G3. 2012: *Wallpaper in the eighteenth century*, AHRC CDA Studentship with *English Heritage*, AHRC £50504 plus £3,000 from *English Heritage*
- G4. 2013: *The English Versailles - 3 AHRC CDA Studentships with the Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust*, AHRC £165,384 plus £13,500 from *the Buccleuch LH Trust*

4. Details of the impact

Story's expertise on early Northumbrian history and archaeology, and on early Christianity in the British Isles, underwrites a longstanding partnership with the team at English Heritage (EH) responsible for visitor interpretation and presentation of the medieval priory at Lindisfarne that was built on the site of one of the earliest and most important Anglo-Saxon monasteries in direct response to the popularity and power of the cult of St. Cuthbert (d. 689) who had been its local bishop in the late seventh century. This partnership has created several new resources which have enabled EH to improve the quality (academic content and site interpretation) and design of its tourist information for Lindisfarne Priory both in print and online, thereby extending the social and geographical range of potential consumers of England's national heritage.

A research-led collaboration between Story and EH, begun in 2004, has focused on the content, design, interpretation, and delivery of visitor information at Lindisfarne Priory. The reach and significance of this 'knowledge exchange partnership for tourism' is on-going and diverse: it has enabled EH to **(a) update and improve visitor information** at the Lindisfarne, with a new and academically-rigorous 'keepsake' guidebook, available in print at the site and through the EH website; **(b) manage the transition** of this resource from traditional print format to digital media; **(c) develop new digital resources** that respond simultaneously to Government changes to the National Curriculum for History and to EH's strategic plans to diversify audiences and boost demand for England's heritage from domestic and international visitors by making high quality tourist information available online, and linking cutting-edge academic research to visitor experiences. Evidence for these impacts can be shown as follows:

(a) Visitor education: Lindisfarne Priory ranks 7th in the list of most-visited properties in English Heritage's north territory, with more than 40,000 people visiting the property each year (43,598 in mid 2012–mid 2013). Story wrote and co-designed a new "Red Guide" for the site in 2005. This initiative coincided with and helped to inform a major refit of the museum at the Priory which contains important collections of Anglo-Saxon sculpture from the site as well as other early medieval artefacts. Working with EH designers, editors, architectural historians, and illustrators she produced the text for this new, heavily illustrated, interpretative book on the history and visible remains at the Priory, and had a central role in advising the detail and design of the reconstruction drawings that are a key tool in explaining the history of the site to visitors [A]. Since it was first published in 2005, more than 48,000 copies of the Red Guide to Lindisfarne Priory have been sold (32,500 since 2008, more than 5,000 in 2012), representing sales to 1 in 10 visitors, generating income to EH of about £200,000 [B].

(b) Digital transition: In the REF assessment period this 'knowledge exchange partnership for tourism' has continued; Story has written and co-produced the Lindisfarne elements for *Portico*, the EH online visitor research portal which went live in June 2013 (849 hits in June/July 2013, with 'dwell-time' concentrating particularly on the historical pages) [B, C]. The text of this online information derives from and develops the 'Red Guide' authored by Story in 2005. The 'Portico' entry provides global access to this tourist and research resource, which was previously accessible only at the site; it helps EH to fulfil its strategic commitment to diversify its audiences and extend its reach both socially and geographically [B].

(c) New digital resources for education and research: Story is also an expert academic advisor, editor, and author of early medieval elements of EH's new online resource, 'Story of England', which links through to the *Portico* entries for EH-managed historic sites nationwide. Her input has been into the design, research and development stages of the project (Jan–July 2013), and the site will go live in late 2013. The long-term impact of this resource will be measureable in coming years; Story's research has had an impact within the REF period on the design, content and delivery of the 'Dark Age' components of the EH web-resource. This ambitious initiative is designed explicitly to attract new 'web-literate' audiences 'to increase familiarity with the broad chronology of English history and to locate the stories of [EH-managed] sites within a broad continuum' [B]. It responds directly to government changes to the school history curriculum with its increased emphasis on national narratives, and simultaneously seeks to serve EH's statutory objectives, by diversifying 'consumers' of England's heritage, creating a global audience, and maximising the tourist potential of academic research and partnerships with UK universities.

The reach and significance of this KE partnership continues to evolve with the development of new research-led initiatives that directly inform EH policy and practice on marketing, education and curation. During 2012–13 a team from Leicester, working under Story's direction as part of her Leverhulme Trust Major Research Programme Award on *The Impact of Diaspora on the Making of Britain: Evidence, memories, inventions* (2011–16) has worked with the English Heritage Lindisfarne team to research visitor-motivation for visiting the Priory, as a case study for investigating modern perceptions of the Anglo-Saxon past. One aspect of this project was a programme of primary research into the impact and use of EH Guidebooks, with a report commissioned by EH into visitor usage of interpretative media at the site [D]. As Dr Ashbee, Head Historic Properties Curator at EH says, 'this research provides the first systematic investigation into a number of key questions concerning our guidebooks ... (and) is of great value to English Heritage in informing the ways that we market our guidebooks, potentially the structure, content and design of the books themselves, and in the development of new strands such as guides specifically aimed at children/family audiences, or more substantial illustrated history books. Data concerned with visitors' perceptions of print versus digital media are particularly useful in present discussions within English Heritage and other organisations' [B]. Dr Ashbee concludes that 'Story's work enables us to provide information supported by research of the highest quality to the largest and most diverse audience possible' [B].

Sweet's research on eighteenth-century cultural history underpins a research-led Knowledge Exchange Partnership for Tourism between the University of Leicester, Lamport Hall Preservation Trust and the Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust, which has succeeded in raising research aspirations in the partner organisations, improving visitor information resources, and developing an effective educational partnership.

Our KE-partnership with the Lamport Hall Preservation Trust began in 2004. It is a registered charity that exists to promote 'aesthetic and historic education' through focused educational events, study days and courses, including study days led by Sweet (who also advises on content and potential speakers), and by providing accurate and academically rigorous information to the general public visiting Lamport Hall in Northamptonshire; about 2000 people visit the Hall in the summer months, many more during the year for corporate and educational events [E, F]. The partnership has focused on facilitating high quality research into the historical records and material remains of the estate and in translating that academic research into improved visitor information and resources. Research generated by the partnership has improved and extended the information available to guides showing visitors around the house; the new research findings on agricultural innovations and historic estate management 'is particularly important as it opens up an entirely different aspect of the Hall's history for visitors' [F]. The results of this partnership have already informed and shaped the Trust's strategic policy on visitor displays; the Trust has decided, for example, to create a new permanent exhibition on farming on the Lamport estate in the nineteenth century, and new display panels are being prepared to reflect the research on the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century history of the Ishams [F, G].

Sweet has been central to the success of this KE partnership; her research has enabled the Lamport Hall Preservation Trust to realize its charitable objectives and to extend the reach and significance of its work. The research conducted by Sweet and her team of postgraduate researchers has had a significant impact on the day-to-day work of the Trust within the REF period; Mr Drye, CEO of the Trust, says that 'the [KE] partnership has delivered original, high quality research and education for the enhancement of the public's understanding'.

This KE partnership has been extended to include the Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust, based at Boughton House Northamptonshire, under the auspices of the *East Midlands Research Initiative* (established 2011) of which Sweet is the director. The aim of *East Midlands Research Initiative* is enhance the Trusts' knowledge of their own archival resources and history and to inform the educational experience for visitors to the house. The partnership with *East Midlands Research Initiative* is indicative of a strategic decision by Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust, informed by the successful collaboration between the University and neighbouring Lamport Hall Preservation Trust, to invest more resources in historical research to develop tourism and is also a crucial element in their longer-term plan to create a publically accessible Archives Centre [H]. It has enabled them to raise their research and outreach aspirations; an early success for this new strategy is demonstrated by the award to the *East Midlands Research Initiative* of three AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Awards in June 2013.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- A. Visitor education: J. Story, *Lindisfarne Priory*, [English Heritage Guidebooks](#) (2005)
- B. Visitor education / Digital transition / New digital resources / Developing policy: Supporting Letter from Head Historic Properties Curator, English Heritage
- C. Digital transition: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/lindisfarne-priory/history-and-research>
- D. Developing policy: *Report on visitor experiences of Lindisfarne Priory for English Heritage*, M. Scully, with J. Story, S. Ling, and T. Rochester (June 2013)
- E. Educational partnership: 2013 Events Diary at Lamport Hall: <http://www.lamporthall.co.uk/index.php?page=events> (search term: 'Leicester')
- F. New visitor information: Supporting document from The CEO of the Lamport Hall Preservation Trust (10.6.2013)
- G. New visitor information: Report in *Northamptonshire Chronicle* 8/01/2013 on new research into Vere Isham <http://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/local/revealed-girl-who-saved-lamporthall-1-4645945>
- H. Raising research aspirations: Letter from Research Director of the Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust concerning the CDA AHRC application by *East Midlands Research Initiative* (8.2.2013)