

<b>Institution: DURHAM UNIVERSITY</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 30 (HISTORY)</b>
<b>The Lindisfarne Gospels exhibition, Durham 2013: cultural heritage, education and tourism (CS4)</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>The 2013 Lindisfarne Gospels exhibition in Durham was a major cultural event in the North East, receiving national media attention. It was sponsored and publicised by numerous public, cultural and business bodies, and it brought educational benefits to schools, stimulation to artistic workshops and economic benefits through the promotion of tourism. <b>Richard Gameson's</b> research expertise was central to the design of the exhibition, to the interpretative themes adopted in its educational outreach and public presentation, and to the selection and borrowing of many of the exhibits.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Gameson has been a professor in history at Durham University since 2006. He is a leading scholar of early British manuscripts and illumination, as demonstrated by his selection as editor of volume 1 of <i>The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain</i> (2012). Five of the essays he contributed to this volume provide authoritative accounts of the physical features, history and significance of these books, derived from first-hand examination of a large number of them in the libraries of Britain and continental Europe. Essay 1b explains in detail the making of these books as material artefacts, from the manufacture of parchment, through the practicalities and styles of writing, to the creation of the ink and pigments. Gameson has taken the opportunity of the gathering of early books for the purpose of this exhibition to direct attention to the under-explored issue of the types and sources of the pigments, some of which required an international trade in precious ingredients: for example, one could only have come from Afghanistan. In collaboration with Professor Andrew Beeby (Durham Chemistry Department), he is using Raman spectroscopy to determine the chemical composition of the pigments used in some of the books. Essay 1c places emphasis not just on the organisation needed for making the books, but the extent to which this was a collective activity, requiring and expressing a strong communal commitment. The further essays, while dealing with periods later than that of the making of the Lindisfarne Gospels, are based upon a deep knowledge of the longer history of early books. Essay 1d explains the purposes, conventions and production of the illuminations in such books, as these developed over two centuries. Essay 1e shows the extent to which Northumbria was part of a European-wide book culture.</p> <p>The work embodied in these essays was integral to Gameson's more focused reassessment of the 'contexts and meanings of the Lindisfarne Gospels', outlined in essay 1a and developed in the monograph researched and written during the preparation for the exhibition (item 2). Here Gameson builds upon Jane Roberts' identification in 2006 of an Old English poem embedded within the colophon that was added to the Gospels by a later glossator, almost three centuries after the book had originally been made. This poem preserves an earlier account of the creation of the Lindisfarne Gospels; from reflection on its content and implications, Gameson has derived new understandings of the original purpose of the Gospels, and the subsequent medieval history of the book. The Gospels came to be identified with St Cuthbert, but this, Gameson argues, was the outcome of a long historical development. Rather, as the poem testifies, the book was originally written for 'all the holy folk' and the saints of the Holy Island community. This was a community which wanted to re-assert its distinctive identity during the long and troubled aftermath of the Synod of Whitby, as a place which merged the best of Irish/Ionan, Roman and Anglo-Saxon traditions. The production of a very special version of the Gospels was one means of expressing this identity. Nearly three centuries later, when Aldred added his gloss to the Gospels and expanded the Old English poem in his colophon, the circumstances had radically changed. The community had fled from Holy Island because of Viking raids, taking with it the relics of its saints; and in its new settlement at Chester-le-Street the community now defined itself much more by association with its most revered saint, Cuthbert. Aldred accordingly described the Lindisfarne Gospels as produced not only for the purposes of the community, but also to honour St Cuthbert. More than a century later, the community had moved again, to Durham, where it established a new shrine to St Cuthbert. After the Norman Conquest the settlement was turned into a Benedictine priory, which wished to emphasise its association with St Cuthbert. As is shown in Symeon's history of the church of Durham, the Lindisfarne Gospels now took on another new meaning, identified exclusively with Cuthbert and presented as evidence of his sanctity. Gameson's central</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

research insight is that the meaning of the Lindisfarne Gospels changed both as the community moved physically around north-east England, and as its political and religious circumstances were repeatedly transformed. This story of the changing meaning of the Gospels – and the importance of the colophon as evidence on authorship and context – was central to the exhibition and the educational work around it.

### 3. References to the research

1. *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain. Vol. I: c.400–1100*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); 978-0-521-58345-9; doi: [10.1017/CHOL9780521583459](https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521583459). The following essays by Gameson:
  - 1a. 'From Vindolanda to Domesday: the book in Britain from the Romans to the Normans', pp. 1–9
  - 1b. 'The material fabric of early British books', pp.13–93
  - 1c. 'Anglo-Saxon scribes and scriptoria', pp. 94–120
  - 1d. 'Book decoration in England, c. 871–c.1100', pp. 249-293
  - 1e. 'The circulation of books between England and the continent, c. 871-c.1100', pp. 344-373
2. Richard Gameson, *From Holy Island to Durham: the contexts and meanings of the Lindisfarne Gospels* (London: ILL Millennium, 2013), 160 pp.

The first volume was commissioned by a major academic press, and reviews have judged it as the authoritative modern statement of scholarship on the subject (e.g., *Times Literary Supplement*, 8 June 2012). Both volumes are submitted for REF2014.

### 4. Details of the impact

The exhibition, 'Lindisfarne Gospels Durham: one amazing book, one incredible journey', 2013, was the culmination of a three-year partnership between Durham County Council, Durham Cathedral, Durham University and the British Library (source 1). While located in Durham University Library buildings, the exhibition and its outreach activities were organised by the 'Lindisfarne Gospels Durham Board', composed of representatives from the County Council and Cathedral as well the University, which secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Arts Council England. The exhibition also received sponsorship and assistance from businesses and public authorities in Northumbria, and media partnerships with regional newspapers. The exhibition opened to the public on 1 July and ran until 30 September 2013; *the impact discussed here relates solely to the period to 31 July*.

Gameson's research and practical experience was central to the design and implementation of the Lindisfarne Gospels exhibition, and for its presentation to regional, national and international publics (source 2). The exhibition enhanced the attraction of the Durham area for cultural tourism, and for educational purposes and artistic inspiration in schools and for other groups throughout the North East. Gameson's impact has been of three types: (i) presentation and interpretation of cultural capital; (ii) contribution to economic prosperity; (iii) influence in schools and on artistic work.

#### (i) Presentation and interpretation of cultural capital

The exhibition was in two parts. One was concerned specifically with displaying and interpreting the Lindisfarne Gospels book and other related gospel books and further artefacts. The other presented and explained the materials which went into the making of early books, and displayed art works created by schools and art workshops. There was no charge for entry to this second part. Gameson was the curator for both parts, chiefly responsible for establishing the themes used to present, contextualise and interpret the Gospels, and to explain the material character of early books. Indeed, visitors follow the route designed by Gameson in order to understand the changing meanings of the Gospels, as described in section 2 above. In designing the academic content of the exhibition, he drew not only on his academic expertise, but also on his long practical experience in the interpretation, evaluation and preservation of medieval manuscripts, and on his advisory roles in earlier exhibitions elsewhere and with national bodies including the British Library

## Impact case study (REF3b)

(e.g., as member of the 2011–12 committee which advised on the acquisition of the St Cuthbert Gospel for the nation). Gameson's work led directly to:

1. the emphasis on the significance of the Gospels' journey, as a way both of explaining the changing meaning of the Gospels over time and of locating the work clearly in its north-eastern context;
2. the contextualisation of the Gospels as a pinnacle of a wider early-medieval culture, with an international significance, which assisted the exhibition's appeal to national and international audiences;
3. the focus on the material character of the Gospels and other early-medieval books.

Gameson briefed the Board itself, and spoke to groups of staff from the partner institutions and to other stakeholders to explain the significance of the Gospels and their relationship to the North East. He was directly involved in selecting the numerous further books and artefacts – including the St Cuthbert Gospel – which were on display as part of the exhibition, and which were drawn from the British Museum, National Museum of Scotland, Corpus Christi College Cambridge, Bodleian Library, Lindisfarne Priory, Norwich City Museum, Yorkshire Museums and other collections. Gameson wrote the academic proposal for the exhibition, on the basis of which the British Library approved the loan of the Gospels to Durham, and provided the academic material for the separate loan case made for each of the other items borrowed (source 3). For many loaned books he provided the insurance valuations required for the Government Indemnity Insurance Cover [GIIC], which is a pre-condition of loans to public exhibitions. As curator, Gameson prepared all captions and other written material for the exhibition, and he provided Braille captions and a tactile version of insular lettering for visitors with visual impairments. He wrote and voiced the audio-guide, and assisted in the training of all gallery guides and attendants (including a large number of volunteers), through lectures.

Comments made by visitors reveal the impact of the exhibition on their cultural knowledge. An analysis of the 2,199 comments left in the visitors' book to 31 July showed them to be overwhelmingly positive; the most commonly-used terms were 'informative' (73%), 'learned a lot' (10%), 'enlightening' (10%) and 'educational' (8%) (source 10).

Gameson undertook a large amount of publicity and public engagement for the exhibition. He provided five press tours in its first week, and a further 17 public lectures during its first month to such groups as the Durham and Newcastle Arts Council and commercial companies (Turner and Townsend, the Vardy Group). Gameson has played a leading part in the wider media coverage of the exhibition, with appearances in the regional and national press (e.g., *Northern Echo*, 18 October 2012; *The Times*, 6 July 2013), on media websites, and on regional and national television and radio programmes. These included Radio 4's *Sunday* and *Saturday Live* (30 June and 6 July 2013) and the Radio 3 documentary 'Gospels come home' on 16 June 2013 (sources 4, 5, 6).

(ii) Contribution to economic prosperity

By 31 July 2013, approximately 35,000 visitors had attended the exhibition (visitor data were collected in weekly tranches: 33,133 had visited by 29 July; 40,259 by 5 August). The exhibition had a national and international reach: a sample of 851 of these visitors (undertaken by Tourism UK Ltd) revealed that 68% of them were from the North East; 30.8% from elsewhere in the UK, and 1.2% from elsewhere in the world. Samples also showed that 65.9% came to Durham solely for the exhibition; 25.9% made overnight stays in Durham as a result of the exhibition. Local businesses reported a significant increase in business as a result of the exhibition, with some reporting that in July it was up by 70% by comparison with the previous year (source 7). The exhibition was also featured in other exhibitions, displays or activities at numerous regional visitor attractions – e.g., Anker's House Museum Chester-le-Street, Bede's World Jarrow, Berwick Museum, Hexham Old Gaol museum, National Centre for Children's Books Newcastle, Durham Art Gallery – assisting their attendances and income. In total, there were 149 advertised events in July attracting an estimated 74,500 people (source 2).

(iii) Influence on schools and on artistic work

During the twelve months before the exhibition began, the 'Lindisfarne Gospels Durham' organisation and the University Library undertook an educational programme, conducted by specialists from the University and designed specifically to meet the needs of the National Curriculum (source 8). Gameson was a part of the Exhibition and Learning Group which designed

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

this programme, and the work of the specialists was very much shaped by Gameson's input. In particular, the Exhibition and Learning Group drove the decision to emphasise the importance of authorship and context in understanding the significance of primary sources: the educational work used Gameson's research on the colophon to the Gospels to illustrate this point. Gameson briefed the educational specialists, and was a constant point of reference for them in devising education materials, particularly the resource pack for teachers, 'Learning Across the Region' (source 9). Pages 4–14, 20–21 and 36–40 of this pack all derive directly from Gameson's research. As well as providing context for the Gospels and explaining the significance of the colophon, they provide resources for teaching children about life as a monk, about the materials used in making medieval books, inks and pigments, about Anglo-Saxon calligraphy and iconography, and about the interpretation of illuminated manuscripts. From September 2012 to June 2013, this programme reached 16,808 children aged 5–18 around County Durham through workshops in primary and secondary schools. Every school which provided feedback reported that that the workshops had improved children's subject knowledge and were useful from a teaching perspective. From 1 July the programme involved school visits and educational activities at the exhibition itself; the visitor survey showed that 70% of visitors to the main exhibition also visited the free exhibition which focused on the making of books. Gameson's work also influenced the content of workshops held around the North East to create artistic work which responded to the exhibition, and work from Escomb, St Anne's and St Bede's Durham, St Michael's Newcastle and Woodham community schools and from workshops at Durham Cathedral and the Museum of Hartlepool were displayed in the free section of the exhibition.

In short, Gameson's research has directly benefited: (1) the wider public in their deeper appreciation of the Gospels and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and artworks in relation to the cultural life of the region and the nation; (2) school children and teachers in the North East through new educational experiences and stimulating student interest in the distant past; (3) local businesses and companies through income generated by increased tourism to Durham and the North East region.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

1. Lindisfarne Gospels website: <http://www.lindisfarnegospels.com/lindisfarne-gospels-durham-exhibition>
2. Letter from the Programme Director, Lindisfarne Gospels, Durham
3. Sample loan request for an item from the British Library
4. BBC website: 'Lindisfarne Gospels: why is this book so special?', 26 March 2013: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/0/21588667>
5. Radio 3 programme: 'The Gospels come home', broadcast 16 June 2013: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b02x939l>
6. News coverage; interviews with visitors, including schoolchildren; discussion of economic impact on region: <http://www.itv.com/news/tyne-tees/story/2013-06-28/lindisfarne-gospels-exhibition-preview/>; tourist supplement on the exhibition in *The Times*; summary of news coverage involving Gameson
7. Letter from Durham Markets Company
8. Schools programme – secondary and primary
9. 'Learning across the region': resource pack for teachers
10. Exhibition visitor data to 31 July