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| Institution: University of Exeter |
| Unit of Assessment: 29 English Language and Literature |
| Title of case study: Understanding the History of Popular Culture and the Moving Image: the Dissemination of Research through a University Museum |
| <p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research by University of Exeter academics has increased the public's participation in, and appreciation of, the history and pre-history of cinema. Much of this has been achieved by collaborative projects with the Bill Douglas Cinema Museum, a free-entry museum located on the Exeter campus, which has a large collection (65,000 items) of international stature. A number of funded digitisation projects to improve accessibility have presented as well as preserved cultural heritage. The main impacts of this research have been to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preserve, conserve, and present cultural heritage • engage different publics in literary and cultural heritage • contribute to economic prosperity via the creative sector |
| <p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>University of Exeter staff—Helen Hanson, Joe Kember, Robert Mack, Dan North, and John Plunkett—have made a collective, cumulative and distinct contribution to scholarship on the history of the moving-image. Over a sustained period, they have been involved in collaborative research projects both with each other and the Bill Douglas Cinema Museum (BDM). Their research not only draws heavily on the museum but feeds back into the understanding, use and impact of the collection. In keeping with the scope of the BDM, the distinctiveness of their work is their demonstration of the links between nineteenth-century visual media and the history of cinema: their research makes evident the long history of moving and projected-image entertainment.</p> <p>The research of Hanson, Mack, and North elaborates the links between 20th/21st century cinema and its precursors. Hanson (appointed 2002) researches and publishes on Hollywood cinema in the Studio Era (3.1). In 2004-5, she held an AHRB Museums Development grant in partnership with the BDM. The project, ADAM (Applying Digital Artefacts in a Museum), enlarged the BDM's online catalogue through Hanson's selection of additional images for digitisation (3.7): it also developed innovative e-learning applications for use by scholars and the general public. North completed his PhD at Exeter in 2003 having held the Bill Douglas and Peter Jewell Scholarship; he was appointed as Research Fellow in the BDM for 2003/4, and subsequently made permanent (until September 2012, when he left Exeter). As illustrated by his 2008 monograph, North's work is primarily concerned with film technologies, connecting early film and nineteenth-century magic theatre with the advent of digital special effects (3.2). Mack (appointed 1999) similarly works on the continuities between Victorian popular media and contemporary film. His research on the legend of Sweeney Todd was published in two books, a scholarly edition of the Victorian 'penny blood' and a subsequent history of its initial publication and numerous adaptations for stage and screen, <i>The Wonderful and Surprising History of Sweeney Todd</i> (2008) (3.3).</p> <p>Plunkett and Kember share with North and Mack an interest in Victorian visual media and popular narrative. Plunkett was appointed in 2001 to an AHRB Fellowship at the BDM to research optical devices 1800-1900; he became a permanent lecturer in 2003. His publications on pre-cinema fed into the production of digitised, interactive versions of Victorian optical toys as part of ADAM (3.5). Kember was appointed in 2004; his research draws on the BDM collection to demonstrate the links between early film and its precursors. These connections were the subject of his 2009 monograph (3.6). In 2007, Plunkett and Kember received a major AHRC award to map the exhibition of panoramas, magic lanterns and early cinema across the south-west from 1820-1914 (3.8). One output of this was a jointly-edited volume (3.6). Plunkett and Kember were part of a JISC-funded project in 2008 to create CHARTER [Creating Heritage Artefacts for Research and Teaching in an E-Repository] (3.9). Plunkett was also awarded a Leverhulme Fellowship in 2011 for a project on</p> |

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optical recreations (3.10).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Evidence of the quality of the research: research peer-reviewed at publication stage by scholarly journals and publishers or by the AHRC and JISC at grant application stage.

Key Publications

1. **Hanson**, Spicer, A. (eds.) *A Companion to Film Noir* (Wiley Blackwell, 2013).
2. **North**, *Performing Illusions: Magic, Special Effects and the Coming of the Virtual Actor* (Wallflower Press, 2008). Shortlisted for 2009 And/Or Award for Best Moving-Image Book, the UK's leading prizes for books published in the fields of photography and the moving image.
3. **Mack** (ed.), *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (Oxford University Press, 2007).
4. **Plunkett**. 'Optical Recreations in Victorian Literature,' *Essay and Studies: Fiction and Film Interactions*, ed. David Seed (London: Boydell and Brewer, 2005), pp. 1-28.
5. **Kember**, *Marketing Modernity: Victorian Popular Shows and Early Cinema* (Exeter: Exeter UP, 2009).
6. **Kember, Joe, Plunkett, John** and Sullivan, Jill, eds., *Popular Exhibitions, Science and Showmanship 1820-1914* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012). Kember, Plunkett and Sullivan authored the introduction, pp. 1-18; Plunkett and Sullivan co-authored a chapter, 'Fêtes, bazaars and conversaciones: science, entertainment and local civic élites', p. 41-60.

Grants

7. ADAM [Applying Digital Artefacts from a Museum] **Hanson** in association with the Bill Douglas Centre. AHRB Museums Development Grant 2004-5: £30k. ADAM built directly upon a previous grant to create an EVE, [Everyone's Virtual Exhibition], AHRB Awards for Higher Education Museums, Galleries and Collections (2002): £30k. EVE, <http://billdouglas.ex.ac.uk/eve/> is the BDM online catalogue, a searchable catalogue (including over 2,400 images and digital interactive); a personalised 'your collection' facility; and an exhibitions feature.
8. *Moving and Projected-Image Entertainment in the South-West 1840-1914*, **Plunkett** [PI] and **Kember** [CI]. AHRC Large Research Grant (2007-10): £202,000.
9. CHARTER [Creating Heritage Artefacts for Research and Teaching in an E-Repository], Bill Douglas Centre/University of Exeter Special Collections with **Plunkett, Kember, North**, et. al. JISC Digitisation Award (Oct 08-Sep 09): £77,049. The grant built on images already digitised through EVE to create a new repository populated with 4000+ digital surrogates, chosen by academic panels, and selected within a common theme: the representation of popular culture, 1800-1914. <https://collections.exeter.ac.uk/repository/>.
10. Leverhulme Research Fellowship, £40,243.00 (Jan-Dec 2012), **Plunkett**, for 'Optical Recreations: Moving and Projected Images 1780-1914'.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)**Preserving, Conserving, and Presenting Cultural Heritage**

The most substantial impact of research by **North, Kember, Hanson, and Plunkett** has been to use digital technology to preserve and disseminate moving-image history to a large virtual, international audience. Items digitised through ADAM and CHARTER were chosen by the above academics; the pioneering e-heritage features developed in conjunction with Hanson particularly aided user-accessibility. The BDM website receives external annual hits of 177,279 (2008), 171,042 (2009), 128,279 (2010), 129,650 (2011), and 98,876 (2012) (5.1). From Jan-Sep 2013, the EVE catalogue alone received 43,223 page visits, while from 1 April-31 May 2012, the 'Young BDM' section accounted for 18,681 out of 24,577 page requests, evidence of the museum's digital outreach to a juvenile audience. The impact of the BDM's digitisation initiatives is supplemented by North's blog, 'Spectacular Attractions', discussing film technology and history. Launched on 11 Sep 2008, it received 1,050,000 hits to 31 Aug 2012, with a global distribution (5.2). Plunkett and the BDM also collaborated on a short film produced by the British Film Institute, 'Dickens and the Magic Lantern', which is available on the BFI's website and YouTube (14,229 views) (5.3).

Mack's OUP edition of the original Sweeney Todd story is another aspect of Exeter's work in preserving and presenting cultural heritage to encourage public appreciation of the links between Victorian popular culture and the contemporary film. Coinciding with the release of Tim Burton's *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (2007), the importance of Mack's edition in providing historical context for the film was proclaimed by the *Los Angeles Times*, among other media outlets (5.4). Mack also made numerous media appearances including 'Newsnight Review' (BBC2; 17/1/2008), 'Open Book' (Radio 4; 20/11/2007), and 'The Robert Elms Show' (BBC London; 5/2/2008). Major coverage included feature pieces in the *Daily Express*, *The Big Issue*, *The Big Issue Scotland*, *Guardian Review: Arts*, and *Guardian Unlimited*, as well as week-long 'blogger' postings on the OUP website and the website for Powell's Bookstore, a major American retailer (5.5).

Engaging different publics in literary and cultural heritage

The virtual Impact of the BDM is augmented by its programme of on-site activities, which facilitates connections between the academy and regional community, and increases public access to the collection through temporary exhibitions, organised tours and events such as Family Fun days. In 2009, the BDM was given Accreditation status by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council as a mark of its 'commitment to managing collections effectively for the enjoyment of our communities'. The findings of **Plunkett and Kember's** AHRC project were subsequently disseminated through an exhibition that toured public libraries across the South West of England in 2011. Consisting of items drawn from the BDM, exhibitions were hosted by the BDM (Nov 2010–May 2011); City of Bristol Reference Library (4 Jan–14 Feb); Torquay Library (18-30 July); Weston-Super-Mare Library (15 Oct-11 Nov); Barnstaple Library (1-30 Oct 2011); Sidmouth Library (8-20 August); Redruth Library (14-25 Nov). Combined visitor numbers were 31,446 (5.6). An online exhibition was presented on the BBC Devon website (5.7). Findings were also featured by BBC Radio Devon and *Western Morning News*. Qualitative evidence of the BDM's national importance is supported through citations from film and museum professionals (5.8).

Hanson, North, Kember, and Plunkett's research also underpinned the museum's production of a Visitor's Education pack in 2009 for teachers, demonstrating how museum activities can be used to teach the national curriculum. It was distributed to all schools in Exeter, and is freely available via the BDM website. Their research also contributed to updating the physical galleries, encouraging on-site tours, lectures and workshops, attended by schools and local groups. These have included Early Years workshops for a number of local schools as well as Rotary Club, Age Concern, Movies Memories Group, Tunstall Special Needs Group, and Devon Youth Service. Visitor numbers to galleries/outreach events from Jan 2008-30 March 2013 was 13,082 (5.9).

Contributing to economic prosperity via the creative sector

Exeter's research in Victorian popular culture and the moving-image has also contributed to prosperity for the creative sector via publishing. To September 2012, **Mack's** edition of *Sweeney Todd* had sold 88,845 copies. In 2011, the BDM entered into a partnership with the publisher, Adam Matthew, to market a digital archive 'Moving Pictures, Optical Entertainments and the Advent of Cinema', consisting of 35,000 images of BDM items. **Plunkett** was Academic Editor, responsible for overseeing image selection. Published in November 2012, it has created further international dissemination of the collection. Publisher's gross income from this digital package is £368,370 at July 2013 (5.10).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. 2008-2012 figures from independent *E-Visit Analyst*, 2013 figures from Google Analytics. 177,279 (2008), 171,042 (2009), 128,279 (2010), 129,650 (2011), 98,876 (2012).
2. Email communication 3/9/2012; figures taken from web counter at <http://drnorth.wordpress.com/>.
3. Figures from YouTube and BFI Screen Online, 'Dickens on Screen', <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tours/dickens/tour2.html> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omuDMHj0TZY>
4. Review in *Los Angeles Times*, 20/12/2007 <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/dec/20/entertainment/et-book20>
5. 'Guest Author' in *The Guardian Unlimited* 25/1/2008 <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/jan/25/crimebooks>
6. Figures are 10,333 (Torquay), 6802 (Sidmouth), 7920 (Bristol) and 6391 (Weston-Super-Mare). Emails from Bristol, Sidmouth, Torquay and Weston-Super-Mare libraries.
7. http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/devon/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_9310000/9310113.stm
8. British director and producer interviewed for short film, 'The Bill Douglas Centre' (2011); <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U56WKgtHt9Y>
9. Figures from Bill Douglas Centre Curator's Report, May and November 2012, and April 2013.
10. Email of 12 July 2013 from Finance Department, Adam Matthews Digital, Pelham House, London Road, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 2AG. Angie@amdigital.co.uk