

Institution: University of Westminster
Unit of Assessment: UoA 28; Modern Languages and Linguistics
Title of case study: The London French: Liberty, Equality, Opportunity
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The French currently constitute a significant presence in London, yet there is little consistent research into their experiences, or the development of this presence. This is a ground-breaking study heralded by the French Embassy/Consulate, and used by the constituency office of the French MP for Northern Europe and the London Section of the French Socialist Party, and the British Library (for inclusion in the UK Web Archive). It has attracted considerable media and popular interest, notably programmes for French Radio London, and at the Bankside Bastille Day Festival. The research assesses the motivations, experiences and occupations of London's French residents, both historically and today, and their contributions to culture, society and business.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The research was conceived in 2008 and directed formally from 2010-2013 by Debra Kelly, Professor of French and Francophone Studies. Other key researchers were Martyn Cornick (Professor of French Cultural History, Birmingham) as co-editor, and Saskia Huc-Hepher, Senior Lecturer in French at Westminster as project researcher on the contemporary French. It has three main components: a British Academy-funded workshop and public event series which took place between 2011-2013; a multi-authored book published in July 2013 by the Institute of Historical Research (IHR); and the creation of a digital archive, the 'London French' Special Collection, part of the UK Web Archive Project, supported by the British Library, begun in 2011.</p> <p>Kelly organised and led all workshops and public events. In addition to the British Academy-funded series detailed below (in 'References to the research' section), of note are: a) the launch of the project, a public event held on 9th July 2010 at the French Institute London attended by an audience of 70 French residents in London, and b) a project engagement workshop with professional and governmental organisations such as the Museum of London, French Radio London and the French Embassy in London, held at the University of Westminster on 14th October 2011 (PowerPoint presentations and lists of attendees are available on the London French Impact Case Study website at www.westminster.ac.uk/the-london-french). Kelly also contributed a sole-authored historical chapter to the book as well as a sole-authored conclusion, which extends its findings to include up-to-date research on the 2012 French presidential and legislative campaigns in London, and on further contemporary manifestations of the London French presence (see: www.history.ac.uk/publications/french-in-london; the book also has a 'microsite' hosted by the IHR: www.frenchinlondon/blogs/sas.ac.uk).</p> <p>Huc-Hepher conceived and developed the original idea of a digital collection recording the community's on-line presence and was instrumental in ensuring the viability and quality of the archive for research purposes and for varied end-users of the UK web archive. The London French Special Collection in the UK Web Archive is a unique representation of a particular resident community, itself part of the overall socio-cultural make-up of 21st century Britain. The national digital archive is designed to appeal to users across a spectrum of interest and knowledge: the general reader, the teacher, the journalist, the policy maker, the academic and personal researchers; see www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/info/about for general information about the UK Web Archive [password access is available for the Special Collection].</p> <p>The research underpinning the impact is interdisciplinary, originating in the fields of cultural history and modern languages, and drawing on migration studies, ethnography and social science methodologies, particularly when focusing on the contemporary French population of London. The research findings provide powerful insights into the composition, motives, experiences and contributions of French migrants to London between the seventeenth century and the present day. A series of thematic areas are identified across the centuries: exile and refuge; opportunity and</p>

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entrepreneurship, politics and religion; leisure and pleasure; the arts and business. The findings establish new historical and contemporary evidence in several areas which underpin the research: the traffic of social, political and cultural ideas between France and London; the interchange of workers and its effects; the traffic of technological knowledge and design ideas; ideas about French superiority in (for example) fashion, gastronomy, luxury goods; French visitors to London and London's image in France; and commercial, social, political and cultural exchanges on a number of levels. The places frequented and settled by the French, and the effects on those places across the centuries, are mapped comprehensively for the first time. This facilitates the analysis of patterns of the London French according to class, gender, generation, place of origin, historical period, political and religious affiliation and socio-economic status. The findings reveal the complex cultural and socio-economic interactions between French citizens and the British capital over several centuries. Connections are also made between the lives of contemporary French residents and their predecessors thereby giving an historical dimension to contemporary experience. In today's London the research shows that the younger generation of French and francophone residents represent ever-evolving facets of what it means for them to live, work and 'be French' in London. By analysing reciprocal exchanges and transformations at the site of the encounter between French and British cultures in a London that is itself constantly changing, the research and its varied and wide-ranging impacts remain open to future developments.

3. References to the research

- Kelly, D and Cornick, M (eds), 2013, *A History of the French in London. Liberty, Equality, Opportunity*, 488 pages, ISBN: 978-1-905165-86-5 (hb); ISBN: 978-1-905165-87-2 (e-book). **Co-edited book** including sole-authored chapter and sole-authored conclusion by Kelly; co-authored chapter by Huc-Hepher; sole-authored chapter and sole-authored introduction by Cornick; published by the Institute of Historical Research (IHR). Kelly's chapter and conclusion are together listed as an output in REF2.
- **Conference papers:**
 - a) Debra Kelly and Martyn Cornick: ' "France's Children" at home in London? Towards a History of the London French'; 'Metropolis in Flux: Contemporary Cultural Migrations in London', June 2010, University of Westminster.
 - b) Debra Kelly: 'The French in London: Liberty, Equality, Opportunity', Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France Annual Conference, 4-5 Sept. 2013, University of Leicester (part of a panel on 'French London').
PowerPoint presentations are available on the London French Impact Case Study website at: www.westminster.ac.uk/the-london-french
- **British Academy-funded workshop and public event series:**
Workshop 1, University of Westminster, 6th May 2011; Workshop 2, 25th November 2011, French Institute, London; Workshop 3, 25th May 2012, University of Westminster; Book Launch and Public Event 2nd July 2013, University of Westminster (PowerPoints, list of attendees and analysis available on impact case study website as above: www.westminster.ac.uk/the-london-french).

Evidence of the quality of the research:

- Grant awarded to: Martyn Cornick, University of Birmingham; Debra Kelly as Co-Investigator
- Sponsor: British Academy; award no. ABAF RRBS15375
- Period of the grant (with dates): 01/03/2011 to 28/02/2013 (extended to July 2013 for book launch/public event)

Value of the grant £7, 329.81 (£4, 500 to Westminster for Project Researcher)

4. Details of the impact

This research has significant and on-going impacts in furthering the public and professional understanding of the historical and contemporary French presence in London. A key objective of the research has been to disseminate its insights and knowledge to interested groups, institutions

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and the wider public. Research findings have been shared with cultural institutions such as museums and archives – for example, the Museum of London and the British Library – with diplomatic services, such as the French Embassy and Consulate (which admits to gaps in its data concerning the current London French population), with political bodies such as the London constituency office of the MP for Northern Europe, (Axelle Lemaire) and the London Section of the French Socialist Party, with commercial enterprises such as French Radio London, and through a number of print media, TV and radio interviews.

French residents in London benefit from the research, not only through the sharing of a diversity of experiences and the dissemination of knowledge concerning their presence, but also through the connections made between these contemporary lives and their historical predecessors. The strength of the research convinced the British Library of the need to class the 'London French' as a distinct community fulfilling the criteria for inclusion in the UK Web Archive. As a result of these discussions, the Library actively supported the creation of the 'London French' digital archive which is also a prime case study in how to use research to create a community web archive that serves the needs of a variety of end-users.

The attitude of openness dates from the very start of the project with its public launch event at the French Institute in London in July 2010. It was attended by 70 representatives of the French Embassy and Consulate, the French Chamber of Commerce, French professional associations in London, the British and French media, London museums, galleries and libraries, as well as interested members of the French community in London.

The event led directly to a six-part programme series (2011) on French Radio London on the contemporary French in London and press, TV and radio interviews (notably with *Le Monde*, *Ouest-France*, *Le Journal de Dimanche*, *Ici Londres*, *Exapatlive*, *Le Petit Journal*, *TV5*, *L'Echo*). During the course of the project, further press interest in its historical aspects has been evident in solicited interviews and contributions to features for BBC London, France 24, Agence France Press, and *La Croix*, notably in 2010 (on the 70th anniversary of de Gaulle's arrival in London during World War Two). Links for some of these many media contributions are available, as noted before, on the impact case study website www.westminster.ac.uk/the-london-french. In October 2011, an engagement workshop at Westminster with the British Library, the Museum of London, Boughton House Collection, the Huguenot Society, the French Embassy and French Radio London resulted in contributions to the book project and to future plans (for events in 2015) with Boughton House, the V&A and the Museum of London around their collections of French artefacts with links to the French in London, and with the Spitalfields Festival and the Huguenot Society. During this October 2011 workshop the UK Web Archive and the beginnings of the London French Special Collection were also shared with the representatives of those institutions present (as listed above) and with members of the French community in London, notably those involved in its on-line presences from businesses (e.g. Bouille, the London relocation company) to bloggers (e.g. Diane Frost's 'Travels around my kitchen' blog).

With the research project up and running, the British Academy-funded series of workshops took place during May 2011-May 2012. One aim of the workshops was to facilitate the collaborative working of the book's contributors; another was wider professional and public dissemination. The series concluded with a large public dissemination and knowledge sharing event in July 2013 with an audience of over 100 people including representatives of the French Embassy and Consulate in London, the Alliance Française, the London constituency office of the French MP for Northern Europe, the Franco-British Council, French journalists, French business people, a wide range of French professional associations and cultural organisations established in London (such as the Rimbaud and Verlaine Foundation), the organisers of the Bankside Bastille Day Festival and of the Spitalfields Festival. There were also representatives of French charities, churches and the French Hospital, the Museum of London and the British Library, and many French citizens of London (analysis of the list of attendees is available on the impact case study website, as referenced above). French Radio London attended for on-the-spot interviews and organised a competition with the book as a prize. There was follow-up from France 24, the *International New York Times* in Paris, *L'Echo* and *Ici Londres*. Twitter campaigns were run from the Bankside Bastille Day Festival,

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by Institute of Historical Research Publications and by the French Consulate.

The research is now working with collections such as those held by the Museum of London, linking objects to content from the research around historical contexts and contemporary cultural ideas, and exploring the ways in which a migrant community can be represented in museum collections. The emphasis remains on the types of contributions this migrant community has made, and continues to make, to the UK. Funding is also being sought for a study into the impact of two new French schools in London (in Kentish Town, opened in 2011; and in Wembley, opening in 2015). The community web archive in the UK Web Archive will continue to offer new depths and dimensions to both the historical and contemporary experiences of the French in London within the expanding possibilities of digital Humanities research. The research has further potential for business sector/professional associations; for government departments dealing with urban migration, social inclusion, public engagement with the city, debates on immigration, and by providing evidence for the on-going political debate and research in France into French national identity and into countering the current brain-drain. These are new ways of using research originating in the approaches of cultural history for application in fields more usually associated with the social sciences.

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

- French Embassy staff, Ambassador, Consul Général and Deputy Consul Général.
- Staff of the London constituency office of the French MP for Northern Europe.
- Section Secretary, London Section of the French Socialist Party.
- Senior curators at the Museum of London and British Library; other project partners.
- Journalists at French Radio London; other journalists in UK and France.
- French residents in London.