

<b>Institution: Kingston University</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 29, English Language and Literature</b>
<b>Title of case study: Cultural and economic impact on Hampton Court Palace from research-based visitor experience</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Research at Kingston University into the socio-political and cultural milieu of the court of Henry VIII fed into a Knowledge Transfer Partnership between the University and Historic Royal Palaces. This resulted in a new visitor experience at Hampton Court Palace, “Henry VIII: Heads and Hearts”, which significantly increased visitor numbers and income at the attraction. The KTP also caused a change in practice at Historic Royal Palaces, with increased incorporation of research into commercial heritage activities. The project received the AHRC award for the most effective use of Humanities for the Creative Economy in 2011.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The research for this project was undertaken by Thomas Betteridge (Lecturer 1998-2000, Senior Lecturer 2000-2003; Reader 2003 - 2006) and the KTP Associate Suzannah Lipscomb (2007-2010), and exploited by Erica Longfellow (Lecturer 2000-2004; Senior Lecturer 2004-2011). From 1998 to 2004 Betteridge undertook pioneering research on the cultural milieu of Henry VIII’s court, disseminated in the monographs <i>Tudor Histories of the English Reformation</i> (1999) [1] and <i>Literature and Politics in the English Reformation</i> (2004) [2]. Betteridge’s work is part of a new wave of court studies that has aimed to recast the debate about Henry VIII beyond the question of whether Henry was a good or bad king. Instead, Betteridge and others have investigated the socio-political and cultural milieu of the court as a group of political individuals with Henry at its centre. ‘The Henrician court of the 1530s was a new institution’ ([2], p.68), composed of influential ‘new’ men empowered by a king who insisted on his ultimate and absolute authority. Betteridge focused particularly on how this new model of the court affected the strategies of writers aiming to influence the king’s policies for religious change.</p> <p>Longfellow and Lipscomb carried this research forward, further investigating the stories of individuals at the court as well as considering how this political model is reflected in material culture. Lipscomb and Betteridge have edited <i>Henry VIII and the Court: Art, Politics and Performance</i> (Ashgate, 2013) [3], a collection of essays drawn from the ‘Henry VIII and the Tudor Court’ conference at HCP in summer 2009, organised by Longfellow. The collection drew together contributions from leading academics from history, art history, material culture, and literature. Together the essays moved the study of Henry VIII beyond moralising about the king’s actions, towards a wider assessment of the impact of Henry and his courtiers on politics, culture and religious change in the period. Lipscomb’s essay in this collection furthered the study of influential individuals at the court by reconsidering the fall of Anne Boleyn as a crisis in Henry VIII’s masculinity, an argument she also promulgated in a popular study, <i>1536: The Year that Changed Henry VIII</i> (2009) [4].</p> <p>‘Henry VIII: Heads and Hearts’, the visitor experience at HCP, drew directly on Betteridge’s, Lipscomb’s and Longfellow’s findings, and thus in itself provided a new research model for how the humanities can inform public engagement with heritage institutions. As described in section 4 below, Lipscomb acted as a research advisor for every aspect of ‘Henry VIII: Heads and Hearts’. This project also generated new research findings. Most significantly, Lipscomb’s cultural research revealed how the Privy Council of Henry’s closest advisors worked in practice. Lipscomb recounted the research findings of this experiment in translating cultural research into public engagement in an article in <i>The Public Historian</i> [4].</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b></p> <p>[1] Thomas Betteridge, <i>Tudor Histories of the English Reformation</i> (Ashgate, 1999) (peer-reviewed and published by a highly-regarded independent academic press)</p> <p>[2] Thomas Betteridge, <i>Literature and Politics in the English Reformation</i> (Manchester UP, 2004) (peer-reviewed and published by a highly-regarded university press)</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

[3] Thomas Betteridge and Suzannah Lipscomb, eds. *Henry VIII and the Court: Art, Politics and Performance* (Ashgate, 2013) (peer-reviewed and published by a highly-regarded independent academic press)

[4] Suzannah Lipscomb, *1536: The Year that Changed Henry VIII* (Oxford: Lion, 2009)

#### Research Grant

Knowledge Transfer Partnership (No. 6238) between Kingston University and Historic Royal Palaces, funded by the AHRC. Total project cost £170,502. KTP funding 50% (£85,251).

The project lasted for three years and finished in February 2010. Erica Longfellow (KU) was the Lead Academic and Kent Rawlinson (HRP) was the Company Supervisor. The grant was one of the first KTPs in the humanities and the only three-year KTP in the humanities. The final report was rewarded an 'A' for outstanding.

#### **4. Details of the impact**

Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) benefited from the cultural and financial impact of the new "Henry VIII: Heads and Hearts" visitor experience at Hampton Court Palace (HCP), based on Kingston University research and founded on a Knowledge Transfer Partnership between HRP and Kingston University, supervised by Erica Longfellow, that ran from 2007 to 2010.

The KTP had two aims: to carry out cultural research to inform an exciting new interpretation for visitors to the Tudor palace at HCP ('Henry VIII: Heads and Hearts'), and to strengthen links and consensus between 'public history' presented at HCP and the academic community. In achieving these aims the KTP offered a pioneering model for the application of humanities research—literary, historical, and cultural—to a project that improved both a company's financial position and its engagement with the public. 'Henry VIII: Heads and Hearts' included new live interpretation, refurbished interiors, interactive displays, and multimedia elements, all inviting visitors to imagine themselves as courtiers attending the wedding of Henry VIII to Kateryn Parr at the Palace in 1543. This new visitor experience immersed members of the public in an experience of the court drawn directly from the model explored in Betteridge's work and furthered in Lipscomb's [1].

In the course of this project, Lipscomb wrote text for various media, designed new Tudor-inspired visitor costumes and warders' uniforms, and briefed staff and volunteers on research findings. Lipscomb conducted original cultural research to inform the new interpretation, and also translated her research into text for written interpretation, a new website, a Henry VIII twitter feed and an in-house publication, *Henry VIII: 500 Facts*. Her findings about the workings of Henry's Privy Council enabled the Council Chamber to be opened to the public for the first time with an innovative multimedia display that immersed visitors in key debates of the time. She also delivered historical briefings for front-of-house staff and appeared on television and radio and in person to promote the new visitor experience [2].

The launch of 'Henry VIII: Heads and Hearts' in April 2009 and the accompanying media and promotional activities helped HRP to achieve its goal of stabilising income streams from domestic family visitors. HCP saw a 43% increase year-on-year in day visitors in the six-month period of April-September 2009 (an additional 115, 287 visitors), compared to a 12.8% increase at comparable London attractions. The number of visitors from the domestic market increased sharply, from 50,000 in July-August 2008 to 77,000 in July-August 2009 [3].

In addition to attracting new visitors, the new visitor experience enhanced public awareness of Henry VIII and the Tudor court. *Which?* named Hampton Court Palace as 'Top Heritage Day Out' in the southeast, with interpretation that 'all heritage attractions should aim for' [4]. Visitor expectations were exceeded for almost two-thirds (62%) of visitors. Visitors commented that it was 'a living Tudor world', 'like you're back in the time of Henry VIII'. Visitor surveys also show an increased level of awareness of the changes in Henry VIII over the course of the reign. In addition, 78% of visitors (98,000) [3] stated that they would tell others that they should visit. The high number of visitors in 2009 has translated into sustained increases in visits in 2010 and 2011, with 81,000 and 117,000 additional visits, respectively, over the pre-exhibition number [5]. These figures indicate the importance of quality, research-based interpretation for maintaining high visitor numbers and particularly repeat visits from the local and domestic markets, and thus increased

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

community engagement with HCP as a heritage institution.

Lipscomb achieved the second aim of the KTP by implementing a strategy to build links with the academic community and position HRP as a research institution. This has significantly changed the culture at HCP, by demonstrating that research can produce both an enhanced reputation and commercial success. This cultural change has been embedded in the institution by the establishment of an interdisciplinary Research Advisory Panel including Longfellow, Betteridge, and leading academics from other HEIs and national cultural institutions.

Among the events that have taken place as a result of this new positioning of HRP are a highly successful academic conference on Henry VIII, co-sponsored with Kingston University and Oxford Brookes University ("Henry VIII and the Tudor Court, 1509-2009," July 2009, attended by over 60 academics from around the world) and a series of six public talks by leading specialists on Henry VIII between May and October 2009, sponsored by *History Today*.

This cultural change has affected projects across the organisation, including a redesigned visitor experience at Kensington Palace. The Chief Executive commented that HRP has "found ways to value and promote academic research and relationships alongside commercial success as mutually important components of successfully achieving our charitable cause. At a practical level, we have been able to transform our palaces for visitors and undertake events such as academic conferences with equal flair and energy. The KTP has played a significant role in this change process." [2]

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

[1] Suzannah Lipscomb, "Historical Authenticity and Interpretive Strategy at Hampton Court Palace," *The Public Historian: A Journal of Public History* 32:3 (August 2010): 98-119.

[2] Testimony from Chief Executive, Historic Royal Palaces (Corroborating Statement Identifier: 1)

[3] bdrc (Market Research Agency), Hampton Court Palace Visitor Survey, Summer 2009

[4] *Which?*, June 2009

[5] bdrc, Visitor Attractions Trends in England 2010, Annual Report,"  
[http://www.visitengland.org/Images/Final%20report\\_tcm30-27368.pdf](http://www.visitengland.org/Images/Final%20report_tcm30-27368.pdf)