

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of Liverpool
Unit of Assessment: 36 – Communication, Media, Library and Information Studies
Title of case study: City in Film
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The outputs of two AHRC-funded research projects included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a comprehensive database (launched in May 2009) of films about Liverpool, which includes rare and previously unknown or unseen material, and • new ways of curating film material using GIS software. <p>The beneficiaries of this work were individuals and organisations interested in cultural heritage. There were two kinds of impact:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultural impact through the preservation and interpretation of rare and previously unknown or unseen heritage films made about the city of Liverpool and Merseyside region. Also through the ease with which more than a million visitors to the Museum of Liverpool have been able to access a wealth of previously unseen historical material (including rare film footage) simply by touching an interactive map. 2. Impact on professional methods and practices for museum curation. Following a series of workshops (May 2009-Dec 2010), curators at the new Museum of Liverpool decided to create an interactive map of digitised artefacts as part of the permanent exhibition in the History Detectives gallery (launched December 2011).
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Film and Place</p> <p>The AHRC-funded ‘<i>City in Film</i>’ project (PI Hallam, University of Liverpool, 2006-2008) examined the ways in which cities have been recorded and represented on film since the early days of cinema, focusing on Liverpool as an example. The project brought together and documented, to date, over 1700 films made about the city between 1897 and 1984 and created an on-line database.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The database is unique in that it is searchable by location, spatial function and use. • It brings together information on films owned by a wide range of institutions, organisations, private individuals and collectors, many unseen by the public and unavailable to all but specialist researchers, until now. • It includes numerous items of rare footage in various public and private collections. <p>Project team included Kronenburg (CI – Architecture, University of Liverpool), Koeck and Roberts (Associates – Architecture, University of Liverpool). Written outputs include journal articles and a well-received monograph, <i>Film, Mobility and Urban Space</i> (Roberts 2012).</p> <p>Cine-mapping</p> <p>The subsequent, AHRC-funded, ‘<i>Mapping the City in Film</i>’ project (PI Hallam, University of Liverpool, 2008-2010), used Geographical Information Systems (GIS) software to extend the ‘<i>City in Film</i>’ database in new ways. As well as enabling an interrogation of film’s spatial properties, GIS provides an organisational framework to anchor qualitative materials, such as interviews and still and moving images, by time and place. GIS organises research outcomes in a way that improves public participation and engagement through partnership with museums, archives and other public forums. The project team included Kronenburg (CI – Architecture, University of Liverpool), Roberts and Shand (Associates – Architecture and Communication and Media, University of Liverpool).</p> <p>This use of GIS in film research was seen as breaking new ground in the discipline. To quote from a peer review of Hallam and Roberts, 2013: ‘<i>This collection breaks new ground for cinema history... Introducing new interdisciplinary methods and asking new questions, Locating the Moving Image takes film studies into new territory, beyond the boundaries of the text and its interpretation, towards an understanding of the relationship between culture, spatiality and place.</i>’ — Richard Maltby, Matthew Flinders Distinguished Professor of Screen Studies, Flinders University).</p>

3. References to the research

1. Hallam, J. and L. **Roberts**. (eds.) (2013) *Locating the Moving Image: New Approaches to Film and Place*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (Commissioned by Prof David Bodenhamer, Director, The Polis Centre, University of Indiana-Purdue for his new Spatial Humanities series).
2. Hallam J. (2012) 'Civic visions: mapping the city film 1900-1960', *Culture, Theory and Critique*, Routledge, Vol. 53 :1, 37-58
3. **Roberts** L. (2012) *Film, Mobility and Urban Space: A Cinematic Geography of Liverpool*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
 review: **consistently interesting, theoretically smart, and a pleasure to read**', Ben Highmore, University of Sussex
4. Hallam J. (2010) 'Film and Place: researching a City in Film' *The New Review of Film and Television Studies* Routledge, Vol. 8 no.3, 277-296. ISSN 1740-0309 (*Best read article in journal overall third position September 2011*).
5. Koeck, R. and L. **Roberts** (2010) *The City and the Moving Image: Urban Projections*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan
6. **Roberts**, L. (2010) 'Making Connections: Crossing Boundaries of Place and Identity in Liverpool and Merseyside Amateur Transport Films', *Mobilities* Vol. 5:1, 83-109. ISSN 1745-0101 [REF 2 output]

Supported by two AHRC research grants; 'City in Film' PI Hallam £195,460 (2006-2008), 'Mapping the City in Film' PI Hallam £377,188 (2008-2010). AHRC review of final report: '**this project achieved 'substantial impact in the city and other community areas', promoted 'extensive networking and collaboration', 'very efficient use of resource'**'. Also supported by an AHRC/BT Digital Heritage Network Award, £11,531 (October 2009 – December 2010), PI Hallam; '*Landscapes, memories and cultural practices: a GIS/GPS digital heritage mapping network*'.

4. Details of the impact

Our research had impact as follows:

1) Cultural impact through the enhancement of individuals' socio-cultural awareness and appreciation of film texts which have never before been seen in public.

2) Impact on methods and practices: curators decide to use GIS as a way of organising the Museum of Liverpool's catalogue spatially.

Our *City in Film* related projects established a wide range of contacts nationally and internationally, with individuals and groups including researchers, filmmakers, cultural producers, cultural institutions and activist organisations, leading to:

(1) Cultural impact

The cultural impact of these projects on education for citizenship and civic/community engagement with the city's environment is wide-ranging and on-going. Until 2008, rare historic films about the city were scattered amongst a wide range of institutions and private collectors. Many of these films have since been donated for preservation. Fifty of them are now preserved in the National Film Archive, North West Film Archive and digitised for permanent display as part of *Screenonline* and in the '*History Detectives*' Gallery, new Museum of Liverpool.

Public screenings, exhibitions, lectures, seminars and events have made this rich film heritage available to a wide range of audiences. Screenings have taken place at various Merseyside locations including Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT) media centre, Woolton Cinema, UCI Edge Lane, Liverpool School of Architecture (LSA).

Public impact: response to the screenings has shown warm enthusiasm: "*a very useful service to the community and to historical records*", "*brilliant glimpse into the past!*" "*let's have more of these events please*", "*films should be shown more often here!*", with 28 of 37 respondents rating a FACT event as excellent and a further 9 as good (attendance 90). Between September 2011 and

January 2013, 907 people watched NWFA screenings with *City in Film* content at events in Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley and Wirral. Other screenings and events have included large scale public events such as *Mitchell and Kenyon's Liverpool Films* in their original Edwardian venue (full house, 800 people), 9 screening and discussion events from 2008-9 with contributions from local filmmakers, artists and community activists, contributions to the *Waterfront* Screening series (Tate Liverpool 2008), Terence Davies Public Lecture, Liverpool University (2010, full house 250 people). Public attendance at these screenings and events has ranged from 30-800 participants. Participants ranged from predominantly young professionals at FACT and LSA to mixed family audiences at UCI and elderly people at Woolton.

Visits and requests for material on Liverpool and Merseyside from personal researchers to programme producers, professional researchers and educators have increased by 6-8% at North West Film Archive since 2008, a rise that can be directly attributed to the change in the archive's collecting policy in respect of material from Merseyside, the publicity generated by the project (interviews for local, regional and national television, radio and press included *North West Tonight*, *GMTV*, *ITV Granada*, *Radio Merseyside*, *Liverpool Daily Post and Echo*; for example, [BBC report, 2009](#)) and increased public engagement through local screenings and events. Enquiries about developing this material for educational use in schools have been received from local groups such as *Lovehistory*, a Liverpool based education charity.

Institutional impact: *City in Film*, in partnership with North West Film Archive, North West Vision and Media, Liverpool Libraries and Liverpool Record Office, contributed to the development of a 'place' page featuring Liverpool for the British Film Institute's *Screenonline* resource. Some 45,518 visitors have viewed the *Screenonline* Liverpool on Screen pages at March 2013, although this figure does not account for links from associated works and biographies. This 'very successful programme' received a special mention by the BFI as an innovative model for a new on-line resource *A Portrait of Britain*, in the BFI's memorandum to the House of Lords Select Committee on Communications, in its inquiry into the British film and television industries, 2009. (see section 5:1)

Community impact: Heritage film is now part of the Museum's education programme to stimulate engagement in citizenship and community action. In consultation with Hallam, Mark Bareham of Soap Box Films is developing a lottery funded project with the Museum (as part of their education programme) to run a series of workshops and create an on-line archive of material made by Community Productions Group, a co-operative media resource that documented co-operative business and voluntary schemes in Merseyside in the 1980s. A pilot screening and discussion of this material announced in gallery attracted 30 adult participants of mixed ages: average response to questions such as 'how useful is material to start a discussion' was 9.8, and 'importance of making it readily accessible' 9.9. Comments included 'Very relevant to today', 'Scary and relevant', 'Really interesting and inspiring', 'Good to relate today's struggles to the past' (April 2012). The project includes the development of educational resource materials that will be piloted in community settings as well as schools and colleges.

Hallam also provided consultation and support for [Pidgin Productions](#) lottery awarded project '[Back to the Timepiece](#)', a documentary that contributes to the history of Liverpool's black community.

2) Impact on methods and practices

The Museum of Liverpool, opened in 2011, is the first purpose-built museum in the UK for over 100 years. According to [its web page](#) it is now the most visited museum in the country outside London.

Workshops, led by our researchers, introduced museum staff to the **technological and methodological insights and tools developed in the research projects. This has changed the ways curators at the Museum think about accessing their collections.** The Museum's curators expressed an interest in developing the public's access to their collections through the use of an interactive map as part of discussions about the new Museum of Liverpool's use of film in exhibition galleries. Traditionally, the public have had no means of accessing a museum's catalogue.

Geo-coding the catalogue and digitising images of many of the artefacts relating to the Merseyside area and storing them in a GIS system has enabled the public to access their local history by touching a map on a screen in the [History Detectives Gallery](#). A menu gives access to a wide range of material including, but not limited to, film materials made available for public display through collaboration between the researchers, amateur filmmakers, North West Film Archive and the BFI.

The interactive map has been accessed by more than a million visitors to the Museum. (current footfall 1,188,226 since the gallery opened in December 2011 against a target of 750,000).

The map is facilitating public participation in psycho-geographic narratives of memory and identity around issues of place through themed workshops e.g. by the creation of 'trails' which become part of the map (c.f. *Radical City*, *Radical Women* impact narrative).

Dr. Rob Philpott, Head of Field Archaeology, commenting on participating in the network, stated that "The workshops have been intellectually very stimulating...[they] created an enhanced awareness of developing technologies in areas as diverse as GIS, GPS, mobile phone applications, architectural reconstruction, music and film, and social history. I anticipate that the workshops will have a series of longer-term, perhaps less immediate, benefits in the way the Museum of Liverpool team will develop the displays on gallery" (AHRC/BT network report Feb 2011).

Dr. Les Roberts is a consultant advisor on 'City in Film' projects in Bologna and Vienna. This latter project proposes to use film to examine how public space has changed over time using a similar approach to *City in Film*. A link to the report on their project, which references their visit to Liverpool, is available in section 5:2.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. [The BFI Memorandum to the House of Lords Select Committee](#) on Communications mentions 'the very successful project run in Liverpool' (section 1, BFI National Archive, Para 5) as a model archive access project in its inquiry into the British film and television industries, 2009 (**Section 4:1c**). See also the Liverpool [Screenonline](#).
2. Siegfried Matzl references the impact of the Mapping the *City in Film* conference (February 2010) and subsequent collaboration research on the Vienna project in his final project report [FILM.STADT.WIEN: A TRANSDISCIPLINARY EXPLORATION OF VIENNA AS A CINEMATIC CITY](#) (**Section 4:2b, page 3 para 3**)
3. **A Senior Curator at the BFI**, can be contacted to corroborate that the *City in Film* project contributed to the *Screenonline* Liverpool pages, including sourcing rare films for archiving, and verification of the number of page visits. See link to BFI select committee report in section 5:1.
4. **A private collector and amateur filmmaker, awarded the MBE for his contribution to preserving local film heritage**, can be contacted to verify that rare amateur film footage archived by North West Film Archive was well received at public screenings in various venues (see Section 4a) leading to further outreach work, and that some films are now part of permanent displays on *Screenonline* and in the Museum of Liverpool.
5. **An academic and PI of the FILM.STADT.WIEN project at Ludwig Boltzmann Institut für Geschichte und Gesellschaft**, can be contacted to corroborate that the Vienna 'City in Film' project was influenced by research at Liverpool and that there is on-going collaboration between Liverpool and Vienna (see report link in section 5:2 above and section 4:2b)
6. **The Director, Museum of Liverpool**, can be contacted to verify visitor numbers to the museum (sections 4:2a and 4:1d); museum staff worked with the researchers on the development of the interactive map for the History Detectives gallery; rare amateur film footage provides some of the geo-referenced map content; the interactive map forms a basis for community education projects including the *Radical City*, *Radical Women* trail and exhibition and Soapbox Films workshops.
7. **A colleague from Soap Box Films** can be contacted to corroborate the evidence of continuing community involvement and impact presented in Section 4:1d.