

Institution: The University of Edinburgh
Unit of Assessment: 29 English Language and Literature
Title of case study: 2. Beyond Macbeth: Shakespeare Collections in Scotland
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Beyond Macbeth: Shakespeare Collections in Scotland, an AHRC-funded research project into Scottish receptions of Shakespeare, culminated in a major exhibition at the National Library of Scotland (NLS) in 2011. The project contributed to economic prosperity, education, and cultural life. It brought direct financial benefits to the NLS, in the form of £88k to mount the exhibition and media coverage with an advertising-value equivalent to £19k. The exhibition received over 26k visitors, a 30% increase on the previous winter exhibition. The project also shaped the way in which the NLS presents important elements of the cultural heritage in its custody, and influenced the development of its learning activities and online learning resources for UK schools. Visitors were led to examine their assumptions about Shakespeare, the history of his reception, and his significance for Scotland, and the exhibition was cited in the Scottish Parliament as an example of how the NLS meets its remit.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Funded by an AHRC research grant of £183k awarded under the Museums, Archives and Libraries scheme, James Loxley (Professor of Early Modern Literature, UoE 1997 - present) worked as Principal Investigator with Helen Vincent (Senior Rare Book Curator at the NLS) to undertake research on the major holdings of early modern printed drama and Shakespeareana held in the University of Edinburgh Special Collections and in the National Library. This AHRC scheme was particularly targeted at “scholarly research to underpin some form of widely accessible output located either in or via, [...] museums, galleries, archives or libraries” (AHRC, <i>Details of the call for applications to the Museums, Galleries, Archives and Libraries Research Grants</i>, October 2007). Thus, the underpinning research for the project was conducted simultaneously with the preparations for the exhibition, and was published through the exhibition at the same time as the impacts were achieved.</p> <p>The research activity began with a collaborative study day organised by Loxley in November 2007, which led to the development of a proposal and application for AHRC funding. The funded project ran for 37 months from 1st December 2008 to 31st December 2011, the bulk of the research being undertaken in the first 30 months. The research involved exploration of the scope of the collections which make up these holdings, study of archival and manuscript material, bibliographic analysis of printed items and contextual study of the collectors who assembled them. The research illuminated the significance of these collectors, and found in William Drummond of Hawthornden, the family of John Stuart, third Earl of Bute, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps and John Dover Wilson distinctive figures whose lives and activities shed light on the varied processes through which Shakespeare’s writing has been recirculated in the four centuries since it first appeared in print.</p> <p>The research added to our knowledge of the history and provenance of the relevant items in the two institutions’ collections. Most importantly, it drew out the extent to which the Shakespearean text has proved enduringly malleable in its material incarnations, solicitous of both the adaptive attentions of readers and writers and the restorative efforts of editors, collectors and scholars. It allowed the researchers to trace the relationship between these processes and the self-conscious development and articulation of a Scottish literary tradition and history, by examining the significance of the presence of such exemplary collections in high-profile Scottish libraries.</p> <p>The research was pursued collaboratively, and involved the exchange of skills and perspectives between the academic and curatorial partners. Loxley and Vincent jointly put together presentations and seminars at the Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham in 2009, at the Material Cultures conference, University of Edinburgh in 2010, and at the Renaissance Society of America annual meeting in Montreal in 2011, and as co-curators shared in formulating ideas, learning outcomes, the design brief and tender documentation for the exhibition, web feature and</p>

learning resources. The focus of the research on the varying form and modes of intimate engagement with Shakespeare's texts by those who have collected, performed and studied his work over four centuries was fundamental in shaping the approach not only to the core elements of NLS activity, but also to the development of interactive resources and the marketing of the exhibition. The research findings were published in 2012 in the 48 page exhibition catalogue. With the assistance of Lisa Otty (Research Fellow, University of Edinburgh), Loxley and Vincent also published *Exhibiting the Written Word*, a 28-page, free-to-download report which summarised the project's insights into the most effective ways to mount exhibitions of written materials. Funded by an AHRC Follow-up grant of £33k, this was circulated among over 30 libraries and research institutes around the UK including the British Library, and up to July 2013 has received 1144 views, 979 of which are unique viewers.

3. References to the research

3.1 James Loxley (PI), 'The relevance of major Scottish collections of printed Renaissance drama to the cultural history and contemporary reception of Shakespeare'. AHRC Museums, Archives, and Libraries scheme. December 2008 to December 2011. £183,490.

3.2 Exhibition. James Loxley, *Beyond Macbeth: Shakespeare Collections in Scotland* (National Library of Scotland and University of Edinburgh, 2012). www.nls.uk/exhibitions/shakespeare. Exhibition Catalogue: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/literatures-languages-cultures/english-literature/research-activities/shakespeare-edinburgh>

3.3 Project report. Loxley et. al., *Exhibiting the Written Word* (National Library of Scotland and University of Edinburgh, 2011). Free to download project report. http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.72782!/fileManager/Exhibiting%20the%20Written%20Word.pdf

4. Details of the impact

'Beyond Macbeth' brought the malleable, user-sensitive elements of the Shakespearean text to public consciousness in a manner that encouraged a wide range of users to interact directly with Shakespeare's work and its history. It led directly to a public exhibition held at the NLS between December 2011 and April 2012. Final visitor numbers were 26,628 and achieved truly global reach, with visitors from 21 countries and 4 continents. The exhibition was followed by an innovative web feature, 'Shakespeare Collected', offering access to early editions, annotations and scrapbooks, hosted on the National Library's servers from December 2011 onwards. The major impacts achieved by the project were in presenting cultural heritage in an innovative, collaborative way; contributing to professional practice and economic prosperity in the curatorial sector; and the creation of educational resources. (Corroborating sources: 5.2, 5.5)

The public benefitted from the innovative presentation of the Library's under-researched Shakespeare holdings. The emphasis in the research on patterns of reception and collection over the centuries underpinned the structure of both exhibition and web feature: both were able to make an organising principle of the different approaches of the individual collectors who brought these collections together. At the same time, the focus on the interventionist attitudes of collectors, readers and scholars to the material form of the Shakespearean text led directly to the exhibition's inclusion of an interactive zone in which visitors were encouraged to make their own interventions in Shakespeare's work through costume design, magnetic poetry and printing-stamp sonnets. The web feature similarly included a scrapbooking activity permitting users to extract and arrange excerpts from or images of Shakespearean texts. Comments in the visitors book (left by visitors to the exhibition and the school students who participated in the learning programme) included, 'Really good – like hearing people's ideas & opinions and seeing how Shakespeare was viewed throughout the centuries'; 'I am a Shakespearephile & think this is a good interactive exhibition – for everyone to try'; 'This is fascinating. A glimpse to tempt a closer look'; 'Wonderful and inventive take on Shakespeare and his collectors'; 'Didn't realise there were so many Scottish connections'; 'All the way from California to see this. Wonderful!'. This feedback demonstrates that the exhibition convincingly articulated the contemporary relevance of Scotland's literary and cultural history. The interactive focus also guided the construction of an e-postcard facility, enabling visitors to the exhibition to assemble image and text for an e-card that could be sent to a recipient of their choice – more than 500 such e-cards were sent. (Corroborating sources: 5.1,

5.2, 5.5, 5.8)

The fact that the project partnership originated with the research meant that the NLS benefitted directly from the research from the outset. The same emphasis on the material form of the Shakespearean word described above informed the textual street installations, a key element in the marketing campaign for the exhibition, 'The Word on the Street', which won a Marketing Society Scotland Gold award (arts and culture sector) in 2013 and was also nominated for the 2012 Scottish Creative Awards. NLS received £88k of the funding given to the project to cover the costs of designing and building the exhibition, web feature and learning resources. NLS also received a corporate benefit as Vincent had 10% of her time for the duration of the project bought out to enable her to undertake bibliographical research. The library benefitted in developing an increased understanding of its early modern drama collections as a result of the research, and of their place in the wider range of its own Scottish collections and of collections of early modern drama held elsewhere. The opening of the exhibition garnered initial media coverage for the NLS with an advertising-value equivalent of £19k, and prompted a feature article by Alan Taylor in the *Herald* on 14 December 2011. The exhibition was also cited in the Scottish parliament by Fiona Hyslop, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, as a prime example of how 'the National Library ensures that the past is brought to life in a modern context... [and] its exhibitions and events remind visitors of the enduring relevance of the collections' (Scottish Parliament Official Report, 15 March 2012). (Corroborating sources: 5.3-5.6)

The project had an educational benefit, creating resources for schools which articulated the contemporary relevance of Scottish literary and cultural heritage. It directly informed the creation of online Shakespeare resources for primary and secondary school students in the NLS's digital Learning Zone, which invites young users to explore character through visual representations across the centuries, and to engage interactively with sonnets by taking them apart, rearranging them, reassembling them by rhyme pattern, and writing sonnets using randomly generated words. The web feature includes a full online catalogue of the temporary exhibition, plus fully digitised texts of key items and explanatory / contextual apparatus, as well as bibliographic descriptions of the collections, biographical information on the collectors and the scrapbook feature. The Learning Zone resources were complemented by a programme of school activities that ran throughout the exhibition period, including workshops delivered at NLS by the Citizens Theatre, Glasgow, and outreach work in schools throughout East Lothian. The project therefore impacted particularly on school-age users. 543 people engaged in the programme of educational activities inspired by the research, ranging from primary school pupils to adult learners and older people. Feedback comments from school students included: 'I found it very enjoyable and quite exhilarating. My favourite parts were thinking up insults and doing the scene about the argument between Macbeth and his wife. I will use the insults to vent off my anger next time I need to'; 'Thank you very much for our Shakespeare workshop. I was a bit worried about it before I went in because I wasn't a big fan of Shakespeare, but my views changed over the time.' (Corroborating sources: 5.7, 5.8)

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

URLs below are original links. Should any be unavailable, see archived copies at:

<https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/REF2014REF3B/UoA+29>.

5.1 Exhibition website, 'Shakespeare Collected' (<http://shakespeare.nls.uk/>) Confirms range, research and organising principles of exhibition; demonstrates interactive 'scrapbook' feature.

5.2 Contact: Exhibitions Officer, NLS. Can confirm visitor numbers and domiciles, range and use of interactive features.

5.3 Newspaper article. 'Does James IV deserve crown of King Lear?', *The Herald* 14 December 2011 (<http://www.heraldscotland.com/comment/columnists/does-james-vi-deserve-crown-of-king-lear.16152605>). Example of media coverage generating publicity for NLS.

5.4 Marketing Society Scotland, list of awards 2013 (<http://www.marketingsocietyscotland.com/stars13//results/>)

5.5 Contact: Senior Curator of Rare Books, NLS. Can confirm impact on curatorial practice at

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NLS, increased understanding and innovative presentation of holdings, advertising value.

5.6 Scottish Parliament Official Report, 15 March 2012.

(<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=7173&i=65298&c=1334572&s=beyond%20macbeth>). Confirms official recognition of impact by and on the NLS.

5.7 Contact: Education Officer, NLS. Can confirm educational activities and impact of the project.

5.8 'Beyond Macbeth' visitors book. Confirms feedback from exhibition visitors and school students. (Can be supplied by HEI on request.)