

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

<p><b>Institution: Royal Holloway, University of London</b></p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment: D.30 History</b></p>
<p><b>Title of case study: History of Material Culture</b></p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The research of Amanda <b>Vickery</b>, Sandra <b>Cavallo</b> and Jane <b>Hamlett</b> focuses on the interplay between personal identity, space, the material world, and social structures. It has had an impact on UK cultural life, economic prosperity, and public understanding. Demonstrating progress from independent research to externally-funded collaborative research, it has underpinned exhibitions attended by tens of thousands of visitors, generating substantial revenue for two national museums. Linked broadcasting events have earned major audiences, plus significant revenue for the BBC and an independent production company. Visitor/audience feedback demonstrates that the exhibitions and broadcasts have changed public perceptions of both past and present.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Underpinning research was conducted at Royal Holloway by <b>Vickery</b> (2001-10), <b>Cavallo</b> (2004-13) and <b>Hamlett</b> (2001-5; 2008-13), and was linked to a large degree by their common involvement in the AHRC Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior (CSDI).</p> <p><b>Vickery's</b> research was carried out under the umbrella of the AHRC of which she was Associate Director (2001-2006) and with support from the Leverhulme Trust (2004-7). The research comprised a comprehensive archival survey of eighteenth-century domestic life, including paintings, illustrations, magazines, newspapers, novels, and personal documents (letters, account books and diaries). Vickery demonstrated the role of the home and its material culture in economic survival, social success, and political representation during the long eighteenth century. Through the spread of formal visiting, the proliferation of affordable ornamental furnishings, the commercial celebration of feminine artistry at home, and the currency of the language of taste, even modest homes turned into arenas of social campaign and exhibition. In particular, she revealed how patriarchal power operated through consumption; and the spatial shaping of master-servant relationships.</p> <p><b>Cavallo's</b> research at the CSDI (of which she was Associate Director 2004-6) included exploration of early-modern residential institutions as domestic environments. This extended the notion of 'domestic interior' to the religious, charitable and educational structures that multiplied in Europe in this period and led to the organisation of a conference, publication of an edited collection (Ashgate, 2009), and the inclusion of entries in the CSDI database documenting the spatial/material dimension of institutional life.</p> <p>In 2009, building on the study of health in the household carried out for the exhibition 'At Home in Renaissance Italy' (V&amp;A, 2006-7) - also sponsored by the CSDI - Cavallo obtained Wellcome Trust funding to research the construction of the healthy domestic environment in Renaissance Italy. The study reveals the forgotten role of medicine in shaping the design and material culture of the home (see, among its outcomes, the OUP monograph, below)</p> <p><b>Hamlett's</b> 2010 monograph (based on her Ph.D at Royal Holloway) is the first nationwide study of the relationship between English domestic interiors and gendered identities in textual and visual sources between 1850 and 1910, including advice manuals, inventories and sale catalogues, photographs, diaries, letters and autobiographies. The research demonstrated how certain spaces were associated with masculinity and femininity, particularly in cultural representations. But it also showed how these were challenged by everyday practice, concluding that gendered identities were less controlling than previously thought.</p>

In 2010 Hamlett won an ESRC First Grant for a study of institutional interiors in nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Britain. The research surveyed the archives of three case-study institutions: lunatic asylums, lodging houses and middle-class schools. The project discovered that domestic ideals were surprisingly powerful, but often failed in practice. Through material culture, inmates were able to exercise agency in otherwise repressive environments. In the asylum, domesticity and decoration were seen as an important means of cure, but their practical effect was limited. Patients were, however, able to find some consolation through ownership of small material goods and personalising their dress.

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

1. Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2009). This publication has sold over 10,000 copies in the UK and was also published in the USA. Short-listed for the Longman/Pearson History Today Prize and commended by the Hessel-Tillman prize judges as 'outstanding'; 'pick of the year' in *Daily Telegraph*, *Scotsman & Daily Express*; 'Historians Favourites', Kate Williams, *History Today*, December 2009.
2. Amanda Vickery, 'An Englishman's House is His Castle? Privacies, Boundaries and Thresholds in the Eighteenth-Century London House', *Past and Present*, 199 (2008): 147-173.
3. Sandra Cavallo and Silvia Evangelisti (eds), *Domestic Institutional Interiors in Early Modern Europe* (Ashgate: Aldershot), 2009, pp. i-xii, 1-267, 27 colour plates. Reviewed in, among others, *Sixteenth Century Journal* (2, 2011); *Renaissance Quarterly* (2, 2010); *Cultural and Social History* (2, 2013); and *Gender and History* (1, 2011): 'This thought-provoking volume moves beyond an examination of the social role served by early modern institutions to consider the non-familial living arrangements that formal organisations provided. ...The result is a stimulating discussion that demonstrates the realms of the domestic and institutional were not mutually exclusive.'
4. Sandra Cavallo, co-authored, *Healthy Living in Late Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), 61 b/w, 23 colour illustrations.
5. Jane Hamlett, *Material Relations: Families and Middle-Class Domestic Interiors in England, 1850-1910* (Manchester: MUP, 2010). Reviewed in *English Historical Review*; *Journal of British Studies*; *Times Higher Education*; *Women's History Review*, *Women's History Magazine*. For example, 'A lively, interesting and important book...a fine achievement. Engagingly written, attractively produced and generously illustrated', Professor John Benson, *THE*, (<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/415496.article>); and 'Well researched and imaginative...an important contribution to our understanding of home life', Professor Carol Dyhouse, *EHR*, (<http://ehr.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2012/04/16/ehr.ces067.extract>).
6. Jane Hamlett and Lesley Hoskins, 'Comfort in Small Things: Clothing, Control and Agency in County Lunatic Asylums in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England,' *Journal of Victorian Culture* 18:1 (2013): 93-114.

### Grants

1. Vickery, AHRC Knowledge Transfer Fellowship (2009) £49,000.
2. Cavallo (co-applicant Marta Ajmar, V&A Research Department), 'Healthy Homes, Healthy Bodies. Domestic Culture and the Prevention of Diseases in Renaissance and Early Modern Italy', Wellcome Trust (2009-11, extended to Sept. 2012) £183,706, and for related conference, Wellcome Trust (2013), £4007.
3. Hamlett, 'At Home in the Institution? Asylum, School and Lodging House Interiors in London and South East England, 1845-1914', ESRC (2010-12) £229,729.

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

The different kinds of impact outlined below flowed from the various projects carried out by Vickery, Cavallo and Hamlett in association with the AHRC Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior (CSDI) during the period under review.

***A History of Private Life and At Home with the Georgians***

In 2009 Vickery won an AHRC Knowledge Transfer Fellowship to develop research from *Behind Closed Doors* (2009) into a 30 part landmark radio series 'A history of Private Life' for BBC Radio 4, produced by with Loftus Audio Ltd. The series was a huge critical and popular success. It scored an 84 (out of 100) on the Radio Joint Audience Research (Rajar) listener audit. The Rajar average listening figure for BBC Radio 4 is 10.8m and Vickery's series came close to the maximum audience. The series received outstanding reviews that noted the importance of original, underpinning research. Vickery's series was one of the top 10 BBC radio hits in 2009.

In 2010, Vickery made 'At Home With the Georgians', a three-part landmark history series for BBC2 also based on *Behind Closed Doors*. In the *Independent* (16/9/2010) Janice Hadlow, Controller of BBC2 commented that Vickery had the exceptional level of authority that she sought in a BBC2 presenter: 'I do believe that people from the world of academia who want to be on television and are right for television do find ways of announcing themselves to the world. You can tell from the way people write that they're interested in communicating to a wider audience. If she was in the room now, she could charm you and compel you with a subject'. The series attracted viewing audiences of 3 million. The testimonies of reviewers across national newspapers also show that the programme had a critical impact on how viewers understood eighteenth-century gender relations. For example: *Sunday Telegraph* (26/9/2010): 'Amanda Vickery breathes new life into eighteenth-century society. It becomes clear that men, just as much as women, fussed over soft furnishings and craved the domesticity that married life could offer'; and *Daily Mail* (27/11/2010): 'Perhaps the biggest surprise is that Georgian house-hunting was such an emotionally charged process, and driven less by women than by men'.

Both radio and TV series were based on Vickery's original research and drew on previously-overlooked diaries and letters to tell new and compelling stories about eighteenth-century domestic life.

**The CSDI Database**

Vickery, Cavallo and Hamlett contributed to the design and production of the CSDI database, containing over 3,000 representations of the domestic interior from the Renaissance to the present, many of which are findings from their research. The database (<http://www.rca.ac.uk/CSDI/didb>), which went live in 2007 and has been monitored and maintained constantly since then, represents a key resource for teaching and researching in this field. Between 31/8/2010 and 5/2/2013 15,351 IP addresses were logged at the site, suggesting c.17 visitors per day.

**'Choosing the Chintz'**

Hamlett's research underpinned a major segment of the Geffrye Museum exhibition 'Choosing the Chintz: Men, Women and Furnishing the Home from 1850 to the Present' (2008-9). The exhibition explored male and female roles in home decoration, using Hamlett's research findings – diaries and autobiographies became listening posts, and rare photographs were projected on the museum walls. The beneficiaries were the museum's visitors and school parties. 'Choosing the Chintz' received 18,379 visitors, and hosted half-term activities for 253 children and a workshop for 102 children. Emma Dunn, Education Officer, described it as 'compelling and understandable for younger pupils'. Head Curator, stated that it was 'one of our most successful exhibitions'.

**'Living Away from Home'**

In 2010-12, Hamlett collaborated with Surrey History Centre (SHC) on 'Living Away from Home', a small exhibition on Surrey institutions (c.2,000 visitors), also available on the SHC

## Impact case study (REF3b)

website, and a talk on asylum interiors. The beneficiaries were users of SHC, which has a working partnership with MIND. According to the Team Leader, Heritage Services, SHC, 'It was clear that the large and very varied audience also found it both fascinating and moving and that the topics you covered enhanced what they had already learned about the institutions through their own research into members of their families who had been treated there or who had worked there'.

**'Healthy Homes, Healthy Bodies'**

This project's findings were presented at the Society of Dilettanti and the Medical Society of London (2010), the Wallace Collection Art Fund Lecture (2011) and The Wellcome Library Talks Series (2013). The size of audience ranged from 20 at the Wellcome Library to 90 at the Wallace Collection. The beneficiaries were art amateurs, medical professionals, health policy makers and a general public interested in learning that prevention and the adoption of healthy lifestyles are not a modern invention, as usually assumed. This awareness may contribute towards greater legitimacy for the promotion and adoption of healthy lifestyles today.

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

1. 'A History of Private Life': Score of 84 on the Rajar Listener Audit corroborating listener figures.
2. Review of 'A History of Private Life', corroborating its influence, *The Telegraph*  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/6378578/Radio-review-Amanda-Vickery-Nicky-Campbell-Richard-Bacon-and-more.html>
3. Review of 'A History of Private Life', corroborating its influence, *The Guardian*  
<http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2009/oct/04/desert-island-discs-private-life>
4. Review of 'At Home with the Georgians,' corroborating its influence, *The Telegraph*  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/property/periodproperty/8167927/Living-History-the-countrys-most-authentic-Georgian-homes.html>
5. Review of 'At Home with the Georgians,' , corroborating its influence, *The Independent*  
<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/reviews/last-nights-tv-at-home-with-the-georgians-bbc2--my-boyfriend-the-war-hero--bbc3--rick-steins-cornish-christmas--bbc2-2149832.html>
6. Review of 'At Home with the Georgians,' , corroborating its influence, *The Express*  
<http://www.express.co.uk/entertainment/tv-radio/215550/Review-At-Home-With-the-Georgians-BBC2-Thursday>
7. For corroboration of influence of 'Choosing the Chintz' exhibition: Head Curator, Geffrye Museum of the Home.
8. 'It's Paintbrushes at Dawn,' (Choosing the Chintz), *The Sunday Times*, 19 October 2008, pp.38-39 (n/a online), corroborating influence.
9. For corroboration of attendance and reception, 'Living Away from Home' exhibition: Team Leader, Heritage Services, Surrey History Centre.