

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP)

Historic England and English Heritage CDP Research Areas 2018

Background

The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (HBMCE) was established by the National Heritage Act 1983, and until 31 March 2015 was known as English Heritage.

On 1 April 2015 English Heritage separated into two organisations:

- Historic England, the public body that champions and protects England's historic environment
- The English Heritage Trust, a charity that, under license from HBMCE, looks after the National Heritage Collection consisting of 400 historic sites, such as Stonehenge and Dover Castle

HBMCE's Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) programme, funded by the AHRC, allows us to identify and co-supervise 3 Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) PhD studentships per year. The 2019 cohort will be the last in this current funding round.

We are now issuing a **Call for Proposals** for co-supervised studentship projects, based on one of the CDP Research Areas listed below; all of which relate to topics within the [Historic England Research Agenda](#) or current research priorities for the [English Heritage Trust](#).

Proposals for studentships should be made by a university based researcher in collaboration with a named member of staff from Historic England or English Heritage, who will act as the co-supervisor for the studentship. We are not looking for project ideas directly from potential students.

Studentships are fully funded by the AHRC and will **commence in October 2019**. They will last for 3 years, with up to 6 months additional funding available from the Student Development Fund to support the cost of work placements, specialist training or other specific development opportunities.

Closing date for Proposals is Friday 23rd November and the Proposal Form and Guidance can be found on the [Historic England website](#).

Research Area 1

Women in Post-War Architecture

Context and Further Details

The issue is a timely one given the global discussion on women's roles and statuses in the workplace and will provide ample opportunity for public engagement work, particularly following on from Historic England's Immortalised Campaign and the earlier Celebrating Women Architects (2014). Diversity in the architecture sector is also being championed by London Festival of Architecture (with its #SeeTheElephant campaign to call out sexual discrimination in the sector) and the RIBA, with the current president specifically committed to increasing all aspects of diversity in the architectural profession.

We want to reveal and celebrate poorly understood and undervalued part of England's architectural heritage and broaden our understanding of the diverse ways in which women from all backgrounds have influenced the historic built environment.

The Historic England Research Agenda specifically asks

"What has been the contribution of women architects, designers and builders as well as women with hidden or unacknowledged roles?"

Projects arising from this theme could be a general survey of the evolving role and participation of women in architectural design, making connections with developments in the first half of the twentieth century; or a specific research topic, such as women's roles within public sector architecture, the role of émigré women in architecture, or women who specialised in architectural photography/drawing.

Research might explore broader and interdisciplinary topics, such as the wider contribution that women have made to the built environment as policy makers, clients, builders, contractors, developers, educators and architectural historians.

Research Area 2

Remote Monitoring Methods to Assess the Condition of Heritage Assets

Focusing on the application of drone and related technologies to derive condition assessments.

Context and Further Details

Love them or hate them, drones are now increasingly used across many different applications by professionals, amateurs and the public. There is a lot of technological development occurring, both within the drone hardware, the sensors they can now carry and the software's used to post-process the captured imagery/data.

We are already making some use of drone technologies for heritage management purposes, in terms of recording and documentation, but there is an opportunity to focus some of the research on technological developments towards heritage assets, which may then benefit from their application.

We would anticipate a range of heritage outcomes of this research such as: a better understanding of how drone technologies might assist the remote monitoring of heritage assets; automated routines for flying drones around a range of heritage asset scales and type; automated analysis of imagery/data to determine condition e.g. weathering, cracking, loss & water ingress; potential for crowd-sourcing/public engagement; a guidance document on the use of drones for remote monitoring of heritage.

We would expect proposals to have considered collaboration with both the Ordnance Survey (re their mapping applications for drones) and FERA Science (RE their agricultural work with drones, given agriculture forms around 80% of the current global application of drones). Such collaboration would significantly widen the impact of this research and potentially bring in other scales of application beyond the initial heritage asset.

Projects under this theme could potentially look at different scales of heritage asset: from landscapes down to individual buildings. One example area might be First World War Memorials where the use of Structure for Motion photogrammetry is already being investigated by Historic England to both record and aid condition assessment of the memorials, building on our existing FWW Memorials Programme (<https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/first-world-war-home-front/help-look-after-war->

[memorials/](#)).

For further information or an informal discussion about this Research Area please contact Paul Bryan, Geospatial Imaging Manager, Historic England (Paul.Bryan@HistoricEngland.org.uk).

Research Area 3

The Impact of Local Authority Planning Advice on the Historic Environment and the Management of Change

Context and Further Details

The most important agent in the protection, enhancement and promotion of the historic environment in England is local government. Through the planning system local authorities manage change to places; change that can protect and enhance heritage assets, or change that can damage or destroy those assets. Key to exercising those responsibilities is the specialist historic environment advice provided to local government.

However, there is little understanding of the impact that advice has on the decisions made by local government, and therefore the effect the advice has on how places change.

We seek to improve that understanding through detailed research which could approach the topic in a variety of different ways; for example:

- An assessment of the impact of historic environment advice on local policies and strategies;
- An assessment of the impact of historic environment advice on the development of specific towns or cities;
- An assessment of the impact of historic environment advice on a series of planning applications, assessing geographical variation and understanding the importance / significance of that variation;
- An assessment of the impact of historic environment advice on a (large scale) single development. Identifying specific changes made as a result of advice and assessing the impact of those changes on the 'success' of the development.

Research Area 4

Heritage Crime: Innovative Methods of Prevention of Investigation

Context and Further Details

Heritage Crime is an important contemporary issue. We have had recent high profile news coverage regarding the sentencing in the case of R v Ingram & Blight; who were found guilty of fraud for failing to disclose the items they looted from maritime sites, including HMS Hermes, a Royal Navy ship in the Dover Strait.

However, despite successes like this, there is still much more work to do. The recent news stories about night-hawking in the vicinity of Hadrian's Wall for example; or the fact that the theft of metal from historic buildings is still a major problem. Whilst the number of attacks of metal theft has shown a decrease, in actuality, the theft of heritage metal has seen an increase in the volume of material that is being stolen (8-12 tonnes per attack).

We need to be able to become innovative and to seize the opportunity to identify and develop the unique/cutting-edge methods and techniques that will help us to protect our shared cultural heritage.

Research will have impact if it helps us to minimise the impact of heritage crime by providing a clearer understanding of the scale and extent of the problem; implementation of effective preventative and enforcement measures; and the ability to enhance the opportunity to investigate and identify offenders.

Historic England's Research Agenda identifies specific research questions that fit this theme, such as:

- *What new and innovative techniques and products are available or under development for use on-site to help owners and managers of heritage sites and buildings to prevent (heritage) crime?*
- and
- *How can new methodologies for studying crime and anti-social behaviour within the historic urban, rural and marine environment be applied to heritage crime cases?*

We would welcome innovative PhD research proposals, and we are particularly interested in cross-disciplinary approaches that aim to tackle these heritage-focused questions.

Research Area 5

Interpreting Graffiti at Historic Sites

Context and Further Details

Graffiti can be found across a large proportion of sites in the care of English Heritage. The motivations behind creating these, the context in which they were made and their meaning is often varied. They range from marks left by 18th-century antiquaries at Stonehenge to inscriptions of generations of gardeners on the doors of a garden building at Wrest Park to hundreds of graffiti left by First World War conscientious objectors at Richmond Castle.

They can offer a window to the lives of ordinary people, the voiceless or forgotten whose stories might not otherwise come to light. Graffiti can also speak to each other over time; they can be layered or added to and drawn onto buildings whose use and meaning change. This raises interesting questions about how we interpret graffiti and what they mean and represent to visitors and researchers today.

Until recently, graffiti has not generally formed an integral part of interpretation or research at English Heritage sites. However, the [Richmond Castle Cell Block project](#), among other English Heritage initiatives, has demonstrated its research potential and appeal to the public.

Focused doctoral research could start drawing together the piecemeal work which has been undertaken on graffiti within English Heritage, and more widely by academics and volunteer groups. It could reveal the extent and depth of graffiti at sites, interrogate specific themes, time periods or building types, assess its value and significance or offer suggestions on best practice. The project might address topics such as:

- When does graffiti become an important historical record worthy of study? What is its value and significance and who values it and why?
- What diverse or underrepresented stories can graffiti tell? What common themes appear?
- What can graffiti tell us about the lives of its creators or the buildings it is drawn on? What can it tell us about the changing attitudes of visitor's or custodians of heritage sites?

- How could graffiti be interpreted and presented to members of the public?
- What motivates people to create or preserve graffiti?

For further information or informal discussion about this Research Area please contact Dr Megan Leyland, Snr Properties Historian, English Heritage (Megan.Leyland@english-heritage.org.uk)

Research Area 6

Stories of English Heritage

Understanding the broader meaning and value of English Heritage's portfolio beyond the historical record

Context and Further Details

From Hadrian's Wall inspiring the 'The Wall' in Game of Thrones to catching Pokémon at Stonehenge, English Heritage's portfolio has provided the setting physically and imaginatively for a plethora of non-historical responses to heritage. Poems, novels, travel accounts, pictures, games and social media posts show that our visitors appreciate material and experiences beyond the historical narratives presented at our sites.

English Heritage often uses this material as the basis for empirical examination of a site's history: for example, using travel writing as the basis for the recovery of a lost aspect of a building or landscape. Else, it often takes on a secondary role as "colour" to complement material derived from a more privileged historical period: e.g. Game of Thrones dress up at Housesteads Roman Fort. But these supposedly tangential aspects are important in revealing the role of our sites in the construction of personal, social and national identity, and are as profound a statement of the contemporary and historical value of an ancient monument as its archaeological and historical record.

English Heritage needs to conduct research into these alternative narratives and experiences to better understand the relationship between our visitors and our sites.

Themes that could be examined within this CDP Research Area include (but are not limited to):

- The construction and exploration of 'alternative' layers of meaning on EH sites - e.g. fan tourism, virtual worlds and gaming, or as a setting for literature, art or poetry.
- The place of EH's sites in discussions of personal, social, local, regional and national identity.
- The interaction between a site/sites and its various physical and/or imaginative contexts, - e.g. history and speculative literature.
- Comparison of how visitors have responded intellectually, emotionally or creatively to heritage encounters in different periods.
- The interests of sections of our visitorship not traditionally well-represented in discussions of national heritage (e.g. BAME, Disability and/or LGBTQ+)

The outcomes of this project could include experimental site interpretation.

For further information or informal discussion about this Research Area please contact Dr Andrew Roberts, Properties Historian (Andrew.Roberts@english-heritage.org.uk)

Research Area 7

Conservation of Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Artillery Pieces

Context and Further Details

English Heritage cares for some of England's iconic coastal fortifications, such as Dover, Walmer, Dartford and Pendennis castles and has over 413 cannons, carriages, guns at these 29 historic sites. Many were located after the site left active service and their history, accuracy and significance is sometimes poorly understood. Weaponry has always spurred technical innovation, especially in metallurgy. Large firearms are particularly demanding of materials properties and much technology is incorporated to improve performance. Range, accuracy and rate of fire were crucial aspects, especially in fixed coastal defences.

The live firing of guns adds another dimension in interpretation to such artillery fortifications. Whilst anecdotal evidence strongly supports visitor engagement with this, no systematic research has been undertaken as to the impact of live firing.

The conservation of late nineteenth and twentieth century artillery pieces is particularly challenging in their historic environment. The coastal and generally exposed location has high levels of airborne sea salt. Some sites are located near active ports which generate significant pollution, increasing corrosion rates. These pieces had many more materials present, other metal alloys, plastics, wood and rubber than older artillery designs. The designs also incorporate many thin plates and junctions that act as water traps. Generally these factors increase vulnerability to corrosion and when it occurs the thin plates often mean the gun reaches a parlous state much faster and can present a safety risk. Little is known as to which alloys and parts corrode fastest or the exact mechanisms. English Heritage in common with most heritage organisations uses a variety of coatings to slow the corrosion process. The performance of each coating and its suitability for specific parts and environments is generally not known.

This area is a priority to English Heritage because of the high liabilities; the present treatments are very expensive and have a limited effective time. Research and investment has provided workable solutions for the earlier cannon and these are now under control, but the more modern pieces still present a significant challenge.

We are looking for research that will allow a better understanding of deterioration phenomena and the significance of the objects themselves. Which elements we need to concentrate on and which coatings work best. This knowledge will allow prediction of future problems and help us conserve, maintain and develop our collections.

For further information or informal discussion about this Research Area please contact Dr Paul Lankester, Conservation Scientist (Paul.Lankester@english-heritage.org.uk).

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