

# Collaborative Doctoral Awards Student Specification

**NORTHERN BRIDGE**  
**CONSORTIUM** DOCTORAL  
TRAINING  
PARTNERSHIP



**Arts and  
Humanities  
Research Council**

<b>Project Title:</b>	Mapping the Cultural Geography of Sam Henry's Irish Song Archive	
<b>Project Summary:</b>	This will be the doctoral examination of the Sam Henry collection of traditional Irish song with a literary and cultural geography approach. Henry's archive, held by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, of approximately 15,000 textual materials, is one of the most significant collections of song, photography and folklore in the British Isles. The project will map and analyse the significance of the sense of place that Henry's archive constructs and will examine how local place impacts upon the gathering of song, and how culture can be identified through the manifestation of song, folklore and local history.	
<b>Institution:</b>	Ulster University	
<b>Partner Organisation:</b>	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Museum Services	
<b>Primary AHRC Subject Area:</b>	English Language and Literature	
<b>Creative Practice Component:</b>	Yes	

<b>For further information and to submit an expression of interest, please contact:</b>			
<b>Lead Supervisor:</b>	Frank Ferguson	<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:f.ferguson@ulster.ac.uk">f.ferguson@ulster.ac.uk</a>
<b>EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN:</b>			6 January 2020

<b>Interviews for shortlisted candidates will take place in the week commencing:</b>	<b>Insert date of week if known</b>
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*Note to supervisors drafting this role description: the doctoral researcher person specification must respect Northern Bridge values of equality, inclusivity and diversity.*

*Careful consideration should be given to additional criteria that are essential to the advertised project or desirable (could be developed through project training and experience.)*

*Avoid long lists of criteria – aim for no more than three per category.*

*Be realistic - criteria may limit the eligible pool of candidates.*

*Criteria must require applicants to demonstrate preparedness for doctoral study.*

*The essential criteria for all Northern Bridge researchers is here: <http://www.northernbridge.ac.uk/competition/eligibility/>  
Directors will be available to assist with the drawing up of person specifications. Colleagues who would like to consult on this can consult as follows:*

*Teesside - Newcastle*

*Northumbria - Durham*

*QUB - University of Ulster'*

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Sam Henry archive embodies the significance of Seamus Heaney's celebration of the significance of place upon existence. It is one of the most important collections of traditional song in the British Isles. Held and managed by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, it contains over 15,000 artefacts among which are materials relating to approximately 800 songs which Sam Henry gathered in the north of Ireland between 1920-1950. His focus into the song tradition of an area across much of the northern counties of Antrim and Derry/Londonderry yielded much richness and variety of source material. The Council's Museum Services have been working with the collection as appropriate external funding has been secured. As a result, the archive has recently been catalogued to museum standard and digitised onto [www.niarchive.org](http://www.niarchive.org) . Since 2009 Public awareness has been raised through three developmental exhibitions and, over the last three years, a programme of community engagement workshops. This has prepared the way for serious academic investigation to begin into comprehending the archive

## RESEARCHER PERSON SPECIFICATION

*\*Applicants must also meet the criteria for acceptance on a doctoral programme as set out by the host institution's Postgraduate Admissions Service.*

<b>Education and Professional Qualifications</b>	Essential Criteria	Undergraduate degree (first-class or good upper-second) in a relevant subject e.g. English Literature, History, Cultural Studies, Music  Masters Degree in a relevant subject e.g. English Literature, History, Cultural Studies, Music  In exceptional cases, candidates with lower qualifications will be considered if they can demonstrate that relevant professional practice or work experience has equipped them with equivalent academic and research skills, and preparedness for doctoral study, as per AHRC guidelines
	Desirable Criteria	Experience in sharing and making public arts and humanities activity e.g. publications, presentations, performance, exhibition, online dissemination, applied design outcomes, industry reports, public talk etc.
<b>Research and impact experience and training</b>	Essential Criteria	Evidence of engagement in independent research.
	Desirable Criteria	Experience in sharing and making public arts and humanities activity e.g. publications, presentations, performance, exhibition, online dissemination, applied design outcomes, industry reports, public talk etc.
<b>Professional practice and job-related experience</b>	Essential Criteria	Supervisors to compete if required for the project.

	Desirable Criteria	Work experience which points to preparedness for doctoral research.
<b>Interpersonal Skills</b>	Essential Criteria	Effective communication and organisational skills and ability to persuade and enthuse.  Ability to articulate a vision of the contribution that the CDA project will make to the field.
	Desirable Criteria	Supervisors to compete if required for the project.
<b>Other Factors</b>	Essential	Willingness to travel to meet the needs of the research project.

## RESEARCH PROJECT

### ***I had my existence. I was there. Me in place and the place in me (A Herbal, Human Chain, 2010)***

The Sam Henry archive embodies the significance of Seamus Heaney's celebration of the significance of place upon existence. It is one of the most important collections of traditional song in the British Isles. Held and managed by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, it contains over 15,000 artefacts among which are materials relating to approximately 800 songs which Sam Henry gathered in the north of Ireland between 1920-1950. His focus into the song tradition of an area across much of the northern counties of Antrim and Derry/Londonderry yielded much richness and variety of source material. The Council's Museum Services have been working with the collection as appropriate external funding has been secured. As a result, the archive has recently been catalogued to museum standard and digitised onto [www.niarchive.org](http://www.niarchive.org). Since 2009 Public awareness has been raised through three developmental exhibitions and, over the last three years, a programme of community engagement workshops. This has prepared the way for serious academic investigation to begin into comprehending the archive. This is timely for a number of reasons.

- 1 To date no sustained, in depth monograph exists of Sam Henry's methodology and impact and this will be the first project to attempt to explore, contextualise and analyse Henry's approach and collection.
- 2 At present there is an extensive re-evaluation of what constitutes indigenous "culture" in Northern Ireland amid the backdrop of concerns about Brexit, the present political impasse a generation after the Good Friday Agreement, and questions raised on Northern Irish identity as we move towards the examination of its centenary as a state in 2021. The Sam Henry archive provides a very fertile collection to analyse and understand the cultural underpinnings of a broad cross communal area in the first half of the twentieth century.

- 3 Given that concerns about space, the local and the locale are so prevalent in the collection. The archive provides a very strong foundation to examine song lyric within a geographical setting and to illustrate this through geo-mapping.

The doctoral project provides considerable opportunity to work directly with the team that has developed the archive, to create a significant research portfolio based on the collection and develop industry based skills, capabilities and experience that will enhance the candidate's career prospects.

The research questions that the project will explore are:

1. How does the lyrics of Sam Henry's collection create a sense of place and community.
2. Which major themes and concerns arise from the lyrics.
3. How can this be mapped to the topography of the north of Ireland?

This material is highly important as it was transcribed "in the field" at a time of great social, political and demographical change in Ireland. As such, Henry's work located and preserved many songs and contextual information that would have otherwise been lost from the record. His methodology sought to transcribe as accurately as possible the songs of the people of his local area across a broad area of Northern Ireland without too much editorial interference. In this way, his collection gathered songs, folklore, photographs, familial and local history in a deeply authentic manner which generated considerable interest and affection not merely among his local community, but by subsequent generations of singers, musicians, broadcasters and musicologists

in the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and across the globe. This was recently highlighted in Sam Henry Songs of the People, a two hour documentary and concert programme on BBC Northern Ireland (2018). Henry has been acknowledged as a major pioneer in the study of song in the British Isles and has been championed by key musicologists such as Alan Lomax and Gale Huntington. The quality of the material is highly impressive and will generate scholarship across the disciplines of literature, musicology, history, museum, media and heritage studies. It is singularly important as a window into a pivotal generation that witnessed the shift from traditional to modern forms of society amid a backdrop of the foundation and initial consolidation of the state of Northern Ireland. Henry's songs convey the sense of how communities understood their local places and their place within them, their Geographical Imagination (Massey, 2005), through the lyrics of local song and imagined the places in which they lived.

This project shall employ an interdisciplinary methodology of literary criticism with cultural geography to trace how the locales mentioned in Henry's work constructed their sense of place through how their song described their setting place and milieu. The candidate shall be based within the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Museum Services with a six month placement at the Burns Library in Boston College, Boston. USA. There, the candidate will have access to major American archives of other Henry material, gain excellent working knowledge of Boston's curatorial and digital centre, and disseminate their work and projects within the academic and museum sectors in the United States.

## SUPERVISION AND EXTERNAL ADVISORS

First Supervisor:	Dr Frank Ferguson	School/Department:	Ulster University, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences of, School of Arts & Humanities
Second Supervisor:	Professor Linda Clarke	School/Department:	Ulster University, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences of, School of Education
Additional Advisor:	Helen Perry	Organisation/ Institution:	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Museum Services

## RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

The project will provide the successful candidate with a very strong research environment which combines a university doctorate with industry placements. The Council's Museum Service is core funded by the Council to deliver on the Cultural Services Strategy. The three pillars of the Museum Service are Collections Management, Community Engagement and public access to collections. The Service manages 5 museum collections across the Borough with over 50,000 items. It delivers substantial annual programmes in 5 Accredited(UK Standard for Museums) museum venues and delivers a programme of community engagement with groups in particular targeting Section 75. The Service reports through Head of Service Community and Culture to the governing body. A further function requires Museum Services to seek external funding to deliver enhanced and targeted programmes e.g. PEACEIV. There are currently 4 core staff including the Manager enhanced by 2 PEACEIV staff. The office is fully accessible and supported by Councils IT and Technical services teams when necessary.

The successful candidate will also become an integral part of the Research Unit for English Language and Literature with outputs assessed in REF2014 as over 80% internationally excellent and world leading. Researchers in the English research unit at Ulster continue to contribute significantly to the discipline: they sit on advisory boards in government and in secondary and higher education; they are members of editorial boards and referee for key publishers such as Palgrave Macmillan, OUP, Blackwell, Routledge and Ashgate; they provide invited keynote lectures and presentations at prestigious international conferences and symposia; and examine degrees and advise on programmes around the world.

The successful candidate will become part of the English research group and will have access to work with the Ulster Centre for Literary Biography and the Ulster University Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies. They will have access to a variety of seminars and talks and can contribute to the English seminar series.

As a researcher at Ulster the successful candidate will be part of Ulster University Doctoral College, an University wide research environment for PhD researchers. Each campus has bespoke PhD hubs providing social and meeting spaces. On the Coleraine Campus it is within the School. PhD researchers engage with the annual festival and the Doctoral Forum provides a voice for PhD's.

At Faculty level there are 9 research Units, providing a rich diversity. We have collaborative agreements with the Seamus Heaney Homeplace which provides access and opportunities for PhD candidates. We work closely with the MAC Belfast, the Riverside Theatre, The Verbal Arts Centre, DerryLondonderry, the John Hewitt Summer School, Armagh and the Ulster-Scots Agency. The candidate would have the opportunity to engage as researcher with a number of programmes and bursaries which are offered by these groups. The candidate will also have an opportunity to develop their work on Henry on a placement at the Burns Library Boston College where they can explore a series of pertinent American archives, enhance their skills in archival and digital humanities and gain further industry experience with museum and research partners in the United States.

## APPLICATION

Applicants wishing to apply for an approved CDA studentship must also complete the relevant University's online postgraduate application form and submit it by 16:00 on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

All applicants must include the code **NBC20** on their application form so that it can be identified. Applicants to:

- Durham University should select "Yes" under 'Have you applied or are going to apply for a scholarship?' This will generate a drop down menu: please select "PGR-Northern Bridge" from that menu.
- Newcastle University should quote NBC20 under 'Studentship/Partnership Reference' and 'Who is your sponsor/funding body?'
- Northumbria University should quote NBC20 under the 'Project/Studentship Reference Number' field.
- Queen's University Belfast should tick 'I will apply separately to an external body' then enter NBC20 under 'To which body do you intend to apply?'
- University of Sunderland must state the supervisor, and should state NBC20 in Section 6 'Who is expected to pay your fees.'
- Teesside University applicants should answer the question 'Who will pay your fees' by selecting 'other' and then quoting 'NBC20.'
- Ulster University Should insert NBC20 in response to the question 'If you will be self-funded or are in receipt of a private scholarship then please provide further information here' on the Funding Details section of the online application.'

(Please note: Independent of the NBCDTP Studentship Competition process, applicants must submit supporting documentation required by the partner institutions' Postgraduate Admissions Services.

This is necessary to secure an offer of a place on the doctoral programme at the applicant's chosen institution, and must be in line with the institution's own admissions policies.)

## **REFEREES**

Applicants are solely responsible for contacting their referees at the earliest opportunity using the email template supplied in the Northern Bridge CDA guidance. It is generally recommended that referees are advised to send references direct to the appropriate Postgraduate Admissions Service no later than Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020.