

Collaborative Doctoral Awards Studentship Competition (Project-led)



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council

Project Title:	Northumberland National Park: Governmentality and the Recent and Not-So-Recent History of Thirlwell Castle	
Project Summary:	Histories of Britain’s National Parks have focused predominately on the political process that led to the passage of the 1949 National Parks Act, the consequent designation process, and the conflicts related to public access, forestry and infrastructural development in the immediate post-war decades. Little attention has been paid to the transformation of the context in which the park authorities have operated since the 1970s. This PhD will examine recent National Park history by contextualizing the multi-faceted process that saw Northumberland National Park Authority acquire, renovate and enable public access to Thirlwell Castle in the late 1990s and early 2000s.	
Institution:	Northumbria University	
Partner Organisation:	Northumberland National Park Authority	
Primary AHRC Subject Area:	History	
Creative Practice Component:	None	

For further information and to submit an expression of interest, please contact:			
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EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN:			6 January 2020

Project Description:
<p>Seventy years ago, legislation passed by the Labour Government enabled the establishment of the National Parks system in England and Wales; Scottish National Parks followed in the 2000s; Northern Ireland has yet to follow suit. Despite the significant territorial footprint of the system, the power and influence of the lobby and individual park authorities and the high visitor numbers all National Parks attract, the history of the system has not been written. The most substantial single work (MacEwen & MacEwen, 1982) is now very dated; John Sheail’s work is indispensable with respect to statutory and institutional developments but narrow in focus and also focused on the earlier period; and the chronological coverage of recent work (Kelly, 2015) is limited in part by the 30-year-rule. One consequence of an inadequate historiography is that in public discourse the work of the park authorities is often reduced to enacting the ‘Sandford Principle’ (1974), updated by the Environment Act, 1995, which states that ‘the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area’ must come before ‘public enjoyment’. What this has meant in practice is little understood historically.</p> <p>By providing access to an extensive archive of previously unused material held by Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA), stakeholders, and utilising archival research and oral history methodologies, this PhD studentship will enable pioneering research into the recent history of Britain’s national park system. Under examination will be the</p>

development of the complex political, social and cultural environment in which the park authorities have operated since the 1970s, particularly with respect to the gradual displacement of 'amenity' as the dominant trope in park planning and management with a more complex discursive and policy framework. Integral to this research was the attempt to transform the parks from sites of contestation, subject to repeated planning disputes and public enquiries, to places of negotiation, dialogue and 'partnership'. Working closely with the supervisory team, the student will develop a set of research questions focusing on the emergence of, first, 'heritage' as a means of identifying new forms of public goods, second, the 'stakeholder' as a means of legitimising or recognising architectural, archaeological and ecological expertise, and, third, concern about social inclusion and exclusion, including but not limited to mobility.

Although this PhD will be concerned with planning processes and discursive frameworks, it will be firmly grounded in the material consequences of these phenomena because the student will work out from a specific case study. In 1998, NNPA embarked on a major project to acquire, renovate, and enable public access to Thirlwell Castle, a small, privately-owned but historically significant site on the south-west tip of the park boundary close to Hadrian's Wall. The project was funded by English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, and NNPA itself; this obliged the authority to enlist the expertise of a wide range of consultants and contractors in order to develop a programme of transformation that took sufficient account of the site's archaeological, ecological, and historical value and meaning. But rather than assuming value and meaning is inherent to the artefact, whether this be the castle structure or the landscape, this PhD will examine how these investigations created meaning and value. This raises another important research question. How did funding streams function as a means of regulating the behaviour of park authorities, particularly with respect to how the landscapes within its boundaries were managed and valued? What forms of governmentality were at work in these processes? As the identity of these funders suggest, the evolving notions of value and systems of governance at work in the parks can only be historicised when placed in their local, national and transnational contexts.

In addition to the thirty-one box files on the Thirlwell process, the student will also be able to make use of an extensive photography collection, some of which is being digitised by volunteers. Photography was a vital tool for the park authority, not least given the emphasis long placed on protecting the 'visual amenity' of the landscape, but its institutional function has not been closely examined. The student will be encouraged to consider how the park authority instrumentalised photography in the Thirlwell process, whether it was used to create an empirical knowledge base, stabilise meaning, or generate a visual narrative of positive change from an archaeological, architectural and ecological perspective. As such, this PhD will also consider how photography was used to articulate meaning and value at the Thirlwell site.

SUPERVISION AND EXTERNAL ADVISORS			
First Supervisor:	Professor Matthew Kelly	School/Department:	History, Department of the Humanities
Second Supervisor:	Dr Elsa Devienne	School/Department:	History, Department of the Humanities
Additional Advisor:	Sarah Burn	Organisation/Institution:	Northumbria National Park Authority
Additional Advisor:	Chris Jones	Organisation/Institution:	Northumbria National Park Authority
<p>The supervisory team combines appropriate specialist academic knowledge and supervisory experience (KELLY), broad academic knowledge in environmental history and oral history methodologies (DEVIIENNE), extensive professional expertise with respect to public engagement and outreach (BURN), and extensive professional expertise and contacts with respect to the historic environment, planning, and work with volunteers and stakeholders (JONES). BURN and JONES currently fulfil senior roles that mirror key authority players on the Thirlwell research project, ensuring their support of the student is especially valuable; they also already work in a 4 research-rich environment and are experienced with respect to directing research and commenting on draft documents. In particular, BURN and JONES will facilitate contact with stakeholders and volunteers active on the Thirlwell project and, as outlined above, BURN will provide the student invaluable professional experience as part of her team. In sum, this is a strong team that melds academic and professional experience in a manner that reflects the significance attached to knowledge exchange between the two and will provide the student exceptionally valuable access to senior professionals.</p>			

Matthew Kelly is Professor of Modern History at Northumbria University. He has published extensively on the history of the National Parks and landscape conservation, including the monograph *Quartz and Feldspar. Dartmoor: A British Landscape in Modern Times* (London, 2015) and the edited volume *Nature and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Liverpool, 2019). He helped found the Rural Modernism network and hosted its inaugural conference, 'New Lives, New Landscapes' (funded by the British Academy); he co-edited *The Nature State: Rethinking the History of Conservation* (London, 2017) and is on the editorial board of *Past & Present*. He has supervised two PhDs to completion and is currently supervising a CDA student in partnership with the Science Museum Group and the National Railway Museum York.

Elsa Devienne is Lecturer in US History at Northumbria University and works on urban and environmental history. Her first book (*La ruée vers le sable: une histoire environnementale des plages de Los Angeles*, forthcoming Sorbonne University Press) builds on the extensive literature on US national parks by examining the campaign to establish Southern California beaches as natural landscapes worthy of protection and public funding. She co-wrote *D'après nature: Frederick Olmsted et le park movement on the nineteenth century US park movement*. She was a member of the scientific committee for the 2017 biennial conference of the European Society for Environmental History (ESEH). Her work utilises oral history methodologies and she currently sits on the supervision committees for three PhDs.

Sarah Burn is Head of Activities and Exhibitions at Northumberland National Park. Part of the Senior Leadership Team, she is responsible for all public engagement work including exhibitions, events, work with schools and educational institutions and audience development. Sarah's career within the wider cultural sectors spans over 15 years and her roles have included event coordination, programme management, policy research, creative education, arts development and enterprise innovation. Previously she has worked at The Sage Gateshead, at Creative Partnerships Northumberland, at Creativity, Culture and Education, as well as roles at Arts Council England North East. Sarah has an MA in Cultural Management.

Chris Jones is the National Park's Historic Environment Officer. He is an archaeologist and heritage manager and has a Master's degree in Landscape Archaeology. At NNP, Chris leads on developing policies and strategies to deliver positive outcomes for the historic environment. This involves providing expert advice to internal and external customers, through the planning process, agriculture, forestry and utilities. He develops project-based solutions in response to specific issues such as: volunteer training programmes, practical conservation schemes, and facilitating community archaeology projects.

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

History, which comprises of 35 staff (including two Leverhulme ECR Fellows and four Vice Chancellors' Research Fellows), is a dynamic and highly research active department, committed to providing outstanding PhD supervision. History's GPA for outputs placed it 18th in research quality in REF 2014. History fosters a vibrant and cohesive PhD community. Alongside AHRC, ESRC and NBC funded studentships, History also usually wins three or four fully funded university studentships per year. PGRs are encouraged to publish during their studies and several have recently enjoyed success in journal such as *History & Memory* and *Contemporary British History*. Bidding to external funders is also encouraged, with students recently securing funding from the Economic History Society, Royal Historical Society, and the Society for the Study of French History. History's PhDs are increasingly progressing into HE careers as lecturers (recently at Durham, QUB, Stirling, and Liverpool John Moores) and postdocs, including IHR and EHS fellowships.

Based in the Glenamara Centre, PGRs have access to fully equipped workspaces and networked computers, with further facilities in the Library's new Research Commons. The newly refurbished library offers subscriptions to academic journals and over 500 online data repositories including State Papers Online, Nineteenth Century US Newspapers, and British Newspapers 1600-1950. Developed by senior academic staff, PGRs benefit from a Faculty training programme run by the Graduate School but also from a Humanities Department programme, which meets weekly and is regularly updated to respond to PGR student's needs. The current programme includes sessions on applying for external funding, pursuing careers outside academia, publishing, digital humanities, and organising conferences. The Humanities Department also runs regular ad hoc events for PGRs including writing workshops and social gatherings. These events ensure that there is an active and lively Humanities postgraduate community at Northumbria University.

PGRs are at the heart of History's six research groups. As well as attending and participating in the Institute of the Humanities Research Seminar Series, PGRs organise and fund their own training events and annual symposium, and regularly organising events with external partners such as The Lit and Phil. They have led in the organisation of the North East branch of History Lab, and work with students at Durham University in the Centre for Nineteenth Century Studies. Supported by a dedicated PGR Coordinator, PhD students progress through a series of milestones, ensuring that they keep their studies on track. Students receive guidance and advice from a principal and secondary supervisor and Northumbria's Graduate School provides extensive support for supervisor training and development; supplemented by specialised subject knowledge. In its pursuit of academic excellence, History is committed to equality of opportunity and to an inclusive approach to diversity in its postgraduate research culture.

More specifically, the student will be a member of the Environmental Humanities Research Group, which reflects an area of research and teaching that has enjoyed significant expansion at Northumbria over the past four years. This lively group includes the two members of the supervisory team, plus among others Prof. Brycchan Carey, Dr David Stewart, Dr Leona Skelton, Dr Rebecca Wright and Dr Joseph Hardwick, as well as a small but growing number of the graduate students. The group was recently associated with the British Academy funded conference 'New Lives, New Landscapes: Rural Modernism in Twentieth-Century Britain' and hosted the second annual Environmental History Workshop (supported by the British Academy through a Newton Postdoctoral Fellowship and the British Agricultural History Society).