

Collaborative Doctoral Awards Studentship Competition (Project-led)



Project Title:	Women, the Arts and Patronage: The Delavals of Seaton Delaval Hall
Project Summary:	The generation of the Delaval family known as the ‘Gay Delavals’, or the ‘ <i>mauvais ton</i> ’ of eighteenth-century society, were fashionable trend-setters, patronising art and literature and forging the north-eastern industrial landscape. But little attention has been paid to the women of the family who shaped eighteenth-century culture and politics by patronising the arts and funding political propaganda for the press. This project will uncover the significance of the Delaval women at a time when the family seat, Seaton Delaval Hall, managed by project partner the National Trust, faces a major overhaul of its interpretation through a £7.8m conservation project.
Institution:	Northumbria University
Partner Organisation:	National Trust
Primary AHRC Subject Area:	English Language and Literature
Creative Practice Component:	None

For further information and to submit an expression of interest, please contact:			
Lead Supervisor:	Dr Helen Williams	Email:	helen.williams@northumbria.ac.uk
EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN:			6 th January 2020

Project Description:
<p>Seaton Delaval Hall is a National Trust property designed by Restoration playwright and architect Sir John Vanbrugh. Its main interpretation narrative concerns the eighteenth-century generation of the Delaval family, especially John Hussey and his brother Francis Blake, and their respective families. The Delavals were aspiring actors and playwrights, and their works were well received in the period. The family archive, part housed at the Hall and at Northumberland Archives, provides a rare insight into domestic life and hospitality at a major country seat. Seaton Delaval Hall is currently undergoing major capital works and investment in innovative modes of heritage education and interpretation. This is a major opportunity for reconsidering the provision for telling the stories of the Delaval family and their cultural contexts, and there is significant scope for designing and developing those narratives.</p> <p>Existing research on the Delavals is scarce. Francis Askham’s <i>Gay Delavals</i> (1955) is the only comprehensive study of the family and is now in need of updating. The women of the Delaval family are touched upon in Eilís O’Sullivan’s recent study of <i>Ascendancy Women and Elementary Education in Ireland</i> (2017) and Lady Delaval’s political patronage of John Cleland has been uncovered by the project’s principal supervisor, Helen Williams, and second supervisor, Richard Terry, in an article for <i>Review of English Studies</i> (2013), but a longer study is required. In responding to recent scholarship by Kate Retford on families, interiors and fine art (2006; 2007), by Heidi A. Strobel on the material turn in gender studies</p>

(2017), Fiona Ritchie on Women and Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century (2014) and Freya Gowrley's ongoing work on eighteenth-century women and domestic space, whilst engaging with recent work on gender, heritage and interpretation (Baldwin & Ackman, 2017; Glaser and Zenetou, 1994; Dubrov & Goodman, 2003; and Levin, 2010), this project will produce new knowledge about the Delaval women whilst exploring the broader landscape of women's stories in historic houses.

This research project has two strands. The first is archival and considers the house collection in conjunction with the family papers at Northumberland Archives in order to piece together the Delavals' participation in and contribution to the arts and culture of the eighteenth century. It will engage with the many surviving paintings, drawings, inventories and letters, and some surviving playscripts which are currently housed in Northumberland and elsewhere which have not yet been brought to public attention. Such a reading of these collections will enable research to be undertaken exploring some of the following themes: acting and the stage in the eighteenth century; domesticity and the arts at Seaton Delaval Hall; the Delavals' patronage of authors from the pornographer John Cleland to the poet Christopher Smart; and the relationship between politics and the arts. The second strand of the project involves reporting on current representations of eighteenth-century women, arts and patronage in the heritage sector and recommendations for best practice. This will ensure that new narratives developed as a result of the archival research can be developed into heritage interpretation opportunities at Seaton Delaval Hall ripe for its reopening to the public.

Research questions considered may include:

- What evidence survives of the Delaval women's patronage of artists, writers and craftspeople?
- How do the paintings and writings that survive present womanhood in the eighteenth century?
- Did private performance at Seaton Delaval Hall and the family's other properties help secure the family's reputation as a literary one?
- How are women and the arts presented at other historic houses of the eighteenth century?
- How can this information inform our reinterpretation of the space of Seaton Delaval Hall today?

In exploring how landed families creatively engaged with both art and literature in order to present themselves as having fashionable literary sensibilities, whilst documenting the representation of women's histories in historic houses today, this project would aim to help inform interpretation and conservation of the eighteenth century's unique built heritage. A placement of up to six months' duration at the property will enable the student to put knowledge into practice and to see their research developing the interpretation of the building.

SUPERVISION AND EXTERNAL ADVISORS

First Supervisor:	Dr Helen Williams	School/Department:	English Literature
Second Supervisor:	Prof Richard Terry	School/Department:	English Literature
Additional Advisor:	Emma Thomas	Organisation/Institution:	Director of Seaton Delaval Hall, National Trust

Dr Williams has extensive experience of collaborative research projects. She has supervised one PhD to on-time completion as second supervisor. This was a collaborative PhD with the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle. Dr Williams's own PhD was an AHRC-funded CDA, so she has experience of managing collaborative projects from both sides. She currently leads an AHRC-funded project (ECR Standard Grant) in collaboration with Cambridge University Library and has recently been awarded a British Academy Rising Star Public Engagement Award in recognition of her aptitude for partnership working. She currently line manages two postdoctoral research assistants and has in the past managed two more. Dr Williams has co-led heritage education programmes with the Laurence Sterne Trust (NHLF, 2013), led literary historical training for National Trust room guides (2017), leads a British Academy-funded network of academics and print museums, and currently leads two strands of the NHLF project Curtain Rises at Seaton Delaval Hall (2018). She also has experience of supporting PhD students with interdisciplinary projects, having contributed to modules on the AHRC-funded Centre for Doctoral Training's PGCert Heritage Research at the University of Hull for three consecutive years. She has published widely on eighteenth-century literary culture (JECS, 2012; ECF, 2016; monograph forthcoming).

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/our-staff/w/helen-williams/>

Prof. Terry has PhD completions as a principal supervisor (one Leverhulme; one AHRC CDA). In addition, he has extensive experience as a research manager in different roles, including UoA lead, Department Research Director, and Faculty APVC for Research. For several years he sat on Northumbria's research degrees sub-committee, the body that ratifies PhD examination arrangements and approves doctoral awards. He is currently the Northumbria Academic Director for the Northern Bridge Consortium, and the Deputy-chair of the University's Working Group on the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. Prof. Terry has published three monographs on eighteenth-century literary history (OUP, 2001; Ashgate, 2005; Palgrave, 2010). Together, Dr Williams and Prof. Terry are experts on the Delaval family and their patronage of the arts (*RES*, 2013). This research also underpins their recent edition of John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (2018) and their forthcoming edition of his letters (CUP). <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/our-staff/t/richard-terry/>

Emma Thomas is General Manager at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland. She is strategic and operational lead based at the property and client for the Curtain Rises project (a £7.8m conservation project funded by NLHF). She was previously Head of Learning and Engagement at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, which has a longstanding partnership with Northumbria University and which leads and supports postgraduate research in the arts. Emma established the Learning Programme for the inaugural Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art and worked in the Education team at Modern Art Oxford. She is currently Vice Chair of Engage, the National Association for Gallery Education and was on the Board of Northern Architecture and NSEAD, the National Society for Education in Art and Design. She is currently an adviser for one Northern Bridge PhD student.

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

The eighteenth-century research group at Northumbria University is one of the largest and most successful of its kind in the UK and internationally, with 11 staff working on the literature and music of the period 1688-1789, including 3 profs, 1 Emeritus prof, 4 SLs, and 3 PDRA's (two of whom are line managed by Dr Williams). Colleagues have won numerous research awards, with Dr Williams being involved in two of three large research projects (AHRC and Leverhulme) currently running in the group with a value of around £700k. Prof. Terry has recently served on the executive of the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Dr Williams is its longstanding annual conference organiser, and Prof. Brycchan Carey is the president-elect. In July 2019 Northumbria hosted the International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies' Early Career Seminar, an intensive workshop for a selected group of the most promising eighteenth-century scholars worldwide, co-organised by Dr Williams. The university is a proud co-convenor of the North East Forum in Eighteenth-Century Studies (<https://northeastforum.wordpress.com>). There is also expertise in heritage studies (as in the Visual and Material Culture research group), and much of the work in eighteenth-century studies in this department involves public facing activities and engagement.

Postgraduate students in the eighteenth-century research group have secured external funding for research and CPD projects (AHRC, British Academy, Vitae, the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies), have organised their own conferences, and have published their work in journals such as *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* and *Literature & Medicine*. PhD student and PDRA Montana Davies-Shuck has served a major role in being postgraduate and ECR representative for the International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies' 2019 Enlightenment Congress in Edinburgh, which attracted 1600 delegates worldwide and the organisation of which was led by Prof. Carey.

The wider Department of Humanities includes History, English Language and Literature, Creative Writing and American Studies. The student would become a member of a vibrant and cohesive community of PhD students, including those funded by AHRC, Leverhulme, ESRC and NBC as well as by the university. They have hot-desking facilities in the Faculty's Glenamara Centre and further facilities in the Library's Research Commons. Humanities PGRs at Northumbria attend both a Faculty training programme at the Graduate School and one designed and delivered by Humanities staff in the dedicated Humanities Institute, where further space and technical resources are available to students. 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.

Within this environment, the student will be encouraged to build contacts; develop skills; and present work at the Forum, the student-staff seminar series in the Humanities Institute and nationally at the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies annual conference. The student will be funded and supported by the department to organise a workshop for PGRs on archival research, sharing expertise with peers, developing research organisation skills, and sharing research with a national audience. The student will also make full use of the opportunities to join activities in collaboration with the British and International Societies for Eighteenth-Century Studies