

Impact case study (REF3)

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| Institution: Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) | | |
| Unit of Assessment: UoA 28 (History) | | |
| Title of case study: ICS28.01_Women's Lives in the Age of Magna Carta: Impact on education, public commemoration, heritage interpretation and tourism. | | |
| Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2007-2020 | | |
| Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit: | | |
| Name(s): | Role(s) (e.g. job title): | Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: |
| Professor Louise Wilkinson | Professor of Medieval History and Co-Director of the Centre for Kent History and Heritage | 01/09/2004 –19/04/2020 |
| Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020 | | |
| Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N | | |
| 1. Summary of the impact | | |
| <p>Royal and aristocratic women have largely been invisible in representations of 13th century English history. Professor Louise Wilkinson's research into women living in the age of Magna Carta has resulted in a more inclusive approach to public narratives and interpretations of this period. Specifically, it has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefitted teachers and students at Key Stages 2 & 3, bringing women and appreciation of medieval gender roles to the fore; • Enhanced the interpretation of cultural heritage and public understanding of the importance of medieval women and families via collaborations with museum professionals, contributions to publications and work with the media; • Underpinned national and international celebrations of the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta; • Led, via work with the City of Canterbury (a Magna Carta town, population 54,880), to an award-winning annual celebration of Canterbury's heritage, Canterbury's Medieval Pageant and Family Trail. | | |
| 2. Underpinning research | | |
| <p>English political history has been dominated by narratives of English kings and their relationship with the male barons. 13th century royal or aristocratic women usually figured on the margins as the victims of oppressive policies, rather than political agents in their own right. Wilkinson's research promotes an inclusive approach to history in the period between Magna Carta (1215) and the emergence of parliament under King Henry III (d. 1272), which recognises the central role of women in English politics against the changing political and societal landscape reflected in, and brought by, Magna Carta.</p> <p>Negative gender stereotypes in 13th century society characterised women as fallible, inferior, and passive. Wilkinson's research acknowledges this influence, but also demonstrates how in reality, the interplay of gender, life cycle, social status and personal circumstance ensured that elite women occupied a central place within aristocratic families, structures of lordship and, surprisingly, government in medieval England. <i>Women in Thirteenth-Century Lincolnshire</i> (2007) [3.1] analysed the life and career of Lady Nicholaa de la Haye (d. 1230), castellan and sheriff of Lincoln. By interrogating royal government records, as well as unpublished Latin letters, charters and accounts, Wilkinson showed how de la Haye's experience, rank and strong local connections propelled her into government office at a time of political crisis in England, culminating in her successful defence of Lincoln Castle during the Battle of Lincoln in 1217. Wilkinson's biography of Eleanor de Montfort (2012) [3.2], sister of King Henry III and wife of the baronial leader Simon de Montfort, illuminated her central role in the events of 1265 (during the Second Barons' War), in promoting her family's interests and defending Dover Castle after her husband's death at the Battle of Evesham.</p> <p>This challenge to perceptions of the absence of women from political life in 13th century England was extended via the AHRC project, <i>Between Magna Carta and the Parliamentary State: The Fine Rolls of King Henry III</i> (2005-2011, £624,735). Conceived by Wilkinson, who was Co-Investigator</p> | | |

(Co-I) alongside Dr David Crook (National Archives), with Professor David Carpenter (KCL) as Principal Investigator (PI), the project created a free online, searchable, English translation of the 56 Latin fine rolls of Henry III (1216-72). Used to detail money offered in return for concessions from the king, these parchment rolls amounted to approximately 2 million words and referenced 65,000 people and places. Made more accessible, their examination brought new insights into the political and social impact of Magna Carta, including the king's changing relationship with his subjects and a broadening political community. Wilkinson utilised the fine rolls to demonstrate the role of women in the formal machinery of government, uncovering the existence of female castellans, foresters and sheriffs [3.3]. She also highlighted how these responsibilities were often an extension of those they already enjoyed as local landlords, who managed family castles, estates and officials in widowhood, drawing upon expertise gained in marriage [3.3] [3.4].

Further insights into the political and societal roles of women in this period were developed by Wilkinson as part of the AHRC funded *The Magna Carta Project* (2012-15, £719,165). Here she revealed the difficulties encountered by 13th century elite women in dealing with the crown, which threatened their wealth, property and welfare, and those of their families, households and tenants [3.4]. As part of this investigation, and via further work on Eleanor de Montfort, she also found evidence that aristocratic women were directly affected by the 13th century's civil wars, saw themselves as members of England's political community and expressed political opinions [3.4] [3.5]. This contrasted sharply with the experience of King John's widow, Isabella of Angoulême, whom Wilkinson demonstrated was deliberately pushed out of royal government by Henry III's government [3.6]. *The Magna Carta Project* played an integral part in the commemorations for the 800th anniversary of King John's Magna Carta. Wilkinson was (Co-I), alongside Professors David Carpenter, Paul Brand (University of Oxford) and Andy Day (UEA), and Dr Claire Breay (British Library), with Professor Nicholas Vincent (UEA) as PI.

3. References to the research

3.1 Wilkinson, L. (2007; paperback 2015) *Women in Thirteenth-Century Lincolnshire*. The Royal Historical Society. Studies in History Series. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press. pp. 245. ISBN 9780861932856. [Authored Book]. Submitted to RAE 2008 and available CCCU on request.

3.2 Wilkinson, L. (2012) *Eleanor de Montfort: A Rebel Countess in Medieval England*. London: Continuum. pp. 213. ISBN 9781847251947. [Authored book]. Submitted REF 2 in REF 2014 and available CCCU on request.

3.3 Wilkinson, L. (2015; paperback 2020) *Women in English local government: sheriffs, castellans and foresters*. In: Wilkinson, L. and Crook, D., eds. *The Growth of Royal Government under Henry III*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press. pp. 212-226 ISBN 9781783270675, ISBN 9781783274628. [Book chapter]. Available CCCU on request.

3.4 Wilkinson, L. (2016) *Reformers and Royalists: Aristocratic Women in Politics, 1258-1267*. In: Jobson, A., ed. *Baronial Reform and Revolution in England, 1258-67*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press. pp. 152-166. ISBN 9781843834670. [Book chapter]. Reserve output submitted REF 2.

3.5 Wilkinson, L. (2020), ed. and trans. *The Household Roll of Eleanor de Montfort, Countess of Leicester and Pembroke, 1265*. The Pipe Roll Society new series lxiii. Woodbridge: Boydell. pp. i-cxxxvi, 1-171. ISBN 9780901134776. [Edited and translated book funded by the British Academy's Stenton Fund]. Available CCCU on request.

3.6 Wilkinson, L. (2016) *Maternal Abandonment and Surrogate Caregivers: Isabella of Angoulême and her Children by King John*. In: Woodacre, E. and Fleiner, C., eds. *Virtuous or Villainess? The Image of the Royal Mother from the Early Medieval to the Early Modern Era. Queenship and Power*. Palgrave Macmillan United States. pp. 101-124. ISBN 9781137513144 [Book chapter]. Available CCCU on request.

All peer-reviewed publications with academic publishers. Associated grants below:

Between Magna Carta and the Parliamentary State: The Fine Rolls of King Henry III (2005-2011), £624,735. AHRC. PI: Professor David Carpenter (KCL), Co-Is: Wilkinson, Dr D. Crook (The National Archives). Associated outputs: [3.2] [3.3]

The Magna Carta Project (2012-15) £719,165. AHRC. PI: Professor Nicholas Vincent (University of East Anglia) Co-Is: Wilkinson, Professor D. Carpenter, Dr P. Brand (University of Oxford), Professor A. Day (University of East Anglia), and Dr C. Breay (British Library). AHRC Annual

Report (2015/16) highlighted *The Magna Carta Project* as a 'high quality' research project 'which brought together the UK's leading medieval experts to apply the latest research techniques to Magna Carta in its 800th anniversary year.' Associated outputs: [3.4] [3.6]

4. Details of the impact

Issued in 1215, Magna Carta restricted the king's power, effectively making the monarch and his government subject to the law. It is one of the most famous documents in history, commonly considered the foundation of the British constitution, with significance across the English-speaking world. The commemoration of its 800th anniversary in 2015 was of national and international importance due to its key role in English history and its international influence. Against this background Wilkinson, as a leading authority on women in the age of Magna Carta, has utilised her research to realise the following impacts:

(1) Benefitted teachers and students, bringing women and medieval gender roles to the fore. A key impact area for *The Magna Carta Project* was raising awareness and understanding of the importance of Magna Carta for students of all ages. Wilkinson represented *The Magna Carta Project* on the Academic and Education Sub-Committee for the Magna Carta Trust, which coordinated the national educational initiatives for the 800th anniversary. As part of these initiatives, Wilkinson developed 'Women of Magna Carta' biographies for the schools' section of the Magna Carta 800th website (launched in 2014). They 'drew extensively on her earlier published work' and were important as they covered 'less obvious political actors' and redressed 'a gender imbalance' in the materials [5.1a]. The biographies are included in the schools' section of the Magna Carta 800th website which, during the anniversary period, received approximately 10,000 visits per month [5.2]. As part of *The Magna Carta Project's* impact programme, Wilkinson also worked with teachers, local archive and museum education officers, the Historical Association and CCCU's Outreach Team to produce resource packs for Key Stages (KS) 2 & 3, which incorporated material on King John's treatment of women, children and families. These have been a popular resource, with downloads remaining high (181 downloads of KS2 materials, 98 downloads of KS3 resource book and 117 downloads of the KS3 resource pack logged in June 2019). The KS3 resources were distributed in print to Kent schools with a pre-order of 1600 copies and a final distribution of 2,000 copies [5.2] [5.3]. The KS2 resources were recommended to teachers by *The Guardian* in *How to teach...Magna Carta* (April 2015) [5.4a] and demonstrating their benefit to international audiences were featured by the Australian Human Rights Commission as part of their 800th Anniversary activities [5.4b].

Wilkinson's biographies of Magna Carta women for *The Magna Carta Trust*, together with the KS3 resources (above) and additional research on Eleanor de Montfort [3.2] [3.5], formed the basis of six workshops hosted by the Centre for Kent History and Heritage (CCCU) for 100 KS3 students at Ramsgate Harbour Academy during 2019. Feedback from the students indicated the workshops developed an appreciation of medieval women and gender roles. Students referenced Nicholaa de la Haye's defence of Lincoln Castle and her bravery and strength, and Eleanor de Montfort's strong character and her protection of her family and money [5.4c]. One staff member commented, 'I really like the social perspective [...] Often the year 7 work has been centred on battles/wars! It was important for them to consider a female being in charge' and highlighted the benefit to students of 'understanding different perspectives. Men, women...' and of 'putting themselves in another role' [5.4c].

2) Enhanced the interpretation of cultural heritage and public understanding of the role of medieval women and families. Kent has a unique connection to Magna Carta, with Canterbury being one of the five Charter Towns and a key stakeholder in the 800th anniversary celebrations. Wilkinson's research informed two exhibitions in the county marking this anniversary. Again, under the remit of *The Magna Carta Project*, Wilkinson was academic advisor to *Canterbury in the Age of Magna Carta*, at The Beane House of Art and Knowledge (Canterbury's flagship museum), which attracted 51,010 people between June and September 2015, and for the Heritage Lottery Funded touring exhibition which attracted 30,480 people between May and December 2015 [5.3]. The exhibition curator commented that Wilkinson was 'an invaluable part of the creation of the *Magna Carta Rediscovered* exhibition' and her 'early input into the exhibition concept helped to

elevate stories of women and children in the narrative [...] These aspects were lacking and with her involvement we created a richer exhibition that was more relevant and meaningful to its audience' [5.1b]. Material by Wilkinson was also used in a display at Pevensey Court House Museum *King John in Sussex and the Magna Carta Story* [5.1c], which was on the Magna Carta Trust's national 2015 Magna Carta Trail. Research into de la Haye informed the National Archives' contributions to the *Battles and Dynasties* exhibition at The Collection, Lincoln [5.5a], part of the celebrations for the 800th anniversary of the Battle of Lincoln (2017). In addition, after a talk by Wilkinson at Lincoln Castle in 2017, her 'excellent research' about de la Haye and the 2nd Battle of Lincoln was used to 'substantiate much of the training' for guides at the castle. [5.1d] Further afield, Wilkinson contributed an article *Women in the Age of Magna Carta* to the Australian Senate's popular publication *Australia's Magna Carta* (2015) [5.5b].

To further promote understanding of the role of medieval women, Wilkinson has collaborated on media programming, utilising her research into Nicholaa de la Haye and Eleanor de Montfort. As lead academic on *In Our Time* (BBC Radio 4, 2017) on *The Battle of Lincoln 1217*, Wilkinson explained the pressures of King John's government and Nicholaa de la Haye's role in defending Lincoln. 2 million listeners regularly tune in to *In Our Time*, and a further 3.5 million download the podcast. According to the producer for *In Our Time*, 'our listeners really enjoyed it' and the broadcast had stimulated interest in de la Haye [5.1e]. Additional media contributions on de la Haye include Britain's Historic Towns (Channel 4, 2020), where Wilkinson again discussed her role in the Battle of Lincoln. In 2015, Wilkinson also provided contributions on Eleanor de Montfort to BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour (weekly audience 3.7 million in 2016) and was a key contributor to BBC Radio 4's special four-part series on *Magna Carta*, marking its 800th anniversary [5.6].

3) Informed Canterbury's Magna Carta 800th anniversary celebrations, establishing Canterbury's annual Medieval Pageant, stimulating tourism, and engaging visitors and residents with the city's heritage. Wilkinson worked with the City of Canterbury on its commemorative event programme for the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta. Here Wilkinson utilised insights developed through her overall body of work on women, drawing particularly on her knowledge of the political and social landscape of medieval society, to underpin her contributions as committee member and academic advisor to the Canterbury Magna Carta Celebration Committee. This brought together stakeholders to develop a citywide programme of activities comprising of 11 major events which attracted 88,000 visitors [5.3]. These celebrations included the Magna Carta Family Trail, developed in collaboration with Canterbury Business Improvement District (BID), designed by the Head of Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library, Cressida Williams, with Wilkinson advising on historical content. Canterbury BID saw the activities as 'a great opportunity to drive footfall into the city centre for the benefit of business and also to develop the city's unique heritage in a way that was new and exciting for everyone.' [5.1f] A cumulative total of over 2,000 people visited the participating sites [5.3].

This success resulted in Williams and Wilkinson being invited by Canterbury BID to help develop the Canterbury Medieval Pageant and Trail, held annually since 2016 (virtually in 2020). In 2017, the Medieval Pageant won the Lasting Impression Award (Ultimate Tourist Experience of the Year) at the Kent Tourism Awards. When receiving the award, Canterbury BID acknowledged Wilkinson and Williams 'whose work on the Magna Carta Family Trail and subsequent support for the Pageant has laid the foundations for all that has been achieved' [5.7]. The former CEO of Canterbury BID highlights the role of CCCU as a 'catalyst to other groups and organisations' becoming involved and credits the significance of the participation of 'leading scholars in their field' who brought a 'tremendous level of expertise' [5.1f]. The event has been credited with encouraging 'families to flock to the town and follow the Medieval trail to enter numerous heritage sites around the city' by the #WDYT campaign, which helps high streets improve footfall [5.8], and featured in a Guardian article (June 2018), *England's cathedrals hark back to the middle ages to pull in crowds* which considers how medieval history is being used to attract visitors to the UK's cities [5.8]. Wilkinson served until April 2020 on the pageant's Academic Sub-committee, and her input has ensured that women are celebrated, alongside the more usual kings, archbishops, knights and monks. In 2019, for example, the central characters were Eleanor of Aquitaine and

medieval ladies [5.9a]. Since 2016 the pageant and trail have attracted thousands of spectators and participants, with 23,500 recorded between 2017 and 2019 [5.9a,b].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

5.1 Testimonials/statements (a) Magna Carta 800th Anniversary Commemoration Committee Member (b) Curator, *Magna Carta Re-Discovered* (c) Honorary Curator, Pevensey Court House Museum (d) Training Officer, Lincoln Castle (e) Producer, *In Our Time* (f) Former CEO Canterbury BID.

5.2 The Magna Carta Project Outcomes – Published End of Project Report for UK Research and Innovation - <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH%2FJ004170%2F1> (under outcome/engagement activity)

5.3 City of Canterbury evaluation report Canterbury and the Magna Carta Oct 2015 <https://www.canterburybid.co.uk/magna-carta-family-trail/> (access at bottom of screen)

5.4 (a) The Guardian *How to teach... Magna Carta* <https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2015/apr/27/how-to-teach-magna-carta> (b) Magna Carta for Schools featured on Australian Human Rights Commission website https://humanrights.gov.au/magnacarta/teachers/?_ga=2.83529183.878336248.1604942681-1085203397.1604942681 (c) PDF collated feedback from schools and blog relating to schools' workshop <https://blogs.canterbury.ac.uk/kenthistory/magna-carta-workshops-at-the-royal-harbour-academy-ramsgate/>

5.5 (a) PDF of The National Archives' blog, *Battles and Dynasties: a collaborative exhibition* (2017) (b) Australian Senate publication: Louise J. Wilkinson, 'Women in the Age of Magna Carta', in *Australia's Magna Carta* (second edition, 2015) ISBN:9781760101268.

5.6 PDF collated contributions to media programming.

5.7 Link to Canterbury BID website relating to Kent Tourism Awards:

<http://www.canterburybid.co.uk/canterburys-medieval-pageant-won/>

5.8 PDF of articles illustrating the benefits of the Medieval Pageant to the local area.

5.9 (a) Medieval Pageant Review (2019) <https://www.canterburybid.co.uk/canterbury-medieval-pageant/> including 2019 visitor figures (b) PDFs of Canterbury BID information related to 2017 and 2018 visitor figures.

PDF available for all online content