

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: Bangor University, 10007857		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 26 - Modern Languages and Linguistics		
Title of case study: European Travellers to Wales: Enhancing Heritage; Inspiring Tourism; Enabling Engagement		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008 - 2018		
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:
1. Professor Carol Tully 2. Dr Rita Singer	1. (PI) Professor 2. Research Officer	1. Aug 1998 – present 2. Nov 2013 – Sept 2016; Jun 2017 – Feb 2018 (also Honorary Research Fellow from Feb 2018 to Nov 2020)
Period when the claimed impact occurred: October 2014 – 31 December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Research undertaken by two AHRC-funded projects on 'European Travellers to Wales: 1750-2010' involved the discovery, study and interpretation of almost 500 accounts by travellers from all over Europe. The impact of the research has been wide-ranging and has involved extensive public engagement activities aimed at diverse audiences. Impact has taken the form of enhanced public understanding of Welsh-European intercultural relations (through a travelling exhibition, freely available educational materials, public talks and a variety of on-line resources) and significant enhancements within the heritage and tourism sectors, including the development of new resources and insights into motivations for travel to Wales and sites of special interest (through an open access database, an interactive website and a range of opportunities for heritage bodies).</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Undertaken jointly with Swansea University and the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, and funded by the AHRC [3.a, 3.b], this research examines the representation of Wales and 'Welshness' in texts by European travellers from 1750 to the present day, focusing on key points in the period of Welsh modernisation from the Industrial Revolution to the post-devolution era.</p> <p>The research has transformed perceptions of Wales as 'unknown' and 'invisible' in European travel writing by uncovering, collating [3.1] and interpreting almost 500 accounts of travel to Wales. This project is the first to broaden perspectives and examine the work of western European travellers to Wales writing in languages other than English, thereby realigning the current debate, and including continental observations of the relationship between Wales and its more familiar dominant neighbour. By focusing on Wales, a minoritized nation at the geographical periphery of Europe, the research has problematized notions of hegemony and identity within the genre of travel writing, relating to both the places encountered (the 'travellee' culture) and the places of origin (the travellers' cultures). The resulting research, including the co-authored book Hidden Texts, Hidden Nation [3.2], makes an original contribution to studies in travel writing. It offers an important case study of a culture often minoritized in the field, but that nevertheless provides a</p>		

telling illustration of the dynamics of European intercultural relations and representation [3.2, 3.3, 3.6]. Analysis of the accounts revealed the extent to which Wales is viewed through comparative filters such as Switzerland and Brittany and numerous distorting prisms reflecting the travellers' home cultures [3.4, 3.5].

This work also makes an important contribution to Welsh Studies by uncovering hidden texts and making them available to a non-Francophone/Germanophone readership to provide brand new perspectives on Wales. Insights gained into European travel writing and attitudes to Wales as a smaller nation serve as a paradigm for understanding broader issues surrounding the reception of less 'visible' nations, such as Catalonia or the Baltic states. Moreover, through the innovative approach of using the prism of Modern Language-based research in the field of Celtic Studies, the project has offered fresh perspectives on the home nations. These neglected texts constitute a new resource for investigating the evolving perception of the 'other', particularly the crucial Celtic 'other'. As the research reveals, only in the twentieth century is Wales treated on its own terms in travel writing, beginning with the French narratives of the 1904-05 religious revival. The narrative of Wales which emerges from these complex textual and empirical European/Welsh interactions highlights its sublime northern landscapes and southern industrial prowess; Wales as a bastion of both Celtic tradition and modern industry. Despite its emergence and popularity in the nineteenth century, that narrative then vanishes from view only to re-emerge in a new form at the dawn of the twenty-first: Wales as haven, a modern peripheral nation with a capital and a boundless range of opportunity for the outward-looking traveller with a taste for adventure. Thus, Wales has been discovered, lost and rediscovered and shifted in and out of view, from blind spot to blank canvas.

3. References to the research

Research Outputs

3.1 **Singer, R.**, Jones, K., **Tully, C.**, and Williams, H. (2013-18) Accounts of Travel: Travel Writing by European Visitors to Wales (Database), *European Travellers to Wales, 1750-2010*. Bangor University. [Website](#) (open access)

3.2 Jones, K., **Tully, C.**, and Williams, H. (2020) Hidden Texts, Hidden Nation: (Re)Discoveries of Wales Travel Writing in French and German (1780-2018). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.304. (Peer-reviewed co-authored book, copy available on request) Submitted to REF 2021 (REF identifier UoA26_32)

3.3 **Tully, C.** (2014) Out of Europe: Travel and Exile in Mid Twentieth-Century Wales, *Studies in Travel Writing*, **18**(2), 174-186, [DOI](#) (Peer-reviewed journal article) Submitted to REF 2021 (REF identifier UoA26_ Reserve7)

3.4 **Tully, C.** (2020) Nineteenth-century German Travellers to Wales: Text, Translation and the Manipulation of Identity, In Hodkinson, J. and Schofield, B. (eds) *German in the World*, London: Boydell and Brewer, 74-90, (Peer-reviewed book chapter, copy available on request) Submitted to REF 2021 (REF identifier UoA26_43)

3.5 **Singer, R. C.** (2016) Leisure, Refuge and Solidarity: Messages in Visitors' Books as Microforms of Travel Writing, *Studies in Travel Writing*, **20**(4), 392-408. [DOI](#) (Peer-reviewed journal article)

3.6 **Singer, R. C.** (2019) Through Wales in the Footsteps of William Gilpin: Illustrated Travel Accounts by Early French Tourists, 1768 – 1810, *European Romantic Review*, **30**(2), 127-47. [DOI](#) (Peer-reviewed journal article, open access)

Grants

3.a PI: **Tully** (Bangor); Co-Is: Williams (CAWCS); Jones (Swansea); RA: **Singer** (Bangor); Project partners: National Library of Wales (NLW) and Ceredigion Museum. (2013 - 2017) *European Travellers to Wales: 1750-2010*. Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) AHK001817/1, GBP419,686 (BU: R05R03).

3.b PI: **Tully** (Bangor); Co-I: Williams (CAWCS); RA: **Singer** (Bangor); Project partners: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) and Visit Wales. (2017 - 2018) *Travellers to Wales*. Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) AH/P014046/1, Follow-On Funding for Impact and Engagement, GBP78,743 (BU: R05R05). Output: 'Journey to the Past': [Website](#) (open access)

4. Details of the impact

Bangor University's research has had both regional and national impact and global reach. It has created cultural, economic and societal impact across three key interconnected themes: ***Enhancing Heritage; Inspiring Tourism; Enabling Engagement.***

Enhancing heritage

Bangor's research has impacted on the understanding, curation and interpretation of key heritage sites from a new, European perspective, as well as enabling the enhancement of the use of new technologies within the sector through innovative reworking of the research findings.

Work with partners at the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales (RCAHMMW) on new digital materials for the 'Journey to the Past' multilingual [French, German, Welsh and English] website has enabled the creation of new multi-media artefacts which have been used as exemplars of good practice in the sector. Commissioned materials include: 10 videos (uploaded to YouTube), a laser scan fly-through of St Winefride's Well and a promotional video of the Virtual Reality experience of Tintern Abbey [5.1]. The website and artefacts were showcased at the Digital Past trade conference in Aberystwyth in 2018 to over 30 heritage bodies from across the UK. The new digital resources are also benefitting other heritage organisations across Wales (National Trust; CADW) whose sites are incorporated in the heritage trails featured on the website. As well as the impact from the cutting-edge visual resources, there is also evidence of impact within the heritage industry. For example, the database has benefitted researchers preparing the current bid to recognise the Slate Industry of North Wales as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Govannon Consultancy, who are coordinating the bid along with Gwynedd Council maintain that our research has greatly enhanced the application [5.2].

Inspiring tourism

Bangor University's research has enhanced the understanding of Wales as a travel destination (both for tourists and the tourism sector), provided new promotional materials for use by key stakeholders and attracted media coverage in Wales, the UK, Germany and France.

Visit Wales (VW) have disseminated the findings of the project to contemporary tourists through the 'Journey to the Past' website, having committed to the project as partners based on the value of the research to their promotion of Wales, in particular in relation to their key German market. The website has featured at trade shows in Germany; been highlighted via VW's German trade e-newsletter (circulation 527) and Facebook page (65,000 followers); been promoted via VW's dedicated German marketing materials (with editorial input from Tully); and will be used to enhance Wesh Government's Wales in Germany 2021 initiative [5.3, 5.4]. The website combines 54 travel destinations across Wales into 9 themed trails. As well as the artefacts produced by the RCAHMMW, it includes translations of excerpts from French and German texts, making them accessible to new audiences for the first time. The website was launched by the Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport in May 2018 with VW and other stakeholders. The website has been highlighted by a number of commercial travel companies and travel blogs. For example, Britain Express said: *'This is unlike any travel website I've ever seen and the result is utterly fascinating.'* (Statistics: 31,000 page views across the project websites; from 83 different countries; largest clusters France, Germany, the UK and the USA; digital artefacts viewed over 8500 times).

Enabling engagement

Bangor's research has had demonstrable impact on engagement within the heritage, cultural and education sectors in Wales, enabling new audiences to engage with cutting-edge Modern Languages research and change their understanding of the perception of Wales in the European context.

The RCAHMMW have been able to further develop and disseminate their holdings to audiences beyond Wales. They note: *'The multi-lingual nature of the project enabled material for the seventy sites covered to be made available in French and German, [...] which has enabled us to reach a*

totally new set of users. The link up with Visit Wales also enabled traffic to be drawn to our records from a large website with vast coverage and highlight the heritage on offer to visitors in Wales.'

[5.1]. The People's Collection Wales are using descriptors written by the project team to enhance their materials on key locations thus changing the perception of Wales among the general public (61 descriptors; at least 600 views each). Three museums across Wales (Ceredigion Museum [Aberystwyth]; Storiol [Bangor]; Swansea Museum) were involved in curating (with major input from Singer) and hosting the exhibition 'EuroVisions' (2015), which showcased responses to Wales by European artists, enhancing their public outreach programmes and increasing footfall (the visitor numbers to the exhibition across the three sites was 46,470, with each venue seeing an increase in footfall compared to other events) **[5.5]**. A commissioned collection of new short stories, *Perthyn i Gymru / Belonging to Wales*, published as an e-book and exploring notions of Wales as a destination for travellers and migrants, was distributed at the 2019 Hay Festival. It attracted the attention of both the Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA) and Wales PEN Cymru, who republished the stories through their online platforms, the IWA noting that the stories help us to *'investigate how individuals find a sense of belonging to their local community and to the nation'*

[5.6]. With the National Library of Wales (NLW) Education Unit we produced bilingual educational resources on refugees in Wales which are hosted on the Hwb online portal (1130 views) for use in schools across Wales **[5.7]**. Teachers have highlighted the value of the resources in the context of the New Curriculum for Wales, in particular to Languages, Literacy and Communication, noting that *'it is incredibly valuable in enhancing pupils' understanding of their locality.'* A final year module has been added to the Modern Languages curriculum at Bangor University as well as a postgraduate-level module at the University of Leipzig. Underlining the value of the project in the context of higher education, it was singled out in a feature article on modern language graduates in *The Times Higher Education* (print and digital weekly readership: 380,000 in 2017) and commended for *'demonstrating how modern languages increasingly help us to understand our own culture'* **[5.8]**.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

5.1 **Testimonial letter from The Secretary (CEO), RCAHMW** (Participant in the impact) corroborates impact on development of heritage resources in Wales and UK.

5.2 **Testimonial email from Consultant, Govannon Consultancy re: UNESCO Slate Industry bid** (Reporter on the impact) corroborates impact on the wider development of heritage sites in Wales.

5.3 **Visit Wales website** corroborates enhancing the understanding of Wales as a travel destination with dedicated link to the Journey to the Past website (Language: German) <https://www.visitwales.com/de/info/Streifz%C3%BCge-durch-vergangene-Zeiten>

5.4 **Testimonial letter from Head of Marketing – Tourism, Welsh Government**, (Participant in the impact) demonstrates how widely the 'Journey to the Past' website has been disseminated via various platforms and the important part this work played in their initiatives to celebrate Wales' relationships and connections with Germany.

5.5 **Testimonial letter from Curator, Ceredigion Museum, Aberystwyth** (Participant in the impact) corroborates impact on museum sector in Wales in fostering their ability to engage with existing and new audiences.

5.6 **Institute of Welsh Affairs website: The Welsh Agenda** corroborates engaging new audiences to change their understanding of the perception of Wales in the European context. <https://www.iwa.wales/agenda/2019/08/belonging-to-wales-a-place-worth-fighting-for/>

5.7 **Testimonial letter from Education Officer, NLW** (Participant in the impact) corroborates impact of the project's education resources and their value to NLW and the curriculum in Wales.

5.8 **Times Higher Education (23/02/2017)** corroborates engaging audiences to understand their own culture, singling out the Bangor-led project as an example.

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/do-we-need-modern-language-graduates-in-globalised-world>