

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Aberdeen		
Unit of Assessment: 27 (English Language and Literature)		
Title of case study: The Evergreen: A New Season in the North		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2011-2019		
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:
Elizabeth Elliott	Senior Lecturer	2013-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2013-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Elliott's research on the Bannatyne Manuscript (c. 1568) and its role in inspiring later anthologies, <i>Ever Green</i> (1724) and <i>Evergreen</i> (1894-6), demonstrates the anthology's function as a format enabling the expression of collective identity, and illuminates the influence of the Bannatyne Manuscript on Edinburgh's cultural heritage. It motivated the publication of a new anthology of creative work, <i>The Evergreen: A New Season in the North</i> (4 vols., 2014-19), which has played a significant role in Edinburgh Old Town Development Trust's work to preserve Edinburgh's built and cultural heritage by catalysing relationships between social enterprise and the academic humanities, directly supporting artistic practice and fostering new understandings of how cultural heritage can meet community needs.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>The Bannatyne Manuscript (1568) initiates a distinctive and enduring tradition, in which the anthology as a format plays an important role in defining complex, diverse, and yet unified conceptions of Scottish identity. Elliott's research traces the importance of the Bannatyne for the development of conceptions of Scottish and British identity after the Union, and its ongoing contribution to culture and community in Edinburgh.</p>		
The Bannatyne anthology		
<p>Elliott's research [2-5] stems from a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship (2011-2014; [P1]) on the cultural afterlife of the Bannatyne Manuscript (c. 1568), a poetic anthology in English and Scots compiled by Edinburgh merchant George Bannatyne. Elliott's work focuses on the anthology's role in facilitating the development of individual and collective identities, first as an expression of its maker's identity, then as a symbol of Scottish nationalism and elite male culture.</p>		
<p>Elliott's research on the Bannatyne Manuscript highlights the role of individual poems in promoting conceptions of Scottish identity that encompass cultural diversity. Her contribution to the AHRC-funded History of Distributed Cognition project (2014-18) examines the <i>Flyting</i> of Dunbar and Kennedy (c. 1508) [1]. Later published in Ramsay's <i>Ever Green</i> (1724), this poem makes Edinburgh the backdrop for an argument addressing Scottish identity and its relationship to Gaelic and English language cultures. Uniting conflicting viewpoints in a single work of art keyed to the urban landscape, the <i>Flyting</i> supports the work of imagining Scotland as a diverse community (Elliott, 2019).</p>		

Bannatyne's Cultural Legacy

Elliott's research further charts the Bannatyne's influence on Edinburgh's cultural landscape: the poet Allan Ramsay (1686-1758) published poems from the anthology as *The Ever Green* (1724), fuelling the revival of Scots as a literary language [2-5]. The Bannatyne Club (1823-61), a gentleman's antiquarian printing society founded in Edinburgh by the poet, novelist, and historian Sir Walter Scott, made George Bannatyne the figurehead for their mission to publish 'works illustrative of the History, Topography, Poetry, and Miscellaneous Literature of Scotland'. Commemorating their past, the membership endorsed a distinctive Scottish identity, in tension with the homogenising influence of political Union (Elliott 2016). Marking a further stage in the Bannatyne's reception, the town planner and conservationist Patrick Geddes published *The Evergreen* (4 vols., 1895-7), celebrating his development of the site of Ramsay's former home on Edinburgh's Royal Mile as housing for artisans, students, and academics.

Elliott's study is the first to contextualise these responses to Bannatyne as part of an interconnected and distinctive tradition of particular importance for Edinburgh. Her collaboration with Edinburgh Old Town Development Trust (EOTDT, 2012-present) began as an attempt to take account of the ongoing influence of the Bannatyne tradition in the present.

In response to Elliott's research, and at her instigation, EOTDT published a new series, *The Evergreen: A New Season in the North* (4 vols, 2014-19), as a conscious addition to the Bannatyne tradition, using the anthology format to articulate a dynamic, yet coherent community identity. Elliott's contributions to the project and her role on the editorial board helped shape the direction of EOTDT's project, while her ongoing research recognises EOTDT's work as evidence of the vitality of the Bannatyne tradition and its present significance.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[1] **Elizabeth Elliott**, 'Cognitive Ecology and the Idea of Nation in Late-Medieval Scotland: The *Flyting* of William Dunbar and Walter Kennedy', *Distributed Cognition in Medieval and Renaissance Culture, The Edinburgh History of Distributed Cognition*. Ed. Miranda Anderson and Michael Wheeler, Edinburgh University Press, 2019.

[2] **Elizabeth Elliott**, 'Walter Scott's Bannatyne Club, Elite Male Associational Culture, and the Making of Identities', *Review of English Studies* 67, no. 281 (2016): 732-50. <https://doi.org/10.1093/res/hgw005>

[3] **Elizabeth Elliott**, 'Planting the Unsunned Hillside: A New Season for the Evergreen', *The Bottle Imp*, 17: Ecology and Scottish Writing (2015). <https://www.thebottleimp.org.uk/2015/06/planting-the-unsunned-hillside-a-new-season-for-the-evergreen/>

[4] **Elizabeth Elliott**, 'Old-World Verse and Scottish Renaissance: Flourishing Evergreen', *The Evergreen: A New Season in the North*, ed. Sean Bradley et al., Vol. 1. Edinburgh: The Word Bank, 2014. 149-56

[5] **Elizabeth Elliott**, 'Introduction', 'Playing with history: Geddes' Masques', *The Evergreen: A New Season in the North*, ed. Lucy Ellmann et al., Vol. 4. Edinburgh: The Word Bank, 2019, 9-11; 23-27.

Evidence of quality of underpinning research:

[P1] The underpinning research was supported by a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship (September 2011-December 2012 and August 2013-February 2014; (GBP15,302).

[P2] Elliott was awarded GBP8851 by the Royal Society of Edinburgh under the Research Workshops Scheme (February 2015-January /2016).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Illuminating the tradition stemming from the Bannatyne Manuscript, Elliott's research was the locus for EOTDT's venture into community publishing. *The Evergreen: A New Season in the North*, is a four-volume anthology of poetry, prose, and visual art (E1-E4, 2014-19) involving 85 contributors and intended as an Evergreen for the 21st century [S1]. The anthology created a new space for writers and artists to explore key themes, including place, identity and community. It has supported EOTDT to achieve its aims by increasing community participation and creative partnerships, contributed to EOTDT's income, and fostered new understandings of how cultural heritage can meet community needs.

Co-creating a new anthology for the 21st Century

According to EOTDT's director, Sean Bradley, *'the idea behind The Evergreen can be described simply: if you connect the people to the place in which they live – its history, natural environment, and culture – you encourage them to become more active and responsible citizens'* [S2]. Elliott proposed a new Evergreen as a pilot project for EOTDT community publishing collective, The Word Bank. A new Evergreen matched EOTDT's commitment to preservation of Edinburgh's built and cultural heritage, and the growth of community participation and the arts. Patrick Geddes' work as an urban planner and conservationist was already an acknowledged inspiration for EOTDT, but Elliott's research made the connection between development and the Evergreen. Bradley notes that, *'Not only did it provide an essential reference point for the framing of the subsequent publishing project, but it was an essential guide to how the 4 volumes developed, including the accompanying community learning programme'* [S2].

Stimulating Community Participation and Learning

The project contributed to EOTDT's own formation and its ethos for engaging with its community. As a member of EOTDT's board testifies, *'The process of publishing the Evergreen proved to be an important one in the formation of [EOTDT] in itself [...] This process helped the EOTDT to develop its own constitution and ways of working'* [S4]. Consultation with stakeholders was built into the development process, with initial meetings in 2013, followed by a consultative workshop (2015), attended by representatives of Scottish Historic Buildings Trust, Workers' Educational Association, the Patrick Geddes Centre, Patrick Geddes Memorial Trust, Edinburgh Printmakers, and academics. Elliott secured funding [P2] to support this consultation and a community learning programme, raising awareness of the project through public lectures hosted at the NLS and University of Edinburgh and a free poetry writing workshop (2015).

For contributor Petra Reid, *'The workshop had the effect of sparking my consciousness into reclaiming the physical and historical significance of the Old Town for me as a citizen of Edinburgh'*. This began as *'an intensive few weeks of research into street life of the Old Town, which culminated in my contribution'*. Discovering *'amazing historical accounts of the Old Town made me far more invested in the Old Town as a real place, while engagement with the work of Geddes continues to inform my practice as a writer'*. For her contribution to *Evergreen Volume 2*, inspired by Elliott's research on how 'Ramsay and Geddes "ventriloquised" historical poets', Reid *'had the idea of ventriloquising the ventriloquists. Therefore, this device, voicing a contemporary female figure to give rejoinder to both historic [and] present sexual inequalities, was directly influenced by LE's [Elizabeth Elliot's] piece'* [S5].

The project also created models of community activism, conservation, development, and culture for an international context. The 85 writers and artists commissioned for the anthology include contributors from India, Italy, the USA, and Spain. Open calls for submissions were circulated via social media and EOTDT's website, with commissions 'geared to ensuring quality and equality attracting new as well as established writers and contributions in minority languages' [S3]. As editor of Volume 4 and prizewinning novelist Lucy Ellmann states, *'Geddes's own vision was far-reaching – he and his work travelled, and we wanted the same for the new Evergreen'* [S6]. Sales figures are noted below, with users of the project website estimated at 6000 [S3].

For Bradley, Elliott's collaboration with the EOTDT has modelled new ways of working and new possibilities for community engagement and cross-sector collaboration. '*The project as a whole offers a new and highly innovative model for productive collaboration between the academic humanities and social enterprise [...] The Evergreen has contributed to making productive connections between organisations and individuals with shared interests and has made a direct contribution to supporting creative work*' [S3].

Contributing to Edinburgh Old Town Development Trust's Financial Sustainability

Elliott's collaboration with EOTDT also had economic impact, contributing to EOTDT's income through grant awards and direct sales. Elliott has worked with the Trust to secure GBP37,000 grant funding related to the anthology project. Creative Scotland awarded EOTDT GBP25,000 (2014) for initial development and publication of the anthology, as high-quality work with a clearly-described public outcome. Funding from the Saltire Society (GBP2,000) and Edinburgh World Heritage (GBP1,000) supported the commissioning process [S3]. Additionally, as of 29/6/2020, 1184 books have been sold, generating GBP10,071.18 [S3].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[S1] Volumes 1-4 of *The Evergreen*. Ed. Sean Bradley et. al., Edinburgh: The Word Bank, 2014-2019.

[S2] Supporting statement from Director of Edinburgh Old Town Development Trust and managing editor of *The Evergreen: A New Season in the North*

[S3] Final report to Creative Scotland, 29/06/2020

[S4] Statement from Old Town resident and prior EOTDT board member

[S5] Statement from Canongate poetry workshop contributor (2015)

[S6] Statement from prizewinning novelist, editor of Volume 4 of *The Evergreen*